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'Good governance' as a discursive strategy in Dutch development co-operation policy discourse

1. Introduction

In this paper I want to show that is fruitful to integrate discourse theory, institutional theory and the so called grid/group Cultural Theory in policy analysis. There are a lot of valid reasons for wanting to combine them. For me, there are two. First, in my research I want to compare the policy discourse in different countries, but regarding a single theme. Institutional differences could account for differences in policy discourse. Second, I think, it is the interplay between the content of a discourse and its institutional setting that explains the internal dynamic of discourses. It is this second line of argument - the diachronic one, if you like - that I want to explore and illustrate further in this paper.

Of course, I do not pretend to integrate the whole bodies of theories. I will just take a particular discourse theory and a particular institutional theory and will try to show that applying their combination on a case 'works'. In a first step, I show how Hajer's interpretation of policy discourses can be integrated with Hendriks' theory of institutions. In a second step, I just follow Hendriks, who shows that grid/group Cultural Theory can be interpreted as a form of institutional theory.

Next, I want to apply the 'product' of this integration on the discourse around the concept 'good governance' in Dutch development policy in order to show that it is a useful tool in analysing discourse dynamics.

2. Integration of discourse theory, institutional theory and cultural theory.

In 'The politics of environmental discourse' Hajer rightly treats discourse as more than content: it is a dynamic process. Although he defines discourse as a 'more or less coherent ensemble of ideas, concepts and categorizations' (Hajer 1995; p.), analytically more important is his conception of the way in which this coherent ensemble is used in social relationships. He distinguishes two processes.[1] 'Discourse structuration' is a process in which actors are increasingly forced to draw on a particular ensemble of ideas, concepts and categorizations in order to define a plausible problem situation; "for instance, if actors credibility depends on the usage of the terms of ecological modernization in the domain of environmental politics"(61). 'Discourse institutionalization' is a process in which a particular ensemble of ideas, concepts and categorizations are translated into institutional arrangements "i.e. if the theoretical concepts of ecological modernization are translated into concrete policies (i.e. shifting investment on mobility from road to rail) and institutional arrangements (i.e. introduction of multi-value auditing, or the restructuring of old departemental decisions)" (61).[2] Given the fact that most policy problems are vehemently discussed in the executive, in parliament and in societal organizations before policy decisions are made, the two processes are more or less a continuation of each other, although the process of structuration does not necessarily have to

[1] Actually, he speaks of 'conditions for discursive hegemony' rather than of 'processes'. I think the concept can also be taken to mean the path to the fulfillment of this condition.

[2] I would like to add that official policy can act as institutionalised discourse, even before the phase of policy implementation. Also a white paper should thus 'act' as an institution in this sense.

be completed before discourse institutionalization can take place. Still it should have progressed beyond a certain point.

[figure 1]

Discourse institutionalization reinforces both itself and the process of structuration. When existing policy is based on a particular discourse, policy proposals based on similar ideas are more easily translated into official policy because they underpin rather than undermine existing institutional arrangements. Moreover, these policy proposals sound more credible in the first place, because actors in the policy arena[3] do not have to think in terms that are different from those they are used to.

In the case of a fully structured and institutionalized discourse, Hajer speaks of the condition of 'discursive hegemony'. Only one ensemble of ideas, concepts and categorizations is credible in the policy arena and all the institutional arrangements are based on it. Because of the reinforcing tendency of such a situation, it is not easy for actors using different ideas, concepts and categorization to talk about them in the policy arena and to break this hegemony. Discourse theory assumes that all actors in a policy domain strive for discourse hegemony. Therefore Hajer also refers to the discursive 'strategies' of the stakeholders. Discourse dynamics as discourse structuration and institutionalization is a form of power dynamics. To define the situation in terms of particular ideas, concepts and categories is the supreme instrument of power.[4] All in all, Hajer's conception of policy discourse is more in line with the original ideas of Foucault than that of other policy scientist (see Dryzek 1997), who treat discourse as more static and neutral.

This approach links the concepts of 'discourse' and 'institutions'. In Hendriks (1998) we find a definition of institutions, which is complementary to this approach. Hendriks is interested in a definition of institutions in terms of what they actually *do* rather than what they *are*. Roughly indicating what he takes to be institutions in the real world, he mentions examples as "constitutional structures and formal governmental organizations as well as informal links, rules and procedures that structure policy making." (p. 2) But he defines political institutions as: "all the relatively persistent patterns of behavior and organization within the political system that exert a *formative* or *regulative* influence on the actors and communities involved in the development of public policy". (p.2, italics added)

The *formative* impact of institutions on actors and communities he refers to as 'the identity-shaping aspect of institutions'. Institutions influence the way actors think when approaching policy problems. They shape the categories we use, the causes we are willing to consider and the norms and values we cherish. In other words, they influence they way actors define reality and their role in this reality. As an 'obvious example' Hendriks mentions the sectoralization of government into various divisions, subdivisions, departments and units'. (p.10) Besides influencing cognition, institutions also influence the habits: the way in which actors routinely to handle matters and persons. Customs and routines not only express a particular way of thinking, but also structure it themselves. As an example of this form of institution, Hendriks mentions the 'policy styles' investigated by Richardson (1982). A more formal expression of the formative impact of institutions is found in the way they distribute

[3] The policy arena is waargenomen very boadly as all the 'discursive rooms' where can be decided on policy. This can be the parliament (or the parliaments standing committee on development aid) but also the top level discussions at the ministry.

[4] paraphrasing Schattschneider (1961); see also Stone, D., *Policy paradox and political reason*, Scott, Foresman& Co., Glennview, 1988.

goals and duties. Actors tend to internalize the formal goals of their organization as well as the roles the social environment demands in a particular situation.

The *regulative* impact of institutions on actors and communities is not identity-shaping but strategy-constraining and - enabling. The identity-shaping aspects of institutions help to understand why actors in a particular setting perceive the policy problem in a particular way and seek to solve it in a particular manner. The concept of the regulative aspects of institutions is useful in explaining what happens when different actors come together in a policy arena and fight over different policy proposals. "Political institutions constitute connections, channels and gates of entry, which influence the political fate of problem definitions, policy options and concepts embraced by various actors and organizations in the public domain" (Hendriks 1998; pp. 13-14). For example: the (formalized) contact of government with pressure groups determines to a large extent which kind of ideas, concepts and categorizations get access to the policy arena. The same institutions can also barr certain problem definition from access to the policy arena. For example Bachratz and Baratz (1970) distinguished four barriers between social wants and political decisions. Finally, institutions can determine the distribution of resources, thereby influencing the struggle taking place within the policy arena. Existing policy can equip departments with money, information and competencies to defend 'like minded' policy proposals in the policy arena.[5]

Hendriks' formative and regulative aspects are easily integrated in discourse theory as outlined above. Institutions have a formative impact on discourse structuration and they have a regulative impact on discourse institutionalization. The reinforcing capacity of discourse institutionalization is explained by the two aspects of institutions Hendriks distinguishes. But the institutional environment of the policy arena is shaped by many other institutions, other than those which are formed by policy decisions of the past.

[figure 2]

Grid/group Cultural Theory is considered by Hendriks as a specific form of institutionalism. (1998, p. 7) However, according to him it accounts only for the formative aspect of institutions.

Grid/group Cultural Theory assumes compatibility between the social structure of a social constellation (in terms of 'grid' and 'group'), the cultural bias of its members and their behavioral strategy. This is called the 'compatibility theorem'. 'Grid' refers to the individual prescription of the group and describes the extent to which interaction between members is bound by pre-determined roles and rules. 'Group' refers to the extent of group integration. A high score on 'group' implies strong group boundaries and strong identification with the group.[6] Social structure is potentially compatible with a particular cultural bias: the cultural bias legitimizes the existing social structure; conversely, and interactions based on the social structure reinforce the culture. In a social constellation with a low score on both grid and group only an *individualistic* cultural bias produces a viable combination. High grid/low group corresponds to a *fatalistic* culture; high grid/high group to a *hierarchical* culture and low grid/high group to an *egalitarian* culture. The behavioral strategy of the individual will be compatible with his cultural bias. It will also be tuned to the social structure, because successful interaction cannot easily occur outside the 'normal' pattern of interactions.[7]

[5] It is may be tempting to confuse the difference between formative and regulative aspects of institutions with the difference between informal and formal institutions. But formal institutions can be formative and informal institutions can implicitly influence decisions in the policy arena.

[6] For an empirical translation, see Gross J.L. &S. Rayner, *Measuring Cultures*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1985.

[7] For a more elaborate and sophisticated description of grid/group Cultural Theory: see Mamadouh 1999.

[figure 3]

Mary Douglas, who first developed this idea, applied it to ethnic cultures in anthropology. (Douglas 1978) Cultural Theory was adapted to political science by Wildavsky. (Thompson 1990) Culture is therefore referred to in a specific sense, as *political* culture. In the political culture of a country, all cultures exist side by side, but each is struggling to become dominant.

An important part of the research of political scientist working with grid/group Cultural Theory is to find out empirically what exactly is the content of the four political cultures that corresponds to the four patterns of social structures. Hendriks takes this for granted. His point of departure is the existence of four idealtypical cultures, which have by now become clear and consistent. The social structure, i.e. the score on grid and group, has become a variety-constraining device only; it legitimizes the number of four cultures. The compatibility theorem is more or less left out. (Hendriks 1998, p.9)[8]

According to Hendriks grid/ group Cultural Theory does a great job in highlighting the formative impact of institutions. Given a particular setting, which is defined by social structure and cultural bias, actors and communities will start to think in terms of particular categories, causes-effect relationships and norms, and act and talk accordingly. In other words, they will adapt their behavioral and discursive strategies. Actors using other concepts will not be taken seriously. A political culture structures political and policy discourse.

According to Hendriks, the *mechanisms* described by cultural theory only apply to the first, identity-shaping and not to the second, strategy-constraining process. But nothing prevents us from using the same *categories* (hierarchies, individualists, egalitarians and fatalists) for both processes.

Integration of the theories yields the following results. When we want to understand how a particular ensemble of ideas, concepts and categorization become official policy, we have to look at two processes. In the process of discourse structuration, problem definitions and proposed solutions with a particular cultural bias are taken more seriously than those of other cultural biases. This is due to an institutional setting consisting of past policy and other relevant institutions, itself culturally biased. In the process of discourse institutionalization, certain problem definitions and proposed solutions have more chance of reaching the policy arena and becoming accepted as official policy than others. Since the institutional setting regulates the access to the policy arena and the distribution of resources within this arena, actors will try to take advantage of it. Therefore, we can regard problem definitions and solutions as discursive strategies.

[figure 4]

In the following paragraphs, I will try to apply the result of the integration of theories to a particular Dutch policy discourse. I will not pay a lot of attention to the interpretation of findings in terms of grid/group Cultural Theory. First, because a interpretation in detail would take more pages than appropriate for a conference paper. Cultural Theory is most fruitful when comparing different countries, which is not the goal of this paper. Second, many sceptics of Cultural Theory would identify my integration of theories with Cultural Theory rubberstamping. I think, applying the integration of theories on the case will convince without these labels. Therefore, I printed my Cultural Theory interpretations in a small size.

[8] He suggests a 'logical affinity' between the social structure and the particular content of the worldview. I think the content of the worldview cannot be logically deduced from the score on group and grid. At most, this score makes it possible for the researcher to make conjectures about the way a particular subject is viewed within a political culture.

3.'Good governance' in development policy discourse

'Good governance' is sometimes being called a trend in Dutch policy on development co-operation. Unfortunately, to call something a trend is nothing more than an indication of its existence with the implicit suggestion that it is ephemeral and ultimately insignificant. The concept seems to be an excuse not to analyze policy changes. The integration of theories presented here aims to go beyond vague indications like 'trends' and to analyze how trends 'work'.

Since the World Bank Report 'Sub-Saharan Africa, from crisis to sustainable growth' of 1989, 'good governance' has become an important concept in international literature and policy on development co-operation. Most commentators identify a number of reasons for its popularity. At the end of the eighties, it became clear that the so-called 'Structural Adjustment Programs' were unsuccessful in bringing economic growth to developing countries, and sub-Saharan Africa in particular. Part of these programs was a cut back in the size and activities of national states. Development specialists now realized states in developing countries needed to have the support of their people and the capacity to implement the Strucutral Adjustment programms. Only a 'strong' state could facilitate economic growth in general.[9] The end of the Cold War encouraged to popularity of these ideas in two ways. First, it put aside geo-political reasons to hold eyes 'wide shut' while supporting 'bad' governments in strategically important countries. Moreover, a wave of democratization swept the African continent in the early 1990's. Western donors wanted to support these new 'good' governments.

But what does 'good governance' mean? From the beginning, donor agencies have emphasized different characteristics. "A general consensus on the importance of good governance is easy to achieve, but, typically, its exact meaning and the role of external donors in this area are not precisely defined. The discussion centers around a rather confusing variety of catchwords [...]". (Nunnenkamp 1994, p.458) In the last ten years, both of the meaning of 'good governance' and the perceived role of external donors developed within donor countries. In the following, I want to explain these developments for the case of the Netherlands. Here, the concept 'good governance' has started to play an important role in recent policy discourse. The main questions will be: How did the concept 'good governance' advance in Dutch policy discourse? In what meaning? Accompanied by what role of the Netherlands as a donor? Parallel to the terms of the two key ministers, Pronk and Herfkens, I distinguish two periods: 1989-1997 and 1998-2000.

I will use a method common in discourse analysis, although ut will be adjusted to the integrated theories. This method proceeds in three steps. First, I will look at the 'context of production' of discursive strategies. In what national and international institutional setting did Pronk and Herfkens subsequently had to present their problem definitions and policy proposals with regard to 'good governance'?

Second, how did their discursive strategy look like? I will analyze three different aspects of their discursive strategies. (a) Their rhetoric. What kind of catchwords did they use again and again to indicate the gist of their policy? (b) What kind of qualities they imputed to a 'good government?' In other words: what did 'good governance' mean according to them? (c) In what kind of relationship between donor and developing country did they believe 'good governance' to becomes a relevant concept? My material for the analysis consists of white papers, letters to parliament and interviews with policy makers at the ministry.[10]

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[9] see Migdal, J.S., Strong societies and weak states, state-society relationships and state capabilities in the Thrid World, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1988.

[10] I would like to thank mr. J.Boer, mr. R. Visser and mrs. S. Volbeda and mr. R. Van Den Berg for their kind cooperation.

Third, what was the effect of their discursive strategy on the context of production? Did their strategies enhance discourse structuration and institutionalization of their own cultural bias?

4. The period 1989-1997: Pronk's term of office at the ministry for Development Co-operation.

4.1 context of production

Pronk was minister of development cooperation once before, from 1973 until 1977. His policy was for the most part adopted by his successor, De Koning. Although subsequent ministers in the eighties tried to get rid of Pronk's inheritance, they were not entirely successful, so in a sense Pronk had himself created the context of production for his second term. (see Kuitenbrouwer 1994, pp. 148-159)

The major expansion of development aid in the sixties and seventies coincided with the rise of a new perspective on the Dutch colonial past. The generation raised after the independence of Indonesia in 1949 started to look back very critically on the Dutch role in the slave trade and the economic exploitation of the colonies. This view gave rise to the expression of collective feeling of guilt. Ideas of a moral duty to compensate for exploitation with development aid (which had existed from the late colonial period onwards), were projected onto the rest of the world. "[…] in the sixties and seventies, the colonial debt of honor was generalized to a kind of collective Western debt towards the Third World as a whole and development aid was the redress. Also towards developing countries with which the Netherlands never had had contacts in the colonial period, like most of the countries in Africa." (Kuitenbrouwer 2000, p. 379; my translation) The theoretical underpinning for these ideas was the Dependencia theory of Frank. An elite-survey showed that by far the most of the development specialists in NGO's and universities, politicians, high civil servants supported the idea that underdevelopment was caused by colonialism and neo-colonialism.(Kuitenbrouwer 2000, p. 379)

Under the very active young minister Pronk the idea came into vogue that the Netherlands had the most progressive development aid policy in the donor world. The Netherlands was thought of as a 'Model Country' for other donor countries, because only Dutch policy claimed not to consider any other interests than those of the very poor. As a consequence, in the seventies Pronk supported development country governments that claimed to be governed by and for the poor, like Cuba and Vietnam. Obviously, this aid was also meant to satisfy the great expectations of his New Left. Although the cooperation with Cuba was suspended under De Koning and his successors no longer took a redistributing social policy as a significant criterion for cooperation, Dutch policy stayed poverty-focused more or less throughout the eighties.

Besides, Pronk had always vigorously supported the movement for the so-called New International Economical Order, the initiative of an alliance of the independent countries whose economies totally depended on the export of raw materials. Its aim was to reach an agreement on the stabilization of raw material prices, the regulation of production, stock building and sales insurance. Although at the end of his first term even Pronk himself was forced to admit that this initiative had failed to produce results, Dutch ministers continued this initiative in the UNCTAD. (Kuitenbrouwer 1994, p. 153)

This solidarity with poor peoples and poor governments resulted in Dutch 'principled multilateralism' (Hoebink 1999) Multilateralism should not be understood as the opposite of bilateralism, but rather as a ambition of the Dutch government not to take sides with other northern donors (who were thought of to act in their own interests), but always to take into account the interests of the majority of countries, which are underdeveloped. The Netherlands

were spending disproportionally on UN agencies like the UNDP, precisely because they wanted to be well represented in development organizations that were multilateral in the true sense. Furthermore, the Netherlands were one of the few countries spending more than one percent of GNP on development aid, the norm set by the UN for the so-called second development decade. For all of these reasons, Dutch development specialists saw their country as the Model Country throughout the seventies and eighties. It was only at the end of the eighties, the beginning of Pronk's second term, that this idea was attacked by a number of politicians and scientists, mainly from outside the field of development cooperation.

In the sixties Dutch bilateral aid had expanded rapidly, for the most part because of domestic pressure. On the one hand, there were religious organizations transforming their traditional missionary work to more general development work, asking for financial support by the government. Helped by a lot of public interest in the subject matter, their ideas were received sympathetically in parliament. On the other side, private firms and their representative organizations were complaining about competition disadvantages, because other western government got their national industry attractive contracts in developing countries while granting aid bilaterally. Throughout the sixties, bilateral aid expanded very rapidly (Nekkers&Malcontent, p.394). Most of this aid, 90%, was spent in the Netherlands, because it was so-called 'tied aid'. One of the main goals of Pronk was to abolish this practice. In spite of his strong rhetoric at the end of his first term still 75% of the bilateral aid flowed back to the Netherlands. But although the more right wing oriented ministers of the eighties were less reluctant to serve the interests of Dutch industry, this flow-back percentage decreased gradually to 39% in 1992 (Hoebink 1999; p.198) Hoebink speaks of an increasing 'humanitarization' of the aid: the aid did serve less and less economical interests and was more and more directed to the very poor.[11]

> I think so far it is safe to speak of an egalitarian cultural bias of the Dutch development aid policy field. The egalitarian bias had an important impact on the structuration of the policy discourse

Besides these very broad characteristics of the role of development aid in Dutch society, the institutional setting also had some more specific peculiarities, which exerted both a formative and a regulative influence.

The distribution of competencies between the ministries relevant for development aid is an international exception. There is a minister for development cooperation, but he/she does not have an own ministry. Development cooperation is part of the ministry of Foreign Affairs, which is therefore headed by two ministers. In his first term Pronk's attitude in international organizations and his choice of communist partner countries had led to a number of conflicts over competencies. His successor have avoided a confrontation with the minister of foreign affairs. For example, human rights affairs stayed under his competence. But at the end of the eighties, a competence conflict was still institutionally build-in, which hindered positioning on human rights issues by the minister for development cooperation.[12]

In the Netherlands, the ministry of Economic Affairs does not have a lot of competencies regarding development aid. Until 1973 Economic Affairs was in charge of bilateral financial aid, and was able to exert a considerable regulative impact on bilateral aid policy: it was a channel for industry-friendly policy proposals and a barrier for policies that damaged industrial interests. After Pronk had seized these competencies at the beginning of

[11] In 1988, however, the same Hoebink called his dissertation on development cooperation with Sri Lanka and Tanzania 'To give means to take'. Then, his dissertation was very influential and was cited in the white paper of Pronk "A World of difference".

[12] Another consequence of the construction of a minister without a ministry is, that personel is being geworven and aangenomen by foreign affairs. A lot of people working on development issues, for example at the embassies, are not development specialists, but diplomats, who want to be replaced every three years in order to have a diplomatic career. (Hoebink 1996) This could have a formative impact on discourse structuration.

his first term, the industry does not have easy access to the development policy arena.[13] This could be one of the reasons why it was so difficult for his 'industry-friendly' successors to change the policy of humanitarisation, which had begun under Pronk.

This regulative aspect of the institutional aspect supports the egalitarian discourse on humanitarization.

As to the departmentalization within the ministry, until the reorganization of 1994 ('herijking') there was no special department issues, related to 'good governance', like institutional development or human rights. Different departments were supposed to be engaged in the subject, but without an own department, these activities did not get an own 'heading' in the white papers. This has both an formative and a regulative impact on discourse, because people were not used thinking of what they did as 'institutional development work', neither were policy proposals regarding these issues backed up by bureau-interest in the policy arena.[14]

In 1978 the Inspection Unit (IOV) was started up. During the years, the task of this independent unit has become less and less inspection in the narrow sense of the word, that is monitoring whether is money is spend on the targets set by the minister on a project to project basis. After 1987 the Inspection increasingly produced evaluations on the real effects, not just of projects but of whole programs, in order to enhance policy development. Talking about the regulative and formative impact of these studies, it seems useful to differentiate therefore between these two periods.[15] In the first period, the influence of IOV reports seem to have been very low. Although the IOV was supposed to provide an input in the generation of policy, it did neither have an institutionalized, direct contact with the minister nor with policy advisory bodies. In 1991 Hommes wrote: "The result of the IOV are, therefore, mainly relevant for the civil service leadership of the Ministry […] It is my impression, that the influence of evaluation reports at that level (that of the minister, HJT) is very minor. In the past I have known of cases in which the minister - for political reasons - has purposely neglected the results of evaluation studies, because they went contrary to his political preferences. In simple words one could say that it depends on the political usefulness of a recommendation whether it will be used or not." (Hommes 1991, p.158) The regulative capacity of the IOV to push issues of effectiveness within the policy arena seems not to have been very high in that period. Its formative impact was limited to the high civil servantry. But at that level, it seems the will to draw conclusions for policy from the evaluations, which in 1984 showed that a third of the projects did not have a lasting effect on poverty,[16] was there. In 1988, van Dam, a high civil servant, said *a titre personel*, it could be necessary to terminate aid to countries which do not have adequate governance, because in such countries aid projects cannot be successful. (van Dam 1999, pp.46-47)

After IOV had switched to evaluations of whole programs, their influence in policy discussion seems to have increased. IOV evaluation studies are always sent to the parliament, which most of the time wants to discuss about them with the minister. It seems, together with this practice the IOV has gained an important regulative capacity. Sometimes, the IOV had a access to the policy arena by informal contacts with the NAR, the main advisory body until 1998. Also the formative impact at the level of the ministry seems to have increased. Ministry personnel is asking for draft reports of the IOV to incorporate in policy design frequently.[17]

Without considering the content of the IOV reports throughout the years, it is difficult to say something about its cultural bias. But the kind of organisation can give a clue. Considering the first period,

[13] Also in the FMO (Financieringsmaatschappij voor Ontwikkelingslanden), a tripartite organisation representing government, employers and employees, the government has 51% of the votes.
[14] Interview with mrs. Volbeda on the 21th of februari 2001.
[15] Interview with mr. Van Den Berg on the 8th of march 2001
[16] Kuitenbrouwer 1994, p. 242. He also cites the head of the IOV, Kramer, in 1989, who comes to the same conclusion.
[17] Interview mr. Van Den Berg.

monitoring implementation seems to be a task born out of hierarchical concerns. Considering the second period, the focus on effectiveness and efficiency of programs can serve a lot of different arguments. For example individualistic arguments in favour of a cut back of the state activities in the field of development co-operation.

During the seventies and eighties, there have always been voices in the public discussion which were critical on the effectiveness of development aid. Target of critique was mainly the effectiveness of individual projects. At the end of the eighties influential people like the liberal conservative politician Bolkestein, together with some journalist of the right wing paper NRC Handelsblad started to attack also the country choice and pleaded for re-channelling the aid to the new eastern-European states, where it would be spent more effectively. Their criticism seems not really to have had access to the policy arena, although the general political climate by then under the motto: 'no nonsense' was characterized by budget cut downs and reorganizations for more effectiveness. The discourse on development aid seems to have been structured otherwise. "[It is] typical, that a fundamental debate about the methods and effectiveness of development cooperation did hardly get off the ground in the Netherlands." (Malcontent 1999, pp. 58-59). 'Do good and do not look back' (Doe wel en zie niet om) is supposed to have been the credo of that period. But at the beginning of Pronk's second term, attacking development aid effectiveness was already a rival discursive strategy to the dominant humanitarian discourse.

The liberal-conservative attack on aid effectiveness had an individualist bias.

An important role in the Dutch development aid policy arena was played by the Nationale Adviesraad (NAR), an advisory body consisting mainly of social scientists and a number of ex-politicians and experts from trade and industry. The NAR was consulted by the minister, but was also entitled to draw up advises for the minister without an assignment. In the early eighties, the NAR sometimes even prepared the line of Dutch diplomats on UNCTAD-conferences, because DGIS personnel did not have the expertise.[18] Therefore, the NAR not only had a formative, but also a regulative impact on discourse. After DGIS personnel was becoming more specialized, it was still a perfect channel for ideas to reach the policy arena.

Before being dissolved in 1996, the NAR consisted of 75 scientists, which drew up the advises in committees of different composition. Therefore I am not able the characterise the NAR in terms of grid/group Cultural Theory. Their report of 1989 'Administrative and management capacities in Sub Saharan Africa', however, is characterised by a hierarchical bias.

Maybe more influential than the reports of the IOV is the research by the World Bank. Interviewees at the ministry all mention WB studies as of great importance for policy changes.[19] Their reports, like the World Development Reports and evaluation studies, are considered as of very high quality and are being read with care. It seems to me, the practice to read WB policy carefully does not only give the World Bank a considerable formative impact on Dutch policy discourse,[20] but also a regulative one. Proposals in line with WB policy do have a better chance of getting institutionalized. Apart from their good reputation in general[21], the quality of their reports is among other things based on the access to a huge amount of data from development projects over the last decades. Their evaluations can be grounded empirically very well. In terms of Hendriks, the World Bank has a regulative impact on the distribution of the resource 'information' within the Dutch policy arena.

To characterise the World Bank on issues of Governance is not difficult. The Bank conception of the role of the state in the reports 'sub-Saharan Africa, from crisis to sustainable growth' and 'Governance and Development' stayed individualistic. (see Williams & Young 1994)

[18] Interview mr. Van Den Berg.
[19] Interviews on 24th of january and 21th of february 2001.
[20] cf: Hommes 1991, p. 157.
[21] Onder meer because the World Bank can afford to hire the best experts in whatever specialism. See interview Vissser, 21th february 2001.

In short, the institutional setting which formed the context of production of Pronk's discursive strategy was divided. On the one hand, an egalitarian bias had formed policy discourse on development aid throughout the years. On the other hand, rival individualistic strategies from liberal-conservative opposition were supported by an institution like the World Bank with great formative and regulative impact.

4.2 Pronk's discursive strategy[22]

rhetoric

Pronk did not use the concept 'good governance' often without mentioning the complaints of developing countries against the concept. "So, least developed countries have an equal right to criticise the governments of the rich partners in the world economy, when they take decisions hurting them without compensation or even consultation. Good domestic governance is a necessary but insufficient condition in the struggle against poverty. International good governance is equally important." (DGIS 1991, p19). In the White Paper of 1993: 'A World of Conflict', the concept was accompanied by a list of complaints of developing countries against the 'hypocritical' and 'western-centered' concept. (DGIS 1993, pp.25-26).

In both his most important white papers, Pronk used governance discussion to attack the policy of supporting 'bad governments' in the past, with the argument that this is necessary to create economic growth. "No freedom without food - but freedom comes first". (DGIS 1993, p. 19)

Typical for the Pronk's rhetoric is the way in which he defended toward left wing voters the spending of a greater part of his budget on non-ODA objectives, like care of asylum seekers, during his third term. He compared himself with a mayor during the German occupation of '40-'45, who had the collaborate sometimes with the enemy to prevent worse. Of course, this comparison did not have any charm to his colleagues in the cabinet.

Pronk's rhetoric show a strong egalitarian bias , centred around the norm of supporting the weak and attacking all outsiders which do not comply with this norm.

meaning of Good Governance

A lot of activities to improve governance, were subsumed under the headings of 'institutional development', 'human rights', 'democracy' and 'participation'. 'Good governance' was not very important yet at the level of policy design, but it was there on the level of implementation. Looking back on the sort of projects implemented during this period, they seem to center around two themes.

First, they emphasized participation of the poor people at the local level, in order to take responsibility for development according to their own needs. "[We have chosen] as much as possible for autonomous development: from the beginning the needs, objectives, design and implementation of development programs and projects should be decided on by the stakeholders themselves, *not by the authorities far away*, not by the donor."(DGIS 1990, p. 398, italics added). According to Pronk, this implied not in the first place decentralization of state functions and agencies. It meant participation of the local poor in project organizations, which were not integrated in state structures. And it meant participation in civil society organizations (and the market), which had to form countervailing powers to the state, "in order to enforce social changes and bring about more equality".[23]

This interpretation of 'good governance' is clearly egalitarian.

Second, there was a lot of attention for violations of human rights. Projects were set up to increase the chance that violations were being punished. This meant on the one hand

[22] All official policy papers are taken to have been endorsed by minister. Arguments of these papers are regarded to be part of his discursive strategy.

[23] This is the approving comment of Hoebink, 1990, p. 5.

strengthening institutions of the state (judiciary, public prosecutor and police), on the other strengthening human rights NGOs and pluralistic democratic organisations in general.

> This aspect of 'good governance' can also be taken as egalitarian. Weliswaar he proposes to strengthen state functions but in an egalitarian view of the state, the state is on the one hand the enemy of group norms and practices, at the other hand the state is the instrument through which group norms should be implemented in society.

In Pronk's second term, these kind of projects became incorporated in a new policy framework. In his White Paper: "A World of Conflict", Pronk regards the numerous violent ethnic and religious conflicts around the world as a most acute danger to development process. Preventing this conflicts, supporting post-conflict countries on the road to conciliation and peace, and political stability became a major policy goal. 'Good governance', is not only regarded to support economic development, but also political stability. Projects on governance should be implemented in countries in rehabilitating from a violent conflict, or in transition and therefore susceptible for political instability. (DGIS 1996, pp. 88-89) The concept becomes a more general meaning. Its scope comprises not only (political) participation and public sector management capacities, but the way in which government handles potential social and ethnic conflicts within society.

> The concern for disintegration of the state and the emphasis on the capacity of the state to channel social dynamics through democratic procedures has a hierarchical undertone.
>
> In short, there is an development in the meaning of 'good governance'. Beginning as a more or less egalitarian concept, in Pronk's second term it is defined more in a hierarchical way, emphasising the capacity of the state to intervene in the dynamics in society.

<u>relationship between donor and developing country</u>

The third aspect of the discursive strategy consists of the role the concept 'Good governance' has in the bilateral relationship between donor and developing country in general. For Pronk it is clear that good governance should not be made to another condition for development cooperation: "There is a general consensus, that positive measures (directed at improving governance, HJT) should be the rule and negative measures (good governance as a condition for cooperation, HJT) the exception." (DGIS 1993, p.26) He denounced a defaitist attitude towards the possibilities of the governments of developing countries to improve. "When government organizations function inadequate, [bilateral donors] are constantly tempted to find or create other channels for giving aid. This is justifiable, because there is the wish for and often the necessity to have short term success. It is however necessary to improve at the same time these government organizations" (DGIS 1992, p.11).

Van Cranenburgh (1990, pp.723-724) noticed, that in this policy dialogue with recipient countries not much room was left for policy initiatives of their governments. Pronk had created so much new policy goals, 'speerpunten' and criteria which had to be accepted by the recipient government in the policy dialogue, that their room for own initiatives was very restricted. The only justification for this, that the Dutch represented the real interests of the poor in that country, who would not be heard otherwise, she found very presumptuous and not corresponding to the goal of autonomy for the poor.

Pronk saw the necessity for his directorate to concentrate aid on a limited number of developing countries. For him, this did not imply that the Netherlands should break of any development cooperation contacts. Concentration on one country should take place without withdrawing totally from another. In other words, he wished concentration without selection. The interviewees indicate, he thought that also with a small Dutch presence in country, he could do something for the local poor by the continuing the policy with their government. No selection implies also: no selection on criteria regarding good governance. "He would sit at the table with the blackest of governments, when he had the feeling he could accomplish

something for the poor."[24] A very significant exception is the suspending of aid to Indonesia in 1991 because of the slaughter of at least 25 demonstrators on East-Timor. Still, this suspension had a somewhat different character than the selection which is central in the policy of minister Herfkens. It was more like a punishment, a signal within foreign affairs diplomacy, which had nothing to do with reasons of concentration.

> Selection for these kind of reasons, is not anti-egalitarian at all: it confirms certain inviolable values and norms. The egalitarian character of Pronk's strategy with regard to the relationship with the recipient countries is most clear when we consider the solidarity with the poor, against arguments of efficiency and more or less against their own government.

<u>coherence within discursive strategy</u>

The three element of Pronk's discursive strategy show coherence to a high degree. Moreover, they are in line with the twin pillars of the idea of the Netherlands as a Model Country of the seventies: choosing the side of the poor countries against the rich countries and choosing the side of the very poor within the poor countries

In his rhetoric, he does not use the word 'good governance' without indicating the objections of the poor countries against the 'hypocritical' and 'western-centred' character of it. He also pleads for positive measures to improve governance instead of negative conditions from the side of the donors.

He shows his solidarity with the poor within the poor countries by using good governance in a meaning which concentrates on participation and autonomy of the poor against the state. This is in line with his policy not to withdraw from a country after a selection process. In 'forcing' his policy goals upon the government - upon 'good' and 'bad' governments alike - he takes the role, which van Cranenburgh found presumptuous, namely that of the true representative of the poor in the poor country.

The broadening of the meaning to 'management of latent and open conflicts in society', reinforces only the need not to select and let the poor alone. It is however a change in the direction of a more state-centered approach of the meaning of good governance. But at the same time, this is understandable, considered the meaning of 'good governance' in which it is the capability of the state to enforce human rights.

In 'A world of difference' Pronk, looking back at his first period as minister, says: "The offering of aid shows some awareness of guilt for the suffering in the colonial time[…] therefore it had elements of repentance to it." (DGIS 1990, p. 46). It seems as if this holds also for his discursive strategy in his second and third term.

4.3 Coherence between context of production and discursive strategy

'Good governance' in the meaning of participation, the focus on promotion of good governance instead of using it as a condition for aid, and the refusal to make a selection and 'let some countries down', these aspects of Pronk's discursive strategy all fit very well into the dominant discourse of that time in the field of development cooperation. After all, the discourse was still structured around the idea of Netherlands as a Model Country and the process of humanitarisation of the aid.

The institutional problem of unclear distribution of competencies between the ministers of Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation came to an outburst in 1991, when Pronk decided to 'punish' for human rights violation by suspending aid. He did this with the consent of the Minster of Foreign Affairs, van den Broek. But when Indonesia, in a careful and sophisticated diplomatic offensive (see Schulte Nordholt, 1995), broke off all development aid contacts with the Netherlands, the party of Mr. van den Broek was furious and accused Pronk of interfering with foreign affairs. After these severe political difficulties,

[24] Interview Joan Boer, 21th january 2001.

Pronk lobbied for a decompartementalization ('ontschotting') of foreign policy. Dutch international relations should be seen in the perspective of both the traditional goals of foreign policy, stability, peace and international trade, and the goal of development. The decompartimentalisation gave him the opportunity to legitimately interfere with foreign affairs. (Malcontent 1999, p.57) The linking of 'good governance' to conflict prevention and post-conflict rehabilitation should be seen in this context. He used the already widely known concept in a special interpretation as a discursive strategy in a particular institutional setting.

Pronk linked the concept of 'good governance' to the issue of aid effectiveness very late. In the period before 1996, Pronk did raise the issue of aid effectiveness mostly in a different sense than that of the critics in parliament. Effectiveness was called 'the quality of aid' and was regarded mainly in terms of the question, whether the aid had reached the very poor[25], and not whether the same guilder could be spent differently with more effect. In fact, this last question is more about aid efficiency than about aid effectiveness, but that was the sense in which it was used in the public discussion. Kuitenbrouwer (1994, p.245) even blames Pronk for totally disregarding the question of effectiveness. Governance was presented more as an end in itself ("Freedom comes first") than as a means to improve effectiveness. As we will see, this discursive strategy could not produce a discursive hegemony because of a number of changes.

> In terms of Cultural Theory, Pronk's strategy matched perfectly the egalitaristic side of the discourse, but the institutional setting did change in another direction.

4.5 Effects of Pronk's discursive strategy/Context of production for Herfkens' discursive strategy

The way in which Pronk's discursive strategy became institutionalised and influenced policy discourse, together with other the changes which took place in the institutional setting, forms the context, in which Herfkens' discursive strategy should be situated.

During the operation of decompartementalization in 1994, the Department Human Rights, Good Governance and Democratisation (DMD) and the Department for Crisiscontainment and Humanitarian Aid (DCH) were created.[26] The fact that Good Governance had its own department now, meant the concept could have greater formative and regulative impact on discourse. In the context of peace-building, the concept acquired a somewhat different meaning. It became less focused on the role of grass-root organizations and more on state capacity to influence society effectively.

> In this way, a more hierarchical meaning of 'good governance' became institutionalised.

In connection with the reorganisation of Foreign Affairs and Development Co-operation policy ('herijking') the NAR had produced an advice in which it urged for limiting the number of countries with which DGIS should have development aid relations. (NAR 1995). This led to a confrontation with the minister. In his opinion, the reorganisation and decompartementalization would to an integration of development affairs into all international contacts of the Netherlands. On the basis of the NAR advice, the parliament asked some critical questions for the minister. (NAR 1997, p.17) This shows a regulative impact of the NAR as institution.

Part of the process of reorganisation was an elaborate evaluation study into the effectiveness of aid. During Pronk's second term, the discussion about effectiveness had remained. The right-wing party VVD, which had criticized effectiveness for a long time, became part of the governing coalition of Pronk's third term. Referring to IOV reports[27] they

[25] Interview mrs. Volbeda

[26] Both department were merged under the ministry of Herfkens to the Department for Human Rights and Peace building (DMV).

[27] interview mr. Van Den Berg

forced the inclusion in the coalition's government program ('Regeringsverklaring') of an investigation into development aid effectiveness and possible consequences for the budget of development aid. (DGIS 1996, p.7). The evaluation study 'Aid in progress' ('Hulp in uitvoering') drew conclusions from former IOV evaluation reports and was completed in 1996. "The gist of the report was, that projects are destined to fail when the institutional environment is not good.[…] This insight was not new. We had ignored that all the time. But after the report, the conclusion was inescapable: we had to develop a programmatic, long term, institutional approach. […]". (Interview Boer) According to Boer, at that point a conclusion was drawn at the ministry. "It means, we cannot be everywhere." In that way, 'good governance' and the issue of efficiency would have been linked explicitly. 'Aid in progress' was signed by the minister himself. But considering Pronk's quarrel with the NAR and parliament only shortly before, it is not clear whether also the minister himself draw the conclusion to start to selection. In the two remaining years, it did not become part of his discursive strategy. "I do not think under Pronk selection of countries had been implemented so rigorously [as under Herfkens], but maybe the parliament had forced him to reduce it to forty instead of twenty" (interview Boer)

Very important was the evaluation study of the World Bank about the effectiveness of development aid of the last decades of 1996. Its main finding: development aid was not successful in countries which did not have 'rule of law, high quality of the public bureaucracy and low pervasiveness of corruption' (Dollar 1998, p. 12). All interviewees regard this report as of major influence on the policy making process. It coincided with the IOV report, which draw the same conclusion. Because the study was set up by comparing countries, it supported the trend of talking about effectiveness in the sense of efficiency. Now, they were talking about the way in which they could have spent the tax payer's money otherwise. Like the studies of the NAR and the IOV, this study of the World Bank had more formative and regulative impact on the discussion about aid relationships, than on the meaning of the concept 'good governance', which was not defined very precisely in it.

> Selection for the reason of improving efficiency of development aid spending could be interpreted in an hierarchical way.

In the IOV report, the recommendation to make a selection of countries was accompanied by the recommendation to reduce the control of the development programs by the donor. Development programs are most successful when the target group have a sense of 'ownership' of the program. "The activity is owned by the stakeholders themselves, not by their government nor by the donor. [...] Ownership is favored in an environment in which decisions are taken on the basis of participation of the people and supported by well-functioning institutions. Real ownership is therefore supported in an environment which is characterized by good governance: an environment in which the government fulfills her tasks efficiently, in which decision making is transparent and policy is accounted for in a democratic way". (DGIS 1996, p.78) This is completely in line with Pronk's former participation-oriented definition of the meaning of 'good governance'. But , as we will see, together with the idea of selection, it leads to a different understanding of the relationship between donor and recipient, in which no room is left for solidarity with the poor against their own state.

The reports of the NAR and World Bank were more supportive for rival theories in the policy arena than for Pronk's. Together with the reports of the IOV, which institute had gained influence compared to the eighties, they had a formative impact on discourse, which made selection of countries more plausible than Pronk's ideas regarding the developing aid relationships. Pronk's discursive strategy did have some successes, notably in positioning 'good governance' in the context of 'peacebuilding'. This lead to a different, more 'statist' meaning of the concept. Pronk's discursive strategy did not lead to a discursive hegemony.

> Institutions with a more individualistic or hierarchical bias had a strong formative and regulative impact on policy discourse. Pronk's mainly egalitaristic discursive strategy did sound not plausible

anymore in an discourse, which was structured otherwise and did not have strong support in the policy arena.

5. The period 1998-200?: Herfkens' term of office at the ministry for Development Co-operation.

5.2 Herfkens' discursive strategy

The difference between the discursive strategies of Pronk and Herfkens are illustrated best by the following quote from one of the interviewees: "It is like the dispute about a half filled glass: Pronk emphasized the glass is half full, Herfkens said it is half empty." (Interview J. Boer) Indeed Herfkens presented her policy in a totally different way, although a lot of its themes were already present in the policy of Pronk.

<u>rhetoric</u>

Whereas Pronk's rhetoric carried remnants of a feeling of generalized guilt towards developing countries, Herfkens uses words to designate governments of development countries which betray a totally different tone. She calls governments 'decent' or 'indecent'. Governments are a bad lot or not ('het zit wel snor met het bestuur hier.') These words do not show the same critical attitude which Pronk had towards a 'hypocritical' and 'western-centered' view on 'good governance', which belonged to what Hoebink called 'principled multilateralism'.

In using this words, she appeals to an 'international consensus' on this theme, referring to the Dollar report.[28] Contrary to her predecessor , she explicitly makes the link between effectiveness and good governance. 'No effect without good governance' is the title of one of her speeches.[29] She raves against the fragmentation 'versnippering' of the aid. The word 'effectiveness' is used parallel to words like 'manageable'. It acquires a different connotation. It has more to do with efficiently running the Dutch ministry than with the old concept of 'quality' of the aid.

Maybe the most important word in Herfkens discursive strategy is the English word 'ownership'. "'Ownership' is an unclear concept. At present, it has more an agitating function: it is the opposite of 'donorship'." (interview Visser) Apart from the association with effectiveness, 'ownership' implies therefore also the moral message of autonomy of the recipient country viz. a viz. the donor country.

In terms of Cultural Theory, the rhetoric regarding aid effectiveness, which does an appeal on the common sense feeling of the public that 'fragmentation' is a bad thing , should be regarded as part of an hierarchical bias. But Herfkens rhetoric also has another aspect. The refusal to co-operate with 'indecent' governments and the emphasis on 'ownership' versus 'donorship' has a strong egalitaristic undertone.

<u>meaning of 'good governance'</u>

Under Herfkens, the meaning of the concept was more clearly defined in a white paper, which was not submitted to the parliament.[30] She referred however to its to content. (BUZA, 1999). According to this white paper, good governance has four components.

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[28] But this international consensus is not so clear as she presents it (see Otto, J.M. (forthcoming), 'Goed Bestuur en rechtszekerheid als doelen van ontwikkeling', in: Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid, *Goed Bestuur en Ontwikkelingsbeleid*, Rapporten aan de Regering, Den Haag, Staatsuitgeverij.) Certainly not upon topics like what it is to be decent.

[29] An interesting detail is, that Herfkens does not use the english word 'governance'. Sh talks about 'bestuur' (administration). Maybe the english word was already too much associated with an international trend to be taken serious.

[30] The reason for this was in line with her aversion against 'donorship': she did not want to produce more 'official policy'. (Interview Volbeda)

Participation of the people in government and civil society, transparency of government processes and combating corruption, lawfulness in order to bring about legal security and effectiveness of government action.

Compared to the meaning which was given to the concept under Pronk, there are a number of new elements. New is the emphasis on combat of corruption. "Corruption is something which in Dutch society counts as very blameworthy. We just don't want to support corrupt governments and that is it! [...] Corruption extracts huge amounts of money from government control; it is not possible to make policy on it. Besides, corruption strikes the very poor first." (Interview Volbeda) Support for the media and support for improving the possibilities for parliamentary supervision (like the founding of a independent audit office ('Rekenkamer') are also part of the new emphasis on transparency.

Furthermore, the emphasis on participation has become of a somewhat different character. Although decentralization and democratization programs were implemented under Pronk too, 'participation' was defined as participation to a development program or project, civil society organizations and the market in order to strengthen countervailing powers to public administration. At present, the ministry rather wants to strengthen participation in development organisations which fit in the official development policy of the recipient government.

> These two new elements in the meaning of 'good governance' give the concept a more hierarchical character.

<u>relationship between donor and developing country</u>

The most important changes betroffen redefinition of the bilateral relations with recipient countries. In accordance with the rhetoric, only twenty countries are selected by the Dutch government to onderhouden an official development aid relationship with. After the mate van armoed, 'good governance' is the second most important criterium for selection.[31] Other countries can qualify only for beperkte projecten regarding environmental protection, private investment subsidies and, again, peace building/good governance. They can also be supported by state-aided Dutch NGO's. In the selection process, a number of countries, onder meer Kenya, was struck off the country list because of 'bad governance'. "This choice was very difficult to take for Pronk. He would always see possibilities to improve the situation for the poor in the country. He saw the glass as being half full. For Herfkens it was half empty." (Interview Boer).

The developing countries, with which the Netherlands continue the development aid will get a maximum of control on the spending of the money. At present, the recipient government selects the sectors in which it thinks the aid is needed most. Dutch aid will be concentrate on this sector. Apart from the conventional development activities, the aid will also be directed at improving governance within the sector. In the ideal case, Dutch government just gives budget support to their development programs. Hoebink (Voipio and Hoebink) have invented a term for this kind a development relationship: the government-in-the-drivers-seat (GIDS) approach. This approach of course furthers the 'ownership' of the government of the recipient country.

This kind of development aid relationship is presented in the Dutch policy arena as improving aid effectiveness, taken in the new sense as efficiency ('doelmatigheid') of Dutch spending. First, selection in itself does improve aid efficiency, because in designing and implementing development policy it is possible to concentrate on a few countries, which

[31] Which does not mean, that these criteria have been interpreted very streng during the selection proces. Additional overwegingen (like existing presentie of the Netherlands in such a country have played a role. The screening on 'good governance' was quick and qualitative: it was based on positive or negative trends, which were visible in already known information than on actual, volledige information about participation, transparency, effectiveness and legal security of the recipient governments.

should make the policy process more ‘maneagable’ in decreasing ‘fragmentation’ at the level of the ministry and embassies. The higher financial budget per country also makes it possible to become more active in institutional development, improving governance in a particular sector. Second, selection by rather the criterion of ‘good governance’ improves effectiveness in two other ways. In the first place, it makes it defendable towards the Dutch public to leave more room for the recipient government, the GIDS approach. This improves ownership, which in turn increases effectiveness. ‘Ownership’ also has a moral connotation. Government of development countries should have a right not to be dependent on the grillen of donor policy trends. In the second place, development projects in a good insitutional environment are more succesful in general.

coherence within discursive strategy

In Herfkens discursive strategy a number of ideas already present in the discourse are skillfully combined. But in the process, some concepts acquire a somewhat different meaning.

The Dutch tradition of giving attention to human rights violations is continued in the meaning of ‘good governance’, in which civil and political rights are incorporated in the components ‘participation’ and ‘legal security’.

The emphasis on participation is continued, but in a slightly different way. On the one hand, participation is taken more in the sense of participation of the people in government structures. Participation of the local poor people to the development project is not the first priority anymore. On the other hand, the theory according to which this latter kind of participation leads to more ‘ownership’ and therefore to a greater effectiveness, was being extended to the GIDS approach. This was in line with the IOV report of 1996. Visser: “This was a general movement. We have started to view things more and more in a macro perspective, away from the micro perspective on projects.”

The concept of ‘good governance’ was linked to the concern for effectiveness in the domestic policy arena through the idea of selection by two separate ways of argumentation. The first argumentation was most explicit. It says it makes no sense to grant aid to recipient countries which do not have good governance. This technocratic insight is given rhetorical strength by portraying these countries as ‘indecent’. “The glass is half empty”. The second argumentation[32] is, that improving governance in a particular sector in order to increase effectiveness of development programs, requires a lot of donor effort, which cannot be provided without limiting the number of countries.

Finally, the idea of ownership was being linked to ‘good governance’. The GIDS approach is only possible when the recipient government is ‘decent’. Otherwise, ownership would lead to a waste of money. ‘Good' governments, on the other hand, have a right to have ‘ownership’ over their development programs. It makes these programs more effective, too. [33]

In comparison with Pronk’s discursive strategy, Herfkens did not change so much at the level of the meaning of the world. The most important , like participation and human rights, were adopted. The special program for peacebuilding/good governance continues to work in Pronk’s definition of the word. Totally different, however, is the rhetoric which accompanies the policy proposals and the proposed development aid relationships with the recipient countries. Since ‘good governance’ plays such a totally different role within these relationships, one can speak of a very different discursive strategy.

[32] This second argumentation I only heard in the interview with J. Boer, deputy director-general at DGIS. Maybe one cannot say it is part of the overall discursive strategy.

[33] Through selection on the basis of the criterion of ‘good governance’ Herfkens could avoid the paradox in Pronk’s strategy. He wanted to support the local poor against their governments and at the same time improve the state capacities. Herfkens supports ‘good’ governments ‘against’ their people, and supports through special programs and other channels like NGOs local people against ‘bad’ governments.

The vormgeving of the relationship with recipient countries shows the same two 'tracks' of Herfkens discursive policy. Appealing to a hierarchical bias, she emphasizes manegeable, effective channeling of aid. Appealing to a egalitarian, she does not want to sit at one table with 'undecent' goverments. But the 'decent' governments are entrusted with the full responsebility of the development of their country. The expertise of donor countries is de-emphasized. The GIDS approach is a consequence of the idea of ownership, which is linked to effectiveness on the one hand, and to a moral idea of autonomy on the other.

5.3 Coherence between context of production and discursive strategy.

It is clear Herfkens discursive strategy fits well in the institutional setting , and it fits better than did Pronk's at the end of his third term.

The question rises, why Pronk did not switch to a selection policy during his second period, when the discourse was structured in that way. One possible explanation is, that the regulative impact of institutions like the World Bank and the NAR was not 'strong' enough, whereas there were other institutions that successfully blocked policy proposals of similar purport from the policy arena. I do not have indication for this. A more plausible explanation lies in the fact that it was already Pronk's last two years as a minister. According to J. Boer, it was only a matter of time before parliament also would start to insist on selection and would force the minister to it.

When Herfkens started in 1998, her discursive strategy was in line with the discourse and her proposals were supported by the regulative impact of especially the World Bank. Her policy proposals were accepted fairly easy in the policy arena. In the press even development aid specialists reacted not as negatively as expected considered the change in discursive strategy. But we should bear in mind, that the strength of her discursive strategy is, that she has combined a number of elements already present in the discussion. Therefore, it is not a complete change.

Herfkens discursive strategy is characterised by an hierarchical and egalitarian aspect. The structure of discourse had altered from pure egalitarian to the inclusion of a lot of individualistically biased idea's concepts and categorizations. The hierarchical aspect of Herfkens strategy fits well within a individualistic structured discourse. Hierarchists and individualist often form a kind of 'natural coalition' (Mamadouh 1999, p.403). Her strategy is supported by institutions, which have shown a individualistic bias. The egalitarian undertone makes it more acceptable to the majority of development experts, which have stayed to their 'old' ideas, concepts and categorizations.

5.4 Effects of Herfkens' discursive strategy

To what extent Herfkens discursive strategy and policy effected the discourse on 'good governance', cannot be said with certainty yet. As an example, I will just mention some of her policy measures which can be expected to have a formative or regulative impact on discourse.

- The budget projects to improve governance in the program for peacebuilding have increased.[34] This will continue to set the concept in this specific perspective.
- Embassies are asked to make a report on corruption in their country on a yearly basis.[35] The Netherlands has started a concerted action with Germany, the United Kingdom and Norway (The Utstein group) in order to combat corruption. (BUZA internet document) Their official statement could have lasting influence in regarding corruption as one of the main elements of 'bad' governance

The success of Herfkens discursive strategy cannot be taken for granted. Selecting out countries can prove dangerous for the support of her policy. When an important country reacts on the selecting out by Herfkens like president Suharto of Indonesia did in 1991, she can loose her support. On the other hand, selecting a country in, which misuses the GIDS approach to build a white elephant, can cause scandal in the Dutch press. Moreover, she is

[34] (TK 27400, V, nr. 2, p. 44)
[35] Interview mrs. Volbeda.

still very dependent on the reports of the World Bank about their experiences with their programs to improve governance which will have a formative and regulative impact again.

6. Conclusion

'Good governance' is being called a 'trend' in Dutch development policy discourse. Analysing this trend in terms of the integrated theories, we have gained several insights.

When the concept 'good governance' is used, it should be interpreted as a discursive strategy in the context of a discourse which is structured in a certain way. That means, the rhetoric which accompanies the concept, the meaning of the concept and its proposed role in development aid relationship are all adjusted on what is taken to be plausible in this discourse. Moreover, they are adjusted to certain institutions, which give them access to the policy arena and which further particular ideas more than others. Because these policy proposals are translated in institutional arrangements, this process can be self-enforcing. This is not always the case. Dutch development policy dynamics show that change is very well possible.

Pronk's discursive strategy on 'good governance' was very plausible in the policy discourse at that time, which was influenced still by ideas of the 'Model Country'. This idea, however, did not structure policy discourse totally. Rival discursive strategies, emphasizing the ineffectiveness of development aid, were not taken very seriously, but were not dismissed totally either. They just did not reach the policy arena or did not have a change on it. But several things changed. The regulative impact of an institution focused on aid effectiveness and efficiency, the IOV, increased. The reorganization together with Foreign Affairs, which Pronk had wished himself, led to a report on aid effectiveness (Aid in progress), which had a formative impact on the discourse. In the report, 'Good governance' was linked to the issue of effectiveness. A report the World Bank which normally has a very big formative impact on Dutch policy discourse, confirmed this link. Moreover, the way in which the report was set up (namely: by comparing countries) hinted in the direction of selecting countries with 'bad governance' out, thus changing 'effectiveness' into a matter of 'efficiency'. Independent of this, the NAR advised to select countries in order to increase efficiency of the aid activities. In this way, the issue of effectiveness found its way to the policy arena and ideas of selection in order to increase efficiency and ideas of selection on the criterion of 'good governance' became more and more part of policy discourse, although in 1996 they did not become official policy yet. Besides, Pronk's own discursive strategy, setting 'good governance' in the context of peace-building, had changed the meaning of the concept somewhat in a more 'statist' direction.

Herfkens discursive strategy combined selection on the criterion of 'good governance' in order to increase efficiency with a 'state -centred' idea of the concept to the so-called GIDS approach. She could make use of the regulative impact of World Bank, NAR and IOV to get support for her ideas.

> In the perspective of Cultural Theory, we see the following. The institutional setting of the end of the eighties is mainly egalitarian, with the important exception of the World Bank. Pronk's discursive strategy is therefore more successful then individualistic rivals. In time, the regulative capacity of some hierarchical institutes increases other institutes. Together with the World Bank, they form a more supportive environment for the hierarchical/egalitarian strategy of Herfkens than for the purely egalitarian strategy of Pronk.

I think, the integration of discourse theory with institutional theory helped to analyse the role of 'good governance' in Dutch development aid policy and its development. The twin concepts of 'discourse structuration/formative impact' and 'discourse institutionalisation/regulative impact' are helpful to understand this kind of dynamic in policy discourse.

The link between the 'formative impact of institutions' and grid/group Cultural Theory I could not explore in detail in this paper. But I think it can be used to improve the analysis of

differences and similarities between the contents of discursive strategies, than the description alone can. For example, both Pronk's rhetoric of guild and Herfkens rhetoric of decent and indecent states belong to the same egalitarian cultural bias.

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figure 1

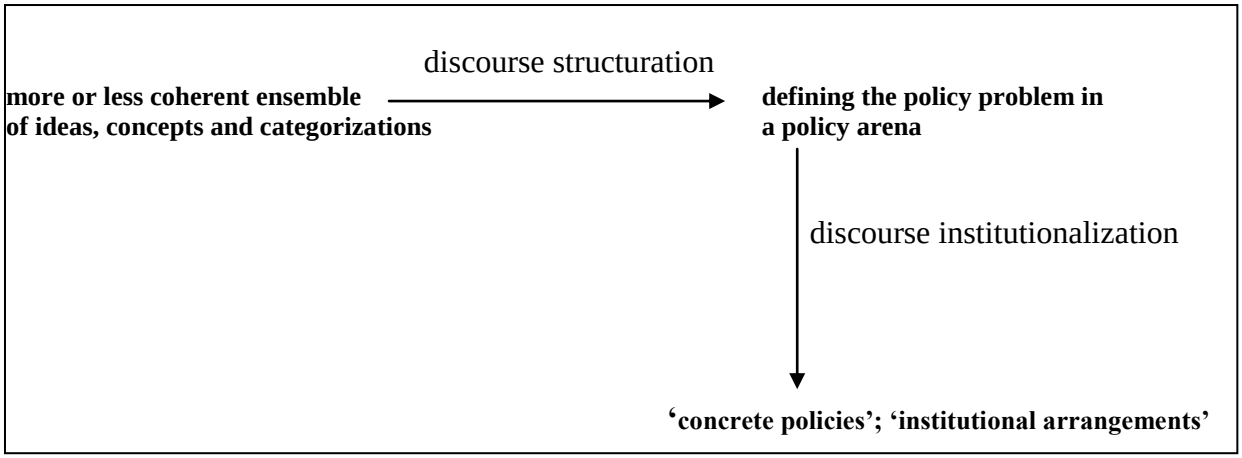


Figure 2

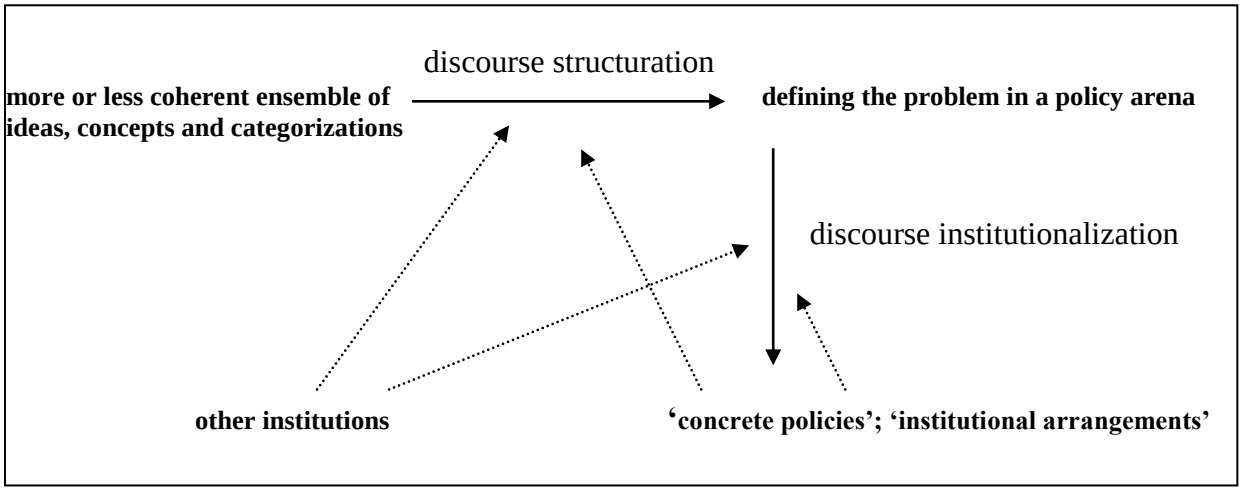


figure 3

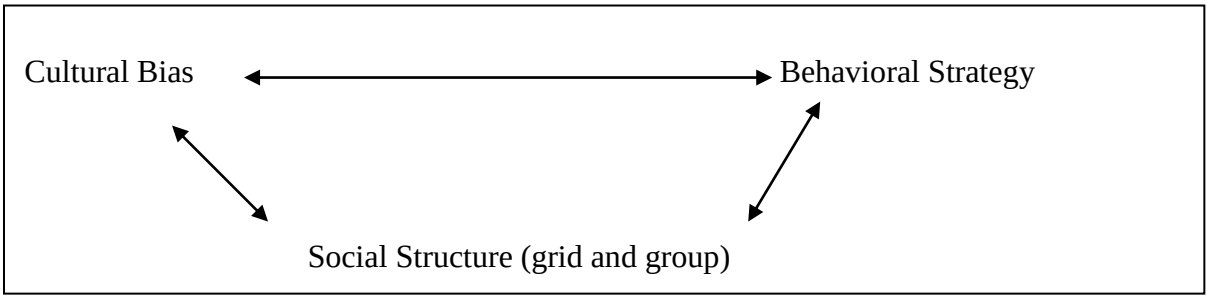
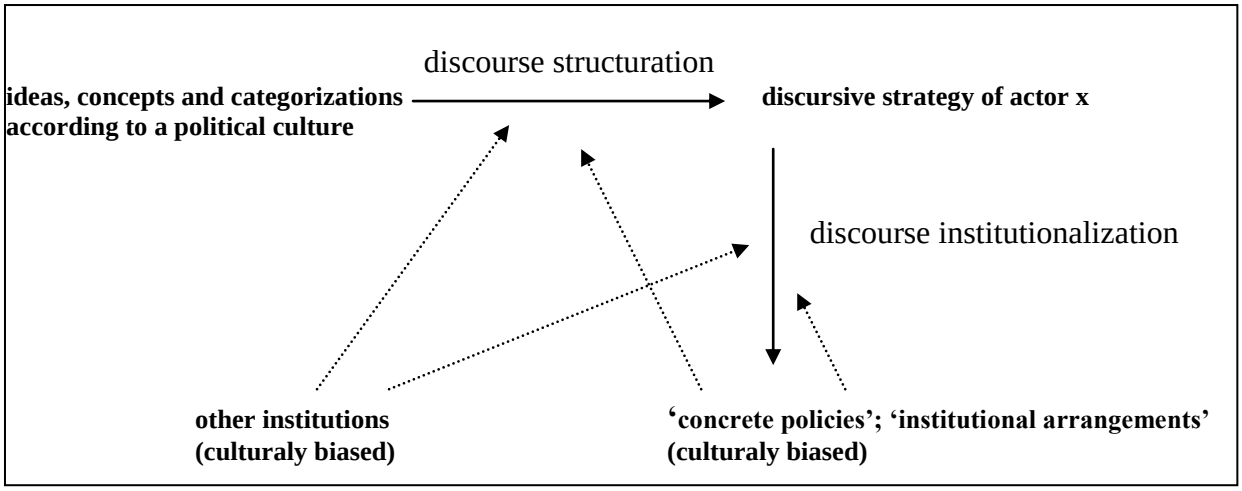


figure 4


discourse structuration
ideas, concepts and categorizations according to a political culture
discursive strategy of actor x
discourse institutionalization
other institutions (culturaly biased)
'concrete policies'; 'institutional arrangements' (culturaly biased)