

De omwenteling die niet kwam: verkenning van het bestuursbeleid bij het ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken, 1969-2009

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Summary

'The turning point that did not come', *Exploring Internal Affairs Policies of the Ministry of the Interior 1969 - 2009*

Subject matter and method of enquiry

In order to improve our insight in public policy making, this book presents the results of extensive research into the *polity-theory* of the policy making sub-system around the Dutch Ministry of the Interior in the period between 1969 and 2009.

A *polity-theory* is a species of policy theories, i.e. the (often implicit) set of beliefs and reasonings of policy makers about the fundamental character and relationships of their subject matter. When this subject matter concerns the nature of public governance itself we speak about a *polity-theory*.

The main research question is: *how did the polity-theory of those participants of the political sub-system dealing with the structure and functioning of public administration in the Netherlands develop?* We call these dealings (meta-policies) Internal Affairs. Do these fundamental ideas follow the actual developments in society or are the Ministry and its allies pursuing a logic of their own?

These developments are described by political scientists. Many scholars of public administration adhere to academic views (theories) about the empirical developments between government and society.

Thus we could reformulate our research question to the following: to what extent does the mainstream *polity-theory* of Internal Affairs reflect the predominant academic theory on the structure and functioning of public administration.

This query presupposes the focused development of a consistent *polity-theory* within the Ministry.

Additional research questions are therefore: were there systematic efforts to update the ideas about governing in this period when the world changed dynamically? And were these theoretical views reflected in the practical policies of the Ministry? All these questions are about organisational learning.

Furthermore, the study explores other policy making domains surrounding the Ministry of Internal Affairs in order to question the often heard suggestion that this (sub)system had specific inclinations that discerned it from other systems. These domains are: the political scene in parliament and relevant parliamentary committees, a spending department like the Ministry of Agriculture, and the practice in local government.

First, we look for a point of reference to which the development of the *polity-theory* can be compared. For this purpose (in chapter 2) we turn to the mainstream discourse within academic theories about public administration. About the science of public administration within the Netherlands, which dates back to roughly the same period as is covered by this study, several historical overviews have been published (e.g. QANU, 2005; Boin, e.a., 2004; Snellen, 2007). In these studies we found as predominant the above mentioned central thesis about a *shift from government to governance*, which was first developed in Rotterdam University in the nineties. It can also be recognised in public policy literature worldwide (Scharpf, 1994; March and Olsen, 1995; Rhodes, 1997; Maintz, 1999; Peters and Pierre, 2000; Salamon, 2002; Kjaer, 2004; Folke Schuppert, 2007; Fischer, 2006). Kjaer (2004: 41) even refers to 'The Dutch school of governance'. This theory implies that for a growing number of complex issues topdown bureau-centric policy making is no longer possible. The traditional working methods of hierarchy and vertical instructions

following pre-arranged political plans are not suitable in areas of high uncertainty and characterized by mutual interdependence of many actors.

It is self-evident that in many respects government institutions and practices are influenced by this development. At the same time it is clear that the traditional government-mode' is still useful in many situations and remains tempting for public officials, because it leads to swift and seemingly rational decisions. The postulated shift refers to a relative change in the relationship between government and society, which challenges the traditional attitudes within the administration.

In this present study the distinction between government and governance modus is being elaborated on in a number of operational criteria to test whether the policies of the Ministry concerning the structure and functioning of public administration reflects the same shift.

How does a set of ideas, a policy theory or polity-theory, reveal itself in day-to-day practice of public policy making? Chapter 3 is devoted to methodology. The analysis of the discourse within the sub-system offers an appropriate method for this purpose. In this study the stories that are told and the language in the documents of the different projects are analysed in order to classify the type of policy theory that lies behind these texts, but discourse does not limit itself to language, it also contains practices. Discourse is defined here as 'classification of language and practices within a preset dichotomy of ideas, that give meaning to the activities of policy makers'.

Discourse analysis is a well developed research method within social sciences. Here the approach of Maarten Hajer and Willemijn Dicke, who applied discourse analysis in a specific manner in their research (Hajer, 1993; Dicke, 2001) is followed, They make a distinction between different clear cut 'story-lines' with which the policy approaches in the field can be classified.

Here is where the distinction between the two modes, *government* and *governance*, comes in. We classify the discourse in a number of new projects that have come up in the Ministry of the Interior to change the system of government by characterising them as either government or governance oriented. For this purpose four criteria are used:

1. the goal of the policy is directed to consolidation of power and well discerned responsibility in central polities or it is aimed to enhance coproduction and cooperative problem solving capacity;
2. the steering approach in the project is hierarchical or horizontal;
3. the stance on democracy is favouring representative forms of democracy or also opening up to participative democracy;
4. the gathering of information is based on the rational causal relationships epistemology or relies on learning by doing and experiments. Van Gunsteren (2006) makes the distinction between reasoning from Analysis to Instruction and reasoning from Variety to Selection.

Each of these preferences revealed in the discourse of the projects corresponds with either a *government*- or a *governance*-inclination. Some projects show a mixed outcome, with some elements of the opposite approach. To conclude the research, all projects were assigned a score to categorise their approach: A = government; A - =government with some governance-elements; B = governance; B - = governance with some government-elements. If during a certain period more than half of the projects switched from A to B and if this orientation continued for a longer period (institutionalised), we conclude that the postulated 'shift' took place.

Furthermore, this study establishes the extent to which each project appears to be sustainable and is institutionalised in the legal system of the Dutch public sector. We assume that the *polity-theory* which is connected with projects that are implemented and institutionalised is likely to be the hegemonial or mainstream theory of the Ministry and its allies. From the developments of the discourse in the subsequent new projects and its sustainability in the institutions the changing pattern of the dominant *polity-theory* can be deduced.

In order to establish the nature of innovation in the different projects the concepts developed by Hogwood and Peters (1993) are applied. Some projects represent completely new issues and approaches in the policies of the Ministry, others are adaptations or replacements of already ongoing policies.

Finally, of each project an assessment is made whether evaluation has taken place, and if so whether this was done in a way that implies organisational learning. Subsequently, conclusions can be drawn about the existence of a dynamic and vital system of *polity-theory* development within the sub-system of Internal Affairs.

The contribution of each project to the *polity-theory* is assessed in four categories:

- large impact and dynamically updated by external influences (1);
- large impact but stable regardless of developments in the environment (2);
- little impact, but dynamically subject to external influences by updating (3);
- little impact and relatively inert from external influences (4).

This methodology was applied to cases where important new projects and policy innovations were introduced. We found 24 examples in five different fields of Internal Affairs. It is important to stress that these cases were not a random selection, but contained virtually all projects where the Ministry made a significant turn to new ideas or new methods. If anywhere, possible shifts could be found here. These policy fields are:

- organisational structure of government (municipalities, provinces);
- intergovernmental relations and decentralisation of responsibilities between tiers of government;
- qualitative impulses in local government to cope with disadvantaged areas;
- qualitative impulses in local government on information systems;
- organisation of central government.

The investigations of the projects are based on documents, interviews and literature and are focused on stories, factual developments, descriptions and evaluations. These are characterised according to the criteria of this research described above. A discussion of the analysis of these projects is presented in chapters 5 to 9.

Empirical data about projects in Internal Affairs

Before elaborating on the 24 projects an overview is given of the internal organisation of the Ministry (chapter 4).

The systematic development of constructive policies about the structure and functioning of government goes back to around 1969. In that year a 'green paper' on the organisation of local government appeared, based on extensive scientific research and developing a blueprint for a coherent subdivision of the country in new tiers of government. In the same period a committee of experts appointed by the Dutch government reported on the fundamental problems of ministerial coordination within central government and came with proposals for a new division of tasks between Ministries.

Between 1969 and 2009, seven substantial internal reorganisations within the Ministry of the Interior took place, as a result of which the different departments of the Ministry have been put together in the same directorate for one or more periods of time. This implies two things: a. there is a close coherence between the departments so that their configuration seems to be interchangeable; b. the frequent reorganisations suggest that the management must have been uncertain about the best course of action.

Another fact highlighted in this study is the frequent changes of political leadership. During the 40 years this study spans 25 ministers came into office. Among them only one minister stayed for more than 4 years, although taking part in three different cabinets. Presumably, not much political steering can be expected with such volatile presence of less than 2 years per minister. Some *staatssecretarissen* (junior ministers) had a better track record and are told to have been more influential, notably mr. Wim Polak (1974-1978) and mrs. Dieuwke de Graaff-Nauta (1986-1994).

In terms of organisational culture a tension is found between two kinds of civil servants: the 'doctrine-developers' and the 'coordinators in the field'. The latter civil servants were confronted with different contingent arrangements in different sectors of government, whereas the first type of civil servants clung to the uniform standards for the government as a whole. Of course the coordinating civil servants also had to bring the message about the standard doctrine of the

Ministry, but they were naturally more inclined to see the historical and pragmatic reasons for tailor-made solutions in their area of work.

Description of the cases

Field 1. Organisational structure of local government (municipalities, provinces)

This chapter studies the attempts to restructure local government. These projects aimed at reformulating the institutional framework for local government, three of which tried to define new entities for the middle tier of local government and two others worked on the modes of cooperation between and within local government. Only the latter project succeeded.

Three major attempts have been made in 1976-1983, 1992-1994 and 2005-2007 respectively to fundamentally change the size, tasks and position of the provinces, the middle tier of Dutch government. All of them failed. The first two of these projects succeeded in getting legislation passed, but were aborted in the last stage of implementation. The latter did not even reach the stage of parliamentary approbation. The first two were based on the idea of transferring operational tasks from (often cooperating) municipalities to a compact regional entity (‘do-province’) on a scale of large agglomerations or coherent regions. The latter was heading to large regions, combining several existing provinces to five parts of the Netherlands, creating a competitive relationship between provincial and state level.

One project was an exploratory study in a special expert committee about co-operative government, regulations that would be necessary in order to make arrangements and to foster agreements between different public stakeholders on fields that transcend each organisation's competence. Also, this project led to a report and entailed some interesting discussion among experts, but not to any institutional effect. Even the concept (‘complementary governance’) that was used in the title of the report has become obsolete in present-day jargon.

Remarkable is that, although all projects were directed to more effective problem solving in collective issues, none of these projects involved participation of the private sector or of midfield social organisations, e.g. social welfare institutions, schools and hospitals, which are essential co-producers for collective services.

One reformative project that was studied in this field dealt with intra-governmental relations between councils and boards (around 2000). This project was a success. It resulted in legislation and implementation within the timeframe of one cabinet period. This project improved the checks and balances between local government and the councils by separating responsibilities. This ‘Dualisation’ process had specific care for a fitted implementation process in each municipality. A team in which also civil servants of the Ministry of the Interior participated, went to the town halls and learned about the practical situation in the field of local government. This was one of the few instances where the link between *The Hague* and local practice was established, thereby fulfilling a criterion for the governance-type of information-gathering. On the other hand, the concept of democracy in the Dualisation project referred to representative democracy only.

For the rest, the scores based on the four research criteria in all the projects of this field were *government*-oriented, even though in this field, a less technocratic and top down approach in preparing and implementing policies could have been possible. The project about Complementary governance might be considered an exception to the government approach, although the report was mainly a product of technocratic administrative thinking. Moreover, the complete failure of this report to be turned into law, and the arguments to keep it that way, reveal the predominant inclination of the Ministry.

Striking is the fact that of all these projects only the successful Dualisation-legislation was evaluated, even extensively, and none of the others was.

Field 2. Intergovernmental relations and decentralisation of responsibilities between tiers of government

This field contains one general innovation to start a coordinating activity to intervene in the products of other Ministries concerning local government activities, one project which introduced general covenants between the national associations of local governments and central government, four new methods to promote decentralisation and one project that reflected on the effects of decentralisation. A last innovative project focused on the extent to which differentiation between municipalities would be possible and advisable.

Around 1980 the Ministry changed its mission from being a passive spectator and executive of centralising legislation in all sectors to a coordinator of intergovernmental relations and a protagonist of decentralisation in the domain of other Ministries. The adoption of this objective was one of the major changes in the position and ideology of the Ministry and a very influential leading rationale for most of its activities, also in other fields.

Specific projects for decentralisation succeeded each other with different methods and approaches. For this study a few of these changing strategies were analysed. Some of them were not top down, experimental even, like the 'D'project'. This project accepted proposals by individual municipalities or provinces, but in the end this project only headed towards universal realisation of proposals favoured by some local governments. Another project called Decentralisation-impulse, consisted of real negotiations between local and central government, to transfer more power to local authorities in exchange for the acceptance of budget-cuts.

Both projects implied a broadening of the playground, introduction of more committed players and more serendipity in the process than simple proposing new decentralisation options within the cabinet, from the one Ministry to the other.

For the purpose of this research it is interesting to see the translation in the D'-project of the Scandinavian *Frikommuner* concept in the Dutch context of standardised government: free zones where the municipality could select its own regime to experiment with and more experimenting with differentiated regulation than national legislative proposals. The Dutch project made reverse choices. The powerful Dutch Association of Dutch Municipalities VNG is not keen to differentiate by allowing privileges to some of its members.

Since 1987, Central Government, the VNG and the Interprovincial platform (IPO) pledge their common insights about intergovernmental relations in General Covenants. In 1994 they tried to switch to more specific covenants about urgent issues. The products of these covenants were mostly worded in general terms, i.e. did not consist of tailor-made local or regional negotiations with individual municipalities and provinces about their specific problems.

The policy on intergovernmental relations was remarkably consistent during most of the research period. Decentralisation programs, combining and shifting specific grants to the General Grant for local government funding and general codes of conduct in Covenants were repeated over and over again, even when the original urgency was long gone. Nevertheless, there was a period between 1995 and 2000 when the spirit of innovation was at its peak within the department for intergovernmental relations.

A study about the effects of decentralisation (Fleurke cum suis 1997) pointed out that the presupposed effects of decentralisation were not reached automatically: promises like integrated democratic decision making, tailor-made solutions and more citizens' participation require adequate local government capabilities, which are often not available. Fleurke advised that central government should accompany decentralisation with efforts to help effective implementation. This evaluation study made the Ministry reflect upon its decentralisation policies so far and led to the project 'Decentralisation with care', focusing on the specific requirements of each social problem rather than working with standardised arrangements and facilitating local government to take appropriate action. As it turned out, this view did not last and was abandoned at the beginning of the 21st century.

This present study adds that ideas for such experimentation, exchange of experiences between local politicians and local civil servants were often tried by Internal Affairs, but prematurely came to an end after some time.

In general, we conclude that ambitions in the field of intergovernmental relations was high and at the same time predominantly aimed at strengthening or restoring the government-modus of public administration: clear cut responsibilities and more power to local centers of public decision making, fostering local representative democracy and standardised arrangements for the whole country. Civil society or the market sector was hardly ever a partner in this policy field. Of the eight projects in this field six obtained an A or A - score. There were also two B's ('Decentralisation with care' and 'Differentiation', but these did not reach the institutionalisation phase.

Evaluation and theorisation of the challenges of intergovernmental relations did at some point take place, but hardly influenced the *polity-policy* of the Ministry.

Field 3. Qualitative impulses in local government to cope with disadvantaged areas

The next two chapters deal with projects which intervened in the policies of local governments, assisting them to cope with new challenges and deprivations. Field 3 focuses on deprivations, field 4 deals with challenges offered by information and communication technologies (ICT's).

In 1980 a first large task that emerged from new social challenges of modern society was allocated to the Ministry of the Interior: integration of ethnic minority groups. This challenge was perceived first and foremost on the local level. Municipalities had to be prepared for this task. The activities were not confined to a single sector such as housing, education, social welfare, etcetera, but included them all. This was the main reason why it was considered an administrative challenge and why Internal Affairs was selected as the locus for this policy. The directorate for the integration of Minorities was founded in 1980 with ample means and, possibly as a result of that, soon became over bureaucratized. The project from this directorate which was selected for this study, the Policy for Neighbourhoods with Cumulating Problems ('PCG'), shows the influence of its placement between local government policies. The project concluded that problems of ethnic minorities could best be coped with by impulses in specific neighbourhoods. So plans, money and freedom to act, with less interference from central sectorial regulations would be the instruments for these neighborhoods. The PCG-project was gradually developed since 1985, but soon overtaken by successive policy projects elaborating on the same theme: Social Renewal and Big Cities Programs. These projects are among those examined here.

'Social Renewal' was a major project of the Centre left Lubbers-Kok government which intended to show responsiveness to the citizens after the harsh budget-cuts of the eighties. The initial efforts were quite innovative for the Ministry and involved many contacts with grassroots neighbourhood activities. After two years, the project became contaminated with bureaucracy, because most effort was devoted to preparing covenants with all municipalities about their utilisation of the combined grants for deprived areas and to ensure correct accounting for the way this money was spent. The combined grants from different Ministries were seen as preceding transfer to the general grant in the Municipality Fund, administered by Internal Affairs.

A similar strategy is found in the Big Cities Program. After the Social Renewal project, lessons were learned and the program concentrated on a smaller number of municipalities with deprivation problems rather than covering all of them. Now only the big cities with real problems took part in the program, although their number soon increased from 15 to 27 (later 32), all epitomised 'Big'. Again, the problems of deprivation were pictured as curable by giving more freedom and responsibility to the city councils, while at the same time pushing them to make mid-term integrated plans for tackling the complex problems. Collecting and judging all these plans (often showing surprising similarity), cost a lot of administrative energy, but beside this yearly routine there was ample opportunity for innovation.

One of the innovations was an initiative to persuade private companies located within the cities to join the efforts for rehabilitating neighbourhoods. The idea was borrowed from a similar initiative in Minneapolis in the United States, and the promoter, Mike Brinda, was introduced by the Dutch project-leader in Rotterdam to circles of entrepreneurs in order to inspire them. Although associations of Corporate Social Responsibility were founded in some cities, Internal Affairs did not sustain its efforts and after a few years the idea of company involvement in Big Cities development

was abandoned. Such efforts, evidently of the governance type, were soon aborted and seemed alien to the policy sphere of Internal Affairs. In the end, the whole project for Big Cities Policies was taken away from the Ministry of the Interior, as had happened earlier in 2002 with integration of ethnic minorities. The Ministry had been successful in the sense that the spending Ministries were no longer hostile to each other so that one of them could be made responsible for coordinating the project, but this eventually meant that these tasks were taken away from the Ministry of the Interior.

This field produced interesting experiences: mixed adoption teams, composed of municipal and multi-departmental members, went troubleshooting in neighbourhoods; citizens were encouraged to take initiatives and get subsidies for their plans in deprived areas directly from the Ministry. Such activities may have helped to give the civil servants a better sense of practices on the ground level, but again all these instruments were temporary and they did not have lasting influence in a *polity-theory* of the Ministry. Scores were divided equally among A's and B's, but no governance-oriented projects lasted.

Evaluation has taken place more frequently in this field, although the focus of these assessments was more directed at the results of the efforts than at the process within the organisation.

Field 4 qualitative impulses in local government on information systems

Another field where Internal Affairs felt the urge to intervene into the activities of local government was that of information systems. Two large innovative projects (BBI and GBA) investigated into old routines of local government that urgently needed modernisation. Two other projects were devoted to better service delivery to citizens with modern ICT-related methods (Quality instruments and Management of Chains).

The first project concerned the production of yearly budgetary reports. A study by Twente University in 1985 pointed out that local councils were hardly able to understand these products of their financial departments. An ambitious project from Internal Affairs about Policy and Control Instruments (BBI), alarmed by this threat to the major democratic functions to make budget decisions and to achieve transparency of spending, aimed at upgrading the quality of these financial reports. This again suggests that Internal Affairs was highly sensitive to threats of representative democracy. The project also had governance-like aspects, because civil servants of the Ministry made a tour of municipalities and had more contact with the local practice to see what really happened there, and why. However after a few years, in 1988, the implementation of the jointly developed Policy and Control Instruments was left to the market of consultancy and the lifeline between local practicalities and the policy center in The Hague was cut.

Another large project was the automation of the population registers. The core choice was between a central register or decentralised registration of the population by municipalities within a common framework and with possibilities to exchange data. After two years of study, the second option was chosen and translated into a system design, logical design and into complete legislation. GBA (Municipal Population Administration) became one of the few successes of the Ministry. The process was topdown and based upon rational planning, but left executive power and direct control on the ground level to local government.

The two preceding projects scored A - and the next two B - on the scale from government to governance.

Other quality improvement projects were more temporary and experimental. For example, quality safeguards in service provision were sought by concentrating service delivery to a single counter in the municipality. Also the development of explicit service standards was promoted. Following New Public Management ideas, the customer approach was introduced by exchanging best practice between pioneering local governments.

A last example examined here is the so called Management of Chains project, which portrayed public services as a chain of different government professionals adding value to a single individual person or group rather than a one-to-one service delivery. This vision implied cooperation between a network of professionals, a working method that sharply distinguished itself from the contemporary silo-organisation of public service. In order to promote chain management, Internal

Affairs installed a knowledge center and invited all relevant partners to join and to learn from each other. This method is typical for all projects where Internal Affairs tried to introduce and stimulate new methods of governance.

Similarly typical is the pattern that all these projects (half of them were ended long before a substantial number of local governments had adopted and implemented these new governance methods. This resulted in a series of novelties endorsed by the Ministry for a limited period of time and then left aside again. The pattern, occurring over and over again, adds to the impression that the mainstream polity policy of the Ministry is government- rather than governance-oriented. Moreover, it leads to the conclusion that no substantive change of the *polity-theory* based on ongoing developments in society and public administration has taken place. Neither is there any sign of systematic efforts to develop and update the *polity-theory* by making use of evaluation and feedback studies.

Field 5. The organisation of central government

In this field three projects, or rather clusters of activities following a core idea about central government, were investigated. The first was the reorganisation, or rather rationalisation, of central government in the 80s. The second followed in the 90s and was directed at privatisation and autonomisation of public service organisations. The third concerned the idea that representative democracy is no longer the only way to legitimise decisions, which idea entails process-management and interactive policy making.

One of the first issues of Internal Affairs tackled by public policies was the organisation and coordination of central government. In the 60s and 70s the welfare state had produced a large and multi-departmental bureaucracy where coordination and integration of multiple government policies were the biggest problems. Three state committees were formed around these issues, which strongly influenced the *polity-theory* of the Ministry in the earliest days of policy development. The main views of the largest of these committees, named after its chair Vonhoff-committee (1980), were considered to be outdated even at that time (Van der Heijden, 1990: 207) and did not go beyond traditional ideas of rational planning and concentration of policy development in large coherent areas. As a result, hardly any of the recommendations of this Vonhoff-commission were implemented. A remarkable fact is that the Government Commissioner, Herman Tjeenk Willink, who had been added to the commission and stayed as a guest at the Ministry for a few more years to look after implementation, had been giving authoritative advice with quite a different outlook on state problems. He stressed the network character of policy making and the importance of fostering relations with civil society. This governance type message did however not influence the main decision makers and after some time Tjeenk Willink moved to even higher offices.

The important wave of change that did have some influence followed in the 90's after the New Public Management school arrived on the European continent. This stood for privatisation and the formation of agencies detached from the policy center. This innovation, however, did not start in the Ministry of the Interior, but with the Ministry of Finance, which aimed at more efficiency in public services. It was only a few years later that Internal Affairs took over, but from another perspective: better functioning of the core policy center and of ministerial responsibility, which was often overloaded with operational details.

In this field, the Ministry found itself trapped into one of the paradoxes of its own theory. In order to be effective as a watchdog or even a leading advisor for improvement in the operation of services and policy making it would be forced to meddle into the affairs of other ministries, which would conflict with one of its own principles of ministerial responsibility. Here again, its dealings with the reorganisation processes of major public service provision- and control-institutions remained too superficial and general in nature to influence *polity-theory*. The starting point, ministerial responsibility towards democratic representation, and the method of intervention, legislation and general guidelines, suited government better than governance. The Ministry remained constantly doubtful about this privatisation and autonomisation of public service organisations and at one point

even an expert committee advised to bring them all under direct supervision of ministers again, but by this time (2004) this was far too late. The process had become irreversible.

Another subject Internal Affairs tried to deal with, was citizens' participation. Here, the Ministry was not the first and most important policy maker. The Ministries of Transportation and Water Management, of Housing, Planning and Environment and of Agriculture and Nature Management had started pilot projects with citizen's participation before. Because this topic related to public policy making, the Ministry of Internal Affairs felt tempted to step into this field, which was a clear example of the governance approach. At the same time, however, the Ministry, being closely related to parliamentary politics, felt reluctant to fully express its support for participative democracy. This is shown on many occasions where the Ministry did not answer questions on the subject from the House of Commons. This in itself is quite uncommon, but on these occasions Parliament itself failed to ask for follow up. In the political arena, citizens' participation appeared to be an uneasy subject, if not a taboo. Nevertheless, on the administrative level the Ministry pursued learning activities with municipalities to exchange experiences and new practices for citizens participation, also in cooperation with other Ministries. This field of exploration looked promising for helping develop an up to date *polity-theory*, because it opened up relationships with of civil society and other stakeholders than government. However, for this purpose sustainable influx of new ideas about the relationship between government and society within the organisation must be established. And so far (2009) this did not occur.

To conclude findings in this field, two projects were of the A type and one B, of which the latter did not reach institutional status yet.

Concluding on the polity-theory of Internal Affairs

The combined results of the discourse analysis in all 24 projects are shown in this table.

Field 1 Organisational structure of government (municipalities, provinces)

Project	I Type of change	II Evaluato n	III Character of <i>Polity- theory</i> ¹⁾	IV Follow up; institutio nalisation	V Indication for shift (combining columns I, II en III)	VI Contribution to <i>Polity theory</i> ²⁾
	Hogwo od& Peters					
1 Reorgan. do-provinces	successio n	-	A	-	No	2
2 Complementary co-op.	innovation	-	A -	-	No	4
3 Urban provinces	adaptation	-	A	-	No	4
4 Combined provinces	successio n	+	A -	+	Not really	3
5 Dual checks/balances	adaptation					

Field 2 Intergovernmental relations and decentralisation

6. Coördinating Role	innovation	- ?	A	+	No	1
7. Offensive	adaptation	+	A	+	No	2
Decentr.policy	adaptation	-	A	+	No	2
8. Specific Grants	successio	+	A -	+	Not really	2
9. Covenants	n	±	A -	-	No	4
10. Dutch Frikommuner	adaptation	-	A	-	No	4
11. Decentralis.- Impulse	adaptation	-	B	-	No	3
12. Decentr.reconsidered	successio	-	B	-	No	4
13. Differentiation	n	?				

Field 3&4 Qualitative interventions in local government in disadvantaged areas and information systems

14. Minorities integration	?	±	A -	± / -	No	4
15. Social Renewal	succession	+	B -	± / -	No	3
16. Big Cities Policy	adaptation	+	A -	+	Not really	3
17. CSR in cities	innovation	+	B	+	No	4
18. BBI/Single Audit	adaptation	-	A -	+	No	4
19. ICT-policies/GBA	adaptation	-	A -	+	Not really	2
20. Quality instruments	succession	-	B -	-	No	3
21. Chain Management	innovation?	-	B	-	No	4

Field 5 Organisation of central government

22. Reorganisation Rijk	innovation	+	A	-	No	2
23. Agency formation	succession	-	A	+	No	4
24. Interactive process	innovation	+	B	± / -	No	3
	?					

1) A = government; B = governance; A - and B - = elements of both
2) 1 = large and dynamic; 2 = large and stable; 3 = small, but dynamic; 4 = small and stable

Of the 24 cases about half were successful, in the sense that they reached the stage of institutionalisation and implementation. One case (number 13) did hardly reach the stage of official policy-making, although an official project about differentiation was started in 2006, but at the brink of a new cabinet in 2007 it was abolished again. The idea of one standard-type of municipality is deeply rooted in the Dutch administrative system, another symptom of government-thinking.

This 50% score does not mean that the projects that were institutionalized also had a sustainable influence on the *polity-theory* (vision) of the Ministry. In order to reach that stage, it would have been necessary to evaluate and reflected on the impact for the relation between government and society and on the implications for the mission and organisation of the Ministry. As column I b shows, this seldom was the case. The the lack of evaluation studies indicate that all these new projects with their often disruptive confrontations with reality were not used as building bricks for the steady development of a sustainable *polity-theory*. Moreover column V suggests that projects that effectively had influence on the *polity-theory* of the Ministry were relatively petrified, not updated by the confrontation with external influences on the ground.

Remarkable is that almost all governance projects were a once-off experiment. Even those that were successful or sometimes returned much later in a different shape or in a different Ministry, as *Wijkaanpak* (empowered neighborhoods), which was a lookalike of Social renewal 20 years later, was developed in the Ministry of the Environment VROM.

Discourse in the ministerial system, revealed by both examined language and performed practices, indicates that the turmoil created by individualisation, emancipation, fragmentation, complexity hardly had substantive influence on the development of a new *polity-theory*. Certainly no shift has taken place from government to governance, as predicted by the academic side of the public administration community.

It seems that the basic ideas of the Ministry were solidly founded in the seventies, an era where rational planning bloomed, and have never really changed since. When split up in periods of time according to chapter 4, one period (1994 - 2002) shows a majority of new projects of a governance nature, but because they did not last through durable institutionalisation, also this period did not contribute to a real shift. It was no more than a try. These projects were efforts and signs of a changing tide, but they were overruled by other developments: new public management, political populism and mediocracy, to name a few. Hierarchical ties were fastened and short term straightforward solutions prevailed. However, alternative ways of thinking went on, but outside the mainstream discourse of the Ministry and its related sub-system.

It is remarkable that only 8 of the 24 cases were politically instigated. There was ample opportunity for civil servants to start innovative projects. In terms of Hogwood and Peters (1993) the inclination towards innovation was quite high. Many new projects however, especially those tending to a governance mode ended prematurely, never to restart again. This means that the need for experimentation with alternative *polity-theories* was felt, but at the same time the incorporation of governance elements in the mainstream *polity-theory* failed during the research period 1969-2009. Many examples of network governance in these projects tended to fade away over time, straddled by bureaucratic elements. For instance, in Social renewal and Integration of ethnic minorities this mechanism was pre-eminent.

In short, yes, there were tendencies to introduce network-governance elements in new policy projects, but they were not incorporated into the mainstream *polity-theory* of the Ministry.

Before continuing our main line of argument, we respond to possible reasoning which state that other mechanisms are at work than those obstructing a shift from government to government. The line of reasoning could be that the Ministry acts purposefully in these projects. For instance, the inclination towards the government approach would coincide with the sheer purpose of the Ministry to foster the general interest, upholding the democratic maintained by a strong government against partial interests in public organisations and against centrifugal tendencies in society. This natural preference might account for its inclination to structure-building with concentrated responsibilities. Another suggestion would be that the Ministry deliberately jumps from the one innovative impulse to the next, leaving further implementation to local partners and not sticking to a single method for too long until the stage of routinisation, which would be at odds with innovation. Several objections against such explanations can be made.

Firstly, the policies of the Ministry does not support the impression of such strategic planning, neither has there been a neatly complementary succession of projects, in order to absorb insights progressively in the same line of thought. Most projects just come and go.

Secondly, even deliberate policies aiming at a strong bureaucentric government, would have to take into account that these objectives can only be reached effectively when they incorporate real developments in society, including co-creation in networks, participative tendencies in democracy, notably uncertainties and interdependencies in public decision making.

During our research, we noticed that policy makers thought ambiguously about *polity-theories*. We saw that very clearly in the position of the director-general Brinkman, who advocated Complementary policy making but finally chose to kill his darling in favour of decentralisation and the creation of new provinces. This ambiguity in human thinking is considered to be an amendment to the discourse analysis practice, that suggests that the position of actors can be assessed unequivocally by the language they use (Van der Arend, 2007: 27 ff).

Looking more closely, we found an interesting regularity in the moments where the Ministry of the Interior intervened on a large scale in the practices of local governments contrasted with periods where it abstained from such activities. These periods of approximately three years seem to alternate, which can be explained by the tension between the necessity to correct defects in local government and the doctrine of local autonomy, professed by the Ministry. The coincidental pattern of alternation could be regarded as a rather elegant way to tackle this dilemma.

Comparison with other domains of policy making

In the next chapters (11 to 13), the available relevant literature has been analysed to find indications of a possible shift from government to governance in three different domains adjacent to Internal Affairs:

- politicians in parliament,
- a spending department: in case Agriculture and
- local government, the natural grass root-supporters of the Ministry.

Unlike the research on the cases in the Ministry of the Interior, these comparative studies are merely based on the available literature.

Domain politicians in parliament

Politicians whose ideas are described here are divided between those observant politicians reflecting on their particular profession and the members of the parliamentary commission on Internal affairs, taking a specific stand on the issues the Ministry dealt with.

The memoirs and other documents about the first group (notably Jeekel, 1998; Enthoven, 2011) revealed that in general the culture in parliament was less open and innovative than in the Ministries.

The second group tended to ask the Ministry to be even stricter, in a vertical government sense. Especially when it came to participative forms of democracy, the interaction between the Ministry and parliament appears to have been quite touchy (Schrijver and Van Zuylen, 2010). Quite a few promises made by the Ministry to elaborate on this subject were never realized, but parliament did not come back to it.

Domain spending department: in case Agriculture

The Ministry of Agriculture was selected for comparison, because so many academic studies have been devoted to this Ministry (Hoetjes, 1993; Frouws, 1993; Termeer, 1993, Bekke e.a., 1994; Wielinga, 2001; Kickert & Van der Meer, 2007). It is interesting to see that the history of this Ministry has been so different compared to the Ministry of the Interior. After World War II, Agriculture was a network organisation, firmly related to one sector of the economy: farmers and fishermen. In the eighties this politically uneasy coalition came in a crisis when the minister covered up a fishermen's fraud too long. The minister had to resign and the Ministry experienced a somersault ('salto mortale', Bekke, 1994). New ministers brought the organisation back on track, opening up relationships with environmentalists and focusing on food safety and sustainability. More crises had to be overcome, like a manure problem and an epidemic of pig disease.

Although some interesting innovations started in this Ministry, like the Innovation Network Agribusiness and the Agency to service land and water-management, working on integrated landscaping, the Ministry's policy center in The Hague soon felt the pressure of the political process in a mediatised environment. Civil servants reported the restored discipline of hierarchy after 2000 (Kickert & Van der Meer, 2007). Wielinga (2000) describes a communicative (governance) paradigm from 1995 only as underflow behind the mainstream 'strategic' (power-struggle) paradigm. In the end, the whole Ministry was discarded and taken over by the Ministry of Economic Affairs.

Domain local government

About Dutch local government in the last 50 years a large number of studies is available (Gerritsen, 2011; De Boer en Van der Lans, 2011; Abma, 2012 Korsten, 2012). Apart from some general studies describing overall tendencies, many descriptions of new experiments can be found in recent literature (Tops et al., 1996; Denters et al., 1998 Hendriks & Drosterij, eds, 2012). The general descriptions either virtually ignore tendencies in the social context of mutual interdependence and uncertainties for local government, or overenthusiastically state that there is no alternative for local government than negotiating its way to co-productive decision making (Doolaard in Beckmann & Hoekema eds., 1987: 12).

From the many publications on specific municipalities engaging into experimental practices, it may be deduced that at least part of local government has been taking advantage of alternative methods of network governance. However, the general picture of all municipalities in the Netherlands is far from an overall application of interactive government throughout the organisation (Boogers & Tops, 1998; Pröpper & Kessens, 2005; Abma, 2012; Korsten, 2012). Many municipalities keep presenting themselves as rather autocratic and self-contained.

Our conclusion is that local government has gradually become very diverse, with some progressive forerunners, a larger section of pioneering experimenters and the peloton lagging behind. The diversity between local governments may have increased during the last forty years, starting with the standardised municipality, as Internal Affairs had molded it, and finally showing individual approaches of local problem solving, whereas in the same period Central government became more homogeneous. Nowadays the Dutch central government calls itself 'concern Rijk' with one logo, merging many staff functions in one single Central agency. The practice of policy making in the core offices in The Hague has become more integrated, since processes are all guided by mass-media and populist politics.

Conclusive reflections

In concluding, what possible explanations can we suggest to explain the fact that the policy theory Internal Affairs actually did not change to the extent academics in the field have predicted. There have been three possible explanations for the fact that 'the shift' did not happen? Following Kreitner and Kinicki (2008: 562), we distinguish between two internal factors (organisational relations, leadership and human resources) and external factors (like economic development and political power).

Organisation theory often finds conserving tendencies in the managing core compared to the more dynamic fringe processes of field workers in the organisation (Stacey, 1996). Our investigations in Internal Affairs, suggested that here leadership is relatively weak, leaving field workers freedom to experiment, but bringing little cohesiveness and sustainability in the activities.

Explanations about human relations stress the effects of an auto-selection process for types of civil servants, possibly more inclined to risk avoidance and diligence towards the minister (Pauka, 2001). In the Ministry of the Interior, this last explanation is not corroborated by the facts.

Power based explanations look for interest groups who benefit from keeping positions as they are. Docters van Leeuwen (Raad openbaar bestuur, 2003) ascribes the conserving tendencies in the *polity-theory* to power pressures. Moreover, the centripetal effects of the Risk society (Tommel, 2010) and a harsher political culture (Bestuurskunde, 2013, nr. 4) are pointing in the same direction.

The chapters 11 to 13 have pointed out that Internal Affairs has not been diverging from other domains of policy making, because it was more submissive to the legislative process. This study even suggests that the opportunities to switch to a governance paradigm were limited. So, would alternative policies have been feasible? The Ministry has not been protected from serious problems of effectiveness by ignoring strong contextual tendencies in society. If not by changing topics and objectives, the Ministry could at least have adjusted its methods in a complex environment that demands responsiveness to multiple actors and different perspectives. Two recent examples illustrate what went wrong here: the program 'Different Government' (Andere overheid) and the project 'Big middle tier of government' (Middenbestuur) could have benefited from another

bottom-up approach, the use of which was even advised to the Ministry at the time. Of course it is difficult to prove afterwards that these projects would have been successful if they had tried a governance mode of conduct, but it is suggested that adaptation of the *polity-theory* to the circumstances of times is prerequisite for any success in policy making.

At the same time, a peculiar conclusion imposes itself from the facts presented here. On the one hand, social developments seem to demand (post-)modern ways of conduct, while on the other hand political conditions seem to prevent acting that way. Scientists of public administration (exceptions excluded) may have ignored that even stronger forces (notably mediatised politics) were exerted to prevent the shift from government to governance from happening. In that case our study ends with the conclusion that the choices by Internal Affairs were not so disconnected as seemed at first sight, although its inability to find a suitable *polity-theory* remains a substantial drawback in the decades we explored.

At the same time, the expectation of a shift from government to governance was based on existent fundamental changes in society like individuation and fragmentation. These developments exerted real challenges to an agile public administration. Obviously our political system and human society had trouble in keeping pace with the level of complexity required by these developments, which indicates a real impasse in present-day public administration.