Picturing generosity. Explaining success of national campaigns in the Netherlands

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Picturing generosity: Explaining the success of national campaigns in the Netherlands

Abstract (148 words)

In this study we investigate the success of national campaigns for charitable causes in the Netherlands using historical data from archival sources, including newspapers, and the internet. Firstly we describe the 102 national campaigns held in the Netherlands between 1951 and 2011, focusing on uniquely Dutch contextual features such as a society organized along vertical pillars and highly formalized collaboration between international aid organizations. We then formulate and test hypotheses concerning possible explanations for the success of national campaigns as a specific type of fundraising campaign. We focus on the effect of campaigns organized for "innocent" victims, versus campaigns organized for victims of man-made disasters, the effect of media coverage on campaigns, campaign frequency, government contributions, and economic conditions. The results show that campaigns for victims of man-made disasters are less successful. Campaigns organized in periods of fewer competing campaigns and campaigns receiving government support are more successful.

Keywords: philanthropy; national campaigns; giving; fundraising

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Introduction

National campaigns for charitable causes have blossomed over the past decades in the Netherlands. Virtually absent before World War II, after 1951 they increased in number and outreach, sometimes perhaps to the point of campaign fatigue, when the average television viewer could be sure to expect several appeals to his or her charitableness every year. In this study, we investigate the success of national campaigns for charitable causes in the Netherlands between 1951 and 2011. We first sketch a brief history of those campaigns, during a period which saw the strong decline of "pillarization" – the division of society along vertical "pillars", based on religious or other ideologies – and the concomitant rise of a national audience – and market – for these campaigns. Next, we formulate and test generic hypotheses to explain the success of national campaigns (see also Van Leeuwen and Wiepking, forthcoming, the introduction to this symposium). These generic hypotheses can be thought to explain the success of fundraising campaigns across the Western world, and were derived from the interdisciplinary literature on national campaigns. We formulate hypotheses on the effect of campaigns organized for "innocent" victims, media coverage of campaigns, the effect of the number of campaigns organized during the same period, government contributions to national campaigns, and the effect of the general economic situation. We test the hypotheses with information on 102 national campaigns organized in the Netherlands between 1951 and 2011. In line with all other articles in this symposium, we define a national campaign as a fundraising instrument to raise money for nonprofit organizations supporting one particular charitable cause, which can range from patients suffering from muscular dystrophy to victims of a natural disaster such as the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004. The key characteristic of a national fundraising campaign is its extensive

coverage in the national broadcast and entertainment media, which makes it possible to solicit donations from all people living in the donor country, in this case the Netherlands. Examples are telethons, benefit concerts, and charitable lotteries.

A brief history of national campaigns in the Netherlands

It is especially interesting to study national campaigns in the Netherlands during the second half of the twentieth century, as during that period Dutch society and the nonprofit sector went through changes that can provide unique insights into the success of fundraising campaigns. The first national campaigns in the Netherlands soliciting donations countrywide were organized around 1951, in a country that was still rebuilding after World War II. Dutch society at that time was divided vertically along "pillars". The Dutch belonged to either the Roman Catholic, Protestant, social democratic, or liberal pillar. Each of those four pillars had its own political party, broadcasting association, and social organizations, such as sport clubs and leisure associations (Bax, 1988). The social distance between those different pillars was large, and individuals from one pillar socialized less often with those from another pillar. Because the early national campaigns in the Netherlands took place in a strongly pillarized society, these campaigns were not as "national" as the term might suggest. For example, the Dutch listened predominantly to the programs broadcast by radio broadcasters affiliated with their own pillar.

When the first national campaign *Haak-in* [Link Arms] was organized in 1951 by the Dutch Christian Radio Association [Nederlandse Christelijke Radio Vereniging, NCRV], it thus reached mainly those belonging to the Protestant pillar. Pillarization was a recurring pattern during the 1950s and 1960s, nicely illustrated by one of the more famous Dutch campaigns: *Open het dorp* [Open the Village]. The aim of this campaign was to build a specially designed village for disabled adults who had completed a process of rehabilitation.

In November 1962, a 23-hour-long television marathon was broadcast by the secular AVRO broadcasting company [Algemene Vereniging Radio Omroep, General Radio Broadcasting Association]. This telethon ultimately raised 52 million euros.[1] The Dutch were asked to hand in matchboxes filled with money that they had raised at post offices or supermarkets (Constant, 1993; Dietz, 1999). A survey conducted among the Dutch public showed that in total, 89 per cent of Dutch households donated to *Open het dorp* in 1962. Fifty-two per cent did this using the matchbox (authors' calculations based on the *Open het dorp* dataset, NIWI/DANS, 1962). One of the most striking results of the survey is the low level of willingness to give among Protestants. Protestants were up to 60 per cent less likely to give to *Open het dorp* than those with a different religious affiliation or no affiliation at all, even when controlling for background characteristics such as age, income, education, and size of municipality. This is striking because Protestants have traditionally been generous donors to charitable causes in the Netherlands (Bekkers & Schuyt, 2008; Wiepking & Bekkers, 2010); they were just not willing to contribute to a secular campaign in the 1960s.

The concept according to which the first Dutch campaigns, such as *Open het dorp*, were organized in the 1950s and 1960s turned out to be a huge success. Typically, these early campaigns took the form of grand galas, where a celebrity would host a show full of amusement. During these shows many other celebrities and artists would perform, occasionally interrupted by listeners or viewers and companies making an appearance to pledge donations. The radio public was kept informed at regular intervals of the amount pledged so far and encouraged to donate more, so that the "target figure" could be achieved. The first national Dutch television broadcast was transmitted in 1951, and since the mid-1950s national campaigns for charitable causes have increasingly been broadcast on television rather than radio.

From the early 1950s to the late 1970s, national campaigns were organized at regular intervals, usually one or two a year, using the same grand gala format. These campaigns varied widely in terms of cause: from *Geven voor leven* [Give for Life] for children with cancer, to *Geef gezondheid* [Give Health] for health care in developing countries. However, these national campaigns in the form of television galas were costly affairs, and during the economic downturn of the late 1970s and early 1980s their frequency declined sharply.

In 1983, however, a humanitarian disaster in the Horn of Africa slowly marked the end of the "campaignless" period. As a result of periods of extreme drought, between two and three million people died of hunger. Campaigns were initiated on a worldwide scale, including Band Aid in 1984, which culminated in the Live Aid concerts in London and Philadelphia in 1985. In the Netherlands this famine led to the *Eén voor Afrika* [One for Africa] campaign in 1984. It marked an important point in the history of national campaigns in the Netherlands and its success formed the start of a long-term collaboration between various international aid organizations representing all pillars, united in the Dutch Cooperative International Aid Organizations [Samenwerkende Hulporganisaties, SHO]. The SHO can be seen as a response to the emerging need of the media and the public for closer collaboration and greater effectiveness in disaster response and international relief. As a result of the SHO's emergence as an initiator of national campaigns, the format for national campaigns for charitable causes in the Netherlands changed. The national SHO campaigns provided more room for "infotainment", with the audience being informed about the cause or the beneficiaries for which the campaign had been organized. Apart from such infotainment, however, the shows continued to include ample entertainment: Dutch celebrities filled the screens while appealing to the audience to donate. Another phenomenon that arose in connection with the SHO campaigns was government support for national campaigns. Until the 1980s the Dutch government rarely contributed public funding to national campaigns;

after the emergence of the SHO there was a sharp rise in government contributions to national campaigns, and this continues to the present. It is likely that the already strong relationship between the international relief organizations comprising the SHO and the Dutch government spurred these contributions. Today, the SHO is still the major Dutch fundraising organization for victims of international disasters.

In addition to the SHO campaigns, there was one other successful recurring campaign organized in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Interestingly this is a radio campaign, as were the first campaigns in the Netherlands organized in the early 1950s. In 2004 the 3FM broadcasting station and the Dutch Red Cross joined forces to organize "Serious Request", a annual radio marathon campaign organized during the last week before Christmas. Serious Request is similar to the *Radiohjälpen* campaign discussed in the article on national campaigns in Sweden in this symposium (***). Donations are solicited using various types of media, including social media, but the focal point of the Serious Request campaigns are three radio disc jockeys, who broadcast for five days from a glass house in the central square of a Dutch town; the town selected varies from year to year. Individuals can make requests for songs to be played on the radio, in return for a donation. They are also encouraged to organize their own campaigns, and many of them come to the glass house to personally present the money they have raised.

It is interesting to note that between 1999 and 2011 very few other national campaigns were conducted that were not affiliated to the SHO or Serious Request: two examples are the *Vuurwerkdisaster Enschede* [Enschede Fireworks Disaster] by the Nationaal Rampenfonds [National Disaster Fund] (2000, 21 million euros), and *Nationale Actie Volendam* [National Volendam Campaign], for the victims of the New Year's Day fire in Volendam (2001, 1 million euros). Charitable causes are given ample exposure on Dutch television – for

example, in game shows involving various lotteries for charitable causes – but rarely in the form of a one-off national campaign, as was frequent in the early years of Dutch television.

Explanations for the success of national campaigns

Having sketched a brief history and background to Dutch charitable campaigns, we now focus on formulating testable propositions on what makes some campaigns more successful than others. These testable propositions were derived from the interdisciplinary literature on national campaigns. In the next section we will formulate hypotheses on the effect of campaigns organized for "innocent" victims, the effect of media coverage on campaigns, of the number of campaigns organized during the same period, of government contributions to national campaigns, and the effect of the general economic situation.

The innocent victim

From the socio-psychological literature, we know that people are more likely to help others if those others are not (or hardly) to blame for their neediness. As Miller says: "If people witness undeserved suffering, they will be motivated to re-establish 'justice'" (Miller, 1977: 144). Victims who are considered to bear the blame for their pitiable situation will be less likely to be helped than people who, in total innocence, find themselves in a specific situation of neediness (Bennett & Kottasz, 2000). Examples of those generally deemed to be in need through no fault of their own are victims of a natural disaster or famine, and children. On the other hand, it is often thought that victims of man-made disasters (including wars) are to blame in some way for their misfortune (Meijer, Bekkers, & Schuyt, 2005; see also Van Leeuwen, 2000; 2012). We formulate hypothesis 1:

H1: Campaigns organized for victims of man-made disasters (including wars) are less successful than other campaigns, while campaigns to help victims of a natural disaster or a famine are more successful than other campaigns.

Media coverage

Some disasters or targets have a greater potential to attract funds than others. One needs to be aware of a national campaign and the cause for which it is raising funds in order to be able to make a donation (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011). Media coverage can raise that awareness. The greater the media coverage of a cause and its campaign, the greater the chances of potential donors becoming aware of the campaign.

Bennett and Kottasz "[…] underscore the critical role of television in determining whether an appeal will be successful. It is the mass media that decide which disasters are to be covered and the natures of the images of the victims and the circumstances of a disaster that are to be projected" (Bennett & Kottasz, 2000: 258). Greater media coverage increases the likelihood of people being aware of the cause for which the campaign raises funds, and thus increases the likelihood of more being donated (Simon, 1997). We formulate hypothesis 2a:

H2a: The greater the number of individuals who watch or listen to coverage of a national campaign, the greater the success of that campaign.

It is also likely that campaigns that receive more airtime reach more people, and are consequently more successful than other campaigns. Therefore we also formulate hypothesis 2b:

H2b: The longer the duration of the broadcast of a national campaign, the greater the success of that campaign.

Furthermore, it is likely that the audience's appreciation of a broadcast campaign show relates positively to the fundraising success of that campaign. The more people value a show, the more they will be willing to contribute. We formulate hypothesis 2c:

H2c: The more people appreciate a campaign show, the greater the success of that campaign.

Individuals are more likely to watch or listen to a national campaign if that campaign and the cause for which funds are raised receive a higher level of media coverage. According to Adams (1986) and Meijer, Bekkers, and Schuyt (2005), the degree of media coverage given to a cause is determined by the news value of this cause. The **news value of a cause** itself is influenced by two factors: **the number of victims** or beneficiaries, and **the distance to the cause**.

The **number of victims**, fatal or otherwise, of, for example, a disaster gives an indication of the scale of the disaster (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011). A larger scale has a positive influence on the news value (Simon, 1997). This argument does not always hold true, however, since in the past it was often not possible to establish the number of fatalities until weeks or even months after the disaster itself. Adams (1986) shows that there are often great differences between the preliminary estimates of the number killed in an earthquake and the final number of "official" fatalities. An example is the earthquake in China in 1976. The first estimates mentioned 100,000 fatalities, while the subsequent official figure was 800,000. Current

information technology makes it possible for experts to determine with a fair degree of accuracy, and relatively quickly, the number of victims in need of support in most locations in the world. We formulate hypothesis 3:

H3: The greater the number of victims or beneficiaries for which a campaign is organized, the greater the media coverage the campaign receives and the greater the success of that campaign.

In addition to the number of victims, the **distance to the disaster or cause** is important in determining its news value. This distance takes two forms: geographical and social (or cultural). When the geographical distance is short, information about the disaster and the number of fatalities can reach the public more quickly and with a greater degree of reliability. Additionally, the news value is determined by social or cultural distance. According to Adams (1986), the annual number of American tourists in an area is the most influential factor in determining the amount of airtime a disaster in that area gets on American television. Rosenblum says – in response to the relatively high level of American media coverage given in 1976 following an earthquake in Italy (the official death toll was 946; the initial estimate was 1,000 deaths) compared with the little media coverage given to an earthquake in Guatemala (the official death toll was 22,778; the initial estimate was 5,200 deaths) – about tourism as a yardstick for the social and cultural distance to an area:

"[It occurs] partially because Italy is easier to cover than Guatemala, and more reporters are immediately available. But it is mainly because Italians are seen as individuals, with physical and cultural characteristics familiar to Americans. Many editors and readers have been to Italy, and they recognize place names in the stories. Guatemalans are seen, on the other hand,

only as faceless residents of the underdeveloped world" (Rosenblum, 1981, in Adams, 1986:120).

The social or cultural distance to a disaster area can also be reduced if an area is in the news more frequently. People become familiar with an area and its inhabitants. In the words of Rosenblum: "People get a face". The social or cultural distance to a disaster area can also be reduced through similarity between donors and beneficiaries, for example through similarity in religious affiliation. We formulate hypothesis 4:

H4: The shorter the geographical and social distance is to victims or beneficiaries for which a campaign is organized, the greater the media coverage the campaign receives and the greater the success of that campaign.

Campaign fatigue

In some periods, there is an overabundance of national campaigns for charitable causes. This influences the success of these campaigns. Both the media and potential donors become tired of national campaigns. The SHO has a name for this: "campaign fatigue" or "campaign inflation" (van Asbeck, 1999). "Campaign fatigue" kicks in when an audience becomes overtired with the national campaigns, and resembles the "compassion fatigue", when the public has become "overtired" with regard to social problems, referred to in the communication science literature (Kinnick, Krugman, & Cameron, 1996). According to Kinnick, Krugman, and Cameron (1996) the major cause of compassion fatigue is constant media coverage of the same subject. This leads to a normalization of social problems. People are no longer surprised that certain problems exist. And when they are confronted with these problems, they no longer elicit a compassionate emotional response.

Compassion fatigue can also occur in response to national campaigns. When too many campaigns are organized in too short a period, the audience can become indifferent to those campaigns and experience campaign fatigue. In the Netherlands, the establishment of the SHO in the 1980s led to a large increase in the number of national campaigns. We assume this has implications for the willingness to donate, and in turn for the amount raised during national campaigns. We formulate hypothesis 5:

H5: The higher the campaign frequency, the more likely individuals are to experience campaign fatigue and the less successful a campaign will be.

Government contributions

In the Netherlands, it is very common for the government to contribute public funds, raised through taxes, to national campaigns. Campaigns for victims of natural disasters in particular are often supported not only by private philanthropic donations but also by public funds, donated by national and/or local governments. There is a rich economic literature discussing the effect of government contributions on private giving (e.g., Abrams & Schmitz, 1984; Glazer & Konrad, 1986; Horne, Johnson, & Van Slyke, 2005; Steinberg, 1991). Classical economic models of public goods imply that government provision of public goods crowd out private contributions (Andreoni, 1988). When governments provide public goods, there is less need for private charitable donations, and hence individual rational actors will, in theory, decrease their donations. Classical economic theory thus predicts that private donations will be crowded out by government grants. However, there are a few conditions that need to be met for private donations to be crowded out by public money.

First of all, people need to be aware of the government grants in order to reduce their own donations accordingly. Often, the public does not know about those grants, and hence

cannot respond to these contributions (Horne, Johnson, & Van Slyke, 2005). Secondly, the timing of a government decision on providing a grant is important. Only if the government decides to provide a grant and communicates this at the start of a fundraising campaign can this affect the response of private donors. Thirdly, according to economic theory, only donors motivated by "pure altruism" adjust their giving to the donations of others, including the government. The sole reason a pure altruist donates is the creation of a public good, in this case the cause the national campaign is raising funds for. If the government provides a grant to create that public good, the donor motivated by pure altruism will lower their donation, because a larger part of the public good will already have been created by government funds. The pure altruist does not care about his or her own contribution to the public good, in contrast to the impure altruist, who, for example, cares also about the positive feelings he experiences when making a donation (feelings of a warm glow) and about the reputation effects that come with making a donation (Andreoni, 1990; Harbaugh, 1998).

Government grants to international causes, for which many national campaigns raise funds, are an even more complex phenomenon than government grants to charitable causes in general. Not only do *Dutch* private donors and the *Dutch* government contribute to international causes, those from other countries support them too. Thus, when deciding whether and how much to give, the pure altruist needs to take into account all the donations made by private donors and governments from other countries as well.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, empirical studies have rarely provided support for a crowding-out effect. Studies find at best just a partial crowding-out effect (Brooks, 1999). In the case of government grants to national campaigns, we argue that there might be two opposing effects of government grants on the amount raised in a national campaign through private donations by the public. On the one hand, in line with the crowding-out hypothesis, direct government grants to international relief organizations lower the need for these

organizations to solicit private donations from citizens. Lower levels of fundraising will limit public awareness of the needs of beneficiaries. And if citizens are unaware of the beneficiaries' needs, fewer and lower levels of private donations will be made (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011). Another argument in support of the crowding-out hypothesis is the classical economic thesis that people behaving purely altruistically may consider government funding an alternative source of funding, which removes the need for private contributions. Hence, we formulate hypothesis 6a:

H6a: Private giving to the victims of natural disasters decreases with the level of government grants.

We might also expect a crowding-in effect from government grants. First, government grants increase the total budget of charitable organizations, providing these organizations with greater financial means which they can then choose to spend on fundraising, creating awareness of beneficiaries' needs. Increased fundraising and the creation of awareness will result in an increase in private donations, and hence a crowding-in effect (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011). A second argument in support of a crowding-in effect is that government grants to charitable organizations can act as a signal that the charitable organization receiving funding is reputable (Salamon & Anheier, 1998). Private donors look for guarantees that their donation will reach the intended beneficiaries and will be spent as effectively as possible (Bekkers, 2003). Signals displayed by charitable organizations to facilitate trust include accreditation seals and celebrity ambassadors, but also government funding can be viewed as a sign of trustworthiness. People may feel that when the government trusts an organization enough to provide a grant, they can trust this organization as well. Based on these arguments, we formulate the competing hypothesis 6b:

H6b: Private giving to the victims of natural disasters increases with the level of government grants.

In the Netherlands, government contributions to national campaigns strongly increased with the emergence of the SHO in the 1980s. This increase in government grants will enable us to test the relationship between government grants to national campaigns for charitable causes and the success of these national campaigns.

Economy

A final explanation for the success (or lack of it) of some national campaigns can be found in the economic situation in the donor country, in this case the Netherlands. People need financial resources in order to make charitable donations (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011). Furthermore, research shows that not only are absolute financial resources important for making donations, the perception individuals have about their financial situation also influences the level of their donations. If citizens feel their financial situation is secure and will continue to be secure, they will be inclined to give more and more often to charitable organizations (Schervish, 2005; Wiepking & Breeze, 2012). If an economy is stagnating or in recession, people will be more concerned with their own financial situation and less inclined to make donations (Breeze & Morgan, 2009), in this case to national campaigns. At the same time, organizers of national campaigns, such as the broadcasting companies, production companies, and charitable organizations, will also have fewer financial options, and they will therefore invest minimally in large-scale national campaigns during such periods. Between 1951 and 2011, the Netherlands went through several periods of economic stagnation (in

2002-2003 for instance) and recession (in 1958, 1981-1982, and 2009). We formulate hypothesis 7:

H7: A higher rate of economic growth in a certain period leads to more successful national campaigns in that period.

Data and methods

National campaigns in response to disasters, for example natural disasters such as flooding and earthquakes, or famines and wars, have been documented by the SHO, and we consulted this documentation. Information on other campaigns has been gathered by consulting the archives of the seven main Dutch national daily newspapers.[2] For some newspapers, online archives can be searched for the period 1990 onwards (LexisNexis, 2006). We performed searches of these online archives using the keywords "*nationale actie*" [national campaign], "*goed doel*" [charitable cause], and "*televisie*" (television), since the majority of national campaigns are linked to a television broadcast.

The search in the SHO documentation and the archives of the seven Dutch national daily newspapers led to the identification of 102 national campaigns held between 1951 and 2011. Then, using the names of the national campaigns, we searched the Internet (using Google) and the online and offline archives of Dutch daily newspapers for additional information on these campaigns, such as the amounts raised, the number of fatalities, and government contributions. In the same manner, we also retrieved more information for each national campaign about the nature of the charitable cause in question.

The donor information pertaining to the national campaign *Open het dorp* mentioned in the theory section of this article was made available by Data Archiving and Networked Services (DANS) in the Netherlands. The data were originally collected by TNS NIPO. In

November 1962, immediately after the 23-hour-long marathon *Open het dorp* broadcast, 1,023 respondents were asked to indicate how much they had appreciated the national campaign and about their donation to *Open het dorp* (NIWI/DANS, 1962). Data on media coverage of national campaigns were obtained from the archive of Stichting Kijkonderzoek [Foundation for Viewing Research, SKO] as well as from the archive of the Nederlands Instituut voor Beeld en Geluid [Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision].

Funds raised by campaigns

We operationalized the success of national campaigns for charitable causes as the total amount donated by the public during the campaign. All amounts have been converted to 2005 prices using the Consumer Price Index (CPI) published by Statistics Netherlands (CBS, 2011a). The amounts raised by the campaigns are strongly right-skewed, and that is why we use the natural logarithm of the amounts raised. There is one extreme value, namely the amount raised by the *Hulp aan Azië* campaign for the victims of the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004: 203 million euros. As it biases the results, it was excluded from the analyses.

Predictor variables

For each campaign, we indicated whether it raised money for *victims of man-made disasters*, *natural disasters*, or *famines*. [3] In total there were 25 campaigns for victims of man-made disasters, including campaigns for the victims of war in Rwanda (1994), Iraq (1991), and Kosovo (1999). In recent decades, there have been 29 campaigns in the Netherlands for victims of national and international natural disasters. Examples include campaigns for victims of flooding in the Netherlands (1993, 1995), flooding in Bangladesh (1988, 1991, 1998), cyclone Mitch in Central America (1998), the Indian Ocean tsunami (2004), and an

earthquake in Haiti (2010). There have been 11 campaigns for victims of famine, most for the Horn of Africa (1984, 1987, 1990, 1992, 1995, 2011).

Another variable used was the *number of viewers* in millions (Peeters, Jager, & Kalfs, 2005). The data were obtained from the archive of Stichting Kijkonderzoek. This archive dates back to 1966. For the national campaigns held prior to 1966 (N=4), no viewing or listening figures are known. It was possible to establish viewing figures for a total of 33 campaigns using the archive. In some cases, it was difficult to find records relating to campaigns in the archive. This was because the title of the television program as registered in the archive did not always match the name of the national campaign. Additionally, the titles of the television programs in the archive were abbreviated to a maximum of 40 characters. For various sets of campaigns, it was possible to retrieve additional indicators for the amount of media coverage campaigns received. For 38 campaigns, we found information on the *duration* (length) of the campaign show in minutes, which can also be considered an indicator of media coverage. The average campaign show lasted 191 minutes. We also found information on viewer *appreciation* of the campaign show for 25 campaigns. Appreciation was measured on a scale of 0 to 100, the average level of appreciation being 74.

According to Adams (1986) and Meijer, Bekkers, and Schuyt (2005), the degree of media coverage given to a disaster is determined by the news value of a particular disaster. The news value of a disaster itself is influenced by two factors: the number of victims, and the distance to the disaster or target. The number of victims or beneficiaries for whom a campaign is held is difficult to operationalize. We have chosen to use the number of *fatalities* (in tens of thousands), in preference to the number of wounded or the number of beneficiaries. Simon (1997) has shown that the number of fatalities is more important for predicting media coverage than the number of wounded. Determining the number of beneficiaries of a campaign is often an extremely complex and tenuous exercise. It is, for

example, impossible to determine the number of beneficiaries of campaigns such as *Geven voor leven* [Give for Life] organized by KWF Kankerbestrijding [Dutch Cancer Fund] in 1974 or *Geef om de natuur* [Give for Nature] organized by the Wereld Natuur Fonds [the Dutch chapter of the World Wildlife Fund] in 1977. Where different sources gave conflicting estimates of the number of fatalities, we selected the most objective source where possible, for final rather than initial numbers of fatalities. In the end, we were able to establish the number of fatalities for 68 campaigns.

The *geographical distance* (in thousands of kilometers) from the Netherlands to a disaster or cause for which a campaign was organized was also used. When a campaign was for a Dutch target, the distance was recorded as 0. We realize that this geographical distance only partially captures the social distance to the country or the cause for which a campaign was organized. However, the geographical distance can be measured objectively, and we assume that the geographical and the social distance are highly correlated.

We assume that a higher *campaign frequency* leads to stronger campaign fatigue, which in turn results in less successful campaigns. We determined campaign frequency based on the number of campaigns held in the twelve months prior to the corresponding campaign. On average, two other campaigns were held during those twelve months. *Government contributions* to a campaign were transformed to the natural log of government contributions, in millions of euros at 2005 prices, and we were able to track these contributions for 66 campaigns.

We used the proportional volume movements in Gross Domestic Product as an indicator for *economic growth* in the year in which a campaign was held (CBS, 2011b). Table 1 provides an overview of the descriptive statistics of the variables.

<<Insert Table 1 about here>>

Methods

We tested the hypotheses by comparing the amount raised in national campaigns across groups using independent t-tests for categorical predictor variables. For continuous predictor variables we use correlations to examine the relationships with the natural log of the amount raised in national campaigns.

Results

A total of 102 national charitable campaigns in the Netherlands have been identified for the period 1951 to 2011. We were able to trace the amounts donated to 84 of those campaigns. Figure 1 illustrates these campaigns by year and amount raised in millions of euro. The campaigns are classified into ten possible causes, from campaigns to support the disabled and the sick in the Netherlands to campaigns for victims of international disasters.

<<Insert Figure 1 about here>>

Using independent t-tests, we compared the amounts raised by campaigns for *victims of man-made disasters*, *natural disasters*, and *famines* with the amounts raised for all other types of campaign.[4] Campaigns for victims of man-made disasters raised an average of 9.7 million euros, compared with 16.5 million euros by all other campaigns ($t(56.9)=1.66$, $p_{(one\text{-}sided)}=.051$). This finding is in support of the first part of hypothesis 1: Campaigns organized for victims of man-made disasters (including wars) are less successful than other campaigns. The results did not support the second part of hypothesis 1. Although campaigns organized for "innocent" famine victims tended to raise more than all other campaigns (campaigns not for famine victims) – 22.5 million euros as against 13.6 million euros – this difference was

not significant at the ten per cent level (t(81)=-1.28, $p_{(one\text{-}sided)}$=.103). We also found no significant difference in the amount raised by campaigns organized for "innocent victims" of natural disasters (15.3 million euros) and other types of campaign (14.3 million euros) (t(81)=-.216, $p_{(one\text{-}sided)}$=.415).

<<Insert Table 2 about here>>

In Table 2 we show the correlation between the continuous characteristics of campaigns (such as campaign frequency and economic growth) hypothesized to predict the success of campaigns and the natural log of the amounts raised by national campaigns. We first evaluate the relationship with the three indicators of media coverage: number of viewers, duration of the campaign show, and appreciation of the campaign show. We find no relationship between the number of viewers of a campaign show and the amount raised for that campaign (r=.120, N=26, $p_{(one\text{-}sided)}$=.280). However, we do find that the total duration of the campaign show (r=.427, N=29, $p_{(one\text{-}sided)}$=.010) is positively related to the funds raised for that campaign. We thus find no support for hypothesis 2a, but the results are supportive of hypothesis 2b: the number of viewers of a campaign show is not positively related to campaign success, but the duration of a campaign show is. We also find that the appreciation of the campaign show (r=.431, N=19, $p_{(one\text{-}sided)}$=.033) is positively related to the amount raised for a campaign, supporting hypothesis 2c.

In hypotheses 3 and 4, we argued that the news value of a disaster is influenced by the number of fatalities and the distance to the disaster or target, which both influence campaign success. The correlations in Table 2 do not support hypothesis 3: the data show no relationship between the number of fatalities and the number of people who watched the campaign show (r=.058, N=20, $p_{(one\text{-}sided)}$=.404). The data do partly support hypothesis 4: the

greater the geographical distance between the Netherlands and the locus of the cause for which funds are being raised, the lower the number of people who watched the campaign show (r=-.447, N=31, $p_{(one\text{-}sided)}$=.006). However, as already noted, the data show no relationship between the number of people watching a campaign show and the success of a campaign. The relationships between geographical distance and the duration of a campaign show (r=-.219, N=35, $p_{(one\text{-}sided)}$=.103) and between geographical distance and the appreciation of a campaign show (r=-.144, N=23, $p_{(one\text{-}sided)}$=.256) are also both negative, though not significant. In relation to hypotheses 3 and 4, it is interesting to note that the data show no direct relationship between the number of fatalities and the amount raised in a campaign (r=-.034, N=59, $p_{(one\text{-}sided)}$=.398) nor between geographical distance and the amount raised in a campaign (r=.006, N=76, $p_{(one\text{-}sided)}$=.480).

In hypothesis 5 we argued that the higher the campaign frequency, the more likely the population will experience campaign fatigue, and the lower will be the amount raised for a campaign. There is a negative correlation between the number of campaigns organized preceding a campaign and the amount donated to that campaign, but this relationship is only just significant at the ten per cent level (r=-.148, N=83, $p_{(one\text{-}sided)}$=.091). Another interesting result in Table 2 is the strong significant negative relationship between the number of viewers and the campaign frequency (r=-.369, N=32, $p_{(one\text{-}sided)}$=.019). Although we cannot say anything about causality based on these results, a higher campaign frequency might cause viewing figures to decrease. When more campaigns are broadcast in a certain period, people might experience campaign fatigue and be less inclined to watch subsequent campaigns.

We argued that, theoretically, there could be either a positive or a negative relationship between government contributions to national campaigns and campaign success. We find a positive relationship between government contributions and the amount donated to campaigns, suggesting a crowding-in effect, supporting hypothesis 6b (r=.360, N=65, $p_{(one\text{-}}$

$_{sided)}$=.002) and not hypothesis 6a. However, note that based on these data we cannot make any statements about the causality of this relationship. Finally, we find no support for hypothesis 7. Although the relationship between economic growth and campaign success is positive, as expected, there is no significant relationship between economic growth during the period of a campaign and the amount of money raised by that campaign (r=.133, N=83, $p_{(one-sided)}$=.116).

Conclusion and discussion

In this study we have provided an overview of national campaigns for charitable causes in the Netherlands. In the first part of this article we described how societal developments such as the pillarized nature of Dutch society in the 1950s and 1960s, the highly formalized collaboration between international aid organizations through the SHO, and increased government support for national campaigns influenced the development of national campaigns as a fundraising instrument for charitable causes in the Netherlands between 1951 and 2011. In addition to providing an overview of the development of the national campaigns for charitable causes organized in the Netherlands, this study also tested generic theoretical explanations for the success of national campaigns as a fundraising instrument. These theoretical explanations are not context specific and arguably operate not only in the Netherlands but also in other Western countries. Testing these has provided useful insights into factors explaining the success of fundraising campaigns in general, and not only in the case of national campaigns. So how can we explain why some campaigns were much more successful than others?

Before answering this question, let us make a caveat. Tracing the 102 Dutch national campaigns between 1951 and 2011 and their different characteristics proved to be very difficult and time consuming. We were unable to find complete information for many of the

characteristics being studied. Most importantly, we were able to find data on amounts raised in national campaigns for just 84 campaigns, and for other campaign characteristics we were able to trace information for just 25 campaigns in some cases (viewers' appreciation of the campaign show for example). It is possible that information on other campaigns could change the outcome of this study. It is also likely that the missing campaign characteristics are not missing at random, but that smaller, less successful campaigns in particular were harder to trace, leading to a bias towards larger and more successful campaigns.

When it comes to campaign characteristics, the results in this study partially support the "innocent victim" hypothesis. This hypothesis states that people will tend to help others more readily when those others cannot be blamed for their distress (Bennett & Kottasz, 2000; Miller, 1977). Campaigns for victims of man-made disasters, including wars, were found to raise significantly lower amounts than other types of campaigns. People often think that victims of man-made disasters are to blame in some way for their misfortune. However, the finding that campaigns for victims of famines or natural disasters, which are often perceived as innocent victims, are no more successful than other campaigns does not support this hypothesis.

To make a donation to a national campaign, people have to be aware of the need for donations and know of the opportunity to give (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011). We have argued that greater media coverage of a campaign will result in more people watching the campaign show and consequently more people being aware of the need to donate, as well as being more aware of how to give. For those campaigns for which we were able to trace both viewing figures and the amount raised (N=26), we found no relationship between the number of people who watched a campaign show and the amount raised in that campaign. We did find a positive relationship between the duration of a campaign show and the amount raised by that campaign as well as viewer appreciation of a campaign show and the amount raised by that

campaign. All these results are based on a very small and probably selective sample[5] of campaigns and therefore need to be interpreted with great care. Also, it is possible that campaigns that were already relatively successful before the campaign show was broadcasted were given more broadcast time than campaigns that had not yet proven to be a success, indicating reversed causality.

Following Adams (1986) and Meijer, Bekkers, and Schuyt (2005), we argued that the news value of a national campaign is predicted by the number of fatalities and the distance to a cause. We found a negative relationship between the geographical distance between the Netherlands and the locus of the cause for which funds were being raised and the number of viewers watching the campaign show. The larger the geographical distance, the fewer people watched a campaign show. We also found a negative relationship between geographical distance and the duration of a campaign show and between geographical distance and viewer appreciation of a campaign show, though these relationships were not significant. We found no relationship between the number of fatalities and the indicators of news value. Geographical distance was used as an indicator of both the physical and social distance between donors and beneficiaries of a fundraising campaign. A shorter geographical distance facilitates easier, faster, and more reliable news coverage, increasing the news value. The social or cultural distance to the beneficiaries of a campaign too influences the news value, giving "people a face". According to Rosenblum (1981, in Adams, 1986) and Adams (1986), people are more inclined to see victims of a disaster or other beneficiaries of a campaign as individuals like themselves, and experience emotions of empathy and concern, if the social or cultural distance is smaller. We have argued that geographical distance can also be used as an indicator of social or cultural distance, as people living closer to each other will be more familiar with their respective cultures. However, it is very likely that the news value of national campaigns is influenced by other aspects of social distance in addition to

geographical distance. Perhaps the religious similarities between donors and the beneficiaries of a national campaign are relevant as well. Although the Dutch are increasingly secular, the most common religious affiliation is with Christianity (CIA, 2012). Additional analyses of the data showed no relationship between the success of a national campaign in the Netherlands and whether the beneficiaries of a campaign were predominantly Christian, Muslim, or affiliated with an eastern religion such as Buddhism or Hinduism (results available from the authors). Interestingly, the size of the Muslim population in the Netherlands rose from 0.4 per cent in 1971 to 5.8 per cent in 2004 (CBS, 2012). That same period also saw an increase in the number of campaigns organized for beneficiaries in Islamic countries, especially in the period 1980 to 2000. One likely explanation for this, however, is the emergence of the SHO during this period; the SHO focuses on victims of natural disasters, of which several occurred in Islamic countries in those years.

It is possible that other aspects of social distance to beneficiaries of a campaign do influence media coverage, such as the number of Dutch tourists in an area for which a campaign is organized, as argued by Adams (1986). We attempted to collect information on the relevant number of Dutch tourists, but this proved too difficult.

"Campaign fatigue" is the phenomenon whereby people become overtired with national campaigns, and it resembles the "compassion fatigue" referred to in the communication science literature (Kinnick, Krugman, & Cameron, 1996). Too much exposure to a particular social problem can cause some citizens to become indifferent to a social problem. In line with the campaign fatigue hypothesis, we found a negative relationship between the number of campaigns organized during the twelve months preceding a campaign and the amount raised by that campaign (though the relationship was significant only at the ten per cent level).

We found a positive relationship between the level of government contributions to national campaigns and the success of those national campaigns. Additional analyses revealed that this positive relationship becomes even stronger when holding constant for the number of fatalities, which could be an alternative explanation for government contributions to national campaigns (results available from the authors). The positive relationship between government contributions and the amount raised in national campaigns suggests that government contributions to national campaigns crowd-in private donations by the public. We have argued that this positive relationship can be explained by both the increased fundraising resources a government contribution provides and by the signaling function of a government contribution. Increased resources for fundraising will enable an organization to make more people aware of the campaign and attract their donations. A government contribution can also be viewed as a sign of trustworthiness. If the government trusts this organization to spend money well, private donors are more likely to view this organization as trustworthy and effective too. However, because of the nature of our data we cannot make statements about the causality of the relationship between government contributions and campaign success. We also know that in a small number of campaigns government contributions were not independent of private donations, because the amount the government contributed was conditional on the amount raised by the public (the Serious Request campaign in 2007 for example). More information about the conditionality and timing of government contributions and about the level of awareness among the public about government contributions is necessary to better understand the relationship between those contributions and the success of fundraising campaigns such as national campaigns for charitable causes.

In our last hypothesis we argued that a higher level of economic growth in a certain period would lead to more successful national campaigns in that same period. In periods of

economic growth, people are more likely to have sufficient financial resources and feel financially secure enough to make donations (Breeze & Morgan, 2009; Schervish, 2005; Wiepking & Heijnen, 2011). The Dutch data do not show such a relationship.

All told, the key statistically significant findings of our study are that national campaigns in the Netherlands are more successful if organized in periods of fewer competing campaigns, and if campaigns receive government funds. National campaigns are less successful if organized for victims of man-made disasters such as wars, who can in some way be perceived to blame for their own misfortune. These findings are likely to be generic to other Western countries, and charitable organizations may benefit from this knowledge.

In the Netherlands, as in other countries, only a limited number of national campaigns are organized each year. As a consequence, it is difficult to empirically assess explanations for the success of national campaigns on a country-by-country basis. Because of the few campaigns available for analyses, we chose to use a less restrictive significance level of ten per cent to test our hypotheses. This increased the possibility of our erroneously concluding that there is a relationship between two variables. A combined analysis of data for a sizeable number of countries all over the globe may be interesting not only to mediate such statistical issues but also for substantive reasons. We hope this article can contribute to the global study of national campaigns for charitable causes, past and present.

Notes

[1] Figure converted to euros at 2005 prices using the Consumer Price Index published by Statistics Netherlands (CBS, 2011a). All amounts given in this article are in euros at 2005 prices.

[2] These seven main Dutch national daily newspapers are: *De Volkskrant*, *NRC Handelsblad*, *Trouw*, *Algemeen Dagblad*, *Financieele Dagblad*, *Nederlands Dagblad*, and *Het Parool*.

[3] Note that it is often quite difficult to distinguish between national campaigns organized for victims of a famine and victims of a man-made disaster such as war. As one of the referees of our article rightfully remarked: "[...] natural and human causes frequently accentuate and exacerbate one another". Man-made disasters can culminate in a famine and vice versa. When classifying campaigns, we have taken care to classify the campaigns according to the category that was communicated most dominantly in the national campaign.

[4] Excluding the outlier of 203 million euros raised in the Indian Ocean tsunami campaign in 2004.

[5] Information relating to the campaign show was retrieved more often for campaigns organized more recently and for larger campaigns.

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Table 1 Descriptive statistics

	N	**Mean**	***S.D.***	**Min.**	**Max.**
Amount raised[a]	83	3.43	.46	2.24	4.73
Man-made disasters	102	.25	-	0	1
Natural disaster	102	.28	-	0	1
Famine	102	.11	-	0	1
Number of viewers[b]	33	2.19	1.85	.16	6.90
Duration campaign show[c]	38	190.63	163.69	13	802
Appreciation campaign show	25	74.00	3.89	67	83
Fatalities[d]	68	51.79	162.63	0	1280
Geographical distance[e]	90	4.57	3.30	0	11.78
Campaign frequency	102	2.07	1.47	0	7
Government contribution[f]	66	.73	1.06	0	4.41
Economic growth	102	3.15	1.91	-4.00	9.00

Notes: [a] Natural log of amount raised for a campaign at 2005 prices. The amount raised for *Hulp aan Azië* (Indian Ocean tsunami) is excluded from these descriptive statistics;
[b] number of viewers in millions; [c] duration (length) of campaign show in minutes; [d] number of fatalities in tens of thousands; [e] geographical distance in thousands of kilometers; [f] natural log (government contribution + 1).

Table 2 Correlations[a]

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1 Amount raised (ln)[a]	1								
	N=83								
	-								
2 Number of viewers[b]	.120	1							
	N=26	N=32							
	.280	-							
3 Duration campaign show[c]	.427*	.310*	1						
	N=29	N=32	N=37						
	.010	.042	-						
4 Appreciation campaign show	.431*	.184	.439*	1					
	N=19	N=24	N=25	N=25					
	.033	.194	.014	-					
5 Fatalities[d]	-.034	.058	-.053	-.293	1				
	N=59	N=20	N=22	N=12	N=67				
	.398	.404	.407	.177	-				
6 Geographical distance[e]	.006	-.447**	-.219	-.144	.127	1			
	N=76	N=31	N=35	N=23	N=67	N=89			
	.480	.006	.103	.256	.153	-			
7 Campaign frequency	-.148(+)	-.369*	.055	-.055	-.093	.242*	1		
	N=83	N=32	N=37	N=25	N=67	N=89	N=101		
	.091	.019	.373	.397	.227	.011	-		
8 Government contribution (ln)	.360**	-.129	.113	-.093	.168	.037	.039	1	
	N=65	N=20	N=22	N=14	N=49	N=59	N=65	N=65	
	.002	.294	.308	.376	.124	.391	.380	-	
9 Economic growth	.133	-.004	.026	-.132	-.218*	-.025	-.063	.060	1
	N=83	N=32	N=37	N=25	N=67	N=89	N=101	N=65	N=101
	.116	.491	.439	.265	.038	.409	.266	.317	-

Notes $^{(+)}$ $p \leq .10$; * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$ (one-sided tests; *p*-value displayed below the number of cases for each correlation); [a] The amount raised for *Hulp aan Azië* (Indian Ocean tsunami) is excluded from analyses; [b] number of viewers in millions; [c] duration (length) of campaign show in minutes; [d] number of fatalities in tens of thousands; [e] geographical distance in thousands of kilometers.

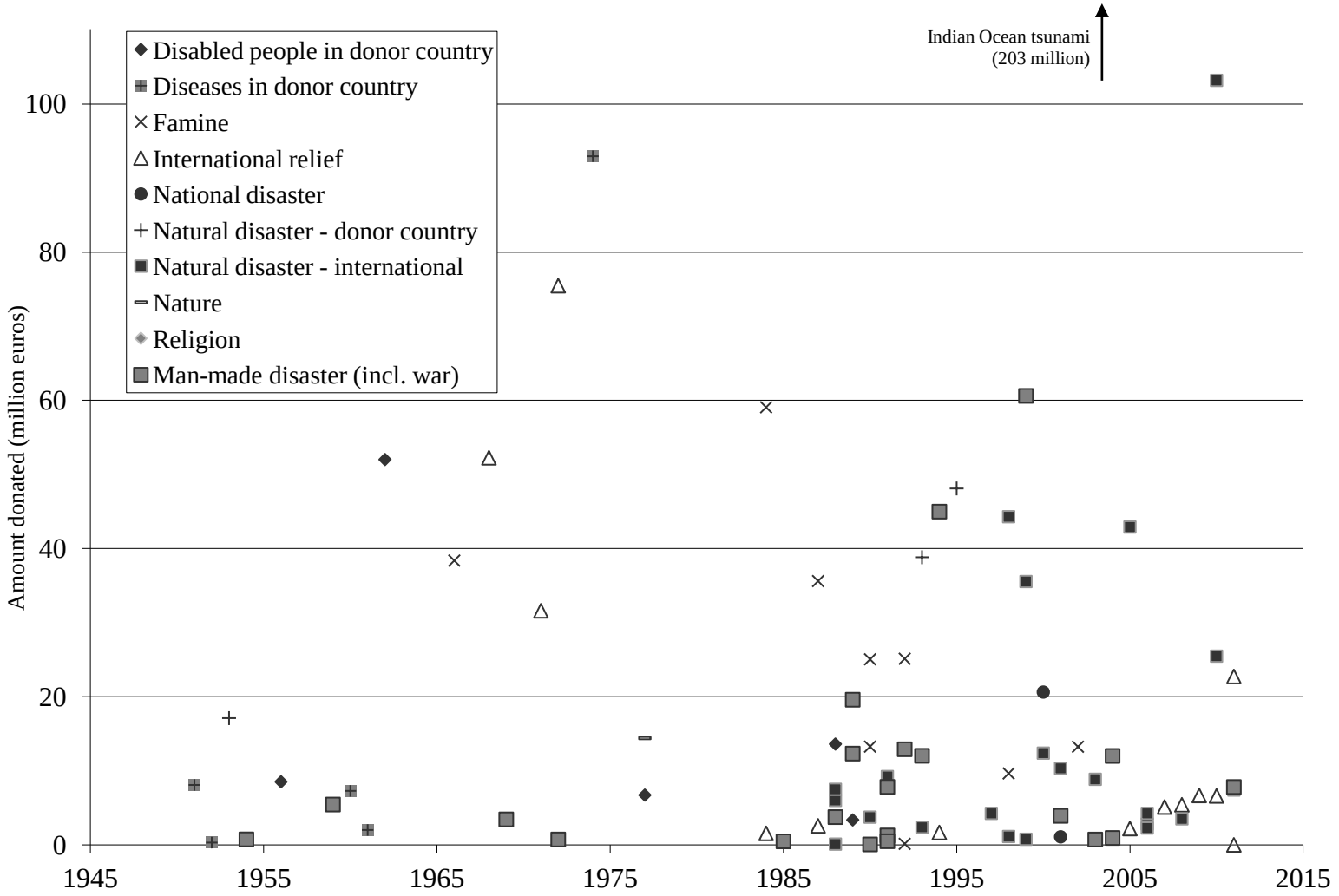

Figure 1 Amounts raised by different types of national campaign for charitable causes organized in the Netherlands (N=83, 1951-2011)