
Abstracts

Affirmative Action Policy of the Dutch Government

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In 1993, the Dutch government formulated a personnel hiring policy intended to give preferential treatment to women in government employment. Affirmative action was thought appropriate if in given functions the proportion of women was low in relation to the numbers of women in the overall work force qualified for these jobs. The idea was that women should not be deprived of equal chances in the labour market. In this article it is argued that this approach has certain drawbacks. A simulation conducted on the basis of female and male employment data from Dutch universities revealed that the government policy neglected to take account of 'time' as an intervening factor. This has led to an overestimation of the measure of (in)equality. Moreover, this type of preferential treatment ignores processes of gender differences with regard to values and self-selection. As an unintended consequence, unrealistic expectations emerge about the outcome of affirmative action. The conclusion is that more attention should be paid to continuous monitoring of careers as an integral part of organisational change.

Quasi-nongovernmental Organizations: Unity in Variety?

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Quasi-nongovernmental organizations (quango's) differ with respect to their assignment, legal form, historical background and relationship with the public authorities. This article deals with the question whether quango's fit into a certain typology, and whether some theoretical suppositions coherent with this typology add up with the real situation. Also the hypothesis is tested that quango's performing similar tasks are controlled by the involved Minister in a similar way.

Ineffectiveness of Governmental Public Information Campaigns through Mass Media

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The government often uses mass media for public information campaigns: to create public support for unpleasant measures, to achieve large-scale attitude changes, and to achieve behavioral changes. However, research has shown that the effects of these campaigns are often disappointing. Recent research even indicates that such campaigns can have quite the opposite effect: the study referred to showed, for example, that informing the general public about the financial costs of private car use created *less concern* about the environmental and financial consequences of car use. The conclusion is that public information as a policy instrument needs to be approached with more care.