

Moral Entrepreneurship: Resource Based Ethics

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Abstract This article studies the role of entrepreneurship in business ethics and promotes a resource-based ethics. The need for and usefulness of this form of ethics emerge from an analysis of contemporary business ethics that appears to be ineffective and from a moral business practice formed out of the relationship between the veal calf industry of the VanDrie Group and the Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals (DSPA) in their development and implementation of a Welfare Hallmark for calves. Both organizations created jointly a new meat segment in the market by trust-building and partnership. The relationship shows a remodeling of capabilities of both organizations in the light of co-creation of values. The VanDrie Group established an effectuation of moral goals by being socially sensitive and resource-minded. The DSPA created openings for dialogue by being pragmatic in its ideals. Philosophically, this article sketches a resource-based ethics with Deweyan concepts as end-in-view and transactionality of means and ends. Both organizations show in their entrepreneurship the ability to create, what is called “Room for Maneuver” by exploring, socializing, individualizing, and growing. By maneuvering they set off a form of co-evolution between business and ethics. This article demonstrates what actual moral entrepreneurship can do in bringing about moral change by combining effectively social, policy, norm, and economic related values.

Keywords Business and society · Moral values · Animal welfare · Co-evolution · Pragmatism

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Introduction: Ethics and Resources

There are clear signs that business ethics is struggling with its potentials. Business and ethics both address the societal demands for a better, more honest, cleaner, and more respectful world, but these activities do not always give satisfying results (De George 2006, cf. Garriga and Mele 2004). In society the call for restoring moral agency in business becomes louder, but we still witness business scandals as disgraceful accountancy, environmental spoils, health threat by contained food products and extravagant bonuses for top managers. In reaction, the academic world tries to understand and control moral situations by analyzing concepts such as autonomy, non-maleficence, beneficence, and justice, but the ethical evaluation of business practices and the proliferation of frameworks (cf. Waddock 2004) make that managers are not keen for philosophical contemplations (De George 2006). In the corporate field, business ethics develops in its own internal structures codes, standards and procedures, to stimulate or even enforce ethical conduct of employees and to transmit values within the firm and to maintain a certain corporate culture, but Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) often face skepticism since they are seen as a glossy and instrumental mark to polish the company's public image (Porter and Kramer 2006).

Overall, the ethics in business reveals several gaps between moral aspirations and practical implementations. These are gaps between “what we want” and “what we can do” and illustrate the misunderstanding and underestimation of the complexity of the moral world business has to operate (Pompe and Korthals 2010). Conferences on CSR show the appeal of moral concepts and principles and at the same time the embeddedness of the social and economic barriers. The gap between ends and means appears to be big enough to create a paralyzing divide between principles and practice (Pompe and Korthals 2009).

Seeing the current state of business ethics, there is a need for another perspective. One that does not focus on decision-making and business dilemmas or on formalizing good conduct into codes (cf. Harris et al. 2009) but one that focuses on *resources* to create moral change or contribute to it. This *resource-based ethics*, as one can call it, leans to *moral entrepreneurship*. First, because it is an ethics that is based on entrepreneurial actions as discovery, evaluation, and exploitation of opportunities (Shane and Venkataraman 2000) or on seeking for “a new good, a new method of production, new market, new source of supply, new materials or parts and new organization to restore an economic disruption of equilibrium” (Schumpeter 1934: 84). Second, it is moral because of the *social* dimension when business is aiming at public change with groundbreaking scale and effect, or of the *policy* aspect when innovative ideas are promoted to the public sector in the hope for support or new ideas, or even the *norm*-oriented element when entrepreneurship is creating a “norm bandwagon” to change social norms whereby small shifts in norms lead to rapid revision of its prevailing norms (Pozen 2008).

From a more philosophical level, the orientation on a resource-based ethics can be seen as a result of the inefficacy of mainstream business ethics. There is a dominance of the rationalistic and generalistic mode of ethics in its effort to (re)shape concepts, principles, and standards to understand and guide the pluralistic

world. Commonly, ethics is, as Sen (2009) indicates, *transcendental* when it examines the nature of ethical phenomena, as “the just,” “the free,” “the harm,” and “the good,” in order to find or outline the perfect *arrangement* and guidelines for change. This rationalistic and top-down nature is still regarded as the core of ethics. Solomon (2007), in his “Introduction of Ethics,” defines ethics as a “study of values and justification as well as the actual values and rules of conduct by which we live” (12) and “ethics is not just a varied collection of ‘do’s and don’ts’ but a system of values and principles which tie together in a reasonable and coherent way in order to make our society and our lives as ‘civilized’ and as happy as possible” (13). Another example of transcendental and arrangement-focused ethics comes from Mepham’s ethical matrix (2000) in which principles and values are coherently tied together to assist sound judgments and decision-making about the ethical acceptability of action and policies. It cross-links *prima facie* principles, referring to wellbeing, autonomy, and justice, borrowed from Beauchamp and Childress (1994), with selected interest groups. Mepham’s idea is that through the application of ethical principles on the interests of stakeholders, ethical problems can be identified and appropriate responses can be guided. In business ethics, Zimmerli and Aspländer (2007) suggest a similar hierarchy starting from principles at the top, regional (time and place related) standards and professional code of conduct as sub-layers and at the bottom material values. The way to use (business) ethics in the classical way, transcendental and arrangement-focused, may lead to some heuristic insights, but is doubtful whether it influences working-floor experience. The inefficacy is due to centralizing the end but disregarding the means.

Resource-based ethics leans to Sen’s *realization-focused* and *comparative approach*, in which different social realizations are compared in order to find some criteria to determine what makes one situation “less unjust” than another. It, therefore, also allies strongly with pragmatism. Rorty holds a similar line of thought as Sen in a debate about applied ethics (2006a) by stating that ethics should not aim its effort at the justification of principles and standards but should focus on analyzing cases and revealing relevant differences (2006b). Also for Rorty, the task for ethics is not to construct coherence but to find in practical situations consistency and with that, predictability. The pragmatic soil Sen and Rorty are standing on is clear: truth and knowledge are a result of *experience*, i.e., the practical consequences of a proposition. Besides, pragmatism stresses that values and principles are formed out of the practice, which means that ethics is not about imperatives but about hypotheses, emerged from the past with its record of success and tested in a new situation (Dewey 1929; Buchholz and Rosenthal 2005). Keulartz et al. (2002) formulate the difference between principle-oriented ethics and pragmatism in terms of justification and discovery. An *ethics of justification* defends a moral outcome or course of action by arguments or good reasons, while the pragmatist’s idea of ethics is an *ethics of discovery* that seeks purposely for heterogenic confrontations in order *to grow* from the experience of dealing with or overcoming conflicts. Restoring frustrated situations is the pragmatic core of ethics. For pragmatism, ethics is *melioristic* with its belief that it is worthwhile to put effort in advancing the common good. This attitude of improvement, progress, and betterment is a philosophically robust concept of hope that can function as a guide for critique and inquiry (Koopman 2009: 15).

Discovering new values for a breakthrough towards moral change or improvement is what business and ethics have in common. According to Bucholz and Roosenthal (2005) both fields need the same management properties as *thoughtfulness* regarding understanding concrete human existence in its richness, diversity, and complexity, *imagination* to see authentic possibilities and *creative intelligence* to reorganize and order capabilities (cf. Hannafey 2003). Pragmatic ethics and business are both about dealing with a social and a physical environment, events that are inseparable and transactional (cf. Dewey and Bentley, 1949), and about changing these realities for the good by overcoming problems. Both fields aim at modifying or innovating a practice for which social mindedness, change orientation, imagination, creativity, and the ability to exploit the new are pivotal competences (cf. Fesmire 2003; Werhane 1999).

Change depends more on the creative use of actual resources than on wishful ideas. This article, therefore, explores the potential for a resource-based ethics, as an academic field and as a real business practice. It discusses an example of entrepreneurship regarding ethical issues by describing and analyzing the relationship in the Netherlands between two organizations with different and sometimes opposing interests: the veal calf industry of the VanDrie Group and the Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals (DSPA). Both organizations found common ground to improve the welfare quality of calves according to a *one-star Better Life Hallmark*. They jointly created a new order by putting an intermediary meat segment on the market.

The development of the better life hallmark for calves was object for a case study based on a triangulation of desk research, interviews with cross-reference, and participant observation. Both organizations were interviewed through the method of *Responsive Dialogue* by which practices are described and analyzed by the experience of actors and narratives, in the light of social facts and ethics, with the aim to enhance the understanding of a situation from a variety of perspectives (Abma and Widdershoven 2006; Widdershoven et al. 2009). All interviews were recorded and a written summary was presented to the interviewees for approval.¹ Insight into this relationship, the case study brings forward, is used in this article to demonstrate moral change and gain more understanding on how resource-based ethics develops.

In this article I will first discuss the relationship between the VanDrie Group and the DSPA. Next, based on pragmatism, a more philosophical analysis is given of this relationship in terms of *transactionality* of means and ends in order to present a deeper support for a *resource-based ethics*. The following section will demonstrate how the relationship created and effectuated *room for maneuver* and consequently a *co-evolution* of practices. In the final section I will discuss critically this case study

¹ This is researched mainly by interviewing Bert van den Berg, senior policy maker of DSPA, and Henny Swinkels, Director Corporate Affairs, and Jacques de Groot Head of RandD of the VanDrie Group. Interviews with the two organisations were held separately, for reason of cross reference. The information processed here comes from approved interview reports 2010 by the parties: *Verslag Co-evolutie van waarden, Dierenbescherming en Verslag Co-evolutie van waarden, VanDrie Groep, Stichting Promotie Kalfsvlees*. Additionally, the desk research of annual reports of both organisation: *VanDrie Group MVO Annual Report 2007–2008; Jaarverslag Dierenbescherming* (DSPA Reports from 2005 till 2008).

and draw some conclusions. All of this, I hope, will contribute to more a *workable* ethics.

VanDrie Group and DSPA Moving Towards the Welfare Hallmark

The relationship between the VanDrie Group and the Dutch Society for the Protection of Animal (DSPA) is not of recent history and the hallmark does not come from nowhere. This section will first describe the relation between the organizations, especially the process of dialogue and collaboration. Next, the backgrounds are analyzed more closely, in particular, the business strategy of the VanDrie Group and the policy approach of the DSPA.

Long Relation VanDrie—DSPA

The VanDrie Group is the largest integrated veal company in the world. The holding comprises more than twenty businesses that feeds and nurses almost 1.4 million calves a year and processes them to 1,700 products (meat, leather, glue etc.). The DSPA is a professional NGO, with 200,000 members and about 65 permanent employees that stands up for the interests of all animals in society at the private, public, and political level.

In 2009 the VanDrie Group received a one-star Better Life Hallmark from the DSPA. The Better Life Hallmark guarantees a certain level of welfare during the process of rearing the animals for meat production. With a one-star hallmark the VanDrie Group certifies that all its animals will have a welfare management regime that results in: no suffering of anemia, high fiber roughage twice the minimum statutory requirement, better stable comfort and living space, and in 10 years' time transport in fully climate controlled vehicles.

The awarding of the hallmark is an outcome of a long debate about veal consumption and calf welfare that started in the 1980s. Prior to the 1990s, calves were held in poor conditions to increase the “whiteness” of the meat. This pale color was considered desirable as it guaranteed the tenderness, the taste, and the low fat of the meat. For these consumption qualities the calves' hemoglobin (Hb) level was kept low by limiting the movement through solitary box housing and feeding them with artificial milk and low roughage. VanDrie defends that regime with: “in those days, change of regime was rejected by many farmers and consumers with the argument ‘then veal becomes bull meat’.” A call for change was inevitable, but came not only from politics. The farmers themselves expressed their concerns about the unnaturalness of this form of husbandry. They foresaw the societal rejection of “white meat”. Eventually, in 1994, Dutch Parliament mandated immediate change in the roughage for calves to stop abomasal ulcers and demanded group housing by 2004. The EU mandated in 1997 the immediate increase in roughage and group housing by 2007.

At first glance, the 2009 hallmark qualification does not look so special since it can be seen as a direct consequence of legislation. However, regulations are unclear about what is meant by acceptable Hb-level, substantial roughage, and group

housing. For the farming industry the composition of the feed and the number of animals per unit have a direct effect on the profit and loss account. Nevertheless, the VanDrie Group aimed at more social acceptance and actively approached the DSPA: first for consultation and at a later stage for collaboration. The relationship between the VanDrie Group and DSPA started as early as 1988, which is six years before legislation. In that year the Foundation “Group Veal” (Stichting Groepskalfsvlees) was established by some cattle farming associations, including the predecessors of VanDrie Group, and the DSPA. This foundation was a platform for expressing and sharing concerns and for active deliberation. In 2001 the relation intensified because veal from group housing was common in the market and the VanDrie Group wanted to excel in new animal welfare quality.

For the DSPA, anemia in calves was its number-one issue. The VanDrie Group addressed this concern by suggesting scientific research on the relation between the level of Hb and animal suffering.² It took 2 years of preparation to implement a regime that results in a higher Hb-level. This time was needed because veal is a complex product. The animals are fed with about 100 ingredients and after the slaughter the entire animal is processed into 1,700 products. The whole practice involves different chain members whose activities are monitored by a rigid quality system. Changing one aspect may have implications, technological or human, for other components of the system. Besides, the rearing of calves itself is difficult as the animals are “by-products” of milk cows and therefore genetically uncontrollable for the VanDrie Group (in contrast with pig and hen farming). Implementing welfare measures is, therefore, dealing with gene expression of individual calves of in a more biological term with phenotypic variations. On the 20th of January 2009 the VanDrie Group was awarded with a one-star Better Life Hallmark of the DSPA. The firm’s quality system could guarantee: twice as many high-fiber roughage than legally required; no anemia; soft floors in the future; no longer than 8-h transport to and from calve feeders; and no longer than 4-h transport to the slaughterhouse.

The whole process of dialogue and collaboration continues. The two organizations meet each other 3 or 4 times a year to discuss their concerns and the VanDrie Group even shares with DSPA the successes and failures of its experiments to improve the welfare system.

Background 1, VanDrie Group: Being Resource-Minded

The moral entrepreneurship of VanDrie stands out in the group of direct competitors. Veal calf integrators as Lactalis/Tendriade, Denkavit, and Bigard are operating on the market with rose meat, but do not show any CSR activities on their websites let alone a dialogical and participative relationship with animal protection organizations. This omission of animal welfare policy in their profile makes the contrast with the VanDrie Group stronger.

² Science determined that a Hb level under 4.5 mmol/l was equivalent to clinical anaemia and the concentration between 4.5 and 6 can be regarded as a “grey area” (EFSA 2006). Based on these data the VanDrie Group and DSPA agreed on the regulation that the average Hb-level of all kept calves must be 6 mmol/l and none of the levels must be under 4.5. For the one-star-hallmark the welfare parameters are stricter: the average must be 7 with none under 6 to make sure that no animal suffers from anaemia.

Tendriade or Lactalis seems to have no public reports and the information on the Lactalis website is meager. This is somewhat remarkable because “transparency is” one of the main company values, but apparently the firm applies this value to strategic objectives only.³ What is known of Tendriade is that it is part of the milk producer and processor Lactalis, whose main products are cheese and chilled dairy. Although Tendriade produces white meat, it has a rosé system with conventional open straw yards and draught warm lying areas. Denkvit is an integrator that does not slaughter. The company rears 160,000 calves per year in the Netherlands and 200,000 calves per year in France. Further information about this firm is also minimal.⁴ The Denkvit Group claims to be the leading partner for livestock farmers and the top compound feed industry in the Netherlands and abroad and publishes only manuals and guidelines to optimize their rearing management and not so much to improve animal welfare (Trierum 2006; Veld 2010). Finally, the French company Bigard, which slaughters between 350.000 and 390.000 calves per year, is a non-integrator who claims that 30 years of history in slaughtering, carving and manufacturing of processed products, cultivated the “art of meat.” Also with this firm there appear to be no annual reports other than the web pages with some simple facts and figures about turnovers, staff and production.⁵

This short survey demonstrates the difference in moral maturity regarding animal welfare between the VanDrie Group and its main European competitors. According to VanDrie’s annual report (cf. note 1) the company builds its CSR policy on three values: openness, dialogue, and collaboration. The firm regards the relationship with NGOs, authorities and politicians as essential for its *license to produce*. This license is not considered as a negative or reactive duty to stay in line with the rules of society but as a more positive and proactive task to listen to societal concerns in order to improve the firm’s products and services. The company’s annual report shows clear signs that CSR is taken seriously. There is a triple P strategy, in which: “People” refers to investment in employees, safe food and responsible nutrition for consumers and transparency towards society; “Planet” guides the consideration for the environment, in particular manure control, and healthy animals; healthy business operations and business future, outline the “Profit” part. All the 3P’s are consistently applied in the chain with veal farmers, feed producers, slaughterhouses, and calfskin processors. The company endorses CSR related objectives as: more efficient use of energy; writing a “Master Plan for the Rational Use of Antibiotics” to secure animal health with minimizing the risk to public health; and supporting the Conscious Choice label (Ik Kies Bewust) to motivate consumers in their choice for healthier food. These CSR activities may be impressive. However, from the perspective of ethics, the VanDrie’s internal business mottos that guide these external interests are more interesting.

The first and foremost is the axiom of *if you do something, do it in an acceptable way*. This acceptability refers to feasibility since it has more an internal operational than a social meaning. As the firm states: “in making policies, the company first

³ See <http://www.lactalis.fr/english/groupe/valeurs.htm> visited 20 December 2010.

⁴ See <http://www.denkvit.nl/corporate/denkveal.asp?taal=uk> visited 20 December 2010.

⁵ See <http://www.bigard.fr> visited 21 December 2010.

looks at what it can achieve by setting sensible goals and finding internal support.” This is in contrast to most organizations that appear to set moral goals before gathering the resources to pull it through. Another quote is: “in theory, change management looks easy but implementation fails when players in the chain cannot handle the new tasks.” That is why the VanDrie Group proclaims: *start working from the resources at hand*. It means looking at what goals can be set *from resources* and seeing what can be achieved *with resources*. Business strategy and implementation should be regarded as intertwined and inseparable. Setting objectives must result from the dialectic of the-how-and-the-what or the-means-and-the-end. Remarkable, in the firm’s own words, is that its management is neither top-down or bottom-up but *centered-oriented*, which means that not the farmer, the calves, the consumer or politics is the core of business but the *balance of their interests*. Before changing from “white” to “rose” veal and from “open” to “closed” climate control transport, internal conflicts had to be taken into the scheme of management. This means understanding and accepting the resistance to change. Most of the time rejection results from unfamiliarity with the new concept and uncertainty of one’s employment and income. Good entrepreneurship, according to VanDrie, includes “sympathy for small calf farming businesses which are forced to keep up with the high market standards on food safety and animal welfare which are set by the firm’s scale of business.” Conflicts and responsibilities make “If you do something, do it in an acceptable way” not a simple embracement of other’s moral ideas. An entrepreneur should have his main focus on the internal affairs since every effectuation of a moral desire depends on the ability of the resources at hand. In this case it includes the workers and the cooperating firms.

A second motto of the VanDrie Group is *quality through quantity*. Producing veal is meeting qualities regarding animal welfare, food safety, and sustainability. Interestingly, the VanDrie Group guarantees these qualities by linking them directly to *quantity*. By concentrating veal farms, feed production and slaughterhouses in the Netherlands, volume is created to develop, implement, and improve quality standards. Concentration of resources means, apart from increasing market-power, reduction of product costs and, hence, more room for a welfare quality that consumers can afford and are willing to pay for. Starting local plants in order to stop the long transport of calves, from e.g., Ireland and England, will, according to the VanDrie Group, reduce the “overall” welfare of the animals. The firm states that “local plants cannot produce at low costs and hence have not the profit to invest in quality.” The VanDrie Group strongly believes, therefore, that nowhere in the world do calves in an industrial setting have a better welfare than in the firm’s environment. Although, from a research point of view, the factuality of this claim is unknown, the statement expresses a conviction that extra value can be created from concentrating resources. Resource management is VanDrie’s ticket. It is departing from *I can* to arrive at *I want*.

Background 2: DSPA and the Benefit of Being Pragmatic

The collaboration with meat producers is for the Dutch Society for the Protection of Animals a very sensitive issue. By committing to the hallmark, “the organization is

putting its logo on a piece of dead animal.” Some members, especially the vegetarians, find it difficult to match the hallmark policy with the Society’s objective to respect the animal’s intrinsic value by seeing animals as independent sentient beings with awareness and integrity.

The position of the DSPA among its European peers is, just as VanDrie, remarkable. The “Eurogroup for Animals” reports shortcomings and improvement of policies regarding the use of animals in the member states of the EU but does not report intensive collaboration with farming industry.⁶ There are some animal welfare quality schemes such as “Label Rouge” in France, “Freedom Food” in the UK, and the brand “Neuland” in Germany,⁷ but they do not match the impact of the Dutch one-star welfare hallmark.

Sister organizations such as the Tierschutz and the British RSPCA have not employed the participative and collaborative approach as the DSPA did. Their main strategy is campaigning against abuse and suffering and for more respect and welfare. All associations share the approach of stimulating local initiatives and political pressure, but the main difference, among the many similarities, between the DSPA and its European sisters is that the activities of the latter function as a protest against existing situations and not as participation in creating a new situation. The reason for this may be found in the so-called *Dutch Polder Model*. This is a decision-making model in which pluriformity is acknowledged and issues are formulated and policies are set on the basis of consensus between major stakeholders. This approach of discourse brings oppositions closer in a workable position. The omission of such a communication model in other countries may well explain why brands as Neuland and Freedom Foods are far away from conventional farming and why the DSPA operates in the intermediary field.

The strategy of the DSPA with the Better Life Hallmark is to create a so called *intermediary segment* (“tussensegment” in Dutch). This segment contains new welfare defined products and forms an alternative for the 98 percent of the market’s industrial meat, on the one side, and the more expensive organic products that includes the remaining 2 percent, on the other side. In other words: the original market offered only a choice between “no-star” and “three-star” welfare hallmarks. By creating an intermediary segment, the DSPA’s ability to improve the welfare conditions of millions of animals in industrial farming advanced enormously. An intermediary segment opens possibilities to develop more welfare friendly products for an affordable price (Ingenbleek et al. 2004, 2006a, b). The Better Life Hallmark was introduced in 2007 for broiler hens (Volwaardkip) to give the animals a slower growth rate, more space, natural day-night rhythm, outdoor run and straw as distraction material. In 2010 the hallmarks, 1, 2 and 3 stars, are applied on 26 different meat products and are available in all Dutch supermarkets and in the major foodservice and catering companies.

⁶ Eurogroup for Animals 2010, Areas of concern analysis of animal welfare issues in the European Union.

⁷ See <http://www.poutrylabelrouge.com/>; <http://www.rspca.org.uk/freedomfood>; <http://www.neuland-fleisch.de/> all visited 22 December 2010.

The success of the DSPA in developing and promoting the intermediary segment lies “in putting welfare into the economic structure and respecting farmers instead of condemning them.” This approach created an open atmosphere for dialogue and joint venture. It can be seen as a shift from the Society’s original policy which was focused on classical campaigning against the abuse and neglect of animals. In the last 30 years only as recently as 2008 did, negotiation became the other stance of policy and the annual report included the strategy of dialogue and partnership for creating a better world for animals in society (cf. note 1, DB, 2008). The 2007 and 2008 annual debates with the members on the course of the Society ended in a clear approval for the pragmatic road of dialogue and partnership in order to enhance welfare improvement for the vast majority of farming animals. However, the fact remains that some members still find it difficult to deliberate with those who are treating animals as simple commodities. With the Better Life Hallmark the DSPA distinguishes itself from sister organizations which are less willing to participate in multiple-stakeholder deliberation and to seek compromises.⁸

The remarkable relation between the VanDrie Group and the DSPA reveals itself by the mutual drive to bring forward change in the welfare of animals while starting from completely different and at some points diametrically opposed backgrounds. The VanDrie Group still clings to industrial farming but with the awareness of the *license to produce* granted by society. The DSPA starts from a moral *license to protect* but with the awareness of the market-economic forces and limitation for industry to bring about (radical) change. Both organizations see that change is incremental and that dialogue and building trust is the best formula for collaboration. In the next section this relation will be further analyzed from the perspective of transactionality of means and ends in order to support a resource-based ethics.

Business ethics as resource based

The VanDrie-DSPA case demonstrates an ethics of creating a new value from practice in order to meliorate a situation. The case also shows that the position of resources in entrepreneurial practice is more dominant than the economic end, as Sarasvathy enfold. In her model of entrepreneurship, the means-driven activity is key because it ultimately assesses the *effectuation* of efforts. Especially VanDrie employs a strategy that Sarasvathy would call “bird-in-hand” principle because something new is created “with existing means rather than discovering new ways to achieve given goals” (2008: 15). For Sarasvathy the “question is “What can we do?” with our means rather than “What should we do?” given our environment” (2008: 248). Moral entrepreneurship, therefore, is strongly linked with the *ability* to perform. The case study presented here shows that resources are not only essential for changing but also for interpreting reality. In this section the theoretical

⁸ Organizations as “Wakker Dier” (Alert Animal) which operates mainly in the campaigning field regarding all forms of industrial animal farming : <http://www.wakkerdier.nl/docs/jaarverslag2009>, and “Stichting Varkens in Nood” (Pigs in Need) which focuses on pigs only and claims to have an intellectual and civilised campaigning approach; <http://www.varkensinnood.nl>.

background for a resource-based ethics is further explained by using Dewey's concept of transactionality and his distinction between "ends" and "ends-in-view."

Dewey makes a practical difference between an *end* and an *end-in-view* as respectively between a remote and final goal and a usable plan to shape the course of events (Dewey 1925: 101). This difference is important for strategy formulation and policy making. Some goals we make are remote and unattainable at least in the near future, such as forming an ideal society, becoming old and happy, creating a world in which animals are not subjugated. These remote goals do not have much impact on our behavior apart from our imaginations and aspiration because it is not sure when the *end* is reached. *End-in-view* arises, as Dewey puts it, "when a particular consequence is foreseen and being foreseen is consciously adopted by desire and deliberately made the directive purpose of action" (Dewey and Tufts 1909: 199). This means what is *in view* becomes part of the way to reach the *end*. Aspirations are turned into a concrete plan when they are put in direct relation with the means to attain them (Dewey 1925: 280). Consequently an end needs a view to become realistic and attainable and an end without a view will be regarded as ideal or as unrealistic. Applying this to business, entrepreneurs only work with ends-in-view, so ethics must focus on moral ends-in-view to reach the business mind.

To analyze this a bit deeper, I want to draw attention to the pragmatic concept of *transaction*, which shares a resemblance in its meanings with entrepreneurship. In business, a transaction refers commonly to an "exchange of goods, services or funds." In the pragmatic version, a transaction means "a 'deal' that has been 'put across' by two or more actors" (Dewey and Bentley 1949: 116f). For Dewey exchange is not focused on the result but on the process like events as "organism and environment." Key in the meaning of transaction is that events are inseparable as Dewey explains: "no one would be able successfully to speak of the *hunter* and the *hunted* as isolated with respect to *hunting*." (1949: 133, my italics). This means that hunting is not a self-action because the hunter depends on wildlife to shoot. Neither is hunting an interaction between the hunter and the hunted because that would mean that before the hunting there can be a hunter without the hunted and vice versa. Transaction signifies the influence events have on those involved and that the result of that influence makes something happen (hunter + hunted = hunting). Dewey's distinction between the hunter and the hunted reflects his stimulus—response model. Dewey rejects that stimulus and (bodily) response are separated entities. In his "reflex arc" concept a stimulus becomes a stimulus *after* it is interpreted as such by the subject (Dewey 1972). A child who burns itself does not withdraw its hand (response) after feeling the flame of the candle (stimulus). It is not a sensation of light and heat that makes the hand withdraw but an *act* of seeing and feeling. The stimulus is therefore part of the response. With this insight Dewey underpins his claim that the agent and environment are inseparable and mutually formed. For business ethics this signifies that a moral end is seen by the entrepreneur as one (in-view) from the means at hand.

The distinction between end and end-in-view and the claims on transactionality are Dewey's ways to reject any bifurcation of reason and experience in ethics. This division is still present in mainstream ethics today which sees its "core business" as looking for and constructing *coherency* between ethical concepts, values, and

principles in order to justify and guide behavior. This form of ethics subordinates experience what may explain the difficulty it has in understanding an ethical practice such as business. Concepts as end-in-view and transactionality denote a unity of reason and experience. Again, for entrepreneurship this stands for an inseparable relation between means and end. As Khalil (2003) paraphrases Dewey “the set of means involves meaning, i.e., the set of means is not given independently of the context afforded by the ends.” Khalil emphasizes that “means of entrepreneurship are not given but acquire their significance from the context, in particular the end empowered by the belief one comes to acquire.” It is therefore not the market that dictates the entrepreneurship, but business (hunting) emerge endogenously (from the hunter) in a field of exogenous market forces (presence of the hunted + conditions as weather, etc.).

This underlines that a company embodies its business ideas from its resources. It cannot work with ends that do not (cannot) have the company’s view on means. I connect here with the ideas of Joas (1996) who expresses this dependency in terms as situatedness, corporeality, and sociality. An action does not take place in a situation but the situation itself determines the action. Each situation induces experience, shapes our perceptions and understandings of the world, which makes to revise our actions in our response: “it is not sufficient to consider human actions as being *contingent* on the situation, but it should also be recognized that the situation is *constitutive* of action” (Joas 1996: 160). A situation is, hence, not a pre-established means-ends framework, as in the rational action theory, but a state of learning in which generated actions continually are revised. Regarding the corporality, perception and action are rooted in a body with its sensory, locomotive and communicative powers. We experience and control the world we live in corporately. According to Joas, “Given that the fundamental forms of our capacity for action lie in the intentional movement of our body in connection with locomotion, object-manipulation and communication, our world is initially structured according to these dimensions” (1996: 158). Joas emphasizes that beings are embodied beings and therefore that moral agents are *embodied moral agents*. Joas view on human action reflects Merleau-Ponty’s *workspaces* as “one’s being-in-the-world through one’s own lived body” (1962/1945: 151). It is maybe philosophically problematic to extend the biological meaning of the concept body to a more industrial or economic significance. However, the concept “body” has an aggregative sense, as something that embodies or gives concrete reality (cf. Webster dictionary). In my view this interpretation can be linked with Joas’ corporality. The employees of a firm can have a collective perspective, knowledge and skill and their organized capability is what embodies business. Therefore understanding any action, whether individual or collective, creative, rational or normative, comes from an embodied (collective) mind with a background of former experiences. This constitutive principle applies also to sociality, as humans are social beings and social actors, which means they do not just happen to be social but sociality is inextricably part their agency. Joas defines sociality as “a structure of common action which initially consists solely of our interaction with other bodies” (184). The sociality of action links clearly to Bourdieu’s “logic of practice” in which practices are submitted to *hidden* structures and dynamics (Bourdieu and

Wacquant 1992). Practice is not a pure intelligent product, but a result of agents socialized in a “field” of roles and relationships with various forms of social and financial “capital” as competitive resources. From the views of Joas and Bourdieu, entrepreneurship and its moral dimensions, can be analyzed from the facilities and constraints that stimulate and restrict opportunities and innovations. Maybe entrepreneurs are not the first in line to set moral ends, but they can be encouraged to establish a public change or to promote publicly innovative ideas to the practice (cf. Pozen 2008).

Pragmatic ethics as a transactional relation between means ends is comprises dialectic. The case study reveals not only a Hegelian dialectic between animal production and animal protection but more a Deweyan dialectic between the individual (firm) and the state. The company’s view becomes in this sense the company’s moral view. The VanDrie’s *license to produce* is a transaction of that dialectic. A business end becomes a business’ moral end when it is positively assessed from a societal perspective. Setting a *moral ends-in-view* is discovering possible worlds in which the named conflicts do not exist and to explore ways to create such worlds (Cf. McGillivray 2004 on politics, Bromley 2006 on economic institutions). A moral end-in-view creates an imaginary world-in-the-making that is believed to be better than the current one, and automatically sets the aim for melioration. Setting an end-in-view is a matter of empathetic *projection* in the sense of amplifying one’s perception beyond the immediate environment by regarding the aspirations, interests, and worries of others (Fesmire 2003: 65ff; cf. McVea 2009). For business this would mean not only stating a *strategic intent* in which the industry’s future is envisioned (Hamel and Prahalad 1994) but to give proper attention to those involved in the issue and to present them a world to look forward to. A moral end-in-view implies that business resources (intellectual and material) are at hand to contribution at least substantially to the social end. This “in-view” contribution towards a societal end must have some transparency because company’s judgment must be publicly verifiable.

Transactional relation between means and ends makes that there can be no efficacious (business) ethics without resources, just as there can be no mind without a body and no organism without an environment. Ethics based on resources is one in which aspiration and implementation transact. It should be noted that a complicated factor in this transaction is the path dependency which pre-shapes reality (Nelson and Winter 1982; David 1994). Path dependency means that choices made in the past, e.g., regarding, housing, husbandry systems, soft- and hardware, can still cause impact on present situations when they restrict a revision of those choices. This technological fixedness can limit the dynamics in the means-end relation. From a human resource point of view, the dynamics can be influenced by a social and cultural anchor in the form of firm’s *doxa* as a set of beliefs that becomes accepted as unquestioned, self-evident and, hence, as almost unchangeable (Bourdieu 1977: 164). Path dependency and *doxa* can be observed in the Dutch pork chain. Greef and Casabianca (2009), describe how current husbandry systems resist threats from the market and society. One of their conclusions is: “it is difficult to think ‘out of the box’ if you are part of that box.” There are inescapable complications in the means-end relation, which make that ethics should not only accept that moral ends emerge

from resources, but that there is certain inflexibility from path dependency and doxa too. These insights make recourse-based ethics even more important because it prevents that reason (aspiration) becomes too far-parted from experience (implementation).

Room for Maneuver

The acknowledgment, that moral change comes from ends-in-view, generates challenges. For ethics this may be to let new reason emerge from experience and for entrepreneurship to generate new experience from reason. Bringing about moral changes is being *resourceful* in making new ends-in-view. This resourcefulness is finding *room for maneuver* in a pluralistic world of values and constraints in the sense of identifying relevant ethical issues, interpreting these and creating solutions (Korthals 2008). In the route towards the Better Life Hallmark, the VanDrie Group as well as the DSPA had to change position. They had to move from their initial stance towards, in Gadamerian terms, the horizon of the other. This hermeneutical dimension of ethics encourages gaining a good understanding of a practice by exchanging concrete and detailed experiences and perspectives. This process is essential for getting to know what the other values and their “horizons” entail and to open the possibility for a *fusion of horizons* (Gadamer 2004: 305). The VanDrie Group and the DSPA both had to find ways to maneuver, to create more ability to meliorate their own existence in the light of societal demands. They found a kind of a *playground* to discover experimentally their moral interests (cf. Pompe and Korthals 2009, 2010). They explored possibilities, socialized and at the same time individualized their position and eventually grew from it.

The *exploration* of possibilities shows that sets of the collaboration were done from different motivations. The VanDrie Group’s driving force is the vulnerability of their “license to produce” in Dutch society. The production of veal is socially a sensitive enterprise, because of the public human affection with young animals and the luxury of the product compared with other meat merchandise. Dutch Parliament have already put a ban on mink farming from 2018 and VanDrie fears that public attention to calves, as young appealing animals, can end in a similar prohibition. Dialogue with society is therefore essential not as a one-way lobby but as an exploration of demands and possibilities to improve qualities. VanDrie’s whole strategy is aimed at constantly adapting to the social environment. The reality of the market, politics and society changes continuously and hence the firm regards (moral) entrepreneurship as never ending. The DSPA, on the other side, explores the possibilities to move society towards a more animal friendly community. It takes into account the limitations of action-based protests. Exploration is directed at making the organization’s ideals realistic without losing their deeper meaning. The animal protection ideals, philosophically formulated by utilitarian Peter Singer (1973, 1993) and deontologist Tom Regan (1983), are more understood as one of the many truths (cf. Posner 2004). It may be conceptual coherent to equate higher animals and humans regarding their basic ability to suffer, or to ascribe inherent value to all human and non-human subjects-of-life. However, it is questionable

whether these forms of principled ethics are efficacious in improving animal welfare (Pompe and Korthals 2009, 2010). Exploring ideals is, therefore, trying to match them with the realities from a pluralistic society.

VanDrie and DSPA have their own network of relations but both *socialized* their space of operation beyond the regular peers and politics. VanDrie invited the DSPA for deliberation and the Society became an important advisor on animal issues. The relationship is so close that they meet three a four times a year. The DSPA, on its part, further socialized its room. First, by accepting VanDrie's invitation, something other animal protection organizations would not do. Second, by proactively contacting other farmers and farm businesses for dialogue about welfare improvements for hens and pigs (see the other welfare hallmarks "Volwaard" hen and "Comfort Class" for pigs). Part of socializing is finding ways to settle difficulties, scoping out alternatives and, most importantly, picturing ourselves taking part in them. This is a pragmatic way of deliberation that Dewey calls *dramatic rehearsal* (Fesmire 2003: 70). Rehearsal illuminates current situations and opens them up, so that new ways of thinking can be perceived. The rehearsal's dramatic meaning is an imagination that is stimulated to act in a line of melioration the stakeholder's position. The imagination tries to harmonize the pressing interests, needs, and other factors of the situation by paying attention to all the bearings that could be foreseen and by having the proper interest in knowing what is going on (Fesmire 2003: 74). It is maybe the most important action in ethics.

By exploring and socializing their room for maneuver they both *individualized* their rooms in the sense that the welfare hallmark (slightly) changed their identity. VanDrie expressed not only its intention of social responsibility but more the actual implementation and therefore the actual realization of it. The firm is a model for other companies. It stands out by the successful implementation of its aspirations. The DSPA's identity changed from passive advisor on animal protection to active initiator and mediator of alternative animal farming. More noticeably, the Society's identity changed with the presence of its logo on meat products. Individualizing in an ethical context leans to the Aristotlean concept of *phronèsis* (EN 1976) in which the importance of practical wisdom is stressed as a form of deliberation about values with reference to variable context-dependent practice. More experience and practical knowledge means more awareness of the limitation of the application and also of the improvements to be made (cf. Flyvbjerg 2003).

By maneuvering both organizations *grew*. For VanDrie this growth is not that much market-related. The Better Life Hallmark is only for the Dutch market, which is small with just a few percent of the firm's total production. The main bulk of veal is exported to countries such as France and Italy which have fewer welfare concerns than the Netherlands. Growth for VanDrie refers more to welfare quality of their products as well as the respect and the credits from society. For the DSPA, growth is not related to the number of members that is declining. The growth is in the number of animals whose existence has been improved (98% of all animals in the Netherlands are cattle). DSPA grew also in a political and social sense by showing to be a reliable and reasonable partner in working on projects some of its conservative members reject.

Room for maneuver is not finding certainty by seeking for correspondence with reality or coherency within a set of proposition, as principle-oriented ethics does,

but by looking for “what works,” what proves to have instrumental value. Therefore, moral values are instrumental, but instrumental values need not to be moral. Trying values out and experience them serves the ethical purpose of growing morally in an ever-enduring process of perfecting, maturing, and refining.

The VanDrie-DSPA case shows that business and ethics do not need to be considered as opposite fields. Entrepreneurship can mean new challenges for ethics and vice versa. The relation between the VanDrie Group and DSPA is one in which business and ethics react upon each other and change both as a consequence. Both organizations found ways to fuse their different *horizons* on the economy and animal welfare by loosening their ideologies a bit for the sake of creating something new. The hallmark can be seen as a result of co-evolution between a commercial and a social-political organization, or between business power and public power. It can be seen as a managerial intentional co-evolution to change a situation technologically, economically and socially (Volberda and Lewin 2003). It can also be regarded as a co-evolution of alliances in which relationship between *trust, control, and learning* change simultaneously (Inkpen and Currall 2004). The internal maneuvers within and between the practices of VanDrie and DSPA, resulting in the Better Life Hallmark, created more room for maneuver for others too. Consumers can afford welfare friendly meat more easily and there is a greater variety of choice. Room also increased for farmers with their possibility to upgrade a husbandry system without imbalancing the cost-benefit equilibrium too much. Interrelated practices caused a shift in the mosaics of values and the set of constraints and created new moral niches. The awareness of one’s *Room for Maneuver* renews ethics towards experience-based creation of values (Pompe and Korthals 2009, 2010).

Conclusion and Discussion

The aim of this article is to explore the possibilities of a resource-based ethics. The relationship between the VanDrie Group and the DSPA concerning the development and implementation of a Better Life Hallmark for calves has been described and analyzed. Both organizations show moral entrepreneurship by being pragmatic and melioristic. They share the attitude of continuous adaptation to the ever changing world and see that an (incremental) improvement of human and animal interest runs through dialogue and partnership about the use of resources. They both take the social, economic, and technological environment seriously and work from the possibilities and limitations. Important to notice is the fact that co-operation and moral progress do not need consensus. It is all about making “value conflicts” workable in a learning process. The hallmark result can be seen as a co-evolution in which by interrelating practices values and constraints shift so a new moral niche emerges. Both organizations show moral entrepreneurship in their ability to create room for maneuver: by exploring interaction within one’s own organization and between external parties, by socializing their actions through dialoguing with counterparts and joining ventures, by individualizing and strengthening their identity and finally by growing in quality and social respect. This article stresses the

importance in ethics of the resources at hand, whether human competences or technological capabilities, and of the capabilities people perform in using them. However, looking more critically to this study, there are some points for discussion. These relate to concerns about the motive of VanDrie in becoming moral, the obligation to stay a front-runner in new developments and the public validity of the hallmark.

Skeptic voices may accuse VanDrie of using ethics as a dressing for its economic target to create new markets to compensate the loss of other segments. The veal calf industry is subjected to socio-economic influences which almost halved the number of calves slaughtered in France between 1984 and 2008. Sans and de Fontguyon (2009) explain this fall with the reduction of calf numbers from the dairy herd after milk quotas were introduced and the rise in the prices of production factors (bobby calves, milk feed). There is also a change in the social-economical context. Milk supply is no longer in excess, farmers hold on to female calves, more profitable use of milk proteins in human nutrition than in animal feeds, slaughter premium is decoupled and young people increasingly avoid veal. These economic developments led probably to some changes. Integration management was further developed to reduce costs through volume management and, externally, new market opportunities were explored as a Better Life Hallmark veal. From this analysis the animal welfare project is purely economically driven. Maybe so, but that is not important. What counts is the welfare improvement and the attitude that it is just one step towards better. Besides, it is clear that competitors, such as Lactalis/Tendriade, Denkavit and Bigard, do not show much (economic) interest in animal welfare. Being a moral entrepreneur creates expectations and obligations. On the innovation side, there must be a continuous effort for improvement. In the veal calf industry this means facing challenges to develop techniques, for instance, to feed the calves during transport with warm milk. A technique, not possible yet, would make a great welfare difference for the young cattle. Moral entrepreneurship is a long-term commitment with social expectations.

Another concern directly related to the resource-based approach is that moral targets or aspirations can be set too conservatively in order not to overstretch the means. Starting from resources may limit or even kill aspirations. Seeing the VanDrie's motto "I can" before "I will," it may arouse some skepticism since it provides an easy way to avoid moral responsibility. An ethics based on resources may lead to pardon one's duties when capabilities are low: "I cannot" therefore "I will not" might be the excuse.

A more complex concern is the validity and integrity of the data that justify the hallmark. The interests of VanDrie and DSPA are entangled with their commitment to pull through a welfare system. Both parties can be harmed when their agreement lacks transparency regarding the compliance. How does the public know whether the system is valid? What proof is there that the average Hb-level of all kept calves is 6 mmol/l with none under 4.5 and for the hallmark 7 with none under 6? This is, for the public, not clear and traceable and therefore VanDrie and DSPA have to work on some transparent audit system. Whether that system is a first-party (sellers), second-party (buyers) or third-party (independent) certification is not that relevant. Pivotal is the transparency for consumer's bodies, media, and science in order to

debate publicly animal welfare claims in the livestock chain (cf. Hatanaka et al. 2005). One of the subjects of that public debate can be the first-party position VanDrie and DSPA have regarding the hallmark, because they share the responsibility of the quality they offer.

Obviously, there is already enough transparency regarding the firm's abilities especially in relation to the DSPA. Besides, the credibility and trustworthiness of VanDrie, and DSPA alike, in the sector and society is too valuable to put at stake. VanDrie has participated, for many years, in several committees and boards, ranging from the butcher vocational training advisory committee to the Dutch National Board for Animal Affairs (Raad voor Dieraangelegenheden). The DSPA has a political and societal reputation, even in a European context, of admirable proportions. The VanDrie Group and the DSPA take leadership seriously and are aware of the social capital it can gain and lose (cf. Maak 2007). Nonetheless, these concerns should not be ignored, firstly by VanDrie and DSPA but also publicly.

The VanDrie–DSPA case provides sufficient insight into a practice in which resource-based ethics actually occurs. This form of ethics opens a new input in the public debate. A debate not only on what a firm or organization *achieves* but even more on *what it could achieve*. Available resources should, therefore, not be exclusively defined by the one who sets the end-in-view. If it concerns moral change, resources should become transparent to such an extent that it serves the social debate without compromising the company's competitiveness. The focus in the moral debate should be more on capabilities for change than on the change itself (cf. Sen 2009). Questions to guide the debate are “what can it do?,” “how much from within?,” and “where are the potentialities?” A pathway for *workable* business ethics runs along the situational, corporeal, and social lines.

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