

A PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW OF PROFESSIONALISM IN SURVEYING:
THE PUBLIC AND THE PRIVATE ETHIC

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Foreword

I do not intend to include an abstract/summary of this paper. Essentially this is because I think that the argument proposed herein is compact enough in its entirety, and as it involves a precise philosophical progression of ideas, any abstraction would be dangerous. I will merely stress that this paper proposes a theoretical construct based upon a philosophical premise. Within these terms, it can only be refuted on the grounds of the inadequacy of my argument, or by a critique of the philosophy, not by a resort to fact. It could prove interesting to measure the validity of my proposition via practical research, although it would prove difficult to quantify. In any event, the theoretical nature of the paper does not preclude its practical usefulness. Too much "practical" research is done without any logic or understanding, and much of what we decide as an institution is decided by personal experience and ideology. A theoretical research base can only support and improve practice.

The work is aimed at professional surveyors, students and academics (whatever that term may mean). The danger in attempting to write for everyone, is not satisfying anyone: too theoretical for practice, too logically presumptive for philosophers (whoever they may be) and overly long and formal for students. I have tried to balance the needs of all readers, together with my own requirements to develop the argument herein. Reading should be for interest and enjoyment, but too little is. I hope that I have managed to at least interest each in this paper.

The bibliography proved troublesome. Because this work transcends a number of intellectual fields, I was faced with a major problem of deciding what to include for completeness, and what to exclude on the grounds of space. In the end, I attempted to include those works that were fundamental to my argument, and a selection of essential background material. The choice was subjective, and I am left feeling that the result is neither complete, nor short.

I would like to thank Andrew Holt, Sarah Sayce and Barry Staff for their comments upon this work, and Henry Cirkel for the speedy and precise typing. This work is, however, solely mine and I accept all responsibility for it.

The school has a number of publications currently on sale, and a programme for continued expansion. Should you require details on any of these, then please contact The Publications Editor, Kingston University, School of Surveying, Knights Park, Kingston-upon-Thames, Surrey.

Tim Eccles
February 1993

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INTRODUCTION

Surveying is a profession. Traditionally, it is a British profession. It is controlled by a professional institution (the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors), has regulations and rules of conduct, minimum entry requirements and a recognised career progression in order to obtain professional qualifications. Surveyors, in being professionals and thus members of the professional body, obey its strictures and should act professionally at all times. Surveying firms also act in a professional manner, being both professional firms and employers of professionals. In the past, management theory has failed to adequately recognise the qualitative differences between the organization and management of a professional private practice (firm) and that of a purely business enterprise.

Professional firms have been faced with twin obligations; those of professional integrity and those of the customer and market forces. Traditionally, the two obligations have been achieved together, since professional firms guarantee professional work and thereby quality and general customer satisfaction. For individual surveyors, professionalism has resulted in carefully designed career routes with assistance and understanding from their employers; after all, notions of firm professionalism depends upon employed professionals who are obeying externally laid down strictures of professional conduct.

This duality has now been seriously challenged. Barrett and Males [Barrett and Males (1991)] point to the clearly emerging contrasts between the demands of 'the Market' and those of professional ethics. In periods of recession, it becomes increasingly clear that in times of economic hardship, the simple aim of economic severely undermines notions of professional ethics. Response to change is increasingly pro-market and anti-professionally orientated, resulting in radical changes to both firms and employees.

To examine this idea, let us consider literature on the industry in Britain six years ago (January 1989) with that now (January 1995).

In 1989, response to change meant largely dealing with a worrying shift in the demography of the UK (no school leavers, more women and elderly employees) and a view to the new markets of 1992 and the ever-unifying world economy [Sloan (1991)]. Now, change means that the firm must adapt to survive the recession, by consolidation, diversification and (retrievable) shrinkage.

Whilst in 1989, 'The Market' was seen as the optimal resource allocator, in 1995 it is perceived increasingly as an anarchic distributor, in that firms can only react to its whims and are buffeted along by the winds of market forces randomly. Despite this, there is little movement towards state control, whereby centralised planning and predication could ameliorate these problems, due to the failure of state planning in Eastern Europe. There may be some tendency to look towards certain 'neutral'

organisations to help, but these are not able to exert any control over the Market, nor to exhibit constant and logical policies. Take, for example, the apparently idiosyncratic (patriarchal?) attitude of the RICS to key issues, such as its education policy and the Lay Report. How useful has RICS intervention been? [Eade (1992); Estates Times (1992); Mallett (1992)]. Opinion seems to suggest that it has been of little assistance, but as it too is under the control of 'the Market', there is little it can do.

At a social level, employment is one of the most obvious changes between the four years. Whilst it is obviously over-simplistic to suggest that in 1989 there were jobs, and in 1995 there are none, the recession does clearly illustrate a change in attitude by firms to their employees.

The primary change is that in 1989, employees were regarded (in the literature) as a firm's main asset - 'human resource' - and the texts worked in the fields of motivation, payment by results (PBR) and how to best keep staff [Torrington and Hall (1991)]. Today, they are sacked in order that the firm survives, which throws the communitarian approach of the 1989 texts into a different light. It also raises the questions of what use such theories will be in future, and, indeed, what harm the industry may have done to its future, having possibly created a psychological shift in employees' attitude to work.

Much of the human resource literature has always been of doubtful use in its application to construction. Construction firms

clearly fall into Atkinson's flexible firm theory, whereby a small elite of core staff are retained, and the rest of the workforce is hired on a casual or part-time basis [Atkinson (1984); Best (1990)]. Until recently, however, it has seemed that professional surveying firms adapted a rather more permanent structure; professional staff, according to these same motivations theories, requiring a rather more liberalised attitude. The current situation has thrown this into doubt, and one has to question whether the industry is not laying the seeds of doom for its future and creating serious problems for itself.

Perhaps this is unfair; after all, this is a serious recession. Given the dominance of 'the Market' in both resource allocation and demand for services, there was little that firms could do except to react to the dictates of market forces. It is possible to consider a subjective model of this current situation and to recognise, in simple terms, a series of polarised styles of reaction. In a professional firm there may well be a communal attitude to the problem; everyone pulls together to survive the recession and act as theory suggests in a liberalised humane manner. The problem arises in the economist's typical 'business unit' (firm), where the professional managers have a different attitude to the problem. These managers act solely in their own short term interest, and in a recession seek to cut costs to survive (ie sack employees). However, when the recession ends, these firms may find themselves in a far worse position, as employees will remember those firms who offered permanence and security, and thus the higher order motivation needs of Maslow, Herzberg, McClelland et al. They could find themselves paying

higher wages for less qualified staff, and suffering appropriately. And, it may not just be employees' attitudes that change, but those of clients as well. Theory suggests that professional firms recognise their employees as valuable resources; practice in 1992 suggests otherwise.

Traditional liberal theories have been severely tested, and it is doubtful if they can recover. This rather disturbing picture has shattered the pre-recessional view of a professionally devised response to pure market forces, and a belief that the surveying profession can manipulate those forces. It is tempting to romanticise this pre-recessional control which the RICS wielded in maintaining quality, but it should be recognised. The arguments were rehearsed in the debate over standard fees as a guarantee for competition purely on quality terms, and lost at that time. Whilst professional integrity survived as a major issue before the recession, mere business survival and job retention are in danger of having terminally undermined the previous ideals, despite the threat of professional monitoring by the RICS and increased expulsions for malpractice.

In a market economy of price competition, this is surely not surprising. Surveying as a profession has been fortunate to have survived for so long relatively untouched by such forces; general industry has long been under its power, and the majority of the construction and property industries have for some time looked at the nonchalance of surveying with awe. Notions of professionalism cannot, in the long run, survive in a market

economy. Not, at least, the traditional form of surveying professionalism that we will explore later.

Many issues have been raised within this introduction, and left either partially answered or couched in undefined terms. This is important, since responses to these questions depend upon the definitions which have been adopted. This paper is primarily interested in professionalism, *purely as found within surveying*, and concerned solely with the issues facing the surveying profession. As will be seen, these are unique to surveying because of the realms in which it operates. Definitions, such as of professionalism, must then wait until these 'realms' have been described.

In philosophical terms, the market economy operates in the public sphere of social life, in contrast to the private sphere of the household/family domain. The public sphere operates on the principles of competitiveness, abstraction of facts into general principles and is termed a male ethic. The purpose of this paper is to examine the notion of the contrasting female ethic and to examine the possible introduction of such a construct as a means of promoting professionalism, and thereby quality of work and working.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PRIVATE [FEMALE] ETHIC

By implication, the female ethic cannot be defined in absolute terms, for it can only be considered in comparison to its nemesis, the male ethic. The female ethic is a relative term. It cannot, therefore, be described as a list of characteristics, but must be seen in terms of a relativity continuum, considering not only male/female differences, but their social, cultural and historical determinants. This is aptly described in Hughes-Hallett's review of the histories, dreams and distortions surrounding the story of Cleopatra. She argues that the history has been redefined by every time and culture into their own psyche of the East, Egypt, women, Rome, love, infidelity and more. From a plain woman, struggling successfully to hold together a bankrupt, previously mis-managed and increasingly isolated nation (true), she has been transformed to a beautiful, scheming temptress, untrustworthy, seeking world domination via the bed and with her outrageously bedecked and (typically foreign) incompetent armies. Hughes-Hallett clearly maintains that the durability of the story is because Cleopatra was a woman:

"She is the 'wickedest woman in history'; she is a pattern of female virtue. She is a sexual glutton; she is a true and tender lover who died for her man. She is a royal princess whose courage is proof of her nobility; she is an untrustworthy foreigner whose lasciviousness and cunning typical of her race. She is a public benefactor, builder of aqueducts and

lighthouses; she is a selfish tyrant who tortures slaves for her entertainment. She is as playful as a child; she is as old as sin 'the most complete woman ever to have existed, the most womanly woman and the most queenly queen, a person to be wondered at, to whom the poets have been able to add nothing, and whom dreamers find always at the end of their dreams'."

[Hughes-Hallett (1990) p 1)

This clearly shows the relativity of any female ethic; it also portrays a number of different views of what is female, feminine or womanly, and this must be examined further before any view on the female ethic can be developed. It is useful to note at this point that the paper will only be considering the modern, developed world, which is not to say that other cultures are unimportant (far from it), but too diffuse to consider in this paper.

Women are different to men. This is obvious. And yet, it is perhaps not quite so self evident. Certainly there are biological differences, although modern science can now bridge this gap. This paper is, however, more interested in psychological differences, in modes of thinking, in reactions to situations and in social behaviour. Do women think, behave and act differently then men? And if so, why?

Women *do* behave differently at all levels of social behaviour. This has been recognised since the dawn of philosophy and is evidenced in the earliest writings still extant. Pre-classico-mythical [Stone (1976)], Greek and Roman (Aristotle, Plato, Pythagoras, Marcus Aurelius), Western Medieval (St. Augustine), Renaissance (Vico) and Contractualist (Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau) thought all express (albeit often inherently) views on the fundamental differences between men and women. Usually this is detrimental to women (Aristotle, St. Augustine, Locke, Rousseau), sometimes unclear (Plato, Hobbes) and occasionally favourable (Pythagoras). As Almond states:

"There is a view that is as old, probably, as the human race, and certainly as old as Homer and the ancient Greeks, that there is one ethical structure that represents right for men; a composite of manly virtues, such as courage, endurance, physical stamina, willingness and political judgement, and a corresponding but complimentary conception of what is right for women, womanly virtue being seen as a mixture of timidity, tenderness, innocence and domestic competence." [Almond, in Griffiths and Whitford (1988), p 42]

Freud, Piaget and Kohlberg have each recently discussed this difference in terms of sense of justice. Kohlberg in devising his view of morality, noted the basic differences between men and women. Men develop a moral outlook (orientation) based upon impartiality, impersonality, justice, formal rationality and the

universal principle [Blum (1988)]; women do not. Kohlberg suggested that this meant that women were in some way less developed, but Gilligan later countered that it meant that they were merely different.¹

Others have also recognised differences in more specific investigations. Limb [in Porter and Tomaselli (eds) (1989) pp 45-61] clearly contrasts female friendship with other types of friendship (ancient Greek, Christian, male, children, animal) and highlights those differences. Gilman sharply divides male and female attitudes in the male visitors to the female Herland [Gilman (1979)], and a practical example of the division has been shown in the neighbourhood sharing by women in London before 1914 [Ross (1983)].

There are three possible reasons usually presented as explanation for the difference between men and women. Both naturalistic and psycho-analytical arguments have been developed, but it is the purpose of this paper to assume that the difference is fundamentally caused by the division of life into public and

¹ The male/female ethic discussion within this paper is based upon the arguments between these two. Whatever the merits of either side, both recognise the difference between men and women. There are obviously criticisms of the Kohlberg-Gilligan position, most notably within Hare's Two-Levels view, which allows Adler to query both the Kohlberg and Gilligan arguments [Adler (1989)]. Since Hare's levels of thinking seem to exhibit a form of moral schizophrenia, the paper will remain faithful to the Kohlberg-Gilligan posit, and whilst recognising that there are many other criticisms that have been developed in a methodological vein [see Flanagan Jr (1982) for some examples], these do not undermine the basic premise of the stages of reasoning, nor the difference between men and women.

private domains.² Since women have been predominantly found in the private sphere (the home) and men in the public (the workplace, the market, the political), the distinction between the two is fundamentally due to this distinction, and not to either of the other two proposed solutions. The female ethic is thus a socially formed characteristic, and develops as a result of inhabiting the private arena of existence.

Having recognised the existence of the ethic, and explained its cause, it is next necessary to examine it in close detail.

THE PRIVATE [FEMALE] ETHIC DESCRIBED

One major caveat that must be examined revolves around the value judgements that the ethic invariably engenders (and quite rightly so).

If the ethic is socially created by the forces that have imprisoned women in the private domain, how can it in any way be useful? Women have been demeaned by philosophers throughout history, from Aristotle to Nietzsche, Rousseau to Kohlberg [Anderson and Zinsser (1990a); Anderson and Zinsser (1990b); Grimshaw (1986); Lloyd (1984); Nye (1988) among many]. Women were naturally inferior (Aristotle) or half a human being,

² There is in fact a plethora of academic debate over the purported reasons for the male/female division, and I am not presenting a detailed support of my assertion here. A selection of the clearest defences are provided in the bibliography, and I do not propose to waste space on retracing these in what could only be an inferior manner. I refer the interested reader to those references, particularly Grimshaw (1986) and Lloyd (1984) as introductions.

charming, compliant, obedient servants to dote upon men (Rousseau, Kant), being for another (Kierkegaard). Social imposition has often been horrific [Armstrong and Tennenhouse (1987)]. Even the houses that they have been relegated to have been designed and built in the male (public) domain [Roberts (1991)].

Under this regime, the resulting ethic tends to be regarded as a very inferior one, with women being very sneaky, unable to separate feelings from ideas, easily influenced, confused, ambivalent, uncertain, dependent, unable to do things, uncomfortable, anxious, unambitious and uncompetitive [Grimshaw (1986), pp 189-190]. Indeed, Marx regards the domestic (female)

domain as animalistic, and only the public arena as being that which we should regard as human [Marx (1974)].

This problem is best answered in three ways. Firstly, it has been argued that this exclusion from the public sphere into the domestic, has had a beneficial effect on women. They have remained pure and unsullied from the harshness and contamination of the public domain, and have thus retained those higher attributes of loyalty, truth and goodness. This is clearly a very naive notion in its entirety, but that does not necessarily overturn the essential premise that the female ethic may retain certain of these traits.

Secondly, the ethic has partly developed as a defence to these forces, as a response to them and not purely by them. Thirdly,

the idea of relativity must be borne in mind. The female ethic is a relative idea, and the above notions are value loaded in favour of the male ethic equivalents (for example, competitiveness, ambition, directness, aggressiveness, independence). If, for example, it made all women slave-like, they would only become slaves if men came along to control them; if everyone is 'slave-like', then it only becomes apparent to an external source who may then take them as slaves. In addition, it is only a characteristic of Western Capitalism that traits of individuality, aggressiveness, competitiveness, ambitiousness and directness are so highly prized, and if we bear the notion of relativity in mind, different societies may have different views on these two ethics. Radical feminists (such as Brownmiller) have even argued that the lack of such traits proves women's goodness, and their presence men's evil. Whilst such an argument is highly essentialist - that men are men and women are women and there is no way to change either's nature - it does lend support to the notion that the female ethic exists and that it may prove beneficial as a general social ethic.

The argument herein, then, is that the ethic contains many beneficial characteristics to its proponents (and also, it will be argued later, to firms and thus society as a whole). What, then, is the female ethic?

Whilst the notion of relativity must once again be stressed, it is possible to identify major trends within the ethic. The most commonly recognised is probably the idea of care, of caring for others (often selflessly, even suicidally), dealing with

situations in a personal and yet concrete view (ie not abstracted, but within wide social contexts) and of maintaining relationships. This is perhaps made clearer by looking at the principle in relative terms. According to the male ethic, men are capable of abstraction and they use these to create universal principles (laws, regulations, moral codes, etc); women, however, are not, for they act only specifically in each case in concrete methods. This is often taken as argument that women are in some way less capable than men, in that for example, in Rawls' theory of justice, they cannot abstract in order to create moral theories (and are thus amoral). This is increasingly an untenable view, since Okin has shown that in order to determine Rawls' justice one has to be able to act in the concrete, to understand the specific relationships involved [Okin (1989)].

Other characteristics include beauty, egalitarianism, co-operativeness, open-mindedness, communitarianism and an unwillingness to cause hurt or harm. It can be seen that most of these positive elements of the ethic consist merely of applying a less pejorative view (or, perhaps, a view with a shifted bias). Take, for example, the arguments on women and nature; some hold that women are imprisoned by nature (eg mothering) [Firestone], others that it provides women with inherent strength [Chodorow], and yet others that in an age of ecological doom, the feminine may be our only saviour [Plumwood].

Other examples can be found by examining some of the arguments developed over women living within the ethic in both the philosophical and real world realms of discussion. Gilman gives,

perhaps, one of the most complete pictures of a female ethic in her mythical Herland. Women in Herland form a contiguous community of community conscious individuals, living in a beautifully created environment [Gilman (1979)]. A similar, but real life, example is found in Ross' examination of the caring communitarianism that existed in pre-first world war working class London [Ross (1983)]. Roediger and Foner similarly argue the greater solidarity, and ability to see long term implications, in women with regard to labour struggles [Roediger and Foner (1989)]. In friendship, Limb [in Porter and Tomaselli (eds)(1989), pp 45-61] clearly argues that female friendship is the closest and securest, regardless of time and culture.

THE PRIVATE [FEMALE] ETHIC AND THE FIRM

Modern firms operate in the public domain, and are thus run by the male ethic. This tends to lead to firms that operate in large, rigid, hierarchical structures, aimed solely for profit maximization, are formally regulated and mass produce for exchange. This male ethic is commonly expressed in terms of the protestant work ethic and to modern theories of motivation, human resource management and personnel legislation [described by, for example, Torrington and Hall (1991)]. The philosophy behind such market (or bureaucratic) economies depend upon the (abstract) moral, or justice, perspective that, in its turn, depends upon contractarian values; this is, again, associated with the male ethic. Even where the philosophy has been liberalised (flexitime, job-sharing, group working, profit sharing, etc), the fundamental ethos of the ethic is clearly still present, and

since such is only granted, so graciously, to certain labour aristocracies, the lot of the majority is tied unremittingly to the drudgery of the male ethic. But, need this be so?

Firstly, Okin has questioned the 'maleness' of this justice (male) perspective, in that its creation depends upon the ability to empathise about how people would feel within a developed society; this empathy is a function of the private (female) domain [Okin (1989)]. Secondly, Poole has questioned the traditional view on the boundary of the public/private domain. He argues that the state (and the firm, by implication) can be regarded as belonging to the domestic (private) sphere of influence [Poole (1991)]. This radically alters previous views of the female ethic and has radical implications for the ethic at work, and would support its full transfer to the public sphere. The only danger in accepting this viewpoint, is the form that the ethic seems to take in this situation. Poole sees such a female ethic as quite capable of supporting war to protect the interests of the state, since the state is merely an extended family and it is a duty of those under the ethic to defend it.

Despite Poole's³ arguments, the female ethic has been described as predominantly existing within the private domain. In order to run firms, however, the ethic would have to transfer from this private sphere to the public sphere of relations. In essence, this involves the total uprooting of the ethic into an

³ Poole's thesis is, in fact, central to the argument herein, but since it is only a recent line of thought, it is first necessary to cover traditional lines of discussion as possible avenues of use.

environment that is totally alien to it. Can the female ethic survive this transformation?

Almost certainly not. The characteristics of the ethic have evolved in conditions totally alien to the public sphere of life, and are diametrically opposed to it. This need not be a disadvantage, however, since whenever two opposites meet, one would expect the result to be found in the middle of the two. In other words, in being destroyed itself, it would create the conditions for the downfall of the public (male) ethic, and since the female ethic is uselessly closeted away at the moment, the loss would be minimal. In addition, it should be recognised that the public/private split in life is only a relatively recent occurrence. Ignoring the romanticized arguments of Engels, Ruskin and others [see, for example, the fake of MacLeish and Launos (1972)] with regard to pre-industrial families and communities [Hindess and Hirst (1975)], it is only necessary to look at Aristotle's view of the public, as the series of friendships in which we exist as human beings. The female ethic would return us to this notion. As a general theory of society, and as a reformed business environment, the introduction of the ethic can only be recommended. As a principle for an individual firm operating in the existing business environment, however, serious questions of practicability must be raised. Since the female ethic is so alien to the existing public arena of business action, it seems inevitable that a firm operating purely on female ethic principles would not be as profitable, efficient or rational enough to survive in the market place.

If we allow ourselves a little latitude and consider two qualifications, the firm could conceivably survive. Firstly, the market is not perfect. The female ethic firm should have a highly motivated (and thus productive) workforce producing high quality goods and/or services. It could, therefore, via product differentiation, capture a small market niche in a specialism or at the luxury end of the market.

Secondly, we would assume that it would have high demand for its jobs due to working conditions. Other firms would thus begin to lose their best staff to our firm, and would have to react to this. They could try a number of options [Torrington and Hall (1991)], but at the end of the day may find themselves forced to move towards a female ethic.

Given the existence of the female ethic within the workplace, there would be some quite major changes in firm practices in line with the values of the ethic. Since relationships are so important, the firm would have a totally different structure, becoming less hierarchical, less regulated, regarding employees as people and limiting organizational sizes (chain of command, scalar principle, etc). Since social implications would also be recognised, corporate social responsibility would be readily accepted. Given the abolition of the public/private split, work itself would become a more holistic part of life, more enjoyable and more meaningful.

On a wider scale, the female ethic demands more co-operation and less competition, which would obviously have enormous implications to modern market economies. Interestingly, this would only tend to affect the West, and not countries such as Japan and many nations in the Third World, whom it is generally recognised typically operate in the public domain in a manner equivalent to that of the female ethic (notions of family, obligations, etc) [Hofstede (1984)].

This is perhaps the crux of the problem. The female ethic has developed within the private domain of the household. Under this ethic, therefore, women have learnt to control small units of production (the family) with understanding and compassion, and by persuasion and mutual consent. To transfer this directly in to the public sphere would be suicidal, but to couple it with an evolution of the public sphere by merging it with the private, could provide the solution to this problem.

Whilst the above provides certain possibilities, the drawbacks are equally obvious. The assumptions and ideals implicit within it, still remain highly questionable. At best, it perhaps supports the arguments of the traditional motivation theories devised by Maslow, Herzberg, McGregor et al, which in themselves fail to radically alter the ethos of the management and organization of (surveying) firms. Nor do these ideas provide any solutions to the questions raised within the introduction, concerning professionalism and its relevance to surveying firms in the 1990s. We are also trying to have our philosophical cake

and eat it, in that we are in danger of wanting to hold to an essentialist and a relativist theory of 'female'. This is unacceptable, and therefore, in maintaining a consistent approach, the previous model is rendered both theoretically and practically useless. The notions of professionalism need a far sturdier basis of support than provided by this view of the female ethic. The female ethic itself needs a far sturdier and more fundamental basis in fact in order to be able to support the ideals of professionalism within the surveying firm.

A more useful and realistic approach is to consider Poole's view of the private (female) ethic, whereby any single recognisable unit is regarded as creating its own internal, and therefore private, domain. By this argument, the state or the firm can be regarded as a 'family' and thus exhibit the characteristics of the female ethic [Poole (1991)]. This view distorts the higher order moral notions of the female ethic, allowing individuals to act in a manner that may appear to be at odds with the ideals of the 'pure' ethic. For example, a war could be fought (aggressive, competitive, hatred) to protect the interests of the state, even though these may prove to be rather more abstract than for pure self-defence and the love/care of one's fellow nationals ('family' members).

For the purpose of this work, we will consider the application of this form of the ethic to the firm, and the professional (surveying) firm in particular.

THE SURVEYING FIRM

Much of the discussion to date has been in terms of theoretical practice to general firms thus far, and it is now time to turn attention to the focal industry of this work. Whilst, the discussion on firms in general is valid to construction, it is necessary to recognise the individuality of the construction industries. If the male ethic runs general business, it is at its most maleness in this industry, and at all levels. Most can recognise the masculinity of the building site, and even of the management of construction firms, but the professional firms are equally so [Greed (1992)].

Given that the problems facing our general firm are so great, what hope can there be for such a male dominated industry? I intend to argue that history is on the side of the female ethic, for throughout history the construction industry has exhibited radical tendencies when least expected. It was the construction industry that retained communal working long after the birth of the division of labour; that provided the Medieval guild instead of feudal bondage; that created the first trade unions; that fought with the Arts and Crafts as guild socialists against capitalist contracting.

Not only is history on the side of the female ethic, so also is its very nature. The female ethic exists only in the private domain, usually regarded as the "family". Poole, however, persuasively regards the 'family' in a wider context of state and

firm, each of which can create their own internal environment [Poole (1991)].

The surveying industry has been traditionally portrayed as consisting of a plethora of small firms. Whilst there is currently much debate about the likelihood of small firm survival, either through the recession [Turner (1993)] or some perceived macro-firm takeover of the RICS [CQS (1992a)], the advantages of the small firm can be compared with notions of the family (and thus the female ethic) as we have seen. The firm is small, with a few partners (parents) who see themselves not only as responsible for the firm itself, but also its employees (children) via Continued Professional Development (CPD) assistance, education training (day release, RICS exams, etc), flexible working, responsibility, social and welfare interests.

It is interesting to note that such ideals are also put forward in favour of the larger firms, who are better able to afford training [Davis (1992a)], provide better facilities [Davis (1992b)], and generally look towards a better future for firm and employee [Cleary (1992)].

Surveying firms can thus be portrayed as a unique organizational sub-set of the typical firm (business unit) represented in traditional organization literature. In the introduction to this paper this was posited as a result of their professional nature, and was linked to the continuance of this. Surveying firms have evolved over a long period of time within a strong professional history, and have retained much of the fundamental essence of

these times [Thompson (1968)]. This history can be seen by the traditional reliance on Victorian business organization (partnerships) and tied to that period's strong views on professionalism and the obligations inherent in that. In modern times, the ideal of both the partnership and the professional has changed over the intervening century, and whilst there is clearly no suggestion that firms are old-fashioned, surveying still retains many relics of this past.

It is for this reason that the "small" surveying firm in some way retains in its very nature those Victorian ideals, and is traditionally regarded as typical for surveying firms. It is also for this reason that notions of professionalism can be tied to the "small" firm, and the "small" firm can be regarded in terms of its own private domain, distinct from the public sphere of action. On these grounds, the female ethic clearly exists, in Poole's terms, within the traditional surveying firm and can thus be related to the ideals of professionalism.

* I am using the term "small" in this paper in comparative terms, and have no clearly defined ideal in mind. Broadly speaking, it represents the sole trader/partnership legal structure, and operates on flexible and *ad hoc* organizational principles. I do not wish to formalize as definitively as Avis and Gibson, although the image is similar when they say "firms with less than 10 full time employees are considered to be small organisations The activities of this group cover the entire range of surveying services. The majority of the individual firms have identified a niche in the market and are concentrating on a very limited range of services and/or clients Small GP firms are better able to adapt to changes in the market because of their size. Their management styles tend to be much more flexible and informal. The success of the firm is dependent on the professional abilities of the partners." [Avis and Gibson (1987), p 8]. Equally simplistically, its polar opposite, "large", is portrayed in bureaucratic PLC terms with rigid and formal hierarchical structures. Similarly, contractor and local authority QSS can be classified as to how their departments are organized.

PROFESSIONALISM IN SURVEYING

The introduction of a female ethic within surveying would have some interesting repercussions. Notwithstanding the problems of a general introduction of the ethic, and within surveying in particular, there is nothing within the female ethic that is alien to the ideas of a surveying profession and much to support it.

Notions of professionalism are exemplified within the female ethic, where both consider the ideals of quality, social principles, group solidarity and recognition of mutually beneficial rule frameworks. Because of the female ethic relationship with the private domain, it can only exist in those firms which exhibit those characteristics that are loosely associated with that arena; the 'family'. The primary consideration for this must be size. The female ethic will find its greatest hold in those firms of a "small" size, and those characteristics that were defined as common to both it and professionalism will consequently be far more natural within these organizations. This is most certainly not to say that "large" firms are unprofessional (or, more precisely, non-professional), merely that the notions of professionalism associated with the female ethic are inherent to "small" firms and will thus be found naturally within them. Professionalism will become more difficult to achieve with size, and becomes a cost that must be incurred and off-set against the savings made by increasing size.

It has also been suggested that one method of achieving an introduction of the ethic would be by the entry of women into surveying [Greed (1990a); Greed (1990c)]. It is clearly an oversimplification to state that women=female ethic=professionalism, since it is only termed a female ethic because of its association with the private domain. There does, however, seem to be growing evidence that a mixed office achieves more of a balancing of the ethical opposites rather than a mere acceptance of control by the male ethic [Greed (1990a); Greed (1990c)].

The fundamental argument within this paper has finally been fully developed. In recognising a competitive male ethic that has universally been accorded control over the public domain, we should recognise, by contrast, the existence of a female ethic within the private domain. We also recognise that within the public domain, market forces have increasingly downgraded the practical importance of professionalism. By using Poole's view of the ethic, and recognising the uniqueness historically of the professional surveying firm, we can thus develop an argument wherein surveying firms, in retaining the ideal of a private domain to some degree removed from the market, will retain the ideals of professionalism inherently within their very being. In practice this can be achieved most easily by retaining a structure (size) that allows the creation of such private ('familial') bonds and employing professionals exhibiting characteristics broadly consistent with the female ethic (interested in creating a harmonious and contiguous working environment).

In surveying, "like other Victorian professions, ideological emphasis was placed on service rather than quick profits and on quality rather than the scale economies that could be derived from standardised high-volume turnover." [Ball (1988), pp 59-60]. Ideals of professionalism are fundamentally delineated within this heritage. Traditional definitions of professions which recognise them as a specialised authority based upon a superior knowledge of a body of theory, governed by controlled entry within a code of ethics and a monitored self-discipline, can only be applied within this Victorian framework. The surveying profession, as a *profession*, cannot be separated from its own professional culture, which is firmly rooted within the culture of Victorian Britain. Any definition of surveying professionalism must recognise the essential status of this culture in the workings of that professionalism within the firm. Ball acknowledges this when he identifies the typical duties of the QS firm: "When quantity surveyors perform independent advisory roles they take on few management functions, because of the potential contradictions between the objectives of a profession and the needs of a productive enterprise." [Ball (1988), p 62]. He proceeds to identify this as the major source of conflict that existed within surveying between contractors (Institute of Quantity Surveyors) and private QS firms (RICS). Within the framework of this paper, we can extend this line of discussion further. The conflict was not a contractor/PQS conflict, but a "large"/"small" firm conflict, between those in the public arena and those within the private arena of (Victorian) professionalism. The issues raised at the time can be studied in terms of the reluctance to erode traditional

professional (private) values by an acceptance of business (public) necessities. Similar issues can be identified, such as the abolition of fee scales to open up competition on price terms and lessen the importance of solely quality as a measure of output, and the various recent amendments to the 'Rules of Conduct', such as in advertising [Ball (1988)], the allowance of limited liability and membership [Ball (1988)], and the redefinition of what constitutes a chartered ('professional') firm [CSM (1993);CQS (1992b)].

This erosion of 'traditional' values is a constant feature of public/private conflict - typified by the arguments concerning the erosion of family [private] values by external [public] influences. Within the surveying firm the distortion that is occurring within the private sphere of professionalism by this erasing of the boundary between public and private spheres of action, is constantly challenging the notions of professionalism. This returns us to the position discussed in the introduction, on issues such as employment and the traditional attitude of the owners (partners/managers) of the surveying firm. Unemployment is alien to the professional worker, and current employer practices on redundancy are alien to the surveying firm. Action undertaken now is thus in danger of destroying the professional firm. In terms of the family sphere of the female ethic, the children are being thrown out, the parents are divorcing and/or the family home is being repossessed.

The current recession obviously demands action for survival by firms, and it is one of many 'modern' forces that demand change.

Surveying is, however, in a difficult position. Its professional ethics and working practices are based upon its Victorian heritage; they operate within the private domain of the female ethic and exhibit its characteristics. The dangers of allowing the ethic to be eroded are fundamental to the ideals of professionalism within surveying, and the possibility (and results) of the survival of the female ethic in the public order have been previously discussed. The professionalism that surveying retains as its speciality is in increasing danger, and the results of allowing the private ethic to become public could prove catastrophic to surveying, surveyors and all those who rely on its professionalism [Turner (1993)].

CONCLUSION

Whilst on the one hand, the female ethic would certainly be transformed by its ingress into the public domain (notwithstanding Poole's alternative views on the ethic), it seems unlikely that it would not in turn also transform the public domain into a less polarised sphere of action. And, in an increasingly degenerating world, such an evolution may prove to be the only answer for us all (men and women) in achieving a less opposed society. For whilst women usually suffer at work under the male ethic [Barrett (1988); Dex (1985); Greed (1992); Honeyman and Goodman (1991); Schlegel (1983); Tsurumi (1984)], so do men [Argyle (1979); Braverman (1974); Burnett (1977); Keane and Owens (1986); Pahl (1989); Putterman (1980); E. Thompson (1968); Wood (1989)]. A public female ethic could change that, and may achieve in practice what the co-operatives, guilds,

communes, and socialists have only managed in theory due to the power of the male ethic.

Using Poole's view of the ethic, allows us to develop an ideal structure of the professional firm that closely resembles the traditional surveying firm. Poole's female ethic that we have used as a model for professionalism demands a 'private domain' environment that typifies the pre-recessional professional surveying firm. Whether the ideals of the pre-recession can survive draconian measures enforced by the slump remains to be seen, but it is apparent that the 'private domain' of the individual firm has been broken up. This is not a new phenomena, since in reality, the family has long been increasingly a 'public' orientation, but demands upon the modern firm are likely to increase. The female ethic demands a 'private domain' and so too does the principle of professionalism. Since the two ideals are mutually supportive of the private domain, they may be able to retain it in the face of these increasing pressures from forces within what has historically been solely, and definitively, the public domain. Our traditional notions of professionalism have been severely undermined, and only the female ethic seems to offer any hope for its survival.

Ross Poole's version of the ethic provides the ethical framework in which we can envisage the ideals of professionalism within 'the Market' system. This is achieved by the creation of a pseudo-family unit as the surveying organization; to paraphrase Schumacher, small is beautiful - and professional.

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