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## **The driving forces of providing aid: How ideas and party ideologies influence foreign aid policy preferences in donor countries**

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**The driving forces of providing aid: how ideas and party ideologies influence foreign aid policy preferences in donor countries**



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## **Abstract**

Foreign aid policies vary greatly in their means and ends. Long-term development policies, aiming to promote development and welfare, distinguish from short-term humanitarian policies that respond to humanitarian emergency crises. Politicians seem to differ in their preferences, leading scholars to question how these preferences emerge. Existing literature has been focusing on theories of elite competition in explaining why states construct and implement certain policies. However, these theories seem to ignore the concept of political agency, and grant no primacy to the role of ideas and values. This thesis aims to fill this gap by asking *how party ideologies influence foreign aid policy preferences*. It employs the discursive legitimation model of Van Leeuwen (2008) to analyze Dutch parliamentary debates. Here, it is found that conservative values affect politicians to refer to authorization and rationalization when legitimizing their preferences, while liberal values work through to moral evaluation and story-telling strategies. This confirms that ideas and ideologies do matter for policy preferences.

**Key words:** foreign aid, policies, donor countries, governments, ideas, party ideologies, discursive legitimation, the Netherlands

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## Table of contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Abstract.....   | 2  |
| Acknowledgements.....   | 3  |
| Table of contents.....  | 4  |
| Introduction.....   | 5  |
| Literature review.....  | 7  |
| Competition for power, political agency, and ideas .....                  | 8  |
| Theoretical framework.....  | 9  |
| Ideology .....  | 9  |
| Values .....  | 9  |
| Conservatism.....   | 11 |
| Liberalism .....  | 11 |
| Research design .....   | 12 |
| Case.....   | 12 |
| Discourse analysis.....   | 13 |
| Data.....   | 14 |
| Operationalization.....   | 15 |
| Results.....  | 16 |
| Legitimation through authorization: an authority-based discourse .....    | 16 |
| Expertise .....   | 16 |
| Personal authority .....  | 17 |
| Laws and rules .....  | 18 |
| Legitimation through rationalization: a utilitarian-based discourse ..... | 19 |
| Legitimation through mythopoesis: a compassion-based discourse.....       | 21 |
| Legitimation through moral evaluation: a fairness-based discourse.....    | 22 |
| Evaluation .....  | 23 |
| Abstraction.....  | 24 |
| Conclusion .....  | 25 |
| Limitations .....   | 26 |
| Future research.....  | 27 |
| Bibliography .....  | 29 |
| Appendix.....   | 35 |

## **Introduction**

Governments providing foreign aid is nowadays a common, even expected, element in the relation between developed and developing states (Lancaster, 2007). Foreign aid is generally defined as a policy tool, which entails a ‘a voluntary transfer of public resources, from a government to another independent government, to an NGO, or to an international organization (...), one goal of which is to better the human condition in the country receiving the aid’ (Lancaster, 2007, p. 9). But this aspect of ‘bettering the human condition’, needs to be further nuanced. Lancaster emphasizes that although policies of humanitarian relief, economic progress, promoting democratization, addressing global problems and managing post-conflict transitions are all measures aimed at human betterment, they do need to be distinguished. This is due to the fact that they are inherently different in their means and ends. “Aid programs continue to vary greatly in their amounts, purposes, recipients, and uses” (Pomerantz, 2007). Debate exists around the most effective type of aid. It divides politicians into two categories, those supporting long-term development assistance to eliminate poverty, and those who prefer humanitarian aid to provide more rapid assistance to populations needing support (Fink & Redealli, 2009). The first is often accompanied by political conditionalities from the donor’s end, while humanitarian aid presents itself rather as unconditional, responsive to emergencies (Riddell, 2014).

Aid policies are puzzling, because of the ambiguity of its goals (Veen, 2011). Ever since the Marshall Plan after the Second World War was implemented, aid policies have been justified by rationales of national security, humanitarian contribution or market rebuilding purposes, which appears ‘compelling’ to scholars (Atwood, McPherson, Natsios, 2008, p. 124). In explaining why governments vary in their motivations, scholars have mainly been looking at interstate power relations, comparing paradigmatic theories of realism, idealism and neo-Marxism (Schraeder et al., 1998). This led them to find that for example, U.S. aid policies are mainly influenced by containment politics in their aid imbursements, while Swedish governments are driven to strengthen progressivism abroad, and Japanese policies aim to foster capitalism. The issue, however, with these conventional theories is that they tend to emphasize structures, constraints, and competition for power, while paying less attention to preferences of individual actors (Veen, 2011). They do not acknowledge governments and parties as ‘coalitions of groups with intense preferences on issues managed by politicians’ (Lewis, 2019, p. 26), hereby ignoring the idea of political agency of individuals in decision-making processes (Buckler & Dolowitz, 2012). Studying ideational factors renders it possible

to measure the motivation of politicians for constructing foreign aid policies, rather than assuming the driving factors for providing it (Veen, 2011). Scholars have examined the role of domestic politics in shaping the donor's attitude to engage with certain aid principles, such as political conditionality (Molenaers et al., 2015). However, it still remains unclear how ideas, interests and institutions affect political aid. In response to this literature gap, this thesis asks *how party ideology influences foreign aid preferences of politicians in donor countries?* It acknowledges how politicians have the capability to imbue actions with normative meaning. I employ various theories that compare liberal and conservative socio-economic values (Haidt & Graham, 2007; Hirsh, 2010; Hasson et al., 2018; Jagers et al., 2018; Schoonvelde et al., 2019; Morris, 2020; Feinberg et al., 2020). This leads to the expectation that conservatives are mainly influenced by values of authority, self-reliance and optimality of results in their preference-shaping behavior, while for liberals, values of social justice, fairness and empathy are expected to play a role.

The selected case for this study is the Netherlands, due to its leading role in the international arena. Deliberation on both developmental as well as humanitarian aid projects provides the data needed to uncover how politicians come to make certain choices (Veen, 2011). By doing a discourse analysis of parliamentary debates of the General Committee of Foreign Trade and Development, this thesis finds that conservatives mostly employ authorization and rationalization strategies, which are linked to conservative values of authority and optimality of results. Liberals are found employing strategies such as moral evaluation and mythopoesis, which reflect values of fairness and empathy. This confirms what scholars have been calling 'the primacy of the role of values and political leadership' in steering preferences and political behavior (Leggett, 2004). The nature of aid policy can indeed be explained by ideas about goals and purposes of aid (Veen, 2011). Normative values that are configured into sets of coherent ideas about the world (Lewis, 2019), play a role in determining what politicians prefer and how they behave in deliberative arenas.

Furthermore, by acknowledging the agency of politicians and the importance of values, other political processes and observations can also be measured and explained. Future research might want to focus on how ideas that shape foreign aid preferences work through to actual voting behavior, since votes are found to depend on personal economic and ideological interests (McGuire & Ohsfeldt, 1989). For recipient countries, insight in policy-making processes of donor countries might help to better adapt aid requests to ideological profiles of donor governments (Greene & Licht, 2018). This study contributes to knowledge about the moral relevance of interstate transfers of resources (Opeskin, 1996). It sheds a new light on

the normative debate whether states, and individuals, have moral obligations to help others abroad, and how existing ideologies position themselves within this debate.

### **Literature review**

Politicians, as well as scholars, are not unanimated over what type of aid is most preferable. The types of foreign aid that are most often distinguished from each other are long-term assistance programs and short-term aid supply programs (Rouleau, 2009; Fink & Redaelli, 2009; Riddell, 2014). While the first responds to ongoing structural problems, and assists in building capacity to ensure resilient community and sustainable livelihood (Humanitarian Coalition, n.d.), the second is designed mainly for humanitarian purposes, aiming ‘to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity’ (Rouleau, 2009, p. 575). Riddell (2014) worries about the latter. ‘Short-term approaches to aid-giving tend to downplay (...) evidence to indicate that some development processes – that produce tangible medium and longer-term benefits – may not show any short-term benefits and can even involve things getting worse before they get better’ (p. 34). He proposes governments should be wary of this short-termism, and instead support complex projects whose results take longer to achieve, even though outcomes might be less certain or predictable. Other scholars agree, for example by saying that providing short-term aid to Africa ‘is a band-aid, not a long-term solution’ since this type of aid does not aim at transforming Africa’s structurally dependent economies (Akonor, 2008, p. 1072; Andrews, 2009). Examples of long-term relations are those between the U.S. and Israel, with development support exchanged for over more than three decades now (Hook, 2008), or between China and Japan, with the goal ‘to steer China in an economically sustainable, socially stable, and politically liberal direction’ (Takamine, 2002).

Long-term relations are often accompanied by certain requirements, also defined as political conditionalities (Molenaers et al., 2015). For example, Japan linked their funding to China’s condition of human rights (Furuoka, 2005). Humanitarian aid programs, however, are less concerned about conditionalities (Fink & Redealli, 2009). They differ from development aid due an ethic foundation in humanitarian law. ‘The principles governing humanitarian assistance [are] to be reflected in the fact that donor governments perceive emergency aid as politically unconditional, while development assistance has always been conditional. Humanitarian aid does not target nations or states and their development, but individuals, independent of race, country or citizenship’ (Fink & Redealli, 2009, p. 4). An example case of humanitarian aid is the \$9.28 billion dollars spent both bilaterally and multilaterally on humanitarian recovery after the Haitian earthquake in 2010 (Ramachandran & Walz, 2012).



### *Competition for power, political agency, and ideas*

To explain why these different aid programs and their goals are pursued, scholars have been looking at the goals of donor-governments and the relations between states (Lancaster, 2007). Most studies conclude that realist motivations drive states to pursue for their own interests in bilateral aid relations (Schraeder, Hook, & Taylor, 1998). ‘For example, the United States has been motivated by Cold War concerns; the French by maintaining a postcolonial sphere of influence in Africa’ (Lancaster, 2007, p. 3). Realism assumes that the international playfield is anarchic, with states preoccupied with concerns of power, security and survival. This view of aid as a ‘hard-headed tool of diplomacy’ (Lancaster, 2007, p. 3) is however contested by liberals, who rather define the provision of foreign aid as an instrument for interdependence, projected by national values and social movements within states (Noël & Thérien, 1995).

What all these paradigms do have in common is that behavior is studied purely in the light of instrumental competition between elites (Buckler & Dolowitz, 2012). Parties and politicians are assumed to behave in competing matters to maximize their power, votes and electoral appeal. Preferences are considered exogenous and stable, and are reduced to materialistic goals such as power, security or wealth. What worries scholars is that ideas are downplayed in the context of political elite competition, where politicians are assumed to operate on ideologically neutral, vote-maximizing territory – acting not out of principle, but mainly out of desire for power and votes (Buckler & Dolowitz, 2012). A too strong emphasis on institutions, organizations and rules in explaining governmental behavior ignores the idea of individuals having ‘agency’, downplaying the importance of how the decision-maker perceives the world (Winham, 1970; Buckler & Dolowitz, 2012).

While constructivists move somewhat beyond this, emphasizing the importance of norms and ideas, there’s still work for them in providing ‘a coherent framework for explaining the role of ideas in the formation and evolution of preferences’ (Veen, 2011, p. 26). Individuals are capable of imbuing their actions with meaning and redefining them, hereby creating, sustaining and modifying institutions and practices. ‘Politicians and parties position themselves ideologically, appealing to a variety of ideological traditions, resolving dilemmas in terms of making ideas work, exploiting ideational ambiguities and ‘borrowing’ ideological meanings’ (Buckler & Dolowitz, 2012, p. 578). Although actors operate in constraining circumstances, politics of social change are always open-ended, subject to intervention of ideas and norms (Leggett, 2004). Competition for power and votes is argued to

be inseparably connected to how ideological positions are adapted: the driver of political competition is ideological principle. Thus, it is only appropriate to study political behavior through a narrative method, since it lets this sense of agency back in, ‘and again ideas come into play here through intellectual ‘traditions’’ (Buckler & Dolowitz, 2012, p. 578). While motivations or rationales on individual level are argued to be more difficult to observe, or may not always reflect the real intent (Lancaster, 2007), they are nevertheless essential in understanding why states and governments engage in certain international relations.

## **Theoretical framework**

### *Ideology*

When ideas configure into a coherent set of elements that “are bound together by some form of constraint or functional independence’ (Lewis, 2019, p. 27), they define as an ideology. Ideology gives coherence not only to attitudes and ideas, but also to structures of thought and talk, meaning that they determine how people communicate with each other (Lewis, 2019). Party ideologies are defined as such systems of ideas and beliefs, shared by party members, influencing the way politicians think, and act (Entman, 1983; Nice, 1985, Krause & Mendes, 2005). This is due to its cognitive function; organizing, monitoring and controlling group attitudes (Van Dijk, 2005).

Lewis (2019) emphasizes that for parties, ideologies mainly exist in narratives, mental frameworks, and most important: in discourses used by party members to discuss policies. Policy differences need to be made sense of by looking at the political party environment in which they were constructed (Allen & Flynn, 2018). Some scholars have indeed found a connection between party ideology and foreign aid policies. They observe that left governments are more likely to increase unconditional forms of aid, while conservative governments prefer aid that fosters trade-relations (Greene & Licht, 2018). ‘A progressive party is more humanitarian and active in implementing foreign aid policies, whereas a conservative party tends to be more passive and strategic, and to focus on economic interests’ (Sohn & Yoo, 2015, p. 345).

### *Values*

These parties hold such preferences do to the values that their ideologies reflect. “Political ideology represents values and beliefs that together serve as a cognitive filter when gathering

and evaluating information (...)” (Swigart et al., 2020, p. 1070). Ideology affects decision-making because politicians can steer their choices, and create climates for choices imbuing them with normative meanings (Leggett, 2004). Values do not solely serve to help understand pre-given sociological analysis, they actually *shape* social change. It is found that foreign policy orientations rely on configurations of moral values (Kertzer et al., 2014). ‘Highly significant relationships exist between the moral foundations and the specific policy attitudes’ (Kertzer et al., 2014, p. 837).

Values that individuals hold concern universal issues such as justice, order balance, or moderation (Huntington, 1957). Scholars find that especially conservatives and liberals hold opposing values on these issues (Swigart et al., 2020; Hirsh et al., 2010; Janoff-Bulman, 2009; Feinberg et al., 2020). Conservatives wish to conserve institutions and practices (Huntington, 1957), and are keen to justify the established order ‘because their very existence creates a presumption that they have served some useful function, because eliminating them may lead to harmful, unintended consequences (...)’ (Muller, 1997, p. 5). In contrary, liberalism is a proxy for values of social change (Proch et al., 2019; Becker, 2020). Liberals weighs heavier on situational and contextual factors when judging equality of outcomes (Swigart et al., 2020). These two ideologies are argued to be most important when studying political behavior, due to these differences, but also because they reflect fundamental motivational differences in human morality (Hirsh et al., 2010). Where conservatives are concerned with in-group loyalty, respect for authority and purity, liberals value compassion and justice. Literature suggests that they fail to understand each other when making claims on moral behavior. It is argued that this discrepancy leads to ideological misconceptions in deliberations (Haidt & Graham, 2007). ‘Differences in the strength of these underlying motivational systems are thought to influence explicit political attitudes and ideologies’ (Hirsh et al., 2010. p. 656).

Foreign aid is an issue of international justice, which is intertwined with values of socio-economic justice (Ogaba, 2021). The world is argued to be unjust and inhuman, mainly because people in poorer countries lack access to basic resources, such as food, safe water, clothing and shelter. States wonder how to help and protect the poor, and how to enable communities to govern themselves. Social justice cosmopolitanism acknowledges this, linking international justice to principles of socio-economic justice and distribution of goods. Thus, in studying foreign aid policies, it is most relevant to examine how socio-economic values give normative meaning to political action in terms of policy preferences.

### *Conservatism*

Conservatism reflects the value of preservation (Muller, 1997). Conservative individuals are in socio-economic terms concerned with protecting group members from threats and dangers (Janoff-Bulman, 2009). While they are attuned to the needs of citizens, the concern for social welfare does not define their worldview. They particularly value respect for authority (Janoff-Bulman, 2009; Hirsh et al., 2010), and this is further amplified by the illustration of the strict-father model (Feinberg, Wehling & Chung, 2020). The strict-father model stresses an authority that enforces strict rules and competition to foster self-reliance and self-discipline. According to this view, all things in the world have direct, simple causes. For example, poverty and inequality are considered direct results of a lack of self-discipline. When applied to politics, it is said that conservatives ‘who ascribe to the strict model will likely have strong moral [disapproving] intuitions about programs such as public health care, public education, welfare, and even food stamps, as they constitute immoral indulgence and compromise the citizens’ personal growth and journey to becoming maximally self-reliant and disciplined’ (Feinberg et al, 2020, p. 3).

Conservative right-wing politicians are more concerned with the issue of results, and the purpose of policies (Thérien, 2002; Haidt & Graham, 2007; Jagers et al., 2018). This notion of optimality of results is an important element of the theory of consequentialism. Consequentialists believe that decision-making should be based upon judgments about consequences for achieving people’s goals (Baron, 1994). When looking at governmental behavior, politicians who apply utilitarianism to decision-making will choose those policies that on the whole result in better welfare (Hausman & McPherson, 2006). Due to the fact that politicians have agency in conferring meaning to actions (Buckler & Dolowitz, 2012), these underlying values are expected to show in the form of political preferences in texts [and speeches] created and valued by conservatives (Haidt & Graham, 2007). This leads to the first expectation on how conservatism influences foreign aid policy preferences.

*H1: Conservative values of authority, self-reliance and optimality of results shape foreign aid policy preferences of conservative politicians*

### *Liberalism*

Liberal ideology reflects different values than above mentioned conservatism. Liberals claim that ‘all men are born free and equal’ which leads them to actively undertake measures to live

up to this (Choma et al., 2012). While conservatives focus mainly on prevention, liberals are proponents of social change, prioritizing the provision of welfare and advocating for progression as a primary means of social regulation (Janoff-Bulman, 2009). Individual human rights are central to the liberal ideology, and need to be protected by an active government (Banning, 1986). In contrary to avoidance-based conservatism, liberals are found to be more approach-based, mainly worried about matters of social justice. They are more motivated to feel empathy and believe in providing help for others, and especially those individuals that are disadvantaged in society (Janoff-Bulman, 2009; Hasson et al., 2018).

Rather than a strict-father, liberals are linked to a nurturant-parent model, which encourages reciprocal responsibility for others, and values a cooperative and mutually caring relationship between caregivers and receivers. They do not ascribe issues such as poverty and inequality to lack of discipline or unwillingness to learn, but rather to a more complex, contextual set of causes. Governments are equally responsible and accountable for the success (or lack of it) of citizens. Thus, liberals, who ‘ascribe to the nurturant family model will likely have strong intuitions about programs that uphold their moral concerns with empathy, need-based fairness, and empowerment (...)’ (Feinberg et al, 2020, p. 3). While conservatives value maximization of results, liberals are more worried with moral principles (Thérien, 2002; Jagers et al., 2018). They consider aid a moral issue, and believe that wealthy countries are obliged to help poor countries. Justification of such kind aligns with the moral theory of deontology, that argues that decision-making should be based upon the fairness of the act (Wheeler & Laham, 2016).

For liberals, these underlying values are similarly expected to show in texts and speeches (Haidt & Graham, 2007; Buckler & Dolowitz, 2012). Scholars have shown that liberals generally have more speech complexity, using longer and more creative sentences due to a higher score on openness to experience (Schoonvelde et al., 2019). The literature leads to the following expectation regarding the effect of liberalism on foreign aid policy preferences:

*H2: Liberal values of social justice, fairness and empathy shape foreign aid policy preferences of liberal politicians*

## **Research design**

*Case.* The aim of this thesis is to understand how ideologies influence foreign aid policies and policy preferences. To do this, I will examine the case of the Netherlands. The Netherlands is

an adequate case for testing my hypotheses for several reasons. First of all, the Netherlands is known as a donor country that is quite generous in spending on foreign aid to different countries (Veen, 2011). Over the last decade, the Dutch government widened its international influence by taking a leading role on the international stage, introducing new humanitarian priorities. This is observed in the funds for both long-term development assistance as well as humanitarian relief in areas of crisis (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2018a; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2018b). The previous government (2017-2021), funded a total of €1.841.674.000 of humanitarian aid, for example €5.000.000 on material relief assistance and services in 2018 in Syria through the Syria Humanitarian fund (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2021). On long-term developmental projects, they spend €1.716.671.000, to contribute to a stronger private sector and improved investment climate in developing countries. An example case of such a project is the KEPSA Sustainable Inclusive Business- project in Kenya, in which the Dutch government invested every year during their governing period (see Table 1 in the Appendix for a full overview of the expenditure).

With regards to humanitarian and development purposes, the Dutch are found to support both quite equally. In 2019, the Dutch government renewed their policy course, to put an emphasis on humanitarian aid. They announced to put stronger focus on immediate relief in humanitarian crises, and its core objectives are described as ‘to preserve life, alleviate suffering and protect and restore the dignity of people affected by crisis’ (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2019). It is most interesting to examine how the Dutch politicians come to make such policy choices. With a multiparty system, the Netherlands is known for its large number of political parties and open structure of party competition (Walter, 2014). A proportional representative elective system lets various parties represent their ideological views in the parliament. Since the parties are particularly polarized over socio-economic pro-state versus pro-market distribution issues, analysis can reveal how these ideas shape their preferences (Aarts & Thomassen, 2008). I choose to do a case study of only the Netherlands, since this is useful when we want to gain deeper understanding of the subject (Gerring, 2004). It gives the opportunity to richly describe the existence of this process of how policy preferences of politicians emerge.

*Discourse analysis.* A discourse analysis is considered most relevant to study ideologies, since people ‘acquire, express and reproduce ideologies by text or talk’ (van Dijk, 2006). Prior studies have considered discourse analysis as the missing link when studying ideas about a course of action and the action itself (Kentikelenis & Voeten, 2021). Social practices

and discourses are based upon mental models, configured out of ideologies (Van Dijk, 2019). Consequently, this method is employed for various research goals: to examine how racist ideologies influence parliamentary debates (Van Dijk, 2019), or to study how ideological components affect Turkish prime minister Erdogan's political speeches (Bayram, 2010). Discourse analysis here is used as an analysis of 'ways of talking about and understanding the world' (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Further, discourse analysis can uncover moral signaling. It is theorized that ideologies reflect different normative values, which then steer differentiating policy preferences. 'Moral attitudes are learned, shaped, maintained, and changed via communicative practices' (Wheeler & Laham, 2016, p. 1206). Discourse analysis is fit to capture the discursive constructions, understanding how normative components of liberalism and conservatism shape the preferences of politicians with regards to foreign aid.

*Data.* I investigate two debates of the General Committee of Foreign Trade and Development. One from April 4, 2019 which focuses on support for the World Bank, an organization that funds development projects in developing countries via traditional loans, interest free credits, and grants. By investing in people, it aims to build resilience to shocks and threats that can roll back decades of progress (World Bank, n.d.). A second debate from June 6, 2019 discusses short-term humanitarian aid and diplomacy policies. The debate covers the matter of renewing the policy course of the government, discussing how and why the government should spend money on humanitarian relief. Looking into these grants opportunity to analyze how ideas shape the debate on long-term assistance and short-term aid provision, as Riddell (2014) proclaims.

Both debates consist of structured discussions between members of different parliamentary parties, and the minister of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation. I assessed the transcripts through the website of the Dutch parliamentary, which gives access to all documents regarding plenary and committee debates dating back to 2013. I analyzed these documents using the ATLAS.ti computer program, that helped me code the texts and uncover patterns in a qualitative matter. The Dutch parties are operationalized as either conservative or liberal based upon their economic preferences for government interference and authority enforcement. Information about these standpoints of parties is retrieved from their political manifestos and electoral campaign documents of the parties published in 2017, and additionally from the European Election and Referendum Database (Norwegian Centre for

Research Data<sup>1</sup>, 2021; D66, 2017; PvdD, 2017) (See Table 2 in the Appendix for an overview of the parties' categorization).

*Operationalization.* Ideologies are expressed through deliberation, an activity that aims for mutual understanding while casting personal interests aside (Barabas, 2004). It is a chance for politicians to persuade one another. For this reason, I employ Van Leeuwen's (2008) model of discursive construction of legitimation to operationalize conservatism and liberalism. I aim to identify how conservatives and liberals express values while deliberating on foreign aid issues. I measure conservatism through Van Leeuwen's legitimation categories (i) authorization and (ii) rationalization. With authorization, options are legitimized by reference to traditions, laws, customs and institutions that are commonly considered as having authority and expertise. This applies to conservatism, since it values respect for authority and order in society (Hirsh, 2010; Janoff-Bulman, 2009). This code is further refined to three types of authorization: expertise, personal authority, and laws and institutions. The second category, rationalization, is defined as 'legitimation by reference to goals and uses of institutionalized social action and to the knowledges that society has constructed to endow them with cognitive validity' (p. 106). It is expected that conservatives support policies that generate the best outcome (Thérien, 2002; Jagers, Haring & Matti, 2018).

Liberalism is measured through two other discursive strategies: (iii) mythopoesis and (iv) moral evaluation legitimation. The first makes use of story-telling and 'legitimation through narratives whose outcomes reward legitimate action' (Van Leeuwen, 2008). This applies to liberals because of their attachment to values such as social justice, reciprocal responsibility, care and equality (Janoff-Bulman, 2009). This is also relevant if we consider studies on speech complexity, arguing that liberals use longer and more creative sentences due to a higher score on openness to experience (Schoonvelde et al., 2019). Further, liberals are expected to make use of moral evaluation legitimation, which makes reference to value systems, through evaluations, abstractions and analogies. Contrary to conservatives, liberals are less concerned about the issue of results, and are more worried about moral principles and fairness (Thérien, 2002; Jagers, Haring & Matti, 2018). Further definitions and examples are explicated in Table 3, in the Appendix.

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<sup>1</sup> "(Some of) the data applied in the analysis in this publication are based on material from the "European Election Database". The data are collected from original sources, prepared and made available by the NSD - Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD). NSD are not responsible for the analyses/interpretation of the data presented here".



## Results

This analysis focuses on the different ways that politicians legitimize their choices and how these strategies are influenced by normative values. Politicians position themselves on an ideological spectrum, appealing to values and traditions reflected by mainstream ideologies (Hirsh et al., 2010; Buckler & Dolowitz, 2012). Conservatives value authority, self-reliance and optimality of results. These values are expected to be expressed as preferences through strategies of authorization and rationalization (Van Leeuwen, 2008). In contrast, liberals are expected to express their preferences by making claims on values of social justice, fairness and empathy, through the use of moral evaluation and mythopoesis strategies (Thérien, 2002; Janoff-Bulman, 2009; Hasson, 2018; Jagers et al., 2019; Feinberg et al., 2020; Morris, 2020).

In the following section, I will show how Dutch political parties justify their different policy preferences in two general debates: one on supporting the World Bank (General Committee of Foreign Aid and Development, 2019a), an organization for development aid, and one on providing humanitarian aid (Committee of Foreign Aid and Development, 2019b). The results are presented in two main sections. First, I examine how parliamentarians use strategies of authorization and rationalization. After, I will investigate the themes of mythopoesis and moral evaluation. Specific examples are selected due to their representative as well as illustrative function of strategies that played a crucial role in the debates. I will explain what the data means with regard to the relationship between normative values, party ideologies and foreign aid preferences.

### *Legitimation through authorization: an authority-based discourse*

#### *Expertise*

The Dutch politicians evoke the expertise and experience of the World Bank frequently during the first debate. By saying that ‘the organization really has the capacity and expertise’ and ‘if one organization is able to [deal with a changing world], then it is the World Bank’<sup>2</sup>, the Minister (D66) allows this capacity and expertise, rather than compassion or justice based arguments, to be sufficient justification to support them instead of any other organization. She further makes claims onto specialized organizations such as the EATA (European Association for Transactional Analysis) and the AITI (Aids Transparency Index), and DiFfit (Duurzaam Inzetbaar Financieel Fit) that have shown that the World Bank scores high on transparency, and to the IBRD (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development) for legitimizing

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<sup>2</sup> Parliamentary document, 2018/2019, 26 234, nr. 225, p. 11 (Report)

the choice to support China as middle-income country<sup>3</sup>. Bouali (D66) relies similarly onto the expertise of NGO's, saying that '[they] also express worries about this'<sup>4</sup>, hereby implying we should as well. Conservative ideology is a proxy for the value of authority. '[Conservatives] respect established authority and believe "order is precious and at least a little fragile"' (Janoff-Bulman, 2009, p. 123). By making expertise claims, politicians implicitly adhere to the idea of conserving a world order. Those who have most experience, meaning who have been working in this field, should continue operating. The World Bank is refigured as an authority figure by these politicians. This confirms that conservative ideas, such as hierarchy and strict-rule enforcement (Feinberg et al., 2020), matter for how they shape and defend their preferences. Liberal-conservative Voordewind (CU) believes that support for Dutch help organizations is legitimized because they do an amazing job in Lesbos<sup>5</sup>, while Van den Hul (PvdA) legitimizes the World Bank as a capable institution for development aid, relying on numbers provided by them<sup>6</sup>. This suggests that liberals also rely upon conservative values at times.

### *Personal authority*

Reference to authority can also be personal, by relying on qualities and experiences of itself. In this analysis, this means that politicians justify policies by referring to the authority of the Dutch government. The Minister (D66) does this when deliberating the level of transparency of the World Bank. 'DiffFit scores, just as the Netherlands does, quite high when it comes to access to information'<sup>7</sup>. These arguments are employed to put emphasis on the skills and knowledge of the World Bank, and to suggest that the Dutch government is qualified to choose transparent organizations to invest in. The Netherlands is often referred to as a *front-runner*, and a trustworthy donor, by the Minister (D66) and Van Haga (VVD)<sup>8</sup> <sup>9</sup>. The Minister speaks of trust and capability of the Netherlands, suggesting cooperation with the Dutch businesses, since many of these companies have gone on trade missions to crisis-bound countries, where they have traded in traditional ways<sup>10</sup>. The politicians plead to use this privilege, knowledge and expertise in implementation. Reliance in themselves aligns with

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<sup>3</sup> Parliamentary document, 2018/2019, 26 234, nr. 225, p. 13-15 (Report)

<sup>4</sup> Parliamentary document, 2018/2019, 26 234, nr. 225, p. 3 (Report)

<sup>5</sup> Parliamentary document, 2018/2019, 34 952, nr. 78, p. 3 (Report)

<sup>6</sup> Parliamentary document, 2018/2019, 26 234, nr. 225, p. 9 (Report)

<sup>7</sup> Parliamentary document, 2018/2019, 26 234, nr. 225, p. 14 (Report)

<sup>8</sup> Parliamentary document, 2018/2019, 26 234, nr. 225, p. 12 (Report)

<sup>9</sup> Parliamentary document, 2018/2019, 34 952, nr. 78, p. 18 (Report)

<sup>10</sup> Parliamentary document, 2018/2019, 34 952, nr. 78, p. 15 (Report)

literature stating that conservatives value a strict-father model in which the ‘[child] ought not to question their [parents’] authority’ (Feinberg, et al., 2020, p. 3). Conservative ideology reflects values of authoritarian, punitive, hierarchal structures, which are also seen here reflected in the preferences (Morris, 2020). E.g., referring to the skills and authority of the government suggests a preference for hierarchical structure. Theory states that conservatives believe that standards set forth by authority figures are considered absolute rights and wrongs (Feinberg et al., 2020). When those who have authority help others, their authority is further reinforced, which contributes to the order as it is. The observations in the debates thus confirm that such conservative values matter for how the D66 and VVD parliamentarians frame their preferences.

### *Laws and rules*

Whereas the strategies discussed above invoke the authority of persons and organizations, authority legitimation is also often done by mentioning laws and rules. “The answer to the unspoken “why” question is then (...) “because the laws (the rules, the policies, the guidelines, etc.) say so”” (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 108). The Minister (D66) does this regularly. For humanitarian aid, she admits to its importance, because it is anchored in the international humanitarian laws of war<sup>11</sup>. Also when discussing support for aid workers who experience danger in doing their job, she makes a claim onto international laws. ‘humanitarian aid workers need to be able to do their job (..) as is in line with the humanitarian principles and the humanitarian laws of war’<sup>12</sup>. In defending the support for the World Bank, the Minister argues that we ‘follow the general guidelines here’, implying that she supports whatever the guidelines prescribe<sup>13</sup>. All these references are employed to suggest that humanitarian law and guidelines are commonly agreed upon, meaning these are the rules that we all should follow. As expected, no liberals rely on laws and institutions. It is conservatives who value social order, stability and norm adherence (Janoff-Bulman, 2009), which explains why they would employ this strategy. Conservatives are conceptualized as protective of the status quo, and institutions are considered doing exactly this. Institutions are defined as clusters of norms and values, established and strongly supported by group consensus (Lach et al., 2005). The results confirm that conservatives express their preferences through the

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<sup>11</sup> Parliamentary document, 2018/2019, 34 952, nr. 78, p. 10 (Report)

<sup>12</sup> Parliamentary document, 2018/2019, 34 952, nr. 78, p. 22 (Report)

<sup>13</sup> Parliamentary document, 2018/2019, 26 234, nr. 225, p. 16 (Report)

authorization legitimation strategy, in line with the expectations that values of authority have an effect.

*Legitimation through rationalization: a utilitarian-based discourse*

The rationalization strategy defines as legitimation by reference to goals, uses and effects (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 116). Most rationalization framings can be recognized by three basic elements: an activity (support for policy), a purpose link (a preposition such as ‘to’ or ‘for’, and the purpose or the goal (p. 113). Van Leeuwen emphasizes how rationalization cannot function as legitimation strategy without morality. By the use of values, actions are moralized as purposeful or useful. However, they are not the same (Hausman & McPherson, 2006). For this analysis, all framings that mention utility or purpose of a policy are considered rationalization strategies (Van Leeuwen, 2008). References to the good and bad are considered moral evaluation legitimation, and are discussed later on.

Conservative parliamentarians are found evoking rationalization strategies quite frequently. To defend governmental support for the World Bank organization, Van Haga (VVD) puts strong focus on where money can best be spent, and the need to support those institutions that ‘exert the highest transparency’<sup>14</sup>. In supporting help packets, he emphasizes the importance of using limited resources very carefully, striving for the highest impact<sup>15</sup>. This reflects the conservative value for efficiency and results (Thérien, 2002). Conservatives often worry about the inefficiency of aid. They are particularly against state intervention, because it distorts markets and creates dependency. This aligns with the strict-father theory, which claims that conservatives value competition because it fosters self-discipline and independency (Feinberg et al., 2020). This is also expressed through Bouali’s (D66) strong preference for products that innovate the work and make it more efficient. The need for goal-oriented policies dominates further throughout his deliberation strategy, considering he links humanitarian aid to the growth of the GNP, and aims to utilize all opportunities<sup>16</sup>. The Minister (D66) is also familiar with rationalist framings, for example by saying that the World Bank supporting China is useful for spreading out risks. Further, she argues that the Dutch should support the World Bank, because it may cause an enlargement of opportunities for the

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<sup>14</sup> Parliamentary document, 2018/2019, 26 234, nr. 225, p. 2 (Report)

<sup>15</sup> Parliamentary document, 2018/2019, 26 234, nr. 225, p. 6 (Report)

<sup>16</sup> Parliamentary document, 2018/2019, 34 952, nr. 78, p. 4 (Report)

business sector on a qualitative basis<sup>17</sup>. With these examples, the focus is strongly on how support for the World Bank would help to bring out the best results overall, including for the Netherlands, relying on the principle of utilitarianism (Hausman & McPherson, 2006), rather than looking at if it is only fair to support China.

‘We trust organizations based on their performance. We look at their ability to achieve, to be transparent, and how they deal with difficult situations (...) We give organizations the choice to intervene where they have the most added value. It is about themes of efficiency and effectivity. We are not stuck with one organization; it is about who can deliver in the best way possible considering the circumstances.’ (Kaag, 2019, p. 10)<sup>18</sup>

Conservatives’ preferences are to a large degree explained by expected outcomes (Jagers, Haring & Matti, 2018). This is because conservatives more often concern about the optimality of results than with moral principles (Thérien, 2002). While conservatives acknowledge that foreign aid is a tool that could be useful, they believe that the ‘fight against poverty’ is a responsibility held by each state itself, not necessarily the international community. ‘Seen from this viewpoint, aid is often considered inefficient. In particular, the Right points to the fact that aid has no clear effect on growth or on the policies of developing countries’ (p. 460). These values are particularly expressed by the politicians when they use words such as ‘the highest’, ‘efficient’ and ‘useful’ when justifying the program.

Theory leads us to expect that conservatives wish to support policies that accommodate personal growth for citizens and maximize self-reliance and discipline (Feinberg et al., 2020). This seems to be explicitly expressed by some of the conservative politicians. Bouali (D66) and the Minister (D66) address this while deliberating cash assistance policies. ‘People will be able to take matters into their own hands, and provide a worthy life for themselves and their family’<sup>19</sup>. The Minister thinks that the government should give people the opportunity to create work, and make money for themselves. Kuik (CDA) does this as well, while being more focused on the position of women. She believes that self-reliance and economic independency is absolutely crucial for them<sup>20</sup>. This aligns with the thought that ‘conservatives believe that others need to be self-reliant and do not warrant help

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<sup>17</sup> Parliamentary document, 2018/2019, 26 234, nr. 225, p. 17 (Report)

<sup>18</sup> Parliamentary document, 2018/2019, 34 952, nr. 78, p. 10 (Report)

<sup>19</sup> Parliamentary document, 2018/2019, 34 952, nr. 78, p. 4 (Report)

<sup>20</sup> Parliamentary document, 2018/2019, 34 952, nr. 78, p. 5 (Report)

from other people' (Janoff-Bulman, 2009, p. 123). Also, the idea that the government is a 'strict-father', fostering competition to stimulate this self-discipline, is valued by conservatives in this discourse (Feinberg et al., 2020). The politicians seem to put a strong focus on personal autonomy, aiming that all individuals are able to take care of themselves and become responsible for their own actions.

Although conservatives are found using rationalization strategies for legitimation more frequently, liberals are also found doing this occasionally. When Van den Hul (PvdA) discusses education policies for women, she firstly relies on the authority and expertise of the World Bank, as mentioned before, but she also builds further on a rationalist argument, saying that 'if all girls worldwide would receive twelve years of good education, then women worldwide would earn 15 to 30 trillion dollars more'. The education has, in her eyes, a desirable outcome, which is why the government should invest in it. In proposing better policies regarding the circumstances of aid workers, Voordewind (CU) points out the risk of delay and negative consequences for assistance.

#### *Legitimation through mythopoesis: a compassion-based discourse*

In this analysis, mythopoesis is defined as story-telling in which social practices are implicitly argued to be legitimate or illegitimate (Van Leeuwen, 2008). Use of this is observed in the debate on humanitarian aid, when Voordewind (CU) asks the Minister to describe her experiences in camps in North-Iraq. She in response describes that 'in many countries, girls and women in temporary shelter are in an unsafe position. There is no lighting, they have to go to big, shared, latrines, and the danger of rape or assault is present. There is also the danger of involuntary marriage, to prevent rape. Traumatized women are deprived of chances'<sup>21</sup>. Voordewind then uses this to propose a stronger policy focus on this victim group. Diks (GreenLeft) does something similar, by describing how people had to clamp onto trees a week after the Idai Cyclone came onto land in Mozambique. She creates a sense of empathy which serves as legitimation for bilateral help<sup>22</sup>. In line with the idea that personality traits can affect political beliefs and behaviors, Morris (2020) has found that a person's empathy level is significantly correlated to liberal ideology and liberal policy preferences. He conceptualizes empathy by three components: affective sharing, empathic concern, perspective taking. This latter defines as the cognitive facet of empathy, 'the ability to consciously put oneself into the

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<sup>21</sup> Parliamentary document, 2018/2019, 34 952, nr. 78, p. 21 (Report)

<sup>22</sup> Parliamentary document, 2018/2019, 34 952, nr. 78, p. 9 (Report)

mind of another individual, imagine what a person is thinking or feeling' (Morris, 2020, p. 11). In the examples from the Dutch discourse, this *mentalizing* of thoughts and internal states of the suffering is explicitly observed in Voordewind (CU) and Diks (GreenLeft) their discourses.

Further, Van den Hul (PvdA) legitimizes humanitarian aid by telling a cautionary tale about rich people; 'worldwide inequality grows, the 26 richest people own equally as much as the poorest half of the population (...) while the richest saw their capital grow with 2,5 billion a day, the capital of the poor reduced with 11%. To make it concrete: in Indonesia, the four richest men possess more than the poorest 100 million. In short: we observe a growth of inequality within countries'<sup>23</sup>. In this example, she implicitly judges the act of growing capital among the rich as morally wrong. The use of such a narrative aligns with the theoretical expectation that liberals use more complex language in their discursive practices, and are more tolerant to ambiguous phrasings (Schoonvelde et al., 2019). They want to feel more empathy and also experience this more often than conservatives (Hasson et al., 2018), which expresses itself when they describe sceneries of disaster.

At one moment, Bouali (D66) talks about 3 million people in Syria who are unable to move further, and 14 million people in Jemen who are at risk of starving. He seems to do this to create a sense of empathy and responsibility among the other politicians<sup>24</sup>. But overall, the liberals seem to rely on narratives more often. This aligns with studies that find that liberals are more open-minded in their pursuit of creativity, novelty and diversity (Schoonvelde et al., 2019).

#### *Legitimation though moral evaluation: a fairness-based discourse*

Moral evaluation strategies are the most implicit (Van Leeuwen, 2008). There is no general method for identifying moral evaluations, instead they need to be recognized on the basis of commonsense cultural knowledge of moral values. Justifications are often hinted at by adjectives, such as 'healthy', 'normal' or 'useful', but what makes it more complex is that morality may look similar to rationalization, since utilitarianism is morally justified. Utilitarianism considers maximization to be the objective of moral behavior (Askari &

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<sup>23</sup> Parliamentary document, 2018/2019, 34 952, nr. 78, p. 9 (Report)

<sup>24</sup> Parliamentary document, 2018/2019, 34 952, nr. 78, p. 4 (Report)

Mirakhor, 2019). Thus, in this analysis, moral evaluation is specifically defined as legitimizing policy options by reference to evaluative adjectives, abstractions or analogies.

### *Evaluation*

Diks (GreenLeft) uses sayings to judge situations. She phrases how ‘numbers make [her] hairs stand on end’, meaning that the numbers shock her. Further, ‘what happens to [them], defies all description’ and ‘if we don’t monitor them, they will disappear behind the statistics’<sup>25</sup>, are meant to suggest how bad the circumstances of the poor are, and why it is only normal to help them. She does not give further justification based on generated outcomes, or expertise or authority. She judges policies on the level of inclusivity. The importance here lies not particularly on maximization, but more on fairness. Liberals are theorized to care about the well-being of others and consider all individuals responsible for inequalities, valuing communal sharing, rather than the conservative concern with order in society (Janoff-Bulman, 2009). It is found that the concept of fairness determines support among liberals (Jagers et al, 2018), they are more likely to have strong intuitions about social programs that take care of moral concerns of need-based fairness (Feinberg et al., 2020). In the same plea, Diks argues that the Dutch government needs to ensure safety among aid workers, because they ‘should be able to do their job freely without fear of punishment’<sup>26</sup>. Rather than justifying this policy choice by emphasizing the utility or consequences, as the Minister did, Diks seems to believe the government should ensure this, because it is only “normal” to work without such fear. It again reflects the liberal value of fairness.

Van den Hul (PvdA) starts off her plea by giving indications of how many people did not wake up in their own bed due to displacement. Here, she explicitly uses words such as ‘human degrading’ and ‘embarrassing’ to make a judgment. ‘These numbers call for intervention’, is what she says, to suggest that evaluation is reason enough to<sup>27</sup>. Similarly, does Alkaya (SP) rely on the normality of helping countries out of poverty, because according to him: ‘there is nothing wrong with that’<sup>28</sup>. When VoordeWind (Christian Party) says that ‘people are starving and wasting away in the snow, people are dying, we could enable organizations to help people get out of the terrible tents and in closed containers and on solid

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<sup>25</sup> Parliamentary document, 2018/2019, 34 952, nr. 78, p. 9- 10 (Report)

<sup>26</sup> Parliamentary document, 2018/2019, 34 952, nr. 78, p. 10 (Report)

<sup>27</sup> Parliamentary document, 2018/2019, 34 952, nr. 78, p. 7 (Report)

<sup>28</sup> Parliamentary document, 2018/2019, 26 234, nr. 225, p. 8 (Report)



ground<sup>29</sup>, he means to say that we ought to help them because starvation is bad, without saying it directly. All these examples align with the liberal nurturant-parent model, that values a cooperative and mutually caring relationship; governments are considered equally responsible for bad circumstances of others, and are motivated to feel empathy for those in need (Feinberg et al., 2020). This explains why these politicians feel the need to intervene due to the bad circumstances. Not emphasizing some further purpose, but rather due to a responsibility.

### *Abstraction*

Alkaya (SP) uses abstraction at one moment to indicate what type of action is wrong and what is right. 'It is meant to help people, not meant to spread ideological ideas about economy at the expense of the poorest' (A, p. 6). Here, he says that this organization spreads ideological ideas at the expense of poor people. His focus on helping people aligns with theories stating that liberals believe in helping those who are less well off (Janof-Bulman, 2009). His support for this depends on the rightfulness of the action, and just and fair behavior is something that is valued by liberals, in comparison to conservatives (Jagers et al., 2018; Feinberg et al., 2020). Liberal ideology here is a proxy for the value of fairness, which seems to steer the discourse.

### *Conservatives and moral evaluation*

Conservatives also seem to evoke moral evaluation strategies occasionally to support policies, although this is quite limited compared to the use of authorization and rationalization. Kuik (CDA) says that it should not lead up to the point where people have to choose between clean drinking water or green energy, saying: 'then I would know what to choose'<sup>30</sup>. Without saying why clean drinking water is better, she values this as the better option. The fact that conservatives here rely upon 'liberal values', can be explained by the fact that conservatives are argued to care for fairness as well, along with care, ingroup loyalty, authority and purity (Haidt & Graham, 2007). It is argued that conservatives are not oblivious to other's hardships and needs, just that it does not define their ideology (Janoff-Bulman, 2009).

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<sup>29</sup> Parliamentary document, 2018/2019, 34 952, nr. 78, p. 25 (Report)

<sup>30</sup> Parliamentary document, 2018/2019, 26 234, nr. 225, p. 5 (Report)

The Minister opens her plea saying that humanitarian aid should be based upon the needs of vulnerable people, and should be unrelated to their political affiliation, or the situation in general. It is about saving lives and helping to survive <sup>31</sup>. Soon after, she refers to the importance of quality, which is then again considered rationalization. Something similar is employed by Van Haga (VVD). He believes the primary goal is to save lives and ensure essential needs. ‘It is about safety, food and water, medical care and a roof. If we read that in 2018, more than 136 million people were dependent upon humanitarian aid. That shows how important it is that we spent money on this’. He also switches to rationalization after, saying that resources need to be spend there where the highest impact can be realized<sup>32</sup>. Haidt and Graham mention that ‘for conservatives: rights, justice, fairness and freedom are moral goods because they help to maximize the autonomy of individuals and protect individuals from harms’ (Haidt & Graham, 2007, p. 102). This explains why Kaag (D66) and Van Haga (VVD) would use moral evaluation here, but also rely on rationalization arguments right after.

## Conclusion

It seems that foreign aid policies vary in both their means and ends. It is argued that long term successes of development are impeded when too strong of a focus is put on humanitarian relief. However, long-term relations are often accompanied by conditionalities, in the sense that donors ‘will give (...) aid if you do such-and-such’ (Riddell, 2014, p. 30). This is aspect is then again strongly objected by advocates of humanitarian aid, which instead presents itself as an unconditional response to emergencies. It is not yet clear what the driving factors are of these preferences. Scholars have been stressing the need to focus on the role of ideas, since these have been claimed to be downplayed in the light of elite competition for power and security (Veen, 2011; Buckler & Dolowitz, 2012). Politicians have the agency to normatively judge their behavior, and this assumption grants primacy to the role of political values (Leggett, 2014). This thesis acknowledged this, aiming to answer *how party ideology influences foreign aid policy preferences of politicians in donor countries*.

What is found is that liberals and conservatives base their judgment upon different moral intuitions and values, which is expected to show in texts and speeches created and valued by them (Haidt & Graham, 2007). This analysis focused on legitimation strategies

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<sup>31</sup> Parliamentary document, 2018/2019, 34 952, nr. 78, p. 10 (Report)

<sup>32</sup> Parliamentary document, 2018/2019, 34 952, nr. 78, p. 6 (Report)

used in general deliberation in the Netherlands, and found that conservatives and liberals indeed seem to differ in the way that they legitimize their policy preferences. Conservatives rely more often on authorization and rationalization strategies in legitimizing foreign aid policies. This aligns with the first hypothesis, that expected conservative values of authority, self-reliance and optimality of results to play a role. For liberalism, it was expected that the values of social justice, fairness and empathy work through to deliberative strategies. Liberals indeed seem to employ moral evaluation and mythopoesis most often, confirming the second hypothesis, stating that liberal values of fairness and empathy determine policy preferences. It is found that while moral evaluation is used to legitimize both development and humanitarian aid, mythopoesis is a strategy that is employed only to legitimize humanitarian aid. This confirms that liberals are more creative and complex in their speech use when it comes to humanitarian aid policy deliberation. These findings complement existing studies on liberalism and the use of complex language (Schoonvelde et al., 2019). Overall, this study contributes to the debate around foreign aid policies. The findings show that conservative and liberal normative values do affect policy preferences, through the use of legitimation strategies. This confirms the claim that ideas matter, and grants ‘primacy to the role of political values’ (Veen, 2011; Leggett, 2014).

### *Limitations*

Despite contributing to the on-going debate surrounding foreign aid, this study also has some limitations. The theories of party ideology are unable to explain some unanticipated results. What might be involved here is that institutional incentives can promote or hinder deliberative actions. Political institutions such as coalitional arrangements and non-public arenas create a less polarizing environment among politicians. This could apply to the Dutch case, since it is an example case of a *consociational* democracy (Lijphart, 1977). The Netherlands has a long history of consensual elite behavior, with oversized coalitions and representation of parties in cabinet decision-making (Steiner et al., 2009). Coalition arrangements stimulate a joint decision-making logic. In these settings, coalitional partners are often found more constructively positioned towards each other, open for problem-solving-activities (Bächtiger & Hangartner, 2010). This might explain why Voordewind (CU) at times evokes rationalization strategies, to align more with his conservative coalition partners.

Liberals and conservatives are sometimes found legitimizing using unexpected strategies. Although limited, liberals occasionally opt for rationalization and authorization

legitimation, despite the expectations that liberals misrecognize conservative concerns of authority, loyalty and purity, and care less for the issue of results (Thérien, 2002; Haidt & Graham, 2007). However, such behavior might be explained by the role of motivated social cognition in constructing and organizing political evaluation (Federico, 2007). ‘*Motivation* – in the form of generalized needs, goals and wants- may determine if and how prior information is used to form and organize judgments’ (Federico, 2007, p. 538). Especially politicians who have expertise on ideological structures will know what ideological strategy is more attractive than the other in light of their one own evaluative commitment. Further, non-public arenas, such as general debates of committees, allow legislators to deliberate more freely, without necessity to follow the demands of the constituency. This creates space for politicians ‘to reflect, to show respect for the claims of others or even to change their opinion’ (Bächtiger & Hangarter, 2010, p. 615).

Furthermore, when a conservative politician relies upon mythopoesis to legitimize his preference, this also goes against expectations that conservatives are less creative and complex in their discursive practices (Schoonvelde et al., 2019). However, these scholars also address how linguistic patterns can be dynamic at times. Parties may become more liberal or conservative, and adjust their level of complexity and creativity based on this.

#### *Future research*

Despite the findings of this study, it is important to acknowledge that party ideology exists in thoughts, while behavior exists in action. How thoughts influence action depends on a number of factors, for example ‘how embedded [politicians] are in the mental frameworks and linguistic patterns of the party ideology, how committed the individual is, personally, to the party ideology, and what other circumstances are involved in their decision-making process’ (Lewis, 2019, p. 28). This study finds that party ideology does influence how politicians frame their preferences in general debates, but not necessarily that ideology determines support for one such type of policy. Future studies need to focus on how ideas and legitimation strategies might be influencing voting patterns (Alesina & Dollar, 2000), something beyond the scope of this thesis.

Another limitation of this study exists in the use of Van Leeuwen’s model of discursive legitimation. The analysis focused on how politicians legitimize their preferences. However, forms of legitimation can also be used to delegitimize: to give critique on actions or

choices (Van Leeuwen, 2008). ‘Delegitimation means establishing a sense of negative, morally reprehensible or otherwise unacceptable action or overall state of affairs’ (Vaara, 2014). Ideologies and their values might be having an effect on these practices as well. This leads to the empirical implication that further research should examine how party ideology influences policy delegitimation.

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## Appendix

**Table 1. Ideological categorization of Dutch political parties.**

| <b>Party</b>                                   | <b>Ideas/values</b>   | <b>Ideology</b>      |
|--|---|----------------------|
| CDA (Christian Democrats)                      | center position in terms of economy and defense politics, combined with conservative leanings                                   | Conservative         |
| VVD (People's Party for Freedom and Democracy) | supporter of private enterprise, free market, fiscal responsibility, international cooperation, welfare state.                  | Conservative         |
| D66 (Democrats)                                | strong economy, privatization, government that encourages self-discipline and initiatives.                                      | Conservative         |
| CU (Christian Party)                           | combines a conservative point of view on ethical and social issues, with center-left ideas on economic and environmental issues | Liberal-conservative |
| PvdA (Labour Party)                            | ideals of shared responsibility, justice, solidarity  | Liberal              |
| PvdD (Party for Animals)                       | protective, active, government, right to social basis   | Liberal              |
| GroenLinks (GreenLeft)                         | social justice, international solidarity  | Liberal              |
| SP (Socialist Party)                           | social welfare, investing in education, public safety and health care. Against privatization.                                   | Liberal              |
| SGP (Reformed Party)                           | social justice, protective government, pro social safety net.   | Liberal              |

Information retrieved through the European Election and Referendum Database (Norwegian Centre for Research Data, 2021).

**Table 2. Annual funding of KEPSA project by government of the Netherlands as part of sub article ‘a stronger private sector and an improved investment climate in developing countries’.**

| Year | Activity name                     | Amount   | Planned start date | Planned end date   |
|------|-----------------------------------|----------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 2017 | NAI SIB Knowledge Centre Phase II | €141.000 | January 1, 2017    | September 30, 2019 |
| 2018 | NAI SIB Knowledge Centre Phase II | €87.000  | January 1, 2017    | September 30, 2019 |
| 2019 | NAI SIB Knowledge Centre PH III   | €99.000  | September 1, 2019  | February 28, 2023  |
| 2020 | NAI SIB Knowledge Centre PH III   | €154.000 | September 1, 2019  | February 28, 2023  |
| 2021 | NAI SIB Knowledge Centre PH III   | €128.000 | September 1, 2019  | February 28, 2023  |

Data retrieved via Government of the Netherlands,

[https://public.tableau.com/views/RijksbegrotingHoofdstukXVII/ChapterXVII?amp%3B%3As howVizHome=no&%3Aembed=y&%3Adisplay\\_count=no](https://public.tableau.com/views/RijksbegrotingHoofdstukXVII/ChapterXVII?amp%3B%3As howVizHome=no&%3Aembed=y&%3Adisplay_count=no).

**Table 3. Legitimation categories according to discursive construction model of van Leeuwen (2008).**

| Categories      | Definition  | Examples   |
|-----------------|---|--|
| Authorization   | ‘legitimation by reference to the authority of tradition, custom, law, and/or persons in whom institutional authority of some kind is vested’ (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 105) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reference to expertise: a particular course of action is “best” or a “good idea” according to expert</li> <li>• Reference to role models who are “wise” and “experienced”</li> <li>• Reference to laws, rules, regulations: because the law says so...</li> <li>• Usage of key words “tradition”, “practice”, “custom”, “habit”</li> <li>• Reference to modality: “many ... do it like this now”</li> </ul> |
| Rationalization | ‘legitimation by reference to the goals and uses of institutionalized social action and to the knowledges that society has constructed to endow them with cognitive       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actions founded upon the principle of success (“whether it works or not”)</li> <li>• “The following strategies should be employed to make ... more smooth/efficient/successful”</li> <li>• “It is useful” “It is effective”</li> <li>• “facilitating” processes, such as “allow,” “promote,” “help,” “teach,” “build,”</li> </ul>   |

|                               |  |   |
|-------------------------------|--|---|
|                               | <p>validity’ (p. 106).</p> <p>The purposeful action is represented as a tool to achieve a goal.</p>  | <p>“facilitate,”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of following words: “so that,” “that way,” “to,” “in order to,” “so as to,” “by,” “by means of,” “through,”</li> </ul>  |
| Mythopoesis                   | <p>‘legitimation conveyed through narratives whose outcomes reward legitimate actions and punish non legitimate actions’ (p. 106).</p> <p>Moral tales: protagonists are rewarded for engaging in legitimate social practices.</p> <p>Cautionary tales: protagonists engage in deviant activities that lead to unhappy endings.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reference to things that happened</li> <li>• Giving examples of previously happened event where actors did a good thing.</li> <li>• Giving examples of previously happened events where actors acted morally wrong.</li> </ul>   |
| Moral evaluation legitimation | <p>‘legitimation by (often very oblique) reference to value systems’ (p. 106)</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arguing that certain actions are necessary to fulfill conditions necessary for sufficient living conditions (e.g. “fulfill the public hygiene conditions necessary to provide their children with sufficient space for ensuring the sensible protection of the live environment”)</li> <li>• Use of evaluative adjectives “normal”, “natural”, “good”, “bad” to legitimize actions. (e.g. “It is a ... policy”)</li> <li>• It is “normal” “natural” “healthy”, thus legitimate</li> <li>• Abstraction: referring to practices that moralizes actions</li> <li>• Comparison to activity that is linked to positive values to encourage</li> <li>• Comparison to activity linked to negative values to renounce</li> </ul> |