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## **Ethics on the radar: exploring the relevance of ethics support in counterterrorism**

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## **8. Experiences with Moral Case Deliberation as ethics support within the Dutch practice of counterterrorism**

This chapter deals with the explorative application of moral case deliberation within the Office of the Dutch Coordinator for Counterterrorism and Security in the Netherlands. The practice of counterterrorism can be characterized by its limited accessibility due to the general secrecy surrounding counterterrorism. Therefore, reporting about the experiences of moral case deliberation within the practice of counterterrorism is rather difficult and so far unique. The methodology of the explorative application of moral case deliberation within the practice of counterterrorism at the Office of the Dutch Coordinator for Counterterrorism and Security has been explained in Chapter 2. Currently, academic research within the practice of counterterrorism is also by definition related to a limited research population. Taken together, it makes this research, and especially the analysis of the effects of the application of this tool of ethics support, rather explorative in nature. The research question to be answered in this chapter is: What is the added value of applying the method of moral case deliberation among counterterrorism professionals in the Netherlands to the practice of counterterrorism?

In order to answer this question, the following aspects will be addressed in this part of the chapter. First, the pilot study of a series of moral case deliberation sessions within the Office of the Dutch National Coordinator for Counterterrorism and Security will be briefly recounted. Afterwards, the findings of the explorative application of moral case deliberation will be presented and analyzed based on the reported experiences of the counterterrorism professionals. Finally, the findings will be discussed in order to answer the research question of this chapter.

## **8.1 Moral Case Deliberation within the Dutch National Coordinator for Counterterrorism and Security**

The implementation of moral case deliberation addressed in this part of the chapter took place within the Office of the Dutch National Coordinator for Counterterrorism and Security in 2016. The history of the organization's interests in ethical issues, as well as the chosen research methodology, limitations of this research and the research ethics of this research has been discussed in Chapter 2.

### **Context of study**

The initiative of this study is - as far its announcement is concerned -linked to the wider organizational developments within the Office of the National Coordinator for Counterterrorism and Security and the department of the Ministry of Justice and Security. This leads to the inclusion of this research initiative into the broader organizational objectives which were when conducting the research the following:

1. explicitly address ethical dilemmas at work,
2. encourage collaboration within and between organizational units,
3. promote reflection in the workplace and within the administrative hierarchy,
4. contribute towards an open and critical work culture,
5. strengthen the link between organizational units and the National Coordinator for Counterterrorism and Security.

From the aforementioned goals, only the first, third and fourth goal are explicitly related to this research initiative and will be covered in this research. The other goals are related to the broader organizational developments and are foremost mentioned to demonstrate a coherent management strategy on the development of the organization and its human resources.

The implementation of moral case deliberation to be discussed here takes place in the first half of 2016. In January 2016, all circa 350 employees of the Office at the Dutch National Coordinator for Counterterrorism and Security located in The Hague in the Netherlands received an invitation to register for a dilemma-workshop. Calling the sessions a dilemma-workshop instead of moral case

deliberation was a deliberate choice as the method was largely unknown at that time. Another rationale was that the wording 'dilemma-workshop' was considered to be more neutral and less value loaded than the wording of 'moral case deliberation'. This neutral wording was chosen to attract as many potential participants as possible. There was no pre-set amount of workshops, as the workshops were organized based on the registrations and the availability of the registered professionals.

The text of the invitation is displayed in the box below and reflects the set-up of the setting as described above. The original invitation was in Dutch and has been translated for this thesis into English.

Invitation to join moral case deliberations

"From: Michael Kowalski

Sent: Monday 11 January 2016 9:02

To: All employees of the NCTV

Subject: invitation dilemma workshops 2016

Dear colleagues,

In 2016 a series of dilemma workshops will be offered to the entire organization. In such a dilemma workshop ethical dilemmas from our work will be further scrutinized. This will be done by using a method that is already widely implemented by and among professionals within the health care sector: moral case deliberation. The workshop will be facilitated by colleagues of ours who are certified facilitators of this method by the Free University Medical Centre (VUMC) Amsterdam.

In a small group you will investigate a concrete ethical dilemma from your work. This will take place in a closed setting and last approximately 2.5 hours. Everything shared during a moral case deliberation will remain confidential. In 2015 there have been the first positive experiences with this method at the Surveillance, Protection and Civil Aviation Department as well as at the former Risk and Threats Department. The objective is to strengthen all together our dealings with ethical dilemmas. The method seems also to stimulate critical thinking and reflection on the work floor, an added bonus.

By the way, the dilemma workshops will not only be held but also evaluated. At the end of the series of workshops it will be looked into the benefits we experienced and into what is needed to deal in a good way with ethical dilemmas in the future. At the same time the entire trajectory will be evaluated scientifically, since this is a quite unique initiative within the international field of security and counterterrorism that others might learn from as well. The implementation is in the trusted hands of a NCTV-employee who is seconded in part-time to the Center for Terrorism and Counterterrorism of Leiden University.

You are warmly welcomed to participate in one or more of the dilemma workshops. You can register via e-mail address. For questions you can contact NCTV-colleague Michael Kowalski, mobile phone number. Based on all registrations the data of the series of workshops will be planned.

With kind regards,

Michael Kowalski"

## **8.2 Research findings and analysis**

### **Findings based on questionnaires**

This chapter is organized thematically and will present the findings accordingly. This implies that the presentation of the findings will not follow the sequence of items as presented on the questionnaire from one to nine. The presentation is clustered thematically to give a better insight into the effects of the moral case deliberation. The difference between the sequence of the items on the questionnaire and the sequence of the presentation here is not of a fundamental nature. The idea behind the sequence of questions on the questionnaire was to collect participant impressions directly after each session. The rationale behind the sequence of the following presentation is to facilitate a clear image of the added value of all the sessions held as perceived by the participants of the moral case deliberations.

The five thematic clusters are as follows. First, it will be assessed how many of the respondents are working in the field of terrorism. Second, participant appreciation of moral case deliberations as a method, and of the individual moral case deliberation itself, will be described. Third, the extent to which participants of the moral case deliberations have experienced ethical dilemmas before the experience of the moral case deliberation and how they dealt with these ethical dilemmas will be clarified. Fourth, the participants' major insights related to the dilemmas based on the sessions will be collected and put into perspective. In addition, it will be checked if and how the moral case deliberation in question changed the participants' views in dealing with dilemmas. Last but not least, participants' lessons provided by other open comments within the questionnaire will be presented.

### **Description of the participants of moral case deliberations**

This research examines the added value of moral case deliberation to the practice of counterterrorism. The organized sessions, however, were open to all employees at the National Coordinator for Counterterrorism and Security, including those not working in the field of counterterrorism. In total 53 professionals participated in the moral case deliberations. Each of them participated one time in a moral case deliberation. 43 of them returned the questionnaire. In order to determine whether the input provided through the

questionnaires is related to counterterrorism and therefore useful at all for this research, this issue is addressed first. The vast majority, 86 percent or 37 out of 43 respondents, “are working in the field of counterterrorism or (partly) related to counterterrorism” (Question 1 of questionnaire). Fourteen percent, or six out of 43 respondents, are not working in that field. One respondent did not provide information on that question at all. In sum, there appears to be enough responses from counterterrorism practitioners to give a follow up on the results provided. In the following analysis, the focus will be on those working in the field of counterterrorism, however, if relevant for the overall discussion, the responses of those not employed in the field of counterterrorism will be included in a transparent way.

### **Appreciation of moral case deliberation**

The only exceptions to the open character of the questionnaire were the questions measuring appreciation for the moral case deliberation as a method in general and for the particular moral case deliberation the respondent had joined. The question regarding the appreciation of moral case deliberation as a method was as follows: “How do you rate moral case deliberation as a method? (on a scale of one to five, 1 very good, 2 good, 3 neutral, 4 poor, 5 very poor)” (question 8 of questionnaire). The average response of those working in counterterrorism was 1.65. If the responses of those working in the fields of national security and cybersecurity are included, their average appreciation remains 1.65. The question on the appreciation of the moral case deliberation session the respondent participated in, asked: “How useful did you find the moral case deliberation? (on a scale of one to five, 1 very useful, 2 useful, 3 neutral, 4 not particularly useful, 5 not useful at all)” (question 5 of questionnaire). The average response of those working in counterterrorism was 1.59. If the feedback of the non-terrorism respondents is included, the average remains at this level. These figures hint toward quite a positive evaluation of moral case deliberations, both as a methodology in general and as individually experienced sessions.

### **Past experiences with ethical dilemmas**

Since experiencing ethical dilemmas can be seen as a condition in order to participate in moral case deliberation in the first place, two questions from the

questionnaire asked: "Did you experience ethical dilemmas in your work before joining the moral case deliberation, if yes, what kind of ethical dilemmas? If applicable, how did you deal with those dilemmas?" (questions 2 and 3 of questionnaire). A vast majority, 89 percent, of respondents had experienced ethical dilemmas in the past. Of those involved in counterterrorism, 33 answered 'yes', two 'no', and two did not comment on this question. The majority of thirteen reached out to colleagues when dealing with a dilemma. A considerable group of seven respondents sought dialogue with management. A smaller group of four respondents addressed the ethical issue on the individual level, either by a self-dialogue ("*monologue intérieur*", respondent 23) or by following a "personal compass" (respondent 39). Also interesting were two other options mentioned; weighing the interests at stake (respondent 35) or "seeking guidance by the judicial framework" (respondent 22). Last but not least, it is also striking to realize that quite often (seven times) it was mentioned "to find a way to raise an issue and discuss it".

### **Insights raised by moral case deliberation**

What seems crucial for this research is to gain an understanding of what the moral case deliberation meant to the participants. This can help in determining the added value of moral case deliberations. The questions related to the potential added value of moral case deliberation are: "Did the MCD change your view on dealing with ethical dilemmas? ... What is the most important insight of the MCD?" (questions 4 and 6 of questionnaire). More than half of the respondents involved in counterterrorism (59 percent) said that the moral case deliberation did change their view on ethical dilemmas. Twenty-two respondents answered 'yes', 14 'no' and 1 respondent did not answer the questions. The latter remarked that he or she was already familiar with moral case deliberation as a method. Similarly, of those answering 'no', one respondent remarked that they were already familiar with the method. One of the respondents answering 'no' stated that their view was not changed profoundly yet. Five respondents saying 'no' added remarks that they feel reconfirmed in the need to have such sessions (respondents 4 and 15), that they realize how different people think about an issue and that there are more possible solutions to an ethical problem than evident at first sight (respondents 19, 21).



What insights have moral case deliberations provided for those twenty-two participants answering 'yes'? Eight different insights can be identified on the basis of a qualitative analysis of the written responses. In this analysis, insights raised by at least three respondents will be considered.

First, 'recognition' of the fact that others also experience ethical dilemmas was the most prominent issue. The participants in the session found it helpful to discover that virtually all of them encounter ethical dilemmas. Or, as one respondent, put it:

*"The broadening of a personal dilemma to a collective dilemma was liberating" (respondent 9).*

Second, closer examination of ethical dilemmas usually proved to be an 'eye-opener'.

*"The reality check that everyone deals with a number of forces that can really put you in the position where doing the 'right' thing can have a lot of (negative) consequences" (respondent 16).*

Participants found it useful to discover different points of view and personal values and to examine the complexity of a specific case in greater depth in order, as it were, to cut to the heart of the dilemma.

Third, the sessions also proved 'inspirational'.

*"It is so inspiring to realize that ethical dilemmas at work, that look insignificant at first glance, can indeed be of impact" (respondent 6).*

The experienced inspiration can be of benefit to the ethical inquiry as such, but also to the capacity of inquiries in general. The generated creative energy can be applied to deal with ethical issues.

Fourth, the participants' 'room to maneuver' was also increased.

*"Deepening an issue provides me more angles and potential perspectives to act" (respondent 30).*

A moral case deliberation helped to provide an idea of the various perspectives for action available, thus increasing the room to maneuver in the specific situation. In the end this might lead to a broadening of the practitioners' professional repertoire.

Fifth, 'experiencing personal support and backup from colleagues' was also mentioned.

*"The added value of doing moral case deliberation is the collective effort experienced together with your colleagues about ethical issues"*  
(respondent 42).

Participants felt supported in their ethical struggles, that they had had their own values confirmed and bolstered by the sense that an individual dilemma can also be a shared ethical dilemma and that a collective effort to talk about an individual dilemma can be powerful.

Sixth, the moral case deliberations were also seen as 'contributing to the work culture'.

*"Talking about ethical dilemmas is important for the culture of our organization. It also helps to prevent problems in the long run for both employees and employer"* (respondent 9).

Dealing with dilemmas was found to be a key element of the professional culture and an area requiring further attention. Constantly discussing dilemmas and making them open to debate among colleagues, as well as between staff members and line managers is part of this.

Moreover and seventh, moral case deliberations were also seen as helping to raise the quality of the profession.

*"It is a necessity for the quality of the employees and their work to stay in dialogue about ethical dilemmas"* (respondent 31).

Constant attention to ethical dilemmas was seen as conditional to the quality of the work and the quality of individual members of staff.

Finally, the 'importance of ethical inquiry' itself became clear.

*"The exploration of a problem under reflective conditions provides insight into what this issue really is about. Great to be engaged in such a self-inquiry" (respondent 29).*

Participants found that it takes energy to first distinguish practical dilemmas from ethical ones and then to cut to the heart of an ethical dilemma. However, over the course of a single moral case deliberation, it emerged that an ethical question worded in insufficiently clear terms can also result in a less valuable moral case deliberation.

The insights reportedly raised by moral case deliberation and their importance to counterterrorism professionals have been summarized in Figure 5.

**Figure 5**  
**Insights reportedly raised by moral case deliberation**

<b>Insights</b>	<b>Importance</b>
Recognition of ethical issues	Empowerment, shared responsibility
Eye-opener	Raising ethical awareness
Inspiration	Contribution to creativity
Increasing room to maneuver	Broadening professional repertoire
Experiencing personal support	Empowerment, emotional stability
Contributing to an organizational culture	Upholding necessary conditions
Improving of quality of profession	Broadening the concept of professionalism
Ethical inquiry	Supporting ethical capacities

## **Suggestions for future ethics support**

The participants in moral case deliberations were also asked for suggestions for future support in dealing with ethical dilemmas, in light of this first use. The question posed was: "What would you recommend regarding the role of ethics within your organization?" (question 7, questionnaire). The answers given fall into five categories. The first and most frequently mentioned suggestion concerned repeating the moral case deliberation in the workplace. The participants would like staff members and line managers to be given the opportunity to participate in a moral case deliberation more often or even on a regular basis, facilitated by an expert in the facilitation of moral case deliberations. Although this could be done as part of the regular departmental consultations, it was also due to the very fact that the discussions included the management level that caused many participants to value them so highly. Establishing links between organizational units could also increase confidence.

A second suggestion concerned a wish to have ethics support in general as a standard practice. According to participants, moral case deliberation should become part of the structure within the National Coordinator for Counterterrorism and Security and allowed the appropriate amount of time, space and supervision. Another suggestion made by two respondents was to appoint an ethicist within the National Coordinator for Counterterrorism and Security. In addition, one respondent raised the suggestion to consider other moral consultative structures, notwithstanding the appreciation of the moral case deliberation method.

Third, there was a clear call for a 'secure culture' within the National Coordinator for Counterterrorism and Security. Such a culture implies that employees feel free to share their thoughts and concerns without fear of being judged or punished based on their contributions to a dialogue. For many, this is a matter of maintaining the status quo, since such a culture already exists. At the same time, it has become evident that a secure culture requires constant maintenance.

Fourth, there was the request for an ethical reflection method for use during a crisis situation. Initial introductions to moral case deliberation clearly demonstrated that this is a time-intensive method which could only work during quiet moments when a shortage of time is not an issue. Yet, a crisis situation is

when ethical reflection is required most. In principle, the core of moral case deliberation is undoubtedly a suitable method in this regard. An adapted step-by-step plan could make it unequivocally suitable for a crisis situation and thus enhance the ability to deal with a crisis situation. Such a plan could consist of a shortened version of a moral case deliberation or a moral case deliberation facilitated at a higher speed than normal.

Fifth, the personal added value of moral case deliberation and the side effects were also addressed. Discussing ethical dilemmas can put participants in a vulnerable position and can cause psychological harm. This should be borne in mind not only when conducting moral case deliberations but also during ethics education in general.

### **Other observations and comments**

Within the questionnaire, participants of moral case deliberations could also communicate other suggestions in the last and final question of the questionnaire: "Are there any other observations or comments you want to share?" (question 9, questionnaire). In total, sixteen observations or comments were shared, out of which fourteen were from respondents from counterterrorism. Four colleagues expressed support for this initiative and suggested that "it is a good initiative that fits very well with the National Coordinator for Counterterrorism and Security" (respondent 30), it would be "good to be repeated" (respondent 38) or if the moral case deliberation could even be done "periodically, perhaps even compulsory" (respondent 37). Three respondents reflected their appreciation for the moral case deliberation. It was considered as "a nice talk in an open atmosphere" (respondent 2), "a good way to have a conversation with each other" (respondent 13) and "useful to do it in a setting across the National Coordinator for Counterterrorism and Security, with colleagues from other units" (respondent 1). Three comments were related to the ethical complexity. One respondent felt uneasy "due to the complexity of the issue that feels like a heavy burden" (respondent 40). Another respondent stressed, based on previous experiences with the method, the importance of communicating the outcome of the dilemma only at the very end of the meeting in order to stimulate an optimal ethical reflection on an individual basis (respondent 43).

Furthermore, it was mentioned that it is difficult to keep judgements out of the deliberation, and that some can feel vulnerable providing an individual dilemma for deliberation (respondent 24). Four single comments were made about either having a shorter introduction (respondent 27), recalling that an ethics deliberation can also “be done quite quick and have effect at the same time” (respondent 28) and, that it was “a good facilitation” (respondent 29). The main messages of appreciation for the moral case deliberation and support for institutionalization fit with expressions made in other sections of the questionnaire.

### **8.3 Discussion**

In this section the preliminary findings of the explorative pilot study on moral case deliberation will be discussed. It has to be stressed again – as also addressed in the section on research limitations – that the findings are related to the limited testing of the method of moral case deliberation within the office of the National Coordinator of Counterterrorism and Security in the Netherlands. Nevertheless, the explorative analysis of the findings might be relevant for the wider field of counterterrorism.

#### **Relevance of ethics of counterterrorism**

First of all, it seems that the insights gained from the counterterrorism professionals reflect the inherent ethical character of counterterrorism. The experiences from the moral case deliberations indicate, like the interviews before, that the majority of the counterterrorism professionals involved in this research experience the ethical character of counterterrorism in their professional practice. Concrete ethical dilemmas counterterrorism professionals are facing, however, are mostly not as complex and extreme as the case of a hijacked airliner as presented in the beginning of this thesis. The ethical dilemmas they are mostly facing occur during routine activities, rather than exceptional and extreme cases. Although many of the activities of counterterrorism professionals might look rather like ordinary office work, those rare and extreme issues do still exist. Within the workforce of the National Coordinator for Counterterrorism and Security for example, there is a duty officer who can be tasked day and night to prepare a decision in the case of a potentially hijacked airplane. Another observation is that both daily and exceptional ethical issues shift over time as the terrorist threat and the context in which the threat takes place continue to evolve and change.

#### **Usefulness of typology of ethical issues**

Second, an analysis of the answers to the questionnaires results in the suggestion that the experiences of counterterrorism professionals with ethical issues seems to a large extent fit well with the typology of ethical issues proposed in the theoretical section in Chapter 5. Professionals face ethical issues

that are either situated on the structural level, the political level, the professional level or the personal level, or a combination of levels like the structural and political level on the one hand and the professional and personal level on the other. At the same time the analytical differentiation between levels remains a constructed reflection of the much more complex reality that cannot be grasped in its entirety by theoretical dividing lines of a typology. Given the fact that the differentiation of the proposed typology has been largely reflected in the particular practice of counterterrorism of this research, the typology can be considered as useful. It not only shows the diversity of ethical issues to be addressed by counterterrorism professionals. It also contributes to an explanation of how and why counterterrorism professionals are struggling with ethical issues. In addition, the proposed typology offers different potential angles to promote and support internal goods in the practice of counterterrorism. Ethical issues occurring at the professional or personal level require different strategies to be addressed than ethical issues existing at the political or structural level as the latter remains outside of the primary circle of influence of counterterrorism professionals.

### **Compromise between principles in practice**

Third, another observation from the empirical findings is the apparent engagement of counterterrorism professionals in striving towards compromise. Professionals engaged in a collective dialogue about ethical issues turn out to explore different options to deal with a specific ethical dilemma, very often aiming at the ideal option supported by the entire group. The experiences of counterterrorism professionals with ethical issues reflect the debate in the theoretical part of this thesis. In Chapter 4 it has been suggested that there is no single key ethical approach that offers satisfactory guidance in ethical affairs. It is rather a compromise between opposing principles and underlying values emanating from observing obligations (deontology) on the one hand and serving goals (consequentialism) on the other. Training of virtues in the practice of counterterrorism can imply keeping an open attitude, challenging assumptions, rethinking disputes and establishing a synthesis or new middle position in a conflict between two or more opposing principles and their underlying values.



By applying virtue ethics the practical wisdom of the professionals can be explored and used to clarify and empower the internal goods of the practice of counterterrorism. Engaging in moral case deliberation as one form of potentially relevant training for practical wisdom can contribute to the practical development of virtues as suggested by the explorative findings of the thesis. Given the lack of institutional infrastructure to facilitate such training in the field of counterterrorism, there is room to create and maintain an environment conducive to ethics support. This can be achieved by means of prolonging initiatives of ethics support on the work floor or by encouraging management to incorporate the handling of ethical issues in their development and training.

### **Added value of moral case deliberation within counterterrorism**

Fourth, the preliminary findings of this explorative pilot study indicate that the introduction of moral case deliberation within the practice of counterterrorism generates added value. The overwhelming response to the moral case deliberations was one of appreciation for the individual sessions attended, as well as of the method of moral case deliberation itself. For just over half of all respondents, the moral case deliberation changed the way they looked at ethical issues. According to the respondents, many important insights have been gained. These range from recognition of the ethical dimension of the work and personal inspiration to an expansion of the room to maneuver in ethical and professional navigation. In the end, participants felt both personal and professional support when dealing with ethical issues. The whole range of insights raised can be considered as a consequence of implementing the pilot of testing moral case deliberation as a tool of ethics support. Although some of the insights tend to be related more to organizational issues, like culture or room for maneuver, all insights seem to be more or less related to the internal goods of the practice of counterterrorism. At the same time insights like inspiration, personal support and professional quality are linked to the promotion of external goods as well.

### **Comparative reflection on findings about moral case deliberations**

Fifth, a comparative reflection on the preliminary findings of this explorative research with earlier findings in the field of health care suggests some common patterns. In the field of health care it has been concluded that participating in

moral case deliberations mostly contributes to changes on the personal and inter-professional level (Haan et al., 2018) and affects different aspects of professional collaboration like more open communication, better mutual understanding, and seeing situations from different perspectives (De Snoo-Trimp et al., 2017). Furthermore, it has been established that ethics support can contribute to an increase of insights into moral issues, and an improved cooperation among multidisciplinary team members (Hem et al., 2015). The preliminary insights identified after the explorative of moral case deliberation within the practice of counterterrorism suggest some similarities. Striking examples are the suggested personal benefits, the increasing professional room to maneuver, the contribution to organizational culture, professionalism, and capacities to deal ethical inquiries. These apparent similarities might be a further indication that moral case deliberation as form of ethics support can be of personal and professional benefit not only to practices in the health sector but also to the practice of counterterrorism. However, further research is needed to substantiate this preliminary indication.

### **Role of professionalism**

Sixth, within many moral case deliberations throughout this research, it was stated that ethics deliberations should be, in the eyes of many counterterrorism practitioners, part of their professionalism. Such an understanding of professionals embraces the fostering of internal goods as goods of excellence. Framing and researching the practice of counterterrorism can become a foundational stepping stone to advance the craftsmanship of counterterrorism practitioners. The contribution of Sennett as developed by the concept of craftsmanship can be applicable here and in future research as well (Sennett, 2009). This would imply connecting the perspective of professionals based on their practical wisdom with an exploration of ethical values of their professional practices.

Among all suggestions, there was one very prominent recommendation pleading to repeat moral case deliberation sessions on a regular, multidisciplinary basis. Many suggestions included a call for institutionalizing moral case deliberation and ethics support in general. Since this was the first involvement in a moral case deliberation for most of the participants, the analytical observations remain of an

explorative nature.

### **Organizational culture and training**

Seventh, the findings of this research indicate that a secure culture to address ethical issues is important. Organizational cultures reflect a set of basic assumptions that are expressed through values (Lawton et al., 2013) and result in the reality of a professional practice. The governing organizational culture can suggest an ethical climate that implies a secure culture as mentioned above that could be conducive to an open dealing with ethical issues. As organizational cultures can be raised and nurtured by regular training, it can be considered as useful to broaden the toolbox of ethics support beyond moral case deliberation. In other societal fields training of all layers of an organization has been identified and implemented as tool of ethics support (Van Baarle, 2018). This research has shown that ethics training in the field of counterterrorism is rather underdeveloped. Developing a training curriculum could contribute to the strengthening of ethical capacities of counterterrorism professionals, or to put it differently to their ethical virtues. Such an approach can feed into the quality of dealing with ethical issues. Establishing and maintaining a strong qualification in virtues can be considered as powerful point of departure for virtuous decision-making in general and intuitive judgment - that would fit quite well to the dynamic practice of counterterrorism – in particular (Provis, 2010).

### **Extending research within counterterrorism**

Eighth, the exploration of research findings in other domains such as health care and defence so far suggest that there is a rich tradition of applied ethics and ethics support in other societal sectors that can inform and inspire the practice of counterterrorism. At the very beginning of this research the idea was to include other counterterrorism professionals like intelligence officers, policemen, policy makers into the research and to do so in an international comparative approach. This idea, however, did not turn out to be feasible at that stage. Since then, the interest of addressing the ethics of counterterrorism has been grown as can be concluded from the growth of literature in that field. Although the recently added literature is not really addressing ethical issues of counterterrorism professionals,

this growth of interest can contribute to the building of future research projects in this field.

### **Institutions and policies**

Ninth, this research can inform institutions and policies within three domains: the National Coordinator for Counterterrorism and Security, other counterterrorism practices like intelligence services, and the domain of ethics. Within the first domain quite a number of practitioners and managers from the Office of the Dutch National Coordinator for Counterterrorism and Security became involved in a dialogue about ethical issues as part of this research. Such a strong interest reflects professional interest in the issue of dealing with ethical dilemmas. In addition, it indicates quite some willingness to become personally involved in a dialogue about ethical dilemmas at work. This level of participation can be interpreted as a sign of an open professional culture which can help to put the ethics of counterterrorism on the institutional radar. In a liquid age of constantly changing security lines, new threats have to be faced and new measures creating new ethical dilemmas might have to be added to the counterterrorism toolbox. Especially the experiences of counterterrorism practitioners in their dealing with ethical issues on the structural and political level can inform the development of future counterterrorism policies as well.

Within a second domain the interest in and acknowledgement of the importance of the ethics of counterterrorism can generate more support from more actors in counterterrorism, like intelligence services. Ethics in counterterrorism can aid professionals in their daily work and thereby support the quality of their work. Adhering to as ethically sound as possible counterterrorism practices can also help maintain public and political support for counterterrorism policies. This can be especially helpful once we are facing changing and even completely new threats with new ethical issues attached.

Within a third domain ethics policies in the field of counterterrorism can benefit from this research and all potential future research initiatives in this field. Since ethics policies in the field of counterterrorism are not as developed as it could be, the earlier mentioned mistakes made in public service ethics and integrity policies can still be avoided. Developing and implanting ethics policies within the

practice of counterterrorism could contribute to the institution-building as well. All in all such a development could nurture the conditions under which a promotion of the internal goods in the practice of counterterrorism could flourish.

### **Limitations and opportunities**

Tenth, as already mentioned it remains important to underline that the National Coordinator for Counterterrorism and Security does not represent the entire practice of counterterrorism. Therefore, the scope of this analysis needs to be put into perspective, and must be understood as explorative in nature. At the same time it is important to realize that, as of yet, there is no other comparable and publicly available research on the added value of ethics support within the practice of counterterrorism. This has to be taken into account when measuring the potential values of this research. Since it was possible to include a research population of counterterrorism practitioners from the multidisciplinary workforce of the National Coordinator for Counterterrorism and Security, it seems that the limitations regarding the accessibility of the practice of counterterrorism reflect valuable and so far unprecedented opportunities at the same time.

## 8.4 Conclusions

The pilot program of applying moral case deliberation to the practice of counterterrorism in the Netherlands was met with considerable appreciation by the participating professionals. Their engagement in moral case deliberation resulted in various insights indicating that the nurturing of internal goods can be considered as added value of this tool of ethics support. An analysis of the practice of counterterrorism shows that the typology of ethical issues presented in the theoretical part reflects important elements of the situation of the professionals. They experience ethical issues at the personal and professional level but they are also confronted with ethical issues that are located at the political or structural level of the typology of ethical issues and are much more difficult to address an individual.

Based on the reflections of this chapter's findings, the question arises whether the different levels and categories of ethical issues offer tailor-made options to be dealt with. On the personal, professional and political level there seems to be room for compromise between opposing principles and underlying values of key ethical approaches. A promising avenue to reach compromise can be the use of practical wisdom, which can strengthen the internal goods in themselves, as well in their connection to the external goods.

The training of virtues can be another fruitful path towards compromise within the practice of counterterrorism. It could also foster an organization culture which includes an ethical climate conducive to an open dialogue about ethical issues. Although an institutionalization of training in virtues is by no means guaranteeing a sound ethics of counterterrorism, the stunning absence of institutionalized ethics support within the practice of counterterrorism is of no asset either.

Future research on the ethics of counterterrorism and the role of ethics support within the practice of counterterrorism can test the preliminary findings of this first research of its kind in this field. It can also provide input to a reflection on future counterterrorism policies in the light of shifting threats. Last but not least, it could inspire and stimulate the establishment of ethics and integrity policies in the field of counterterrorism in the long run.