Chapter III

Foreign policy making in the Netherlands and Australia: actors, institutions and procedures

1. Introduction

As was argued in Chapter II, procedures will regulate participation of the various actors in the four phases of the foreign policy making process. Since these actors are thought to represent parochially, and functionally determined views, the next step in a comparative analysis of Dutch and Australian foreign policy is an assessment of how differences in procedural arrangements influenced the contribution of various actors in the two case studies. This task will be taken up in this chapter. The institutional-procedural analysis will shed light on the likelihood that there is a strong foreign policy making centre. The composition of the centre, a major factor in explaining goals and means pursued in Dutch and Australian foreign policy, can also be analysed. A series of hypotheses will compare the expected role and importance of actors in Dutch and Australian foreign policy making. The hypotheses will constitute a first and partial attempt to answer the following questions:

What were the main actors in Dutch and Australian foreign policy making in both cases given the institutions and procedures of foreign policy making? How did changes in institutions and procedures affect the role of and thus the relative weight carried by the various actors in the foreign policy making process of the Netherlands and Australia, and
what, given my assumptions on actors’ respective functional and parochial predispositions, would be the expected implications in terms of goals pursued?

With regard to the last question a number of hypotheses will be formulated at the end of this chapter stating the likely policy of Australia and the Netherlands in the cases of West New Guinea and East Timor. These final hypotheses will be tested in Chapters IV-VII. These chapters also study the effect of coalition making on the barriers of institutional power that support decision making centres since, apart from previous comments about the role of the international environment, any findings contradicting the hypotheses could be explained in terms of coalitions offsetting institutionally and functionally dominant actors, or alternatively as a prevalence of views at variance with functional expectations.

In foreign policy making the bureaucracy, cabinet, parliament, and media and pressure groups are distinguished as categories of actors. Regarding their respective roles and importance for foreign policy the following hypotheses are formulated:

Institutionally and functionally the Departments of Foreign Affairs in Australia and the Netherlands played pivotal roles in foreign policy making, although they increasingly, in the period under study, had to share their responsibility with other departments, defending their parochial interests, which gradually enforced more pluralism of views in the foreign policy of the two states.
Unlike in Australia the structure of the Department of Foreign Affairs in the Netherlands has changed in such a way since the 1950s, that it has become more favourably disposed to accommodate views from outside the traditional foreign affairs perspective, creating in the Netherlands a relatively better opportunity for actors outside the Department to have their views considered.

The coalition structure of cabinet in the Netherlands leads to more bargaining over the direction of foreign policy which weakens the position of the foreign minister, especially when the coalition’s support groups in parliament disagree. In Australia the foreign minister is more dominant in cabinet, although he may face opposition from the Prime Minister whose institutional position is also very strong.

Both in Australia and the Netherlands, parliament is unlikely to substantially change the policy direction of the executive, but Dutch parliament has stronger instruments and is more likely to use these to ventilate human rights concerns because: Cabinet’s coalition nature creates a stronger tendency towards dualism between executive and legislature, party-discipline is weaker, parliament has a multi-party composition and finally, there is no need for members to concentrate on defending the interests of their constituency.

In Chapter II the concept of a policy making centre was explained, stressing the importance of its nature and relations with its environment for understanding and explaining foreign policy making. With respect to foreign policy making centres in Australia and the Netherlands the following hypotheses are formulated:
The policy making centre in both countries will usually comprise the Department of Foreign Affairs, possibly supplemented with other elements of the bureaucracy, and cabinet. Composition, institutions, and functions in Australia are conducive to the creation of an homogenous and very stable foreign policy making centre. In the Netherlands, the composition of the foreign policy making centre makes it more vulnerable to outside penetration. But in both countries, if the policy making centre is united, its views will normally prevail against outside critics.

The media and pressure groups constitute a final source of input into foreign policy making. Regarding their input the following hypothesis will be tested:

In the 1950s Australian pressure groups and media had far more scope for an independent and critical input into foreign policy issues than Dutch pressure groups and media, but in the 1970s this difference had disappeared, while in both countries the attention for human rights had vastly increased with the emergence of new pressure groups.

The following sections will describe the role of the various actors in Australia and the Netherlands, providing evidence in support of or against the hypotheses.

2. The Department of Foreign Affairs in the Netherlands

Since 1965 the Department of Foreign Affairs in the Netherlands has had a diarchic structure linking, but also separating, development co-operation from other aspects of
foreign policy. The Minister for Foreign Affairs is officially in charge of the entire spectrum of foreign affairs, including human rights policy, but he runs the Department in close liaison with the Minister for Development Co-operation, a Minister without portfolio. In case of interface of responsibilities the ministers should consult together.¹

The Department is divided into three Directorates-General: Political Affairs (DGPZ), European Co-operation, and International Co-operation (DGIS), the former two led by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the latter by the Minister for Development Co-operation. Each directorate-general consists of divisions which prepare and formulate decisions. Below the level of divisions, specific country bureaus deal with bilateral relations and in this capacity they are jointly liable for human rights.

Bureau Indonesia, belonging to DGPZ, has been charged with the daily conduct of bilateral relations with Indonesia.² Its tasks include maintaining contact with the embassy in Jakarta, and gathering information for use in recommendations to the upper echelons of the Department concerning implementation of policy. The Bureau itself is also involved in implementation of policy: “Actual policy is conducted here.”³ The Bureau further provides briefs for delegations intending to visit Indonesia, advises other Departments and is concerned with human rights aspects of relations with Indonesia.

² The bureau is currently known as ‘Bureau Indonesia and South Asia.
³ Comment by Dr. J. de Jong, Head of Bureau Indonesia (and South Asia). Interview, The Hague, 20 July 1993
The Bureau’s terms of reference are in line with the advice of the Human Rights Bill of 1979 (see Chapter VI) which opposed the creation of a separate human rights office. Instead it advocated making each section responsible for taking into account human rights concerns in policy preparation, thus involving the whole Department with human rights in a bid to avoid intra-departmental quarrels. General guidelines for weighing national interests against human rights violations are not being used. Therefore it is up to the discretion of bureaus and directorates to decide on a response to human rights violations. More important political decisions are of course taken at a higher level.

Until 1992 Bureau Indonesia used to share its human rights responsibility with DGIS and its ‘Bureau Indonesia’, and also the Directorate International Organisations and its human rights co-ordinator. The DGIS ‘Bureau Indonesia’ handled the daily routine of the aid relationship, and depending on the policy pursued by its minister this task could also involve promotion and protection of political and civil human rights.

Although it is the task of Foreign Affairs to manage the political aspects of relations with Indonesia, other aspects including economic and military elements have not been part of the Department’s portfolio, forcing it to deliberate with other Departments. Since the introduction of a parallel structure separating development co-operation from other elements of foreign policy, there has been a risk of intra-departmental conflict over goals and means of foreign policy. With two ministers linked to the Department, a risk of internal conflict

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4 Handelingen der Tweede Kamer 1979-1980, 15571 no.3, government reply to question no.13. In order to prevent arbitrary judgement and assure co-ordination at floor level a
leading to external penetration was always present. This further undermined Foreign Affairs’ already weak institutional position in the process of foreign policy making.

3. The Department of Foreign Affairs in Australia

The Foreign Affairs Annual Report of 1975 described the Department’s task: “[To] advise the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and through him the government, on the formulation of Australian foreign policy and to assist him in its execution.”

As aims were mentioned inter alia: to give policy recommendations in order to maintain an harmonious interaction and accommodation between domestic and international policy, to maintain an understanding of the international environment within the Public Service, to facilitate inter-departmental co-ordination in order to make Australia’s foreign policy consistent and representative of Australia’s overall national interest and values, and to ensure, by negotiation, representation and other means, the execution of Australian foreign policy.

Responsibility for the overall conduct of Australia’s foreign relations is the Department’s explicitly declared realm. In practice, however, other Departments pursue their own interests. In 1976 the Department’s position was boosted when its purview of responsibility was widened with the administration of Australia’s aid program. Its institutional position was

special task force was set up under the supervision of the Deputy director-general International Co-operation.

further strengthened through a merger with the Department of Trade and Promotion Australia in 1987, an acknowledgment of the important linkage between economic and political factors in the pursuit of Australia’s interests.

Until 1987 the Department’s organisation was very clear, not complicated by parallel hierarchical structures. The merger with the Department of Trade and Promotion and the appointment of a minister responsible for trade negotiations changed this situation. Trade, however, became fully integrated in the existing organisational framework, which reduced the risk of any confrontation at ministerial level. Overall responsibility rests with the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Heading the Department is the Executive which comprises the Secretary and three Deputy Secretaries. The Executive advises the minister and gives policy direction and co-ordination to the Department, that is organised in geographical and functional divisions. Each division consists of branches which are divided into desks. Each political branch within the geographical divisions has, inter alia, the following comprehensive tasks: co-ordination of policy advice regarding relations between Australia and the states for which the Branch carries responsibility; preparing assessments, recommendations and information papers on Australian policies for cabinet, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Secretary; arranging instructions for diplomatic missions; liaison and negotiations with diplomatic representatives in Australia; and briefing politicians and officials prior to their overseas travels.

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9 Two divisions, accountable to different Deputy Secretaries, were entrusted with trade: the Economic and Trade Development Division, and the Multilateral Trade Division.
Officers at desk level carry out a number of tasks. They inform relevant members of the Department of the business of the mission abroad, maintain liaison and undertake initial consultations with other branches and Departments. They deal with routine matters directly, and see that non-routine matters are taken up by more senior officers or other appropriate desks. The desk and its officer are the department’s experts on an area.

The Indonesia Section is responsible for management of the bilateral relationship with Indonesia that encompasses political and economic, as well as human rights aspects, giving it wider responsibilities than its counterpart in the Netherlands.

Regarding human rights the Indonesia Section liaises with the human rights section of the Department, but its own view holds should no compromise be reached. There is also close liaison with the Indonesia and Malaysia Section of AIDAB (see below), but a political officer is in charge of human rights issues.

The connection between Australian aid and Australian foreign policy has been reflected in the administrative structure. In 1975 the Australian Development Assistance Agency (ADAA) administered civil aid in close consultation with Foreign Affairs. Since 1984 an autonomous bureau, the Australian Development Assistance Bureau (ADAB) -- in 1987 renamed AIDAB -- has been responsible for development, planning and execution of Australia’s aid program. Its Bilateral Programs Division fulfils these tasks in a bilateral

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context. A Director-General is in charge of AIDAB. He reports directly to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who thus carries economic and political affairs as well as Australian aid in his extensive portfolio.

Since 1984 the Department has had a separate human rights section, under the aegis of the International Organisations and Humanitarian Affairs Branch with the task of assisting in multilateral human rights activities. Its resources, however, have been very limited. Integration of human rights in foreign policy was insufficient, as was inter-departmental coordination. Along with this ‘structural recognition’ of human rights came a policy that charged diplomatic posts with the task of reporting more frequently on human rights and increased the use of diplomatic representations as an instrument. The Branch initiates and coordinates these representations and also liaises with human rights organisations, notably Amnesty International.

Compared with its Dutch counterpart, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs is in charge of a wider field of policy but, given that its structure is headed by a single minister, the risk of intra-departmental confrontation spilling into the public political arena is smaller, which should contribute to policy consistency.

12 Australian Parliament, A Review of Australia’s Efforts to Promote and Protect Human Rights: Report from the Joint Committee of Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Trade, Canberra, AGPS, 1992, p.42. The Committee, using the study ‘On Equal Footing: Foreign Affairs and Human Rights’, by the Dutch Advisory Committee on Human Rights as a blueprint, also emphasised the importance of providing a similar training to desk officers to make them more acquainted with the problem of human rights.
4. Other departments involved in foreign policy making in the Netherlands

Traditionally the Department of Defence has been a major contributor to foreign policy making. The fields of security and foreign policy were strongly linked, and defence requirements gave direction to foreign policy. An expanding foreign policy agenda further eroded Foreign Affairs’ role as co-ordinator of foreign policy, resulting in more involvement by more departments, each of them defending its parochial interests. The Department of Economics in particular has become a key player due to increased European economic integration and co-operation.

Without a central bureaucratic institution in charge of all major Dutch interests in the field of foreign affairs, one may expect inter-departmental disputes, which cabinet must ultimately settle. Since ministers tend to identify themselves with their respective Departments,\textsuperscript{14} cabinet becomes part of the bureaucratic battleground. Given that cabinets in the Netherlands are coalitions, these bureaucratic disagreements may be drawn into the party-political sphere, vastly increasing the influence of actors in the policy periphery.

These findings substantiate the hypothesis about the role and importance of the bureaucracy and in particular the Department of Foreign Affairs in Dutch foreign policy making.
5. Other departments involved in foreign policy making in Australia

The Department of Defence shares some important sections of its organisation with Foreign Affairs, which further contributes to synchronisation of interests pursued in Australia’s foreign policy. Important defence sections and committees in which Foreign Affairs participates are: the Defence Committee; the Joint Intelligence Organisation (JIO), which evaluates and coordinates external intelligence;\textsuperscript{15} the Joint Intelligence Staff and the Joint Planning Committee.

In 1969 Medianski could still point to the limited capacity of the Department of External Affairs: “Except for the Interdepartmental Committee on Aid, there are no formal arrangements below cabinet through which External Affairs can exercise its coordinating role.”\textsuperscript{16} But its amalgamation with the Department of Trade and Promotion Australia in 1987 invigorated Foreign Affairs’ position as a representative of economic interests significantly. However, Medianski’s comment that, “External Affairs has to share to some extent its coordinating role with Prime Minister’s Department,”\textsuperscript{17} has not lost its cogency.

Compared with the Netherlands, solving bureaucratic conflicts requires more often settlement of intra-departmental disputes. Also better arrangements exist for co-ordination of security interests at inter-departmental level. The Department of the Prime Minister forms the main dissonant voice in this respect. It has increasingly demanded a say in foreign policy

\textsuperscript{15} Medianski, ‘The Department of External Affairs’, p.282.
\textsuperscript{16} Quoted from Medianski, op. cit., p.283.
issues since Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser expanded its role in the 1970s. With a view to policy regarding Indonesia, the Department of Foreign Affairs has strong informal links with other departments and co-operates with them in *ad hoc* committees. Given the level of coordination and centralisation of policy responsibilities, chances that conflicts will spill into the public political sphere are relatively small. Influence from actors outside the bureaucracy will therefore be correspondingly small.

These findings are in accordance with my hypothesis regarding the role of the Department of Foreign Affairs and other departments in foreign policy making.

6. Cabinet in the Netherlands

The system of proportional representation used to elect members of the Second Chamber makes coalition cabinets the rule in the Netherlands. Before committing itself to a coalition, parties will engage in extensive discussions on its policy. The King (or Queen), as head of state will ask a premier-designate to conduct talks and when (and if) these are successful, to form a government. The head of state will then swear in the ministers and Under-Secretaries. The first task of the new government will be to get the approval of parliament for its policy, but since the leaders of the parliamentary parties forming the new government will have been involved in the negotiations on the policy, they will probably also have advised their parties to support the outcome. The coalition parties will generally respect the policy that was agreed to, but statements outlining foreign policy tend to be rather abstract.

\[17\] Ibid.
Cabinet’s peculiar plural party composition begets a tendency to strive for compromises in its foreign policy, which is largely made ad hoc. This reduces the chances of an extremist or radical policy, and will therefore increase support in parliament. Once cabinet has reached a decision, party discipline in parliament will also contribute to its adoption and thus enhance cabinet’s position.\footnote{See Baehr who argues that as long as ministers remain within the broad outlines of their party’s political and electoral program they remain relatively free to conduct foreign policy as they see fit, p.50.}

In order to keep the executive and legislative powers separate, ministers cannot be Members of Parliament. They serve as their party’s representatives in the coalition, resulting in a division of cabinet along party lines, but they also behave as representatives and exponents of their departmental interests. Particularism and parochialism are the result.\footnote{Everts, op. cit., pp.90-91.}

The Prime Minister has to bring about compromise, a difficult task since he is only primus inter pares. The Prime Minister is not allowed to add any subjects to the agenda of a meeting of the Council of Ministers: this prerogative belongs to his fellow ministers. Also the Prime Minister cannot sack and replace a minister. Parliament alone can force a minister to resign through rejecting one of his budget proposals. Also if parliament introduces, and votes on, a motion that is unacceptable to a minister, he may regard this as a sign of no confidence and respond by resigning. If the minister has the support of his colleagues or his own party in parliament, a motion of no-confidence may bring down the government. However, only rarely do events take such a dramatic turn.
Certain ministers are also favourably placed by their mandate, notably the Minister for Foreign Affairs. As head of the Department of Foreign Affairs he is in charge of foreign policy. Baehr correctly claims: “The Foreign Minister is unquestionably the dominating figure in the field of Dutch external relations.” His access to information concerning foreign affairs is unmatched by any of his colleagues. However, the lack of an overarching Department of Foreign Affairs demands that he liaises with colleagues. Further he has to share the Department’s roof with a Minister for Development Co-operation, the implications of which were discussed already. Other ministers can also freely give their opinion on foreign affairs, and have done so in the past, thus interfering in the policy of the foreign minister.

Political responsibility for certain elements of foreign policy is usually delegated to an Undersecretary. During the West New Guinea dispute there was a special Under-secretary who dealt with domestic issues in the colony in particular. The Minister for Foreign Affairs remained ultimately in charge of the overall conduct of policy.

Although the coalition nature of cabinet classifies it as a decision unit composed of multiple autonomous actors, its members are less autonomous than expected since they are committed to the coalition and its survival. Ministers’ personalities and the party and bureaucratic interests they stand for will of course influence decision making in cabinet. In case party groups in parliament seriously disagree over foreign policy, this will divide cabinet

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21 Honig van den Bossche mentions Prime Minister Den Uyl, defence minister Stemerdink, and development co-operation minister Pronk as ‘jamming stations’. *Handelingen der*
and increase influence from actors outside the decision making centre. These findings are in agreement with my hypothesis.

7. Cabinet in Australia

General elections are held at least every three years, but the Prime Minister can call an election before his government has served its full term in office. The Prime Minister may be tempted to hold such an early election when the polls are favourable. Given that a single member district system is used in the lower house elections, only a few parties usually succeed in winning any seats there. Following general elections the Governor General, as representative of the head of state, will ask the leader of the party or coalition which gathered the largest number of seats in the House of Representatives to form a government. The Governor General also appoints the ministers, who keep their seats in the House or the Senate.

A coalition cabinet is a possibility in Australia, but not a rule. Only the Liberal Party usually co-operates with the National (Country) Party in cabinet, but the Liberal Party dominates to the extent that it often merely tolerates its partner. Australian cabinets therefore do not much reflect the peculiarities of coalition politics.

The Prime Minister’s institutional position is very strong. He has the power to dismiss ministers, and cabinet reshuffles occur frequently. A Labor Prime Minister, however, enjoys less freedom in this respect than his Liberal counterpart, since he is more likely to need the

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Tweede Kamer, 1976-1977, Behandeling Begroting Buitenlandse Zaken 1977, pp.858-
consent of his caucus to major proposals. It is the Prime Minister’s prerogative to decide when there will be a cabinet meeting, and what subjects need to be discussed. The Prime Minister presides over the meetings and summarises cabinet decisions, but if he wishes to avoid ministerial interference he can often take a decision himself, simply bypassing cabinet.

Usually cabinet has a Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence of which the PM, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Defence, and the Treasurer are members, but membership may be wider. The Committee’s role in decision making has been subject to change over time and its leverage depends on the way the Prime Minister uses the Committee, as well as cabinet. The Committee does not meet as frequently as cabinet, but it is first to consider matters demanding careful examination.

Fraser further institutionally enhanced the Prime Minister’s already strong functional position through establishment of an Office of National Assessments. This office provided the Prime Minister with analyses of defence and foreign affairs issues. Fraser also strengthened the foreign policy section of the Prime Minister’s Department. In particular the department protects and promotes the Prime Minister’s special fields of interest and tries to integrate foreign policy into the government’s overall policy. The Prime Minister’s Department is also a check on the Department of Foreign Affairs. It has direct access to consultations at the highest level, as the Prime Minister’s international visits often involve consultations with other

859.
22 The ALP’s caucus determines the size of cabinet and the ministry, elects their members and holds them accountable on policy matters. Walter Jones, The Leader: A Political Biography of Gough Whitlam, St. Lucia, University Press, 1980, p.34.
23 Medianski, ‘The Department of Foreign Affairs’, p.280.
heads of state. The Prime Minister can use the Foreign Affairs and Defence Branch of his Department as an alternative source of information to bolster his stand when he is in disagreement with the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Defence. The Prime Minister’s access to information and his prerogative to choose the agenda of cabinet put him in a strong position in cabinet.

Given cabinet’s single or ‘effectively single’ party composition, conflict is more likely to remain confined to its meetings, and unlikely to bring in parliament. Within cabinet the Prime Minister, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Defence are key actors. Since the centre of policy making is homogenous, esoteric and small, policy is likely to be consistent. These findings support my hypothesis on cabinet’s role and position in foreign policy making.

8. Parliament and political parties in the Netherlands

Parliament consists of two houses: the First Chamber or Senate and the Second Chamber. The Second Chamber has 150 members, directly elected by universal suffrage, based on proportional representation. As was explained previously, elected members who take up positions in cabinet have to relinquish their seat in the Chamber, helping to maintain dualism between the executive and legislature. Provincial Councils elect the 75 members of the First Chamber.
With a motion of no confidence the Chamber can force the government to dissolve parliament and call an election. However, participation in the governing coalition may inhibit such an objective verdict.²⁴

Both Chambers debate the annual budget of foreign affairs, which is accompanied by a departmental explanatory memorandum (Memorie van Toelichting) in which the minister outlines the main elements of policy. Not inhibited by membership, the minister can participate in debates in both Chambers. On his initiative or at parliament’s request the minister may prepare a formal bill on any aspect of his portfolio, which is subsequently debated in parliament. Debates often cover a lot of ground, going beyond the level of merely discussing policy. They may be about the minister’s use of executive power, the organisation of the Department, and the role and attitude of civil servants. Parliamentarians can put questions to the minister which may again lead to a debate. The Second Chamber clearly pays more attention to foreign policy than the First Chamber where debates take place more infrequently and concentrate on legal aspects of bills submitted by the government.

Everts offers a good analytical framework for discussing parliament’s role in foreign affairs. He discerns three instruments which parliament can use to influence foreign policy: legislative control, budgetary control and policy control.²⁵ Legislative powers, however, are of relatively little use in foreign affairs. Individual members can initiate legislation, the last

²⁵ Everts, op. cit., p.99.
element of legislative control. This right is hardly used, however. Budgetary control, the second instrument, is mainly exercised during the annual discussion of the budget of foreign affairs, which must be passed as a bill. Discipline amongst coalition parties will generally prevent parliament from using its right to amend legislation. An amendment is legally binding on the government. Usually parliament will only try to influence next year’s budget through adoption of motions, but the government can disregard these. Therefore Everts regards budgetary control as ineffective as well.²⁶

Policy control entitles parliament to have an inquiry, but there has never been one to investigate foreign policy. Members also have the right of interpellation, in case of which the minister must reply directly to one or more questions. A short debate may follow and motions may be put forward. Oral questions to which the minister has to answer in person, but which are not followed by a debate or motions, offer another means of policy control. Yet another instrument of policy control is the motion. It is a weak instrument since the government does not have to carry out the motion. In that case a motion of no-confidence may follow.

Finally, there is the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, established in 1919. The government can provide information requested by the Committee in confidence, but most meetings are open to outsiders. When the Committee convenes in special capacity (uitgebreide commissievergadering), motions may be introduced. The Committee may organise hearings at which people and NGOs are requested to give their opinions. From

²⁶ Ibid., p.101.
1953 until 1967 there were two Second Chamber committees for foreign affairs: one committee reported on the budget, with the minister only obliged to respond to budget-related questions, and a second committee was charged with the gathering of secret information on other subjects. This latter committee would exchange views with the minister on a range of subjects. Only the five major parties were represented and information provided had to be kept secret, which reduced the committee’s influence.\(^{27}\) The First Chamber established a Foreign Affairs Committee in 1951, but this Committee does not engage in discussions on policy with ministers.\(^{28}\)

Members of parliament have often complained about their lack of influence on the Minister for Foreign Affairs and his policy. Indeed their political tools and the coalition character of Dutch politics hamper their influence: “Although parliament has the constitutional right to force the resignation of any minister, it has been reluctant to do so for fear of upsetting the carefully balanced and often rather fragile government coalition.”\(^{29}\) The final stage of the West New Guinea conflict fully supports this assertion, as will be shown in Chapter IV. On the other hand Baehr’s rejection of Cohen’s conclusion, that “parliament and parliamentarian fractions have little impact on the foreign policy decisions of the

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\(^{27}\) Antonio Cassese, *Control of Foreign Policies in Western Democracies: A Comparative Study of Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committees: Research Project*, Padova, CEDAMOceana, 1982, pp.140-141. Communistische Partij Nederland (CPN -- Netherlands Communist Party) was denied membership in the 1950s and 1960s because its ideological stand caused suspicion as to the party’s loyalty and other parties treated CPN as an outcast.

\(^{28}\) Everts, op. cit., p.104.

\(^{29}\) Quoted from Baehr, ‘Democracy and Foreign Policy in the Netherlands’, p.40.
government,” on the ground that Cohen underestimates the “considerable exchange of views that takes place beyond the public view,” seems also plausible.\textsuperscript{30}

These findings do support my hypothesis on parliament’s role and influence in foreign policy making, but although parliament has the means to influence foreign policy, peculiarities of Dutch politics prevent parliament from using these means frequently. Having discussed the role of the bureaucracy, cabinet, and parliament, we may also conclude that the above findings regarding their institutionally and functionally determined participation and influence support my hypothesis about the foreign policy making centre: this is potentially vulnerable, but views of the centre will normally prevail against outside critics if the policy making centre is united.

Political parties are of course linked to their constituencies, but their leaders remain dominant and rather autonomous from local branches. Parliamentarians are not bound to follow their party’s instructions on any issue.\textsuperscript{31} They have a responsibility of their own, as parliamentarians eagerly declare whenever they disagree with their party organs. Party conferences do not pay a great deal of attention to foreign policy issues, \textit{Partij van de Arbeid} (PvdA -- Labor Party) being the exception. But even in the case of PvdA, the party has limited influence on its parliamentarians since they are not bound to follow party instructions. Often, however, there will not be any conflict since a party’s policy only sets out broad guide lines.

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid, p.44.
In the case of Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie (VVD -- People’s Party for Freedom and Democracy), the influence of the party on its parliamentary group is restricted to foreign policy outlines drawn up in the party’s election program.\textsuperscript{32} This leaves the parliamentary group considerable leeway and therefore contacts of its foreign policy specialists with pressure groups may be important in shaping their opinion and stand. The Second Chamber group of VVD used to hold regular meetings with its representatives in cabinet, like PvdA, but contacts with civil servants at Foreign Affairs were very limited, unlike CDA.\textsuperscript{33}

The party structure of Christen Democratisch Appèl (CDA -- Christian Democratic Appeal) encompasses a foreign affairs and a development co-operation committee in charge of the party’s policy in those two fields. A Party Council formulates the foreign affairs section in the election-program: “The Second Chamber group keeps its distance.”\textsuperscript{34} CDA foreign affairs experts used to have very frequent contact with their Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Development Co-operation. The floor leader used to have weekly discussions with CDA ministers.\textsuperscript{35}

Resuming the discussion, the Second Chamber in particular has a number of strong means at its disposal which in theory grant it a functionally significant role in the phases of deliberation and implementation. However, the shackles of coalition and party discipline will often

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., p.45.
\textsuperscript{32} Comment by Mr. Weisglas. Interview, The Hague, 14 June 1993.
\textsuperscript{33} Comment by Mrs. E. Terpstra. Interview, The Hague, July 1993.
\textsuperscript{34} Comment by Mr. Huibers, CDA foreign affairs specialist in the Second Chamber. Interview, The Hague, July 1993.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid.
prevent open and persistent use of those means. On the other hand, the coalition nature of government and frequent discussions with ministers representing their party, will at least allow a parliamentary group to convey its opinion, and have it considered in cabinet.

9. Parliament and political parties in Australia

The House’s relatively small size and low number of sitting days are structural and procedural factors notably limiting its participation in foreign policy making. Further, Members’ entitlement to retain their seat in parliament when also serving as ministers in the government curtails parliament’s independence from the government, essential to maintain dualism between executive and legislature. A related handicap is that a minister can only defend his policy personally in one chamber. This inability to debate directly with the minister responsible for and with knowledge of the portfolio restricts the contribution of the other chamber. Dual membership of government and parliament further ensures that ties between government and its parliamentary group become very tight, with only the non-cabinet Members of a government’s group operating as truly independent parliamentarians. Party discipline is therefore very high, both in the House and the Senate.

The fact that Members of the House retain their seat by grace of their constituencies is yet another structural factor explaining why there is so little debate on foreign policy issues. Maintaining the level of support from their large electorates imposes strains on members, leaving them little time for work not connected with electoral duties. Therefore Hocking
correctly concludes that Members are inclined to a local rather than a national focus, let alone an international focus. The Senate is in a better position in this respect as its members do not have a similar representative burden.

The district system used to elect Members of the House also functions as a threshold preventing minority views present in society, but scattered thinly, from being represented in the House. Thus, only a few parties compete in all seats, which, given their strong party discipline, further reduces the House as a critical voice in foreign policy. The Senate again makes an exception, where smaller parties such as the Australian Democrats and the Greens do become elected, allowing them a chance to raise their critical voice.

Given parliament’s structural deficiencies, procedures would have to guarantee it a say in foreign policy making. The most important and frequently used means available to guarantee Members, their party and parliament in general a say are -- apart from the committees on foreign affairs that will be dealt with later -- questions, adjournment debates, urgency and grievance debates, and motions. The following discussion, however, will show that parliamentary procedures are inadequate as well.

In order to increase knowledge about the government’s foreign policy, Members can ask questions, but, given that backbenchers have limited opportunities, foreign affairs issues will

often give way to matters of more importance to Members: their constituencies.\textsuperscript{37} Questions can be asked without notice, and serve as a means for the opposition to embarrass the government. Alternatively, the government uses this instrument to attack the opposition and to defend its own policy by having its own group ask favourable questions. Given the usual political intention behind questions without notice, serious and informative answers are unlikely. To get a serious answer a question must be put on notice, but even then a proper and informative answer is not guaranteed. The Chair of the House will be on the minister’s side and explain the rules for answering questions, which are found in the House’s Standing Orders (the formal procedures of parliament), in his favour.\textsuperscript{38} Thus when it comes to the instrument of questions a minister can deny Members what is fundamental for their involvement in policy making: knowledge.\textsuperscript{39} Off the record, however, Foreign Affairs and its minister will often be more forthcoming in providing information.\textsuperscript{40}

Debates on foreign policy are infrequent, but one possibility for the opposition to force a discussion is through initiating an urgency debate on ‘a matter of public importance’ for which it chooses the subject. Although it offers an opportunity for discussion, it gives

\textsuperscript{37} Normally an opposition member is allowed to ask one question every three weeks only. David Solomon, \textit{Inside the Australian Parliament}, Sydney, George Allen & Unwin, 1978, p.49.

\textsuperscript{38} It is a standing order that a minister’s answer to a question must be relevant, but it is left to the Speaker of the House to interpret this vague rule. For a discussion on the importance of the Standing Orders and the role of the Chair/ Speaker of the House see Dean Jaensch, \textit{Getting our House in Order: Australia’s Parliament: How it Works and the Need for Reform}, Ringwood, Vic., Penguin Books, 1986, pp.77-79.

\textsuperscript{39} See Solomon for a more thorough discussion of the difficulties involved in formulating a question and having it answered properly. Id.

\textsuperscript{40} Comment by Senator Vicky Bourne. Interview, Sydney, 4 August 1995.
parliament no means to force the government to change its policy as usually no voting takes place at the end of the debate.

Adjournment debates, held at the end of a normal sitting day of the House, provide Members with another opportunity to speak briefly on a subject of their own choice. Again no voting takes place and speeches tend to be unrelated, giving the ‘debate’ little cohesion. Thus its importance as a means to influence the government’s policy is again negligible.

The only other means for individual backbenchers to discuss subjects of their own choice are the Address-in-Reply, following a speech read by the Governor-General -- prepared for him by the government -- the annual budget debate and fortnightly grievance debates. The debate on the Estimates of Foreign Affairs is the best of these three opportunities, but even then the debate is often only a series of unrelated statements that do not provide a coherent and comprehensive overview of policy. A grievance debate offers merely an opportunity to express an opinion. Without a vote being taken there are no implications for the government’s policy.

Given that legislation regarding foreign policy, which requires extensive parliamentary involvement, is very infrequent, opportunities for debate in the legislative process are very limited as well. The Australian Constitution further denies parliament a role in the making of treaties.

This leaves parliament with Ministerial statements and motions as the only other means for debating foreign policy. Ministerial statements may be accompanied by debate, and usually
there is ample time available. A notice of motion must be submitted at least one day prior to a session. Traditionally a motion of notice resulted in at least a half an hour debate, but since the number of motions grew there was no longer enough time to debate all of them. Thus the motion of notice is now primarily an expression of discontent. When a debate does take place, limiting the amount of time available for it is one means to prevent overtly discrediting the government. This procedure is known as the guillotine. The government can further restrict time spent on an embarrassing discussion through use of the gag: ‘that the question be now put’.\textsuperscript{41} However, even when a motion is passed the minister can ignore it. Media attention is what one hopes to get out of a motion.\textsuperscript{42}

Hocking’s conclusion that, “the value of debates and questions as a method of presenting an intelligible exchange of opinion on foreign policy is limited,” succinctly describes parliament’s procedural shortcomings which deny it a major role in any of the phases of the foreign policy making process. Improvements in the functioning of the committee system, however, modify the validity of this conclusion to some extent.

A Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence was first established in 1951.\textsuperscript{43} Its aim was to study ‘in depth’ the ‘great problems of the day’, ‘passing on to parliament’ this ‘expert knowledge’ and thus ‘giving a lead to the House in debates’. The mandate did not mention policy making, regarding this as a government prerogative. The Minister for External Affairs used to refer matters to the Committee and made available information “within such

\textsuperscript{41} See Jaensch, \textit{Getting our House in Order}, p.88.
\textsuperscript{42} Id.
categories and on such conditions as he considered desirable.\textsuperscript{44} Proceedings were secret and the Committee had to forward reports to the minister. The Committee had no authority to send for persons, papers or records without the minister’s concurrence and all evidence given was secret.

The mandate gradually became less tight and in 1964 the Committee gained authority to invite people to give evidence and, with the minister’s consent, to call for official papers and records. Minister Barwick agreed to allow for the expression of a dissenting opinion in any report. The Australian Labor Party (ALP), which had previously refused to join because of the Committee’s lack of autonomy and preponderance of government Members, finally joined the Committee in 1967.\textsuperscript{45} In 1973 authority to call for witnesses and documents and the right to transact business in open sessions were added to the Committee’s arsenal. Since 1978 the government has been required to respond to committee reports within six months.

The Joint Committee’s relationship with the minister has been described as one of consultation. The Committee has served as a useful study group but “[it] has done little to analyse the great issues of the day and enlighten parliament...in the field of foreign relations.”\textsuperscript{46}

\textsuperscript{43} Initially there were 12 members, later 20 -- 13 members from the House and 7 Senators-- and presently there are 28 members.


\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., p.22.

\textsuperscript{46} Quoted from Turner, op. cit., p.25.
In 1971 the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence was created. The Senate Committee has enjoyed greater authority than the Joint Committee, mainly because the Senate itself could refer matters to the Committee, for which a majority is required. By 1976, however, distinctive features of the two committees had largely disappeared: both sit in largely open sessions and engage in substantial inquiries on a wide range of subjects. Officers of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade appear regularly before the Committees to provide information. The Senate Committee can even demand provision of sensitive information. A special joint Sub-Committee on Human Rights was established to deal with human rights matters.

The widening of the mandate, giving the committees better access to information on foreign policy, has done little, however, to compensate for their lack of means to put to use this information and influence the government’s policy.

Having considered the whole range of means that parliament has at its disposal one cannot but fully support Hocking’s conclusion that, “parliament’s influence over foreign policy making [is] extremely limited.” The analysis of the functioning of the Australian Federal Parliament has shown that its structural and functional deficiencies deny it any significant role in deliberation, implementation, and evaluation of foreign policy. Parliament’s position vis-a-vis government and bureaucracy has remained fairly stable and very uneven, allowing parliament only a minor role in the foreign policy making process.

47 Ibid., p.32.
These findings support the hypothesis on the role of parliament formulated in the introduction to this chapter, but in fact the discussion showed that parliament’s role is even more limited than was supposed. The hypothesis about the composition and importance of the foreign policy making centre vis-à-vis other participants in Australian foreign policy making is also confirmed by the discussion of the institutionally and functionally defined role of the various actors: the centre is strong and homogenous and its views will prevail over the views of its opponents.

Within the ALP, the biennial Federal Party Conference officially makes foreign policy and determines the party platform. In theory the platform is binding on a Labor government, but in practice the government can ignore it. The Liberal and Country Parties have no comparable formal structures. Their parliamentary groups are not bound by party platforms.

Party discipline is strictly imposed upon ALP representatives.\(^{49}\) As mentioned before, an ALP government can ignore its federal party conference, but the rule that members act in accordance with caucus is enforced, rendering any public expression of opposition in parliament impossible usually. This party rule further undermines parliament’s influence on foreign policy.

Liberal parliamentarians are not formally bound by a pledge of loyalty to the party or its parliamentary group, but in practice there will be strong pressure to conform with the party

\(^{48}\) Quoted from Hocking, op. cit, p302.

\(^{49}\) Party discipline is secured through a pledge by which members promise “to be bound by the platform...and decisions of the conference...and to vote according to the majority decision of the Caucus (Labor’s parliamentary group).” Quoted from Jaensch, *Getting our House in Order*, p.33.
Thus there is little difference in party discipline between Liberals and Labor, although Liberal members may occasionally vote against their party’s official policy.

10. Media and interest groups in the Netherlands

Divisions in Dutch society have had a large impact on the way public life was organised. Political parties, unions and other interest groups, and media were all deeply affected. The policy of pacification and the responses of the various ‘pillars’ in Dutch society shaped the role and behaviour of all these actors regarding West New Guinea. With the end of pacification in the 1960s, traditional alliances and patterns of behaviour changed dramatically, the effects of which will be outlined below.

Society in the Netherlands used to be divided into four pillars -- the Roman Catholic and Protestant pillars were much more passionate about their identity than the Liberal and Socialist pillars -- each with its own social and political organisations. Until deconfessionalisation started in the late 1960s social organisations, including political parties, were strongly organised along these dividing religious and ideological lines. In order to prevent a conflict with the potential to tear apart the nation, an overarching coalition was formed at leaders' level. With their followers loyal and apathetic, latent tension at the basis of the pillars was pacified. For political life this meant a strong penetration of religious

50 See Jaensch for an extensive discussion on means that both the Liberal and National Party use to force their members to comply with party policy. Ibid., pp.34-36.
influences and hence a strong impact of church leaders and their organisations on the political representatives of the pillars. PvdA, representing the Socialist pillar, and VVD, representing the Liberal pillar, were relatively unaffected, their followers less loyal and less apathetic than their counterparts in the confessional parties.

Newspapers in the Netherlands were also aligned with a pillar and a political party, whose views they loyally propagated. The Roman Catholic daily Volkskrant formed one of the clearest examples of avowed party affiliations. Protestant newspapers were also generally loyal to their political parties. Trouw and Het Parool were close to PvdA. The Liberal newspaper NRC was the most independent newspaper. In spite of being ideologically close to VVD, it often was at loggerheads with the party’s policy on West New Guinea.

In the 1960s social unrest and deconfessionalisation ended a political era characterised by pacification. Thus ordinary people became less docile and more politically active. The influence of churches on political life dwindled, a process that is still continuing in contemporary politics. The role of the media changed as well, from being heralds of party views to more independent news coverage.

Given that the shackles of the pillars had been removed in the 1970s, one would expect a more independent, less passive, more critical role for newspapers and also interest groups, whose ranks were now swollen by newly emerged human rights and humanitarian organisations. The hypothesis too carefully expressed the expectation that media and interest groups had limited opportunity in the 1950s and 1960s to have a critical and independent
impact on foreign policy. The contrast between the 1950s and the 1970s appears even larger than expected.

11. Media and interest groups in Australia

Australian media and interest groups did not experience a similar process of increasing independence that media and interest groups in the Netherlands went through. Except for strong connections between unions and the ALP, major interest groups have always enjoyed relatively more liberty. With the international agenda changing in the 1960s, new groups representing different interests emerged in Australia, helping to put human rights as a subject on the political agenda. Given that the position and input of media and interest groups have changed little, this discussion, which supports the hypothesis, is very brief.

12. Conclusions and policy hypotheses

Who were the main actors in Dutch and Australian foreign policy making, given the respective institutions and procedures of foreign policy making? How did changes in institutions and procedures affect the role of and thus the relative weight carried by the various actors in the foreign policy making process of the Netherlands and Australia, and what, given my assumptions on actors’ functional and parochial predispositions, would be the expected implications in terms of goals pursued?
In Section 1 of this chapter a few questions and a number of hypotheses were formulated. A discussion of institutional and procedural involvement of various actors in Australian and Dutch foreign policy making confirmed the expectations formulated in these hypotheses. The results provide a first step towards a comprehensive answer to the central questions of this thesis. These initial answers will now in turn serve as hypotheses to be tested in the four chapters which discuss Dutch and Australian policy in the two cases.

12.1 The Netherlands’ hypothetical policy in the West New Guinea case

Clearly the Department of Foreign Affairs was in a strong position to determine West New Guinea policy, although it had to share responsibility with Home Affairs and Defence, which became increasingly involved when the conflict escalated. With Defence, Foreign Affairs shared its superior access to secret information. Being able to brief the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and having a leading role in planning and policy execution gave the Department overall a central position in policy making. The foreign minister’s position in cabinet would have been correspondingly strong.

Assuming that the Department of Foreign Affairs was responsible for defending Dutch foreign interests, and given that self-determination for West New Guinea became more and more of a burden in this respect, one would expect that the Minister for Foreign Affairs, attempting to protect those interests, would develop into a strong advocate of relinquishing West New Guinea, at the expense of self-determination.
The Department of Defence and its minister would have played an increasingly important role in the West New Guinea policy, with the security of the territory under growing threat of invasion. Avoiding a military conflict presumably became ever more a priority which in practice meant sacrificing self-determination.

The Department of Home Affairs played a major role in the implementation of the policy of rapid development in West New Guinea. Its assessment of the situation, reflected by its minister in cabinet, should have carried considerable weight as well. Home Affairs’ opinion does not immediately become clear from its interests, but given that it had some pride in developing the population, it would have been favourably disposed to continuation of Dutch administration.

With cabinet being a coalition, led by a Prime Minister with hardly any administrative and decision making powers, the input of these three departments is expected to be decisive, although the role of the Finance Department should not be underestimated. Foreign Affairs and Defence would have logically argued, and this with growing zeal, to relinquish West New Guinea and protect other Dutch interests. Given their strong institutional and procedural involvement, any other findings would have to be explained in terms of these departments proclaiming and defending different views.

The coalition type cabinet, in combination with the active role of parliament in debates on the budget of foreign affairs and hence the direction of foreign policy, should have given parliament at least an active role in deliberating and approving the policy plans. Cabinet
would have been forced to gain at least the support of the members who represented the
coalition parties in parliament. These parliamentarians were therefore in a favourable position
to influence the policy plans. Opposition parties, lacking adequate access to information and
the decision making centre, which probably varied over the years but at least comprised
officials of Foreign Affairs, Defence, Home Affairs and cabinet, were left with weak
instruments for direct influence on policy making. They would have been forced to attempt
to influence public opinion via the media. A difficult task as the media were strongly aligned
with political pillars. The opposition can be qualified as outsider. The same conclusion can
be drawn regarding parties represented in cabinet. They would be strongly inclined to follow
cabinet in its policy, given that cabinet policy is a comprise in any case.

Interest groups, including unions and employers' organisations, and NGOs, as far as they
existed, were not attributed any significant institutional role. Lobbying and coalition forming
would have been their alternative, given the strength of pacification of Dutch society a
difficult task. They are therefore considered as outsiders. Only during the phases of
deliberation and evaluation could they have had some impact.

Based on functional involvement, the role of the churches would have been limited as well,
but as my comments about pillars in the Netherlands have made clear they had ample
institutionalised contacts to make up for this weakness. Thus they probably influenced the
conscience of the nation’s decision makers.
Resuming my conclusions on actor involvement and the views that actors are likely to have had, Foreign Affairs, Defence and Home Affairs would have strongly influenced discussion in cabinet by means of their representatives. On the other hand, because cabinet was a coalition -- cabinet was a centre composed of multiple autonomous actors -- it would also have at least partly reflected the opinion of its parliamentary groups. Parliament in general would tend to follow cabinet, but in case of intra-cabinet disputes parliament’s influence could vastly increase. An assessment of interests by the government would have resulted in adoption of a flexible policy towards Indonesia’s claims. As Chapter IV will show, Dutch policy was bereft of any such realism until very late in the day.

12.2 Australia’s hypothetical policy in the West New Guinea case

What was said about Foreign Affairs in the Netherlands applies largely to the Department of External Affairs in Australia. The Department had access to all intelligence reports, and was in control of a network of diplomatic posts through which it communicated with international actors and collected information regarding their position. Policy making was very much an esoteric field in which External Affairs and its minister had an important role in all four stages of policy making. However, External Affairs shared intelligence sources and committee membership with the Department of Defence which was throughout the conflict involved by means of its assessments. With the threat of an escalation increasing it would only have become more frequently involved and its assessments would have carried more weight.
The institutional position of the Prime Minister was also strong. He was well informed by the Department of Foreign Affairs and firmly in charge of cabinet procedures and meetings. He also frequently exchanged views with other governments.

These three ministers together with the key players in the Departments of External Affairs and Defence made up a strong centre of decision making in Australia’s foreign policy. Given the inadequacies of parliament to have its voice heard, significant changes in means and goals of policy would have been forced upon them only by a change in the international situation.

Putting together an expectation of policy pursued based on a realistic assessment of the interests of the main actors is not as straight forward as was the case for the Netherlands. Their opinion would have been based on an assessment of Indonesia’s political situation and the role of West New Guinea in influencing Indonesia’s policy vis-à-vis Australia. Australia would have vastly benefited from a friendly and stable neighbour but, given Indonesia’s instability, with communism a growing force, the prospect of having to share a common border in an area that had proven its importance to Australia’s security during the Second World War cannot have been attractive. Defence and External Affairs would both have assessed the situation realistically along these lines. Keeping Indonesia friendly and out of West New Guinea would at some stage have allowed them to pursue self-determination as a realistic contribution to Australia’s security interests. With these goals no longer congruent, security
issues would have claimed priority, resulting in the sacrifice of Dutch administration and its ultimate objective, self-determination for the indigenous people.

The institutional position of the House of Representatives and the Senate was very weak vis-à-vis the government. Debates on foreign affairs could be avoided and means to put pressure on the government were limited. The Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs was very dependent upon the Minister for External Affairs, minimising its impact.

Given these findings it is hypothesised that institutions and procedures created a strong, unitary and stable foreign policy decision making centre, hard to penetrate for the periphery that included parliament, NGOs, churches and media. The role of the periphery in deliberation, implementation and evaluation of Australia’s policy regarding West New Guinea would have been limited, if not almost completely irrelevant.

12.3 The Netherlands’ hypothetical policy in the East Timor case

In order not to repeat the content of Section 6.1 only institutional changes relating to the function and importance of the various actors involved in foreign policy making will be highlighted.

Compared with the 1960s the Department of Foreign Affairs underwent a major structural reform. The position of ‘Minister for Development Co-operation’ created to be in control of a special directorate-general, effectively split the Department in two fairly autonomous halves. In liaison with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who remained in charge of the entire
foreign policy, the Minister for Development Co-operation managed the aid relationship
between the Netherlands and Indonesia. As such his influence in all stages of foreign policy
making was and is strong.

The churches’ domination over society and thus their means of influence weakened
considerably, leaving CDA much more freedom to decide its stand. Churches also lost much
ground to cascading NGOs, who contributed often radical views to policy making,
successfully forming alliances with political parties and the press. Thus human rights groups
became involved in regular talks with the Department of Foreign Affairs, and some even
became institutionalised. Although classified as ‘institutional’ outsiders lobbying activities
may well have given them a more prominent position in decision making.

The role of the media, released from their religious confinement, has developed into one of
more independent reporting. Peripheral actors would have had easier access to the media,
allowing them to play a more prominent role in the phases of foreign policy deliberation and
evaluation.

These social and institutional-functional developments justify the hypothesis that the position
of the decision making centre has weakened through its wider composition -- the centre was
made up of cabinet and especially the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Development Co-
operation and their advisers in the Department of Foreign Affairs -- its organisational
division, and stronger penetration by a larger number of independent voices.
Regarding foreign policy pursued towards Indonesia, Foreign Affairs would have hypothetically promoted the more traditional interests of the Netherlands, but with human rights and development aid added to its field of interest, it would have been forced to apply diplomatic means to translate these interests as well. Given the fundamental changes in Dutch society, both in structure and in opinions, cabinet would have been pervaded with these views, resulting in a policy that at least formally paid attention to self-determination and human rights. Party discipline would have continued to secure cabinet’s position as ultimate decision unit, directing foreign policy in the phases of deliberating and evaluation. However, intra-cabinet conflict was more likely to occur in the post-pacification era, theoretically allowing parliament to penetrate the centre with its more idealistic interests. Thus self-determination and human rights are expected to have received mainly low-level attention in Dutch foreign policy, given that small parties had penetrated the political periphery and that human rights had become widely accepted as an issue of foreign policy. However, with Foreign Affairs still dominating policy implementation, political and economic interests are expected to have prevailed over pursuit of human rights interests.

12.4 Australia’s hypothetical policy in the East Timor case

The Department of Foreign Affairs as a main player in the foreign policy making process has both gained and lost institutional ground. Adding Trade to its portfolio its role in international economic policy has increased, but in cabinet the foreign minister has lost ground to the Prime Minister whose position has been invigorated through a significant expansion of his
Department. With the widening of the agenda, a larger number of departments have become involved in foreign policy, which has further weakened Foreign Affairs’ position.

In spite of an extension of the mandate of the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence and establishment of the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, parliament’s role in foreign policy making has improved only marginally, its contribution still being hampered by structural and procedural shortcomings. Although interest in foreign affairs has grown and human rights have developed into an established element of foreign policy, the number of parliamentarians participating in foreign policy matters has remained small.

Australian society at large is much more aware of the outside world, and especially Asia. The fairly independent media would have played an important role in shaping public opinion and through it the opinion of politicians. It would have been easy for NGOs to have access to the media and get their message across. The numerous East Timor support groups lacked proper institutional means but, could only have played an opinion shaping role. Nevertheless the difficulties in penetrating the strong decision making centre would have reduced them to institutional outsiders.

Fundamental changes in the institutional setting since the case of West New Guinea have not occurred, although society at large, represented by the media and NGOs, has become more involved. The conclusion that there is a strong foreign policy making centre, hard to penetrate for outsiders, still holds for the case of East Timor.
A realistic assessment of interests which Foreign Affairs, Defence and their political representatives should pursue, would see domination of the view that gives priority to cultivating political and economic relations with Indonesia at the expense of Timorese self-determination and human rights issues. Assuming that the coalition defending this policy has a unitary decision making centre one expects the policy to be stable, any challenge unlikely to come from within Australia.