

Abstracts

The role of the region

H.J.L. Vonhoff

The aim of this article is to contribute to the discussion about the intermediate level of government in the Netherlands. The starting point of this discussion is – unfortunately – not the working of such a level in Dutch society but the conviction that something had to be done in order to solve problems with regard to the competing power of Holland's four largest cities. The author is of the opinion that a larger scale for the organisation of provincial and local government is essential for the realisation of a decentralised government of sufficient quality. Such a development should meet the requirements of the European Union, in which the regional authorities will play a more prominent role than up to now.

The 'administrative dark matter' made transparant? A regional-geographical discussion of regions and their meso-government

G.A. Hoekveld

Reforms of governmental and territorial structures have not only juridical, organizational or managerial aspects but also regional and political geographic ones. In this article first the traditional and the modern geographical concept of regions are juxtaposed. The conclusion is that in the actual Dutch policy with regard to territorial reforms the traditional concept of region, despite its shortcomings, is embraced. Next a few regional geographic 'rules' about the relationships between administrative territorial and regional development, which function as heuristic hypotheses, are formulated. Although regions are to a certain extent producible, this wilful creation of regions generates much emotional and other costs because there is a need for establishing new internal and external relationships. These may overrule the desired efficiency that was at the base of this creation. Moreover, the consolidation of these new regions takes a long time. These aspects are insufficiently considered in the Dutch debates.

Institutions, administrations or regions in education?

A.M.L. van Wieringen

There is no regional administration for the educational sector. All the same, the regional level is important. In this paper patterns of regional educational administration are analyzed. The analysis reveals that educational administration in the legally non-compulsory sub-sector tends toward specific functional forms of organization. Links with functional administrations in other spheres of policy-making do not succeed. In the mandatory part of education functional as well as territorial forms of administrative organization are tried. It turns out that the new links with local territorial administration tend to compete with functional forms. The final outcome depends on the relative power of administrators, municipalities and the professionals in the field.

Regional administration in an international comparative perspective A.M.J. Kreukels

The essence of regionalization is not in the administrative sphere but in social and economic dynamics. The interaction between dynamic processes and the administrative sphere determines the development of the regions. The current suggestions for administrative reorganization fail to meet sufficiently the differentiation and dynamics characteristic of regionalization. Between the two primary levels of government, namely a) strong local government and b) the national authority, the provincial administration is *the* meso-government that is most suitable to support the differentiated regional developments. The great challenge on the regional level is in the combination of regional development – economic growth- and regional management – which represents other interests. The policy most suitable for this double challenge is the model of the managed growth/growth management.

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