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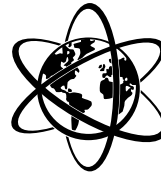
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Michiel S. de Vries

Abstract

In two previous articles in this journal, I posed the hypothesis that policy generations exist and are able to explain policy changes (De Vries, 1999, 2002). Those articles argued that shifts in the dominant policy goals and the policy instruments being dominant in public policy-making processes occur periodically and simultaneously, congruent with the predictions derived from a model on policy generations. This article completes the trilogy by analyzing shifts in the relations between policy-makers and various societal actors. It argues that these shifts also reflect the periodical changes in the design of policy-making processes and that they occur simultaneously with the shifts in policy goals and the dominant policy instruments used. This supports the hypothesis that major policy change can be understood as a shift in attention simultaneously visible in the policy goals, the instruments used and the role of societal actors; that it is a periodical change; and that such change can be theoretically explained and predicted by the necessary neglect of aspects of policy-making not addressed in the previous period.

Introduction

This article assesses longitudinal developments in the measures taken by political elites to shape relations between the public sector and societal groups in policy processes in the Netherlands. The basic research question is whether it is possible to identify the main differences between different kinds of such relationship and whether the underlying dynamics therein can be traced.

The goal of this analysis is twofold. First, I will argue that the nature of interactive policy-making can be described along two dimensions and changes periodically along these dimensions. The second goal of this article is to test the hypothesis made before (De Vries, 1999), that periodical change in policy-making processes occurs

Prof. dr. M.S. de Vries holds the chair in public administration at the Radboud University Nijmegen, the Netherlands. Email: m.devries@fm.ru.nl.

simultaneously in all policy areas and that this is visible in the role of different actors in the policy-making process. In two previous articles in this journal the change in policy goals and in the usage of policy instruments in the Netherlands were investigated. It was argued that the changes therein were in accordance to what one would expect theoretically (De Vries, 1999, 2002). The crux of this theory is that policy-makers, like all other people, have to make choices under conditions of economic scarcity. The means available for adequate policies are always less than those required. Policy-makers cannot simultaneously maximize the short-term goal achievement and the long-term effectiveness of their policies, and have a democratic and efficient policy process. It can be assumed that it is therefore necessary to prioritize. The obvious consequence of prioritization is neglect of those things not prioritized. It is primarily such neglect that induces changes over time. When problems are neglected for too long they are bound to become more pressing, severe or urgent, while at the same time the problems addressed may become less pressing or even resolved. This neglect results in shifts in attention and policy agendas, causing new policy-making designs to become necessary and probable.

In this article a test of the theory is presented, namely to test whether the relations between policy-makers and societal groups change periodically, and whether these periods are consistent with the periods in which the dominant policy goals and policy instruments change. If it is either impossible to trace the different forms of interactive policy-making or if the changes in the nature of interactive policy-making do not coincide with the changing policy goals and dominant policy instruments as given before, then this would be contradictory to what would be expected and it would result into the refutation of the theory.

We first distinguish four modes of interactive policy-making processes and propose indicators for their assessment. We then investigate whether periods can be distinguished in the Netherlands in which each of these four models was dominant. Finally, we try to establish whether it is the one-sidedness of such modes and the neglect of features of other modes of interaction that induced the shifts between periods.

This assessment is based on a literature study, as well as on data from the Dutch statistical office and from the OECD that illustrate the development of the new measures taken in each period. Many studies have already been made of the different periods and the specific relation between government and societal actors during one or two of them (e.g. Kruyt, 1959; Thurlings, 1971; Von der Dunk, 1986; Kickert, 1993; Kennedy, 1995; Lane, 1996; Schuyt, 2000; Delsen, 2002). An assessment of the whole era, covering roughly five decades, is expected to improve our understanding of the subject and especially of the shifts that occurred, although the approach selected here does not enable us to provide detailed information for each period as such.

The theoretical model and research questions

In order to structure our research we first translate the previous findings on policy generations into four policy designs. These policy designs are distinguished by the dominance of congruence or antagonism of interests between policy-makers and

Table 1 Four types of interaction between government and societal groups

		(Dis)parity of power and authority	
		Hierarchical	Horizontal
Perceived interests	Antagonism	Societal groups as target groups Prime concern is to steer societal developments hierarchically Governability model 1951–62	A Societal groups as interest groups B Prime concern is the resolution of conflicting interests among societal groups Pluralist model 1963–81
	Congruence	Societal groups as clients C Prime concern is to provide services Public management model 1981–93	D Societal groups as partners Prime concern is the role of government next to other actors in structuring society Governance model 1945–50; 1994–2004

societal groups, and the extent to which relations are hierarchical or horizontal. This results in four types of interactive policy-making.

In the first type of policy design, model A, societal groups are treated as target groups. The policy-makers are dominant and fear that without their interference the population might act in undesirable ways. It is because of the basic assumption that people might behave undesirably (related to crime, health, education, safety, labour relations, housing, etc.) that a presumed antagonism between policy-makers and population forms the point of departure in the policy-making process. Given the powers of politicians and bureaucratic policy-makers, the participation of societal groups is minimal. Policies are directed towards steering and standardizing the behaviour of the latter and not at obtaining consensus. The major problem is that of governability.

Model B differs from the previous model in that it does not seek the solution in unilateral decisions imposed on societal groups. It acknowledges that there are differences and that, in order to solve those differences, one has to negotiate and compromise. The model still departs from antagonistic interests, but relations between policy-makers and societal groups are less hierarchical and more horizontal. The latter try to influence policy-making processes and are involved in such processes. The model is based on the recognition of the citizens' rights who ought to have a say in policies. In political theory one might call this the pluralist model.

In model C the dominant discourse is that the interests of policy-makers and societal groups are congruent. People as well as policy-makers want quick, effective, efficient and well-planned service delivery by the public sector. In this model, the

Table 2 Measures to promote specific interactive policy processes

	Societal groups as target groups	Societal groups as interest groups	Societal groups as clients	Societal groups as partners
Procedural measures	Extensive regulation Maintenance by sanctions	Regulation to ensure democratization Laws on works councils Public inquiry procedures Constitutional rights, freedom of press, of organization, etc.	Simplification of regulation Deregulation, language improvement, redesign of forms, cutting red tape Speeding up procedures Staff training to enhance efficiency, responsiveness Improving access Queue management	Negotiated agreements instead of laws Self-regulation
Information measures	Registration Sociographic and demographic research Information as means of government control	Freedom of information Hearings, public meetings, community outreach, committees, forums, referenda Information as a right for societal groups	Polls on client satisfaction Advertising, brochures, guides, public relations Advice, surveys, focus groups Information as communication service	Deliberation Joint project teams, lobbying, negotiation Information as means for mutual understanding
Consultative measures	In order to get more insight into effectiveness of policies, the need for new regulations, and control	In order to confront different interests	In order to get feedback from consumers with a view to improving services	In order to know where interests meet and a win-win situation can be created
Institutional measures	National statistical and planning agencies	Works councils Appeal courts, tribunals	Ombudsmen Special commissions	Consultative bodies. National boards
Restructuring measures	Standardization	Democratization	Decentralization Deregulation, one-shop system	Privatization Public-private partnerships

public sector is presented as a service provider and the people as clients. It is a hierarchical relationship, because it is the service provider and not the client — especially in cases of monopolistic service provision as in the public sector — that decides on the services provided — or not provided, in the case of cutbacks — and the way in which that is done. This model is reflected in theories on public management (Hood, 1991).

Finally, model D is characterized by an emphasis on the congruence of interests and equivalency in mutual relations. It is not the question of how government steers society that dominates the discourse, but of how societal developments are structured and what role government has in relation to other groups in structuring those developments. It is what nowadays is called 'governance', referring to all organizations and institutions that are involved in the structuring of society, including governmental as well as non-governmental actors and independent agencies, without any one of them being dominant (Raadschelders, 2003: 4).

The expectation based on the relative attention paradigm is that the four models apply consecutively, in the order in which they were discussed. More precisely, Type A, the governability model, is expected to be dominant throughout the 1950s until the first half of the 1960s; Type B, the pluralist model, is assumed to be ascendant in the subsequent period from approximately 1963 to the early 1980s; Type C, the public management model, is emphasized from the early 1980s to 1994; and Type D, the governance model, afterwards until the first years of the new millennium.

Indicators

In order to distinguish periods in which a specific type of interactive policy-making is visible, palpable indicators are needed. Based on previous research by the public management department (PUMA) of the OECD, we investigate the procedural, informational, consultative, institutional and restructuring measures taken within each period (OECD, 1987; note that this publication did not take into account our fourth type, which came to the fore only after 1990). Together these indicators point to the dominance of one of the four policy designs. Table 2 shows how each of these measures is expected to vary, for each of the four policy designs.

Procedural measures concern the *content of the legal actions* taken by government to steer societal developments. Information measures concern the content of information gathering by leading politicians and government in general. Consultative measures concern processes relative to the question of whom the government wants to listen to. Institutional measures concern the *establishment of new organizations* by government and the goals of those organizations. Restructuring measures concern the *main outcomes* of the actions government aims at. This indicator is important for our argument that shifts occur when a specific outcome was successfully achieved and the neglect of other outcomes becomes a pressing issue.

Towards a description of the four periods

Hierarchy and fear of instability: the lack of public participation

Societal developments in the Netherlands after the Second World War are well documented. The literature on Dutch pillarization, which expanded until approximately the

beginning of the 1960s, is extensive (see e.g. Kruyt, 1959; Lijphart, 1968; Thurlings, 1971; Pennings, 1991). Pillarization was a system in which a plural society was organized along ideological and religious lines. Organizations of any nature were pillar-bound, being accessible exclusively to either Catholics, Protestants, Socialists or Liberals, and closed for members of the other pillars. Important for understanding this period, yet often neglected, is the fact that pillarization in the 1950s was partly based on fear. At the end of the 1940s a major debate took place in the government about the lack of morals in society, the problems caused by adolescents, and the general lack of trust in society. It resulted in extensive sociographic research into the state of the nation and possibilities for containing the dangers of an ill-disposed population and especially the depravity of the youth (Tromp, 1995: 171). Although scholars differ in their opinions as to whether pillarization was a deliberately planned process, the solution for the fear of instability was found in extending this system which had already existed along party lines before the war. The ultimate consequence of this system was a nearly complete organization of society along ideological/religious lines. The institutionalization of this pillarization reached its zenith in the early 1960s. It resulted in a stable society characterized by a politically passive population. The pillars provided a stable foundation and power base for the positions of the elites and an instrument to control the behaviour of the masses and to prevent them from acting in such a way as to destabilize society. By means of rules for organization, registration, an effective way of dealing with information and communication, and public subsidies, the elites were able to initiate, react and imitate in order to induce a self-reinforcing and expanding process of pillarization (Pennings, 1991: 112).

The elites also contributed to the stability of the plural society by depoliticizing important issues. This was done, for instance, by a large number of technocratic advisory boards and experts who determined the political agenda by giving their common interpretation of reality (Alberts, 1998), causing a change in mentality by which the paralysing effects of the existing contrasting ideologies could be neutralized or mitigated. Some scholars talk about the ideological hypothermia of the period, in which ideologies were suppressed and replaced by something called the general interest (Schuyt, 2000: 70).

Hence, the government covered the new policy areas with a range of committees and commissioned research, advisory boards and consultants, always accompanied by experts guided by their scientific approach (Alberts, 1998: 444). New institutions were founded, such as the Social Economic Council, the Central Planning Bureau or the Department of Social Welfare. Equally popular were the yearly industrialization reports and the establishment of scientific boards, foundations and associations — e.g. the Institute for Professional Care, Advice and Information, the Construction Centre, the Quality Service Centre for Industry, the Study Centre for Administrative Automation, the Mathematical Centre, the National Technological Organization and the Foundation for the Enhancement of Productivity — as well as the development of market research and opinion poll bureaus, including the Dutch Statistical Organization and the national institute for opinion polls (NIPO). A network of government institutions led by experts was thrown over the country and government planners enhanced the authority of the ministers over parliament (Von der Dunk, 1986: 15). Even in the administration the number of economists bringing in technical, quantita-

tive and supposedly more objective knowledge exceeded the number of lawyers, who had previously been dominant in the national administration (Bemelmans-Videc, 1984).

The result was the formulation of policy goals, the consequences of which were carefully calculated by mathematicians and economists. The dominant kind of policy-making was one in which technocrats had the final say, in which the basic criterion was well-planned policies with calculated long-term impacts that conformed to the demands of the technocratic planners (Van Kersbergen, 1995: 91). Extra-parliamentary actions were absent, and any social disturbance or resistance, for instance by strikes, was taboo. The rules were relatively simple: depoliticization, compromise-seeking and taking minority positions into account before making decisions (Lijphart, 1968).

In this period neither politicians nor scientists sought regular contact with the population, or communicated their plans to them. The politicians acted solely on behalf of their own constituency and over their heads (Schuyt, 2000: 411).

The nature of the indicators and especially their combination in this period fit our model A, the governability model. As to the procedural measures taken in this period, the rules of consociational democracy with a predominant role for the political elites prevail. The emphasis on policies based on scientific and especially macro-economic models, as well as the initiation of extensive sociographic research and registration, point to a specific kind of information measure, typical of our governability model. The consultative measures are characterized by the increasing influence of scientists and especially economists and economic institutes on government policy. Institutional measures were taken by the establishment of new economic and sociographic expertise centres. Finally, the restructuring measures show a period with an increasing impact of the pillarization process and an attempt to control individual behaviour and standardize societal developments — with obsequiousness on the part of the population.

The 'democratization' era

At the beginning of the 1960s all these stabilizing policies had accomplished their goals. Several politicians, from the Catholic to the Social Democratic side, seeing these accomplishments, began to stress a new phase, namely personal development. The time was considered ripe for entering a new era characterized by the development of the non-material side of welfare, later to be recognized by Inglehart as post-materialistic values (Inglehart, 1971). The sociological and political emancipation of the population was emphasized.

In 1965 the then Prime Minister Cals called non-material welfare a crucial part of the mission of his coalition. It did not take long to establish a Ministry of Culture, Recreation and Societal work as an institutional measure to steer the new developments. Societal work, along with the number of community and socio-cultural training centres, increased. Libraries, youth work, job corps programmes, subsidies for the arts, museums, recreation areas, sports accommodation and the protection of monuments all received four to ten times as much in grants from government in 1971 as in 1963 (source: several annual editions of the Central Bureau for Statistics). Although

the political elites could not have foreseen the consequences of the process to increase this non-material welfare of their population, it can be seen as a process that was originally initiated by them. They were unanimous in their goal of personal development, stressing the non-material sides of the welfare state, and did a lot to institutionalize the process.

This is also seen within government, where policy-making positions were increasingly taken over by social scientists (Bemelmans-Videc, 1984). The economists who since the early 1950s had gradually entered into the leading position were now slowly but definitely being replaced by people with less economic interest and more feeling for societal developments (Bemelmans-Videc, 1984: 441ff.).

The developments were also institutionalized in laws, such as in the law on works councils in the 1970s, and in the growth of social work and community work. As in the early 1950s, when the Central Planning Bureau (CPB) was established as a reflection of the dominant economic mood of the time, the late 1960s saw increasing attention to the need for so-called social planning. This was to be achieved through the establishment of the Scientific Council for government policies and, in 1973, the establishment of the Social Cultural Planning Office (SCP). One of the objectives was to register the degree to which the population participated politically and how that developed. The establishment of these offices is as indicative of technocratic tendencies as the establishment of the economic offices in the 1950s. The objectives were, however, somewhat different. Whereas the CPB was created in the 1950s for economic analyses, the SCP was established in the 1970s in order to conduct sociological analyses.

During this period the dominant design of policy-making increasingly conforms to our model B, the pluralist model. Political polarization increased as the conflicts between political parties grew, resulting in several political crises. In Dutch society the number of workers involved in strikes and the number of labour disputes reached its peak in 1980, while the number of labour days lost due to strikes was at its highest in 1983 (Central Office of Statistics, CBS, in several annual editions). Survey data indicate that it was during this period that the greatest variance existed in voters' left/right positions on the political scale — an indication of the huge political differences at play (Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, 1998).

Institutionalization of this process, at first intended to increase public awareness and to enhance the development of personal talents and abilities, became more and more indicative of an attempt to contain the societal forces that had been unleashed. The establishment of a new ministry, a new social cultural planning bureau, and the extension of social work reflect the shift in attention from an economic towards a more socio-cultural approach. The fact that the democratization process became increasingly institutionalized in special offices, arrangements, laws and regulations was another indication.

The procedural measures taken by policy-makers were increasingly based on sociological knowledge, instead of economic expertise. Information measures emphasized social and especially interactive planning models. The goal was to confront different interests and to mitigate the negative consequences that policies might have for certain groups by compensating those groups. Institutional measures are reflected in the growing numbers who enrolled in the departments of academics

with a social or political science background, and the initiation of extensive sociological research by the Social Cultural Planning Office. The restructuring measures were no longer aimed at standardization, but at finding a way to deal with the variance in opinion and the bottlenecks in decision-making processes. In contrast to the previous period, this was not done by imposing some law or regulation on the population, nor by managing the problem by depoliticization and seeking expert reports. In this period the solution was mainly sought through consultation and deliberation with societal groups and democratization of the policy process. Although relations between government and societal groups never became totally horizontal, the former could not develop policies without such consultation and deliberation, and therefore had to approach the representatives of societal groups in a much less hierarchical way than before. At the beginning of the 1980s the developments had accomplished the original objectives as defined by the political elites in the early 1960s. When in the early 1980s demonstrations were held against the deployment of US cruise missiles, almost 1 million people joined the protests and over 2.5 million signed a petition. This event can be seen as the zenith of the democratization era.

Improving service delivery: the citizen as a client

However, this event also marked the end of that era, because in the meantime new problems emerged. In the early 1980s the economic crisis hit the Netherlands hard (Delsen, 2002: 28). Out of the serious economic situation, the representatives of employers' organizations and trade unions reached consensus on income policy. This was called the 'Wassenaar-agreement', after the municipality in which the representatives negotiated in 1982. The agreement stated that, given the disastrous economic situation, the negative outlook on future economic prospects, the increasing unemployment, government deficit and high inflation rate, the parties agreed that wages should be regulated, labour time should be redistributed and the fight against youth unemployment should be given priority. In addition to these events, two other events can be mentioned which make 1982 a watershed between two periods.

First, in 1982 the institution of the Ombudsman was introduced in the Netherlands. It was intended to be an independent institution for the settlement of complaints by citizens about the government. In the ombudsman law it is stated that there is an increasing need for a special service to investigate 'how government behaved in relation to its citizens'.

Second, a new government coalition came to the fore. The new government interpreted the agreement between the representatives of employers and trade unions as an opportunity to freeze civil servants' wages, and later, at a lower level, minimum wages and social benefits.

In order to reduce conflict and create some cohesion again, the emphasis was laid on the reorganization of the internal governmental structure. The new goals were: less bureaucracy, deregulation, decentralization, more efficiency, economic development, shorter working hours, better service delivery and one-stop shops, back to the core business, no-nonsense, flexible and tailor-made policies. Nobody could disagree with that (Delsen, 2002: 186).

The concepts that increasingly dominated the political discourse also became central in the science of public and business administration, and in organization studies. Given the economic developments and the reaction from government, it is no wonder that the central advisory position of social scientists and community workers was gradually replaced by an increasing influence of people from the aforementioned disciplines. They occupied the new advisory boards when government started to concentrate on the so-called 'great operations', that is, decentralization, deregulation, privatization, reconsideration and reorganization of the civil service (Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, 1992: 480).

The developments imply the end of interaction based on conflicts between government and interest groups, and the beginning of a period in which government concentrated on its core tasks, that is, public service delivery by a downsized governmental apparatus.

Changes in the policy-making processes were reflected in the changing language. Policies slowly but definitively became 'products' and the citizens 'clients'. As in other client service delivery systems, the government started to measure clients' preferences by way of surveys, 'omnibus research', complaint regulations, hearings and focus groups. On the basis of such research, city halls changed into one-stop shops with generalist front-office managers backed by an efficient and specialized back office. The message was that the public did not want political antagonism but high-level service delivery by a 'smart' public sector.

The fact that hierarchical relations were simultaneously restored is seen in the policies regarding social security, including cutbacks, scholarships, the downsizing of community centres, the abolition of several subsidies, cutbacks in healthcare and termination of several university programmes.

Of note was the simultaneous decline in the number of people saying they participated in public inquiries: from 17 percent in 1980 to 11 percent in 1986 (Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, 1986: 400). A decay of interest movements is visible and attention shifted to the opening hours of city halls, the time it took the administration to answer requests from citizens and the waiting lists at city halls.

This era can increasingly be characterized in terms of our model C, the public management model. Trends in the procedural, institutional, consultative and information measures are all indicative of the establishment of a specific relation between the government that concentrated on its role as a service provider, and the population, treated as clients. Both had the same interest, namely better service delivery. Institutional measures were taken not only at national level but also at local level, by the establishment of local ombudsmen to control the quality of service delivery of local government. Institutional measures also involved the tendency toward privatization, deregulation, decentralization and abolition of subsidies. Stress on the need for increased efficiency is what characterized the new role of government as regards societal groups. As regards consultative measures, people with a background in public and business administration partly replaced social scientists and community workers.

Once again, the Netherlands were not unique in this shift in attention. In 1990 the OECD reported on common trends found in all OECD countries. These trends were: client-orientation, result-orientation, human resource management, increasing impor-

tance of performance indicators, information technology, auditing, monitoring and evaluation (Kickert, 1993: 20).

Towards a partnership between government and societal groups

A critical report of the National Audit Office in 1994 and the outcomes of the political elections changed the mood again. Politicians lost interest in issues related to efficiency (Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, 1998: 480). The National Audit Office report concluded that privatization in the preceding years lacked the minimally necessary forms of transparency, supervision and inspection in more than half the cases of privatization, making democratic control nearly impossible (Lane, 1996: 173).

Once again, the result was reaction, the start of which can be pinpointed to 1994. The new governmental coalition agreement abandoned the idea of a government retreat and tried to find a new equilibrium in the relation between the public sector and society. The reduction in public spending changed into a stabilizing policy and the Minister of Finance set a new norm, involving a strict separation of revenues and expenditures. Those ministers wanting new policies had to find the finances themselves. This implied that one could only solve a problem by creating a problem somewhere else. The ministers opted, however, for other solutions. First, this consisted in telling society that it should take part of the responsibility itself, summed up in the adage of creating a 'responsible society' in which government supports developments that make citizens independent. The second solution was to try to find financing for public investments in private business (Koppenjan, 2003). Increasingly, public-private partnerships were created, with governmental agencies developing plans that were advantageous for business, and business financing part of these investments. The consequence was an increased interdependence between the public and private sectors. They needed one another in order to achieve common goals. The argument that the private sector was willing to contribute to large infrastructure investments was often good enough to get controversial plans through the board of ministers and parliament.

The general idea became that the Dutch government did not want to impose its will upon societal groups. This was found, for instance, in the increasing use of so-called 'covenants', that is, negotiated agreements. In these covenants the public and private sectors negotiated what was to be achieved in the following five years and published that agreement. It was an alternative for lawmaking that was deemed superior because of its emphasis on social responsibility, the voluntarism involved, the win-win situations created and its presumed effects on lowering costs and increasing effectiveness (Bastmeijer, 1997).

Information measures included business surveys on measurement of the administrative burden. Their increase, as well as the increase in sections of the law stating that consultation and deliberation with the stakeholders were required, point to the fact that the new developments were noticeable in all sectors, from the environmental sector – where covenants were made with industry and the agrarian sector in order to reduce pollution in the long run, in exchange for grants for research and development – to the tax system – in which business was increasingly allowed to bargain over the taxes to be paid.

In relations with the public at large, the point of departure was also the congruence of interests, and the means likely to make the expected consensus more explicit were explored. Participation was defended by pointing at its possible function of creating profits for all participants. It was not public participation based on conflicts of interest, but negotiation based on congruent interests. Changes in the conception of public participation can be seen in the derogatory ways in which people in the 1990s referred to public participation based on conflicting interests, and which they deemed to be an obstacle to effective policy-making.

The period after 1994 can increasingly be characterized in terms of our model D, the governance model. Government did not want to impose its will on society, but negotiated with societal groups in order to achieve those things the 'partners' could agree on, in order to make compliance easier and reduce the burdens of such negotiated steering. Parity was seen in the use of negotiated agreements, the lack of sanctions, the 'enabling' policies and, in general, the reluctance to impose the government's will on societal groups. Institutionally it is seen in the appointment of public commissions to investigate the problems underlying these practices. The main procedural measures were regulatory impact assessment and the use of negotiated agreements (covenants). Experiments were run on so-called co-production, that is, deliberation among policy-makers and representatives of societal organizations, especially at the beginning of policy-making processes.

New procedures to speed up policy processes were set up, with the passing of so-called emergency laws to shorten lengthy decisional processes plagued by conflicting interests.

At the beginning of 2000 the Dutch economy was booming again, and there seemed to be no nation as satisfied as the Dutch (Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, 2000). However, deliberation between people who seemed basically in agreement neglected the basic conflicts inherent in social life. Furthermore, the tensions involved in treating citizens as partners, and in emphasizing enhanced legitimacy of programmes and policies as the specific goal of interactive processes, were too often neglected. As pointed out in Berry et al. (1993) and Hanna and Folke (1996), societal groups that did not show basic support for the proposals were easily denied access. Singleton (2000) argued that in such processes the general interest can easily be forgotten, to the profit of partial interests. It has furthermore been argued that, as a result, these interactive policy processes are likely not to fit 'good' practices in policy-making (Ophuls and Boyan, 1992).

At the beginning of the new millennium the Dutch government believed that the population was as complacent and satisfied with the achievements as they were themselves. However, in reality a latent anger existed among the population, about a government that did not take care of law and order and was too lenient on delinquents. At the end of 2001 this latent dissatisfaction among the population obtained a voice in the populist leader Fortuyn, and electoral support for his ideas in 2002 marked the beginning of a change in priorities again. This is seen, for instance, in the recent zero-tolerance policies of the police, or the renewed attention to control and maintenance of laws.

Conclusions

This article has investigated developments in interactive policy-making in the Netherlands. Four different models of interactive policy-making have been distinguished, based on two variables, namely congruent versus antagonistic interests, and (dis)parity of power. In a longitudinal analysis on the dominance of these models in policy-making processes in the Netherlands, it has been argued that the four models are not all equally dominant throughout the period under investigation; they became dominant one after another. The analysis started in the early 1950s, when policy-makers surmised a large distance between the visible and desirable behaviour of the population and therefore between different interests. Policy-makers saw the population mainly as a subject. Interaction was based on policies intended to correct the behaviour of the target group, on the basis of a hierarchical relationship. In the following era interest groups based on ideological differences come to the fore and were taken seriously. We then argued that in the 1980s a new model became dominant, in which citizens' role was mainly that of clients and government's role was that of a service provider. The underlying assumption was that both had the same interests, namely the improvement of service provision. The last decade of the century witnessed a government that increasingly saw societal groups as partners, especially the business leaders but to some extent also the population at large.

Of course one can ask why this specific sequence occurred and why model 1 was replaced by model 2 and not by model 3 or 4. It was argued previously (De Vries, 1999, 2002) that the basic values underlying the dominant policy-making processes in each period materialized in specific ways. The short-term perspective of the early post-war period together with a shortage of financial means resulted in policy solutions that were penny-wise but pound foolish. The long-term perspective dominant in the second period, the 1950s, materialized in standardization and welfare production and neglected that there are differences between people. The outcome of that period was not so much the conflicting relation between government and society – this remained latent. The real outcome was that societal groups were not taken seriously and did not feel they were being taken seriously. The dominant value at the beginning of the 1960s became that the people should be 'elevated' and non-material goals should be pursued. Hence the third period of the 1960s was dominated by antagonistic, but more horizontal, relations between government and societal groups. The problem that resulted from this process was that too much conflict originated which could not be controlled because the societal groups were very strong. This resulted in the fourth period in which congruence of interests was emphasized and the power of interest groups diminished. The relation between government and societal groups became wholly reversed. This resulted in the solution that conflict had to be contained and the relations became more vertical again, comparable to those between service providers and customers. Therefore, the reason for this specific sequence has to be sought in the problems resulting from the dominant type of interaction in the previous period which were seen as the solution to the problems of the preceding period.

The analysis does not suggest that in each period only one type of relation existed. The Dutch government did not only provide services in the 1980s, or only

steer hierarchically in the 1950s. The argument is that the dominance of specific types of interaction between policy-makers and societal groups can be pinpointed to fixed periods. The sequential dominance was argued by pointing to the procedural, information, institutional, consultative and restructuring measures taken by the Dutch government. The other models of interaction were not absent, but neglected.

This *neglect* at least partly explains the shifts from one dominant model to another. When one stresses harmony and congruence of interests for too long, too much, and neglects potential conflicts of interest, the neglected side is bound to become pressing and to become the determining factor of interaction in the subsequent period. The same goes for hierarchy and horizontal relations. Stressing the hierarchy in a relation neglects possible cooperation to achieve a common goal or to reduce potential drawbacks in policy proposals. On the other hand, when one neglects hierarchy, one neglects the fact that in every society there is unwanted behaviour which needs to be monitored, controlled, steered and punished.

A major consequence of our approach is that it suggests that a specific form of interactive policy-making lasts only for a limited period, because it is one-sided and neglects other important aspects contributing to the quality of policy processes. This is contrary to the idea that one can make predictions about future developments by extrapolating from current tendencies. Our research suggests that in order to make predictions it might be more profitable to investigate – according to the ‘relative attention paradigm’ – what is currently neglected most, and for how long it received inadequate attention. The ultimate implication is that the ‘new’ practices of governance, visible in recent years, will in all likelihood have a limited duration too, and perhaps their end is already in sight. The neglect of hierarchy and of the possibility of conflicting interests implies, for instance, that model A, i.e. the governability model, may well again become the dominant mode in policy processes in years to come.

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