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Master's Thesis of International Relations

# Parliamentary Questions on Human Rights in the Netherlands

– Exploring the Behaviour of Parties in  
Parliamentary Debates over Chinese Human  
Rights –

네덜란드 의회 내 인권 질의: 중국 인권에 관한  
의회 토론에 나타난 정당 행태를 중심으로

August 2020

Graduate School of Political Science and  
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# Abstract

## Parliamentary Questions on Human Rights in the Netherlands

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More than 70 years after the enactment of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) the topic of human rights remains one of tension in international relations. Countries are trying to find a compromise between complying with human rights and economic benefits in foreign policy. As a traditional human rights advocate, the Netherlands has experienced what happens if they fail to do so as it suffered political retribution from China in the 1990s. Due to the tension between adherence to ideals and economic considerations not all parties may evaluate them equally. This study aims at analysing party level differences between their focus on human rights when raising China-related issues and party responses to changes in Dutch Chinese-human rights policies. Through analyses based on

party behaviour theories regarding parliamentary questions (PQ) and theories regarding the Western perceptions of China's rise this study concludes that parties have dissimilar motivations for their behaviour. Christian Parties were shown to utilize human rights as a political tool. These parties did so by focusing on only the religious freedom of Christians in parliamentary debates, whereas other parties also focused on other human rights concerns. Coalition parties were found to decrease their adherence to human rights as relations with China became more complex and multifaceted. Finally, opposition parties were found to react to issues of salience and changes in human rights policies presented by coalition governments.

**Keywords:** Parliamentary Question (PQ), Human rights issue, Netherlands, Parliament, China.

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# Frequently used abbreviations

AIV	Adviesraad Internationale Vraagstukken (Eng: Advisory Council on International Affairs)
CDA	Christen-Democratisch Appèl (Eng: Christian Democratic Appeal)
CU	Christen Unie (Eng: Christian Union)
D66	Democraten 66 (Eng: Democrats '66)
HTK	Handelingen Tweede Kamer (Eng: Proceedings Second Chamber)
MP	Member of Parliament
PQ	Parliamentary Question
PvdA	Partij van de Arbeid (Eng: Labour Party)
PvdD	Partij van de Dieren (Animal Party)
PVV	Partij voor de Vrijheid (Eng: Party for Freedom)
SGP	Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij (Eng: Reformed Political Party)
VVD	Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie (Eng: People's party for Freedom and Democracy)

# Chapter 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Study Background

The fundamental human rights inherent to all human beings sit as one of the cornerstones in the international framework. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), proclaimed on the 10<sup>th</sup> of December 1948, remains a milestone document in its history and, with versions in more than 500 languages, is the single most translated document in the world.<sup>1</sup> Its widespread reading and implementation are due to the international relations' movement away from bilateral and towards multilateral constructions. Since the establishment of these modern multilateral constructs, Europe has taken upon the role of a normative power in international relations. The EU itself was founded on the principles of human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. Multilateral institutions gave a stronger voice to smaller countries and enforced a system of adherence to international norms and standards set by these institutions.

In this framework, the Netherlands considers itself a frontrunner when it comes to human rights. The Dutch government prefers multilateral solutions to human rights issues but is also extensively engaged with

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations. <https://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/human-rights/>. Accessed: 24-5-2020.

relevant countries to improve their domestic human rights situations through development cooperation.<sup>2</sup> However, a policy letter regarding the foreign policy of the Netherlands towards China in 2019 contained a startling new realisation: influence works both ways.<sup>3</sup> For the first time, a Dutch policy letter concluded that a foreign actor could affect the state of human rights domestically. It was concluded to be no longer a certainty that the Netherlands influenced China only unilaterally.

This realisation has potentially far-reaching consequences. The rise of China as an increasingly important actor in world politics and its implications has been part of both the political and the academic debate.<sup>4</sup> China's rise is not a threat simply due to its economic, political and geographical size by itself, but because it puts into question a core belief regarding the norms and values established in the current international world order: universality. Many Western nations believed that any country developing far enough would inevitably adhere to norms and values similar to those of the Western states' themselves. Thus, it was believed that introducing China into the international framework would lead to Chinese reforms and adaptations to the existing international systems of law. This, however, does not completely seem to be the case. There are currently still

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<sup>2</sup> States General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "Mensenrechtenrapportage 2018: Inzet en resultaten buitenlandse mensenrechtenbeleid". 2018: 1- 105. (Eng: Human Rights Report 2018: Input and results foreign human rights policy.)

<sup>3</sup> States General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 'Nederland-China: Een Nieuw Balans'. 2019: 1-105. (Eng: Netherlands-China: A New Balance).

<sup>4</sup> Influential writers include Graham T Allison, John Ikenberry, John Mearsheimer, and Joshua Cooper Ramo.

many disputed cases regarding trade with China, despite its entry to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, the World Health Organization (WHO) prevented Taiwan from attending WHO meetings and events after 2016 due to pressure from China.<sup>6</sup> Finally, China was amongst the chief authors of the UDHR which it signed. Nonetheless reports of the oppression of (religious) minorities, the institutionalized forced harvesting of organs, and the persecution of human and/or civil rights activists are continuous causes for alarm to the Netherlands and other human rights advocates.

Like many Western democracies, the Netherlands is ambivalent towards China as a global partner. China has grown to be an economic world power that offers many economic opportunities. Scrutinizing Chinese human rights may be to the detriment of bilateral economic relations. China has retaliated in the past by cutting off economic cooperation with countries that focused too much, or at least too publicly, on human rights issues. The Netherlands itself experienced this in 1997 after it attempted to pass multiple EU resolutions that criticized Chinese human rights in the European Commission of Human Rights. The resolutions failed to gain a majority during the voting stage. As a consequence, diplomatic and

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<sup>5</sup> World Trade Organization. "China and the WTO". [https://www.wto.org/english/thewto\\_e/countries\\_e/china\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/countries_e/china_e.htm) Accessed: 25-5-2020.

<sup>6</sup> Yu-Jie Chen & Jerome A. Cohen. "Why Does the WHO Exclude Taiwan." *Council of Foreign Affairs*. <https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/why-does-who-exclude-taiwan>. Accessed: 25-5-2020.

economic ties between the Netherlands and China were frozen by China for a year.<sup>7</sup>

This issue poses an apparent gap between economics and idealism. Adhering to moral ideals endangers economic relations, but dropping human rights issues in favour of economics means foregoing the foundations on which countries like the Netherlands built their political identity as well as the adhering concepts of universality.

## 1.2. Purpose of Research

The Dutch relationship with China consists of balancing economic considerations versus those of ideals. The comparison, however, may be lopsided. In the 2017 Dutch Parliamentary Election Study (DPES) the ‘Economic/Financial situation’ was considered the 4<sup>th</sup> most important issue, whereas ‘human rights’ was not on the list.<sup>8</sup> Economics is of higher political implication than are those of human rights. As human rights can hinder economic relations, it gives incentives to governments to forego them in favour of economics. This raises the questions on whether there are differences between parties regarding their adherence to human rights advocacy.

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<sup>7</sup> Malcontent & Huijboom (2006): 53 – 66.

<sup>8</sup> Dutch Parliamentary Election Survey. “Most important national problem”. 2017. The Dutch Parliamentary Election Study (DPES) is the single largest survey regarding voting behaviour in the Netherlands. Human rights could hypothetically be placed under ‘foreign affairs’, but even this only came in at 10<sup>th</sup>.

To measure these party behaviours one must look at the tools that parties have at their disposal. In the Dutch parliamentary system, there is one core tool through which parties can partake in policy debates: parliamentary questioning. Parliamentary questions (PQs) are the main method by which a member of parliament (MP) can ask a Minister of the government regarding any topic that the relevant Minister is in charge of.<sup>9</sup> MPs can field questions during any plenary session. PQs are the main method for an MP to gain information and/or scrutinize government actions and this tool is utilized daily.<sup>10</sup>

My initial reading of all China-related PQs and their proportion of those related to human rights issues shows that not all parties are equally invested in inquiring about human rights.<sup>11</sup> Specifically, although larger parties tend to ask more PQs overall, some smaller parties seem to be more heavily invested in human rights than others. These parties include the SGP, CU, RPF, GPV, and DENK. Aside from DENK, such a peculiar reaction is particularly intriguing and puzzling because these parties adhere to what is called '*confessionalism*,' a form of party politics in which values

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<sup>9</sup> Lower House of the States General. Rules of Procedure. "Chapter XI. Requests to the government for information".

[https://www.houseofrepresentatives.nl/sites/default/files/atoms/files/180626-reglement\\_van\\_orde\\_engels.pdf](https://www.houseofrepresentatives.nl/sites/default/files/atoms/files/180626-reglement_van_orde_engels.pdf). Accessed 24-5-2020.

<sup>10</sup> In 2019 alone a total of 7399 parliamentary questions were raised by MPs in the Lower House.

Lower House in the States General. "Kamervragen periode 01-01-2019 – 31-12-2019".

<https://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerstukken/kamervragen?&fromdate=01-01-2019&todate=31-12-2019>. Accessed 24-5-2020; Norton (1993).

<sup>11</sup> See Appendix nr. 1.

from the New Testament form the basis of the party's political identity.<sup>12</sup> Yet their fundamentalist religious perspective outrightly contradicts a core principle of human rights that all individuals are equal. The RPF and GPV were against women's right to vote until their merger into the CU in as recently as 2003 and the SGP has only allowed female candidates since 2013. In other words, these parties that denied their Dutch women the fundamental political rights of freedom in expression are seemingly more concerned with human rights in a remote country like China. Do these parties simply believe that they uphold their 'Christian values' by raising questions over human rights in China or are there any political values attached to their parliamentary behaviour? It begs the question of why certain parties would put more focus on human rights than others.

The goal of this research is therefore to 1) show whether the Chinese human rights policies of the Netherlands fluctuate between coalition governments that put different emphasis on human rights policy and 2) analyse party level characteristics to determine whether they can explain party variations in human rights-oriented behaviour.

This research intends to answer the following research question:  
*What causes some Dutch parties to focus more on human rights issues in the Netherlands-China relations than others? Furthermore, through an analysis of party level characteristics can human rights be considered any different from other topics on international relations with China?*

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<sup>12</sup> See Appendix nr. 2 for a list of all parties and their self-proclaimed ideologies.



The idea for this dissertation came from two fields of academic research. The first of these are the studies conducted regarding party behaviour in parliamentary systems. A variety of academic research has developed several theoretical explanations to determine when and why parties raise questions in parliamentary debates. The theoretical background that these works provide forms a solid basis for analysing the China-related PQs obtained for this dissertation. The second field of literature analyses the history of the Netherlands as a human rights advocate. These literary works discuss not only human rights policy but also those specifically towards China. However, there are gaps in both works of literature. The studies on PQs have so far concentrated on overall tendencies rather than specific political topics. It is unlikely that MPs approach all topics in politics equally. By applying these theories to the PQs collected it becomes possible to determine whether human rights centric PQs are based on the same political tendencies established in theories as other topics or if they are distinctly different. Second, the literature regarding Dutch human rights policies regarding China has only focused on the policies themselves. Therefore the literature assumes a uniformity of the Dutch government as a singular actor. This means that the literature is therefore focused on the state level. Yet, the preliminary reading of party-level PQ compositions revealed significant variations amongst parties. Explaining these variances at the party-level is important because it can deepen our understanding of the Netherlands as a self-proclaimed human rights advocate.

The purpose of this research is therefore to help in further the understanding of the mechanisms involved in human rights as a topic in Dutch foreign policy and analyse the reasons that underlie existing and prior policies. This study has therefore significance due to the Netherlands' important role in international relations as a human rights advocate.

### **1.3. Confessionalism in Dutch politics**

Although the Netherlands is currently considered relatively secular, society was heavily segregated based on religious and political identity until the 1960s. This period of politico-denominational segregation in Dutch society was named the *pillarisation*. The term pillarisation is derived from the analogy that each of the four social groups – protestant, catholic, socialist, and liberal – make up one of the four 'pillars' on which society rests. This segregation of society went as far as each pillar having their own social institutions ranging from broadcasting organizations to sports clubs.<sup>13</sup> Although the pillarisation of Dutch society does no longer exist as such, many institutions have their origin in one of these four pillars.

There are several parties that have their roots within a singular pillar. This holds especially true for those of protestant nature. In current politics, the SGP and CU are the two parties left that adhere to the confessional politics of Protestantism. These are the SGP, the oldest party in the Netherlands, and the CU who did not exist until 2001 but was a

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<sup>13</sup> Other institutions included schools, political parties, labour parties and farmers' organisations, newspapers and hospitals.

founded as a merger between the older, protestant GPV and RPF.<sup>14</sup> The third remaining Christian party is the CDA. Rather than being a remnant of the pillarisation period, the CDA was formed as a 'depillarisation' effort by the Protestant ARP and CHU and the Catholic KVP. These three parties merged to form the CDA, which adhered to the concept of *ecumenism*. Ecumenism is derived from Greek, meaning "the whole inhabited world".<sup>15</sup> In essence, this can be seen as a striving for worldwide religious unity of all Christian churches. Ecumenism promotes unity, cooperation or mutual understanding between the various religious groups or denominations within a religion.

The CDA's origin of multiple pillars might have caused the CDA to be inherently different from the SGP and CU. Confessional attachment was shown to be strongly correlated to electoral behaviour in the 1970s.<sup>16</sup> However, the secularization of Dutch society has brought about changes in this electoral behaviour. The CDA's electorate has become increasingly secular, whereas the SGP and CU's electorates have remained highly religious.<sup>17</sup> The CDA's current views on abortion, euthanasia, and LGBTQ+

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<sup>14</sup> The RPF itself was founded by conservative members of the ARP in 1975.

<sup>15</sup> Dictionary.com, 'ecumenical'. <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/ecumenical>.

Accessed: 17-6-2020.

<sup>16</sup> Miller, W. E., & Stouthard, P. C. (1975). Confessional attachment and electoral behavior in the Netherlands. *European Journal of Political Research*, 3(3), 219-258.

<sup>17</sup> Konig, R. (2013). Seculariseren de achterbannen van de confessionele partijen mee? Veranderingen in het gedachtegoed van de aanhang van politieke partijen in Nederland in de periode van 1979 tot 2012. *Ontkerkelijking, nou en...? Oorzaken en gevolgen van secularisatie in Nederland*.

rights also put it at odds with the SGP and CU.<sup>18</sup> Thus, the CDA should be considered as separate from the traditional confessional parties of the SGP and CU.

Voters for these confessional parties are often found in what is considered the 'Dutch bible-belt', stretching out from the south-west to the eastern part of the Netherlands. Outside of this belt, SGP typically receives less than 1 percent of all votes in municipalities. The municipalities that make up much of the SGP's constituency are typically made up of smaller, rural communities who have not increasingly become more secular and progressive as the rest of the Netherlands. As such they are considered to be a highly conservative party by modern standards. As the preliminary data shows, these parties may play a significant role regarding the human rights debate in Dutch-China relations.

## 1.4. Thesis Outline

To answer the research question this introduction is followed up by six more chapters. Theories regarding party behaviour are discussed in chapter 2. These theories will form the theoretical framework upon which this study is based. Chapter 3 discusses the development and changes in Dutch human rights policies in regards to China. In chapter 4 I use the theories discussed in chapter 2 to develop measureable variables through which party behaviour can be analysed. Through a statistical analysis,

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<sup>18</sup> CDA. 'abortus'. <https://www.cda.nl/standpunten/abortus>; 'euthenasia' <https://www.cda.nl/standpunten/euthanasie>. Accessed: 17-6-2020.

chapter 5 discusses party behaviour through the usage of chapter 2 and 4. Chapter 6 contains a qualitative content analysis on party behaviour in response to government policies through the theories of chapter 2 and the policy periods illustrated in chapter 3. Finally, chapter 7 concludes the research with a reflection of the results, their implications and suggestions for future research.

## **Chapter 2. On when parties question ministers**

To acquire a better understanding of party behaviours in the Dutch-Chinese relationship, it is essential to recognize the political deliberations that determine these behaviours. Therefore, this chapter presents four theories relevant to explaining when and why parties field PQs in parliamentary systems. These theoretical frameworks position parliamentary questioning through the scopes of elections, control, constituencies, and media influence. The chapter concludes with an analysis of these party behaviour theories' expected relevance to human rights PQs.

### **2.1. Parliamentary questioning literature**

#### **2.1.1 Electoral tool theory**

Determined to boost their odds of re-election, parliamentarians, or MPs, are inherently motivated to make use of various electoral tools. In a democratic context, this means that an MP has to secure its spot both within his/her own party and by convincing constituents to vote in his/her favour. In addition, parliamentary questions are argued to be an efficient electoral tool by targeting the incumbent government. By raising PQs specifically aiming at the ruling party or coalition, MPs hope that their political tactics will convince the prospective constituents to vote for them as a viable and ultimately sole alternative to the incumbent government on

an election day. Accordingly, scholars argue that such parliamentary behaviour is specifically prevalent for parties that share similar constituents.

MPs may focus their attention on issues that they believe are more likely to convince constituents to vote for them rather than their electoral opponents. This would mean that PQs are asked because of their ability to change voting behaviour.<sup>19</sup> This *electoral vulnerability* can be present at both party- and individual-levels.

The re-election incentive for individual legislators is only present in the setting of personalised electoral systems, such as single-member constituencies or a strong preference vote.<sup>20</sup> The Dutch political system strictly speaking does contain a personalised element in the electoral system, however, there is an almost complete absence of strong preference voting amongst Dutch voters. In the Netherlands, a candidate with preferred votes is elected if he or she has obtained at least 25% of the electoral quota, and the lowest ranking candidate who would have been assigned a seat has fewer preference votes. However, preference voting has been shown to have virtually no impact with less than 1% of candidates receiving a spot due to preference voting in elections between 1978 and 2010.<sup>21</sup> Because these incentives for individual legislators are not present, the theory of PQs being used as an electoral tool for individual MPs is unlikely to fit with the Dutch political system.

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<sup>19</sup> Kellermann (2016): p. 91.

<sup>20</sup> Alemán et al. (2009): p. 89; Bräuninger et al (2012): pp. 612-613.

<sup>21</sup> Van Holsteyn and Andeweg (2012):p. 186.

Considering the non-impact of preference voting in the Netherlands, are individual MPs' desires for re-election than a non-factor for determining parliamentary questions? Although the direct individual incentive through preference voting is absent, this does not necessarily mean that there is no larger electoral incentive at play. At the party-level, parties are always in a tug-of-war for receiving more votes than their direct opponents. Like many European parliamentary systems, the Netherlands has many parties with often overlapping constituencies. Convincing voters to vote for your party therefore also becomes the issue of making alternative parties less attractive. Parliamentary questions can be used in this way to expose government or party mistakes.<sup>22</sup>

The research found that in the Netherlands “*parties are more likely to ask questions of ministers from parties that are ideologically distant and parties that are electorally similar*”.<sup>23</sup>

Ideological distance is the measurement of how dissimilar the policy lines of various parties are from one another. It seems to be an obvious observation that ideological distance has a positive correlation with the amount of PQs they ask. After all, questioning the government's actions and policies is generally the job of the opposition which is inherently more likely to be more ideologically distant than parties within the same coalition government. Thus the average ideological distance is expected to be higher for opposition rather than coalition parties.

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<sup>22</sup> Kellermann (2016): pp. 100-101.

<sup>23</sup> Otjes & Louwse (2018): pp. 509-510.



Electoral similarity may seem to be a measurement in direct opposition of ideological distance. Parties with similar ideologies are expected to share similar electorates. However, in multiparty parliamentary settings, these two measurements do not share a perfect negative correlation per se. This is because in the Netherlands voting behavior is partially determined by a person's social class rather than strictly by a certain political programmatic adherence. For instance, the Christian-Democratic Appeal has a left-right position similar to that of the social-liberal Democrats 66, but whilst the Christian democrats' voters are overwhelmingly religious, the voters' of the Democrats 66 were predominantly secular.<sup>24</sup> Thus, since the Christian-Democratic Appeal and the Democrats 66 are neither ideologically distant nor electorally similar it is expected that MPs from these parties are less likely to ask parliamentary questions directed towards one another.<sup>25</sup>

Parliamentary questions as an electoral tool are used in parliamentary democracies both by parties and individual MPs. However, due to the Dutch political system, individual incentives for using parliamentary questions for re-election are virtually non-existent. The ideological distance between parties may be a factor but can just as well be caused by the parties in question being the opposition on the one hand and in the coalition on the other. Finally, electoral similarity may be of particular interest when it cannot be explained by opposition or coalition politics. We

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<sup>24</sup> CBS (2012).

<sup>25</sup> Otjes & Louwerse (2018): p. 511.

expect opposition parties to ask more PQs because they are more likely to be ideologically distant as well as have a political interest in scrutinizing the government. Electoral similarity and ideological distance are likely to partially explain the effect either have on party behavior regarding PQs.

### **2.1.2. Control tool theory**

The usage of parliamentary questions as a control tool is perhaps the most accepted interpretation. Control here refers to the ability to check the government, not the power to influence or command. This interpretation seems so self-evident simply because the Dutch government itself states it as a method of checking up on government.<sup>26</sup> However, it would be presumptuous to conclude that that is all there is to it. After all, parliamentary questions may have been envisioned as a tool of inquiry, but this does not mean that MPs don't use it with other purposes in mind.

If parliamentary questions were a tool of checking the government they would have only been utilized by opposition parties, yet this is not the case. Coalition parties also ask parliamentary questions to one another to monitor each other's behaviour.<sup>27</sup> The literature argues that this is due to a fundamental delegation problem of coalition governments. Since coalition governments consist of multiple parties with non-identical policy ideologies, there is a necessity for coalition parties to ensure that all partners adhere to joint policy decisions of the cabinet even though these decisions are

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<sup>26</sup> Lower House of The States General. 'Zo werkt de Tweede Kamer'. <https://www.tweedekamer.nl/zo-werkt-de-kamer>. Accessed: 12-4-2020.

<sup>27</sup> Martin & Vanberg (2011).

implemented by MPs from individual parties.<sup>28</sup> According to this theory, coalition partners are more likely to ask each other questions on areas of policy contention.<sup>29</sup> Coalition members are less likely to divert from agreed-upon policies if the policies agreed upon were based on values shared by all coalition parties. However, if a policy is determined to diverge from one or more of the parties' personal preference then the need emerges for the other coalition parties to ensure that the policies are fulfilled according to the coalition agreement.

If PQs are indeed used as a control tool of coalition governments, it is expected that the higher ideological distance, the more likely parties are to ask PQs. This is because parties with higher ideological distance from one another might 'divert' more from agreed-upon policy than a coalition formed from parties that are ideologically more similar to one another. Thus 'ideological distance' has more than one interpretation. If ideological distance's relationship with the likelihood of raising PQs can be significantly explained by whether or not the questions are asked by coalition parties it would favour the interpretation that PQs are fielded as a way of control, rather than as an electoral tool. However, if ideological distance and electoral overlap share a positive correlation with the likelihood of raising PQs it would favour the interpretation that PQs are used as an electoral tool, rather than a mechanism for control by coalition parties.

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<sup>28</sup> Andeweg (2000); Carroll and Cox (2012); Martin and Vanberg (2011); Strøm (2000); Strøm et al. (2008); Thies (2001) in: Höhmann & Sieberer (2020): 226.

<sup>29</sup> Martin (2011).

### 2.1.3. Constituency oriented behaviour theory

The constituency oriented behavior of representatives refers to the actions undertaken by politicians in order to appeal to those who voted for him/her or their party. MPs that engage in this behavior will have to put in significant time and effort, even if it does not contribute much to their own agenda.<sup>30</sup> An MP may choose to do so regardless because the MP believes it may create a steady group of constituents, which would benefit the MP's career in the long term.<sup>31</sup> From this perspective, constituency oriented behavior and the electoral tool argument seem similar if not identical. After all, both ultimately have the same objectives: increasing the number of seats their party occupies in parliament from the party's perspective and increasing one's own political standing and likelihood of re-election from an individual's perspective. However, as described in the discussion regarding the electoral tool, individual re-election incentives are absent in the Netherlands.

It is undeniable that there is a certain amount of overlap in reasoning between PQs through constituency oriented behavior theory and electoral tool theory. However, there are differences. First, the electoral tool focuses on utilizing questions as a way to criticize governments or coalition parties and possibly 'steal away' voters from them. Constituency oriented behavior instead focuses on asking questions on topics that their

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<sup>30</sup> Denmark (2000); Kerevel (2015); Lancaster (1986); Soroka et al. (2009); Strøm (1997); Tavits (2009).

<sup>31</sup> Strøm (1997)

constituency may deem important. It is not meant as a way of potentially gaining more voters but as a means of securing those that have already voted for them. Second, the usage of parliamentary questions as an electoral tool has been found to be influenced by the salience of an issue. That is to say, if a certain issue is of higher interest in society and media, it is more likely to lead to parliamentary questions aimed at the electoral competition. The reasoning behind it is that actions regarding the electoral competition are more effective when it is about an issue that is actively in the minds of the electorate. However, in the case of constituency oriented behaviour, the issues' salience is not the main determinant. Parliamentary questions regarding this theme should theoretically still be asked even if the theme itself is a non-issue in public discourse because it is an underlying value of the electorate.

This means that constituency oriented behaviour by parties is difficult to measure. Unless the party is a 'one issue' party, each party may have their own understanding of what their constituents would value. No existing research has tried to establish this relationship statistically.<sup>32</sup> However, Vliegthart (2013) argues that the content of PQs may offer some explanation. Regulations for fielding PQs in the Dutch parliament require MPs to include a reference on which their question is based. Most commonly, this is based on a (digital) newspaper article. In the case that

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<sup>32</sup> Ciftci & Yildirim (2019) did do a statistical analysis, but here the research objective was to explain individual MP characteristics' influence on the type of constituency oriented behaviour they pursued. This was in Turkey where individual MP's incentives for re-elections are high, unlike in the Netherlands.

the reference used does not belong to a mainstream medium, but to one belong to a specific type of voter, it can be argued that those PQs are constituency oriented behaviour. However, there must be a clear connection between the party's identity and that of the reference in order for proper inference to be made.

#### 2.1.4 Agenda-setting theory

The final prevailing theory regarding PQs is regarding outside influences on parliamentary questioning. It questions whether what is seen in the media influences what politics talks about.<sup>33</sup> This theory, called the agenda-setting theory, believes that news media have the ability to "*influence the importance place on the topics of the public agenda*".<sup>34</sup> The existence of this so-called 'political agenda-setting effect' of the mass media has been defended by various researchers across a wide variety of countries.<sup>35</sup> However, the strength of this effect varied widely per study.<sup>36</sup> It is argued that the type of medium plays a role: newspapers have more influence on the parliamentary agenda than televised news. The role of news content is also claimed to play a role: 'bad news' is argued to have a larger chance of attracting political attention than 'good news'.<sup>37</sup> Some political actors are reasoned to be more prone to media influence. Opposition party members have been argued to react more to the media

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<sup>33</sup> McCombs & Shaw (1972).

<sup>34</sup> McCombs & Reynolds (2002).

<sup>35</sup> Bonafont & Baumgartner (2013); Green-Pedersen & Stubager (2010); Sevenans & Vliegenthart (2016); Van Noije et al. (2008); Walgrave et al. (2008).

<sup>36</sup> Walgrave & Van Aelst (2006).

<sup>37</sup> Thesen (2013).

than ruling party members.<sup>38</sup> Finally, the perceived importance of a topic (salience) was shown to have an impact through both mainstream media and conventional public salience, arguing that although media has an impact it is determined by a baseline of public sentiment.<sup>39</sup>

In close relation to this theory is that of the Framing theory. This theory describes the way in which information is presented. Its core premise is that issues have dimensions of perspective. Any issue can be viewed from a multitude of perspectives.<sup>40</sup> Dennis Chong and James N. Druckman (2007) stated that “framing refers to the process by which people develop a particular conceptualization of an issue or to reorient their thinking about an issue.”<sup>41</sup> Therefore framing in news media is argued to occur when certain issues are reported from particular angles only. Framing theory has been applied in a wide variety of political research. Members of political parties were found to frame issues in a way that favours their own political leaning’s solutions.<sup>42</sup> Various researches have shown that respondents answer very differently on questionnaires depending on what prefaces are given as context.<sup>43</sup> It has also been shown that the media framing of conflicts influences political action more than regular news and that immigration and integration issues in the Netherlands became more heated after news media adapted to framing immigration as a ‘Muslim

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<sup>38</sup> Sevenans & Vliegenthart (2016).

<sup>39</sup> Maniou & Bantamaroudis (2018).

<sup>40</sup> Bateson (1972).

<sup>41</sup> Chong & Druckman (2007).

<sup>42</sup> Van der Pas (2014).

<sup>43</sup> Sniderman & Theriault (2004).

threat'.<sup>44</sup> In conclusion, the agenda-setting effect occurs when the information presented through certain framing influences the consumers of this information.

## 2.2 Human rights and party behaviour.

Theories of party behaviour regarding PQs explain general tendencies when analysing the usage of PQs in its entirety. They do not, however, explain whether or not these theories are appropriate for every topic discussed in politics. This part analyses the theories and their expected role in explaining variances in parties' focus on human rights.

PQs as an electoral tool have the potential of utilizing any political issue. This means that electoral overlap and electoral vulnerability may explain why a party would ask more questions towards another party, but it cannot explain when and why a party would proportionately ask more questions regarding human rights specifically. If the likelihood of asking human rights questions is positively linked to electoral overlap it may imply that parties believe that they can win voters over by focusing on failings by the government on human rights issues. If the likelihood of asking human rights questions is negatively linked to electoral overlap it may imply that parties believe human rights are less likely to convince voters. Considering that foreign policy, and especially human rights, was not part of *any* of the participating parties' campaigns during the elections in 2012 and 2017 it is

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<sup>44</sup> Sevenans & Vliegthart (2016); Roggeband & Vliegthart (2007).



unlikely that human rights have much of an impact on voting behavior. Ideological distance, however, could be an explanatory factor. Parties that are more ideologically distant from each other have naturally more issues on which they disagree with one another. There is also a strategic component to explain why parties might refrain from questioning ideologically close parties. It might be counter-productive to provoke an ideological proximate party with whom one shares little electoral overlap. The reason is that because these ideologically proximate parties may be potential government partners in the future.<sup>45</sup> Potentially weakening their election results may result in an inability to create a majority coalition government with ideologically similar parties.

The theory of PQs as a control tool of coalition governments has the possibility of being of influence. There have been instances where rather ideologically distant parties have formed coalitions and asking human rights related PQs may be used as a tool to confirm that the Netherlands' stance on human rights towards China adheres to the standards set by the coalition. If this is the case, coalition members are more likely to ask human rights-related questions if their ideological distance is larger. This might also explain the VVD's considerably low percentage of human rights-related questions. Human rights questions are predominantly asked to the minister of foreign affairs, a seat that's been held by a VVD or ideologically close CDA member for most of the time period. If the policy of foreign affairs decided on is similar to the ideology of

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<sup>45</sup> Hansen & Pedersen (2008): 21; Walter (2014): 3.

the minister of foreign affairs that has to implement these policies, then there is little reason for a coalition partner to question whether or not that minister is implementing the policies as agreed upon.

Human rights related-questions as part of constituency-oriented behavior have the possibility to explain some of the variations found in the initial data gathering. Particularly of interest is the religious parties' focus on human rights-related questions. If the data shows a significant positive correlation that a party with a heavily religious constituency is more likely to ask human rights-related questions, it begs the question as to why this is the case. Qualitative content analysis of those PQs becomes more important to properly explain whether this is a causal relationship.

Finally, the discussion of PQs as a result of agenda-setting needs to be discussed. Literature focusing on the agenda-setting power of the media does so in a linear manner: what is the likelihood that a news article is followed up by a PQ? This line of thought is prevalent in most of the literature available.<sup>46</sup> Although this thesis does not deny the existence of an agenda-setting effect of news media – the causality was often proven significantly positive – the relationship is usually weak with only five percent or less of news articles resulting in PQs. Furthermore, this effect might explain why such topics receive more attention as a whole in the lower house, but it cannot explain variances between different parties. This could only be proven if it is established that certain parties and their members

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<sup>46</sup> Sevenans & Vliegthart (2016); Vliegthart (2013).

consume different types of media. But even if this is the case, the decision to act on these news items is a decision made by MPs themselves. It then returns to the question of why this particular MP would raise a question in the first place. This thesis believes that focusing on a possible agenda-setting effect does not contribute to the understanding of this case.

In conclusion, there are multiple aspects that may influence a party's behaviour regarding the amount and relative proportion of PQs which are related to human rights when engaging in China-related issues. First, the electoral tool theory argues that increases in electoral similarity imply that parties ask PQs to the government in order to discourage potential voters from voting for the relevant government parties, however, human rights are typically not a highly divisive topic during elections. It is expected that the electoral tool theory does not apply well with human rights PQs. So, I expect to see a significantly lower mean for electoral overlap for human rights PQs compared to non-human rights PQs. Second, the control tool theory argues that the more ideological distant a party, the more likely that party is to ask PQs. Since human rights are by its nature an idealistic topic, it is expected that overall ideological distance may explain some of the variations in the likelihood of asking human rights PQs. Finally, constituency oriented behaviour theory argues that PQs may be asked in order to satisfy the party's constituents. The preliminary findings show that highly religious parties <sup>47</sup> often quote a protestant newspaper titled "*Reformatorisch Dagblad*" (literally: "*Reformatory Daily*"). Thus, I expect

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<sup>47</sup> See chapter 1, page 4.

that PQs belonging to parties adhering to confessionalism cannot properly be explained through electoral tool theory or ideological distance theory. Qualitative analysis of these references may show that these parties focus on satisfying their constituency, rather than being influenced by other incentives.

## **Chapter 3. Policy periods in Dutch-China relations**

This chapter provides an overview of China-policies pursued by the Dutch government in regards to China. It gives particular attention to the importance given to human rights within these bilateral engagements. The combination of chapter 2's party characteristics and this chapter's analysis of government policies makes it possible analyse party behaviour through a multi-faceted approach.

First this chapter discusses general human rights policy letters, starting with the first policy letter of 1979. Second, an overview of effective policy upheld by the Dutch government is given. This allows us to review to which extent human rights in China-policy was determined by general approaches to human rights by the Dutch government or because of the particularities of the Dutch-China relations.

### **3.1 Development and changes of human rights policies**

The exact moment from which the Netherlands 'embraced' human rights policy remains a topic of debate. The debate is in agreement, however, that the minister of Foreign Affairs from 1956 to 1971, Joseph Luns, was hesitant to make human rights into foreign policy objectives. Only after domestic and international pressure did he condemn the Greek military junta of 1967-1974.<sup>48</sup> The following cabinets that formed on the 6<sup>th</sup> of July 1972 and the 9<sup>th</sup> of August 1972 each only lasted a year. The short

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<sup>48</sup> Malcontent (1998): 33-37.

timeframes in which the cabinets were formed and subsequently fell proved too narrow for any significant policies to take shape.<sup>49</sup>

When the Den Uyl cabinet took office in 1973, it immediately expressed its ambition to make human rights a cornerstone of foreign policy. Prime Minister Joop Den Uyl stated on May 28 that year in the House of Representatives that "the close connection between peace, security, equitable distribution of wealth, world law and respect for fundamental human rights" would be a starting point for foreign policy. Malcontent, therefore, called the appointment of the Den Uyl cabinet the breakthrough for human rights as an integral part of foreign policy.<sup>50</sup> In line with his ideas, he offered Van der Stoel and the Minister for Development Cooperation, Jan Pronk, space to make human rights part of their policy areas.<sup>51</sup>

### *1) The human rights note of 1979*

Although human rights became embedded in foreign policy there were issues with its interpretations. This was due to the differing views of Pronk and Van der Stoel.<sup>52</sup> The House of Representatives needed a theoretical explanation of the place and instruments of human rights policy.

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid: 36-38.

<sup>50</sup> Malcontent (1998): 49-50.

<sup>51</sup> Castermans-Holleman (1992): 134-135.

<sup>52</sup> Malcontent (1998): 49-73, 123-125. Pronk was an idealist who aimed for a public display of human rights in foreign policy whereas Van der Stoel was more pragmatic and preferred a behind closed-doors approach to human rights dialogues.

That statement came a cabinet period later in the form of the 1979 Human Rights Note.<sup>53</sup>

In the note, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs explained as fully as possible what human rights are, what their place in international relations, and what Dutch human rights policy entailed. The note turned out to be long-lived; in 2001 the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jozias van Aartsen, still broadly referred to the memorandum as the basis for human rights policy. In the most recent policy letter on human rights, Minister Timmermans wrote somewhat more cautiously that Dutch values had not changed in 2013. He did not mention the policy outlined in 1979.<sup>54</sup>

The human rights policy letter of 1987 had several core aspects. First, human rights were equal to other policy objectives, but could not always take precedence. Other objectives such as maintaining good relations, security policy, arms exports, and trade facilitation should not suffer unacceptable damage from human rights policy. Second, human rights policy was considered most effective through a multilateral approach. Standards could be set by international institutions and subsequently enforced on its member states in return for politico-economic benefits.<sup>55</sup> Third, the Netherlands would address persistent human rights violations

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<sup>53</sup> Castermans-Holleman (1992): 134-135.

<sup>54</sup> Parliamentary piece (HTK) 1978-1979, app. 15 571, nr. 2; parliamentary piece (HTK), 1986-1987, app. 19 700, ch. V, nr. 125; Parliamentary piece (HTK) 2000-2001, app. 27 742, nr. 1; Parliamentary piece (HTK), 2012-2013, App. 32 735, nr. 78.

<sup>55</sup> Baehr et al. (2002): 8-12, 21; Parliamentary piece (HTK) 2012-2013, app. 32 735, nr. 78, 11.

bilaterally in case the multilateral approach failed.<sup>56</sup> However, even in this case the Netherlands would aim to seek like-minded countries to form a coordinated political response such as aid to victims, confidential conversations (silent diplomacy), formal complaints to international organizations and public statements (naming & shaming), and in the most extreme cases sanctions.<sup>57</sup> Finally, political rights should take precedence over social rights as political rights were considered a necessary condition for the improvement of social rights.<sup>58</sup>

## *2) Notes and policy letters since 1979*

The 174 page Human Rights memorandum from 1979 was followed by a series of progress notes and policy letters in 1987, 1991, 1997, 2001, 2007, 2011, and 2013. Like the 1979 Human Rights Memorandum, these documents set out the human rights policy of the incumbent government. The extent to which the 1979 policy principles were confirmed indicates the extent to which Dutch human rights policy had continuity. Before the notes are discussed, it is important to mention that several Ministers have therefore not published a human rights note. With one exception, this can be explained by premature cabinet changes that prevented the creation of such notes. However, the responsible ministers all took the 1979 note as a

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<sup>56</sup> Parliamentary piece (HTK) 1978-1979, app. 15 571, nr. 2, 59-62.

<sup>57</sup> Parliamentary piece (HTK) 1978-1979, app. 15 571, nr. 2, 102-104.

<sup>58</sup> Baehr et al. (2002): 6-7.



starting point.<sup>59</sup> Only Ben Bot spent four years as Minister of Foreign Affairs without issuing a human rights note.

Hans van den Broek was the first Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1987 to issue a progress memorandum in addition to the 1979 Human Rights Memorandum. The progress memorandum was entirely in line with the memorandum and praised the effect it had. Human rights were "established", according to Van den Broek.<sup>60</sup>

The subsequent progress note of 1991 contained similar texts with even more optimism due to the collapse of the Soviet Union. The ideological struggle between East and West with additional security dilemmas had disappeared. Looking back, the tone of the note reveals the same euphoria that prompted Fukuyama to predict the end of history. The democratic constitutional state was the prospect of the entire world.

In the third progress note of 1997 by Hans van Mierlo, however, this mood had to make way for reflection on new problems. Failing states like Yugoslavia proved to be real threats to human rights and the rise of Asian Values in some Asian countries put pressure on the principle of universality. Van Mierlo, therefore, changed the Dutch deployment somewhat. To counter the danger of failing states, he committed to conflict prevention, and he advocated the consolidation of existing human rights treaties.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Reiding (2008): 208-213.

<sup>60</sup> Parliamentary piece (HTK), 1986-1987, app. 19 700, ch. V, nr. 125.

<sup>61</sup> Parliamentary piece (HTK), 1990-1991, app. 21 800, ch. V, nr. 91; Parliamentary piece (HTK) 1996-1997, app. 25 300, ch. V, nr. 1; Reiding (2008): 208-213.

The last human rights memorandum explicitly building on the 1979 Human Rights Memorandum came from Jozias van Aartsen in 2001. The memorandum found that the world had not fundamentally changed since the 1997 progress memorandum. A few months later, however, the focus of the international community would change drastically as a result of 9/11. The note was therefore actually published too early; Dutch policy in subsequent years was shaped to a greater extent by the ensuing fight against terrorism than by the policy intentions in the memorandum.<sup>62</sup>

Maxime Verhagen presented a completely new human rights strategy in 2007, but was ultimately shown to not diverge much from policies as outlined in the 1979 note. Under his predecessor (Ben Bot), Dutch human rights policy had lost prestige and human rights had come under international pressure due to the war against terrorism. Above all, therefore, Verhagen wanted to consolidate what had been agreed internationally in treaties and declarations. There was no change with past policies. He simply gave human rights policy a more prominent point on the agenda again.<sup>63</sup>

This changed in 2010 when VVD's Uri Rosenthal was appointed as Minister of Foreign Affairs. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of April, 2011 Rosenthal published a human rights policy letter called "*Responsible for Liberty*" which indicated that human rights policy would henceforth be subordinate to economic diplomacy and security policy. Rosenthal wanted to break from traditional

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<sup>62</sup> Reiding (2008): 208-213; Parliamentary piece (HTK) 2000-2001, ch. 27 742, nr. 1.

<sup>63</sup> Reiding (2008): 214-217; Parliamentary piece (HTK) 2007-2008: ch. 25 218, nr. 2.

human rights policy in this respect: human rights were no longer considered on equal footing with other policy objectives. The new human rights policy had to be determined by selectivity and effectiveness criteria. This meant that the Netherlands would no longer approach human rights policy through the traditional, non-selective manner, but would only engage in a way that the government believed the Netherlands would have added value.<sup>64</sup> A further explanation of what this would entail in policy came in the form of the AIV's advisory letter titled "*the receptor approach: a question of weight and measure*". The receptor approach was meant to be an approach which did would respect other cultures rather than trying to implement the Western style of law-based human rights, non-jurisdictional institutions already core to other cultures could serve the same function. Core to the receptor approach then was to identify those institutions and find ways to strengthen or reform them. This would, in theory, circumvent the cultural contrasts. Dialogue would still be a focus for the promotion of human rights worldwide, but the effectiveness of these efforts would have to be properly valued. In essence, rather than bilateral efforts, the government policy focused more on the combined strength of countries through multilateral institutions.<sup>65</sup>

Rosenthal did not have long to implement his policy outlines. The cabinet fell apart after a mere year and a half. The new Minister of Foreign Affairs, Frans Timmermans, delivered his new human rights foreign policy

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<sup>64</sup> Parliamentary piece (HTK) 2010-2011, app. 32735, nr. 1.

<sup>65</sup> AIV. "The Receptor Approach: A Question of Weight and Measure." *Advisory Letter*, 2012, No. 21: 1-15.

letter to parliament on the 14<sup>th</sup> of June 2013 titled “*Respect and rights for every human*”. The letter was meant as a reaffirmation of policy that had existed before Rosenthal. The letter stated that the Netherlands was a human rights advocate and would remain to be so. Rosenthal’s receptor approach and the selectivity and effectivity criteria were not even mentioned.<sup>66</sup> When a parliamentary question was subsequently asked about the similarities between the receptor approach and parts of the policy letter, Timmermans made it clear once again that his policy should not be associated with the receptor approach.<sup>67</sup>

Timmermans’ belief in multilateral solutions for human rights policies showed through in the policy letter. The Netherlands would engage in trilateral approaches including both western partners and new partners. It would focus not only on state-level cooperation but also societal level and aim at the engagement of local populations through the internet. Another new idea was the improvement of human rights issues within the Netherlands and being open to criticism from the other countries as to not appear to be ‘above’ criticism.<sup>68</sup>

No formal policy letter on international human rights has been publicised since. Instead, human rights policy has been integrated directly in the policy letters regarding NL-China relations. The first of these was developed in November 2013 with the title “*The China-policy of the*

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<sup>66</sup> Policy memorandum. ‘Respect and rights for every human.’. House of Representatives of the States General, 32 725, no. 1, 14 June, 2013.

<sup>67</sup> Parliamentary piece (HTK) 2012-2013, App. 32 735, nr. 83, question 24.

<sup>68</sup> Parliamentary piece (HTK), App. 32 735, nr. 78: 7-12.

*Netherlands: Investing in Values and Commerce*”, but as this was shortly after Timmermans’ revealed his human rights policy letter, it only referred back to that letter regarding Chinese human rights.<sup>69</sup> An updated version came in March 2019 when Minister of Foreign Affairs Stef Blok delivered his policy letter titled “Netherlands-China: A New Balance”.<sup>70</sup> In this policy letter, differences between Chinese and Dutch values were emphasized and states that China’s vision of human rights could have consequences for the Netherlands. This resulted, for the first time, a portion of the debate being surrounded by the protection of human rights in the Netherlands and Europe in opposition to Chinese influence.<sup>71</sup>

In short, human rights notes and policy formulations show variations in perceptions towards China. Until 1989 human rights abuses in China were not well known or an issue in Dutch parliament and policy formulation, but this changed after the Tiananmen Square incident. Until 1997 the Netherlands would seek to actively condemn these issues through multilateral settings but stopped after it could not find the international backing it longed for. From then on until 2010 the Netherlands sought to approach the Chinese state to change the CCP’s systems of law and protection of human rights. This was interrupted in 2010 by Uri Rosenthal’s ‘realist’ approach but was picked up again from 2012 until 2019 when Stef

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<sup>69</sup> Parliamentary piece (HTK), App. 33 625 nr. 59: 1-17.

<sup>70</sup> Policy memorandum. ‘Netherlands-China: A New Balance.’. House of Representatives of the States General, 15 June, 2019: 1-53.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid. 51.

Blok's policy letter emphasized the protection of domestic human rights alongside the promotion of human rights in China.

### **3.2 From paper to practice: Dutch China-policies over time**

To determine what makes policies distinct from one another there is a need to categorize possible approaches. Interpretations of China's future role in international politics have divergent assumptions and conclusions. It is these assumptions from which, ultimately, policy regarding China is made. The existing theories regarding China's rise have been categorized in table 3 in the appendix. These theories are drawn upon in determining when a certain policy period starts and ends. This is because human rights engagements with China may be influenced more so by the interpretation of whether or not it is effective when interacting with China. Therefore the choices made can give a completely different picture of human rights policy than the policy letters suggest. In other words, the difference between policy formulation and effective policy is sometimes enormous. In this way, the Ministry seems to balance between domestic opinion formation and foreign sensitivities. On the one hand, policy letters at home create the image of a powerful Netherlands that can be heard internationally, and on the other hand, in practice, the Netherlands proves to other countries that it wants to deal with its views.<sup>72</sup>

#### **1973 –1997: China Crisis theory**

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<sup>72</sup> Baehr et al. (2002): 1.

It is striking that where the Dutch human rights policy took shape in 1973, a specific policy concerning China was only implemented in 1989. In the period 1973-1989, the Dutch China-policy was marked by its absence.<sup>73</sup> This was changed by the bloody crackdown on Tiananmen Square protests on June 4, 1989. In a PR fiasco for the Chinese state, a series of violations of the most basic human rights occurred in front of the global press. From one day to the next, China unwillingly placed itself at the centre of the international human rights lobby.<sup>74</sup>

In the days after the Tiananmen protests in 1989, the idea prevailed in the Netherlands that China, following the Soviet Union, was on the verge of collapse. Relus ter Beek, Member of Parliament on behalf of the PvdA, put it as follows:

*"Today's youth in China have proven to their elderly leadership that their ideology and system are also outdated. China is waiting for a new generation of leaders who can and want to implement not only economic but also political reforms. These days it will be decided how long that waiting will take."* - Relus ter Beek.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid.: 149.

<sup>74</sup> Baker (2002): 55.

<sup>75</sup> Parliamentary piece (HTK), 1988-1989, "explanation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs regarding the recent incidents in China", nr. 83. Literal quote: *"De jongeren in het China van nu hebben de oude leiders bewezen dat ook hun ideologie en hun systeem verouderd zijn. China wacht op een nieuwe generatie leiders die niet alleen economische, maar ook politieke hervormingen kunnen en willen doorvoeren. Dezer dagen zal worden beslist hoe lang dat wachten zal duren."*

Ter Beek saw the events in Tiananmen Square heralding an existential crisis for the regime. The entire House of Representatives shared his analysis. Minister Van den Broek also took this scenario into account, but as a statesman, he did not want to be too far ahead: the measures to be taken should not make future cooperation with China impossible in advance. However, the vision of the House of Representatives in June 1989 was fully in line with the China Crisis theory. The regime could fall over every day.<sup>76</sup>

Believing that the government in China itself would not last, the Netherlands rather focused on raising the Chinese human rights situation with like-minded countries in a UN context than deal with the CCP directly. Initially, the Netherlands submitted a draft text for a thematic resolution to the General Assembly, but an active Chinese lobby resulted in amendments that nullified the resolution. Minister Van den Broek expressed frustration with the UN Human Rights Commission about the state of affairs, after which Australia took the lead and submitted a motion for a resolution condemning China. China again managed to prevent the resolution from coming about, this time thanks to a so-called no-action motion: the country managed to mobilize a majority in the Human Rights Commission to stop a substantive vote on the resolution.<sup>77</sup>

In the following years, this scene repeated itself in the Human Rights Commission: a Western state submitted a motion for a resolution,

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<sup>76</sup> Appendix, table 3.

<sup>77</sup> Baker (2002): 153-155.



after which China dismissed it through a no-action motion. This cycle continued until 1997.

In the run-up to the session of the Human Rights Commission in 1997, the Netherlands chaired the EC who wished to field another resolution. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was convinced that the absence of such a resolution would be a victory for China. However, not everyone within the EC held this view. Ultimately, resistance to a resolution was too strong and as a result, in 1997, for the first time since the establishment of European cooperation in this field, no China resolution was tabled. Instead, Denmark submitted a resolution co-sponsored by the Netherlands. China again blocked the resolution through a no-action motion. The Netherlands and Denmark were also punished by China for their proactive stance by freezing bilateral ties for a year.<sup>78</sup>

In 1997, therefore, the second major shift in Dutch human rights policy towards China took place. Public condemnation of abuses in China became the focus of human rights policy in 1989. Eight years later, this judgmental element of the policy disappeared through the side door, despite Dutch resistance. After all, resolutions in the Human Rights Commission were the condemnation par excellence: this is evident from the importance that the Netherlands attached to efforts to submit the resolutions year after year, and the importance that China attached to putting an end to the resolutions. Due to the continuous failure of these

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<sup>78</sup> Malcontent & Huijboom (2006): 53 – 66.

resolutions, however, the Netherlands decided not to table any China-related human rights resolutions anymore after 1997.

### **1998 – 2010: Economic wow-factor**

From 1997 Dutch efforts were largely focused on cooperation with the government, with the most important instruments being the European-Chinese human rights dialogue, attention to human rights during state visits, and the embassy's rule of law project. Such attention to influencing the government and government officials is not consistent with the belief that communist China would fall. The crisis theory, which initially formed the basis of the Dutch China policy, had reluctantly made way for a new vision of the future in 1997 and under European pressure. By stimulating economic interaction and ideological exchange, the new policy found itself in the camp of the Economic Wow Factor approach. Extensive interaction between China and the West was to have a socializing effect on China's human rights policy.<sup>79</sup>

This does not mean that the Dutch policy towards Chinese human rights abuses changed completely from a stance of critique towards cooperation. For example, former Prime Minister Wim Kok received the Dalai Lama in 1999, even though it would make a confrontation with China inevitable.<sup>80</sup> Moreover, parliament has always expressed itself more

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<sup>79</sup> Appendix, table 3.

<sup>80</sup> DalaiLama2018. "The Dalai Lama in the Netherlands".  
<https://www.dalailama2018.nl/en/dalai-lama-en/the-dalai-lama-in-the-netherlands>.

Accessed: 14-5-2020.

critically than the government itself. An example of this is the recurring appeal by the House of Representatives to China to end the occupation of Tibet.<sup>81</sup>

Another period of particular interest in this era was the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing. Opposition parties asked multiple PQs regarding the possibly forced evacuation of thousands of people from poorer districts in Beijing as these older buildings were subsequently bulldozed to clean up the city's image.<sup>82</sup> Other PQs called for the Prime Minister, queen, and Minister of Foreign Affairs not to partake in the opening ceremony as a moral statement against China's human rights situation.<sup>83</sup> The answer was, however, that such an action would not be beneficial if not in unison with other like-minded countries. No action was undertaken and the Dutch delegation attended the opening ceremony.

### **2010 – 2012: Break from tradition**

The receptor approach developed under Rosenthal did change Dutch policy. Anecdotally it was well-received by China. After all, the receptor approach acknowledged that there were cultural differences between the West and China, whose prior absence was the main point of critique from China itself. An example of this is that one of the think tanks behind the formulation of the receptor approach, Tom Zwart, was allowed

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<sup>81</sup> Parliamentary piece (HTK) 2010-2011. app. 32 500, ch. V, nr. 91.

<sup>82</sup> Parliamentary questioning appendix (Kamervragen) 2007-2008, nr. 2113 and 2359.

<sup>83</sup> Parliamentary questioning appendix (Kamervragen) 2007-2008, nr. 2126, 2408, and 2410.

on Chinese state television to talk about his ideas.<sup>84</sup> Not everyone, however, was enthusiastic about the approach. Academics and opposition parties critiqued the approach, stating that, despite the rhetoric, nothing quite new could be appointed in terms of policy lines. Furthermore, the approach seemed to give China a means to justify poor human rights practice: it could use culture as an apology for the existing policy.<sup>85</sup>

Economic policy was to become the core of NL-China relations. In both his human rights and economic policy letters he emphasized 'the Dutch interest' in foreign policy and vouched for more cooperation with businesses in these endeavours.<sup>86</sup> However, there are not many practical examples of these policy implications, because the cabinet fell within two years of forming a coalition. There is only one economic activity through which an effective policy can be evaluated. The economic consideration was that of a single extensive trade mission. Verhagen, then minister of Economic Affairs, travelled to China in May 2011 with forty-five Dutch companies in his wake. During the mission, contracts with a combined value of more than one hundred million euros were concluded and a promise of commitment to building an economic consulate in Western China was made.<sup>87</sup> Building on this success, the cabinet tried to set up

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<sup>84</sup> Parliamentary piece (HTK), 2010-2011, App. 32 735, nr. 19.

<sup>85</sup> Donders & Vleugel (2013); Flinterman & Krommendijk (2012); Parliamentary piece (HTK), 2010-2011, App. 32 735.

<sup>86</sup> Parliamentary piece (HTK), 2010-2011, App. 32 734, nr. 1.

<sup>87</sup> Minister Verhagen voor handelsmissie in China', in: *NOS.nl: nieuws* (10 mei 2011): <http://nos.nl/audio/239402-minister-verhagen-voor-handelsmissie-in-china.html>, accessed: 19 May, 2020.

another trade mission in 2012, but this was eventually scaled down to one without ministerial representation.

In terms of human rights policy, the government was not able to give a clear answer to what the receptor approach would mean in terms of effective policy. In the human rights year report of 2011, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that “*human rights are universal, but its implementation is a domestic affair.*”<sup>88</sup> This would imply that the Netherlands should not bother with China’s adherence to human rights at all since it was domestically completely up to China. Yet a slightly altered version arrived some months later as an answer to a PQ regarding the receptor approach stating that “*in the receptor approach, countries are called to account for obligations arising from treaties to which they have voluntarily committed themselves*”.<sup>89</sup> According to this statement, only treaties ratified by the countries themselves should be addressed, anything beyond the scope of those treaties would be up to the country themselves. This resulted in a PQ warning the Ministry of its consequences as China had not ratified the UN’s International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and such statements ‘de-universalising’ human rights would give countries such as China the excuse of never having to ratify it at all.<sup>90</sup>

A second issue from which policy can be evaluated is the annual prize awarded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs called the *Human*

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<sup>88</sup> Parliamentary piece (HTK), 2011-2012, App. 33 240, Ch. 5, nr. 1.

<sup>89</sup> Parliamentary piece (HTK), 2011-2012, App. 32 735, nr. 51.

<sup>90</sup> Parliamentary piece (HTK), 2011-2012, App. 32 735, nr. 29.

*Rights Tulip*. An independent jury had determined to give the prize to the Chinese human rights lawyer Ni Yulan. She had fought against the bulldozing of houses in Beijing prior to the 2008 Summer Olympics. She had consequently been imprisoned, tortured by police in 2008 which put her in a wheelchair, and lost her license as a lawyer.<sup>91</sup> The ceremony should originally have taken place on December 9, 2011, but was postponed to early 2012. Rosenthal opposed the award but, unable to prevent it, distanced himself from the Ministry's own human rights prize.<sup>92</sup> Likely this was an effort to not invoke Chinese retaliation. A year prior the Nobel committee had given the Nobel Peace Prize to Liu Xiaobo, which Norway had to pay for with Chinese economic sanctions.

In prior policy, human rights had received a position equal to those of other considerations. However, Rosenthal's actions suggest that for him, human rights problems were in the way of his desire to strengthen economic ties with China. His effective policy, in combination with the statements regarding the receptor approach, can be classified under 'moderated futurism'. After all, moderate futurism dictates that human rights diplomacy must be based on sovereignty. Priority is therefore given to harder policy areas such as increasing prosperity and security policy.

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<sup>91</sup> Author unknown, 'China: Human Rights Tulip 2011 to Ni Yulan', in: *Lawyers for Lawyers* (2 January 2012): <http://www.advocatenvooradvocaten.nl/nl/6195/china-dutch-%E2%80%98human-rights-tulip%E2%80%99-2011-awarded-to-ni-yulan/>. Accessed: 20 May 2020.

<sup>92</sup> Roessingh, Martijn. 'Minister distantieert zich van eigen mensenrechtenprijs'. <https://www.trouw.nl/nieuws/rosenthal-distantieert-zich-van-eigen-mensenrechtenprijs~b35d971f/>. Accessed: 20 May, 2020.

## 2013 – 2018: return to normalcy

In the November 2013 policy document, Timmermans explained that the importance of government contact was invaluable in the relationship with China. After all, the Chinese government was strongly intertwined with business. Excellent governmental contacts, therefore, formed the basis of a successful China policy. In other words, cooperation was imperative; confrontation with consequently closed doors should be avoided.<sup>93</sup> At the same time, Timmermans did not want to subordinate values to economics. The innovative approach announced by the minister in his human rights letter provided the means to this end. First of all, the human rights dialogue had to be conducted as broadly as possible: all ministers would touch upon the subject within their respective domains and the Netherlands would also actively seek out contacts outside the government, for example through the human rights ambassador. Second, the Netherlands and the E.U. would need to show more appreciation for China's progress in economic and social rights, and the Netherlands itself would be more open to Chinese criticism of Dutch human rights policy. This would create an equal and more constructive dialogue on human rights policy. In this way, a confrontation behind closed doors would be avoided as a result, while a substantive discussion could be conducted.<sup>94</sup>

Human rights was therefore no longer a theme on its own but rather were to be implemented in all facets of interaction with China,

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<sup>93</sup> Parliamentary piece (HTK), 2013-2014, App. 33 625, nr. 59.

<sup>94</sup> Parliamentary piece (HTK), 2013-2014, App. 33 625, nr. 59.

regardless of topic. The issues were then also to be raised in a constructive manner in the hope of improving human rights without angering China. In lieu of this policy outline, the interaction did seem to increase. In 2013 Timmermans and Prime-Minister Rutte visited China for the *Nuclear Security Summit* and Rutte subsequently announced on the national news that the Netherlands had resumed human rights talks with China after which the human rights ambassador visited China as well.<sup>95</sup> The following year Xi Jinping came for a state visit to the Netherlands himself during which human rights were discussed again within the context of bilateral international cooperation.<sup>96</sup> In a subsequent royal state visit by the Dutch King Willem van Oranje-Nassau to China human rights mentioned as well, albeit extremely briefly.<sup>97</sup> Yet Timmermans' vision of a transparent human rights dialogue did not work at all times. Lists of expenditures regarding the government's human rights fund do list efforts and expenditures in China, particularly Beijing, but the projects are often labelled as 'confidential', attesting that closed-door dialogue and activities are still the norms when dealing with Chinese human rights.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Parliamentary piece (HTK), 2013-2014, App. 32 735, nr. 106, appendix. 321308.

<sup>96</sup> Parliamentary piece (HTK), 2014-2015, App. 34 000, Ch. 5, nr. 80.

<sup>97</sup> The Royal House. "Toespraak van Zijne Majesteit de Koning at the state banquet during the state visit to China, Beijing." 26 Oct, 2015.

<https://www.koninklijkhuis.nl/onderwerpen/staatsbezoeken/documenten/toespraken/2015/10/26/toespraak-van-zijne-majesteit-de-koning-bij-het-staatsbanket-tijdens-het-staatsbezoek-aan-china-beijing-26-oktober-2015>. Accessed: 20-5-2020.

<sup>98</sup> States General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "Mensenrechtenrapportage 2018: Inzet en resultaten buitenlands mensenrechtenbeleid". 2018. (transl.: Human rights report 2018: efforts and results foreign human rights policy.)



The Dutch approach to China's human rights reverted back to its original proposition: improving human rights by engaging with China. This falls back into the Economic Wow Factor approach which was held until 2010.<sup>99</sup> Although the approach of implementing the debate within other spheres of interest is a new iteration, it remains the same at the core. Improving Chinese human rights is done through interactions and cooperation in the hope of changing the Chinese system.

### **2019 and beyond: In search for a new strategy**

The first indication that a new policy would be formulated came with the publication of the European Commission's (EC) EU-wide policy letter "*EU-China: A Strategic Outlook*". For the first time, the EC did not frame the relationship as largely full of opportunities but rather focused on negative aspects such as its grievances with Chinese protectionism, investments in European's 'critical infrastructures', and general unwanted Chinese influence.<sup>100</sup> PQs asking whether critical infrastructures were also the target in the Netherlands got a response that the government was already re-evaluating their relationship with China and a new policy letter would be delivered shortly.<sup>101</sup> The subsequent policy letter by Stef Blok announced greater interest in the protection of Dutch critical infrastructures, increasing pressure on China to abolish unfair economic protectionism by adhering to WHO standards, increasing cybersecurity, publicly announcing

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<sup>99</sup> Appendix, table 3.

<sup>100</sup> European Commission (2019): 1 – 16.

<sup>101</sup> Parliamentary piece (HTK), 2018-2019. nr. 2082, 2552, and 3284.

positions on Chinese human rights, increasing cooperation towards climate goals, working together with China in developmental projects in Africa and focusing on a unified-EU to monitor and possibly counter Chinese (political) pressure and/or influence.<sup>102</sup> Dutch policy towards China had never been more multifaceted.

In an advisory piece requested by the cabinet from the AIV, a core aspect of the interpretation of China as a state comes forward. *“Here appears a fundamentally different civilization, a different power. We meet this country on all international stages and even at home, sometimes as rivals or competitors, sometimes as unmissable partners... Where convergence is impossible and confrontation undesirable, the relationship takes shape as a meeting of two systems, civilizations, players”*. The AIV further advised not to take a frontrunner position in emphasizing human rights in multilateral settings when a majority was uncertain, as the political-economical costs could be high. The response by the cabinet was that, although it did agree that achieving a majority before any voting regarding human rights statements were important, it dismissed the AIV’s advice that the Netherlands should not be a leading country on the issue.<sup>103</sup> It did, however, agree that it had started to influence foreign states on more than just the economic level. The perceived dangers of Chinese influence abroad, particularly within the EU would lead to the belief that the policy adheres to the ‘China Threat’ theory, in which China is considered as a

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<sup>102</sup> States General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. “Mensenrechtenrapportage 2018: Inzet en resultaten buitenlandse mensenrechtenbeleid”. 2018: 1- 105.

<sup>103</sup> Parliamentary piece (HTK) 2018 – 2019. App 25 207, nr. 2.

power fundamentally endangering current world order. Here, trying to change its domestic human rights situation would be difficult as human rights would be considered a bargaining chip in power politics. In this situation rather than cooperating with China on improving Chinese human rights, there would be a return to publicly criticizing the Chinese government. There is reason to believe that this may be happening. The Dutch embassy in Beijing posted a message on its official Weibo account stating “*One of the wishes for 2020 that the Netherlands has is for all countries globally to implement the Universal Declaration of Human Rights unconditionally*” along with a screenshot of a Chinese court document that sentenced a Chinese Christian pastor to 9 years in jail.<sup>104</sup> The Netherlands also co-signed a statement regarding the detention of Uyghur minorities, issued to the UN human rights commission on October 29, 2019.<sup>105</sup>

The formulation of an approach to China and its effective human rights policy do not seem to be completely aligned. Although the cabinet acknowledges the increasing political Chinese influence and does perceive it as a threat, human rights engagements with China are not completely aligned with the common human rights approach associated with countries adhering to the China Threat theory. The human rights dialogue is more public and because of it, more confrontational. However, most of the human rights debates still take place behind closed doors and the

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<sup>104</sup> [https://www.weibo.com/2511711495/Invjns7XU?filter=hot&root\\_comment\\_id=0&type=comment#\\_rnd1589975502232](https://www.weibo.com/2511711495/Invjns7XU?filter=hot&root_comment_id=0&type=comment#_rnd1589975502232). Accessed: 20-5-2020.

<sup>105</sup> Gov.uk. ‘joint statement on human rights violations and abuses in Xinjiang.’ 29 October 2019. Accessed: 20-5-2020.

Netherlands continues its policy of improving human rights situations through development cooperation in China. Placing the approach into a category has difficulties because its implementation is less than a year ago, but there seems to be a mix of two approaches. The first approach is the traditional 'economic wow factor' approach in which the economic benefits of having good relationships with China are wanted, although the approach is more sceptical than before. This is also shown by the adherence of trying to get China to adhere to the Covenant of Human Rights which is implementing China into the international system of law. The second approach is that of the 'China Threat Theory'. Here, the possibility of China influencing human rights elsewhere is acknowledged and these Chinese influences abroad, both within the EU and elsewhere are seen as possible threats, including to human rights. The current cabinet seems in the crossroads between these two strategies: Economic Wow Factor and China Threat theory.<sup>106</sup>

### 3.3 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the Dutch policies of human rights and those in regards to China. Table 3.1 shows the time periods for each policy, the applicable theory to their approach, and the adhered to China-specific human rights policy.

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<sup>106</sup> Appendix, table 3.

**Table 3.1** Approaches to China and human rights policy per time period

<b>Time period</b>	<b>Approach to China</b>	<b>China-human rights policy</b>
1973 – 1989	China Crisis Theory I	Non-existent
1989 – 1997	China Crisis Theory II	Critique in multilateral setting
1997 - 2010	Economic Wow Factor I	Improvement through cooperation
2010 – 2012	Moderated Futurism	Selectivity in discussing human rights topics: receptor approach
2012 – 2019	Economic Wow Factor II	Implementation of dialogue in other fields of interaction
2019 – current	Economic Wow Factor/China threat theory	Improvement through dialogue and domestic protection

Source: data collected by the author.

The period of 1973 to 1997 was shown to be typified by the belief that the CCP would not be able to retain power in China. However, only after the 1989 Tiananmen Square incident did human rights issues in China become prevalent in Dutch foreign policy. The usage of economic development as a tool in improving China's human rights that started in 1997 is still present today and was only briefly interrupted during the policy period of Uri Rosenthal from 2010 to 2012. Currently in 2019, this approach is starting to shift, but policy has not completely moved away from traditional policy.

A period of interest not apparent in this table is the China Olympics in Beijing in 2008. During this period, China rose to salience and became a

heavily debated topic in Dutch parliament. This outlier should be noted when analysing the data as it is likely to have temporarily have affected party behaviour.

## Chapter 4. Methodology

In this chapter, I will spell out how the pertinent data are collected, which variables are appropriate to capture the major constructs or concepts, and how I purport to substantiate the relationships among those variables.

### 4.1. Data Collection

764 parliamentary questions were collected from 1973 until 2019. The reason for the timespan is simply that the first China-related parliamentary question on record was raised on the 14<sup>th</sup> of August in 1973. Thus the data set includes all known China-related parliamentary questions until the moment of data collection. This is in accordance with King et al.'s (1994) position that it is best to *collect data on as many of its observable implications as possible*.<sup>107</sup> The parliamentary questions were gathered through entering keywords in the search engine of the digital database of government documents from the Dutch government at “[www.officielebekendmakingen.nl](http://www.officielebekendmakingen.nl)”.<sup>108</sup> The most important criterion of the data was that the question had to be directly related to China as the sole topic of interest. For instance, during the nuclear disarmament movements in the 1980s, multiple questions regarding the nuclear disarmament of all

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<sup>107</sup> King, Keohane & Verba (1994): 24.

<sup>108</sup> See table 1 for the list of keywords used. However, even though a diverse range of keywords were used, all parliamentary questions ultimately gathered ended up having a 100% correlation rate with the keyword “China”.

nuclear powers were asked, including China. However, these questions related to a list of countries that all had nuclear capabilities in common, not to China specifically. Such questions that merely mention China in a list of multiple countries without addressing a question specifically towards China were excluded from the list. The resulting collected data was made into a single data set file to be analysed with the software package “SPSS Statistics”.

**Table 4.1. Keywords used during data collection**

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Keywords used (Dutch)</b>
Noun and adjectives	China, Chinees, Chineze(n)
Chinese Cities	Shanghai/Sjanghai, Beijing, Wuhan, Tianjin, Chongqing, Hangzhou, Chengdu, Shenzhen, Guangzhou, Nanjing
Presidents	Mao Zedong, Liu Shaoqi, Dong Biwu, Song Qingling, Li Xiannian, Yang Shangkun, Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao, Xi Jinping
Issues of international attention	Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macau, Olympische Spelen, Tiananmen, Uyghur/Uighur, Tibet, Tibetaans(e)

Source: list compiled by the author.

Not all observations collected during data-collection were used for analysis. This is because of the distorting effect of two specific parties: the



PvdD and DENK.<sup>109</sup> The Partij van de Dieren (Animal Party, PvdD) is a single-issue party that focuses solely on animal-rights abuses in which the Netherlands is either directly or indirectly involved. For instance, out of the 35 PQs asked by the PvdD 17 of them were in regard to the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing. Reports came in that street animals were being hunted down in order to clean up the city's image prior to the Olympics. The PvdD fielded numerous questions asking the government to condemn these actions as one of the countries participating in the event. All other 18 questions were about meat products of Chinese origin. The PvdD argued that the Netherlands should not import meat from countries that have no or limited legal protection of farm animals. The content of these PQs shows that the PvdD has no direct interest in China or a specific approach towards China itself. Their only concerns are animal rights and welfare.

The party DENK was founded in 2016 after two MPs of Turkish descent disagreed with a statement regarding immigration from their party at the time, the Partij van de Arbeid (Labour Party, PvdA). DENK proclaims itself to be focused on immigration issues, but the party is completely represented by MPs of Turkish-Dutch origins. The word DENK is also chosen because of its Turkish meaning "equality". Since its formation, the party has raised 12 PQs involving China, all of them about the persecution of Muslim Uyghur minorities in western China. This should be viewed as purely constituency-oriented behavior. After all, the two MPs formerly active for the PvdA did not raise the Uyghur issue a single time prior to founding

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<sup>109</sup> See table 1 in the appendix.

DENK. Furthermore human rights PQs also often include the persecution of other religious minorities such as Christians or Tibetans, as well as government critics. Yet, none of these issues have been raised by DENK MPs. Both the PvdD and DENK distort the analysis of our case. It is clear that both raise questions because of their constituencies. Because these parties are not representative of party behavior in Dutch politics, nor are they part of a field of politics that spans multiple parties, the PQs raised by both the PvdD and DENK have been removed from the data set during analysis.

## **4.2 Variables: selection and operationalization**

There are three types of variables that this research is concerned with: dependent variables, independent variables, and control variables. The dependent variable of this thesis is “China-related human rights parliamentary questions”. This is a binary variable of whether or not a China-related parliamentary question is human rights-related. The independent variables have been identified in accordance with the theories discussed in Chapter 2. These are ideological distance, electoral overlap, coalition member, religious constituency. The control variables are independent variables that are not of substantive interest to the hypothesis under examination but may have a non-zero covariance with the variables being researched. Including these variables in a regression, it can improve the fit of the model, if excluded whilst having a non-zero covariance it may

bias the regression's result. The control variables included in the data set are party size and opposition party status.

### *1) Dependent Variable*

The main dependent variable in the dataset is whether or not a question is human rights-related. It is therefore necessary to identify a framework for when parliamentary questions should be considered human rights-related or not. What consists of human rights is well documented in the Dutch case. The first chapter of the Dutch constitution codifies the rights of all Dutch inhabitants and the Netherlands is a signatory to virtually all relevant international human rights instruments.<sup>110</sup> This thesis bases its identification criterion on human rights as laid out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on 10 December 1948. This declaration by the UN is universal, making its content applicable to any part of the world, unlike the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) which confines itself to within European borders.<sup>111</sup> The UDHR consists of a total of thirty articles. Articles 1 and 2 establish the basic concepts of dignity, liberty, and equality. Articles 3 to 5 establish basic individual rights such as the right to life and the prohibition of slavery and torture. Articles 6 to 11 discuss the rights of individuals' defence and treatment in case of being accused of a

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<sup>110</sup> These include the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), Rome Statute, Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR), European Convention on Torture, and the European Social Charter.

<sup>111</sup> This claim is strengthened by the fact that China was part of the drafting committee and is a signatory state itself.

crime. Articles 12 to 17 discuss individual rights within communities. These include the right to privacy, freedom of movement, freedom to asylum, right of nationality, right to consent in marriage, and right to property. Articles 18 to 21 focus on freedom of speech. These include freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of religion, and freedom of peaceful assembly and association. Articles 22 to 27 discuss individual economic, social, and cultural rights. These include healthcare, right to a *standard of living*<sup>112</sup>, care for the disabled, and care to those in motherhood or childhood. Finally, articles 28 to 30 establish that laws and duties can only inhibit personal freedoms for the sake of protecting the freedom of others. Using these articles as a basis, all questions have been codified of being human rights-related or not.

During codification, several questions became issues regarding whether or not they should be considered a human rights-related question. For instance, questions regarding the adoption of children from China have been raised on multiple occasions over a wide variety of years, but not all questions have the same content. Most of these questions related to the 'one-child policy' and that adopted children may have been forcibly removed from their parents.<sup>113</sup> These have been codified as human rights

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<sup>112</sup> The UN defines a 'standard of living' as one being "*adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services.*"

<sup>113</sup> PQs raised: CDA (24-7-1997, 4-11-1999); PvdA (22-6-2001, 8-2-2007); SP (30-7-2002, 2-5-2002, 18-12-2009, 13-5-2011, 15-11-2019); D66 (3-5-2002, 11-10-2017). Some of these questions were raised well after the 'one-child policy' was abandoned. This is because of new information regarding these adoptions being released in a retrospective matter. These questions call for criticizing China's methods during that time period.

questions as they referred both to China and the human rights of the infants and their parents in China. Another question, however, asked the government if they were aware that PTSD had been found in multiple adoption children. The question was not directed to China itself to call for action but was focusing on the wellbeing of the children who were already in the Netherlands to see that they got proper mental health care.<sup>114</sup> In this case, should the question be considered a China-related human rights question? This research decided to *not* codify it as a China-related human rights question. The reasoning is that the main concern of the question was the welfare of inhabitants of the Netherlands, not the question of human rights morality of adoptions from China.

## 2) *Independent Variables*

In order to draw correct inferences, we must be certain that our variables are measuring what we think they are measuring. This requires us to *maximize the validity of our measurements by operationalizing the independent variables into proper measurements.*<sup>115</sup> This poses the question of what types of measurements should be put in place for the independent variables 'ideological distance', 'electoral overlap', 'coalition member', and 'religious constituency'.

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<sup>114</sup> PQ raised by Groenlinks on 30 Jan. 2007.

<sup>115</sup> King, Keohane & Verba (1994): 25.

Ideological distance in essence refers to the distance that two parties' policies have from one another.<sup>116</sup> In order to operationalize this variable, literature developed a positioning framework called the GAL/TAN framework.<sup>117</sup> The acronym GAL/TAN stands for "Green, Alternative, Liberal / Traditional, Authoritarian, Nationalism". Parties adhering more to GAL ideology typically support more expansive personal freedoms such as greater civil liberties and a greater role for citizens in governing. Parties in the TAN end of the spectrum are more focused on law and order, tradition, and the idea that the government should be a strong, moral actor.<sup>118</sup> This thesis makes use of the datasets on party ideologies and policies of the Chapel Hill Expert Surveys (CHES).<sup>119</sup> The dataset consists of answers to questionnaires on four items: (1) general party positioning on the left-right dimension, (2) party positioning on economic left-right, (3) party positioning on the GAL-TAN dimension, and (4) general party positioning on European integration.<sup>120</sup> This dataset uses the data of party positioning on the GAL/TAN dimension as it is the closest measurement of ideological distance. In these datasets, experts from EU member states were asked to number each party on an 11-point scale (0-10) from "extremely GAL" (0) to "extremely TAN" (10) on a number of different policies. The average score of these responses was taken as the GAL/TAN score per party. Surveys have been conducted in 1998, 2002, 2006, 2010, 2014, and 2017. The

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<sup>116</sup> See Chapter 2, page 8.

<sup>117</sup> Bakker et al. (2012): 1-15.

<sup>118</sup> Otjes & Louwse (2018): 501.

<sup>119</sup> All data is available at the Chapel Hill Expert Survey website. <http://chesdata.eu>

<sup>120</sup> Bakker et al. (2012): 2-3.

average GAL/TAN score of each party is between 1998 and 2017 was taken for the data between 1973 and 1998. However, no data is available of the parties PPR, DS'70, and PSP as they disbanded before the first survey of 1998. This resulted in missing data for this variable on 9 occasions. The scores of each party are listed in table 3 in the appendix.

As the theoretical framework established that ideological distance and electoral overlap are not equivalent in the Netherlands, a separate measurement for electoral overlap must be established. Measuring electoral overlap has proven difficult in parliamentary settings due to the plurality of parties involved. Here, the Dutch Parliamentary Election Study (DPES) offers reliable statistics.<sup>121</sup> In this survey, scores are available regarding the question “probability of a future vote” (PFV). Respondents were asked how likely they were to vote for every party in the future on an 11-point scale from ‘certainly never’ to ‘sometime certainly’. On a scale of 0-10, this thesis caught the share of voters who said they gave a voting probability of a minimum of 7 for *both* parties. For instance, during the 1998 election, 2185 voters gave the PvdA *or* Groenlinks a PFV score of 6 or higher whereas 562 of them gave *both* parties a 7 or higher. This translates into a  $562/2185=25.7\%$  overlap, within the same year. If a minister is asked a question by an MP from within his or her own party, then the variable for electoral overlap is noted as zero (0,00) since electoral overlap on a party level is not present within the same party. This way of measuring electoral overlap was first used by Otjes and Louwse (2018) and has since also

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<sup>121</sup> Stichting Kiezeronderzoek Nederland, 1971 - 2017.

been applied by Höhmann and Sieberer (2020). It must be said that this cannot be considered a perfect estimate of electoral overlap. However, the measurement is likely to be highly correlated as it measures the proportion of voters that have amicable perceptions of both parties. Voters with a strong inclination to a single party would be unlikely to give a high score to the statement “likelihood of a future vote” towards parties that they would not consider voting for in favour of their personal party identity. As the method of measuring between each party is the same for all parties, it is internally valid. Therefore, I argue that significant differences between party types and the likelihood of raising human-rights PQs can still be correctly analysed, but the exact measures’ limitations to external validity must be acknowledged.

The third independent variable ‘coalition member’ is the easiest of these four variables to determine. It is a simple binary, categorical variable of whether or not the MP asking a PQ is from a party that is a coalition member of the current government to whom the MP asks the PQ. A positive relation might imply that PQs are being used in this case as a control tool for coalition governments.

The variable of ‘religious constituency’ refers to whether or not a party’s identity is heavily reliant on religion. This is called ‘confessionalism’ and parties that adhere to this *must* mention in their manifesto that they base their political standings on testimonial grounds. The four parties with religious affiliation in the Netherlands are (or were) the CDA, CU, SGP,



GPV, and RPF. The GPV and RPF merged into the CU in 2000. The CU, SGP, GPV, and RPF all refer to the bible, Christian values, and the importance of Dutch, religious heritage. The CDA does refer to itself as being Christian-democrats, yet they do not refer to a religious aspect when discussing cultural beliefs and values. The CDA rather phrases these as 'our' values, evading a stance of being strictly religious. The argument that the CDA differs from testimonial parties is strengthened by their supportive stances on issues such as abortion and euthanasia. These topics are predominantly agreed upon by secular Dutch parties but are opposed by the traditional, religious parties. Because of these differences, this thesis classifies the CDA as a non-testimonial party, whereas the CU, SGP, GPV, and RPF are classified as testimonial parties.

### *3) Control variables*

The control variables of party size and opposition party status have been included in the data set because of their potential correlation with how many parliamentary questions each party asks. Party size is important simply because larger parties have more MPs at their disposal. The amount of time of an individual MP is finite. A party with more seats in the lower house is therefore expected to have more MPs in charge of specific topics and policies. The value of party size is the direct numerical value of the number of seats a party possesses in the lower house out of a total of 150. Opposition party status is a yes or no categorical value that identifies if a question is asked by an MP from a party that is in opposition to the coalition

government at the time. This is because opposition parties are expected to ask more questions of coalition governments than the coalition partners due to both ideological differences and political willingness to scrutinize coalition parties. This variable controls for that correlation.

### **4.3 Missing variables**

The implementation of independent variables in our data resulted in a couple of missing variables. This is because some PQs were fielded by MPs of multiple parties. These multi-party initiatives have some consequences for determining our independent variables. The electoral overlap is difficult to determine with multi-party PQs because electoral overlap would also be a factor between the parties asking the PQ, thus in these cases, the electoral overlap is considered a missing variable. Ideological distance in this case is not considered a missing variable as larger ideological distance are hypothesized to lead to more PQs. Thus, the average ideological distance of the parties asking the PQ should still be a valid measurement. Finally, some multi-party PQs may consist of parties from both within the coalition and from the opposition. In this case, the independent variable of 'coalition member' is considered a missing variable.

## Chapter 5. Party characteristics and party behaviour

This chapter discusses the findings from the gathered data. Chapter 2 discussed reasons for party behaviour and how they might be different between opposition and coalition parties. However, the preliminary data analysis showed that amongst the opposition members, confessional parties might act distinctly different in regards to Chinese human rights. Therefore, this chapter is dedicated to data analysis, with particular attention being paid to which extent confessional parties differ from the other groups.

### 5.1 Observations of PQ data

**Table 5.1.** Frequency statistics

Variable	Category	f	Rel f
PQ content	Non human rights PQ	402	0,554
	Human rights PQ	324	0,446
	Total	726	1,000
Party status	Opposition	426	0,587
	Coalition member	187	0,258
	Own party	93	0,128
	Multiparty	20	0,028
	Total	726	1,000
Religion status	Non-testimonial party	638	0,879
	Testimonial party	80	0,110
	Total	718	0,989
	Missing	8	0,011

*Source: Results from data set collected by author.*

Table 5.1 shows the frequencies of our main dependent variable ‘human rights PQ’, and the explanatory variables ‘coalition member’ and ‘confessionalism’. Out of the total of 726 China-related PQs collected, 324 were observed to be related to human rights, corresponding to 44.6% whereas 402 PQs, or 55.4%, were not related to human rights. The data shows that PQs are a tool more used by opposition parties with 426, or 58.7% of PQs fielded by opposition members, 187 or 25.8% by coalition members, 93 or 12.8% by an MP of the same party as the Minister, and 20 or 2.8% asked through a multiparty effort. The confessionalism variable shows that testimonial parties asked about 80 or 11% of all PQs whereas non-testimonial parties asked 638, or 87.9%. The missing data here is due to multiparty PQs including both non-testimonial *and* testimonial parties. Testimonial parties ask relatively a lot of questions compared to their size as they typically only hold around 8 to 9 seats in parliament out of 150 seats, which is somewhere around 5 – 6%.

**Table 5.2.** Descriptive statistics.

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Electoral Overlap	598	0,014	0,259	0,12375	0,063337
Ideological distance	593	0,011	7,793	2,43533	1,532133
Ideological distance -					
GAL/TAN scale	593	-6,535	7,793	-0,12464	2,87631
Party Size	698	1	54	21,63	13,441

*Source: Results from data set collected by author.*

Table 5.2 shows the descriptives of the two explanatory variables 'electoral overlap', and 'ideological distance'. The electoral overlap variable shows that on average the parties of the PQ asker and PQ receiver overlap about 12.375% with a minimum of 1.4% and a maximum of 2.59%. Ideological distance is measured in two ways. The first variable 'ideological distance' is the absolute difference between two parties' GAL/TAN scores, resulting in scores of higher than 0 only. The lowest measured ideological distance is 0.011 whereas the highest distance is 7.793 and the average ideological distance is 2.43533. The second variable 'ideological distance – GAL/TAN scale' takes the GAL/TAN scale into account. Thus when the minister asked the PQ has a higher score than the PQ asker the higher score deducted from the lower score gives possible values below 0. Thus the lowest measured score is -6.535 whereas the highest was the same as the 'ideological distance' measurement with 7.793. The mean here of -0,12464 shows that there might be a slight inclination of PQs being more often asked by parties further towards the GAL side compared to the ministers' parties. Finally, the party size is a control variable which shows parties that asked PQs had a minimum of 1 seat and a maximum of 54 seats, with an average between 21 and 22 seats.

To answer the research question - *Can human rights be considered any different from other topics on international relations with China?* – this analysis includes two tests. First, performing a t-test in SPSS allows us to determine whether or not the means of the independent variables deviate between human rights PQs and non-human rights PQs.

This is relevant because it indicates to what extent human rights differentiates itself as a topic in Dutch politics. Second, an ordinary least squares (OLS) regression analysis is performed. This multiple linear regression tests whether the dependent variable can be predicted by the independent variables.

**Table 5.3.** Independent samples test measuring differences in means between human rights PQs and non-human rights PQs.

		t-test for Equality of means						
		t	df	sig.	Mean dif.	SE dif.	95% conf. int.	
							Lower	Upper
Party Size	Eq. var.	-5.139	696	.000	-5.190	1.010	-7.173	-3.207
	No eq var	-5.132	638.75	.000	-5.190	1.011	-7.176	-3.204
Electoral	Eq. var.	-4.088	596	.000	-0.021	0.005	-0.031	-0.011
Overlap	No eq var	-4.112	591.18	.000	-0.021	0.005	-0.031	-0.011
Ideological distance - absolute	Eq. var.	-0.322	591	.747	-0.041	0.126	-0.289	0.207
	No eq var	-0.322	580.18	.747	-0.041	0.126	-0.289	0.207
Ideological distance - GAL/TAN scale	Eq. var.	1.947	591	.052	0.460	0.236	-0.004	0.924
	No eq var	1.948	580.18	.052	0.460	0.236	-0.004	0.924
Confessionnalism	Eq. var.	7.245	716	.000	0.165	0.023	0.121	0.210
	No eq var	6.761	432.93	.000	0.165	0.024	0.117	0.214
Coalition member	Eq. var.	-4.587	704	.000	-0.246	0.054	-0.351	-0.141
	No eq var	-4.687	696.47	.000	-0.246	0.053	-0.349	-0.143

*Source: Results from data set collected by author.*

Table 5.3 shows whether or not the means of our variables are significantly different for human rights PQs as compared to non-human rights PQs. The results show several significant results. First, the average party size of parties asking human rights PQs is significantly smaller than those asking non-human rights PQs. This is in line with expectations as the confessional parties addressing a considerable amount of human rights PQs have a considerably smaller amount of seats than the mean of 21,63.<sup>122</sup> Second, electoral overlap seems to have a negative correlation with the likelihood of human rights PQs being asked. The expectation that human rights play no significant role in elections seems to be supported by this data. Third, although absolute ideological distance shows no significant difference, ideological distance along the GAL/TAN scale shows that there is a significant correlation between human rights PQs and parties adhering more to the TAN side of politics.<sup>123</sup> The explanation is possibly due to the effect of confessional parties, these parties score high on the GAL/TAN scale due to their overall highly conservative stances.<sup>124</sup> Fourth, as expected, confessionalism correlates highly with human rights PQs. Finally, being a coalition member correlates negatively with the likelihood of asking human rights-related PQs. The theoretical framework of chapter 2 discussed this possibility as an expected higher average ideological distance could cause opposition parties to focus more on topics embedded

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<sup>122</sup> See table 4.2.

<sup>123</sup> The significance is at  $p < 0,10$ . This is less significant than the other significant results who are all at  $p < 0,001$ .

<sup>124</sup> See Appendix, Table 3.

in ideology such as human rights. This shows the necessity for the regression analysis to include models focused on either opposition or coalition politics.

**Table 5.4.** Linear Regression model explaining the likelihood of a party fielding human rights PQs over non-human rights PQs.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
(Constant)	<b>0.662***</b> (0.070)	<b>0.648***</b> (0.081)	<b>0.852***</b> (0.251)
Party Size	<b>-0.004*</b> (0.002)	<b>-0.003</b> (0.003)	<b>-.008</b> (0.004)
Electoral Overlap	<b>-0.670</b> (0.352)	<b>-0.376</b> (0.401)	<b>-2.064*</b> (0.903)
Ideological distance – absolute	<b>-0.030*</b> (0.013)	<b>-0.040*</b> (0.016)	<b>-0.029</b> (0.030)
Ideological distance – GAL/TAN scale	<b>0.001</b> (0.008)	<b>0.014</b> (0.011)	<b>-0.037**</b> (0.013)
Confessionalism	<b>0.312***</b> (0.79)	<b>0.310**</b> (0.100)	<b>0.148</b> (0.197)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.092	0.095	0.149
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.085	0.084	0.124
N	589	411	176

*Source: Results from data set collected by author.*

*Note: Regression coefficients with responding standard error in brackets*

\*\*\*p < 0,001, \*\*p<0,01, \*p<0,05



The multiple regression analysis was carried out to assess whether party size, electoral overlap, ideological distance, and confessionalism could predict the likelihood of a PQ being human rights-related. It is important to note that high a  $R^2$  number was not expected. This is because we are interested in the increased likelihood of raising human rights PQs over other topics to understand what party characteristics cause these differences rather than explaining what party characteristics cause human rights PQs to be fielded in absolute terms.

Model 1 of the regression analysis includes the multiple regression analysis of all our gathered PQs. Model 2 only measures PQs raised by opposition parties and model 3 only contains PQs fielded by coalition party members. Party size is shown to be significant in model 1, but not in models 2 or 3. Furthermore, although significant, its effect is extremely small. This confirms our suspicions from the t-test analysis: confessional parties have likely caused party size to significantly correlate with the likelihood of raising human rights PQs. Electoral overlap showed no significance in either model 1 or 2 but did in model 3. Furthermore, model 3 shows a negative causality. It was expected that electoral overlap would cause a decrease in the likelihood of asking human rights PQs because of human rights' limitations as a topic of contention during elections. However, it is notable that this negative causality was expected in all models, not just model 3. The ideological distance was measured to be significant, but only in the case of models 1 and 2. Furthermore, ideological distance has a negative effect on human rights PQs. This

means that, although small, opposition parties are more likely to ask human rights related PQs when they are *less* ideologically distant. The ideological distance along the GAL/TAN scale shows the opposite results. No significance was found in models 1 and 2, but there was significance found in model 3. The causality shown in the regression shows that coalition parties are more likely to ask human rights related PQs when they are more ideologically oriented to the GAL side compared to the party of the Minister they ask their question to. Finally, as expected confessionalism shows strong significance with the likelihood of raising human rights-related PQs. The exception of this is for coalition parties, where no significance was established. It is possible that being in the coalition has an effect on the likelihood of a confessional party asking human rights related PQs, but the data is too preliminary for a definitive conclusion. The reason is that the only confessional party to have been part of a coalition government is the CU which is currently part of a four party coalition since 2017. During this time, however, they have only raised 4 China-related PQs, 2 of which are human rights related. This may appear to be a significantly lower focus on human rights related PQs, but the number of observations is too small to conclude causality.

## **5.2. Results and theoretical implications**

Chapter two discussed four theories that explained parliamentary behaviour regarding PQs: electoral tool theory, control tool theory, constituency oriented behaviour theory, and agenda-setting theory. Except

for agenda-setting theory, these were hypothesized to have possible influences on the likelihood of parties asking human rights related PQs over other topics.

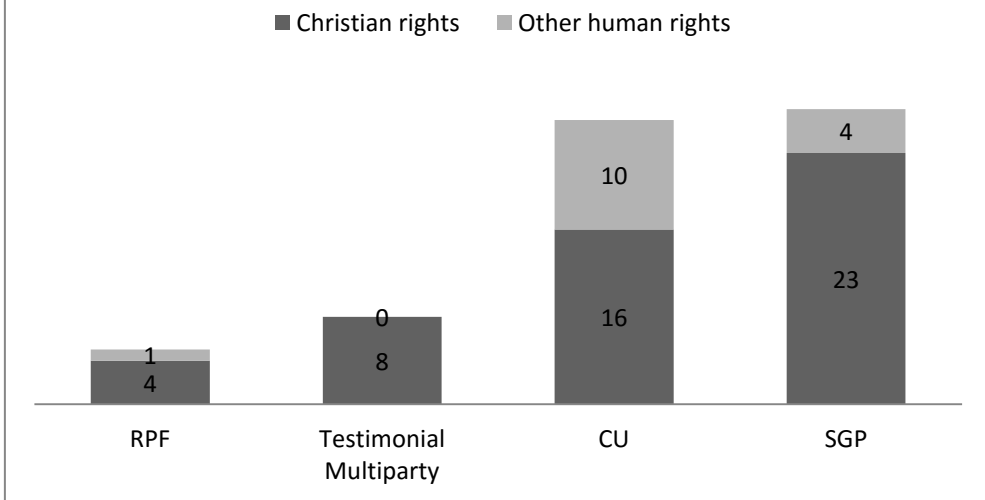
The electoral tool theory proposed that parties would be more likely to field questions in the case of higher electoral overlap. However, this study does not look simply at the likelihood or frequency of PQs in itself, but asks why parties would choose to focus on human rights *above* other topics when engaging with China. Human rights policies are not expected to have a considerable impact on elections. This is because, in general, human rights issues are far removed from the general populace's everyday lives and thus carry too little salience to make a considerable impact on election results. The analyses of this chapter support this hypothesis. The electoral overlap has a negative correlation with the likelihood of raising human rights PQs. This would imply that parties with a lower electoral overlap have fewer incentives to focus on topics that may impact elections. This means not that parties are *more inclined* to ask about human rights issues, but *less inclined* to ask about other, more election oriented topics. This causes these parties to naturally have a higher proportion of their PQs to be about human rights issues.

Through ideological distance theory, it was hypothesized that ideological distance would have a positive causal relationship with the likelihood of fielding human rights PQs. The outcomes, however, show mixed results. The absolute ideological distance variable showed no

significance in the t-test and only a weak effect in the regression analysis. Furthermore, counter to expectations this effect showed the opposite of the expected outcome. The GAL/TAN scale showed a weak significance in the t-test, but a sturdy significance in model 3 of the regression analysis. The regression analysis showed that parties that are more on the GAL side of politics compared to their coalition partners are more inclined to ask human rights related PQs, but this effect was also relatively weak.

Finally, confessionism showed strong causality in all of our tests and all models except for model 3 which is likely caused by lack of sufficient observations. However, as neither ideological distance nor electoral overlap can explain the reason for confessional parties' focus on human rights PQs it brings up the question of whether this behaviour is constituency oriented. The theory showed that it was difficult to statistically determine when a PQ should be considered as constituency oriented. Therefore, the following graph shows the content of all human rights-related PQs of each confessional party. The graph shows that the majority of human rights-related PQs are not simply about human rights, they are predominantly about *Christian* rights. Considering that confessional parties are highly religious and have similar religious constituencies, it would imply that these parties do not target human rights in China because they care a lot about human rights in general; they seem to do so because they care about Christian rights in particular.

### Graph 5.1. Human rights PQ content: confessional parties



Graph 4.2 confirms that confessional parties are likely engaging in constituency oriented behaviour. Out of the 68 human rights related PQs raise by confessional parties, 53 of the news articles referenced in these PQs are not main-stream news outlets. The Reformatorisch Dagblad (Reformed Daily) is a newspaper officially aligned with the SGP. It is a Christian daily newspaper whose website cites a different biblical psalm every day except for Sundays on which the website is inaccessible.<sup>125</sup>

<sup>125</sup> Reformatorisch Dagblad. <https://www.rd.nl/>. Accessed 20-5-2020.

**Graph 5.2. References used by confessional parties**

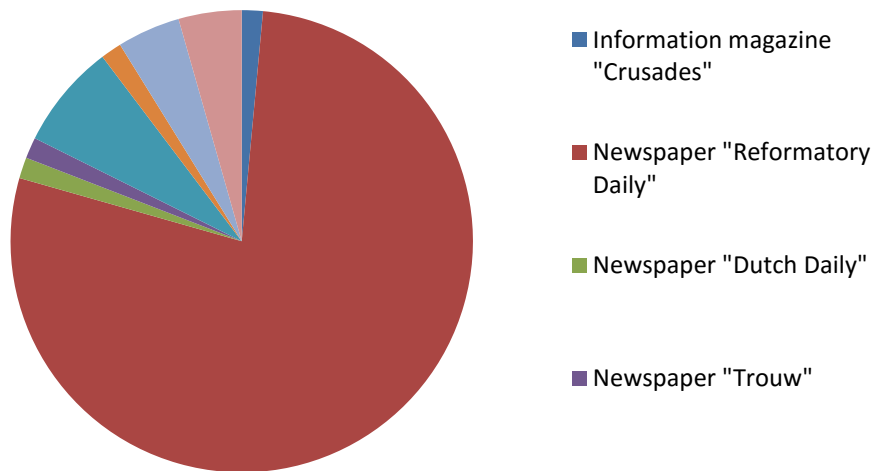


Table 5.5 below shows the variation of confessional parties' adherence to human rights when asking China-related PQs. It shows that, after the initial China Crisis Theory periods, human rights related PQs make up 75% to 87.5% of all the PQs that confessional parties ask. No significant changes can be seen from this data across the policy periods. Specifically, had confessional parties cared deeply for human rights policy, a significant spike would have been observed during the Moderated Futurism policy period during which Rosenthal aimed to diminish the importance of human rights in foreign policy. Yet no such variation is noticeable.

**Table 5.5.** China-related PQs per time period

		Confessional Parties	
		No human rights PQ	Human rights PQ
China	China Crisis Theory I	0 (0)	1 (100)
Approach	China Crisis Theory II	0 (0)	7 (100)
Classification	Economic Wow Factor	7 (25)	21 (75)
	I		
	Moderated Futurism	3 (16.7)	15 (83.3)
	Economic Wow Factor	3 (12.5)	21 (87.5)
	II		
	Economic wow factor / China Threat	2 (20)	8 (80)
<b>Total</b>		<b>15</b>	<b>73</b>

The data shows that the influence of confessionalism on the likelihood of raising human rights PQs regarding China is almost entirely determined by constituency-oriented behaviour. This is because these PQs rarely touch upon the persecution of Uyghurs, or Tibetans, nor regarding organ harvesting practices, but are predominantly concerned with their own and their constituents' religion: Christianity. Furthermore, when asking PQs they refer to a newspaper almost exclusively read by strictly religious Christians who are more likely to vote for them. Finally, these parties do not appear to significantly react to policies for their behaviour.

This observation has an important implication. A considerable part of Chinese human rights debates in the Dutch parliament is *not* the result of actual human rights concerns, but the fact that China is *not Christian enough*. Confessional parties' behaviour shows that their concerns are not with human rights directly, nor are they on the concept of religious freedom. Their reason for just focusing on the Chinese

government preventing the practice of Christianity is that confessional parties wish for a broader Christian influence. It is in essence a political effort to push the Dutch government into taking actions that would increase the spread of Christianity. It is the classical behaviour of the missionary which drives confessional party behaviour in regards to Chinese human rights. The fundamental rights of humans themselves are not their concern. This is ultimately the *political value* that human rights have in the Dutch parliament. It is but a tool utilized by Christian fundamentalists.

### 5.3 Conclusion

This chapter contained the statistical analysis of party characteristics and the role that they play in explaining why some parties are more inclined to raise human rights related PQs than others. In particular, I was interested in whether or not confessional parties have their own particular reason for their high percentage of human rights PQs. Confessional parties have been shown to focus on human rights issues in China so much, not because of their adherence to human rights in general, but because confessional parties desire a more widespread influence of Christianity in China. These parties often reference newspapers aligned with highly religious affiliations, making this behaviour identifiable as adhering to the constituency oriented behaviour theory.



# Chapter 6. Government actions and party behaviour

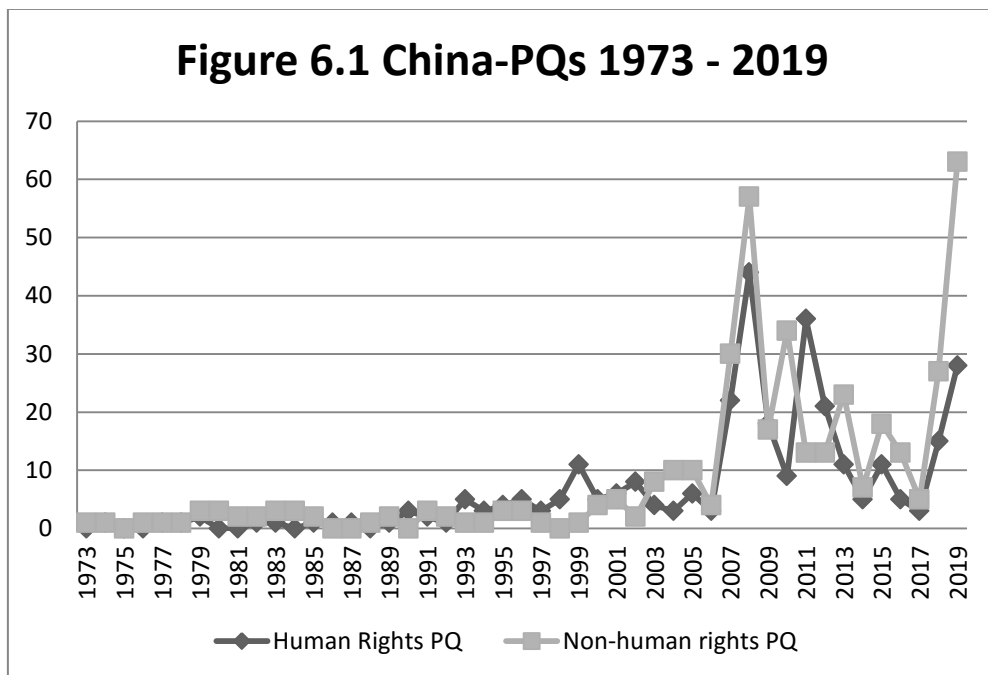
Chapter 5 showed that confessional parties have distinctly different reasons for their party behaviour than traditional opposition and coalition parties. They also showed, however, that traditional party behaviour theories could not explain the differences between opposition and coalition parties. This chapter is dedicated to analysing party behaviour as a reaction to its environment. The first part provides an overview of PQ trends over time. Through a qualitative content analysis the second part analyses periods of interests derived from part one. Finally, a conclusion is given in regards to the analysis' meaning for party behaviour.

## 6.1 Variations in PQs over time

Although the first PQs regarding China were asked from 1973, the yearly average of total China-related PQs remained less than 5 per year until 1997. Human rights issues did pick up the pace during the period of the first Economic Wow Factor policy, however, as Chart 5.1 shows, the largest influence can be seen in the period before the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Human rights issues in China suddenly became increasingly relevant due to the indirect involvement that the Netherlands would play in it. Dutch athletes would make use of facilities created by bulldozing poor neighbourhoods to the ground. Opposition parties also called for a boycott of the opening ceremony in a public display of protest to the human rights

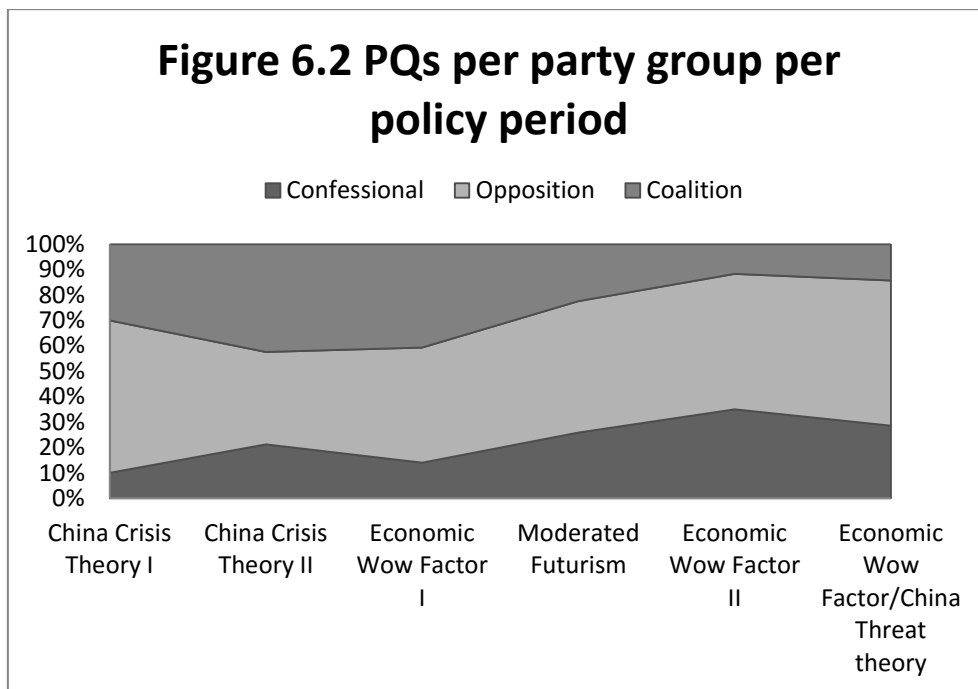
conditions in China. After the Olympics, however, human rights PQs dropped to nearly their prior level.

The amount of human rights PQs suddenly peaked again in 2011. This coincides with Uri Rosenthal's attempt at diminishing the importance of human rights in international relations with China. It shows that parties respond heavily to government policies if it deviates too much from expected patterns.



Fluctuations of the amount of PQs fluctuate heavily per year. This is likely because of variations in domestic policy rather than fluctuations in international relations or policy with China. However, tendencies can be shown. As chart 5.2 shows, as policy types pass by, coalition party

members contain an increasingly smaller share of the total human rights related PQs asked by parties. Both confessional parties and opposition parties have proportionately increased their share of human rights PQs.



It is not only in the proportion of human rights questions in which tendencies are shown. Table 5.3 shows the amount of PQs, both non-human rights and human rights-oriented per period for confessional, opposition, and coalition parties each.

**Table 6.1** China-related PQs per party group per time period

		Confessional Parties		Opposition parties		Coalition parties	
		No human rights PQ	Human rights PQ	No human rights PQ	Human rights PQ	No human rights PQ	Human rights PQ
China Approach	China Crisis Theory I	0 (0)	1 (100)	18 (75)	6 (25)	8 (72.7)	3 (27.3)

Classification	China Crisis Theory II	0 (0)	7 (100)	6 (33.3)	12 (66.7)	10 (41.7)	14 (58.3)
	Economic Wow Factor I	7 (25)	21 (75)	97 (57.7)	68 (42.3)	62 (50.4)	61 (49.6)
	Moderated Futurism	3 (16.7)	15 (83.3)	14 (33.2)	30 (66.8)	20 (60.6)	13 (39.4)
	Economic Wow Factor II	3 (12.5)	21 (87.5)	57 (64.0)	32 (36.0)	43 (86)	7 (14)
	Economic wow factor / China Threat	2 (20)	8 (80)	11 (40.7)	16 (39.3)	41 (91.1)	4 (8.9)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>102</b>

The data shows that confessionalism is not swayed much by the differences in policy approaches as the proportion of human rights questions they ask remains relatively even. Opposition parties, however, seem more swayed by government policies. In particular, the short cabinet period in which Minister of Foreign Affairs Uri Rosenthal tried to diminish the importance of human rights in foreign affairs stands out. It shows that opposition parties use parliamentary questions not merely for diminishing the information gap, but also to target policies that they do not agree upon. After the 'moderated futurism' period human rights questions remain on a similar level as before it. Coalition parties however, show a steady decline in the proportion of human rights questions asked. To some extent this can be explained by the fact that the foreign relations with China have become increasingly complex and multifaceted over the years, but it is a sharp decline from 58.3% during the 1989-1997 'China Crisis Theory II' period down to a mere 8.9% during the current period of a combined 'economic

wow factor' and 'China Threat theory' approach. It shows that human rights are increasingly becoming an issue of contention done by the parties in opposition. As testimonial parties are also its distinct branch of the opposition, this is all the more true. During the last two periods coalition parties only raised human rights questions 11 times, compared to the combined total of 77 from the confessional and opposition parties.

The decrease of participation from coalition parties in debating the governments' human rights policies is a trend resulting from the increasing complexities of China's position vis-à-vis the Netherlands. As the plurality of considerations in the NL-China relationship increase, coalition parties will be more likely to focus their attention on one of the many other issues, aside from human rights. Because human rights have little value in electoral competition, there is limited value aside from moral duty to engage in discussion. This makes smaller parties increasingly important for checking the governments' actions. Parties that are less concerned with 'winning' elections have fewer incentives to ignore human rights than parties that aim to become part of a coalition.

If opposition party behaviour is largely determined by external forces such as government policies or increased importance of China such as the Beijing Olympics, exactly how did parties act in such periods? The following two parts discusses these periods of interest.

## 6.2 Party behaviour in regards to the Olympics in Beijing

With the promise that the human rights situation in China would improve in the run-up to the 2008 Olympics, the country was awarded the sporting event.<sup>126</sup> Wang Wei, Secretary General of the Olympic Committee of the Olympic Games in China (2008), stated, "We are convinced that the Games coming to China will not only promote our economy, but also improve all social conditions, including education, health and human rights."<sup>127</sup> In the run-up to the Games however, human rights remained under constant tension and violations even increased in order to achieve the Games.<sup>128</sup> In Dutch parliament, discussions regarding human rights violations in the run-up to the Olympics led to a special hearing on the matter in March 2008.

As shown in the data, an increase in PQs was observed during this period. The first PQ directly related to the Olympics was raised on the 16<sup>th</sup> of July 2007 and the last one on the 21<sup>st</sup> of August 2008. All PQs raised per party are shown in figure 6.3.

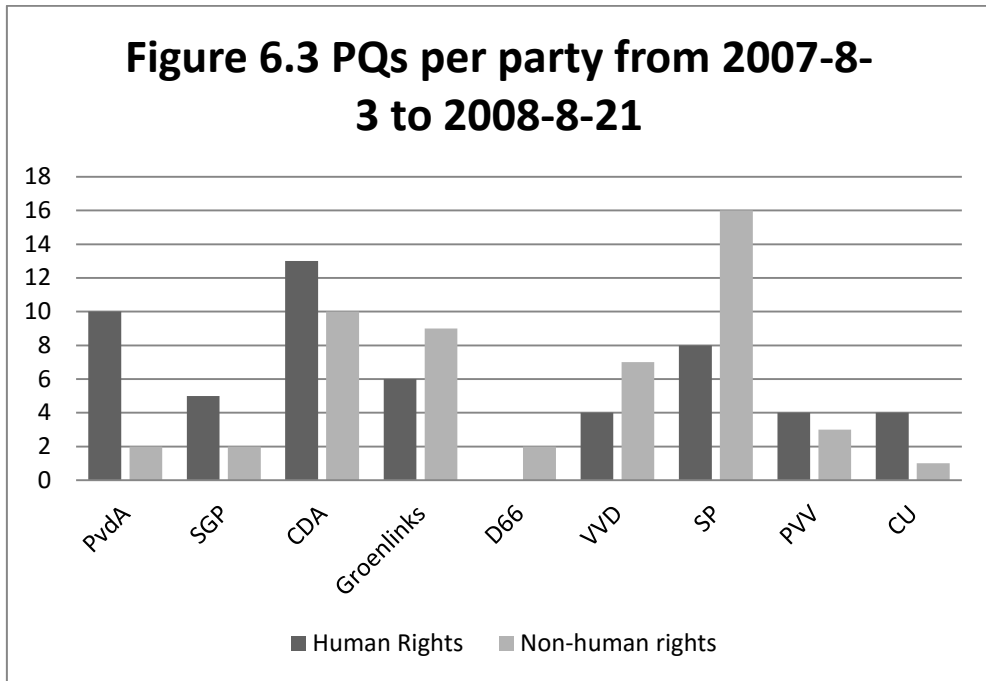
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<sup>126</sup> Human Rights in China, '2008 Beijing Olympics: The Price of National Glorification', <http://www.hrichina.org/en/content/193> (29 June 2020).

<sup>127</sup> Amnesty International, 'People's Republic of China: Authorities' broken promises jeopardize Olympic legacy', [http://www.amnesty.or.jp/en/news/2008/0729\\_875.html](http://www.amnesty.or.jp/en/news/2008/0729_875.html) (28 June 2020).

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

**Figure 6.3 PQs per party from 2007-8-3 to 2008-8-21**



The SGP and the CU raised predominantly PQs regarding human rights. Out of the 12 PQs raised, 9 were in regards to human rights and all 9 of those concerned Christian rights. Only 2 of those questions were related to the Olympics and they were asked on whether or not the Minister of Foreign Affairs was aware of China sending away foreign missionaries in the run-up to the Olympics. This shows that the confessional parties did not react to the increased interest on China's human rights situation during this time.

The coalition at the time existed of the CDA, PvdA and the CU. Contrary to expectations, the PvdA and CDA raised more human rights related PQs than non-human rights related PQs. Not only were the coalition parties' more concerned with human rights in this context, this behaviour

deviates from their overall balance of human rights and non-human rights PQs.<sup>129</sup> Out of the total of 40 PQs of coalition parties, 27 were human-rights related. Of these 14 were specifically asked in the period of February to May 2008 in regards to whether or not the Netherlands would boycott the opening ceremony of the Olympics in response to the associated human rights issues. This shows that, although general tendencies show that coalition parties are less likely to focus on human rights PQs, this changes when government actions are uncertain. Especially the PvdA asked many PQs in regards to the potential boycott. As both the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs were part of CDA at the time, this shows that the PvdA used PQs to ascertain their coalition partner's position on the matter. This coincides with the control tool theory as discussed in chapter 2.<sup>130</sup>

The opposition parties Groenlinks, D66, VVD, SP and PVV all showed increased amounts of PQs, but except for the PVV all asked more non-human rights related PQs than those related to human rights. With 25 seats the SP is expected to be most active amongst the opposition parties, but the difference with the VVD is large even though the VVD had 22 seats. In comparison, Groenlinks was more active than its 7 seat size would suggest and the PVV and D66 with 9 and 3 seats respectively behaved more or less within their expectation of party size. The SP's high activity can be explained by the fact that they are the de facto opposition party. In their 50 years of existence they have not once participated in a coalition

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<sup>129</sup> Appendix, table 1.

<sup>130</sup> Chapter 2, page 12-13.



government, despite their party consistently placing between 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> place in terms of number of seats. The VVD on the other hand, has only been in opposition three times in the same time period, whereas they have been part of the coalition government eleven times.

In terms of content, opposition parties asked both related and unrelated PQs. Greenleft was the only party to question whether or not the right of freedom of expression of Dutch athletes and their coaches could be protected in China. This was in reaction to a Dutch coach's criticism to human rights violations during the preparations for the Olympics in China. However, the social freedoms of expression seemed core to the domestic debate. All opposition parties except for D66 asked PQs regarding arrests of civil rights activists. The culmination of these PQs came through multiparty PQs asking whether the government would consider boycotting the opening ceremony, signed by members of parties from both the coalition and the opposition, with exception of CU and PVV.<sup>131</sup> As a result, a special hearing was held to discuss the issue, but the government held the position that human rights dialogues were more beneficial than being absent and chose to attend despite opposition.<sup>132</sup>

### **6.3 Party behaviour during Uri Rosenthal's policy changes**

Uri Rosenthal's statements regarding human rights not being on equal standards in foreign policy on the 11<sup>th</sup> of December 2010 immediately

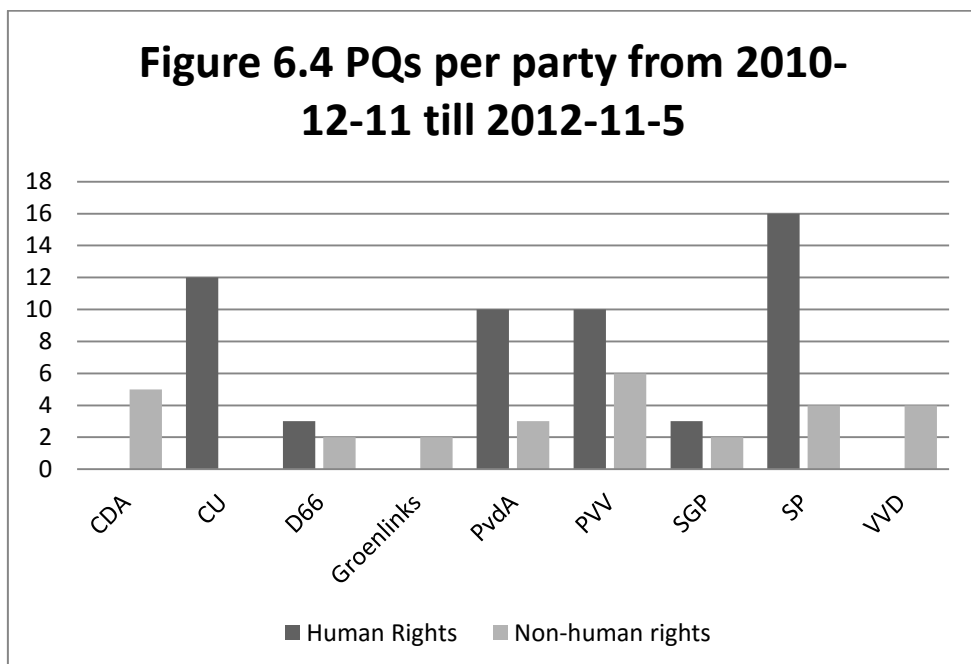
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<sup>131</sup> Parliamentary Piece (HTK): 2007-2008. Appendix. 18410.

<sup>132</sup> Parliamentary Piece (HTK): 2007-2008. Appendix 31200-V, nr. 99, p. 7017 – 7019.

led to questions by exactly what that meant for him in terms of policy. Figure 6.4 shows the PQs per party from the moment of Rosenthal's first statement until the premature falling of the coalition.

The figure shows that, overall, parties were much more concerned with human rights at the time compared to other issues related to China. This is in contrast with the 2008 Olympics period. The reason for this is that the period of the 2008 Olympics were affected by the salience China received due to being the Olympics host country. It was not specifically human rights that were salient, but China as a whole. During Rosenthal's time as Minister of Foreign Affairs, however, it was exactly the opposite. Human rights as its role in foreign policy was at the core of the discussion, which in extension led to PQs regarding human rights policy in the NL-China relation as well.



The confessional parties raised a total of 17 PQs in this period, out of which 15 were human rights related. Of these 15 PQs, 12 were related to Christian rights specifically. Out of the 12 PQs that CU raised, 8 of them were regarding a group of Christian dissidents that were jailed and supposedly mistreated.<sup>133</sup> None of the PQs were focused particularly on questioning the government's stance on policy, except for one PQ by the SGP. This PQ was raised by the SGP's Van der Staaij where he asked what Rosenthal's human rights policy would entail after his comment on the 11<sup>th</sup> of December 2010. He included a suggestion which stated that a theory called the 'receptor approach' might be of value. Van der Staaij followed up on this through a motion which asked for Rosenthal's attention in evaluating the receptor approach when formulating his human rights policy letter.<sup>134</sup> This shows that the SGP was the one who influenced a great deal of policy debate during this period. Why the SGP would try to influence human rights policy in this way became clear in the subsequent parliamentary debate a week later. One focus of the receptor approach was strengthening local, non-governmental institutions already existing in societies. When asked what communities Van der Staaij was thinking of, the answer was predictable: local Christian communities would form an excellent basis for Dutch human rights efforts through this approach.<sup>135</sup> This was another way in which a confessional party could try to promote

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<sup>133</sup> Parliamentary Piece (HTK): 2010 – 2011. Appendix. 1760, 2900, 3109; Parliamentary Piece (HTK): 2011 – 2012. Appendix. 303, 2468.

<sup>134</sup> Parliamentary Piece (HTK): 2010 – 2011. Appendix. 32735, nr. 19.

<sup>135</sup> Parliamentary piece (HTK): 2010 – 2011. Appendix. 32735, nr. 22.

Christianity abroad. This time, the effort was made by suggesting that development assistance towards Christian communities could become part of Dutch foreign policy. This coincides with the findings of the previous chapter which concluded that confessional parties' behaviour was motivated by the desire to increase the influence of Christianity abroad.

The two parties that did not raise a single human rights related PQ were both of the coalition government parties, the VVD and the CDA. This is in contrast with the period surrounding the 2008 Olympics. The reason for this is that the VVD and CDA were both participants in formulating the government's human rights policies; therefore they would have had fewer questions to the new policy formulations in comparison to the opposition parties. The PVV is an outlier in this case. The PVV was never official part of the coalition cabinet, but operated under a 'tolerate' understanding. The PVV would support the decision-making of the government but would not actively participate as coalition party. The PVV retracting their support caused the cabinet to fall prematurely. Thus, although in a 'semi'-coalition party position, they behaved dissimilar to the other coalition parties, as they had no part in policy formulations.

The opposition parties D66, PvdA, and SP all focused heavily on human rights in their PQs. The lack of behaviour from Groenlinks is noteworthy as they were one of the most active parties during the 2008 Olympics' debates. Possibly this is because of internal strife during this period that caused multiple changes in party leadership, but other than that

no specific reason can be ascertained. Of the 29 human rights PQs raised by these opposition parties, 12 of them related specifically to government policy. This included multiple PQs that criticized Rosenthal's decision to postpone the 'Human Rights Tulip' prize to a Chinese lawyer who fought for the rights of Chinese citizens that lost their homes during the 2008 Olympics.<sup>136</sup> The activities by the opposition parties show that they respond critically to government policies. This behaviour is dissimilar to coalition parties and those adhering to confessional politics.

## 6.4 Conclusion

This chapter aimed to analyse differences amongst parties in their behaviour in regards to asking China-related PQs. It was found that confessional parties do not respond much to external changes, with the exception of the SGP's attempt at influencing foreign policy to strengthen the position of Christian communities in countries with human rights issues. Coalition parties were shown to only respond heavily when their government's positions on matters are unclear. However, when political debates arise by opposition parties due to prior agreed upon policies, coalition parties do not raise more PQs themselves. Finally, opposition parties react differently depending on external situations. During the 2008 Olympics, China became more important in political debates, but it did not necessarily create a proportionately larger interest in Chinese human rights. However, Rosenthal's policy changes caused opposition parties to focus

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<sup>136</sup> See Chapter 3, page 32.

more on Chinese human rights than ever, even though China's salience did not increase. It was only due to the increased perceived importance of questioning the government's human rights policies.

## Chapter 7. Conclusion

*“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all directly.”* – Martin Luther King.

In 2013, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Frans Timmermans, started with this quotation when presenting his human rights policy letter to parliament.<sup>137</sup> The document was meant to re-emphasize the Dutch ‘tradition’ of human rights advocacy after the previous cabinet aimed to diminish human rights as a goal in foreign policy. Yet, human rights as a topic in international relations changes as the political environments change as well. The China-policy letter presented in 2019 introduced the new concern of a worldwide decreasing human rights situation due to increasing Chinese influence. The notion that the Netherlands has a culture of human rights advocacy assumes certain uniformity in norms and values in politics. This study aimed to test this assumption by looking at party level variations in regards to their adherence to human rights in parliamentary debates regarding China. It aimed to do so through the research question *What causes some Dutch parties to focus more on human rights issues in the Netherlands-China relations than others? Furthermore, through an analysis*

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<sup>137</sup> Policy memorandum. ‘Respect and rights for every human.’. House of Representatives of the States General, 32 725, no. 1, 14 June, 2013

*of party level characteristics can human rights be considered any different from other topics pertaining international relations with China?*

The research objective was embedded in party behaviour theories regarding parliamentary questions. Human rights were found to have no electoral value for parties as it is not a topic for contention during elections. Control theory did not have significant influence on a party's adherence to human rights issues. This shows that conceptualizations of proper human rights policies are not the result of overall ideological stances. The results, however, did show that some parties behave distinctly different from others. Coalition parties are less and less concerned with human rights during the same period as the importance of economic relations with China has been increasing. This has left opposition parties to pressure the government for their adherence to human rights policies. Yet, not all opposition parties were found to behave the same. The smaller parties adhering to Christian fundamentalism focused on human rights to a much greater extent than any other party. However, this was not shown to be out of altruism, but because it was used as a constituency oriented-tool for expanding Christian influences abroad. Human rights therefore have high political value for these small confessional parties. Effectively these parties aim to act as an indirect missionary, trying to expand adherence to the Christian faith.

Different party groups also behave dissimilar during periods of increased salience. Confessional parties are shown to not respond much to changes in international issues such as the 2008 Olympics, nor to domestic



changes such as human rights policy changes. The motivation for their behaviour here is that of increasing Christian influences abroad, which coincides with the analysis of party characteristics. Opposition parties were shown to respond heavily to both domestic and foreign influences. Increased importance of China resulted in increased PQs overall, but not proportionately more for human rights. Changes in Dutch human rights policy did cause opposition parties to focus more on Chinese human rights. Finally, coalition parties react mostly in times where behaviour of coalition partners is uncertain, which is in line with control tool theory.

The results of this study have several implications. Party behaviour theories may not apply to all political topics. This shows the need for a further understanding of what determines party behaviour beyond general tendencies. Furthermore, the large variations amongst parties shown in the analysis show that the Netherlands should not be simply considered a unitary human rights advocate at the state level. There are party level influences at play that determine policy debates and formulations. Furthermore, the domestic human rights debate is disproportionately carried by small parties that adhere to strict biblical guidelines.

For future research it is worth investigating whether the roles of confessional and opposition parties change when engaging other human rights abusing countries. Conversely, it is worth investigating whether similar party behaviours are at play in the engagements with China of other human rights advocates such as Denmark and Sweden. However, it should

be noted that neither of these countries have as deep as economic ties to China as the Netherlands, making the balancing between human rights and economic topics less important for those governments.

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## Appendix

**Table 1.** Amount of PQs per party

	Human Rights PQ		Total
	No human rights PQ	Human rights PQ	
CDA	81	45	126
CU	6	26	32
D66	30	19	49
DENK	0	12	12
DS'70	0	1	1
Groenlinks	32	24	56
Independent	3	0	3
Party of MP asking the PQ			
LPF	0	1	1
Multiparty	3	25	28
PPR	5	0	5
PSP	1	0	1
PvdA	44	50	94
PvdD	35	0	35
PVV	29	27	56
RPF	0	5	5
SGP	9	27	36
SP	75	61	136
VVD	84	13	97
Total	437	336	773

**Table 2.** List of all effective parties in the Lower House from 1973

		Characteristics	
		Ideology	Time Period
Party	CDA	Christian Democracy	1980 – current

CU	Testimonial Conservatism	2000 – current
D66	Social Liberalism	1966 – current
DENK	Immigration Politics	2016 – current
DS'70	Social Liberalism	1970 – 1983
Groenlinks	Green Socialism	1989 – current
LPF	Populist Nationalism	1999 – 2007
PPR	Green Politics	1968 – 1991
PSP	Pacifist Socialism	1957 – 1991
PvdA	Labour Party	1946 – current
PvdD	Animal Rights	2002 – current
PVV	Populist Nationalism	2006 – current
RPF	Testimonial Conservatism	1975 – 2001
SGP	Testimonial Conservatism	1918 – current
SP	Democratic Socialism	1971 – current
VVD	Conservative Liberalism	1948 – current

**Table 3.** China's rise theories and human rights policies

	<b>Core argument</b>	<b>Expected human rights policy</b>
<b>China Crisis Theory</b>	This theory predicts the demise of the Chinese state. It assumes that the regime of the CCP is doomed to fail as communism is a form of government that the Chinese people do not support. It was particularly prevalent after the Tiananmen Square Incident.	As the CCP is expected to fail, human rights concerns are raised as critique on the Chinese state in order to weaken its position in the hopes of increasing the chance of instigating a movement for a regime change.
<b>Economic Wow Factor</b>	This theory assumes that China is not	As interaction leads to China become more

(Fukuyama, 1992; Ikenberry, 2008; Jacques, 2009)

fundamentally different from the West. Increased economic and social interaction with China would lead to Chinese society to naturally change towards more Western ideals. This assumes that the capitalist-democratic ideology will spread around the world and countries such as China will slowly implement themselves into this existing framework.

Western, the human rights situation is also expected to improve. Economic, diplomatic, and social interaction and cooperation are encouraged as they are predicted to have a Westernizing effect on the Chinese society and state.

**China Threat Theory**  
(Broomfield, 2003; Hughes, 2006; Mearsheimer, 2005;)

According to this theory, China is the same as any other state as seen through the realism approach. Here, China as an actor will act according to its desire to increase its power. In US-China relations this is often framed as preventing each other's influence in various regions of the world.

The human rights situation in China can only be improved if the CCP believes it leads to more power for China. Thus, human rights are used as a weapon or bargaining tool in topics such as trade deals, sanctions etc.

**Moderated Futurism Theory**  
(Ramo, 2004; Mahbubani, 2008)

This theory assumes that China is a fundamentally different society than the West. Thus, as China increases its economic and diplomatic interactions with the West, it will *not* become more similar to Western

Human rights issues in China are seen as a domestic issue to be handled by China alone out of respect for sovereignty. As China is considered a fundamentally different society, human rights dialogues are not expected to have any

	states. In this case, neither the West nor China will be influenced by one another.	effect.
<b>Radical Futurism Theory</b> (Barr, 2011; Martin, 2009)	According to this theory, China is a fundamentally different society than the West and will become the future hegemon. Any increase in Chinese influence in world politics will lead to a world system more favourable to China. Here, in order for the West to preserve the current system, any increase of Chinese influence must be prevented.	As China's influence increases, it leads to a natural decline in the global human rights situation. As such, increases of China's influence must be prevented in order for the Western ideals of human rights to remain. This theory is not widespread in Western academics.

Source: existing academic theories and their arguments compiled by researcher.

**Table 4.** GAL/TAN scores per party per survey year

	1973-1997	1998	2002	2006	2010	2014	2017
<b>CDA</b>	6.873	6.727	6.890	6.700	7.143	6.44 4	7.335
<b>PvdA</b>	3.487	3.636	3.250	3.700	4.000	3.00 0	3.333
<b>VVD</b>	5.136	4.909	5.560	5.100	4.786	5.12 5	5.333
<b>D66</b>	1.635	2.272	1.440	2.500	1.571	1.00 0	1.000
<b>GL</b>	1.580	1.909	1.440	2.400	1.929	1.00 0	0.800



<b>SGP</b>	9.428	9.363	9.380	9.400	9.286	9.44 4	9.667
<b>GPV</b>	8.636	8.636	-	-	-	-	-
<b>RPF</b>	8.545	8.545	-	-	-	-	-
<b>SP</b>	-	5.000	3.330	5.220	5.214	4.11 1	4.600
<b>LPF</b>	-	-	5.440				
<b>CU</b>	-	-	8.780	8.400	7.429	7.66 7	7.733
<b>PVV</b>	-	-	-	6.570	7.154	7.77 8	7.067
<b>PvdD</b>	-	-	-	-	3.800	2.33 3	1.929
<b>50PLUS</b>	-	-	-	-	-	4.33 3	4.800
<b>DENK</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	6.364
<b>FvD</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	7.133

**Table 5.** Electoral overlap per party per cabinet

	1989		1994			1998			2002			
	PvdA	CD A	PvdA	VV D	D66	PvdA	VV D	D66	CDA	LPF	VVD	D6 6
<b>PvdA</b>	-	.109	-	.11 2	.256	-	.19 2	.259	.112	.052	.091	.17 7
<b>CD</b>	.017	.015	.015	.03 0	.019	.013	.01 5	.010	-	-	-	-
<b>RPF</b>	.005	.054	.017	.03 4	.014	.023	.01 8	.007	-	-	-	-
<b>GPV</b>	.019	.066	.011	.03 7	.013	.025	.02 4	.012	-	-	-	-
<b>SGP</b>	.014	.053	.014	.03 6	.017	.02	.01 8	.011	.039	.030	.014	.01 1
<b>CDA</b>	.109	-	.127	.19 4	.151	.182	.19 0	.137	-	.146	.224	.10 1
<b>GL</b>	.196	.052	.200	.05 9	.175	.257	.11 1	.213	.070	.035	.044	.18 0
<b>D66</b>	.237	.144	.256	.21 0	-	.259	.18 2	-	.101	.065	.121	-

<b>VVD</b>	.069	.188	.114	-	.210	.192	-	.182	.224	.173	-	.12 1
<b>PPR</b>	.144	.022	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>SP</b>	-	-	-	-	-	.150	.06 4	.124	.073	.057	.049	.13 2

**Table 5.** Electoral overlap per party per cabinet continued

	2006			2010			2012		2017			
	CDA	VVD	PvdA	VVD	CDA	PVV	VVD	PvdA	VVD	CDA	D66	CU
<b>PvdA</b>	.111	.084	-	.139	.139	-	.155	-	.110	.099	.173	.076
<b>SGP</b>	.054	.030	.016	.053	.053	-	.036	.024	.051	.078	.039	.141
<b>CDA</b>	.047	.217	.111	.215	-	-	.185	.109	.188	-	.144	.147
<b>GL</b>	.059	.039	.214	.093	.083	-	.067	.182	.070	.070	.199	.091
<b>D66</b>	.217	.075	.109	.185	.134	-	.201	.192	.176	.144	-	.082
<b>VVD</b>	-	-	.084	-	.215	-	-	.155	-	.188	.176	.070
<b>SP</b>	.065	.052	.233	.086	.078	-	.088	.252	.050	.076	.111	.065
<b>PVV</b>	.051	.068	.047	.162	.094	-	.142	.064	.101	.079	.041	.061
<b>CU</b>	.099	.47	.029	.058	.129	-	.068	.043	.07	.147	.082	-

## 요약 (국문초록)

국제인권선언이 제정된 지 70여 년이 지났지만 인권은 여전히 국가간 관계에 있어 중요한 갈등의 요소로 남아있다. 모든 국가는 대외 정책에 있어 인권의 준수라는 이상과 경제적인 이익이라는 현실 사이의 절충점을 찾기 위해 노력하고 있다. 전통적인 인권 옹호국으로서 네덜란드는 대외 정책의 수립과 집행에 있어 인권과 경제적인 이익을 적절히 조율하지 못할 경우 어떠한 상황에 처할 수 있는지 보여주는 대표적인 예이다. 네덜란드는 1990년대 중국의 인권 문제에 대한 지적으로 인해 경제적인 제재를 받았다. 본 논문은 중국의 인권 문제에 대한 네덜란드의 입장 변화를 사례로 삼는다. 특히 본 논문은 인권 문제와 경제적인 이익에 대한 개별 정당의 입장이 상이하다는 사실에 주목해 이의 원인을 파악하고자 한다. 본 논문은 첫째, 중국 관련 문제를 제기함에 있어 인권 문제에 대한 정당 간의 차이가 왜 발생하는지 분석하고자 한다. 둘째, 본 논문은 네덜란드의 중국 인권에 대한 정책의 변화에 각 정당이 어떻게 다르게 대응하는지 분석하고자 한다. 본 논문은 이를 위해 의회 질의(PQ)와 연관된 정당 행동에 관한 이론을 검토하고, 이를 통해 각 정당이 중국의 인권 문제에 대해 다른 입장과 견해를 보이는 이유를 밝히고자 한다. 구체적으로, 기독교 정당은 중국 인권 문제를 정치적인 도구로 활용해 왔다. 중국과의 관계가 복잡해지고 다각화되면서 네덜란드 연립 정당은 인권 문제를 경제적인 이해 관계 속에서 다루고자 했다. 마지막으로, 야당은 연립 정부가 중첩적으로 추진하는 정책과 그에 따른 인권 정책의 변화에 민감하게 반응하는 것으로 나타났다.

주요어: 의회 질의, 인권, 정당 행동, 네덜란드 하원, 중국