Journal of Studies in Social Sciences and Humanities
http://www.jssshonline.com/
JSSSH, Volume 12, No. 1, 2026, 94-112
ISSN: 2413-9270

"Always on"; public strategic leaders under pressure: A humanistic exploration of reflectivity and its social implications in accelerated times

Ms. Barbara van der Steen, MSc*
University of Humanistic Studies, Leadership & Spirituality
Email: barbara.vandersteen@phd.uvh.nl

Prof. J. W. van Saane
University of Humanistic Studies, Utrecht, the Netherlands

Prof. G. M. van Dijk
University of Humanistic Studies, Utrecht, the Netherlands

Abstract
In this article, we explore the assertion that personal and relational reflectivity is indispensable in these times of poly-crisis, conflict, and increasing contradictions for addressing wicked issues and adaptive problems. More specifically, this study explores the concept of reflectivity among public strategic leaders working in liquid and accelerated times. It addresses the growing urgency for leadership and reflectivity in regional and global public spheres, from a humanistic approach as a normative stance. The study shows that reflectivity, relational, and ethical values in organisations are under pressure due to a series of sociological shifts. Alongside this, there is a trend of strategic leaders in public organisations expressing a growing need for reflectivity as a personal desire. The selected methodology of this study is qualitative; a phenomenological and narrative exploration based on in-depth interviews, group dialogues, and open-ended surveys involving 31 public strategic leaders from health, government, education, and social organisations. The thick data on the actual experiences of public strategic leaders add an empirical perspective and contribution to the often-theoretical leadership debate. We conclude with three critical moments that summarise the struggles of public strategic leaders in their reflective practices in public organisations. This article offers practical value for leaders, coaches, and facilitators who aim to create reflective and resonant spaces within organisations.

Keywords: Public leadership, Strategic leadership, Reflective practices, VUCA, Resonant space

Introduction

The statement in this study is that reflectivity, which allows for a personal and relational inquiry, is indispensable in these times of poly-crisis, international and regional conflicts, and growing contradictions. Reflectivity with others appears to be "under pressure due to a variety of forces", on which we will elaborate in this article (Van der Steen et al., 2025). In addition, a paradoxical development appears to be unfolding: "a growing number of public strategic leaders express an increased need for reflectivity" (Van der Steen et al., 2025). Therefore, according to Van der Steen et al. (2025) current crises require "a shift in the mindset of leaders and others in public organisations." In this context, we define the concept of reflectivity as "the

intrapersonal and interpersonal experience" of "doubt", "hesitation", or "perplexity" regarding "a directly experienced situation" as noted by Dewey (1933) and Van der Steen et al. (2025).

Dewey (1933) advocates for "a process of co-authoring and the construction of the meaning of specifically disruptive events" as also underlined by the view of Gergen (1999), Weick (2005) and Frimann & Hersted (2016). The study of Van der Steen et al. (2025) points out as a limitation of previous studies that they insufficiently explore how organisational pressures influence the daily practices of public strategic leaders today. This study fills this gap. We conducted this exploration from a "with-ness perspective" to gain more insights into the actual experiences of public strategic leaders in practice, as opposed to the "about-ness perspective" in the theoretical leadership debate and is often used to describe how leaders must behave, as noted by Shotter (2006).

This study responds to the repeated scholarly assertions that public strategic leaders now face increasingly complex changes and diverse adaptive challenges, compounded by a rapidly growing body of information (Raelin, 2002; Obolensky, 2014; Rosa, 2019; Haslam et al., 2020). One of the main concerns for organisations nowadays is how to reflect and experience meaning in these times of poly-crisis and acceleration, dealing with problems too complex to resolve, and unpredictability as noted by Vaill (1996), Bateson (2023) and Stockdale & Jones (2024). This is further detailed by Horney et al. (2010), who, among others, describes current challenges as "VUCA referring to volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity." These scholars argue that "leaders now face increasingly complex and ambiguous situations, as well as novel problems. These problems are often referred to as 'wicked issues'" (Rittel & Webber, 1973) or "adaptive challenges" and, according to Heifetz and Heifetz (1998) and Grint (2010), "necessitate new forms of reflective practice." In this context, the general argument is that leaders in organisations must deliberately create time to think, reflect, and discern their role (Van der Steen et al., 2025). Or in other words, to create meaning as a response to complexity, uncertainty, and accelerating pressures as noted by Horney et al. (2010), Kornelsen (2019) and Rosa (2019).

First, we introduce the conceptual framework of this study, elaborating on three pillars: a) the three pressures on reflective practices in organisations as noted by Van der Steen (2025), b) the related sociological shifts (building on various scholars, see Table 1), and c) a series of relevant humanistic values (building on various scholars, see Table 1). We then present the methodology and empirical findings, followed by a discussion and conclusion. As an overview, we share the summary of the conceptual framework in Table 1.

Table 1

Conceptual framework: pressures on reflectivity, sociological shifts, and humanistic values

Pressures on reflectivity	Sociological shifts	Humanistic values
The pressure of demanding expectations focused on individual leaders	The breakdown of traditional institutions and the separation of power from politics, where global business interests prevail (Bauman, 2000). A transfer of risks from institutions to individuals (Bauman, 2000; Rosa, 2019)	The value of human dignity and the aim to create conditions for human flourishing, including empathy and meaningful relations (Von Kimakowitz et al., 2010; Melé, 2016).
The accelerated	A shift from long-term planning to quick fixes	The value of ethical reflectivity and stimulating ethical dialogue with others

pace of new information and demand for quick fixes in problem-solving	(Bauman, 2000; Rosa, 2019) which is accompanied by the acceleration of fact-based and fake information, driven by technology and focus on economic growth (Rosa, 2019; Stockdale & Jones, 2024). Moreover, a relentless pursuit of growth and control further contributes to alienation (Lijster & Celikates, 2019).	(Von Kimakowitz et al., 2010), the process of co-authoring, and the construction of the meaning (Gergen, 1999; Weick, 2005; Frimann & Hersted, 2016).
Vulnerability due to visibility and the risk of transgressive reactions	The erosion of social safety nets amid deregulation (Bauman, 2000) and economic, social, and technological transformations heightened the visibility and increased stakeholder multiplicity and ethical complexities (Van der Wal, 2017; Noordegraaf, 2000, 2007).	Value of attention for all stakeholders, aiming for responsible action (Von Kimakowitz et al., 2010), with attention for meaning, the experience of purpose (Melé, 2016), ethical accountability (Arendt, 2003), and the role of emotions in moral judgment (Nussbaum, 2011). Prioritising the needs of the others over self-interest through vulnerability and open dialogue (Levinas, in: Hummels & Nullens, 2022; Han, 2023).

Pressures on reflectivity in organisations and sociological shifts

The first pillar of the conceptual framework is based on the insights gained from the study by Van der Steen et al. (2025). In general, they have demonstrated that "public strategic leaders often become bound by a scripted, ritualised ideology of reflectivity." They found a pattern of avoidance of disruptive reflectivity by a variety of daily pressing pressures that inhibit genuine reflective practice. In this paragraph, we describe these pressures on reflectivity in organisations, influenced by a series of sociological developments.

Pressure of demanding expectations focused on individual leaders

First, Van der Steen et al. (2025) found a pressure to meet demanding expectations focused on individual leaders. This pressure arises in the context of "liquid modernity," as described by Bauman (2000). This term highlights "the breakdown of traditional institutions and the separation of power from politics, where global business interests prevail" (Bauman, 2000). Additionally, a "transfer of risks from institutions to individuals" appears to influence the mindset of both leaders and followers (Bauman, 2000; Rosa, 2019). Van der Steen et al. (2025) confirm in their study that "dominant leadership theories impose expectations. These expectations are based on outdated representations and underline contradicting ideologies, including both decisive and reflective leadership." The contradictory pressure to be decisive and reflective has led to socially desired behaviours that create a disconnect between what is preached and what is practised, building on Rosa (2016), Kerr & Todd (2021) in Van der Steen et al. (2025). Van der Steen et al. (2025) further contend that this pressure, inherent in the concept of leadership itself, induces an "instrumental interpretation or a reflective approach as a tool for decision-making, leaving little room for vulnerability."

Pressure of an accelerated pace of new information and quick fixes in problem-solving

Second, Van der Steen et al. (2025) found that "the pressure of an accelerated pace of new information and demand for quick fixes in problem-solving is a significant concern." This pressure is mainly related to the concept of "acceleration and the focus on economic growth" (Rosa, 2016, 2019). In this matter, Bauman (2000) describes a shift, in his analysis of current sociological changes, from "long-term planning to quick fixes." A growing number of studies highlight that the digital age overloads leaders with continuous new fact-based and fake information, leaving little time for thoughtful reflectivity and learning (Raelin, 2002; Amulya, 2004; Rosenberg & Feldman, 2008; Rosa, 2019; Stockdale & Jones, 2024). Van der Steen et al. (2025) conclude that public strategic leaders generally experience "daily, accelerated pressure, with a strong focus on problem-solving." In this light, Rosa (2019) explains that the "shrinking of time", a push to achieve more in less time, undermines the capacity to form "meaningful relationships" and engage deeply with one's environment. He explains in this view how a "relentless pursuit of growth and control further contributes to this alienation" (Lijster & Celikates, 2019).

Pressure of vulnerability, due to visibility and the risk of transgressive reactions

Third, Van der Steen et al. (2025) identified a pressure of "vulnerability due to visibility and the risk of transgressive reactions." This pressure stems from the "erosion of social safety nets amid deregulation" (Bauman, 2000). Furthermore, economic, social, and technological transformations heighten visibility, stakeholder multiplicity, and ethical complexities, as described by Van der Wal (2017) and Noordegraaf (2000, 2007). This also implies the earlier-mentioned transfer of risks from institutions to individuals, referring to Bauman (2000). Van der Steen et al. (2025) illustrate how public strategic leaders interpret their role as individuals who react to the interpretations of "them" or "others," revealing a pervasive sense of pressure and vulnerability in their positions without an open or genuine dialogue. In this light, leaders come forward as the "primary decision-making cockpit" (Twist & Frissen, 2024). In this light, Vosman and Niemeijer (2017) argue that leaders experience "dehumanisation" due to a limited "expiry date" regarding their future position, which is characterised by "lingering insecurity about one's labour, income, and status" (Marchart, 2013). Recent studies show that the threat towards public leaders is increasing, specifically in a public political context (I&O Research, 2023).

The humanistic approach as normative stance

To explore the meaning and effects of these pressures and sociological shifts, we adopt a humanistic approach as a normative stance, resulting in the third pillar of the conceptual framework. In general, the humanistic approach aims to build humane societies where all individuals can lead meaningful lives, as formulated by the University of Humanistic Studies, Utrecht (2025). This approach challenges the neoliberal concept of the "Homo economicus", which tends to overlook the inherently relational dimensions of human existence, as noted by Gergen (2009); Sayer (2011) and Huijser & Nullens (2024). In this view, Nullens and Van Nes (2021) argue for conceptualising the human person as "Homo amans",1 driven by an "innate need for profound relationships and meaning" (Nullens & Van Nes, 2021; Huijser & Nullens, 2024). Dignity is a general principle of humanity, rooted in global spiritual and religious traditions, underlined by Pirson (2017) and Huijser & Nullens (2024).

[1] "Homo amans" translates to "loving man," or "one who loves" in Latin. It is a term used to describe humans, not just in a biological sense (like *Homo Sapiens*), but also in terms of their capacity for love, care, and connection (Nullens, 2021).

To relate to the humanistic philosophy, we elaborate on a series of specific humanistic values related to the mentioned pressures and sociological changes, as the third pillar of the conceptual framework in this study. First, considering the pressure of demanding expectations focused on individual leaders, we incorporate the value of "human dignity" and the aim of "creating conditions for human flourishing," including "empathy" and "meaningful relationships," into the conceptual framework, drawing on Von Kimakowitz et al. (2010) and Melé, (2016). Secondly, considering the pressure of an accelerated pace of new information and demand for quick fixes in problem-solving, we underline the value of "ethical reflectivity" and stimulating "ethical dialogue" with others, as noted by Von Kimakowitz et al. (2010). This builds on the value of co-authoring and co-construction of meaning, as underlined by Gergen (1999), Weick (2005), and Frimann and Hersted (2016).

Thirdly, given the pressure of vulnerability from high visibility and the risk of transgressive reactions, the value of "striving for responsible action" stands out. This means "focusing on the common good for all stakeholders, with attention to societal meaning and purpose", as noted by Melé (2016). In this line of thought, we also mention Arendt (2003), who emphasises "self-revelation" and "ethical accountability." We also draw on Nussbaum's (2011) perspective, highlighting "the centrality of emotions in moral judgment and their contribution to broader social justice and ethical responsibility."

Building on this, Hummels and Nullens (2022) propose an "agapeic turn," with a focus on love and wellbeing in work and organising. They draw inspiration from Levinas (Hummels & Nullens, 2022), who emphasises "the ethical imperative of prioritising the needs of the 'Other' over self-interest through vulnerability and open dialogue." The primary question we explore is: Considering the dominant pressures public strategic leaders face, what are the social implications for the reflective practices of public strategic leaders considering the mentioned humanistic values? What does it mean for the mindset of strategic leaders and others in public organisations?

Methods

We conducted a qualitative study, specifically a phenomenological and narrative exploration of the experiences and narratives of public strategic leaders. In line with Ritchie et al. (2003) and Rhodes and Noordegraaf (2007), we contend that qualitative methods, mainly narrative investigations, offer a deep insight into the behaviours and motivations of top-level public leaders. We conducted thirteen in-depth interviews and analysed these rich lived experiences using the phenomenological method of close and open reading of Dahlberg et al. (2008).

In the next phase, we enriched our study by engaging twelve additional public strategic leaders through group dialogues and open surveys. Twenty-five leaders' narratives were explored inductively, incorporating Mattingly's (2019) perspective on "frozen concepts." Our sample included sixteen men and nine women from public organisations spanning health (7), government (10), education (6), and social organisations (3). The qualitative survey captured more personal insights, helping to mitigate social desirability and group thinking.

In the final phase, an additional group dialogue was held with six strategic public leaders (three men and three women) from health, government infrastructure, and education sectors. This focus group, conducted within the context of the "Reflective Chamber", a space for directors to discern and create meaning in volatile environments, explored the pressures affecting reflective practice.

The open and qualitative exploration yielded rich data comprising lived experiences and narratives. We then analysed all the thick data using a mixed qualitative method that combined narrative and phenomenological approaches to select and extract the most revealing interpretations based on inductive and interpretative analyses.

Ultimately, we employed ChatGPT (03-mini) to verify our data analysis, resulting in a stronger connection between the narratives and humanistic values. We share an overview of the samples and methods in Table 2.

Table 2
Samples and methods in three phases

Selected sample	Phenomenological methods	Narrative methods
First sample: 12 participants	In-depth interviews, e-mails, and observations	
Second sample: 13 participants		Group dialogue 1 and open survey
Third sample: 6 participants	Group dialogue 2 and observations (this study)	Group dialogue 2 (this study)
In total: 31 participants		

The qualitative outcomes amongst public strategic leaders

Considering the three dominant pressures, we explored a series of questions in the second group dialogue: How do public strategic leaders interpret the pressures and their implications? What do their interpretations reveal, considering the humanistic perspective? We share a selection of the most profound narratives and phenomena that emerged.

Thick data on the pressure of demanding expectations focused on individual leaders

The experiences related to the demanding expectations focused on individual leaders revealed several phenomena. In general, the participants expressed that they experience conflicting expectations; not only do they face expectations to deliver results, but they also feel that they must be open, structured, and accountable in their reflective practices.

a. Data concerning pressure of demanding expectations focused on individual leaders:

In this light, participant A started to explain:
"When the process in the meeting does not run smoothly, there is a quick call to the chairman or leader. People expect you to take the lead." Later on, this participant reflected on another aspect of her position as a leader, "When I choose to reverse decisions after a reflective moment, I have experienced that people often wonder if you are a good leader."
Participant B added on to this, stating:
"If I do not organise it, it will not happen; it is a role. As a director, you must dwell on the structure of reflective practices."
In this light, participant C added a long-term perspective:
"You must embody it as a role-model to create a reflective culture; it takes time."
These quotes underscore how these interpretations seduce public strategic leaders into being constantly "on," ready to step in immediately to restore order, even if it means sacrificing a reflective dialogue.

b. Data concerning a periodical routine of reflective practices:

Furthermore, most participants reported having a periodic routine for planning reflective practices, often triggered by an audit or regular meeting, as outlined in their annual plans.
Participant F shared:
"In my former job, looking into each other's work was common. The project directors took feedback from another team. You will improve as a team and an organisation if you create such an atmosphere."

And participant G:
"In our board of three, we reflect quite a lot. I have been doing it for 25 years, following the lesson I was once taught: "We have to make each other stronger." If that is not the case, then it is better to quit, so to speak. We have no problems with the time constraints; it gets scheduled!"
Participant B added:
"Furthermore, I consider the moments with an external audit or supervisory board a great occasion. I consider them partners. Moreover, when they start pushing with hard power, I will turn that into more personal human reflections. Reflecting is then searching together. Inspection is also accountability."

c. Data concerning spontaneous and reactive reflective moments:

Next, they seem to have expectations towards themselves and others regarding relational reflective practices, underlining the value of "strong relations." Several examples were shared concerning the participants' spontaneous and reactive reflective moments in their practices.
For example, Participant D illustrates his practises:
"I weekly organise a morning with my team. I start the first hour with attention for the question, 'How are you doing now?'"
Participant B illustrated her practice of spontaneous, reactive reflectivity with an example. She shared:
"I just started a new job in this organisation, and the first month was complicated. I did not feel very welcome. So, I then brought that into a joint meeting with the board of directors to share what that does to me and its overall impact. That opens others up as well. And that is also often uncomfortable."
Participant F added to this theme, wondering,
"How could we bring reflectivity more to the primary process, since people cannot reflect against their will? How can we connect to the primary work process? May it also be an instruction to reflect?"

Thick data on the pressure of the accelerated pace of new information and quick fixes

The theme of reflecting beyond the fast pace and "quick fix" attitude emerged as relevant from contradicting experiences. We found several phenomena related to this theme in the experiences.

a. Data concerning slowing down and the delaying effect of reflective moments:

The first theme in the lived experiences concerned slowing down and enduring the delaying effect of reflective moments. Participant A shared, for example:
"I experience that the need to reflect becomes greater as the pace of work quickens. Due to technological advancements, the volume of mail and the amount of information being shared have increased, necessitating action. So that pressure is great. Standing still now feels as much more necessary than twenty years ago."

This quote captures a paradox: while the faster pace demands more reflectivity (to avoid rash decisions), it simultaneously leaves less time for it. Later, she stated in this light:
"In the rush of the day, with a full agenda in the meeting, if someone asks reflectively, 'What is going on here?' then I do not always have the patience for it. I know exploring this question could create precious moments. However, I often do not have the headspace or time. I also want to be finished by 1 p.m, the time pressure can backfire. You also want to complete the agenda and make decisions; you are sitting together for a reason. However, I know it often comes back like a boomerang." Later in the dialogue, she shared:

"It is always the same person who asks the question; then it is not reflectivity but a possible sabotage. What makes us think is that we must go on."
Participant B reacted:
"Isn't that exactly the moment to reflect on?"
Participant A initially appears to interpret her role as productive in the decision-making process. In contrast, participant B describes her reflective role as her default stance in any work process. In this light, participant F stated:
"The tricky thing about reflectivity is that it does not just arise; it also has a delaying effect. I view reflectivity as a natural desire, but due to its hectic nature and complexity, it often gets pushed to the background. So, you must organise it yourself in these accelerated times." This emphasises the challenge: without deliberate structuring, reflectivity will be sidelined by the constant need to act quickly.

b. Data concerning the transition from action and problem-solving to reflectivity:

Another phenomenon observed in the experiences related to the solution-oriented context was the transition from action to reflectivity. For example, Participant F states:
"That switch from firefighting to reflectivity takes a lot of effort in practice!"
Participant E confirmed:
"I find switching from 'action' to 'reflectivity' easier when it is planned because then you sit down for it, and you are set up for it."
Participant G states in this light:
"When my schedule leaves some space, spontaneous reflectivity arises, but when it fills up, you lose it. Then you already have to organise it and make sure you have space in your calendar."

The participants underlined the high cost of transitioning from "firefighting" to reflective thinking. Some approach this as a problem and a complexity, whereas others, as we mentioned before, consider this awareness to be the core of their role and job.

c. Data concerning reflecting on shared meaning:

Another phenomenon in the fast-paced contexts of schools and hospitals is reflectivity in the form of sharing meaning and stories about the purpose and value of their work and organisation. Participant D shared in this light:
"You have that in healthcare and education, people work with a purpose. They work from an essence, and they want to matter, but you also have to reflect on that. To what extent do you still matter, both for the work and for yourself?"
Only one participant mentions this theme, which is notable, given the theories of sense-making and the development of shared meaning.

d. Data concerning reflectivity as evaluation with methods:

The examples generally that reflective practices serve various aims. Among these, we identified a specific objective: using reflectivity as evaluation, which utilises multiple methods, as illustrated by a series of examples. Participant G shared, for example:
"We have quarterly evaluations with every team. We, as directors, attend those once or twice a year. We call that self-evaluation. We have some frameworks that they must meet. Then we discuss 'Is it going well?' or 'Is it not going well?'"
And,
"What also works very well is the form of Moral Deliberation (Moreel Beraad) when we have complicated cases that we cannot resolve. We do that when it is tricky, for example, with ethical issues, but when one says, 'Let us turn left,' and another wants to go to the right. Then we explore 'What is the right thing to do here?'"

Concerning quality improvement as reflective practice, participant A shares:
"We are very active now when it comes to reflecting. This also concerns the Care Sector Quality Compass, which strongly encourages reflectivity. Not just through facts, figures, and measurements, but also through stories, because that encourages reflectivity much more than cold numbers. Stories provide soil for reflectivity. Next, we conclude what we can learn from them and identify areas for improvement."

Here, we also see that this participant refers to the theme of co-authoring as "a shared language" directly linked to creating shared meaning.

Thick data on the Pressure of vulnerability, due to visibility

The theme of precariousness, vulnerability, and the risk of uneasy interactions emerges as relevant, with contrasting experiences. We found several phenomena related to this theme in the experiences.

a. Data concerning reflectivity with an inequality in power in the relationship:

First, the theme of inequality in power within the relationship arose. Participant D started in this light, explaining:
"Inequality in power in a relationship makes reciprocity difficult. If practitioners are open to this, this can lead to good reflection. It becomes reciprocal only when people are open to it. Maybe establishing clear 'game rules' will help to make it more explicit how to make it work."
Participant C added:
"I am not so bothered by hierarchy differences. However, I am very aware of them. For the other person, you are a director. When I notice that, I very consciously sit back longer and express myself by 'self-unpeeling,' sharing how I experience the process. That is often very helpful."
Participant B stated in this dialogue,
"The moment a superior takes over the conversation, I say, 'fine, I have heard this, but I think it is important for everyone to speak up. I am aware of those patterns.'"
Participant E shared how he tried to open up reflectivity:
"I did once suggest in a team to submit something to two other colleagues to explore what they thought about it, just to let them have a look. That was perceived as a vote of no confidence. I even got a letter about it and the OR got involved."

b. Data concerning reflectivity leading to uneasiness and discomfort:

In his following example, he illustrates the obstacle of people "getting upset" with his decision to let an issue go it go in the management-team:
"I wanted to hold management-team meetings every other week with no set agenda, just to explore 'what keeps you busy' and 'what do you want to discuss.' Everyone got upset. So, I do that only at the board level now."
In this example, he appears to avoid a feeling of precariousness and discomfort by withdrawing and selecting an alternative arena with his peers. Furthermore, his attempt to invite reflectivity was interpreted negatively, illustrating how reflective practices can be perceived and lead to conflict. This experience also reveals a moment of distrust that he experienced. Participant G shared in this light:
"When it is not in the genes of the organisation, it becomes very complex. Then people think, 'Oh my, soon I will have to make myself vulnerable, and people in power will judge me.' It surely comes down to social safety. I wonder, does more reflective skill lead to more safety?"
With Participant B adding:
"I am used to opening up with vulnerability. If you state, 'I have trouble with this or that,' and then personally relate, it invites better reflectivity from others."

Other participants explain how, in their experience:
"Fear is a poor counsellor. One feeds safety precisely by reflecting."
Participant B acknowledges the sometimes-uncomfortable process of people getting used to her reflective interventions:
"The other day, we had a crisis at the location. I opened up, 'what is going on in here? Are you afraid, or do you feel guilty?' And I do reflect openly about myself, which is very enriching. People must get used to me because I also name the patterns in the conversation."

When reflectivity is not embraced, the participants demonstrate different approaches. Some withdraw due to discomfort and confrontational reactions, while others engage by seemingly taking more risks and allowing "others" to adjust to them.

c. Data concerning spontaneous reflectivity in the primary process:

Several times, the theme of spontaneous reflectivity arose several times during the exploration of the primary process. For example, participant F shared his struggle with how to stimulate others to reflect:
"The reflective conversation is good to do with directors, management and staff, but landing that in the primary process is much harder. My teams are primarily focused on 'fixing' and 'acting.' 'Thou shalt reflect' does not work so well. If it comes from above, it is another top-down assignment, another instruction or box on their long checklist."
Participant F adds,
"I can only deploy myself and not order this. Good reflectivity comes from strong relationships."
Participant G continued this theme, wondering how spontaneous reflectivity could be created,
"So, spontaneous reflectivity, I would find that interesting because then the question arises: 'how do you create a climate where that happens?' A climate in which people say, 'hey, let us reflect on that.' I do not know how you experience it, but the employees mainly want to complete the list of tasks."
Participant D explains his view on this:

"Maintaining reflective skills in periodically planned moments helps to reflect more spontaneously in the moment. An occasional offsite works when you get away from it or have a drink. Nevertheless, it is something to be forced to dwell on."

The participants' different use of language seems relevant. Some search for ways to "organise" and "create" a reflective "climate," whereas others use language about "opening up" as a mindset and approach in their behaviour.

d. Data concerning visible incidents leading to an initiative to reflect together:

Furthermore, the dialogue mentioned that more visible incidents often lead to an initiative to reflect together. For example, participant G shared how, in their practice,
"The more complex, the calmer. When we have an incident, such as, for example, the suspicion of mutilation of a patient, then within 2 or 3 days, we sit down and introduce someone very good at asking questions."
This might imply that the significant, visible complexities are more straightforward to address and reflect upon than the minor, relational complexities beneath the surface, as seen in the following experience of Participant F:
"The quality of decisions sometimes becomes less. For example, when people are physically present but checked out. Sometimes, you also want to know what is happening; otherwise, you will not make decisions."

It seems that the more complex the issue appears, the easier it is to create a moment to reflect, and the more invisible the underlying issue, the harder it is to create space for reflectivity.

e. Data concerning reflectivity evoked by emotions or doubts:

Lastly, the participants shared how their emotions and doubts led to either reflectivity alone or with others, using metaphors such as "gut feeling" or "stop button." Participant A shared, for example:

"I regularly have a gut feeling. Normally I think too much, but in these intuitive moments I say to myself, 'screw it,' slow down and start sensing!"

With participant C adding, "That is a moment when I want to call someone, who is very variable."

In summary, paradoxical findings: Humanistic values under pressure

The participants generally share conflicting interpretations of how to position themselves regarding the variety of expectations, some more persistent, others more hesitant. They all underscore the value of profound, meaningful relationships, and "opening up" with vulnerability.

The findings show that awareness of the pressures and conflicting mindsets is growing among public strategic leaders. They reflected on these phenomena during the focus group and asked each other reflective questions. It appears that current turbulent times are stimulating awareness of relational and ethical issues and heightening the need for reflective exchanges. Most participants shared various examples of personal reflective questions and their regular reflective practices, such as self-evaluation and moral inquiry, concerning ethics in times of war, climate crises, and human rights and concrete behaviours such as me-too-issues, inclusion, and social safety, both for employees and political leaders.

The findings confirm and illustrate how the participants claim to operate under significant pressures of high expectations, accelerated problem-solving demands, and persistent precariousness. The findings reveal that they operate in a complex environment where they must continually balance their actions. Within this balancing act, the three dominant pressures appear to lead to reflective practices that are more regulated and planned, rather than spontaneous, relational, and existential.

Discussion

The primary question explored in this study was: Considering the dominant pressures public strategic leaders face, what are the social implications related to their reflective practices, considering the humanistic values? What does it mean for the mindset of public strategic leaders and others in organisations?

A notable phenomenon in this study is the observation that the earlier mentioned humanistic values are increasingly challenged within the context of public strategic leadership. Participants report a growing need for reflectivity, while simultaneously describing the environment in which they operate as subject to sustained pressure. Across the accounts, shared experiences point to increasing constraints on:

- The expression of human dignity, empathy, and meaningful relationships; confirming the view of Von Kimakowitz et al. (2010) and Melé (2016).
- Opportunities for ethical reflectivity and the facilitation of ethical dialogue ín the work processes, confirming the view of Von Kimakowitz et al. (2010).
- The open dialogue on responsible action, ethical accountability, and the consideration of emotions in moral judgement, confirming the view of Arendt (2003) and Nussbaum (2011).

The overall theme appears to be a "relational vulnerability" and the sense of "taking a risk" when "acting reflective" in the environment of public organisations. Arendt (1998) elaborates on this idea, arguing that acting is always a risky activity: "once set in the world, an act cannot be undone." According to Arendt (1998), acting is always relational: "we do it 'in the midst'

of others who also act." This raises the question of how to approach moments of pressure and vulnerability, specifically during spontaneous reflective moments ín the interaction with others.

After clustering the narratives and phenomena, three critical moments emerged in the data analysis. McNamee (2004) defines these critical moments as potential transformations, referring to relational moments which alert us to flexibility. These moments determine the flow of the rest of the conversation or interaction (McNamee, 2004). Following this view, public strategic leaders need a heightened alertness in these critical moments, to decide whether to act or reflect, either internally or with others. This definition underscores the participants' struggles, which stem from their reflective flexibility, process skills, and creativity in interventions during these critical moments, following the view of Goedhart & Van der Steen (2016) underlining a processual mindset in current times. The participants expressed doubts, questioning whether to react spontaneously in the moment, to reflect, question, decide, argue, or to postpone such actions for another planned moment. We elaborate on the critical moments found in this study concerning reflectivity:

Critical moments concerning double expectations: reflective versus decisive

In this study, the participants experience the expectation to embody both idealised reflective qualities such as doubt and contemplation, and decisiveness during their interactions with others. This leads to concrete moments of discomfort arising from contradictory expectations. Moreover, as the narratives illustrate, there exists a tension between being a "proactive initiator of reflectivity" and "the risk that reflective actions might be interpreted as indecisiveness." This requires a mindset that acknowledges and endures the double expectations and interpretations of "others." These moments should not be approached as tasks to complete, but as a crucial phenomenon to reflect on, communicate about, and act upon in the view of Goedhart & Van der Steen (2016). A specific situation seems to be the moments involving pressure to respond directly. The participants share how they feel vulnerable and experience tension in these moments. Some participants perceive unwillingness and critical reactions from others as disruptive or sabotaging, while others view them as opportunities to prompt reflectivity. Moreover, they experience an unpredictable environment where taking a risk leads to personal vulnerability and discomfort.

The participants demonstrate that different interpretations lead to different responses and interventions. In their interpretation, this critical moment challenges them to respond reflectively, preferably in a nuanced, neutral way that includes all stakeholders. In the view of MacNamee (2004) this alertness is crucial for "ensuring profound interactions and outcomes."

Critical moments of power dynamics and mutual vulnerability

The participants emphasise their attention to the so-called "power-dynamics" in their interactions with others. They describe the patterns in which, in their position as leaders, they are constantly "put on the spot" to take the lead and speak, also in dialogue and open reflective moments. It challenges the participants to consider multiple positions in their interactions with others, especially under pressure, such as asking questions, listening, or just allowing reflective silence, following Goedhart & Van der Steen (2016). For both leaders and followers, this vulnerability and precariousness are heightened by "the pursuit of reciprocity, the emphasis on social safety, and the fear of vulnerability in contexts with power differences" (Larsson and Meier, 2023).

In this light, Larsson and Meier (2023) argue that power dynamics are not merely a reflection of organisational hierarchy but are constantly "enacted and reinforced through subtle communicative behaviours. They point out that awareness of power dynamics in communication, such as "interrupting, dominating the conversation, or speaking more

frequently, may reproduce asymmetrical power relations and limit others' contributions. Above all, it fosters feelings of mutual vulnerability. They recommend that leaders practise active listening and deliberately create space for others to express their perspectives (Larsson & Meier, 2023). Most participants in this study mentioned coaches and specially trained facilitators who regularly guide them in these concrete critical moments.

In this matter, Ciulla (2004) explicitly highlights the complexities and vulnerabilities inherent in leadership interactions. She adds that leadership is inherently ethical because it involves influencing others (Ciulla, 2004). She underlines the mutual vulnerability, explaining that both parties feel "brittle in the face of disappointment or manipulation" (Ciulla, 2004). She also pays attention to followers, arguing that they have "ethical responsibilities, especially in choosing whom to follow and how they respond to leadership." She explicitly emphasises the moral responsibility in line with the humanistic values.

Critical moments concerning the transition from acceleration to reflectivity

The participants share the challenge of enduring in their words "delayed effects" due to spontaneous reflectivity amidst the pressure of fast-paced daily work. "Switching from action to reflectivity in the interaction" is one of the most often cited struggles they report. On the other hand, increased acceleration intensifies "the need for reflectivity and the effort required to transition from quick problem-solving to reflectivity", according to the participants. They note that "reflectivity tends to be sidelined as the pace of work quickens", particularly in hectic environments such as schools or hospitals. This creates a paradox: the faster the pace, the greater the need for reflectivity. The study of Konishi et al. (2022) underscores the complexity of this critical moment. They underline "the complex process of shifting between introspective and action-oriented mental states" (Konishi et al., 2022).

Above this, they highlight the "neural and cognitive challenges involved in such transitions" (Konishi et al., 2022). The study indeed demonstrates that switching between internally oriented (e.g., reflective, self-referential) and externally oriented (e.g., goal-directed, task-based) cognition is cognitively demanding. This switch takes more time and effort than switching between tasks within the same domain. Because these systems tend to suppress each other, shifting between them involves a sort of neural "change in gear," not a seamless transition (Konishi et al., 2022). Konishi et al. (2022) plead for "transition-time" and the training of cognitive flexibility. This study builds on that, underlining the importance of both training and maintaining reflective skills through planned, periodical reflective sessions and practising and training spontaneously in the moment.

We share a summary of the critical moments, the phenomenon in the data, its social implications and the required mindset in Table 3.

Table 3

Summary: Critical moments, phenomena, their implications and the shift in mindset

Critical Moment	Phenomenon and its social implication	Required mindset
Critical moments concerning double expectations; reflective versus decisive	Public strategic leaders experience concrete moments of double expectations: the tension between being a proactive initiator of reflectivity opposed to the risk that reflective actions might be interpreted as indecisiveness (and weak leadership). The participants generally experience that they work under pressure to respond quickly, preferably in a	Mindset to acknowledge and endure the multiple expectations and interpretations of others; not as an assignment, but as a phenomenon to reflect on. The awareness to consider multiple perspectives when under pressure. Building on McNamee (2004) and Goedhart & Van der Steen (2016).

	nuanced and neutral approach, including all stakeholders.	
Critical moments of power dynamics and mutual vulnerability	The participants emphasise their attention for the so-called power-dynamics in their interactions with others. They describe that in their position as a leader they are constantly "put on the spot" to take the lead and speak, also in dialogue and open reflective moments. Mutual precariousness: both parties are vulnerable to disappointment or manipulation. This is heightened by the pursuit of reciprocity, the emphasis on social safety, and the fear of vulnerability due to power differences.	It is challenging to consider multiple positions in the interactions with others, especially when under pressure, as is the case when asking questions or just allow for reflective silence. The awareness to acknowledge the patterns through subtle communicative behaviours. Practising active listening and deliberately creating space for others as an ethical and moral responsibility. Building on Ciulla (2004), Goedhart & Van der Steen (2016) and Larsson & Meier (2023).
Critical moments concerning the transition from acceleration to reflectivity	The participants share the challenge of enduring the delaying effects of spontaneous reflectivity amidst the accelerated pressure in the fast-paced daily practices. Switching from problem-solving to reflectivity is primarily a struggle in their interactions. Reflectivity tends to be sidelined as the pace of work quickens. This creates a paradox: the faster the pace, the greater the need for reflectivity.	The mindset to endure discomfort and unease. The awareness to acknowledge the delay in switching between neural networks. Including "transition-time" by planning reflective moments, training of cognitive flexibility, and maintenance of reflective skills by periodical reflective sessions and exercises. Building on Konishi et al. (2022).

Conclusion

Considering the conceptual framework (Table 1), we conclude that the mentioned sociological shifts and pressures offer a relevant starting point. The participants confirmed the pressures. They underlined the shifts, the pressures on the mentioned humanistic values, and shared explicitly related critical moments.

In line with the humanistic values mentioned by Von Kimakowitz et al. (2010) and Melé (2016), we conclude that creating conditions for human flourishing requires explicit attention to enduring discomfort and awareness of the pressures and critical moments as described by McNamee, 2004. Most participants demonstrate they are experiencing a shift, with two dominant mindsets currently competing for priority. On the one hand, the persistent claim to be a strong leader and to deliver economic growth and on the other hand, the wish to show a heightened awareness in uneasy moments.

Considering the instrumental approach of reflectivity, the participants demonstrate how periodic evaluative moments guide their reflective practices within a structured framework and agenda. As Cooper (1992) underlines, reflection in this sense often means a) stepping back, abstracting, modelling and monitoring, b) replacing lived practices by representations (plans, strategies, indicators) where c) control is exercised at a distance, through these abstractions. In this light, a crucial meta-question arises as underscored by Hernes (2024) and Goedhart & Van der Steen, (2016): Are reflective practices approached as a utilitarian "project" with goals, tasks, and rationality?

Considering the practical implications for reflective practices in organisations, we wonder: How do public strategic leaders and others reflect on this in their organisations? Does this create an extra critical moment to be alert to? Within this matter, Le Cunff (2025) argues, "By shifting from linear goals to a more organic, process-oriented approach, we should better navigate the challenges of modern life."

We conclude by stating that reflective practices offer time and space to connect the minds that contradict each other, often in a meta-perspective, exploring questions such as: How can public strategic leaders balance seemingly opposing values amidst the acceleration and complexities through reflective practices? How can they find a way to do justice to the tension between various values?

Based on this, we formulate a series of hypothetical questions that are intertwined with the reflective act to balance and do justice to conflicting values. First, as said, reflective "acting" involves "taking a risk" as noted by Arendt (2003). Public strategic leaders (and others) who endure relational discomfort and are willing to take this risk in their encounters appear to facilitate "resonant spaces", inviting others to "open up" and engage in meaningful explorations when something is at stake, building on Rosa (2019).

As Rosa states (2019), "It is only in the uncontrollable that we experience meaning." He refers to the experience of "resonance as the answer to the growing alienation due to the constant striving for modernistic control and predictability" (Lijster & Celikates, 2019). He defines resonance as "a form of world-relation, in which subject and world meet and transform each other." With the concept of resonance, Rosa (2016) provides a foundation for fostering a "more profound and meaningful rapport within communities" where reflective practices can find a safe space and the members of the community can "create and experience meaning" (Rosa, 2023).

Furthermore, balancing and doing justice to contradicting values requires an awareness of the "ideological paradoxical dynamic" attached to the concept of reflectivity (Zizek, 2019). In this matter, Zizek (2019) argues that reflectivity is "never neutral but is always imbued with ideologies that shape what is considered right or wrong." Even when leaders, for example, promote vulnerability and dialogue, they might inadvertently "legitimise the current order and reinforce their position" (Zizek, 2019). For instance, when Participant E structures reflectivity to control the process, it could "reaffirm existing power relations", as Zizek (2019) warns against. In this light, reflectivity is not merely an individual exercise but also "a political act", as Arendt also underlines (2003). It can challenge the existing order or, conversely, reinforce it (Zizek, 2019).

Within this matter, Serres (1980) describes a pattern resulting from the dominance of "MBA language," in which management, whether consciously or unconsciously, "smothers new ideas through reflective rituals and language, taught in MBA programs". Serres (1980) approaches this phenomenon as "co-optation,", produced by "the social reality present in power structures." This view of Zizek (2019), Arendt (2003) and Serres (1980) encourages looking beyond the superficial, seemingly open, and reflective practices and critically examining the mechanisms behind them. Further research should explore these hypothetical challenges in practice in organisations.

In general, we conclude that the findings advocate for reflective and resonant spaces that nurture ethics and vulnerability as a counterbalance to the alienating pace and uncertainties of current sociological shifts. We hope this article contributes to this, providing a reflective and resonant space to contemplate the current turbulent times, highlighting the importance of reflective flexibility, particularly during critical moments. The art of listening, exploring, and considering meta-perspectives, as well as connecting opposing values, emerges as indispensable. It challenges public strategic leaders and their colleagues to courageously take risks when relational and ethical issues are at stake.

Limitations

A limitation of this study is the relatively small and context-specific sample of public strategic leaders. As the findings are rooted in a particular organisational culture, they may not be directly generalisable to other contexts without further comparative research. By exploring

reflectivity through interviews and group dialogues outside the direct work environment, this approach assumes that such reflective practices can be fully understood without being embedded in the actual context.

Contribution

The contribution of this study lies in its exploration of the lived experiences of public strategic leaders navigating accelerated and complex contexts. While much of the existing leadership literature remains conceptual or prescriptive, this study offers grounded insights into the reflective practices of public strategic leaders facing real-time dilemmas.

By adopting a humanistic approach, the study shifts the focus from reflectivity as a managerial tool to reflectivity as a relational and ethical act, one that emerges in moments of discomfort, uncertainty, and mutual vulnerability. It introduces the notion of "critical moments" as concrete instances where public strategic leaders must decide whether to act, pause, or invite dialogue.

Recommendations

Future research could benefit from studying reflective practices as they unfold within daily organisational life, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of their relational and contextual dynamics. It would be essential to verify the conclusions in another large-scale study among a broader sample of leaders, such as middle managers and leaders in communities or profit organisations.

Reflecting on further research, we furthermore consider art-based research as a suitable next step because dimensions of experience—such as time, and space, and ethical or existential life phenomena like resonance—are difficult to grasp through logic alone. Therefore, further research could incorporate this approach to delve "into the unsayable dimensions of our reality" (Visse et al., 2019, 2020).

References

Amulya, J. (2004). What Is Reflective Practice? Centre for Reflective Community Practice, Massachusetts Institute of Technology. http://www.itslifejimbutnotasweknowit.org.uk/files/whatisreflectivepractice.pdf

Arendt, H. (1998). The human condition (2nd ed.). University of Chicago Press.

Arendt, H. (2003). Thinking and moral considerations: a lecture. In Kohn, J. (Ed.), Responsibility and Judgment (pp. 159-189). Schocken Books. (Original work published 1958)

Bateson, N. (2023). Combining. Triarchy Press Ltd.

Bauman, Z. (2000). Liquid modernity. John Wiley & Sons.

Ciulla, J. B. (2004). Ethics, the heart of leadership (2nd ed.). Praeger.

Cooper, R. (1992). Formal organization as representation: Remote control, displacement and abbreviation. In Alvesson, M. & Willmott, H. (Eds.), Reappraising management: New perspectives on the theory and practice of management (pp. 254-272). SAGE Publications.

Cooper, R., & Law, J. (1995). Organization: Distal and proximal views. Research in the Sociology of Organizations, 13, 237-274.

Dahlberg, K., Dahlberg, H., & Nystrom, M. (2008). Reflective lifeworld research (2nd ed.). Studentlitteratur.

Dewey, J. (1933). How we think: A restatement of the relation of reflective thinking to the educative process. Henry Regnery Co.

Frimann, S., & Hersted, L. (2016). Constructing leadership identities through stories. Tamara: Journal for Critical Organizational Inquiry, 14(4), 149-162.

Gergen, K. J. (1999). An invitation to social construction. SAGE Publications.

Gergen, K. J. (2009). Relational being: Beyond self and community. Oxford University Press.
Goedhart, A., & Van der Steen, B. (2016). Proceskunde, een pleidooi voor werken met aandacht. K&S Publishers.
Grint, K. (2010). Leadership is a very short introduction, Oxford University Press.
Han, B. C. (2023). Vita Contemplativa: In praise of inactivity. John Wiley & Sons.
Haslam, S. A., Reicher, S. D., & Platow, M. J. (2020). The new psychology of leadership: Identity, influence and power. Routledge.
Heifetz, R. A., & Heifetz, R. (1998). Leadership without easy answers (Vol. 465). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
Hernes, T. (2014). A Process Theory of Organization. Oxford University Press.
Horney, N., Pasmore, B., & O'Shea, T. (2010), Leadership agility: A business imperative for a VUCA world. Human Resource Planning, 33(4), 34.
Hummels, H. and P. Nullens (2022). 'Other-wise' organizing. A Levinasian approach to agape in work and business organisations. Humanistic Management Journal. https://doi.org/10.1007/s41463-022-00132-6
Huijser, D., & Nullens, P. (2024). An anatomy of human dignity: Dissecting the heart of humanistic management. Humanistic Management Journal, 9(2), 203-230.
I&O Research. (2023). Monitor integriteit en veiligheid 2022 (Rapport). Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties. https://www.politiekeambtsdragers.nl/documenten/2022/07/06/monitor-integriteit-en-veiliigheid-2022
Kerr, P. A., & Todd, R. J. (2021). Espoused theories and theories-in-use of information literacy: reflecting on effective practic. IASL Annual Conference Proceedings. https://doi.org/10.29173/iasl7665
Konishi, M., Brown, K., Battaglini, L., & Smallwood, J. (2022). Investigating the shift between externally and internally oriented cognition using a novel task-switching paradigm. Neuroscience of Consciousness, 2022(1). https://doi.org/10.1093/nc/niac016
Kornelsen, J. (2019). The quest to lead (with) millennials in a VUCA-world: Bridging the gap between generations. In Kok, J., & Van den Heuvel, S. C. (Eds.), Leading in a VUCA world (pp. 27-41). Springer.
Larsson, M., & Meier, F. (2023). Leadership in interaction. In Örtenblad, M. (Ed.), The SAGE handbook of leadership (pp. 28-39). SAGE Publications.
Le Cunff, A.-L. (2025). Tiny experiments: How to live freely in a goal-obsessed world. Penguin Random House.
Lijster, T., & Celikates, R. (2019). Beyond the echo-chamber: An interview with Hartmut Rosa on resonance and alienation. Krisis: Tijdschrift voor Filosofie, 2019(1), 64-78.
McNamee, S. (2004). Critical moments as "transformations." Negotiation Journal, 20(2), 269–274.
Marchart, O. (2013). Die Prekarisierungsgesellschaft. Prekäre Proteste. Politik und Ökonomie im Zeichen der Prekarisierung (p. 248). transcript Verlag.
Mattingly, C. (2019). Defrosting concepts, destabilising doxa: Critical phenomenology and the perplexing particular. Anthropological Theory, 19(4), 415-439. https://doi.org/10.1177/1463499619828568
Melé, D. (2016). Understanding humanistic management. Humanistic Management Journal, 1, 33–55.
Mintzberg, H. (1973). The Nature of Managerial Work. Harper & Row.
Noordegraaf, M. (2000). Professional sense-makers: Managerial competencies amidst ambiguity. International Journal of Public Sector Management, 13(4), 319-332. https://doi.org/10.1108/09513550010350292

Noordegraaf, M. (2007). From 'pure' to 'hybrid' professionalism: present-day professionalism in ambiguous public domains. Administration and Society, 39(6), 761-785. https://doi.org/10.1177/0095399707304434

Nullens, P. (2021). Hoop als kunst van verantwoord leiderschap. Garant.

Nullens, P., & Van Nes, J. (2021). Towards a relational anthropology fostering an economics of human flourishing. In Van Nes, J., Nullens, P., & Van den Heuvel, S. C. (Eds.). Relational anthropology for contemporary economics: A multidisciplinary approach (pp. 25-42). Springer.

Nussbaum, M. C. (2011). Creating capabilities: The human development approach. Harvard University Press.

Obolensky, M. N. (2014). Complex adaptive leadership: Embracing paradox and uncertainty. Gower Publishing.

Pirson, M. (2017). Dignity and well-being as cornerstones of humanistic management (Humanistic Management Association Research Paper Series No. 17-9). Gabelli School of Business, Fordham University.

Raelin, J. A. (2002). "I don't have time to think!" versus the art of reflective practice. Reflections, 4(1), 66-79. https://doi.org/10.1162/152417302320467571

Rhodes, R., & Noordegraaf, M. (2007). Observing government elites: Up close and personal. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230592360

Ritchie, J., Spencer, L., & O'Connor, W. (2003). Carrying out qualitative analysis. In Ritchie, J., & Lewis, J. (Eds.), Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers (pp. 219-262), SAGE Publications.

Rittel, H. W. J., & Webber, M. M. (1973). Dilemmas in a general theory of planning. Policy Sciences, 4(2), 155-169. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01405730

Rosa, H. (2010). Acceleration and alienation: Towards a critical theory of late-modern temporality. Nordisk Sommeruniversitet Press (NSU).

Rosa, H. (2019). Resonance: A sociology of our relationship to the world. Polity Press.

Rosa, H. (2023). Democratie vraagt om religie: Over een bijzondere resonantierelatie. Boom.

Rosenberg, H., & Feldman, C. S. (2008). No time to think: The menace of media speed and the 24- hour news cycle. A&C Black.

Sayer, A. (2011). Why things matter to people: Social science, values and ethical life. Cambridge University Press.

Schön, D. A. (1987). Educating the Reflective Practitioner: toward a New Design for Teaching and Learning in the Professions. Jossey-Bass.

Shotter, J. (2006). Understanding process from within: an argument for 'withness' thinking. Organization Studies, 27(4), 585-604, https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840606062105

Serres, M. (1980). Le parasite(s), pp. 110-111. Éditions Grasset.

Stockdale, C., & Jones, S. (2024). Challenges facing leaders dealing with fake news and misinformation–reduced trust and cohesion in the workplace. Effective Executive, 27(3), 5-12.

Twist, M., & Frissen, P. (2024). Leiderschap als tragische vergissing: Op zoek naar andere woorden voor heersen en hiërarchie. Management & Organisatie, 2024(1-2), 70-84.

Van Dorp, E.-J. (2023). 'The minister wants it': Self-politicisation and proxy politics among senior civil servants. Public Policy and Administration, 38(4), 424-444. https://doi.org/10.1177/09520767221078093

Van der Steen, B., Van Saane, J., & Van Dijk, G. (2025). Public strategic leaders and their reflective practice in accelerated times: a narrative exploration of a utopic story. International Journal of Public Leadership, 21(2), 96-108.

Van der Wal, Z. (2017). The 21st-Century Public Manager. Palgrave.

Vaill, P. B. (1996). Learning as a way of being: Strategies for survival in a world of permanent white water. Jossey-Bass

Visse, M., Hansen, F., & Leget, C. (2019). The unsavable in arts-based research: On the praxis of life itself. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 18.* https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406919851392

Visse, M., Hansen, F., & Leget, C. (2020). Apophatic inquiry: Living the questions themselves. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 19. https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406920958975*

Vosman, F., & Niemeijer, A. (2017). Rethinking critical reflection on care: Late modern uncertainty and the implications for care ethics. Medicine, Health Care and Philosophy, 20, 465-476.

Von Kimakowitz, E., Pirson, M., Spitzeck, H., & Dierksmeier, C. (2010). Humanistic management in action. In Humanistic management in action. Palgrave Macmillan.

Weick, K. E. (2005). Theory and practice in the real world. In Knudsen, C., & Tsoukas, H. (Eds.), The Oxford Handbook of Organization Theory (pp 453-475). Oxford University Press.

Zizek, S. (2019). The sublime object of ideology, Verso Books.