The Involvement of Domestic Actors in Foreign Policy Making

*The Netherlands and the Arctic*

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The Involvement of Domestic Actors in Foreign Policy Making

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A Case Study

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IV
Abstract

The Netherlands has intermittently been active in the Arctic since the seventeenth century, but it was not until the early 2000s that a foreign policy covering its Arctic priorities was created.

In April 2016, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands published the Polar Strategy 2016-2020 to present and clarify its objectives in the Polar Regions as well as the instruments to reach them.

The main research question considered in this thesis is: To what extent were domestic stakeholders involved in the framing of the priorities of the Netherlands vis-à-vis the Arctic?

Using three conceptual models developed by Graham T. Allison (1971) to facilitate the measurement of the level of stakeholder involvement, three types of dynamics are considered in the development process. Firstly, the main policy maker (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, MFA) is free to involve stakeholders at its own convenience, deciding to accept their input or not (Model I); secondly, the policy maker acts as a coordinator of an organized structure of contributors (Model II); and the MFA one player among several others, and it has to bargain with those actors in order to achieve its objectives (Model III).

This thesis finds that characteristics all three types of dynamics between involved actors and the MFA can be identified simultaneously in the policy making process. This indicates that domestic stakeholders are to a varying degree involved in the policy making process. The extent of their involvement seems to depend on whether their non-involvement in the policy making effort would jeopardize the process. As various different types of actors are forming a more organized structure, it becomes more challenging to categorize the actors as belonging to one of Allison’s conceptual models.
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All inaccuracies remain my own.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Specification of Topic

Since the seventeenth century, the Netherlands has to a varying degree been present in the Arctic, and it still is involved in the region today (Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research, 2014: 7). The interests of the Netherlands in the Arctic have fluctuated from economic, to scientific, to geopolitical, and a combination thereof.

Being a small, low-lying country with a trade-based economy, it is at risk of being affected by the consequences of global climate change. Rising sea levels due to the melting of the polar ice caps and glaciers, for instance, are a severe threat. However, as the Arctic becomes more accessible, it also becomes increasingly interesting from an economic perspective.

In the attempt to address the challenges and opportunities in the arctic region, the Netherlands, like many arctic and non-arctic countries, publishes foreign policy papers addressing its priorities in the area. In 2016, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of the Netherlands presented a new edition of its polar policy: ‘The Netherlands Polar Strategy 2016-2020’ (hereafter the ‘Polar Strategy’, or ‘Strategy’). Therefore, this year an appropriate time to investigate the dynamics that shapes this process.

Earlier publications of the Polar Strategy have primarily focused on scientific research. However, this document has evolved into a discussion covering legal matters, environmental issues, as well as economic considerations (ibid: 3). The shift away from purely scientific intentions in the Arctic raises the question of how the change of priorities came about.

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the development of the ‘Netherlands Polar Strategy 2016-2020.’ Although the Polar Strategy also articulates the priorities of the Netherlands in Antarctica, the focus of this paper will be the involvement of

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domestic stakeholders in shaping the provisions that concern the Arctic. The central research question the thesis seeks to answer is:

To what extent were domestic stakeholders involved in the framing of the priorities of the Netherlands vis-à-vis the Arctic?

Given that there are other avenues by which Dutch actors can demonstrate their Arctic interests, the Polar Strategy is one of two documents on which all polar activities of the Netherlands are based (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012: 87). The second document is the scientific Netherlands’ Polar Program (NPP) of the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO) (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016: 6).

The definition of ‘foreign policy’ used in this thesis is provided by Hill (2003) and reads: “the sum of official external relations conducted by an independent actor (usually a state) in international relations” (3). The Polar Strategy can be considered a foreign policy paper as it presents the official Dutch position on their interests and motivations in the Polar Regions. Although this thesis is an example of foreign policy analysis, the implementation of the Strategy will not be examined in detail. Instead, the development of the policy paper is investigated.

In International Relations (IR), the independent actor is often presented as a single, metaphorical entity, conducting relations with other actors in order to reach its objectives (e.g. Allison, 1971: 3; Waltz, 1979; Keohane, 1989). However, this view might be an oversimplification as governments consist of a multiple actors and groups of individuals. These governments, in turn, might be influenced by yet other actors and stakeholders with their own interests and motivations.

Examples of such stakeholders, who are also referred to as ‘players’ or ‘actors’ in this paper, can be governmental (i.e. ministries or political parties), or they can be non-governmental. Within the latter group we can find scientific institutes, businesses, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), such as Greenpeace. Determining what, if any,
role these stakeholders play in the creation of the Polar Strategy is essential in the effort to expose the mechanisms that led to the development of the foreign policy document.

In order to measure the degree to which such stakeholders are involved in this development, the conceptual models proposed by Graham T. Allison (1971) will be employed. In attempting to explain the outcomes of foreign policy making that resolved the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, Allison argues that three conceptual lenses can be used to peer into the ‘black box’ of this process (Allison, 1971: 3).

These models either posit that the state actor is unitary, making rational decisions (Model I); that it is an organizational structure, with subordinate actors supplying the necessary data for the main policy maker to create the output (Model II); or that a disintegrated collection of stakeholders bargain with the responsible player in order to ensure that their interests are protected (Model III) (ibid: 3-7). These models imply different levels of engagement with stakeholders beyond the actor charged with creating the policy.

The case examined by Allison, in which the American government had to act in the 1960s was, however, substantially different than that of the government of the Netherlands in regards to creating the Polar Strategy. Nonetheless, Allison argues that the usage of his models is not confined to such extreme situations. If Model II and Model III can even considered in that extraordinary situation, he argues, than surely this theoretical framework could fit elsewhere as well (ibid: 8-9). Hill (2003) agrees with Allison on this point (91).

Analyzing the development of the Netherlands’ policy concerning the Arctic is an interesting topic to study in an age where an increasing number of non-Arctic states consider the region more important in the advancement of their interests. The manner in which the Netherlands develops a policy document articulating its priorities in the Arctic could shed light on stakeholder involvement in other situations. Whether the involved stakeholders also have an influence on the priorities of the government of the Netherlands could give an impression of the extent to which the policy makers wish to include them in the process. The influence, however, is not examined in detail in this thesis.
1.2 Hypotheses

In the effort to determine to what extent the domestic stakeholders influenced the development of the Polar Strategy, the conceptual framework proposed by Allison is thus used. Based on the research question modelled after this framework, three broad hypotheses can be formulated to function as a starting point for the research presented in this paper. A more detailed discussion of this model will be presented in Chapter 2.

If the government of the Netherlands is the actor that initiates, develops, and publishes the Polar Strategy on its own accords, based on deliberate decisions made among existing alternatives, Model I is the most likely fit. In that case, the policy will not be the result of a bargaining process among a diverse group of players, nor the output of organizational routines of a group of leaders. The motivations to produce the document could therefore be, as Allison (1979) writes, “a calculated solution to a strategic problem” (13). This would indicate that the stakeholders are less involved in the process. Some central concepts that characterize Model I are goals and objectives, alternatives, consequences, and choice (ibid: 29-30). The first hypothesis would thus be:

1. The development of the Arctic provisions in the Netherlands Polar Strategy involves external stakeholders to a limited extent. Instead, the main policy maker, the MFA, decides on the content of the policy paper.

If, however, the government relies on an organized structure of multiple subordinate actors when creating a foreign policy, Model II would be the more appropriate framework. In this model, the involved stakeholders work under coordination, at least in part, of government leaders. The final product of such a structure will not be a deliberate decision by a unitary government, but will be considered an ‘output’ (ibid: 67). In this situation, the domestic actors would be involved to a larger extent than in Model I. A second hypothesis to be investigated in the effort to uncover the inner workings of the policy-making process is therefore:

2. The development of the Arctic provisions in the Netherlands Polar Strategy involves an organized structure of subordinate allied stakeholders, which is coordinated by the main policy maker: the MFA. The final product can be considered an ‘output’.
Finally, if multiple, (more) powerful actors are involved in the policy-making process, and if they are in a position to bargain with the main policy maker in order to benefit from the policy to the greatest extent, Model III would be most realistic. The main actor creating the policy will not be able to ignore or overrule the other stakeholders easily. It will have to negotiate in order to develop a policy paper, which allows the goals of the main stakeholder to be reached. The domestic actors would likely be involved more in this model than in the previous to, whether the main policy maker favors this or not. The third hypothesis that could shed light on how the Polar Strategy was developed is thus:

3. **The development of the Arctic provisions in the Netherlands Polar Strategy involves multiple stakeholders able to bargain with the main policy maker, the MFA, in order to influence the content of the policy paper. The final product of this process can be considered the ‘result’ of a bargaining process.**

One could also argue for the application of the conceptual models to the main policy maker itself, the MFA, implying that the MFA itself is not a unitary actor. However, in order to limit the investigation of the inner workings of the individual stakeholders, the MFA and the external actors involved in the process are regarded in this thesis as single, unitary actors. The conceptual models are applied to the foreign policy development of the Polar Strategy as a whole.

Based on these hypotheses, there are three main expectations with regards to the outcomes of this study. Firstly, Allison’s models are applicable to the case of the stakeholder involvement in the current case. As will be discussed, the extreme case of the Cuban Missile Crisis does not exclude the application of the models to other, more low-intensity cases where national security may not be at stake. Secondly, although all three of these hypotheses could provide plausible frameworks within which the process of policy making could be explained, one can expect that none of them will hold perfectly. The theoretical models are representations of reality, and the policy maker-stakeholder dynamics will likely not perfectly reflect one particular model. Finally, the dynamics typical for multiple models could be present in the current case. Therefore, multiple hypotheses could in part hold simultaneously and it could be challenging to distinguish them.
Potential implications of this study are that the methodology employed in this study could also be applied in the investigation of domestic stakeholders in the development of the Arctic policies of other countries. Furthermore, this method could also be applied to a wider variety of foreign policy documents directed at other geographical and thematic subjects.

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 Methodological Framework

In the effort to determine whether the development of the Netherlands Polar Strategy resembles more closely Model I, Model II, or Model III, it is necessary to analyze the process of this example in foreign policy making. Of central importance in this qualitative case study is thus the examination of the degree to which domestic stakeholders are capable of constraining or enabling the ability of the MFA to develop its foreign policy. George and Bennet (2005) offer four advantages of case study methods: (1) the researcher is able to achieve higher levels of conceptual validity, (2) new hypothesis can be derived more easily, (3) causal mechanisms can be explored, and (4) complex causal mechanisms can be modelled and assessed (19-22). Process-tracing is selected as the most appropriate research method to test the internal validity of the design. As will be discussed, this method allows the mechanism that led to the outcome of a causal process to be uncovered (Beach and Pedersen, 2013: 20).

It allows the researcher to “peer into the box of causality to locate intermediate factors lying between some structural cause and its purposed effect” (Gerring, 2007: 45). In the current case, dependent variable is the categorization of the involved domestic stakeholders in Model I, II, or III. This gives an indication of the extent to which they are involved in the making of the foreign policy. As expressed by George and Bennet (2005), process-tracing can be used in such a situation where the explanation of particular outcomes can be a challenging to trace back to distinct independent variables (206). Indeed being the case in the instance of the development of the Polar Strategy, the involvement of external stakeholders may be due to a number of factors that are not easily recognizable.
Although process-tracing is regarded by many social scientists such as Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett (2005) as one overarching method fitting a wide range of research situations, Derek Beach and Rasmus Brun Pedersen (2013) argue that there are three broad categories of research, each demanding its own version of process-tracing (9). They mention that the goals of these situations can be: testing causal mechanisms, crafting explanations, or building theoretical mechanisms (ibid: 11). The three different kinds of process-tracing they propose are, respectively: “Theory-testing process-tracing, explaining outcome process-tracing, and theory-building process-tracing” (ibid: 12).

Since the goal of this thesis is to present the development process of one particular case through the lenses of Allison’s three conceptual models, the best suited version of process-tracing to be applied here seems to be ‘explaining-outcome process-tracing.’ Since Allison’s study of the Cuban Missile Crisis is itself an example of ‘explaining outcome process-tracing,’ it seems fitting to also use this model in the study of the present case (ibid: 63).

One of the key characteristics of this research method is that it is used when analyzing a single case (Gerring, 2007: 179). Furthermore, the observations that serve as evidence supporting the claim that a causal mechanism exists are often not sampled from the same population. This means that each observation is different qualitatively, and that they are not comparable to each other (ibid.). It is this non-comparability of the observations that is one of the traits that differentiates process tracing from other methods, and it makes them by definition difficult to count (ibid.).

Although the non-comparability of the observations may be considered a disadvantage when researching causal links within a certain process, Gerring finds that inferences based on these observations may in fact be more scientific than those based on those that are sample-based (ibid: 178). As will be discussed in the next section in this chapter, the observations that will be used in the present thesis are gathered in policy papers, supporting documents, and through qualitative interviews.

Gerring posits one other characteristic of process tracing, which is that, in contrast to other research methods, this method relies a great deal on the previous theoretical and pre-theoretical knowledge of the researcher (ibid: 180). The lack of a formal research design places more responsibility on the researcher to identify causal relationships based on prior knowledge (ibid.).
With regards to the external validity of the case study design, Beach reminds us of the level of uncertainty that exists when investigating causal relationships in empirical studies (Beach and Pedersen, 2013: 9). However, it is not inconceivable that some generalizations are possible. Gerring (2006), explaining the particularities of case studies, emphasizes that “researchers should not assume, ex ante, that the truth about their case is contained in factors that are specific to that case” (717). Case studies, he argues, can be generalizable, and might actually be broad in their scope (ibid.).

1.3.2 Data

The research that will be presented in this thesis can be thus be characterized as an empirical case study of the causal process leading to one particular outcome. The empirics needed for the process-tracing method to produce valid conclusions as to which of the three models by Allison best describes the policy development process, were gathered through literature review and interviews.

The data is broadly collected from three major sources. Firstly, governmental documents are used, with the polar policies for the periods of 2011-2015 and 2015-2020 as the centerpieces. Investigating the priorities of the Netherlands, and the extent to which they vary between the two, could give an indication of the level of stakeholder involvement and influence.

The second major source of data consists of supporting documents of domestic actors that are likely to have contributed to the creation of the Netherlands policy framework. Of particular interest are two reports that cover a significant part of the content of the Strategy. The first report is the paper by NWO, ‘Pole Position NL 2.0: Strategy for the Netherlands Polar Programme 2016-2020’ covering scientific priorities of the policy (Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research, 2014). The other report that influenced the polar policy paper to a large extent is ‘The Future of the Arctic Region: Cooperation or Confrontation?’ (referred to in this thesis as the ‘AIV Report’), which was produced by the Advisory Council on International Affairs (ibid.). The latter report is predominantly geopolitical in nature, whereas the former, as indicated, has a scientific focus.

A major challenge in researching the inner workings of this particular case is the lack of documentation on the dynamics of the roles and motivations of domestic actors.
that are either interested in Arctic developments, or directly or indirectly involved in the development of the Polar Strategy itself. A third source of information was thus gathered through the conduct of semi-structured interviews with representatives of those actors.

Fifteen informants\(^4\) were interviewed\(^5\) and additional informal conversations\(^6\) were conducted in order to gather the data needed for this thesis. Representatives of various sectors were consulted for the purpose of this study. These included government, scientific and academic fields, the private sector, and NGOs. They were selected on the basis of their previous contributions to the Polar Policy and Polar Strategy, as well as their overall interest in the Arctic. Through the investigation of public sources, the provision of contact information provided by the Netherlands Embassy in Oslo and the Fridtjof Nansen Institute, and through data gathered during the interviews, the informants were approached for participation in this study.

1.3.3 Qualitative Interview Design

The particularities of semi-structured interviews, which contributed to the collection of valuable data for this thesis, deserve some attention. Interviewing individuals that play a part in a process, as Seidman (2013) argues, is the main method to examine that process (10). It is for this reason, among others, that interviews have played a significant role in the examination of this research topic.

Qualitative interview designs can be sorted into three categories: the Informal Conversational Interview Approach, the General Interview Guide Approach, and the Standardized Open-Ended Interview Approach (Gall, Gall and Borg, 2003; Turner, 2010: 754). Of these three approaches, Gall, Gall and Borg (2003) mention that the Informal Conversational Interview is the most unstructured in nature, since it relies heavily on the “spontaneous generation of questions in a natural interaction”(239). On the other end of the spectrum, one can find the Standardized Open-Ended Interview Approach. Turner highlights the extremely structured way in which the questions are posed in

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\(^4\) Complete list of informants presented in Annex 2 in the appendix.

\(^5\) Most interviews lasted for approximately one hour. In order for the information to be documented adequately, the interviews were recorded with consent of the participants. All interviews were transcribed, and the information to be included in this paper was sent to the informants for approval. All informants approved the quotes and information used in this thesis.

\(^6\) These conversations were held, among others, at the Embassy of the Netherlands to Norway, at the Fridtjof Nansen Institute, and the Norwegian Directorate for Cultural Heritage.
order for the answers to be open-ended (Turner, 2010: 756). In between we find the General Interview Guide Approach, which was used in this study.

Although less structured than the previous approach, and thus potentially more susceptible to inconsistent answers, it does allow for follow-up questions and the adaptation of main questions whilst the interview is underway (ibid: 755). The added fact that the Interview Guide Approach is more structured than the Informal Conversational Approach, and the level of reliability of the data is likely increased; it thus becomes the favored interview approach for this thesis.

One of the characteristics of semi-structured interviews is that the questions, which are open-ended, are determined in advance. Doing so compels the interviewee (or ‘informant’) to elaborate on her or his answers, providing more and potentially more useful data (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006: 315). The ability to compare the answers given in the various interviews allows for the recognition of patterns and differences that could give an indication on whether or how the different players can be categorized according to their relationship to the MFA.

In preparation for such interviews, as implied by the term 'Interview Guide Approach,' an interview guide was created to provide a level of structure that allows the interview to be conducted more effectively. An interview guide, if well-constructed, allows the questions to be posed in a logical sequence, at the correct pacing, and with the adequate level of intensity and intrusiveness (Charmaz, 2015: 1613).

Two versions of the interview guide were created. The questions in one guide were tailored to the actors that can be considered ‘policy-makers.’ Those in another guide were adapted to fit the actors that were not directly responsible for the actual development of the Polar Strategy. In both guides, questions were divided into eight broad categories, which in turn consisted of two to four questions. The findings of the interviews will be presented in Chapter 4.

Even though the merits of semi-structured interviews as main sources of data are plentiful, there are also some reservations. First of all, it cannot be guaranteed that all of the relevant or correct information on the subject was given during the interview. There could be numerous reasons for the participant not to share all the details of their supposed role in the development of the policy. Moreover, the level of their involvement

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7 Full interview guides presented in Annex 3 in the appendix.
could be downplayed or exaggerated without much difficulty. Secondly, the statements
the participant gives could be based on personal, even biased, perceptions, as opposed
to official standpoints of the entities they represent. Such individual perspectives could
influence the reliability of the study. Thirdly, one cannot ensure that the participants are
fully aware of all the information with regards to their roles in the policy-development
process. Knowing these potential challenges to the validity of the research outcomes,
one can work to reduce the negative effects of the disadvantages mentioned above.
Further literature review and cross-referencing of figures and facts could alleviate some
of the doubts. Finally, it is conceivable that some informants, who were in fact important
in the attempt to answer this research question, were not interviewed. Logistical
limitations and time restraints are some of the main reasons for the possible missing
data.8

1.4 Structure

This thesis consists of five chapters. So far in this this first chapter, the topic has been
specified, theory and hypotheses have been introduced, and the methodological
framework has been presented. The next step in the effort to study the research topic is
to expand and specify the theoretical framework and the hypotheses that have already
been touched upon briefly. This will be done in Chapter 2. Having a solid understanding
of the theoretical foundation and the hypotheses will set the backdrop for the more
effective investigation of the development process of the Polar Strategy.

In Chapter 3, the case of the Netherlands is discussed in more detail. The
relevance of the Polar Regions, with emphasis on the Arctic, to the Netherlands will be
clarified. Here, the thesis will attempt to explain the motivations of the government of
the Netherlands to have a polar policy in the first place. After some historical
background of the case, the main points of in the Polar Strategy will be presented
according to the three global themes of climate and environment, economic
considerations, and geopolitical factors. This structure is based on the manner in which
the main themes are presented in the Polar Strategy

In the fourth chapter, various types of domestic stakeholders in the Netherlands
with interests in the Arctic are introduced and examined in more detail after some

8 Some potential missing informants are mentioned in Chapter 4.
general background information is presented on those actors. The data from semi-structured interviews conducted with many of these informants is presented, discussed more in-depth, and analyzed. The process-tracing method will be applied throughout the analysis to determine which of one of Allison’s models best describes the policy-development process. In applying this theoretical framework and methodology, this study will thus attempt to uncover who the stakeholders in Arctic policy making in the Netherlands are, and to what extent they were involved in shaping the Polar Strategy.

The findings will be presented according to the same thematic order as the main points of the Strategy were discussed. This data could give an indication of patterns, which could be indicative of the process in which this foreign policy is created. The application of the methodological tools presented in the introduction chapter is in essence the mechanism that will attempt to answer the main research question.

Finally, the conclusions of this analysis, and potential consequences thereof, will be presented in the final section: Chapter 5. Recommendations for further research will also feature in this fifth and final part of the paper.
2 Theory

“Foreign policy has often been compared to moves and sequences of moves in the game of chess. Imagine a chess game in which the observer could see only a screen upon which moves in the game were projected, with no information about how the pieces came to be moved” (Allison, 1971: 7).

The above metaphor by Allison gives a brief and simple impression of his perspective on the making of a foreign policy. He saw it as an exercise of one party against the other, multiple parties, or a collective of other parties. The question in the context of his models is, however, not about how the move affects the opposing party, but about the actors that were included in deciding upon the move to be taken.

As mentioned earlier, Allison used the case of the Cuban Missile Crisis to illustrate that the three conceptual lenses could provide a valuable perspective on the influence of domestic actors on governmental behavior during the process of foreign policy making. He assumes, therefore, that if those domestic stakeholders even have an influence in such an event concerning national security, than they must also have an influence in other less pressing cases.

In his seminal work ‘Essence of Decision: explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis,’ Allison (1971) presents three conceptual models that he uses to explain the mechanisms leading to the foreign policy that ended the crisis. Allison argued that the notion of ‘government’ is often simplified when seeking to explain the underlying argument for certain steps taken in the international field (Allison, 1971: 3). Governments or states are often personified as individuals making choices in its best interests (ibid; Fearon, 1998: 299). Instead of assuming the state as an individual, unitary, and even rational, Allison investigates if state behavior is determined by the influence of more actors than just the government (Allison, 1971: 3).

In order to measure the extent to which domestic actors influence the foreign policy of the Netherlands on the Polar Regions, and to thus identify the domestic sources of foreign policy (Hill, 2003: 219), Allison’s conceptual models will be used. These models will be presented and discussed in more detail in this chapter. Together with the description of the three models, references will be made to their theoretical and literary
foundations. This enables us to recognize whether the propositions of those theories, and thus the models, can be applied to the dynamics of policy development. Some key elements of the models will be discussed that we could expect to see in the development of the Polar Strategy if the models fit. Before concluding, some reservations to the usage of the theoretical framework and critique on Allison’s approach will be discussed. This will be done in order to give a more balanced view of the theories used in this thesis.

2.1 Allison’s Conceptual Models

Some argue that theories of international relations generally do not apply to intra-state dynamics. Kenneth Waltz even denies the desirability and possibility of combining theories of international relations and those of foreign policy (Waltz, 1996; Holsti, 1989: 29; Fearon, 1998: 292). However, others, such as James D. Fearon (1998), disagree with Waltz and posit that theories in international relations, such as (Neo) Realism, are in fact theories of foreign policy as well (292). Some of these theories will be discussed within this context in order to link the conceptual models to the wider literature of international relations, of which foreign policy analysis is indeed a part (Hill, 2003: 3).

As we will see, Model I, II and III are based on ‘rational actor theory,’ ‘organization theory,’ and ‘bureaucratic politics theory’ respectively (Rourke, 1972: 431-432; Cornford, 1974: 232-233; Bendor and Hammond, 1992: 301). As will be discussed, these theories, in turn, are connected to the literatures of Realism, Liberal Institutionalism, and Constructivism.

Central to the question on whether domestic stakeholders have been involved in the policy making process of the Netherlands is the dynamic between the actors if this black box contains more than just the government. The models provide the framework that supports the analysis of this interaction. Government behavior producing the foreign policy at the end of a certain dynamic – being a decision, outcome, or resultant depending on the model – is the focal point of Allison (1971: 3).

To what extent this government consists of organizations and autonomous political actors is the reason the models are applied (ibid.). The MFA is at the center of this policy development process, as it is the actor publishing the document, and can be regarded as the main policy maker.
2.1.1 Model I

Allison’s Model I, also called the “Rational Actor Model” or the “Classical Model” (ibid: 36), is regarded as the standard policy making model in the traditional literature in international relations, where a government develops a foreign policy (Wagner, 1974: 446).

The focus on the state as the main unitary actor causes it to be associated with Realism and Neo-Realism (Fearon, 1998: 293; Hill, 2005: 8). Wagner even proposed to call this model the “state-as-actor model,” which is descriptive of the importance of the state within this type of decision-making process (Wagner, 1974: 436; Cornford, 1974: 233). Choices made in this model serve to improve the position of the state by reaching its pre-defined goals, which are marked by self-interest. The policy that emerges from the mechanisms of the policy making process can be regarded as the decision.

Arguably the most widely known approach to international relations, Realism emphasizes that power is the most influential tool to possess in an unpredictable world marked by danger (Hill, 2003: 6). Some of the most influential authors and thinkers within the realist thought are St. Augustine, Niccolò Machiavelli, Reinhold Niebuhr, Thomas Hobbes, Hans Morgenthau, George Kennan, and Arnold Wolfers.

Realism is based on the assumption that the international arena is anarchic, and characterized by self-interested and egoistic actors (Holsti, 1989: 18). The relevant actors in international relations are, according to classical realist thought, states. These are preoccupied by their main national interest: survival (Dunne and Schmidt, 2005: 164). The main tool to ensure its survival, as well as the realization of other interests, is power. Tim Dunne and Brian C. Schmidt describe power as “the ability to get what you want either through the threat or use of force” (ibid.). Especially during the Cold War it appeared to be “self-evident that states, and military force, were the main features of the international system” (Hill, 2003: 6).

Although Hill argues that Model I and Realism should not be blurred (ibid: 98), Holsti emphasizes that Model I regards any decision made in that arena as a “direct result of deliberate choice” (Holsti, 1989: 38). The importance of Realism in the Rational Choice Theory, on which Model I is based, is the reason why this model has “often been seen as realist,” Hill (2003) explains (6). For the purpose of this thesis, Realism seems to
provide an appropriate connection between domestic decision making and the purpose of that decision as a foreign policy.

Although Model I assumes the ‘maker’ of the policy is a rational unified actor, it does not exclude the role of other actors. This actor is to a certain extent free to choose rationally between the alternatives the other, more external actors provide in its effort to gain the most benefits in a particular situation. These alternatives, however, are implied to be supplied or presented by agents that might not be a part of the governmental structure (Allison, 1971: 29).

Donald P. Green and Ian Shapiro (1994) present five main assumptions that are generally accepted about the theoretical framework of rational choice. Firstly, they mention that the main aim of policy makers in the rational choice model is utility maximization. This means that “governments select the action that will maximize strategic goals and objectives” (ibid: 32), and that the actions are taken in an efficient and effective manner (Olson, 1965: 65). The second assumption of rationality they put forth is that there is a requirement for their actions to be consistent. Thirdly, it is assumed that the individuals maximize the expected value of their payoff. Under uncertain situations, it is argued, one cannot fully predict what the actual payoff will be. Fourthly, even if a Model I type centers around the state or government as the most important actor, the individuals involved, acting on behalf of the state, are “the relevant maximizing agents” (Green and Shapiro, 1994: 15). Finally, it is assumed by theorists of rational choice that rational choice models apply to the same extent to all persons being observed (ibid: 14-17). The first hypothesis to thus be considered is:

_The development of the Arctic provisions in the Netherlands Polar Strategy involves external stakeholders to a limited extent. Instead, the main policy maker, the MFA, decides on the content of the policy paper._

As a representative of the state and the main policy maker, the MFA would unilaterally be selected as the most advantageous to the state among known alternatives. Although Model I is considered to be too simplistic by some (e.g. Bendor and Hammond, 1992), this model functions as a reference point to compare the role of other potential stakeholders in the development process. The result of this process can in such an event be regarded as a decision.
2.1.2 Model II

As with Model I in the previous section, the theoretical foundation of Mode II, the ‘Organizational Process’ model, will be uncovered in order to further examine the main ideas put forth. The focus on the coordinating and regulating role within and among institutions allows us to place this model within the liberal Institutionalist literature of foreign policy making and international relations.

Not unlike Model I, in Model II, one actor takes the lead in the process of policy making. However, the main player in the Organizational Process Model cannot function adequately without the subordinate actors, and is thus limited in the level of freedom it has to choose. Instead of deciding how a certain policy should look, the main actor acts as a coordinator of the organizational structure. This structure, characterized by the interdependence between the players, could either work as a system in which the coordinator sets goals, for which the contributors are compensated, or the goals can be based on consensus among the actors (Johnson, 2008: 227). The fundamental issues within the organization theory literature are: “order and control, efficient attainment of goals, coordination, and the maintenance of effective communication” (Harmon, 1986: 30).

The importance of order and structure, brought to the development process of a foreign policy through ‘standard operating procedures’ (SOPs) (Allison, 1971: 68), which are executed by a coordinated group of interdependent actors, echoes similar elements applied to the international arena in the Liberal and Liberal Institutionalist approaches. As with other approaches to international relations, however, this application of an IR theory to a domestic process of policy development needs to be addressed. An interesting view on this matter is that Liberalism is, in fact, a domestic product that was exported to the international arena through the so-called ‘domestic analogy’. Dunne explains that the domestic analogy is “the extension of ideas that originated inside liberal states to the international realm, such as the coordinating role played by institutions” (Suganami, 1989: 94-113; Dunne, 2005: 187).

As the name of Model II, the “Organizational Process Model,” suggests, the theoretical foundation of this model can be found in Organization Theory literature (Carlsnaes, 2006: 347). Although there are several different strands of Organization theory, Allison specifies that the branch that he focuses on in the examination of
Model II is ‘organizational decision making’ (Allison, 1971: 71). Essential to the examination of the second model is, therefore, the behavior of actors, the interaction between them, and their motivations, as they are all essential parts of Organization Theory (Harmon, 1986: 5).

As one of the founding scholars of Organization Theory, Max Weber (1978) described that his ideal-type organization influenced to a significant degree the study of both formal and informal organizations (Senge, 2013: 78). Weber defined ‘organization’ as follows:

“A circle of people who are accustomed to obedience to the orders of leaders and who have a personal interest in the continuance of the domination by virtue of their own participation and the resulting benefits, have divided among themselves the exercise of those functions which will serve ready for their exercise” (Max Weber, 1978: 952).

Since the inception of Organization Theory, however, many other authors have added to this definition, and one single definition is problematic to agree upon. To be sure, many of the main elements mentioned by subsequent authors overlap. Key factors of organizations that were proposed include: an administrative system of coordinated activities (Waldo, 1955: 6; Barnard, 1938: 73); a structure in which authoritative personal interrelations and interlocked behaviors take place, leading to rational action (Waldo, 1955: 6; Selznick, 1948: 25; Weick, 1969: 3), and a system of energetic input and output (Katz and Kahn, 1978: 20).

Order and control within this model is, among other factors, achieved through the application of standard operating procedures (Allison, 1971: 68). As a vital part to a strong, procedural organizational structure, the organizational routines of the actors result in outcomes, as opposed to decisions (Wilson 1989: 164). Even though foreign policy is the goal of players in strong organizational structures, the means receive less attention than the ends (Allison, 1971: 78-79; Drezner, 2000: 736).

Of importance to Model II is the notion of the coordinating institution, as mentioned above. In Liberal Institutionalism, such institutions are considered to be the sum of structures, SOPs, and rules, which semi-independently influence the political discourse (March and Olsen, 2006: 4). Institutions introduce a certain level of order and
justice to the international as well as the domestic arena, and can include treaties, state practices, and organizations (Dunne, 2005: 185). The organizational structure of a policy development as portrayed in Model II, can be seen as a manifestation of a liberalist institution composed of coordinated actors, producing a foreign policy.

One of the most striking differences between this model and Model I is that instead of regarding the unitary and rational ‘nation’ or the ‘government’ to be the main source of policies, multiple actors are involved in the process. This “conglomerate of semi-feudal loosely allied organizations” as Allison (1971) puts it, is organized by the main coordinating policy maker (67). Usually the government or a representative thereof can be regarded as this policy maker (ibid.), and the subordinate actors produce their part of the policy making according to routines or standard operating procedures (ibid: 79-80; Bendor and Hammond, 1992: 309; Birkland, 2005: 219; Wagner, 1974: 446).

Furthermore, whereas the final product of that process within the framework of the ‘Rational Actor’ model can be called a decision, the policy that emerges from Model II is described by Allison as an output (Allison, 1971: 67).

To revisit the hypothesis mentioned in the introduction, one possible answer to the main research question ‘what the extent of the involvement of the domestic stakeholders in the development process of the Polar Strategy,’ could be:

The development of the Arctic provisions in the Netherlands Polar Strategy involves an organized structure of subordinate allied stakeholders, which is coordinated by the main policy maker: the MFA. The final product can be considered an ‘output’.

Whether the hypothesis that Model II describes the process most adequately can be rejected or not will thus depend on whether the conglomerate of involved actors in the policy development resembles an organized structure or not. Other core elements that need to be identified if this hypothesis is not to be rejected are: the role of the MFA as a coordinator, the regularity by which the subsidiary actors create input for the policy making efforts of the MFA, and the level of dependence of the MFA on the information provided by the external stakeholders.
2.1.3 Model III

The third of the models to be discussed is the Bureaucratic Politics model. Where Model I regards the government, or the actor representing the government, as a single unitary actor in this process, this model treats policymaking as bargaining processes between multiple players with diverse interests (Allison, 1971: 144). Some key elements of Bureaucratic Politics include the influence of multiple players, the divergent goals and interests of these players, the relative power differences between them, and the bargaining process that leads to the result of this process.

The socially constructed nature of the interests of the actors within Model III, as opposed to approaches such as Realism and Liberal Institutionalism, are emphasized in the Constructivist approach (e.g. Weldes 1996; Barnett, 2005: 259). Whereas the core interests of Realism revolve around the nation-state and the power it possesses to ensure its survival (Dunne and Schmidt, 2005: 176), and Liberalism seeks to create order and justice in an anarchic world (ibid: 187), Constructivism itself does not define what interests the players have. Instead, it recognizes that the actors or individuals themselves, both in the international and intra-national field, are the ones determining their interests (Dressler, 1999: 124, Barnett, 2005: 251).

Constructivism is a social theory, which seeks to explain the relationship between the actors and structures, and scholars such as Michael Barnett (2005) do not consider it a substantive theory (258). Moreover, the interests and preferences of the players, as well as power, influence their perspective of the world and events taking place in it (Hill, 2003: 28). It is such a subjective perspective that is part of the source of how the interests are defined (Weldes, 1998: 218). Jutta Weldes uses a Constructivist assumption, proposed by Wendt, to justify such reasoning. Wendt (1992) wrote that individuals “act toward objects, including other actors, on the basis of the meanings that the objects have for them” (396-397).

Although Model II is equally focused on the impact of multiple players in policy development as Model III, Allison describes the two models as distinct. Essential to this model is that the involved players have distinct interests and goals, and that those differences are overcome through a bargaining process.

The theoretical foundation of Model III is rooted in Bureaucratic Politics theory (Allison, 1971: 144, 157; Bendor and Hammond, 1992: 301). Based on the subjectivity
of the motivations of the involved actors within this theoretical framework, Constructivism, although a young approach to international relations and foreign policy analysis (Barnett, 2005: 251) is, as we will see, the most adequate approach to explain the dynamics within Model III.

In order to most adequately understand bureaucratic politics, Weldes (1998) emphasizes that the constructed nature of the players’ interests must be thoroughly understood, and underlines that the power relations between the players need to be clarified (225). Furthermore, the “divergent and competing modes of reasoning through which bureaucratic battles are fought” need to be examined (ibid.). In short, knowing the sources of the interests and goals of the semi-independent policymakers, the position of power they have to achieve their objectives, and how the tactics between the actors differ are thus key in exposing the dynamics within Model III.

In the domestic and international field, according to the Constructivist approach, the actors, with their perspective-based interests, are to be placed at the core of the political environment (Hill, 2003: 162). Their interests and ideas are able to influence policy outcomes (Drezner, 2000: 733), although the players that are more important domestically tend to have less influence in international politics (ibid: 735). The players can vary from, among others, government bodies, political think-tanks, scientific institutes, commercial enterprises, or even environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Their interests, ideas, and goals can collide or overlap with the goals and interests of the other actors.

Barnett (2005) tells us that if the achievement of one’s goals is dependent on other actors, strategic interaction occurs (262). This strategic interaction is necessary to reconcile the diverse goals and interests before policymaking can be realized (Allison, 1971: 157). The resulting bargaining game, and the strategies that guide that process, take place within a culturally determined context, with constraints and norms, as proposed in Constructivist literature (Barnett, 2005: 262-263). If there is only an agreement on beliefs and not on goals, then bargaining take place (Thompson and Tuden, 1959; Bendor and Hammond, 1992: 314). If the parties agree on the goals, but not on the beliefs, “collegial judgment will prevail” (Bendor and Hammond, 1992: 314).

The outcome of this “pulling and hauling” (Allison, 1971: 144, Alison and Zelikow, 1999: 255; Carlsnaes, 2006: 349) within Model III is referred to by Allison as a result (Allison, 1971: 144). Through negotiation, competition, and cooperation, the interests
and goals of the involved actors could be reconciled to produce a foreign policy that addresses the concerns of the actors involved (Birkland, 2005: 219). A Constructivist view of the analysis of such a foreign policy created through bureaucratic politics is, then, to examine how the identities of the players and the domestic structural forces made bargaining and policy making possible (Wæver, 1994; Hill, 2003: 98).

The hypothesis linking model III to the Polar Strategy of the Netherlands, as introduced in Chapter, was:

**The development of the Arctic provisions in the Netherlands Polar Strategy involves multiple stakeholders able to bargain with the main policy maker, the MFA, in order to influence the content of the policy paper. The final product of this process can be considered the ‘result’ of a bargaining process.**

If the development of the Polar Strategy is indeed to function according to the dynamics that are regarded as typical for Model III, we would see the elements discussed above in that process. Not only would there be multiple actors, with self-determined interests and goals, but they would have to settle those differences in order to produce a foreign policy. The level of power of the main policy-making government body relative to the other actors involved will determine if a bargain process will occur. If the level of dependence on the other actors is high, those other players are in a bargaining position. The Netherlands Polar Policy could in such a case be regarded as a result, and not a decision or output.

### 2.2 Critique

Allison’s work the *Essence of Decision* has been applauded for its comprehensive effort to not only propose and explain the three conceptual models, but also because it presents the historical case of the Cuban Missile Crises, as well as broader observations about foreign policy making in general (Bendor and Hammond, 1992: 318). Some have even called this work “the most generally persuasive attempt ever made to show the relevance of theorizing to the treatment of what are ordinarily thought to be the main problems of the study of international politics” (Wagner, 1974: 446). Allison’s book has been used widely as a starting point for students of political science in their studies of
foreign policy development, and continues to be influential. As with all literary works in political science, however, there are certain weaknesses that need to be addressed.

Some argue that a weakness of Model I is that it is too simplistic. Jonathan Bendor and Thomas H. Hammond (1992) argue that a model, if well-crafted, should be balanced with regards to its complexity and simplicity (302). They find that Allison’s Model I does not strike this balance, as it presents the process of governmental decision making too primitively.

They also mention an example of a weakness of Model II. The organizational model seems to present the logical case of simple bureaucratic steps that lead to a simple solution, but complex results are also possible results from these simple actions (ibid: 309). Furthermore, the fact that standard operating procedures exist does not mean that organizations are more rational, or that they are better informed (ibid: 310-311).

Model III is said to be too complex. Too many factors seem to be involved in the creation of a – seemingly simple – model. Although more attention was given to Model III than Model I by Allison, the various levels of actors, goals, interests, and interactions make this model an “analytical kitchen sink” (ibid: 318). Additionally, Holsti (1989) states that there seems to be no significant “correlation between bureaucratic roles and evaluations of the situation […], as predicted by his ‘Model III’” (33-34).

Taking into account these points of criticism of the models proposed by Allison, this theoretical foundation does provide an adequate point of departure for the investigation of the development of the Polar Policy. The models have the important function of serving as reference points against which to measure the level of stakeholder involvement. Instead of seeking to test the theoretical premise of Allison’s conceptual models themselves, the goal of this thesis is indeed first and foremost to investigate the stakeholder involvement in the development process of the foreign policy of the Netherlands on the Arctic.

The three paradigms provide a theoretical structure for a more organized analysis of foreign policy making and government behavior (Bernstein, 2000: 138). The fact that the models are not mutually exclusive opens up for the possibility to combine certain elements of the models (Rourke, 1972: 431). Before applying the models to the policy making effort of the Polar Strategy, a review of the background of polar policy making of the Netherlands will be presented in the next chapter.
3 Background

As mentioned earlier, there is no official Netherlands policy concerning the Arctic alone. Rather, a significant portion of the Netherlands Polar Strategy is devoted to the Arctic, parallel to the focus on Antarctica. As we will see in this section, Dutch interests in Antarctica have been essential in the creation of a policy covering both Polar Regions. However, the importance of the Arctic to the Netherlands, found in its economic potential as well its relative proximity (a mere three-hour flight from Amsterdam) are some of the reasons this thesis focuses on the High North.

Not being an Arctic state, lacking any claims in the region, and as a small country, the Netherlands has a limited say in Arctic development (Advisory Council on International Affairs, 2014: 57). The Netherlands has been actively involved in the Arctic for a substantial amount of time, and it continues to do so to this day.

3.1 Historical perspective

The Netherlands’ connection to the Arctic can be traced back to the late sixteenth century. After gaining independence from Spain, the Dutch Republic was able to exploit new sources of income across the globe as well as new routes to get to them. The Northeast Passage would make the commute to Dutch trading posts in East Asia much shorter, and Willem Barents was one of the first to attempt to find this route between 1594 and 1596 (Hacquebord, 2009: 14; Braat, 1984: 474).

Even though Barents was not able to find the Passage, he did discover⁹ Spitsbergen, the name he gave to the pointed mountains he saw. (Hacquebord, 2009: 14; Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012: 22). Because the Dutch Republic allowed its merchants to claim new territories, and awarded them trade monopolies, there were many Dutch expeditions that searched for economic opportunities (Hacquebord 1984: 42; Hacquebord, 2009: 13).

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⁹ Although there is agreement on the fact that Willem Barents was the first to document the existence of Spitsbergen in in the ‘Age of Discovery’, there is reason to believe that human activity has taken place on the archipelago earlier than 1596 (Barr; 1987: 25).
Approximately ten years after Barents’ first visit to Spitsbergen, the large-scale whaling activities of the Dutch Republic commenced in 1612, and the ‘Company of the North’ (De Noordsche Compagie) was created in 1614 to execute this trade (Hacquebord, 1985: 13; Braat, 1984: 473; Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012: 22).

On an island that became known as Amsterdam Island, which is still called Amsterdamøya in Norwegian today, a settlement was established close to the constructions in which whale oil was extracted from the blubber, giving it the nickname Smeerenburg (‘Blubbertown’) (Braat, 1984: 476; Hacquebord, 1985: 13, 19). The Dutch also developed similar, although smaller, complexes in other places, such as the island of Jan Mayen, which was discovered in 1614 and was named after Jan Jacobsz May (Braat, 1984: 476; Susan Barr, 1991: 19; Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012: 22).

1642 marked the end of the large-scale whaling activities of the Dutch Republic, and the whale oil processing structures were dismantled (Hacquebord, 1985: 19). It is estimated that the Dutch accounted for around 40% of the caught Greenland Right Whales, or Bowhead Whale, for an extended period of time (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012: 23). The unregulated whaling activities almost led to its extinction by the end of the nineteenth century (Hacquebord, 2001:169; Hacquebord 2008: 95; Haquebord, 2009: 16).

Even though the Netherlands was no longer a whaling nation, its political and economic interests in the Arctic remained after 1900, especially towards Spitsbergen (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012: 23). By this time, the demand for coal to power the industrial activities of Western Europe fueled this interest (Hacquebord, 2009: 16). As Spitsbergen did not belong to any nation, and thus was terra nullius, all countries were able to exploit its natural resources (Nielsen, 1920: 232).

To resolve and prevent conflicts over the islands’ riches, the Spitsbergen Treaty was signed in Paris in 1920, which placed the archipelago under Norwegian sovereignty. The signatory states were given the same economic rights as Norwegian actors on the islands and their territorial waters (Barr, 1987: 32; Salmon, 1993: 17).

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10 Beyond Amsterdamøya, many current place names on Svalbard are of Dutch origin (e.g. Ny Friesland and Hinlopenstredet).

11 In 1873, the Netherlands completely terminated its whaling activities, just before the pelagic processing ships were being used (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012: 23).

12 The Netherlands was the first country to ratify the treaty on 30 July 1920 (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012: 23).

In 1920, the Netherlands Spitsbergen Company (NESPICO) began producing coal, and employed around 500 men in the coal mine (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012: 23; Avango et al., 2014: 24). The settlements that grew as a result of the mining activities on Spitsbergen, which since 1925 was renamed ‘Svalbard’ by Norway (Berg, 2013: 154-155), were called Barentsburg and Rjipsburg (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012: 23). It did not take very long, however, before the profits of the coal production dwindled. In 1932, the mines and settlements were taken over by the Russian company Aktikugol (ibid; Grydehøj, 2012: 103). It would not be until the end of the century before the Netherlands would return to the Arctic.

The first steps towards the return of the Netherlands to the Polar Regions were taken in the early 1960s. By then, the Netherlands and Belgium collaborated to set up a short-term polar research program in Antarctica (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012: 88). This program, however, did not extend into the 1970s, and only in the 1980s did the Netherlands revive its polar research program with the first Netherlands Antarctic Activity Plan (NAAP), which was published in 1985 (ibid: 89).

It laid out the plans for Antarctic research for the period of 1985 to 1987. This plan was important, as “conducting substantial research activity” on Antarctica was a precondition for the admission of the Netherlands as a participant in the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meetings (ATCM) under the Antarctic Treaty of 1959 (Antarctic Treaty, 1959: Article IX.2; Pannatier, 1993: 123). This status was achieved in 1990, and it was thus the substantial research program that enabled the Netherlands to have a political voice in matters related to Antarctic affairs.

On the opposite side of the globe, the end of the 1990s heralded a new spirit of cooperation in the Arctic. Already in 1987, Gorbachev not only spoke of the potential of the Arctic fostering international trade, but he emphasized that cooperation, in regards to security, environmental protection and scientific efforts, could create a ‘North Pole as a pole of peace’ (Heininen and Nicol, 2007: 134-135; Keskitalo, 2007: 195; Berkman, 2012: 125; Kim, 2014: 917).

In 1991, an agreement called the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) was adopted to regulate and streamline multilateral assessment and monitoring efforts intended to protect the Arctic environment (Futsæter, 1995: 352; Scrivener, 26
1999: 103; Kim, 2014: 917). Already one year after the adoption of AEPS, the Netherlands applied for observer status, and in 1993 to the working group called the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP) (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012: 23).

The AEPS and AMAP were combined in 1996 when the ‘Ottawa Declaration’ was signed, creating the Arctic Council (ibid; Berkman, 2012: 126). In part because of its observer status in AEPS and AMAP, and its “established historical interest in Arctic exploration,” the Netherlands received Observer status to the Arctic Council in 1996 (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012: 23; Keskitalo, 2007: 190).

Although not treaty-based, the Arctic Council is an international partnership between the eight Arctic countries: Norway, Sweden, Finland, Russia, the United States, Canada, Iceland, and Denmark (Greenland) (Pedersen, 2011: 147-148). The main objectives of the Arctic Council (AC) are to “promote cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic states with the involvement of the Arctic indigenous communities and other Arctic inhabitants on common Arctic issues” (Declaration on the Establishment of the Arctic Council, 1996: Article I (a)).

Besides the Arctic states, the Arctic Council also includes indigenous peoples’ organizations as ‘Permanent Participants’ (Keskitalo, 2007: 190; Pedersen, 2011: 148). Other observers admitted to the Council, and may attend activities and meetings, include non-governmental organizations (NGOs), notably environmental NGOs, international organizations, as well as non-Arctic states (Pedersen, 2011: 148; Advisory Council on International Affairs, 2014: 35).

The Netherlands is a member of three of the working groups, in which experts present and discuss their work on a variety of topics (Advisory Council on International Affairs, 2014: 34). The working groups in which the Netherlands is represented are the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP), Conservation of the Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF), and the Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG).

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13 The Permanent Participants are: the Aleut International Association, the Arctic Athabaskan Council, the Gwich’in Council International, the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON), and the Saami Council (Pedersen, 2011: 148).

14 The remaining three working groups are: Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME), Emergency Prevention, Preparedness, and Response (EPPR), and the Arctic Contaminants Action Program (ACAP) (Advisory Council on International Affairs, 2014: 35; Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012: 51).
Although an Arctic scientific research program was not a prerequisite for its observer status, the Netherlands Arctic Program (NAP) was announced at the ministerial meeting of the Arctic Council in October 2000 (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012: 89). The NAP was added to the NAAP in 2003, creating the Netherlands Polar Program 2003-2006 (NPP) (ibid.). The policy document accompanying this first Polar Program was the first policy addition to a program concerning research in the Arctic and Antarctica (ibid.).

In the succeeding NPP 2007-2010, there was no longer a distinction between the NAP and NAAP. And although the policy document was a mere addition to the scientific NPP, the subsequent Netherlands Polar Policy 2011-2015 was the first in which governmental policy received more prominence than scientific research (ibid: 87). Even though the Polar Policy includes the scientific Polar Program, it seeks to place the Polar Regions in a larger geopolitical and economic context (ibid: 87-88).

3.2 The Polar Strategy

In 2016, a new edition of the polar policy of the Netherlands, now called the Netherlands’ Polar Strategy 2016-2020 was published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The subtitle of this document, ‘Together for Sustainability’, gives a clear indication to the emphasis on sustainability in the Polar Regions.

With regards to the Arctic, the overarching goals include the continuation of international cooperation, mitigation of the consequences of climate change, protection of the Arctic environment, and contribution to scientific research (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016: 26).

Building on the previous polar policy, among others, the Netherlands Polar Program (NPP) by NWO, and the AIV Report for geopolitical and other political data, the document discusses a wide range of topics that relate to the objectives of the Netherlands in the Polar Regions. As in the previous edition, the NPP constitutes the scientific part of the Strategy. The total budget for the NPP and the accompanying policy-supporting activities amounts to around 4.167 million Euros per year (ibid: 44).

Predominantly within the framework of the Arctic Council, the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU), the International Maritime Organization (IMO), and bilateral agreements, the Netherlands seeks to expand existing and contribute
additional agreements on a wide range of topics, including nature and environment, fisheries, and shipping (ibid: 26). Although the main points of the Polar Policy 2011-2015 and those of the Polar Strategy 2016-2020 are similar, policy-related topics in the working groups of the Arctic Council receive greater focus in the Strategy (ibid.). For instance, whereas economic considerations were discussed in one out of the ten themes in the Polar Policy, they now make up one of just four main categories of priorities. This could indicate that the economic considerations and the remaining three themes are regarded as relatively more important in the newest edition of the policy.

The goals and priorities covered in the Netherlands’ Polar Strategy 2016-2020 broadly cover four distinct subject matters in connection to the interests and objectives of the Netherlands in the Arctic and Antarctica: climate, nature and environment; economic activities; geopolitical situation, management and governance; and inhabitants. Although the protection of the rights of indigenous Arctic populations is mentioned to be integral to the human rights policy of the Netherlands, this theme is not one of the central topics in the Strategy (ibid: 32). The first three themes will therefore function as the main structure in the analysis of the Arctic priorities of Dutch stakeholders in this chapter.

3.2.1 Climate and environment

Like the Polar Policy, the Polar Strategy emphasizes that both Antarctica and the High Arctic, the part of the Arctic Ocean beyond of the jurisdiction of the Arctic states, are considered ‘Global Public Goods’ (GPG) (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012: 14; Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016: 4). This term is clarified as being areas that are not only of unique value to all humanity, but to the global ecosystem. The function of this area, with its effect on the global climate for instance, is not merely of interest to the Arctic states, but also to non-Arctic (Advisory Council on International Affairs, 2014: 20, 44). Its importance to the global ecosystem, by acting as a climate regulator, makes the region valuable to other parts of the globe for and for future generations (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016: 27).

The consequences of global climate change receive a central position in the Polar Strategy. Presented as a catalyst of various developments in the region and further afield, global climate change is both identified as a threat to the polar ecosystem as well
as to human societies. Objectives of the Netherlands in connection to climate change are, first and foremost, to combat climate change and to support adaptation to unavoidable changes (ibid: 26-27).

The increasing magnitude and speed by which the Arctic ice sheets are melting is expected to have a severe impact on the Arctic ecosystem. Some forecast that the Arctic Ocean will experience ice-free summers by 2030 to 2050 (ibid: 13). Especially for Arctic marine life, the retreating sea ice poses a threat. Non-Arctic species of fish and other animals seeking colder waters are moving northwards as well, which adds another strain on indigenous fauna (ibid: 14).

It is said that the changes occurring in the Arctic can give an indication of what awaits the Netherlands, where climate change also poses a threat to biodiversity (Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research, 2014: 9). For instance, species of birds that stop in the Netherlands on their migration to and from the Arctic, such as in the Wadden Islands, will have to adapt their migratory patterns (ibid.).

Beyond environmental threats, climate change in the Arctic could also set in motion a more direct hazard to the Netherlands. Especially when one considers the melting of Arctic land ice poses a significant threat to the Netherlands, as rising sea levels would likely increase the risk of flooding in a low-lying country. In fact, the Strategy informs us that global sea levels will rise by 0.9 to 1.6 meters above 1990 levels by 2100 (ibid.).

More erratic weather patterns would add another dimension to the challenges of the already stressed Dutch coast. Higher sea levels and potential flooding could cause the salinification of ground water reserves, putting pressure of the fresh water supply. The Strategy therefore emphasizes it is essential to be aware of these developments in order form reliable long-term forecasts.

The Strategy emphasizes that the Netherlands, in consultation with the Arctic states, seeks to contribute to the sustainable development of the Arctic Region in order to reach its climate and environment-related goals. In the attempt to do so, the Strategy explains additional international agreements are needed and existing ones ought to be

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15 Between 1979 and 2007, the surface of Arctic sea ice has shrunk from 7,000,000 to 4,300,000 km², which accords to roughly 40% of the surface area (Hacquebord, 2009: 11). The thickness of ice has also decreased by half within that time frame (ibid.).

16 26% of the land area of the Netherlands is below sea level (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016a).
expanded (ibid: 27). The role of the Netherlands as an Observer at the Arctic Council and its contributions to three of the six AC working groups are important in this context. The 2015 Paris Agreement and UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are guiding the Netherlands’ contributions in curbing the negative consequences of climate change (ibid.).

The collaboration with the NWO, responsible for the development and execution of the scientific aspect of the Strategy, and the Arctic Center in Groningen, which represents the Netherlands at the Arctic Council, are necessary in this effort since they are two of the most prominent scientific stakeholders and partners of the MFA (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012: 6).

The Strategy claims that the reputation of the Netherlands, as well as the provision of data gathered through specialized scientific research, have allowed the country to influence the Arctic Council (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016: 44). The research station in Ny-Ålesund, Svalbard, which is run by the Arctic Center, is a physical manifestation of the importance of Arctic research, and is a means to enhance visibility of Dutch research in the Arctic (ibid: 6). The scientific Netherlands’ Polar Program (NPP) is therefore a key element in the implementation efforts of the Polar Strategy. It is this contribution to international research efforts through the NPP that allows the Netherlands to be present and active in the Arctic region (Advisory Council on International Affairs, 2014: 33).

Research aside, the Netherlands advances its commitment to protecting the Arctic through political avenues as well. An example of a concrete measure proposed by the Netherlands to contribute to the protection of the Arctic environment is the creation of a network of protected maritime areas. This proposal was presented in the previous Polar Policy and is repeated in the Strategy (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012: 4; Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016: 27). Within existing international agreements the Netherlands offers to appoint shipping routes in so-called ‘particularly sensitive sea areas’ in connection with the IMO (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016: 27). However, in the maritime zones exclusive to Arctic states, the Netherlands has limited tools to influence the policies pertaining to those regions of the Arctic.
3.2.2 Economic considerations

For the Dutch private sector and national economy at large, the thawing of Arctic floating ice could be lucrative. As the Netherlands is home to many companies that specialized in, for example, land reclamation, maritime and offshore technology, and laying pipelines, it is important to take advantage of these developments when the opportunity arises (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012: 48; Advisory Council on International Affairs, 2014: 17).

Currently, around 10% of the activities of the maritime sector of the Netherlands is related to the Arctic (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016: 21). Although economic activities in the Arctic are not new, and have occurred since the region has traditionally been inhabited, new technologies, increasing demand for fossil fuels, and melting sea-ice contribute to an increase in activities (ibid.).

Fishing grounds previously outside the reach of conventional fishing vessels are becoming accessible. Although fishing could become a potential future economic activity for the Netherlands in the Arctic it is currently only a minimal part of the economic activities in the area (ibid: 22). As the region becomes more navigable, the Strategy is clear that no fishing activities ought to take place in areas where current fishing regulations do not apply (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012: 4; Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016: 22). The close economic ties of the Netherlands with most of the Arctic states further underlines the importance of the Arctic for the Dutch economy (Advisory Council on International Affairs, 2014: 17; Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012: 48).

Of more importance than fishing is the exploitation of oil and gas, which could present the Netherlands with direct and indirect business opportunities. Fossil fuels, as well as other raw materials, could be exploited more easily if the Arctic becomes more accessible. The government intends to look into further exploitation of oil and gas reserves as long as strict environmental regulations and safety standards are followed (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012: 4; Advisory Council on International Affairs, 2014: 20).

It is mentioned in the Strategy that, according to the US Geological Survey, the Arctic could harbor around 13% of the world’s undiscovered oil reserves and 30% of the gas reserves (U.S. Geological Survey, 2008: 4; Advisory Council on International Affairs,
Regardless of increasing accessibility, however, the Arctic is a complicated region in which to extract fossil fuel. This is reflected in the costs for the exploitation of Arctic oil and gas. Technological demands and extreme weather, for instance, increase the costs of operating in the area. Furthermore, the remoteness of oil platforms in the Arctic would make it challenging for outside support to reach the location swiftly in the case of an oil spill (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016: 21).

As global oil prices continue to drop, exploitation of Arctic fossil fuels would not be lucrative. The debate within the general public, and potentially pressure from, among others, NGOs, about the risks and benefits of drilling in the Arctic, adds yet another complicating factor to this undertaking. The retreat of Shell from the waters of Alaska in 2015 shows that the adverse factors related to the Arctic geography, bureaucracy, and economy made its continued Arctic activities undesirable for the time being (ibid.).

Indirect opportunities, such as those connected to technological innovation within the areas of offshore technology, sustainable shipping, and other maritime activities could present themselves as more relevant to the Dutch economy than the direct exploitation of oil and gas (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012: 4).

New and shorter shipping routes that cross the Arctic Ocean present possibilities to transport raw natural resources from harbors in the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean at a fraction of the cost (Borgerson, 2013: 78; Advisory Council on International Affairs, 2014: 15; Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016: 21). Already in 2010, four commercial vessels used the Northern Sea Route, and the number of transits grew to 34 and 46 in 2011 and 2012 respectively (Borgerson, 2013: 82). This number, however, fell again slightly in 2013 (Moe, 2014: 787).17

As a transit country, the Netherlands could potentially increase its revenue through trade, as the cost of shipping is falling. Some predict that the Arctic shipping routes could be profitable between 2030 and 2050 (Le Mière and Mazo, 2013: 70-71; Advisory Council on International Affairs, 2014: 15). The transportation of Arctic oil and gas could be of interest to Rotterdam, the biggest port in Europe (Advisory Council on International Affairs, 2014: 19).

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17 According to the Russian authorities, a ‘transit’ is any shipping along the coast of East Siberia, which is considered the most challenging section of the Northern Sea Route. Sailing the entire length of the route is thus not a prerequisite in order to be counted (Moe, 2014: 787).
It is, however, not expected that the usage of the new routes will add much to the value the transport of raw resources such as coal and iron ore (ibid.). Additionally, increased levels of shipping in the Arctic has an auxiliary effect on climate change and the melting of the Arctic ice sheet, which in turn could facilitate more shipping in the area (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016: 31). Due to the geographical location of the routes and the risks of weather and climate-related hazards, the Arctic will likely remain a high risk area for international shipping (Ebinger and Zambetakis, 2009: 1222).

Regardless of potential obstacles, the Arctic attracts more commercial attention from Dutch businesses. Whereas the previous polar policy did not mention commercial actors extensively, the new Polar Strategy refers to the importance of the private sector beyond their connections to economic development. Serving as a liaison between the Government, research institutes and the private sector, the discussion forum called the ‘Dutch Arctic Circle’ (DAC) (discussed in Chapter 4) serves as a means to address economic, environmental, and even geopolitical interests of Dutch stakeholders. The Government requests the private sector to play a constructive role with regards to the financial and non-financial support of initiatives connected to environmental protection and safety standards, also within the framework of the DAC (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016: 30).

3.2.3 Geopolitics and governance

Aside from weather and climate-related issues, new economic opportunities connected to the increased accessibility of the Arctic could contribute to its changing strategic importance, impacting the international political and legal arena (Advisory Council on International Affairs, 2014: 11; Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016: 4). As economic activities in the Arctic become more lucrative to both arctic and non-Arctic states, the fragmented legal system governing international relations in the Arctic could come under pressure if disputes emerge. This could contribute to what some have called an ‘Arctic Scramble’18 (Advisory Council on International Affairs, 2014: 56; Polar Strategy, Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016: 18). The AIV Report forms the

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18 ‘Arctic Scramble’: The Arctic as a free-for-all for countries to claim territories and resources that have become, or are becoming, ice-free (Wegge, 2011: 165).
basis of the geopolitical priorities mentioned in the Polar Strategy. Although the Netherlands does not have any direct security concerns in the High North, a military conflict in the region, for instance, would damage the national interests of the Netherlands (Advisory Council on International Affairs, 2014: 52). Peace and stability are said to be essential to overcome challenges posed by climate change, and to take advantage of economic opportunities in the region in a sustainable manner (ibid; Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016: 19). Security and development priorities, the Strategy argues, are not to be disconnected from ecological, economic, and civil interests (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016: 19).

Potential sources of dispute in the Arctic are connected to territorial claims of Arctic states, the delineation of their continental shelves, and disagreements on the jurisdiction over the shipping routes that are now opening up in in the Arctic Ocean (Advisory Council on International Affairs, 2014: 50).

Unlike the case in Antarctica, there is not one overarching Arctic treaty like the Antarctic Treaty to prevent these potential sources of conflicts from escalating into a (military) confrontation. However, there are a number of agreements, treaties and examples of international cooperation that serve a similar purpose. The Netherlands regards the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the Spitsbergen Treaty as the legal basis for multilateral Arctic governance (Hacquebord, 2009: 11; Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012: 54; Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016: 18-19).

In the 2008 Ilulissat Declaration, the five Arctic states bordering the Arctic Ocean confirmed that UNCLOS is the most prominent among the legal frameworks providing governance in the region. UNCLOS enables states to settle maritime boundary disputes and to claim exclusive jurisdiction over areas on their continental shelf that go beyond their maritime exclusive economic zone of 200 nautical miles (Borgerson, 2013: 79, 86; Van Geuns, 2011: 20). The participating states emphasized that they “remain committed to this legal framework and to the orderly settlement of any possible overlapping claims” (Ilulissat Declaration, 2008). The United States, however, is the only Arctic state that has not ratified UNCLOS.

19 Canada, Denmark (Greenland), Norway, Russia, and the United States (Iceland was not included at the Arctic Ocean Conference in Ilulissat 2008).
Beyond the importance of the Law of the Sea, the Netherlands presses for further international regulations on shipping, fisheries, and the environment (Advisory Council on International Affairs, 2014: 44). Examples of these regulations are the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) standards on the exploitation of energy\(^{20}\) and the Polar Code of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) (ibid.). Thus far, the countries involved in the Arctic do adhere to international agreements on the management of the region, yet there is an increase in military operations in the area, especially by Russia (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016: 15).

The changing role of Russia in the Arctic, and its contribution to the increase in military activities in the region, are more explicitly mentioned in the Strategy than in the previous Polar Policy (ibid: 22). Although the level of militarization in the Arctic has increased in recent years, they are mostly connected to emergency prevention and mitigation as well as search and rescue operations (Advisory Council on International Affairs, 2014: 49). According to the AIV, a military confrontation occurring in the Arctic remains unlikely for the foreseeable future (ibid: 50). However, spillover effects from conflicts elsewhere, such as Russia’s annexation of the Crimea and Russia’s involvement in the conflict in Eastern Ukraine could increase tensions in the Arctic (ibid: 29). An unlikely military confrontation in the region would hurt Dutch interests, especially since five Arctic states are NATO members as well. The emphasis on peace and stability through legal means and international cooperation is thus a high priority for the Netherlands (Advisory Council on International Affairs, 2014: 52).

As a small, non-Arctic state with no territorial claims in the Arctic, and with a good reputation with regards to its role in matters of international law, the Netherlands considers itself to be in a privileged position to discuss solutions to potential geopolitical conflicts (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016: 26). Being one of the more active Observers, its participation in Arctic Council working groups allows it to contribute to discussions and research projects. In order to gain more influence, it supports the application of the EU, which broadly has the same goals in the Arctic as the Netherlands, to become a permanent Observer (ibid: 28). The Netherlands also welcomes the involvement of the newest permanent Observers: China, Japan, Korea and India (ibid: 17).

\(^{20}\) E.g. ISO Standards for equipment and offshore structures for petroleum, petrochemical, and gas industries.
The Strategy expresses uncertainty about how the security situation in the Arctic will develop in the long term. As tensions elsewhere in the world could influence the global Arctic discourse, it mentions that the Netherlands and NATO should remain vigilant with regards to the strategic moves of the Russian leadership (ibid: 29). Although NATO does not maintain permanent military installations north of the Arctic Circle, its military activities center on civil-military cooperation geared towards disaster prevention. High-level contact with Russian counterparts, and dialogue with Asian countries with Arctic interests, is necessary to ensure transparent communication (ibid: 19, 29).

3.3 Summary

The Arctic is a relevant region to the Netherlands with regards to its historical ties and current implications for the Dutch environment, economy and security. The Netherlands Polar Strategy is meant, among other purposes, to present the position of the Netherlands government on the international and domestic arenas, as they are faced with the negative and positive effects of a more accessible Arctic. Many of the elements that make the Arctic relevant to the Netherlands today are connected to the adverse effects of global climate change. Rising temperatures in the Arctic pose a threat to the biodiversity in the region itself and in the Netherlands, and the melting of the land-based ice caps could threaten the Netherlands as a low-lying country. Conversely, the retreating sea-ice could allow for actors in the Arctic to take advantage of new economic opportunities. The extraction of oil and gas, shipping and fishing are some of the potentially profitable activities to the private sectors of both Arctic and non-Arctic states, including the Netherlands. Yet one result of a more accessible Arctic with commercial potential is that the area becomes more strategically important. This could potentially lead to disputes or even (military) confrontation between stakeholders. Adherence to international agreements, such as UNCLOS, is seen as an important tool in order to prevent disagreements from escalation.

The Polar Strategy of the Netherlands is clear in its priorities with regards to environmental protection and the mitigation of climate change, the economic development of the Arctic, and governance of the Arctic. Sustainable management of the Arctic is the most important pillar of the Strategy.
With regards to climate and environment issues, the Netherlands seeks to contribute to the mitigation of climate change and adaptation to the unavoidable consequences. Through contributions to scientific research as an Observer at the Arctic Council, the Netherlands seeks to both gain access to valuable data as well as add to it. The ecosystem-directed management of the High Arctic (considered a global public good) is one Dutch objective, with the establishment of a network of protected marine zones within the framework of the IMO as the concrete goal.

Connected to the theme of economic considerations are the priorities of the Netherlands to support the Dutch private sector in their activities in the Arctic (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016: 29). As developments in the Arctic can influence the economic development of the Netherlands, the government finds it necessary to be aware of those changes. Although the Netherlands supports the economic development of the Arctic in principle, it emphasizes the importance of environmental standards and regulations. Collaboration between government, scientists and private sector is mentioned as one way in which standards for sustainable growth can be heightened.

Addressing geopolitical and security concerns of the Netherlands in the Arctic, the Polar Strategy highlights that international agreements must be upheld. UNCLOS is put forth as the most notable agreement to regulate and resolve potential disputes in a peaceful manner. High-level open communication, in forums such as the Arctic Council, is said to be essential in this effort as well. The Netherlands seeks to involve the EU in Arctic affairs, as it would support the same efforts of the Netherlands in the region.

Although not opposed to development in the High North, the Netherlands thus insists that strict environmental regulations should be upheld to make development sustainable. The unregulated whaling industry of the Dutch ‘Golden Age’, which led to the near extinction of the Greenland Right Whale, is a reminder that the Arctic is a vulnerable environment in which human activity can have a tremendous effect.
4 Empirical Data and Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter attempts to answer to what extent and how domestic actors were involved in the process of developing the Arctic portion of the Netherlands Polar Strategy 2016-2020, and to a lesser extent if they were able to influence the provisions in the policy.

Whether or not the domestic stakeholders were involved in the policy-making process was examined through the semi-structured qualitative interviews with representatives of actors thought to be relevant to the process. To a lesser extent, the Polar Policy 2011-2015 and the Polar Strategy 2016-2020 were compared in order to determine the degree these stakeholders were actually able to influence the provisions in the latter. As this thesis is not a comparative analysis of the two editions of the polar policies, however, the change in influence of the stakeholders is not the main focus.

At the core of the examination of the process, leading to the publication of the Polar Strategy, is the separation of the main policy maker from the ones that are involved. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the initiator of the process and responsible for the publication of the Strategy, is referred to as the internal actor in this thesis, whereas the other stakeholders are external actors.

With regards to determining the centrality of the stakeholders in the process, process-tracing techniques and interview guidelines were used to identify the motivations and objectives of the actors, to examine their interactions with the main policy maker, and to determine which of Allison’s conceptual models fit best.

The organization of this chapter is based on the thematic structure employed in the Polar Strategy and in Chapter 3. Depending on the thematic emphasis indicated by the interviewed representative of the stakeholder, or depending on secondary information if no representative was interviewed, the external actors are categorized within the following three themes: climate and environment, economic considerations, and geopolitics and governance. Within these thematic areas, the external actors will then be placed in Model I, II, or III, depending on the level of their involvement and influence in the policy-making process. Some external actors may display characteristics typical for multiple models.
Before a more detailed discussion of the individual actors, a brief introduction of the stakeholders is given. As the interviews are central to the analysis of the data, these actors are introduced in this section, rather than in the introduction of this thesis.

4.2 The Stakeholders

In the policy development procedure, domestic actors involved or interested in Arctic matters include four broad categories: government representatives, scientific institutes, the private sector, and non-governmental organizations (Bolman, interview, 2016; representative of Ministry of Economic Affairs, interview, 2016; Fens, interview, 2016; Noor, interview, 2015).

To gain a general overview of how the development of the Polar Policy and Strategy took place, and which external actors were involved, a representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was interviewed first. In this interview, the representative clarified that the MFA planned to include other stakeholders, and to emphasize certain themes in the Strategy. Adding to this broader perspective, representatives of the Netherlands Polar Committee and two political parties were interviewed as well. For a more detailed perspective from external actors with more thematic interests, informants of various sectors were interviewed.

Stakeholders with the protection of the environment and the combat of climate change as their focal point, wishing to be involved in the policy making process, included environmental NGOs, scientific institutes and the Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment. In order to gain a perspective from scientific institutes, informants from the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO) as well as the Arctic Center in Groningen, representing the Netherlands at the Working Groups of the Arctic Council, were interviewed.

A representative of Greenpeace illustrated the perspective of a Netherlands-based non-governmental organization with an environmental focus. Although this study does not include the standpoint of other NGOs, the value and importance of Greenpeace in Arctic affairs, and its long history in the region, could make up for the lack of other perspectives. Other relevant actors that, due to time and logistical constraints, were not interviewed were the Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.
With regards to economic considerations, the increasingly accessible Arctic could offer possibilities to commerce-oriented stakeholders in the Netherlands. As most of the economic activities in the Arctic are likely to be of a maritime nature, and since the Netherlands has an active maritime sector, Dutch companies are likely to wish to be a part of the new economic opportunities. Such stakeholders could thus be a part Dutch private sector, they could be participants in discussion forums on the economic development of the Arctic, or they can be governmental bodies such as the Ministry of Economic Affairs (MEA).

To give a broad overview of the commercial interests of the Netherlands in the Arctic, a representative of the Ministry of Economic Affairs was consulted in an interview. As a track record of active involvement and influence in promoting the interests of the Dutch private sector and the Dutch economy at large, including in the Arctic, this interview was meant to present a more complete image of the economic interests of the Netherlands in the Arctic.

Adding a perspective from an institute linking the private sector to environmental issues was an informant of the Agricultural-Economic Institute (LEI). Not only did this provide a wider perspective on the involvement of the private sector in polar policy making, but as the initiator of the Dutch Arctic Circle it also provided insider information on the cooperation between the involved sectors.

Information on the position of stakeholders from the Dutch private sector was gathered through interviews with informants of Royal Dutch Shell, the engineering firm Royal Haskoning DHV, and the pelagic and demersal fisheries company Parlevliet & Van Der Plas. There are a number of other companies, such as those representing the sectors of dredging, shipping, and tourism. Companies within those sectors could have been helpful in providing a more complete image on the state of affairs of Dutch companies in the Arctic. However, similar to the constraints preventing the consultation of additional environment-focused actors, these were not interviewed.

Geopolitical concerns and matters connected to international law constitute a significant portion of the Arctic section of the Polar Strategy. As the Arctic becomes more accessible, new technologies develop, and the demand for natural resources increases, the region can become more strategically important to both Arctic and non-Arctic states. This increased importance could also be conducive to a heightened risk of territorial disputes and confrontations between the involved states over, for instance, jurisdiction
over shipping routes. Actors such as international law institutes, the Advisory Council on International Affairs, and the Ministry of Defense could be relevant stakeholders.

Information gathered through an interview conducted with a representative of the Netherlands Institute for the Law of the Sea (NILOS) added a legal perspective to the many views presented in this study. Since the Strategy emphasizes the importance of international agreements in providing structure to governance in the Arctic and in Antarctica, such a perspective cannot be omitted.

There were, however, some actors that would have likely added valuable information and insights to this thesis. Among these are the Advisory Council on International Affairs (AIV), writing the report on which the Arctic geopolitical priorities of the Netherlands in the Polar Strategy are based, and the Ministry of Defense. Secondary information from other sources and informants will to an extent compensate for this missing data.

Whether the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has the freedom to decide if it involves these stakeholders in the development of the Strategy, whether it is (partially) dependent on them, or whether it must bargain with external actors to reach its objectives, will determine which of Allison’s models best captures the policy making process. By examining the motivations of the external actors, and the interactions it has with the MFA, an indication could be given of how and to what extent the actors are involved.

For the purpose of this thesis, several of the informants representing external stakeholders were asked what they expected would be included in the new policy before it was published in April 2016. Within the three themes that were mentioned earlier – climate and environment, economic considerations, and geopolitics and governance– this chapter attempts to discover to what extent these stakeholders were involved, what their motivations are, and if they were able to include provisions in the text that are important to them.

Starting with the main actor in the overall process, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the supporting actors and their relationship with the MFA, as well as their role in the development process, will be presented next. The external actors will be discussed according to their main area of interest and the perceived relationship they have with the MFA, placing them in one of the three conceptual models. By uncovering the priorities of the actors, and the means to realize their priorities, the attempt will be
made to open up the black box of the policy making, to uncover the causal process leading to the Arctic provisions in the Netherlands’ Polar Strategy.

4.2.1 Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) is the most active ministry with regards to the Arctic and as the main government body responsible for the publication of the Polar Strategy (Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research, 2014: 7; Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016: 54). Interviewed to give a perspective of the MFA was Jorden Splinter, the Senior Advisor on Polar Affairs at the department of “Inclusive Green Growth” (IGG), who was the main person guiding the policy making process. Even though coordinating the development of the Strategy is an important task for IGG, it is merely one of its focal points. Besides the Polar Strategy, IGG focuses on broader subjects such as climate change, water, food security, resource policy, and energy (Splinter, interview, 2015). It is a relatively small department (1.5 FTE, full-time equivalent). This means that very few people are charged with the task of collecting the necessary information leading to the eventual creation of a foreign policy.

As indicated in Chapter 1, the MFA is treated as a single actor. It is important to mention, however, that there could be differences of perspectives between executive representatives of the MFA, politicians such as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and those who are more involved in the drafting of foreign policy documents, the bureaucrats. As this study relates more to the development process, the choice was made to focus more on the bureaucratic aspect of foreign policy-making.

The goals of the MFA, articulated in the Polar Strategy itself, represent the interests of the government of the Netherlands. Beyond the sustainable management and development of the Arctic, peace and stability in the region, the mitigation of climate change and adaptation to unavoidable consequences are some main objectives. The entire development process involves several other actors, which are to varying degrees essential to this development (ibid.).

Initiating the process of policy development started at the supply of information and pledges for funding by actors within the government. Building on the previous Polar Policy, the MFA holds talks with individuals within the MFA and other ministries for
around half a year to determine which aspects of the policy need to change and which need to remain as they were (ibid.).

In order to develop the Strategy, Splinter mentioned that “approximately 80% of the facts and figures needed to write the new polar policy” are known (ibid.). Whether the 80% is more or less important than the remaining 20% was not clarified. The remaining information, he explains, is gathered through talks with academic institutions, the NWO, the private sector, and NGOs. At the time of the interview with Splinter, however, he was still unsure to what extent the other actors were requesting to be involved (ibid.).

After the draft policy is written, the document is discussed within the Cabinet. Subsequently, the proposal is presented to Parliament and the different political parties are then able to express their opinions on the proposed policy (Koenders, 2016). If the policy paper is approved by Parliament, it is adopted as a part of the foreign policy of the Netherlands (Splinter, interview, 2015; representative of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, interview, 2016).

Although the stakeholders had focal points connected to all three themes, and characteristics of the three models were present within these themes, the next section presents the themes and models discussed in varying length based on the available data. Whereas the discussion about actors involved in matters connected to climate and environment take up much of the analysis, the section connected to geopolitics and governance span a much shorter portion. Part of the reason for this discrepancy might be that fewer external actors were interviewed, or that fewer of the external stakeholders were involved in the geopolitical section than in the environmental part. Although this might give the impression that certain themes are more pressing to the development process than others, this is not necessarily the case.

4.2.2 Domestic actors: Climate and environment

In the category of external stakeholders that focus mostly on the aspects connected to climate change and environmental degradation of the Arctic, actors characteristic to all three conceptual models are included.
Model I

Within Model I, the process of the development of the Polar Strategy is regarded as one in which the MFA is able to make rational decisions on which external actors it wishes to involve. Non-Governmental Organizations represent one type of external stakeholders that are oriented towards the mitigation of global climate change and the advocacy against environmental degradation. Representing Dutch NGOs with interests in the Arctic was Greenpeace.

Josje Fens, ‘Campaigner Climate and Energy’ at Greenpeace Netherlands, explained that both the World Wildlife Fund (WWF)\textsuperscript{21} and Greenpeace were involved during the development of the Polar Policy 2011-2015 (Fens, interview, 2015). To Greenpeace, the foreign policy of the Netherlands on the Polar Regions is relevant as it allows for discussion on the balance the Netherlands strikes between protecting the environment of the area and taking advantage of economic opportunities.

Greenpeace considers limiting the negative impact of human activity on the environment one of its core values (Greenpeace, 2015). This is true for its perspective on the Arctic as well, being a vulnerable ecosystem and arguably displaying the most visible signs of rising global temperatures. Fens mentioned that the Government and Greenpeace have similar interests in the region in this respect (interview, 2015).

One example of this shared agreement on environmental protection is that Greenpeace and the MFA consider it the responsibility of the Netherlands to help mitigate the negative effects of global climate change (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016: 26-27). Both regard it as an obligation of the country to contribute to measures that would slow, or even reverse this development (Scheepstra, interview, 2015). The focus on the protection of the fragile Arctic and Antarctic ecology is another point where the interests of both parties overlap. The role of Greenpeace in reaching these objectives through political action in the Polar Policy has been of an almost \textit{ad hoc} consultative nature, by request of the MFA (Fens, interview, 2015).

However, whereas Greenpeace would prefer implementing more drastic steps to protect the vulnerable environment of the Arctic (for instance by banning all economic activities it considers damaging to the ecosystem) (ibid.), the Government of the

\textsuperscript{21} Even though the WWF had been involved in the Polar Policy previously, the interviews did not give the impression that it currently has a similar influence. Due to limitations of time and funds, a representative of WWF was not interviewed for the purpose of this thesis. It would, however, likely have been able to provide a valuable perspective. For further study of this subject their perspective should not be omitted.
Netherlands permits the possibility of limited sustainable economic development (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016: 29). Although both consider the sustainability of economic development important, the two seem to emphasize different words in ‘sustainable development’ – Greenpeace preferring ‘sustainable’ and the Government of the Netherlands ‘development’ (Fens, interview, 2015).

The possibility of exploiting fossil fuels from the Arctic Region is considered an especially controversial issue. The Polar Strategy claims that Dutch companies are experienced in the exploitation of oil and gas from the Kara Sea, and that these companies can contribute to the development of technologies making such activities safer and more sustainable (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016: 29). This is a point where the objectives of Greenpeace and the MFA start to diverge. Fens argues that Arctic oil is not only expensive to produce, but that it should not take place at all if we wish to keep the global temperature under the 2-degree line (Fens, interview, 2015).

From the perspective of Greenpeace, the MFA does not make a decisive choice between environmental protection and economic development in the Polar Policy 2011-2015, and it considers the Polar Policy hypocritical. “On the one hand, it emphasizes sustainability, but if the off-shore industry asks for assistance in the exploitation of oil and gas reserves the Netherlands gladly provides assistance” (ibid.).

Whereas Greenpeace would push for creating an ‘Arctic sanctuary’ in the portion of the Arctic Ocean outside of the jurisdiction of the Arctic states (ibid.), the MFA does not believe a prohibition on economic development in the Arctic would be beneficial. Splinter reacted to this idea by pointing out the difficulties in defining such a plan. “The questions that need to be answered first are: What is a ‘prohibition’? What is ‘development’? And what is the ‘Arctic’?” (Splinter, interview, 2015). However, as introduced in Chapter 3, a network of marine protected areas is proposed as an alternative in the Strategy (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016: 27).

In preparation for the Polar Strategy 2016-2020, Greenpeace sought to influence the provisions that will feature in the Polar Policy by engaging in talks with government officials from the MFA in charge of writing the policy paper in the summer of 2015 (Fens, interview, 2015).

Greenpeace and the MFA were thus sharing their perspectives on what the priorities of the Polar Strategy should be. Greenpeace was therefore involved in the policy making process. However, Greenpeace’s challenge is that it is not in a position of
power to push the MFA to reconsider its position on sustainable development. The Polar Policy 2011-2015 and the Polar Strategy 2016-2020 propose essentially the same measures to curb the consequences of climate change and protect vulnerable marine areas (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012: 38, 40; Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016: 26-27).

Although Fens does believe that Greenpeace has some influence on the Polar strategy, Greenpeace is not in a bargaining position, nor are they essential enough in the process to be able to push for its objectives to be included in the Policy (Fens, interview, 2015). Greenpeace does not seem to provide data the MFA considers essential for the development of the Polar Strategy. The economic objectives of the MFA, which are influenced by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and the private sector, Fens argues, seem to take precedence. “They have more influence on the policy making process than we do” (ibid.).

Since the MFA is able to decide whether or not to involve Greenpeace in the policy making process, and on its own terms, Greenpeace is more similar to an actor in Model I. The input of such an actor is not essential to the policy making process, and a refusal to participate would not halt the process itself. Although the contribution of Greenpeace might provide an additional perspective, there was no indication that the policy making process depended on its input.

**Model II**

External actors in Model II can be considered more essential to the policy development process than in Model I since the main policy maker depends to a larger extent on their cooperation in a more regulated structure. In this structure, external actors provide important data produced through standard operating procedures (SOPs). The main policy maker acts as the coordinator in this system. The stakeholders that seem to be more closely involved in the development of the Polar Strategy were the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO) and the Arctic Center. Both provide regular insight and advice to the MFA.

Liesbeth Noor, Policy Officer at the NWO, was interviewed to provide a perspective of NWO’s involvement in the development of the Polar Strategy. Similarly, Maarten Loonen, biologist at the Arctic Center and representative of the Netherlands at the Conservation of the Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) Working Groups of the Arctic
Council, and Annette Scheepstra, representative of the Netherlands in the Sustainable Development Working Groups of the Arctic Council and Coordinator at the Willem Barentsz Polar Institute, both presented the perspective of the Arctic Center.

NWO, the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research, is the national research council of the Netherlands and coordinates Dutch polar research. It directs funding for scientific research to various institutes and universities, and even funds and manages several research institutes itself (Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research, 2016). It has a long history of involvement in polar research, starting with Antarctica as part of the ‘substantial research’ clause in the Antarctica Treaty. In has been active in the Arctic since the end of the Cold War. One of the motivations to continue Arctic and Antarctic research is that NWO considers it important for the Netherlands to have a degree of influence on international management regions concerning both the Arctic and Antarctica (Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research, 2014: 7).

In order for the country to gain, maintain, and expand its influence in the area, the government of the Netherlands must, as mentioned in their report ‘Pole Position – NL 2.0’ conduct high quality scientific research in the region (ibid.). Being informed and having a voice in Working Groups at the Arctic Council are important to achieve these goals. The scientific research performed by Dutch scientists adds to the soft power necessary to reach these objectives, which are also goals the MFA considers important (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016: 26).

As opposed to Greenpeace, NWO has become one of the main partners of the MFA with regards to the development of foreign policy for the Polar Regions (Noor, interview, 2015). Since scientific research is mentioned as a tool to influence Arctic politics (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016: 44), involving NWO in polar policy making seems an appropriate measure. The scientific program of the NWO preceded the development of the Polar Strategy, and is one of the building blocks used to create the Strategy (Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research, 2014: 5; Noor, Interview, 2015; Scheepstra, interview, 2015). Not only is the NWO thus directly involved in the development process of the Strategy, it has significant influence on its content through the inclusion of its scientific strategy paper.

The main feature of the NWO Report is that it presents the scientific strategy and the priorities of the NWO with regards to Arctic and Antarctic research for a period of
five years (Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research, 2014: 5). The strategy plans of NWO have been a part of the polar policies of the Netherlands in both the previous 2011-2015 Policy and the 2016-2020 Strategy (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012: 87; Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016: 44). Beyond scientific priorities, the NWO paper also presents plans for representation of the Netherlands in relevant international forums (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012: 3). The NWO Report has become a prominent feature of the instruments mentioned in the Strategy to operationalize the priorities of the MFA (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016: 44-45; Noor, interview, 2015). The NPP, presented in the NWO Report, is financed by the MFA, the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, and the Ministry of Economic Affairs (Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research, 2014: 7). In recent years policy-supporting activities have been financed from its budget as well (Noor, interview, 2015; Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012: 87).

Multiple informants from the scientific sector expressed they were unsure how much funds the MEA and the private sector would contribute to the new Polar Strategy (Loonen, interview, 2015). Even though the ideal budget would have been 10 million Euros per year for the NPP (Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research, 2014: 27; Noor, interview, 2015), the final budget for Polar research was set at less than half of that. While the NWO plays a crucial role in the creation of the scientific section of the Strategy, it unable to get its ideal funding. Monique de Vries, the Chair of the Netherlands Polar Committee (NPC), representing the interests of the polar research community in the Netherlands, states that the NWO did not appear able to force an increase in the budget from financial contributors, assembled in the ‘Interdepartmental Polar Consultative Body’ (IPO) (De Vries, interview, 2015).

Even though the NWO plays an important role in the policy making process, it does not seem to be in a strong bargaining position when confronted with financial contributors. The NWO thus resembles a Model II-type actor, providing important information to the policy makers, but not being in a strong bargaining position to realize all goals.

In an effort to increase its financial means, the NWO Report mentions the effort of the NWO to cooperate with the private sector. This initiative was taken in the context of the ‘top sector approach’ (TSA) (Noor, interview, 2015; Netherlands Organization for
Scientific Research, 2014: 20), which refers to the government initiative to enable the private sector to determine in part research priorities of scientific institutes. Whereas the businesses sought to take advantages of the economic possibilities, the NWO hoped to increase its budget through this cooperation (Scheepstra, interview, 2015). More on the TSA will be presented in the next section.

The Arctic Center has been specialized in certain types of scientific research in the Arctic, such as oceanography and glaciology, since the 1970s, and is considered one of the most highly valued knowledge institutions in the Netherlands with regards to the Arctic (Loonen, interview, 2015). Furthermore, the Arctic Center represents the Netherlands at Arctic Council Working Groups.

The Arctic Centre at the University of Groningen (ACG) is a scientific institution concerned with the planning and execution of polar research, the provision of education, public outreach, as well as participation in national and international scientific communities (Arctic Center, 2016). The Arctic Center is responsible for representing the Netherlands at three of the six Working Groups at the Arctic Council: AMAP, CAFF, and SDWG (Loonen, interview, 2015; Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012: 109). Regular contact with the MFA is necessary to fulfill its tasks at the Arctic Council. Beyond these tasks, the ACG provides advice to the government on Arctic issues, and is a contributor to the development of the Polar Strategy (Loonen, interview, 2015).

To the ACG, the Polar Strategy is valuable in achieving its goals as it allows Dutch researchers to discover and exploit a niche within the field of polar research. This enables them to distinguish themselves from other researchers (Loonen, interview, 2015). Historically, the focus of the polar policy has been scientific research, but other fields, such as geopolitics and economic factors have become more important as priorities have shifted (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012: 89). As a scientific research institute, Scheepstra mentions, such a policy is very useful to be aware of these changes (Scheepstra, interview, 2015). The priorities laid out in the Polar Policy also clarify how the ACG will represent the Netherlands at the Arctic Council (Scheepstra, interview, 2015; Loonen, interview, 2015).

The Arctic Center is in the advantageous position of having a contract with the MFA, allowing it to represent the Netherlands at the Arctic Council (Loonen, interview, 2015). This close relationship also gives the ACG the opportunity to contribute to the development of the Strategy itself. Maarten Loonen, the manager of the Dutch scientific
research station on Svalbard, explains: “Already at an early stage, we are able to read a draft of the polar policy, and we are asked to give our feedback” (Loonen, interview, 2015). It is thus not only involved in the policy making process, but it also puts into practice some of the priorities expressed in the Strategy. The ACG seems to have a level of influence on the polar policy in the Netherlands.

Similar to the relationship between NWO and the MFA, there are clear overlaps between the goals of the MFA and the ACG, yet here too there seems to be no indication of a bargaining situation. The basis of this claim is that a contractual obligation exists between the MFA and the ACG that allows the Arctic Center to represent the Netherlands at the Arctic Council. This formalizes the relationship, and transforms the influence the ACG has on the Polar Policy to a more structural feature (Loonen, interview, 2015). Moreover, in a hypothetical situation in which the Arctic Center refuses to cooperate with the MFA unless demands were met first, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs could find alternative sources of information to build its Polar Strategy on.

**Model III**

When external actors can act on their own accord to influence a foreign policy, and have a certain level of “baronial discretion” (Allison, 1971: 145), those actors can be placed in the category of Model III actors. Those actors able to bargain more readily with the main policy maker on the inclusion of certain topics in a foreign policy, which can be seen as the pulling and hauling of bureaucratic politics. The result of this dynamic, the foreign policy, is therefore more a ‘resultant’ rather than a ‘decision’ or ‘output.’ However, the external actors are also able to take proactive actions to support the main policy maker if they wish.

Tracing the process of the development of the Polar Strategy, it is possible to identify certain players with predominantly environment and climate-oriented objectives who were not only able to bargain with the MFA in the case of a potential disagreement, but who aided the MFA in its policy making tasks. These actors include political parties, ministries, and Parliament.

Representatives of government bodies and political parties might disagree with certain provisions of a foreign policy, and attempt to influence such policies through bargaining. If such bargaining does not result into an acceptable result for one of the
parties, alternative avenues can be found. However, such actors may also come to the aid of the MFA unilaterally.

Members of Parliament representing two political parties, D66 (Social Democrats) and the Dutch Labor Party, were interviewed for this thesis. Although they are not the only two parties that have been outspoken on the responsibilities of sustainable management of the Polar Regions, they have received more attention due to the efforts of members within their parties.

An example of when a Member of Parliament attempted to influence the Dutch policy in the Arctic was a motion submitted to Parliament by Jan Vos, representing the Labor Party (Partij van de Arbeid). In doing so, Vos requested Parliament to convince the Cabinet and the MFA to condemn and curb the transportation of crude oil in the Arctic Region, and to prohibit the exploitation of oil on the High Seas of the Arctic in a European context (Netherlands Ministry of Economic Affairs, 2014: 3-5). By passing the motion, referred to as the “Vos Motion” (Motie lid Vos) (Netherlands Ministry of Economic Affairs, 2014), Parliament effectively attempted to alter the policy. However, although a motion may be accepted by Parliament, it is up to the Government to decide which steps to take to in either accepting the results of the motion or not (Splinter, interview, 2015).

The motion was overruled by the Cabinet, which states in a letter to Parliament that it did not consider it feasible to execute the motion (Ministry of Economic Affairs, 2011: 4-5). However, whereas some external actors do not even have the opportunity to demand certain factors to be included in a foreign policy document, Vos was able to use tools to confront the MFA and the Cabinet with his request. Information from parliamentary debates, according to Vos, will likely be incorporated in the new polar policy (Vos, interview, 2016). This ability to gather parliamentary support and to spur debates on priorities that differ from those of the main policy maker resembles that of a Model III actor, as it has the potential to influence elements in a foreign policy against the will of the policy maker.

Stientje van Veldhoven (D66), who focuses on climate and energy, agriculture, and environment in Parliament, has been visible nationally with regards to the standpoint of her party on Arctic development and environmental protection of the Polar Regions. Even though she has not been directly involved in the development of the
Strategy, her influence may have had an effect on the policy and even other involved actors.

An example of this influence was her ability to get an amendment passed on the funding of polar research by NWO, increasing the amount presented in the scientific Polar Program (Parliament of the Netherlands, 2015). Although this was not a direct bargaining situation between Van Veldhoven and the MFA, her efforts to increase the budget of Dutch polar research were not sanctioned by the MFA, and her actions were thus more like those of a Model III external actor.

The budget for Dutch polar research executed by NWO was increased by one million Euros over a five-year period (Ibid.). Since one of the goals of the MFA is to strengthen the position of the Netherlands in the Arctic through scientific research, the amendment may have brought the MFA closer to reaching this objective.

These two parliamentarians are likely not alone in their ability to demand the inclusion or exclusion of certain provisions in a foreign policy document independently from the MFA. Other representatives of government bodies may have such abilities as well. However, uncovering the causal processes that leads to the involvement of certain actors, whether the main policy maker is in control of this involvement or not, becomes difficult when the process involves human actors. These agents, including the main policy maker, may wish to conceal such causal processes (George and Bennet, 2005: 207).

Beyond representatives of political parties and the Parliament, a representative of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment would have been an adequate source on whether it plays the role of a Model III stakeholder. It seems likely that it has the ability to influence the policy of the Netherlands with regards to the Arctic environment. However, due to the limited constraints of writing this paper, this was not achieved.

### 4.2.3 Domestic actors: Economic considerations

**Model I**

In the interview with the MFA, Splinter expressed he had the intent to involve the private sector to a degree (Splinter, interview, 2015). As the Arctic opens up for economic development, due in large part to the melting of the land and sea-based ice sheets, Dutch companies are becoming more active in the region and to the Dutch
presence in the Arctic. He added, however, that the Ministry would decide on which elements to include in the text, as it is the actor that decides on the final version of the document. This gives an indication of the level of importance the private sector has to the policy making process: they are important enough to consult, but not essential enough to determine the Arctic agenda of the Netherlands.

Businesses within the Dutch offshore sector are the most prominent out of the private sector (representative of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, interview, 2016). Of these, Shell has received much attention because of their intentions to exploit oil reserves off the coast of Alaska. Beyond the petroleum industry, dredgers, shipping companies, and the tourism industry are interested in the economic possibilities the Arctic has to offer (ibid.). However, according to Rob Banning, Officer of Juridical Affairs and Project Manager at Parlevliet & Van Der Plas, the Dutch pelagic and demersal fisheries company, these new opportunities will not have a significant impact to the fishing sector (Banning, interview, 2016).

Royal Dutch Shell, as one of the most important Dutch companies with interests in the Arctic, has received the most attention with regards to its Arctic operations. Although Shell’s Arctic activities were not limited to Alaska, its intents in the area received much criticism from environmental NGOs such as Greenpeace (Fens, interview, 2015). However, the MFA involved Shell in talks leading to the creation of the Polar Strategy, attempting to involve the private sector more in this process. Yet despite the large investments in the project, Shell halted its Arctic operations in 2015 for the foreseeable future (Shell, 2015). This could have implications for the further involvement of Shell in the polar policy making of the MFA.

Robert Blaauw, the Senior Arctic Advisor at Royal Dutch Shell, considers the Strategy relevant to Shell for a number of reasons: it reflects the interests of all the private sector players active in the Arctic; it contributes to collaboration between the involved states in international waters; and it plays a constructive role in the IMO Polar Code and ISO standards, which they do in collaboration with many others (Blaauw, interview, 2015).

He emphasized that the Strategy is not only important for Shell, but also for the oil field services sector, the offshore construction, shipping industries, and the economy of the Netherlands in general (Blaauw, interview, 2016). The MFA agrees that the oil and gas industry could be important to the economy of the Netherlands in the future by
acknowledging that the Port of Rotterdam profit from its role as a trade hub due to its geographical location (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016: 21).

According to Blaauw, it is essential that the Government of the Netherlands understands what the economic value of the development of the Arctic is for the Dutch private sector. However, he argued that a Dutch policy on the Arctic does not make a significant impact on legislation and regulation in the Arctic countries with which it does business, nor on the activities of Shell itself (Blaauw, interview, 2015). Of more direct interest to Shell are the policies of the Arctic states, since each of them has its own regulatory framework (Blaauw, interview, 2015).

With regards to the importance of the economic development of the Arctic, the MFA and Shell agree to a large extent, as they both expressed their support for (limited) economic activities in the Arctic (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016: 29; Splinter, interview, 2015; Blaauw, interview, 2015). However, the emphasis on sustainability in the Polar Strategy might cause friction between the two. This is a point that Shell does not wish to exaggerate, yet it is an issue the MFA does not take lightly (Splinter, interview, 2015; Blaauw, interview, 2015). As one of the main focal areas in the Strategy, the MFA emphasizes that the nature of the economic activity, the exact location, and the wider impact in the short and long-term should determine whether or not an economic activity is desirable (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016: 30).

Although the Strategy does not present the intention to prohibit economic development of the Arctic, the promotion of environmental protection could interfere with Shell’s operations should they restart their Arctic activities. Before the Polar Strategy was published, Blaauw advised the MFA not to include specific advice for countries to revise their Arctic regulations (Blaauw, interview, 2015). He argued that regulatory regimes in the Arctic countries already are very robust (ibid.). Another argument against increased regulation of Arctic economic activities is that Shell does not refer to the Arctic as a high risk region per se. It is “an area that demands certain measures to ensure operations are conducted safely and responsibly in view of specific arctic challenges” (ibid.).

Differences of opinion between Shell and the MFA, however, did not seem to result in adaptations of the Polar Strategy in favor Shell. Although Shell may be symbolic of Dutch economic interests in the Arctic, and the Dutch private sector is more central in the Strategy, Shell seems to be less important to the development of the Polar Strategy
than expected. Splinter expressed this sentiment by stating that if companies such as Shell express their discontent towards the emphasis on sustainability and environmental protection, “I will just have to disappoint them” (Splinter, interview, 2015). In fact, before the publication of the Strategy, Splinter was unsure if it would be necessary to involve Shell further, as the global oil prices dropped significantly (representative of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, interview, 2016).

Although Shell could be helpful to the MFA in reaching some of the goals articulated in the Strategy, the smaller role of the company in the Arctic and their different take on sustainability and environmental protection allows the MFA to exclude Shell from the development process. The exclusion of Shell does not jeopardize the process as Shell does not seem to have the desire or ability to bargain with the MFA on the priorities in the policy paper. Combined with their lower level of importance in policy development, Shell can best be described as a Model I actor. In tracing the causal mechanism leading from the involvement of Shell to the Strategy, Shell does not seem to have a strong impact. Even though Shell is mentioned once in the Strategy (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016: 21), no emphasis is placed on oil or gas exploitation. Shell’s influence thus seems to be limited at best.

Royal HaskoningDHV (RHDHV), an international, Netherlands-based engineering and consultancy firm, is one of the actors in the private sector interested in playing a constructive part in the sustainable economic development in the Arctic (Smits, interview, 2015).

Coco Smits, social (policy) consultant at Royal HaskoningDHV, mentioned that one of the differences between Shell and RHDHV is that it does not seek to engage physically in Arctic commercial activities. Instead, it provides solutions to their clients, who might wish to become active in the region (ibid.). Governments constitute one type of client, which are able to make informed decisions based on the data Royal HaskoningDHV provides. In the past, it has supplied information and advice on the Arctic to the Netherlands Government (ibid.).

Smits believes it is positive that the government of the Netherlands has a strategy concerning the Polar Regions. Internationally, Smits mentions, it demonstrates that the Netherlands is actively involved (as Observer) in the Arctic Council. According to her, it is also important that other states are aware of each other’s position in certain regions (ibid.).
The relationship between the MFA and RHDHV seems to be marked by low-intensity cooperation while pursuing similar objectives in the Arctic region. Based on the interviews, it appears that the MFA does not rely on input by RHDHV, and vice versa. The cooperation between the two, however, is considered a positive development by both. “From the perspective of a consultancy firm, we did provide the government with advice based on the facts that we had. It is up to the government to decide if it wishes to use our advice or not” (ibid.).

In the Strategy, environmental assessment and sustainable development do indeed receive more attention than the exploitation of oil and gas. However, whether RHDHV alone was the cause of this focus is unclear. Many other actors, including the Ministry of Economic Affairs and NWO, have also underlined sustainability while taking advantage of economic opportunities in the Arctic. However, similar to the relationship between Shell and the MFA, RHDHV is not in a position, nor does it seem to have a desire, to bargain with the MFA about the inclusion of certain provisions in the Strategy. Talks between the two are desirable for the exchange of information, but there were no indications that this is an interdependent relationship, which would point more towards Model II.

Dutch fishing interests in the Arctic make up one of the focal points in the Polar Strategy (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016: 32). The Strategy is clear that the EU has the exclusive authority to regulate the fishing activities of the Member States, called the Common Fisheries Policy. However, it highlights two main points in this regard.

Firstly, it expresses that no new fishing activities ought to take place in areas where no regulations on fishing quotas are established (ibid.). Arctic commercial fishing currently does not constitute a large portion of the global fishing activities. However, Eric Molenaar, Deputy Director of the Netherlands Institute on the Law of the Sea, estimates that the fishing industry may be more profitable than oil and gas in a more accessible Arctic, especially when oil prices are low (Molenaar, interview, 2015).

Secondly, the MFA clarifies that the Government of the Netherlands considers the non-discrimination clause of the 1920 Treaty applicable to all maritime zones around Svalbard (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016: 32). As discussed in Chapter 3,

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22 A mere 4% of the total annual catch was realized in the Arctic on average in the past 35 years (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2012: 55).
this clause allows the Contracting States the same economic rights on Svalbard and its territorial waters as Norway. The disagreement on the geographical extent of the non-discrimination clause is at the base of fishing disputes between the EU and Norway\textsuperscript{23} (Molenaar, interview, 2015; Banning, interview, 2015). Even though the Netherlands does not directly negotiate agreements with regards to fisheries with non-EU Member States, Banning encourages the Government to take a stance in the legal dispute (Banning, interview, 2015).

Although Arctic fishing could be more relevant to the Dutch economy in the future, and insights into the industry could be useful to the MFA, Banning mentions the Dutch fishing industry was not directly involved in the development of the Polar Strategy because the national government does not have the authority to change the common EU fishing policy. The policies of the MFA on Dutch fisheries are thus of less concern (ibid.). Therefore, if the MFA’s objectives on arctic fishing were to diverge from those of Dutch fishing industry, this would not have a major impact on Dutch fishing companies. As the MFA does not depend on the cooperation of the fishing industry and vice versa, the interaction between the two stakeholders can be described as a Model I-type relationship.

No representative of the Dutch shipping sector has been interviewed for the purpose of this paper due to logistic restraints and the limited scope of this study. Although this may result in a sub-optimal presentation of the Dutch private actors involved or interested in Arctic developments, secondary information provided by other stakeholders may make up for this.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, shipping is likely to play a bigger role in the Arctic, as shipping routes in the Arctic could be navigable for longer periods at a time due to climate change (Advisory Council on International Affairs, 2014: 15). However, although it is a growing enterprise, Arctic shipping does not constitute a major share of global shipping at present (Arild Moe, 2014: 787).

The Polar Strategy considers the shipping sector to be an important part of the economic activities in the Arctic (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016: 31-32).

\textsuperscript{23} The EU demanded a larger portion of the total allowable catch of Blue Whiting, a member of the cod family, at the expense of Norway’s portion in the waters of Svalbard (Banning, Interview, 2015). Since the EU has exclusive jurisdiction over marine capture fisheries, EU Member States, such as the Netherlands, are not able to negotiate with Norway directly (Molenaar, interview, 2015). As the two parties did not come to an agreement, the Dutch vessels were barred from the area.
However, while it does not specifically elaborate the role it seeks to advocate for Dutch shipping companies in the Arctic, it does clarify its position on general shipping in the region. Of particular importance is the role of the IMO and its Polar Code, environmental priorities, and the impact of tourism (ibid.).

There has, however, not been an indication that the shipping industry has a major impact on the policy making process. This industry was not mentioned as having a significant impact by any of the informants in the interviews, and the limited attention it was given in the Strategy could point to the possibility that this sector was not involved.

**Model II**

During this study, subordinate actors supplying regular information to the MFA on economic considerations, akin to those such as NWO on scientific data, were not found. Instead, much of the information needed for the production of the Strategy was provided by private companies, such as the engineering and consultancy firm Royal HaskoningDHV, or from the Ministry of Economic Affairs directly. However, there has been a movement towards this Model II position by involving the private sector into the policy making process and scientific research projects.

As briefly introduced, a relatively new development allowing the private sector to exert more influence is the so-called ‘Top Sector Approach’ (TSA, Topsectorenbeleid) (ibid: 30). This is also referred to as the “golden triangle between the private sector, knowledge institutions, and government” (Netherlands Ministry of Economic Affairs, 2011: 8). The Ministry of Economic Affairs initiated this policy in 2010 to encourage cooperation between enterprises and scientific institutes.

According to Noor, the idea is that they will develop research proposals together, and if funded, execute the projects together (Noor, interview, 2015). An example of how the TSA is put into practice is that companies can ask for assistance from the Ministry of Economic Affairs when they wish to set up a strategic environmental assessment project. In the framework of the TSA, these companies could receive funding for projects from the appropriate government department (representative of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, interview, 2016).

With regards to economic opportunities in the Arctic, the TSA has been adapted to make it easier for interested actors to conduct Arctic projects (ibid.). A positive effect of the TSA on Arctic research is that the private sector could help fund scientific
research, which is necessary as research institutes are faced with budget cuts due to the hesitance of the MEA to increase their budget (Scheepstra, interview, 2015).

The Ministry of Economic Affairs encourages the scientific and private sectors to set the research agenda together, meaning that scientific research is to be relevant to businesses (Ministry of Economic Affairs, 2011: 5-6). This could leave less space for fundamental research (Loonen, interview, 2015). Although the Strategy itself is not directly influenced by this approach, Bas Bolman, Aquaculture Researcher and Acquisitor at the Agricultural-Economic Institute (LEI), argues that this does affect the Polar Program of the NWO (Bolman, interview, 2015). In turn, the NWO provides a large part of the scientific input that is incorporated in the Polar Strategy.

The private sector seems to be moving from a collection of Model I actors, with a low level of influence and importance in the policy making process, to becoming Model II actors, meaning they are more influential and are becoming a part of the organizational structure creating the Strategy. Budget cuts and the effects of the low oil prices, however, might jeopardize this trend.

**Model III**

Of the external stakeholders with economic potential for the Netherlands, or Dutch companies, as their primary concern, the Ministry of Economic Affairs seem to be the only actor that met the requirements of a Model III-type actor.

As already established, there are four ministries that finance the Netherlands Polar Program (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016: 46). The interests in the Arctic, however, are not evenly divided over all ministries (Loonen, interview, 2015). The MEA stood out during the interviews in the number of times it was mentioned to have significant influence on Dutch priorities in the Arctic (ibid; Scheepstra, interview, 2015; Van Veldhoven, interview, 2016; Vos, interview, 2016). Although it is not the only ministry with a potential ability to influence the Strategy, its interest somewhat differed from other involved ministries. The MEA looks at the Arctic from a more economic perspective, and it is able to influence economic policies towards the Arctic, including in the fields of energy and trade (Vos, interview, 2015).

After the retreat of Shell from the Arctic, and the decline of the global price of oil, the MEA seems to be less interested in investing in the economic development of, and scientific research in, the Arctic. The reason for this is given as the section of the
Ministry of Economic Affairs concerned with energy believes there is no future for Dutch energy in the Arctic (Noor, interview, 2015). It is felt that the MEA encourages scientists not to pursue research on energy in the Arctic, at least not when it concerns fossil energy, which is a significant part of the research in the Arctic (ibid.).

The increased disinterest of the MEA in Arctic matters has led to expressions of frustrations from governmental representatives, scientists, and companies at the cross-sectoral discussion forum of the Dutch Arctic Circle (DAC) (Scheepstra, interview, 2015).

The issue of funding economic development and scientific research, and the decreased willingness of the MEA to increase their budget for these purposes, has strained cooperation and decision-making processes concerning the Polar Strategy and the NPP. Scheepstra mentions the impression is that it does not consider Arctic developments important enough for the economy of the Netherlands (ibid.). According to Loonen, the MEA is hardly investing in the Arctic. “Even if the private sector becomes more reluctant in the near future”, he stated, “they should stay involved” (Loonen, interview, 2015).

The Ministry of Economic Affairs recognizes that the MFA is the ministry coordinating and creating the Netherlands policy for the Polar Regions, yet it is aware that it has a voice in the way its funds are used to invest in Arctic and Antarctic matters (representative of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, interview, 2016).

The MEA has the ability and position to bargain with the MFA about the provisions and priorities in the Strategy as it would in theory be able to halt its funding if unsatisfied with how they were used. Lower oil prices could lessen the enthusiasm for projects in the Arctic altogether, regardless of the centrality of the private sector in the Strategy. However, a representative of the MEA mentions before the new Strategy was published that the energy department will continue contributing the same amount to Arctic policy (ibid.).

Given that the funding of the Arctic activities of the Netherlands is essential to the Strategy, the MFA cannot ignore the influence of the MEA, nor can it control it in a manner of a player in Model II. Without bargaining or negotiating with the MEA, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs thus might risk losing an important contributor.
4.2.4 Domestic actors: Geopolitics and governance

Beyond this reliance on international cooperation, the MFA uses information from different stakeholders in the Netherlands to reach its objectives on geopolitics and governance in the arctic. Among the most prominent are the Netherlands Institute for the Law of the Sea (NILOS), the Advisory Council on International Affairs (AIV), as well as information from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs itself.

Model I

Based on the information gathered during the interviews, it becomes clear that the only interviewed external actor with a more geopolitical view of the Arctic, yet which is neither essential to the polar policy making or part of an organized structure, is the Netherlands Institute for the Law of the Sea (NILOS).

This research institute, which has research on maritime law as its focus, has provided advice to both states and international organizations. It also provided its services to the MFA as well as other external stakeholders. Research at NILOS is fundamental to informing commercial interests.

Both the Splinter and Molenaar have emphasized the importance of international agreements as instruments allowing states to resolve potential disputes in the Arctic (Splinter, interview, 2015; Molenaar, interview, 2015; Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016: 28). As mentioned earlier, UNCLOS and the Svalbard Treaty are considered the most prominent legal instruments to regulate possible tensions in a more accessible Arctic region.

Molenaar considers the Polar Policy 2011-2015 of importance for his work as a juridical researcher and adviser, because it clarifies the position of the Netherlands vis-à-vis Antarctica, Svalbard, and the Arctic Region in general. State practice is important for assessing the research priorities of a state. Knowing which questions are interesting and relevant to a state can shed light on how research proposals are developed, Molenaar mentions (Molenaar, interview, 2015). “If researchers are aware of the knowledge-interests of the government, they can design their research in a manner that benefits the government as well as researchers” (ibid.).

One benefit of cooperating with the MFA on the legal aspects of the Strategy is that it allowed NILOS to acquire limited access to government sources. Much of state
practice, he argues, consists of diplomatic notes, which are often classified. Since these sources are not in the public domain, it limits the extent to which we are able to examine the positions of states and, thereby, state practice. Having contacts at the government and providing them with advice allows researchers access to some of those documents (ibid.).

The work of researchers such as Erik Molenaar could quite likely to have contributed to the development of the polar policy of the Netherlands. Not only did NILOS advise the MFA directly, it also informed the AIV on certain issues such as legal aspects related to the Arctic Ocean and Svalbard (ibid.). In doing so, NILOS contributed to some of the legal aspects of the Polar Strategy. Although the legal perspective of the institute is seemingly valuable to the Strategy, there is no indication that NILOS was closely involved elsewhere in the policy making process. However, as influence of external actors on foreign policy documents could be difficult to measure, it might be that NILOS is moving closer towards a Model II classification. This depends on whether its input becomes more essential to the development of provisions of the Strategy that relate to international law, or not.

Model II
Most of the geopolitical basis for the Polar Strategy is provided by the Advisory Council on International Affairs (AIV) (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016: 15, 28). The AIV produces regular reports on a wide range of topics related to geopolitical developments. In their report “The Future of the Arctic Region: cooperation or confrontation?” the AIV (2014) presents what it considers the main security aspects connected developments in the Arctic. The inclusion of information from this report in the Polar Policy and the Polar Strategy can be regarded as an enrichment of the policy documents, as geopolitical and economic matters have received little attention in previous polar policies (Advisory Council on International Affairs, 2014: 33).

An example of a current development included in the AIV report on the future of the Arctic Region is an analysis of the evolution of the relationship between Russia and the West. The report mentions that the relationship could face a series of challenges straining their relationship (Advisory Council on International Affairs, 2014: 51). The report added a geopolitical dimension to the Polar Policy, which also makes it a defense policy, De Vries claims (De Vries, interview, 2015).
Although the AIV provides background information upon which the MFA drafted certain geopolitical paragraphs in the Polar Strategy, it could be argued that the AIV would best fit into Model II. An argument for this is that the AIV and MFA do have an ambiguous or interdependent relationship, as actors would in the other two models. The frequency, with which the AIV advises the MFA on other issues, however, and the need of the MFA to include geopolitical insights into the Strategy, makes for a more organized structure of interaction. The focus on the output of information used by the main policy maker to develop a foreign policy is typical for an external actor in Model II. This characteristic can be witnessed in reports on AIV’s vision on geopolitical developments.

Model III

Among the informants that were interviewed in this study, there were no stakeholders that could be identified as having a main focus on geopolitical interests, and which were able to confront the MFA with their demands; something a Model III actor would be able to do. Some of the reasons none of the external actors described in this study are included in Model III of this thematic area, could be that (1) the bargaining capabilities of the interviewed actors were not recognized, that (2) a potential geopolitical Model III-actor was not interviewed, or that (3) such a stakeholder does, in fact, not exist at all.

With regards to the first set of reasons, it could be that some of the actors that were indeed able to influence the geopolitical aspects of the Polar Strategy in an interaction with the MFA characterized by ‘pulling and hauling’ were not recognized. Although the AIV was regarded as a Model II-actor, it might be that its impact on the priorities of the MFA could be counted as one of a Bureaucratic Politics-level. However, the emphasis on its function as an advisory council does not seem to support such claims. Other actors, such as governmental bodies, are more easily regarded as an actor belonging to Model III. Parliament and political parties, for instance, are some of the actors that would be able to influence geopolitical priorities of a foreign policy. Nevertheless, during the interviews, geopolitical motivations were not put forth, and claiming that bargaining between the MFA and other actors on geopolitical issues took place would be inaccurate.

Addressing the second set of plausible reasons, it might be that representatives of relevant Model III-type actors were not interviewed. One ministry, for instance, that would wish to influence foreign policies in its favor would be the Ministry of Defense. Its
security concerns would likely be regarded as essential to the foreign policies of the Netherlands on geopolitical issues, and would not be ambivalent towards the Dutch position in such strategic locations. As the role of NATO in the Arctic is presented in the Strategy, the current polar policy has thus become more of a defense policy than ever before. Unfortunately, time and logistic considerations prevented an interview with the Ministry of Defense of the Netherlands. Its perspective would give a more complete picture of the polar policy making process in the Netherlands.

Finally, it could be the case that actors concerned with the geopolitical topics presented in the Polar Strategy, and with the ability to bargain with the main policy maker simply do not exist. Although Allison (1971) claimed that external domestic actors could even be involved in foreign policy making in a situation where national security is at risk (8-9), it seems that, in the case of the Polar Strategy, fewer Model III-actors were involved here than in other thematic areas.

It is possible that subjects connected to the protection of national security, also referred to as ‘high politics’ (e.g. Barnett, 1990: 531; Hill, 2003: 4), are too essential for external actors to influence. Conversely, the Polar Strategy might not be essential enough to such potential Model III-actors to attempt to change geopolitical provisions. Further studying of external stakeholder involvement in the development of the Polar Strategy could investigate the role of geopolitically oriented stakeholders in more detail.

### 4.3 Dutch Arctic Circle

Of particular interest when discussing the categorization of the different external actors in the three conceptual models is the creation of the discussion forum called the Dutch Arctic Circle (DAC) (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016: 29). Whereas the external stakeholders seem to fit into one model more or less comfortably, or slowly moving towards a different model, the DAC seems to provide a framework where the involved actors can play roles that are not typical for the expected best-fit model. Based on the special role this forum has on the mobility of the external actors between models, and its potential effect on the policy making effort of the Polar Strategy, the DAC is mentioned separately from the thematic categories of external stakeholders discussed earlier in this chapter.
In meetings of the DAC, representatives of the Government, scientific institutions and the private sector gather to exchange ideas and strategies. One of the main goals of the DAC is to investigate what the added value of this cooperation to Arctic development can be (representative of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, interview, 2016; Bolman, interview, 2015). The DAC has been mentioned by various informants as a meaningful entity combining some of the most important sectors in the Netherlands. The impression was given that the DAC could grow into a substantial force on Arctic policy making in the Netherlands, as it fills the communicative and strategic gaps between the relevant stakeholders. However, the decline of oil prices in 2015 and 2016 may slow down this development, as we will see in this section.

The purpose of the DAC is thus to shorten the distance between the different actors from various sectors. It puts into practice the 'top sector approach' by assembling representatives from the three sectors of government, science, and private to discuss initiatives related to the Arctic (representative of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, interview, 2016; Bolman, interview, 2015). In doing so, the different sectors attempt to discover how the Netherlands might benefit from this collaboration (representative of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, interview, 2016; Smit, interview, 2015). They might even work together on a project, such as strategic environmental assessment, but so far they have yet to do so (representative of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, interview, 2016). Although shipping, fisheries, and tourism are discussed at the Dutch Arctic Circle, discussions tend to center on energy and other related topics such as infrastructure development (Smits, interview, 2015).

The DAC is predominantly financed through the Maritime Innovation and Impulse Program (MIIP), which is a program created within the context of the ‘top sector approach’. All involved companies contribute to this fund, subsequently from which smaller project proposals are funded. The DAC receives a sum from this program. In 2015, that was approximately fifteen to twenty thousand Euros (Bolman, interview, 2015). The DAC is thus not directly financed by the Government, and it does not structurally work for it either (ibid.).

In the development of the Polar Strategy, the DAC played a consultative role. With regards to the actual implementation of the scientific branch of the policy, NWO was more closely involved than the DAC. The Dutch Arctic Circle also offered its consultative services to NWO in the development of its NPP (ibid.). Within the framework of the DAC,
the government requests the “active and constructive role” of the private sector in supporting and financing the development of safety and environment standards (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016: 30).

Given that the DAC has not existed for long, since 2013 (ibid: 29), it is of a seemingly ad hoc nature, and has played a limited role in the Arctic activities of the Netherlands thus far, it seems that the DAC has less influence on the Government than could be expected. Although this discussion forum was becoming more important in shaping the agenda of Arctic activities of the Netherlands, recent developments have caused this influence to decline.

The retreat of Shell from Alaska had a major impact on the momentum of the DAC. As one of the most important actors in the Dutch private sector, and with the most influence in the DAC, both government actors and those from the scientific field had high hopes that Shell would make large investments in Dutch Arctic activities. Although the Strategy posits that NGOs are included in the DAC (ibid.), the private sector and the government officials have been reluctant to accept them at the forum (Bolman, interview, 2015; De Vries, interview, 2015). As one of the initiators of the DAC, Bas Bolman is of the opinion that NGOs need to be more closely involved to get a holistic view of the Dutch role in the Arctic. “Since NGOs represent a significant part of society, however, it is important to include them. By including them, the policy becomes more credible” (Bolman, interview, 2015).

The question now is, to what extent are the actors from the different models gathered in one forum, and how does this affect the main research question on which of Allison’s conceptual models best describes the policy making process of the Polar Policy. In the Strategy, the DAC is described as a platform functioning as a bridge between those supplying data, those requesting data, and those making and executing policy (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016: 30). It argues that the continuation of the DAC is desirable.

Regardless of the potentially decreasing importance of the DAC in the policy making process due to lowering oil prices, the intention of the MFA to involve the outcomes of the forum into the process could indicate a more structured policymaking process in the future. Government, scientific research, and the private sector seem to be in close contact on Arctic matters, and actors that are typical for Model I, II and III have thereby added an overarching layer to this conceptual framework, which to some extent
resembles Model II more than the other models. This could indicate that certain external stakeholders are involved in the process to a larger extent.

4.4 Summary

In attempting to discover the extent to which stakeholders were involved in the development process of the Polar Strategy, interviewing representatives of different Dutch sectors with Arctic interests provided meaningful insights. Various stakeholders in the Netherlands, with a wide variety of interests and objectives in the Arctic, seek to influence the polar policy of the Netherlands. The main investigation was, as Gerring (2007: 45) describes to “peer into the black box” of stakeholder involvement in the development of the Polar Strategy, measured against Allison’s three conceptual models. Based predominantly on interviews as well as the text of the Polar Strategy 2016-2020 itself, some considerations can be made on the three hypotheses that were presented in Chapter 1 of this thesis.

*The development of the Arctic provisions in the Netherlands Polar Strategy involves external stakeholders to a limited extent. Instead, the main policy maker, the MFA, decides on the content of the policy paper.*

This hypothesis holds at least in part when considering the MFA, as the main policy maker, is able to control the involvement of different actors in the policy making process. With regards to the theme of climate and environment, at least one actor resembled the archetype of the external actor that would be in Allison’s Model I. Taking advantage of the information Greenpeace could provide, together with its perspective as a Dutch NGO, the MFA reached out to Greenpeace before the development of the Polar Strategy. However, the impression was not given that Greenpeace was closely involved in the process.

The differences in perspectives and motivations could have contributed to a decreased level of trust between the two actors, which became clearer due to the exclusion of Greenpeace from the Dutch Arctic Circle. The ability of the MFA to choose whether or not it would involve Greenpeace in the policy making process, and the
inability of Greenpeace to bargain for its involvement, are the main reasons the dynamic between the two is regarded as resembling Model I.

As to actors with a more commercial perspective on the Arctic, the Dutch private sector consists of various external actors that are more typical to Model I. The MFA seeks the contribution of industrial sectors such as the petroleum industry, shipping, and fishing. However, the interviews did not give the indication that the private sector was crucial to the policy making effort of the MFA.

Although there were indications that the MFA and companies like Shell had differences of opinion on the extent of development, as well as its level of sustainability, the MFA expressed its intent to involve the private sector both in the interview and the Strategy itself (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016: 30). Through discussion forums such as the DAC, which put into practice the ‘Top Sector Approach,’ the private sector is more closely involved in talks with representatives from the government and scientific institutes. This more organized structure of stakeholder involvement could indicate a move from Model I to Model II, yet the retreat of Shell from the Arctic may have slowed or halted this development.

Within the thematic area of geopolitics and governance, one actor stood out as a likely Model I-actor: the Netherlands Institute on the Law of the Sea (NILOS). Although NILOS may have had some influence on the development of the Polar Strategy, it too was not essential to the process. The MFA would likely have been able to create the policy without its involvement, but it could be that the quality of the section connected to international was improved by its involvement. As the collaboration was less of a structured dynamic, and NILOS did not have the means or desire to bargain with the MFA, Model I fits the level of involvement of NILOS best.

One could argue that the choice to involve external stakeholders might depend on the urgency of developing the strategy, and the consequences of not having a policy on the security of the state. As mentioned earlier, the Cuban Missile Crisis was a case of an impending world war, and immediate government action was required. Such a situation where the direct security of the state is at stake is what some refer to as ‘high politics’ (e.g. Barnett, 1990: 531; Hill, 2003: 4). In other situations, where domestic issues take a more central position, and the security of the state is not at risk, are seen as ‘low politics.’
The Neo-Realist assumption that the state is at the center of the international affairs, and the government will make choices to protect its own interests, could explain why a government would exclude external stakeholders in policy making on state security. As the Polar Strategy is not a response to an immediate security threat to the Netherlands (Advisory Council on International Affairs, 2014: 51), one could consider the policy development of the Polar Strategy as being a part of ‘low politics’, thereby not rejecting the hypothesis that Model I is indeed the most suitable conceptual model.

However, Allison argues that there is indeed a case for other models besides Model I in such extreme security situations (Allison, 1971: 9). He argues that if Model II and III can give valid explanations for the involvement of other actors in the Cuban Missile Crisis, they could likely also be applied in less urgent, ‘low politics’ situations.

Among the other stakeholders interviewed for this thesis, there were several that did not meet the requirements to be considered an external actor in Allison’s Model I. The MFA did not have the liberty to exclude them, and the information they provided constituted building blocks of the Strategy itself. Therefore, the following hypothesis was discussed:

*The development of the Arctic provisions in the Netherlands Polar Strategy involves an organized structure of subordinate allied stakeholders, which is coordinated by the main policy maker: the MFA. The final product can be considered an ‘output’."

The Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research and the Arctic Center at the University of Groningen especially stood out as actors that were both focused on environmental and climate developments as well as meeting the requirements of Model II actors. The dynamic they have to the MFA with regards to Arctic research and other types of collaboration can be considered an organized structure. This is not an *ad hoc* relationship based on short-term interests. Instead, the two actors are highly involved in the policy making process, supplying information to the MFA in what resemble standard operating procedures. Both the representative of the MFA and the representatives of the actors themselves have indicated that the NWO and ACG influenced the Polar Strategy.

The main reason why these actors are not included in Model III is that they have a more subordinate position in relation to the MFA during the policy making process. The MFA serves as the coordinator of the process, and gathers the information it needs to
develop the Strategy. Although the external actors may have a certain level of bargaining power, seen as they play an essential role in the process, they lack the means to hypothetically pressure the MFA into adopting elements in the Strategy the MFA does not support.

Actors with a similarly structured relationship to the MFA on economic considerations as,, for instance, between the NWO and the MFA, were not found during this study. An economic Model II actor would have structurally been involved with the MFA to provide information on economic issues connected to the Arctic. It would provide this essential data in exchange for a certain level of influence, which would become clear in the Strategy.

The entity that has come closest to an economic Model II actor could be the Dutch Arctic Circle. In the spirit of the Top Sector Approach, this discussion platform has, as indicated earlier, started to resemble more closely a Model II actor since its creation in 2013. As the Polar Strategy 2016-2020 is the first of such policy papers to be published after the DAC was founded, the growth of its influence could be measured in the next polar strategy. The decreased interest in the Arctic by one of the most important participants in the DAC, Shell, might slow, halt, or reverse this movement to Model II.

In terms of geopolitical interests, the Advisory Council on International Affairs was the only actor that could be identified in this study as a Model II-type actor. Although the Arctic is not the only thematic focal area of the AIV, and even though the report on the geopolitical state of the Arctic is one of the many it produces, the value of the geopolitical information it provides to the MFA is one of the reasons the AIV is included here in Model II.

As opposed to Model I, which has a theoretical background that can most adequately be linked to Realism and Neo-Realism, Model II is, as discussed, more comfortably placed in the Liberal and Liberal-Institutionalist school. The more organized structure of stakeholder cooperation with the main policy maker makes the dynamic between the actors seem like an informal institution. The relatively high level of reliance on each other makes the actors appear almost interdependent. Although the involved actors in the development of the Polar Strategy are not only preoccupied with the Arctic and with policy making of the MFA, the Polar Strategy adds to their potential influence in Arctic affairs. In this case, the actors are thus more included in the policy making process, and are thus more involved.
The importance of the Strategy as a means to broadcast the insights of the AIV onto the international political stage, and the significance of the geopolitical recommendations of the AIV, makes the two actors valuable partners. Without the consent of the MFA, however, the AIV is not able to add to or amend the Strategy. Actors within Model III are more able to take such measures. The hypothesis to research whether model III is the correct description of the policy making development was:

*The development of the Arctic provisions in the Netherlands Polar Strategy involves multiple stakeholders able to bargain with the main policy maker, the MFA, in order to influence the content of the policy paper. The final product of this process can be considered the ‘result’ of a bargaining process.*

This hypothesis cannot be rejected, as there were indeed some actors which could be considered external actors that fit in Model III. With regards to priorities and objectives connected to environment and climate, representatives of political parties and the parliament of the Netherlands revealed that they were in a better position to bargain on related topics with the MFA. Whereas the other actors had little incentive or ability to (attempt to) advocate their position *vis-à-vis* the MFA, this was indeed the case for the representatives of the two interviewed political parties. An actor likely able to bargain with the MFA in this context is the Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment. As a financial contributor to the Arctic activities of the Netherlands, it would likely have a strong position of power when dealing with the MFA.

Similar to those actors with an environmental focus, political parties, Parliament, as well as other government bodies would be able to influence the economic provisions of the Strategies by bargaining with the MFA. However, of particular significance is the bargaining power of the Ministry of Economic Affairs. Not only does the MEA have a hypothetical ability to bargain with the MFA and other actors on Arctic policy making, there were such talks before the publication of the Polar Strategy. As the oil prices lowered, the interest of the MEA in investing in Arctic research and development decreased as well. Although the financial contribution of the MEA to Arctic activities of the Netherlands was not decreased, it did demonstrate that the MEA’s support is crucial in the development of the Polar Strategy.
Actors that can be considered as able to bargain with the MFA on geopolitical aspects of Arctic policy making, besides the political parties and other government entities, were not among those interviewed in this study. It is conceivable, however, that especially the Ministry of Defense would have this ability. Whether or not this is the case will have to be investigated more thoroughly.

The Bureaucratic Politics Model, Model III, is characterized by the different motivations and interests of the involved actors. These actors can be involved in this process without the consent of the main policy makers, as they are in a relatively powerful position. Although they might support the MFA in achieving its goals, they might also be an obstacle. The socially constructed motivations of the actors (Hill, 2003: 28), placing this model more adequately in the Constructivist school of thought, may differ from that of the MFA. However, they are able to bargain to influence the policy to their advantage.

It can thus be claimed that dynamics between the external actors and the policy maker in the development of the Polar Strategy resemble those of Model I, II, and III. The MFA is able to choose to involve some external actors, coordinate a more established structural dynamic with subordinate external actors, and bargain with more powerful stakeholders. They thus have a large say in the process, and even though the main policy maker would potentially want to exclude them, they are closely involved. The creation of the Dutch Arctic Circle, however, could be an attempt to unify many of the actors of the different models into one overarching forum, which would approximate a Model II-type organization. The exclusion of NGOs, the decreased interest of Shell, and the bargaining power of some external actors, however, seem to keep dynamics of the three conceptual models largely intact.
5 Conclusions

In applying the three conceptual models developed by Graham T. Allison (1971) to the development process of the section of the Netherlands Polar Strategy 2016-2020 devoted to the Arctic, this thesis attempted to answer the main research question: To what extent were domestic stakeholders involved in the framing of the priorities of the Netherlands vis-à-vis the Arctic?

Allison’s models provide an appropriate theoretical framework for this exercise, as it allows the researcher to measure the involved stakeholders against archetypical characteristics of the three models. In doing so, the domestic actors can be categorized according to the model in which they most adequately fit.

The data on which most of the analysis is founded was primarily gathered through qualitative, semi-structured interviews. By interviewing the main policy maker, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and representatives of actors that were likely involved in the development process, or interested in being involved, statements were gathered to shed light on the dynamics between them.

The information collected in the study was presented according to the thematic structure of the section of the Polar Strategy, which discussed the objectives of the Netherlands in the Arctic. Within these themes, the external actors were categorized according to the conceptual model in which they best fit. Looking back at the three hypotheses that were presented the introduction of this paper, we can make some careful conclusions about the involvement of external stakeholders.

Firstly, the MFA had indeed some degree of liberty in choosing to involve external domestic stakeholders. The lack of input from non-governmental organizations, private sector actors, and some research institutes, including their lack of support for the final policy paper would not threaten the MFA’s efforts to create the policy altogether. The MFA resembled a more typical policy maker, such as those in Model I of Allison’s conceptual framework. Through the interviews, however, it became clear that there were several other stakeholders that, based on their statements on their relation to the MFA, do not fit into Model I.

Secondly, when comparing the development process of the Polar Strategy to Allison’s Model II, there seemed to be many similarities. The MFA functioned as the
coordinator, or a more regulated organizational structure of allied subordinate actors, working together to develop the part of the Polar Strategy on Arctic priorities. If the external actors in such a model do not cooperate, the development of the policy paper could potentially be under threat, as the main policy maker depends on the data they provide. Scientific research organizations and geopolitical advisory boards were some of the stakeholders that could be considered Model II-actors. The findings of the examination of the first two hypotheses, however, do not include all involved stakeholders, which is why the third hypothesis was considered.

Thirdly, as with the first two hypotheses, the third hypothesis was compared to the conceptual model by Allison that was the most similar; in this instance Model III. Based on the relationship the MFA has with some of the stakeholders, this relationship seems to be the real-world counterpart of the theoretical characteristics presented in the model. The examination of Model III stakeholders showed that government actors, such as political parties, ministries, and Parliament, were able to bargain with the MFA on the provisions in the Polar Strategy. Within these dynamics, the MFA was one of the bargaining parties. Especially with regards to the budget for polar activities, the MFA depends to a significant degree on these stakeholders. The main policy maker thus does not have full freedom to decide on its own accords, and depends on the input and support of certain actors.

As expected, this study thus found that the dynamics represented in all three of Allison’s models were present simultaneously in the development of the provisions in the Polar Strategy concerning Arctic activities. However, the relationship between the MFA and one particular stakeholder could be placed more comfortably in one of the three models, instead of multiple models at once. The extent to which the domestic stakeholders are involved in the policy making process seems to depend on the importance of their input and support of the provisions included in the policy paper.

The assembly of some of the actors represented all three models in the Dutch Arctic Circle has made distinguishing between the three models more difficult. Where, for instance, private sector actors were previously typical Model I actors, they are moving towards becoming a part of a more organized structure akin Model II. Whether this development will continue depends on several factors, including the interest of some actors in the Arctic, such as Shell.
One general implication of this study could indicate that Allison’s conceptual models have a wider applicability in other instances of foreign policy making. Applying Allison’s conceptual models to the foreign policy making process of the Polar Strategy shows that Allison’s models are still relevant today, although reservations (as presented in Chapter 2) should be taken into account.

Another implication could be that it demonstrates how a small, non-Arctic country, such as the Netherlands, is able to play an active role in Arctic affairs. Moreover, it could inspire further study on the involvement of domestic stakeholders in this process. Beyond policy making on polar issues, other types of foreign policy could be investigated in a similar manner.

Some recommendations can be made with regards to further study of this subject. The first recommendation is that more relevant actors need to be involved for further study. This is necessary to increase the reliability and validity of this exercise, and to gain a broader understanding of stakeholder involvement and influence. As the research conducted for the purpose of this thesis was limited in scope, some representatives of relevant stakeholders were not consulted. A larger number of Dutch actors that have either contributed to the development of the Polar Strategy, or those with Arctic interest, ought to be included.

As the actual influence of the external actors is difficult to measure, the second recommendation is to compare the polar policies of the Netherlands over time. This could give an indication of the development of their influence based on the focal points of the policy papers. Such a comparative case study could yield interesting findings with regards to changes of influence domestic stakeholders have on foreign policy making. As is the case in this thesis, however, an overlap of objectives of the main policy maker and other stakeholders could be unrelated to stakeholder influence in the policy making process. For instance, the environmental focus of the Polar Strategy may not be due to efforts by Greenpeace, and commercial objectives may not be the influence of Shell.

Building on the second recommendation, a third advice is that cross-sectional comparisons could be made between the Polar Strategy of the Netherlands and those of other countries. The relative focus on the involvement of domestic actors in countries could expose if Dutch stakeholders are more or less involved compared to those elsewhere. Using different types of foreign policy documents could widen the scope even more.
A fourth recommendation concerns the actual implementation of the Polar Strategy, and its effect on scientific research, economic development, and governance in the Arctic could be studied. Being a part of the foreign policy of the Netherlands, this is where the effectiveness of the Strategy, and indirectly the influence of domestic stakeholders, could be demonstrated.

Finally, in the attempt to apply the methods applied in this study to a wider population of cases, one could investigate whether Allison’s models can be applied to other, non-polar policies of the Netherlands and other countries. Extending this effort, the role of domestic actors in the development of other foreign policies could be investigated. Whether or not the involvement of domestic actors depends on if the goals of the policy can be classified as ‘high’ or ‘low’ politics is a further element that could be taken into consideration.

Putting the objectives articulated in the Polar Strategy of the Netherlands into practice continues a 400-year legacy of Dutch presence in the Arctic. However, whereas Arctic resources have previously been exploited in unsustainable ways, one can hope that scientific research, international agreements, and environmental protection allow pitfalls of the past to be avoided. Transparency through publications such as the Polar Strategy could enhance cooperation between the countries involved in the Arctic, in turn yielding a positive effect on the sustainable management of the Arctic in the future.
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http://www.greenpeace.org/international/en/about/our-core-values/
[Accessed 12.05.2016].


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Appendix

Annex 1: Arctic boundaries

Arctic boundaries

24 Available at: http://www.arctic-council.org/images/PDF_attachments/Maps/boundaries.pdf [Accessed 16.05.2016]
Annex 2: Informants

Interviewed informants

Banning, Rob  
Officer of Juridical Affairs and Project Manager, Parlevlied & Van Der Plas, 2015 (in person)

Bolman, Bas  
Aquaculture Researcher & Acquisitor, LEI, 2015 (in person)

Blaauw, Robert  
Senior Advisor, Global Arctic Theme, Royal Dutch Shell, 2015 (in person)

De Vries, Monique  
Chair, Netherlands Polar Committee, 2015 (in person)

Fens, Josje  
Campaigner Climate and Energy, Greenpeace, 2015 (in person)

Loonen, Maarten  
Biologist at the Arctic Center, and Associate Professor University of Groningen, 2015 (in person)

Molenaar, Erik  
Deputy Director, Netherlands Institute on the Law of the Sea (NILOS), 2015 (in person)

Noor, Liesbeth  
Policy Officer, Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO), 2015 (in person)

Scheepstra, Annette  
Coordinator, Willem Barentsz Polar Institute, 2015 (in person)

Smit, Mathijs  
Environmental Scientist, Royal Dutch Shell, 2015 (in person)

Smits, Coco  
Social (Policy) Consultant, Royal Haskoning DHV, 2015 (in person)
Splinter, Jorden  
Senior Advisor on Polar Affairs, Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015 (in person)

Van Veldhoven, Stientje  
Parliamentary Group Secretary, D66 (Social-Liberal Party), 2016 (by telephone)

Vos, Jan  
Member of Parliament, PvdA (Social-Democratic Party), 2016 (by telephone)

(Anonymous informant)  
Ministry of Economic Affairs, 2016 (by telephone)

Other persons consulted

Barr, Susan  
Senior Consultant Polar Regions, Norwegian Directorate for Cultural Heritage, 2016 (in person)

O'Donoghue, Arne  
Senior Policy Officer Economics and Energy, Embassy of the Netherlands to Norway, 2015 (in person)

Ten Tusscher, Bea  
Ambassador, Embassy of the Netherlands to Norway, 2015-2016 (in person)
Annex 3: Interview guides

Interview guide: Questions to Policy Makers

a. The project
This interview is part of the data-gathering fieldwork for my master’s thesis. The thesis will focus on the influence, or lack of influence, of relevant domestic actors on the development of the Netherlands Arctic Strategy. The thesis will be written as a part of my study program Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Oslo, and it is written in collaboration with Fridtjof Nansen Institute in Oslo.

b. Purpose and format of interview
This interview is part of a series of interviews with actors in the Netherlands that have interests in the Arctic region. Although the focus of the thesis will be the Netherlands Arctic Strategy, I will also be talking to actors that have not been involved in the development of that policy. The insights gained during the interviews will hopefully aid in the writing of the thesis. The duration of this semi-structured interview will be approximately one hour.

c. Confidentiality, permission for recording
Ideally the interview will be recorded to ensure that none of the information will be lost for evaluation and analysis after the interview. The interviews are strictly confidential, and the interviewed is free to decide whether she/he will be an anonymous source or not. Potential direct quotes will be sent to the interviewed for approval before being used in the thesis. She/he may decide whether the interview will be recorded or not.

Background
a) Can you tell about yourself and your tasks?
b) Can you tell something about the institution?

1. Goals and interests
a) What are the main goals of your institute/ministry with regards to the Arctic region?
b) According to you/your institution, what would be the ideal role of the Netherlands in this context?
2. The Strategy
a) In your view, what is the purpose and value of the Netherlands Arctic strategy?
b) How do you think a small, non-Arctic country such as the Netherlands can influence international Arctic policy?
c) How are your goals and interests reflected in the Strategy?
a) To what extent is the Strategy for 2016-2020 different from the previous Strategy?

3. Formulation of the Strategy
a) How does the process of the development of the Strategy look like?
b) How much freedom does the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have in creating the Strategy?

4. Other stakeholders
a) To what extent did you rely on external domestic actors during development of the Strategy?
b) What can you offer the domestic actors and what do they supply to you?
c) Are there actors that you wish would also be involved? And are there certain actors you keep out of the collaboration?

5. Evaluation
a) Has the Netherlands Arctic Strategy so far lived up to its expectations?
b) What were challenges or obstacles in the development of the Strategy?
c) How do you think the Strategy will be even more helpful in reaching the goals?

6. Future perspective
a) How could recent changes in the world’s security situation be reflected in the development of future Arctic strategies of the Netherlands?
b) Could the role of domestic stakeholders on the Netherlands’ Arctic policy change in the coming years?
c) Will the collaboration between the Netherlands and other international actors change?
Questions to external domestic actors

a. The project
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b. Purpose and format of interview
This interview is part of a series of interviews with actors in the Netherlands that have interests in the Arctic region. Although the focus of the thesis will be the Netherlands Arctic Strategy, I will also be talking to actors that have not been involved in the development of that policy. The insights gained during the interviews will hopefully aid in the writing of the thesis. The duration of this semi-structured interview will be approximately one hour.

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Background
a) Can you tell about yourself and your tasks?
b) Can you tell something about the institution?

1. Goals and interests
a) To what extent do you have goals or ambitions in the Arctic region?
b) What determines your level of interest in the Arctic region?

2. Netherlands Arctic Strategy
a) According to you/your institution, what is the value of the Netherlands Arctic Strategy?
b) How does the Strategy affect your institution, the Netherlands, and the Arctic region?
3. **Contribution**
   a) To what extent have you contributed/are you currently contributing to the development of the Netherlands Arctic Strategy?
   b) What do you have to offer the policy-makers and vice-versa?

4. **Other stakeholders**
   a) What is your relationship with other contributing stakeholders?
   b) What advice would you have for other interested parties?

5. **Evaluation**
   a) How beneficial has the Strategy been for the Netherlands/your institution/the Arctic?
   b) How do you think the government should change their Arctic policy?
   c) If contributing, were there any obstacles in the process of strategy development?
   d) If not contributing, how do you consider your influence in the Arctic as compared to contributing stakeholders?

6. **Future perspective**
   a) What do you think the role of the Netherlands/your institution should be in the future?
   b) Do you have other avenues by which you seek to reach your objectives in the Arctic?