Advocacy and Policy Change: The Case of VluchtelingenWerk and Immigration Lawyers on the Family Reunification Policy

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Date: 10 August 2020

Word count: 24.988

Abstract

The Dutch family reunification policy for asylum seekers can be seen as quite restrictive. In 2013, the policy was tightened, which had major consequences for dependent young adults as many young adults were left behind in unsafe circumstances in their country of origin or in refugee camps. This specific part of the family reunification policy has received a lot of criticism from several non-governmental actors, such as VluchtelingenWerk and immigration lawyers. Because they did not agree with the policy, they advocated for policy change. Eventually, the policy with regard to dependent young adults changed three times in the period between 2014 and 2016. The purpose of this research is to examine how the advocacy strategies used by the non-governmental actors, VluchtelingenWerk and the immigration lawyers, have contributed to the policy changes regarding the rights of dependent young adults in the family reunification policy in the period between 2014 and 2016. In order to examine this, this research contains a document analysis of both parliamentary documents and documents of non-governmental actors and several interviews. Based on the results of the collected data, the conclusion can be drawn that VluchtelingenWerk and the immigration lawyers have successfully contributed to the three policy changes by investing their advocacy in four ways: (1) Defining the problem definition with the aim to capture attention; (2) Developing policy solutions; (3) Influencing the political climate; (4) Strengthening the organization capacity. This way, they were able to come to an agreement on the problem definition and solutions to problems with policymakers, increase the political will, and to create or respond to a window of opportunity effectively. These factors eventually led to the three changes in the family reunification policy with regard to dependent young adults.

Key words: Family Reunification; Dependent Young Adults; Advocacy; Civil Society Organizations; Multiple Streams Framework; VluchtelingenWerk; Immigration Lawyers

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List of Acronyms

ACF	Advocacy Coalition Framework
ACVZ	Adviescommissie voor Vreemdelingenzaken (translated: Advisory Committee on Migration Affairs)
CDA	Christen-Democratisch Appèl (translated: Christian Democratic Appeal)
CSO	Civil Society Organization
D66	Democraten 66 (translated: Democrats 66)
ECHR	European Court of Human Rights
IND	Immigration and Naturalization Office
MSF	Multiple Streams Framework
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PvdA	Partij van de Arbeid (translated: Labor Party)
SP	Socialistische Partij (translated: Socialist Party)
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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1. Introduction

With the large influx of refugees and asylum seekers to the Netherlands in the past years, family reunification has become a topic of interest for both civil society organizations and policymakers. A significant part of this influx consists of the so-called 'nareizigers': dependent family members of someone who has already been granted asylum in the Netherlands. When an official request for family reunification is accepted by the Dutch Immigration and Naturalization Office (IND), the family members will be granted a dependent asylum residence permit. According to a report by the European Migration Network (EMN, 2017a), which is part of the IND, 24.100 and 31.840 requests for family reunification were done by permit holders in 2015 and 2016, respectively. In these two years, respectively 45.040 and 19.830 people applied for a regular asylum status (EMN, 2017a). This shows that dependent family members form a significant part of the total number of newcomers entering the Netherlands. Moreover, in the period between 2014 and 2016, 70 percent of the applications for family reunification of asylum seekers were accepted, which means that 70 percent of the family members of asylum seekers were granted a dependent asylum residence permit (EMN, 2017a).

The IND is responsible for both the evaluation of asylum applications and family reunification requests. In order to decide upon granting asylum status and processing family reunification requests, the IND follows certain legal procedures. The procedure for regular asylum requests is different than the procedure for family reunification. In the former, the IND has to examine asylum motives, whereas in the latter, the IND has to examine family ties. The family reunification procedure for holders of an asylum residence permit works as follows: Firstly, the permit holder will submit an application for family reunification within the first three months after receiving the residence permit, including documents of family members which will prove their identity and the family ties. After the IND has received the application, they will check whether the application is complete. This is followed by a document research in which the "IND will usually examine whether these documents are authentic" (COA et al., 2018, p. 5). When the documents are insufficient in proving the family ties, the IND can also opt for an DNA test or an interview with the family members at the Dutch embassy. After this evaluation, the IND decides whether the family members meet all the required conditions. If they do, the family members receive a Regular Provisional Residence Permit, a visa for long-term stay, with which they can travel to the Netherlands (COA et al., 2018).

The family reunification procedure can be very complicated, and it takes time for the IND to come to a decision. The large influx of asylum seekers and their dependent family

members has put a lot of pressure on the IND in the past years. The waiting times have been increasing immensely and while the IND is legally obliged to come to a decision for an individual case within 180 days, this term is increasingly exceeded. In 2016, the average processing time was 232 days and during the first quarter of 2017, it took the IND on average 331 days to come to a decision for family reunification (Brummel-Ahlaloum, Andriessen, Smal & Kawous, 2018). This immense increase in the average waiting period for the family reunification procedure is caused by different factors such as the complexity of the procedure, underemployment at the IND, and the fact that the IND prioritized applications for regular asylum over family reunification in 2015 (Brummel-Ahlaloum et al., 2018; Szytniewski, Buysse & van Soomeren, 2018). Partly because of the long waiting period for the family reunification procedure, the IND has been subjected to substantial scrutiny by several actors. For instance, the issue has been discussed multiple times by politicians in the Dutch parliament (van Dijk, 2017; Voordewind, 2017). Furthermore, many civil society organizations have stressed the issue by discussing the consequences not only for the permit holders but also for their family members who are left behind in unsafe circumstances in the country of origin.

This relates to another highly criticized theme within the family reunification policy: the situation of dependent young adults who have reached the age of majority. In 2013, policymakers decided to tighten the policy which had major consequences for dependent young adults as it was almost impossible for them to reunite with their parents or other family members. This is because the IND made the level of dependency for young adults stricter, i.e. young adults needed to have 'more than normal emotional ties' instead of 'normal emotional ties' with their sponsor who had received a residence permit in the Netherlands. Because of this, many young adults had to be left behind in either their country of origin or in refugee camps in other countries. There are many cases in which, for example, young Syrian daughters of 18 or 19 years old were not allowed to reunite with their family and were left behind in unsafe circumstances (VluchtelingenWerk, 2014; College voor de Rechten van de Mens, 2015; NOS, 2014). Since one of their family members received refugee status in the Netherlands, it is very likely that the children who were left behind also faced unsafe circumstances even though they just reached the age of majority. This aspect of the family reunification policy received a lot of criticism from non-governmental actors such as immigration lawyers, VluchtelingenWerk[1], the College voor de Rechten van de Mens[2], and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as they thought the tightening was inhumane. These

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[1] Translated as 'The Dutch Council of Refugees'
[2] Translated as 'Netherlands Institute for Human Rights'

actors therefore advocated for policy change and tried to influence the family reunification policy in several ways.

In the period between 2014 and 2016 the family reunification policy changed three times regarding the issue of dependent young adults (Klaassen & Lodder, 2016). These policy changes have ensured that the policy from then onwards was made less strict for dependent young adults. In other words, the policy regarding this specific issue was relaxed three times in this period. This relaxation seems to contradict the general right-wing stance of the Dutch government which can be characterized as quite restrictive towards asylum seekers and refugees (Hoogenboom, 2015; van Selm, 2019). Therefore, it seems that the advocacy of the non-governmental actors has paid off. However, to what extent and how the advocacy of these non-governmental actors had an influence on these three changes in the family reunification policy regarding dependent young adults has not been examined by researchers yet. Therefore, this study will examine how the advocacy of VluchtelingenWerk and immigration lawyers contributed to the policy changes in this period. In order to come to an answer to this issue, the following research question is formulated:

How have the advocacy strategies used by non-governmental actors such as VluchtelingenWerk and immigration lawyers contributed to changes of the Dutch family reunification policy between 2014 and 2016 regarding the rights for family reunification of dependent young adults?

1.1 Academic and Societal Relevance

This research is aimed to contribute to the academic field of public administration and migration studies. By following the Multiple Streams Framework (MSF) developed by Kingdon in 1984, this research will try to fill in existing gaps in the academic literature on this major theory of change. When focusing on advocacy of civil society organizations, the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) developed by Sabatier (1988) is often used. However, the ACF is not the only academic framework developed to measure the influence of advocacy efforts on policy change. Kingdon created the MSF to apply to the political context of the United States. Other scholars have extended the MSF in the following years in order to apply the framework to other contexts and countries as well. According to Cairney and Zahariadis (2016), "this is because MSF contains a metaphorical language that is flexible enough to describe a wide range of agenda setting processes. It is also built on insights that we can describe as 'universal' because they are abstract enough to apply to agenda setting in any political system" (p. 88). Applying

the MSF on a case in the Netherlands will therefore create a new, interesting vantage point. Moreover, applying it to the issue of family reunification will also contribute to the academic field of migration studies as the MSF has not been used a lot by scholars within this field.

The societal relevance of this research lies in understanding the importance of advocacy and its influence on migration policy. The political arena in the Netherlands has quite a restrictive stance towards the influx of asylum seekers and refugees. It is, therefore, interesting to examine how non-governmental actors advocate for the rights of these vulnerable groups and whether this results in policy change. VluchtelingenWerk is the most prominent organization when it comes to advocating for refugees and asylum seekers in the Netherlands. By focusing on VluchtelingenWerk as an organization, this research will provide new insights for both policymakers and other civil society organizations. Moreover, it is also interesting to see how immigration lawyers could have an influence on policymaking. When one speaks about non-governmental actors, the focus is often put on non-governmental organizations (NGOs). However, lawyers can also play an essential role in policymaking.

2. Theoretical Framework

This chapter will present the theoretical framework for this research. Firstly, a short discussion on the role of civil society organizations on policymaking is presented. This is followed by an explanation of the Multiple Streams Framework, which forms the base of this research. Finally, the applicability of the MSF to the issue of advocacy is discussed in-depth.

2.1 The Role of Civil Society Organizations

When researching advocacy strategies and the influence on policymaking, civil society organizations (CSOs) are important actors to discuss. CSOs are known for their autonomous position towards the government and are therefore recognized as a 'third sector' (Foley & Edwards, 1996; Ghaus-Pasha, 2004). Because of this autonomy, CSOs often have a critical view towards the government (Edwards, 2009; Mensink, 2018). According to Foley and Edwards (1996), CSOs "challenge governing institutions to meet particular needs, aspirations, and conceptions of the common good" (p. 46). CSOs are often occupied with defending the rights of certain marginalized and vulnerable groups of people. As Ghaus-Pasha (2004) argues, CSOs "help give voice to those who have been historically marginalized and provide them with a crucial vehicle for exercising their rights and holding government accountable. As such, they play a vital role in strengthening democracy and the skills of citizenship essential to healthy societies" (p. 19).

According to Pollard and Court (2005), CSOs have the ability to influence various stages in the policy cycle such as the agenda setting process, formulation of policy, implementation of a policy, and the monitoring and evaluation of a policy. In order to do so, five roles of CSOs are identified by Najam (1999). These roles are: (1) "Monitor, with the function of keeping policy 'honest'; (2) Advocate, lobbying directly for the policy options they prefer or against those they oppose; (3) Innovator, developing and demonstrating ways of doing things differently and highlighting the policy value of being missed by options that are not adopted or considered; (4) Service provider, directly acting to fulfil a service need, especially to the marginalized and underserved; (5) Capacity builder, providing support to communities or other CSOs" (Najam, cited in Pollard & Court, 2005). Some of these roles are important in a specific stage of the policy process. For example, monitoring the application of policies and laws is vital for CSOs during the implementation stage of policies (Ghaus-Pasha, 2004). However, in

practice a combination of the five roles is often necessary to have an influence on policy and policymaking.

The question remains when the efforts of a CSO can be regarded as successful in influencing policymaking. Scholars agree that this is difficult to measure (Ghaus-Pasha, 2004). Nevertheless, Ghaus-Pasha (2004) named a couple of key factors "that contribute to the success of CSO policy initiatives" including "willingness and ability to negotiate and effectively lobby with government, elites and other sectors, a vision of narrow and comprehensive policy goals and good strategies to accomplish them, changed perception of the state, financial and technical resources to campaign, mobilize, network, analyze and disseminate, and good and speedy decision making within CSOs" (p. 27). Furthermore, Ghaus-Pasha (2004) emphasizes the importance of coalition building between different CSOs as "it combines their skills, labor and resources, gives them common goals, and enhances their 'voice' and 'bargaining power'" (p. 27).

2.2 Multiple Streams Framework

Kingdon's Multiple Streams Framework can be seen as an essential part of his theory on agenda-setting. With this theory, Kingdon sought to provide an answer to the question of why some issues are put on the public policy agenda whereas other issues are not (Stachowiak, 2013; Travis & Zahariadis, 2002). According to Kingdon, the policy agenda can be described as "the list of topics or issues to which both actors within the government and actors outside the government pay serious attention on a certain point of time" (Kingdon, as cited in van Asperdt & van der Velden, 2006). This definition shows that Kingdon acknowledged the fact that non-governmental actors also have influence over the agenda-setting of problems.

Kingdon's MSF consists of three separate streams that eventually help actors to put something on the policy agenda. These streams are: (1) the problem stream, focused on the recognition of a problem; (2) the policy stream, focused on the proposal of solutions; (3) the political stream, focused on the political climate and political events (Lieberman, 2002). These streams operate independently. However, at some points in time, these streams will simultaneously come together due to the actions of policy entrepreneurs which will then result in policy change (Cairney & Zahariadis, 2016; Travis & Zahariadis, 2002).

2.2.1 Problem stream

The problem stream relates to the recognition of a problem. As there are innumerable amounts of problems, most problems will never arise on the policy agenda. This is because these problems will not receive enough attention from policymakers. This means that there is competition among problems as some will be prioritized and put on the agenda while others will not receive any attention. Since attention is not objectively measurable, it is highly dependent on the interests and biases of policymakers (Cairney & Zahariadis, 2016). Furthermore, attention is also dependent on certain events that occur unexpectedly (Cairney & Zahariadis, 2016). Kingdon called these unpredictable events 'focusing events'. Examples of such focusing events are crises such as earthquakes, terrorist attacks, or the European migration crisis of 2015. Moreover, problems can also receive more attention by actors influencing policy when new information about a problem arises. An example used by Kingdon is a dramatic rise of deaths because of traffic accidents which could function as an indicator for policymakers to give more attention to this problem (van Asperdt & van der Velden, 2006).

In sum, "according to Kingdon, societal conditions capture the government's attention and are deemed problems by way of systematic indicators, dramatic focusing events, or negative feedback from existing policies" (Young, Shepley & Song, 2010, p. 4). Furthermore, Kingdon argues that policymakers and other actors play a pivotal role in agenda-setting. Because of their biases and interests, agenda-setting is highly subjective.

2.2.2 Policy stream

The second stream that is essential for policy change is the policy stream. According to Kingdon, the policy stream consists of "policy solutions whirling around in a 'policy primeval soup'" (Cairney & Zahariadis, 2016, p. 91). These policy solutions are often proposed by an individual actor with the aim to solve a particular problem and then subsequently "reconsidered and modified" by other actors present in the policy communities (Cairney & Zahariadis, 2016, p. 91). Kingdon called the actors who provide policy solutions 'hidden participants'. The group of hidden participants consists of both governmental and non-governmental actors, such as "specialists in government, academics, and special interest groups" (Lieberman, 2002). As Lieberman (2002) states, these actors "generally take responsibility for proposing solutions to various societal conditions under debate once an item has been elevated to an agenda item" (p.

445). They can propose these solutions in several ways. For instance, by doing research, publishing reports, or organizing hearings.

However, solely proposing solutions is not sufficient. Kingdon acknowledged that it is crucial that solutions reach the attention of actors who actually make policy decisions (van Asperdt & van der Velden, 2006). He calls this group of actors 'political elites'. When a policy solution is proposed by a group of hidden participants such as an interest group, they should make sure that their solution proposal will receive sufficient attention from political elites. This process is called a 'diffusion process' (van Asperdt & van der Velden, 2006). It is essential for the hidden participants that they will use the right strategies in order to make themselves heard. For instance, it is very important to have strong connections to participants of the political elite in this process.

2.2.3 Political stream

The third stream of the MSF is the political stream which is "the most critical avenue toward placing an item on the agenda" (Lieberman, 2002, p. 445). As Kingdon argued, excellent policy solutions or alternatives can be proposed but the power eventually lies in the hands of a few elected officials (Lieberman, 2002). In other words, the elected officials have the final say as they determine whether or not an issue will be put on the agenda. This makes agenda-setting highly dependent on changes in the political sphere such as an administrative or legislative turnover (Travis & Zahariadis, 2002).

There are a couple of other political factors that are crucial for agenda-setting, such as "the national mood" and "the balance of power between participants such as interest groups" (Cairney & Zahariadis, 2016, p. 99). In Kingdon's theory, the national mood refers to "the perceived climate of opinion by elites and other politicos" (Cairney & Zahariadis, 2016, p. 99). A change in the balance of power between participants in the agenda-setting process such as interest groups is also important. When a certain interest group gains a better reputation or has stronger connections to political elites, it is more likely that this interest group will receive more attention and thus will have more influence on the process of agenda-setting.

2.2.4 Window of opportunity and policy entrepreneurs

According to Kingdon's MSF, the three separate streams that determine agenda-setting must come together in order to result in policy change. As described by Stachowiak (2013), "at least

two of the streams need to converge at critical moments" in order to receive sufficient attention and to be put on the policy agenda (p. 7). When all three streams come together at a certain time period, it is most likely that the advocacy will be successful (Stachowiak, 2013). Kingdon called this critical moment in which the streams have the opportunity to converge a 'window of opportunity' or 'policy window'.

When a window of opportunity arises, it does not mean that the three streams will automatically converge. A pivotal actor in this process is the 'policy entrepreneur' (Lieberman, 2002). According to Kingdon (as cited in Mintrom & Norman, 2009) policy entrepreneurs "could be in or out of government, in elected or appointed positions, in interest groups or research organizations. But their defining characteristic, much as in the case of a business entrepreneur, is their willingness to invest their resources – time, energy, reputation, and sometimes money – in the hope of a future return" (p. 651). Liebermann (2002) captured the definition of a policy entrepreneur by stating the following: "an entrepreneur recognizes a problem, attaches an appropriate policy proposal to it, and floats the policy proposal in various forum to bring it to the attention of the elected officials that have the true power to place it on the agenda. An astute policy entrepreneur seeks windows of opportunity that create a favorable political climate for the policy being proposed" (p. 445).

2.3 Multiple Streams Framework and its Applicability to Advocacy Strategies

The MSF of Kingdon is a well-known theory that relates to agenda setting and the policy process. The theory can also be used to evaluate advocacy strategies that aim for policy change. Firstly, it can be used to simplify the complexity of a policy process which helps to evaluate advocacy strategies used by a particular actor and their outcomes. As Coffman (2007) states, "while there is no neat way to package the policy process to explain all of its complexity and nonlinearity, evaluations of advocacy and other promotional efforts that are based on theories of the policy process can help simplify the process to help evaluators intelligibly assess advocates' actions and their outcomes within it" (p. 7). Secondly, the MSF can be applied to advocacy because advocates play an important role in this theory. As described before, policy entrepreneurs have a certain influence on agenda-setting and there are all kinds of policy entrepreneurs, both within and outside the government. Therefore, it can be said that a civil society organization or interest group advocating for certain policy changes also belongs to this group of entrepreneurs. This means that advocates are important actors in the policy process functioning in the three streams.

Stachowiak (2013) has described a couple of advocacy strategies directly related to the MSF and its streams which advocating actors can use. This scholar created a figure that visually shows the advocacy strategies and the outcomes of these strategies which could be applied in advocacy evaluations (see figure 1) (Stachowiak, 2013).

The first strategy consists of "impacting problem definition, i.e. framing the issue, monitoring indicators that assess the existence and magnitude of issues, initiating special studies of an issue, and promoting constituent feedback" (Stachowiak, 2013, p. 8). This strategy is directly related to the problem stream of the MSF as it consists of different activities that are related to the definition of an issue. As can be seen in figure 1, this advocacy strategy captures the definition of a problem and this can be done through various ways such as framing and research. According to Cairney (2018), framing is a very important part of the problem definition as policy entrepreneurs need to "tell a persuasive story to frame a policy problem" in order to be successful and convincing. As the amount of existing problems is abundant, only a few will reach the policymakers. Successful policy entrepreneurs are aware of this and "they know that agenda-setting is about exercising power to generate attention for some issues over others" (Cairney, 2018, p. 201). Therefore, they act as 'knowledge brokers' by framing knowledge in certain ways to make it understandable in the political context, and 'problem brokers' by framing "conditions as public problems and work to make policymakers accept these frames" (Knaggård, 2013; Knaggård, 2015). When framing issues, policy entrepreneurs should keep in mind to reduce ambiguity and uncertainty. According to Cairney (2018), "policymakers seek to reduce ambiguity, by focusing on a simple definition of a complex problem, and uncertainty, by gathering information relevant to that definition" (p. 210-211). Therefore, policy entrepreneurs should make sure to give simple problem definitions and gather relevant information.

The second strategy is directly related to the policy stream as it includes the development of policy options and solutions by conducting research and creating think tanks devoted to certain issues (Stachowiak, 2013). Furthermore, the advocating actors could announce their policy solutions by "going to lunch, circulating papers, publishing articles, holding hearings, presenting testimony, and drafting and pushing legislative proposals (Kingdon, as cited in Cairney and Zahariadis, 2016, p. 91). According to Cairney (2018), it is important for advocating actors to "make sure that their favored solution is available before attention lurches to the problem" (p. 211). In other words, successful advocating actors should always be prepared for the moment they can present their solutions before a window of opportunity opens up. This is because it takes some time for a solution to be considered and to eventually become

accepted. Moreover, in order for a solution to be taken seriously, "the policy options need to be seen as technically feasible and consistent with policymaker and public values" (Stachowiak, 2013).

The third strategy which is related to the political stream consists of the influence on the political climate through activities such as "coalition building, demonstrations, and media advocacy" (Stachowiak, 2013, p. 8). Cairney emphasizes the importance of coalition forming by arguing that policy entrepreneurs "seek opportunities to sell their solutions during heightened attention, by forming coalitions and engaging in networks to identify receptivity to policy solutions and an opportunity to act" (Cairney, 2018, p. 211). In other words, coalitions with others could help advocating actors to raise more attention to an issue and to increase the chance that their proposed solutions are taken over by policymakers.

The fourth strategy identified by Stachowiak (2013) is the strengthening of the organizational capacity of an advocating actor. The organizational capacity can be strengthened by relationships with policymakers, credibility, the ability to identify a policy window, and the ability to couple streams. This way, the strengthening of the organizational capacity can result in a change in capacity which could eventually lead to an increased ability to create, recognize or to respond to a window of opportunity effectively (Stachowiak, 2013). As Stachowiak (2013) argues "to effectively recognize and take advantage of open policy windows, advocates must possess knowledge, time, relationships, and good reputations" (p. 7). Cairney (2018) also acknowledges the importance of this ability by arguing that "policy entrepreneurs exploit a 'window of opportunity' during which policymakers have the willingness and ability to adopt their policy solution" (p. 211).

As can be seen in figure 1, each strategy has a certain outcome. The first two strategies could lead to a shift of norms as it could result in an "increased agreement on problem definition" and an "increased agreement on solutions to problems" (Stachowiak, 2013, p.8). Furthermore, the strategy of the political stream could, in fact, lead to a strengthened base of support which could, in turn, result in an increased political will. When all these outcomes are combined, there is a possibility that a policy will, in fact, change which could have an impact on the social and/or physical conditions (Stachowiak, 2013).

"POLICY WINDOW" Theory of Change

STRATEGIES

Define the problem, e.g.,
- Indicator tracking
- Framing
- Research
- Organizing

Develop policy solutions, e.g.,
- Research/think tanks

Strengthen organizational capacity
- Relationships
- Credibility
- Ability to identify policy window
- Ability to "couple" streams

Influence the political climate, e.g.,
- Coalition building
- Demonstrations

OUTCOMES

SHIFT IN SOCIAL NORMS
- Increased agreement on problem definition
- Increased agreement on solutions to problems

CHANGE IN CAPACITY
Increased ability to create/recognize/respond to policy window effectively

STRENGTHENED BASE OF SUPPORT
Increased political will

IMPROVED POLICIES
Changes in policy

IMPACT
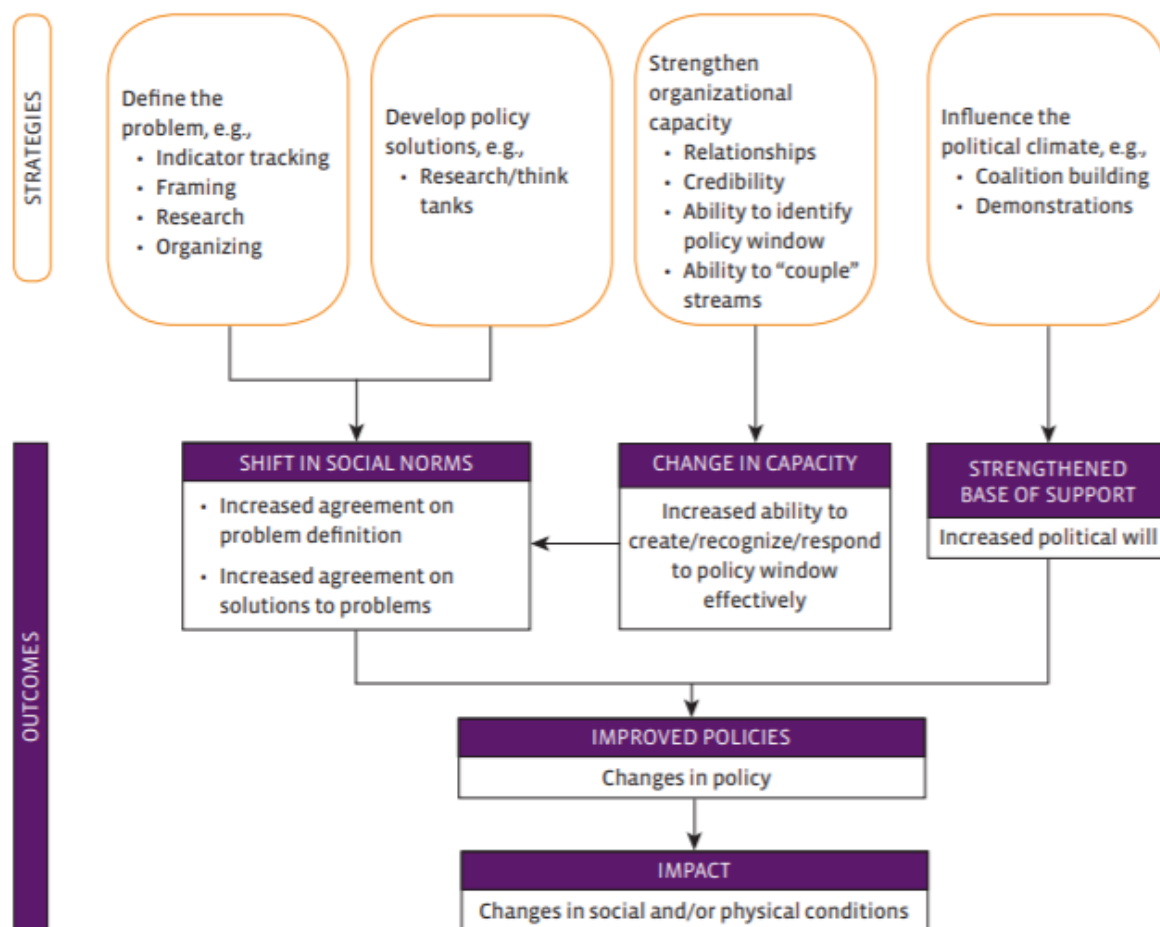Changes in social and/or physical conditions

Figure 1: The application of the MSF on advocacy strategies (Stachowiak, 2013)

3. Research Design

This chapter discusses the research design of this study. Firstly, the research question and the sub-questions are discussed. Secondly, the operationalization of the concepts discussed in the theoretical framework are explained. Thirdly, the case selection is explained. This is followed by an explanation of the methodology of this research consisting of the data collection and data analysis. Lastly, the expectations, aim of the study, validity and reliability, and the ethical considerations are discussed.

3.1 Research Question

This research will answer the following research question: *How have the advocacy strategies used by non-governmental actors such as VluchtelingenWerk and immigration lawyers contributed to changes of the Dutch family reunification policy between 2014 and 2016 regarding the rights for family reunification of dependent young adults?*

In order to give answer to this question, the following sub-questions are created:

1) Which changes have been made to the policy on family reunification regarding the rights of dependent young adults?

2) Which advocacy strategies were used by VluchtelingenWerk and the immigration lawyers?

3) In what way did the advocacy strategies and the corresponding activities contribute to the changes of the family reunification policy regarding the rights of dependent young adults?

The first sub-question is of descriptive nature as it gives an overview of the policy changes in the case of family reunification. The other sub-questions will delve more in-depth with the MSF and the advocacy strategies used by the selected non-governmental actors.

3.2 Operationalization

The operationalization follows from the MSF and the advocacy strategies within this framework. Based on the work of Stachowiak (2013) and figure 1 (see section 2.3), this operationalization table is created. In this table, the factors contributing to policy change are divided along the lines of the MSF. In other words, the three streams of the MSF and the concept of a 'window of opportunity' are separated. For each element of the MSF, the factors

contributing to policy change and the advocacy strategy which relate to the specific MSF element are shown. Furthermore, each advocacy strategy consists of a couple of indicators which have been described by either Stachowiak (2013) or Cairney (2018) and are explained in paragraph 2.3. Finally, a couple of interview questions per indicator are shown in the operationalization table.

Elements of the MSF	Factors contributing to policy change	Advocacy Strategies	Indicators	Activities	Interview questions
Problem Stream	Agreement on problem definition	Defining the problem definition with the aim to capture attention	Problem recognition	Monitoring a policy and the way it is acted upon by policymakers and decision makers in order to come across issues	How did you find out about the issue? Who were the most important actors to raise the issue to? What have you done to raise the issue to these actors?
			Manipulation of the cognitive biases of policymakers	Influencing the cognitive biases of policymakers by telling persuasive stories, making emotional appeals and framing the issue in a way to reduce ambiguity and uncertainty among policymakers	Did you use certain tactics such as telling persuasive stories and making emotional appeals when framing the issue? Can you give an example? Why did you do this? How was this issue framed? Did you try to frame the issue in a simple way? Did you frame it in a way to stress the urgency of the issue?
Policy Stream	Agreement on solutions to problems	Developing policy solutions	Research	Conducting research on an issue in order to come to specific solutions to the problem and to publish these solutions	Did you conduct research on the issue? What kind of solutions did you propose based on this research?
			Feedback	Promoting constituent feedback on policies in order to	Did you give feedback or criticize the policy in order to capture the attention for the issue? In what ways did you do this, e.g. talking to policymakers or sending letters to the State

				capture the attention to a policy issue	Secretary? What kind of solutions did you propose?
Political Stream	Increasing the political will	Influencing the political climate	Coalition building	Building coalitions with other advocating actors (e.g. civil society organizations, researchers, interest groups)	Did you form a coalition with regard to the advocacy on family reunification? If so, with whom and why? Do you feel like this has been effective?
			Demonstrations	Organizing or participating in public protests and setting up campaigns	Did you set up campaigns regarding the issue of family reunification? Did you organize public protests? Why? Do you feel that this has been effective in influencing the political climate?
			Media advocacy	Reaching out to media platforms	Did you reach out to the media regarding their advocacy of family reunification? Why? Do you feel like this has been effective?
Window of opportunity	Increased ability to create/respond/recognize to window of opportunity effectively	Strengthen the organizational capacity	Relationships	Building relationships with the political elite	How are the relationships between you/your organization and policymakers? Do you have close contacts with certain policymakers? Do you feel like these contacts are necessary and useful in order to spread your message?
			Credibility	Creating credibility by acquiring support and maintaining a good reputation	What do you do to maintain a good reputation? What do you do to acquire support from other actors?
			Ability to identify policy window	Monitoring (sudden) events happening in the political climate in	What do you do to monitor the political climate? Did you recognize a moment in which you felt was the right moment to seek attention for the issue of family reunification?

				order to seek a window of opportunity	
			Ability to 'couple' streams	Making sure to reach sufficient attention for an issue and the proposed solution	Do you think the advocacy on the issue has been effective and has contributed to actual policy change? What has been effective and what has been ineffective?

Table 2: Operationalization

3.3 Case Selection

The case selection consists of two different parts. Firstly, the selection of the non-governmental actors is discussed. After that, the selection of the issue of dependent young adults within the family reunification policy is explained.

3.3.1 Non-governmental actors

In order to examine the role of non-governmental actors who advocated for the policy changes regarding dependent young adults, predominantly two types of actors are selected: VluchtelingenWerk and immigration lawyers. Together with the College voor de Rechten van de Mens and the UNHCR, these two actors have advocated for policy change regarding dependent young adults. Based on the availability for interviews and the willingness to participate, the choice has been made to focus on VluchtelingenWerk and immigration lawyers. These two actors are shortly explained.

Firstly, VluchtelingenWerk is an independent organization that stands up for the interests and rights of refugees and asylum seekers. The organization does this in several ways. For instance, they support asylum seekers during their asylum procedure by giving information and providing legal support and guidance. They also support and guide refugees who are allowed to stay in the Netherlands. Besides offering direct support, the organization is also very active with advocacy and creating public support. VluchtelingenWerk claims to commit "itself to improving the position of refugees and asylum seekers. One of the ways we do this is through advocacy: influencing the government's policy and the viewpoints of political parties and by creating public support" (VluchtelingenWerk Nederland, n.d.). The advocacy of VluchtelingenWerk consists of the following activities (1) "signal problems in legislation"; (2) "react to legislative bills"; (3) "make policy proposals"; and (4) "monitor the position of asylum seekers and refugees" (VluchtelingenWerk Nederland, n.d.). During the past years, VluchtelingenWerk has focused a large part of their advocacy on the issue of family reunification. The organization did not agree with certain aspects of the national policy including the issue regarding dependent young adults and has advocated for change.

The second type of non-governmental actors selected for this research consists of immigration lawyers who handle family reunification cases. During the individual cases they handle, lawyers sometimes come across certain issues or restrictions in a policy of which they think that it should be changed. This has also been the case with the situation of dependent

young adults. That is why some immigration lawyers with a specialization in family reunification cases have actively tried to advocate for policy change on that specific issue. The choice has been made to include this specific type of non-governmental actors because they could provide another perspective on the overall contribution of advocacy. As immigration lawyers are different actors with possibly other interests than civil society organizations, it is interesting to include them in this research. The interviewee from this specific group of actors has been selected through a snowballing approach as other respondents stressed the importance of this immigration lawyer.

3.3.2 Dependent young adults

Since it is not feasible to investigate changes in family reunification policy in general, the focus in this research will be on a relatively small part of the policy, i.e. the issue of dependent young adults. This specific part of the policy has been selected for various reasons. First of all, the family reunification policy with regard to dependent young adults changed three times in the period between 2014 and 2016 making the policy less strict. This is particularly interesting, because the policy was tightened in 2013 which had significant consequences for dependent young adults. In other words, because of the tightening of the family reunification policy it was almost impossible for dependent young adults to be admitted to the Netherlands. Therefore, it is interesting to examine how and why this was reversed. Moreover, the Dutch government has a quite restrictive stance towards immigrants and family migration (Bonjour & Schrover, 2015; Klaassen & Søndergaard, 2012; van Selm, 2019). As dependent family members form a large part of the total number of newcomers coming to the Netherlands, a relaxation of the family reunification policy seems to contradict this restrictive attitude, especially because the policy changes regarding dependent young adults make it easier for these young adults to reunite with their parents or other family members who have received a residence permit. Therefore, it is more likely that this could have led to a rise in the total number of dependent family members entering the Netherlands. Furthermore, the policy changes regarding dependent young adults are also interesting to study because the Dutch family reunification policy has become quite lenient on this issue compared to the policies in other European countries such as in the United Kingdom and Belgium (EMN, 2017b). It is therefore interesting to see how this fits into the restrictive stance of the Dutch government. A final reason for the selection of this specific part within the family reunification policy, is the fact that various different non-governmental actors

have advocated for the changes in the period between 2014 and 2016. This therefore fits well with the research question of this research.

3.4 Data Collection

This research is entirely based on a qualitative method in order to give an answer to the research question. For the collection of data, two different types of qualitative data are included.

On the one hand, an in-depth document analysis has been performed. In this document analysis, a variety of documents are included. First of all, parliamentary documents from the national level are collected. These documents include reports from parliamentary debates, letters from the State Secretary for Justice and Security, written questions asked by politicians to the State Secretary of Justice and Security, and the 'Staatscourant' (a newspaper published by the state in which new laws and governmental announcements are made). These documents have been retrieved from two online databases of the Dutch Parliament (https://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerstukken) and (officielebekendmakingen.nl). In these two databases, the policy documents are found through various search terms, such as 'gezinshereniging meerderjarige kinderen'[3], 'meerderjarige nareizigers'[4], and 'nareis'[5]. The policy documents are also collected through a snowball approach. Furthermore, the policy documents are mainly collected in order to provide an answer to the first sub-question, i.e. to give an overview of the family reunification policy regarding the rights of dependent young adults and the changes within this policy.

Secondly, documents of the non-governmental actors advocating for policy changes are collected. These documents include letters sent to the State Secretary or other politicians, research reports showing the results of a research and including recommendations, annual reports showing the activities and achievements of the actors in the period between 2014 and 2016, and news articles published on the website of the actors. These documents are collected in order to analyze what kind of advocacy strategies are used by the actors.

On the other hand, this research also includes a couple of semi-structured interviews with actors who have been actively advocating for policy changes regarding dependent young adults. The interviews are semi-structured because this gives room for new interpretations. As Galletta (2013) argued, "a key benefit of the semi-structured interview is its attention to lived

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[3] Translated from Dutch: family reunification of young adult children
[4] Translated from Dutch: dependent young adults
[5] Translated from Dutch: the journey of dependent family members

experience while also addressing theoretically driven variables of interest" (p. 24). These interviews are conducted with the purpose of providing new insights on the advocacy strategies of the actors as not all advocacy activities are written down and documented. The interviews were also used to assess the contribution of advocacy strategies on policy changes. In total, three interviews have been conducted. Two of the respondents work at VluchtelingenWerk and the other respondent is an immigration lawyer specialized in family reunification. The respondents for the interviews are selected as a result of a snowballing approach as some respondents are accessed through the contact information provided by other respondents (Noy, 2008). However, due to the current Covid-19 crisis, it was more difficult to find respondents as some potential candidates had other priorities. Moreover, it was no longer possible to conduct face-to-face interviews. Therefore, the choice was made to do the interviews by telephone. This had some consequences, such as the fact that body language and non-verbal expressions of the respondents were not visible (Bryman, 2012). However, telephone interviews are not inferior to face-to-face interviews as it "may allow respondents to disclose sensitive information more freely" (Novick, 2008, p. 397). The topic list for the interviews can be found in appendix II.

3.5 Data Analysis

This research has a qualitative nature which means that the documents and interviews have been analyzed in a qualitative way. The first step in this process is to analyze the parliamentary documents in order to delineate the changes in the family reunification policy with regard to dependent young adults. As Hall and Steiner (2020) argued, "qualitative content analysis is the close, comprehensive, and organized reading of a set of texts to identify themes, intent, or patterns" (p. 4). Therefore, a grounded theory approach for the coding of the parliamentary documents and the documents of non-governmental actors is used (Charmaz, 2006). The coding of the documents has been done in the program 'ATLAS.ti' and it consists of two steps: initial coding and focused coding. The first step, initial coding, was used to analyze the content of selected documents with an open mind meaning that these codes went beyond the advocacy strategies and indicators laid down in the operationalization table (Charmaz, 2006). This provided the opportunity to identify specific parts of the policy documents which were relevant for this study. The second step consisting of focused coding "entails emphasizing the most common codes and those that are seen as most revealing about the data (Bryman, 2012, p. 569). In other words, the most common codes have been identified and categorized in specific

categories which enabled the researcher to make comparisons between the selected documents and to analyze the coherence between the documents.

The second step in the data analysis is the analysis of the interviews. Contrary to the coding in the document analysis, the choice has been made to use closed codes when coding the interviews. In other words, the overall categories that followed from the literature on the MSF and advocacy strategies within the MSF as described in the operationalization table have been used to categorize the respondents' answers. For the analysis of the interviews, the choice has been made to anonymize the respondents. The respondents acknowledge the risk that they might be traceable because of their professional position. However, the respondents' names are not given in this research.

3.6 Expectations

Based on the Multiple Streams Framework and the advocacy strategies within this framework, a couple of expectations are formulated.

Expectation 1: If there is an agreement between policymakers and non-governmental actors on the problem definition of an issue, it could lead to actual policy change.

Expectation 2: If there is an agreement between policymakers and non-governmental actors on the solutions for an issue, it could lead to actual policy change.

Expectation 3: If non-governmental actors are able to influence the political climate and increase the political will, it could lead to actual policy change.

Expectation 4: If non-governmental actors are able to create or respond to a window of opportunity effectively, it could lead to actual policy change.

3.7 Aim of Study

By conducting this research, the aim is to contribute both to the academic literature on this topic, as well as providing a better understanding of the contribution of civil society organizations and lawyers on policy. By examining how these non-governmental actors can influence the family reunification policy, it can also provide a theoretical base which can be drawn upon by other non-governmental actors, such as NGOs and lawyers on other immigration related issues.

3.7 Validity and Reliability

As this research has a qualitative approach, validity and reliability are assessed in a different way than in quantitative research (Bryman, 2012). In terms of internal validity, credibility is a term often used in qualitative research. In order to make this research as credible as possible, all the interviews are recorded and transcribed and a list is created showing all the documents used in the document analysis (see appendix I). Furthermore, there is access to the codes used for the analysis of both the documents as the interviews. Moreover, the research includes triangulation as it "entails using more than one method or source of data in the study of social phenomena" (Bryman, 2012, p. 392). This is all done in order to contribute to the internal validity of this research.

When it comes to external validity, qualitative research often refers to the transferability of the research. Qualitative data is often context specific which makes it difficult to be transferable or generalizable (Bryman, 2012). Despite this limitation of qualitative research, this research tries to be transferable by giving insight to the methods used in this research. In appendix II, the topic list used for the interviews is shown. Besides, the way the documents and interviews are analyzed is explained in the data analysis. However, it still remains difficult to generalize because this research is based on a relatively small sample.

In case of the reliability and objectivity of this research, a large limitation can be found. As it was only possible to find three respondents for the interviews, the reliability and objectivity is limited. The interviews have been conducted via telephone, which could potentially have encouraged the respondents to be more open and "disclose sensitive information more freely" increasing the reliability of the results (Novick, 2008, p. 397). Furthermore, the researcher has tried to leave room for different perspectives during the interviews and has also asked the respondents' opinions on important topics. This is all done in order to increase the reliability and internal validity. However, due to the fact that the number of respondents was limited, the conclusion must be drawn that the external validity and generalizability are limited.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

As this research examines the contribution of VluchtelingenWerk and immigration lawyers on policy change, the choice has been made to anonymize the respondents of the interviews. This is predominantly done because the respondents have been careful in judging their own advocacy

efforts and their possible contribution to policy change. This caution in reflecting their influence on policy is also seen in other research and can be seen as typical for advocating actors (Mensink, 2018). The anonymizing is also done so that the answers of respondents are unlikely to be traced back to the specific respondent. This gave the respondents more confidence in participating in the interviews because they cannot be hold accountable for the outcome. Prior to the interview, the respondents signed a consent form in which this was all explained.

4. Context

This chapter provides the necessary context for understanding the issue regarding dependent young adults in the family reunification policy. Firstly, a concise description of the national family reunification policy in general is given. After this, some important policy changes that were implemented prior to the policy changes regarding dependent young adults are discussed.

4.1 Dutch Family Reunification Policy

4.1.1 Regular family reunification versus asylum family reunification

The family reunification policy in the Netherlands relies on national laws and regulations as well as on international treaties and European legislation. "At a national level, the provisions on family reunification are available in the Aliens Act 2000, the Aliens Decree 2000, the Aliens Regulations 2000, and the Aliens Act Implementation Guidelines 2000" (EMN, 2017a, p. 7). Something remarkable in the Dutch family reunification policy is that there is a distinction between regular family reunification and asylum family reunification[6]. The former refers to the procedure for a holder of a regular residence permit whereas the latter refers to the procedure for a holder of an asylum residence permit. As described by the EMN (2017a), "requirements [for asylum family reunification] are less stringent than for regular family reunification: There is no income requirement, no fees are charged, no civic integration examination abroad is required, and no regular provisional residence permit requirement applies" (p. 19). Furthermore, the definition of family members who are able to reunite via family reunification is broader for asylum family reunification than for the regular procedure. For example, adult children and parents of minor children are eligible for asylum family reunification under the national policy but they are not eligible for a regular family reunification (EMN, 2017a). Another major difference between the two types of family reunification is that the application for asylum family reunification should be done within a period of three months after the sponsor received his or her asylum residence permit. For the regular procedure, there is no time span in which the application should be done. This three-month term for the application is one of the requirements for asylum family reunification. Other requirements are: there must be an actual family relationship between the sponsor and the family members; the family relationship must

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[6] It should be noted that this thesis focuses on the asylum family reunification procedure and not on the regular family reunification. When the term 'family reunification' is used, it automatically refers to 'asylum family reunification'.

be created in the country of origin, and the family members should have the same nationality (Kinderombudsman, 2013).

4.1.2 Tightening of the family reunification policy since 2007

From 2007 onwards, the family reunification policy has tightened a couple of times because there were signs of fraud (Kinderombudsman, 2013; Stronks, 2018). These policy changes were predominantly related to the way the IND examined family ties. From 2007 onwards, the IND put more focus on DNA tests for biological family members. However, this changed in 2009 when the State Secretary decided that there should be more focus on the actual family ties and that they therefore should intensify the interviews with children and their parents (Kinderombudsman, 2013). In other words, instead of offering a DNA-test, the IND conducted intensive interviews with family members to examine if they had an actual family relationship. In these interviews more detailed questions were asked to both parents and children to see if the answers would add up. This focus on interviews meant that having a biological tie was insufficient to prove actual family ties. This decision was made because there were signs of fraud, especially regarding Somalian (foster)-children (ACVZ, 2014; Kinderombudsman, 2013). There were signs that there was a large group of foster-children reuniting with sponsors who had not been a part of the sponsor's family in the country of origin (Oers-Verschueren, 2013). However, the tightening of the policy in 2009 applied to all children, irrespective of their nationality and whether they were foster-children or biological children (Kinderombudsman, 2013). In 2011, the Minister of Immigration and Asylum, Leers, announced that they were content with the policy change of 2009 as "more applications for family reunification are denied, the influx of dependent family members is declining and therefore the line they started is successful" (Kinderombudsman, 2013, p. 24). This shows that the government took a restrictive turn with regard to family reunification. As Stronks said (2018), "since 2007, the Netherlands has tightened the family reunification policy several times, because it stated that there was a lot of abuse of this favorable procedure. The goal was to reduce the number of dependent family members coming to the Netherlands. This was often about a reinforcement of the evidence to demonstrate the family relationship with the dependent family members."

However, not everybody agreed with the minister's view and the tightening of the policy. The policy received a lot of criticism by societal actors such as immigration lawyers, VluchtelingenWerk and Defence for Children (Kinderombudsman, 2013; Oers-Verschueren, 2013). Therefore, the policy was relaxed in 2012 "to the extent that for biological children, the

statements of the sponsor in combination with the results of the DNA test are sufficient to consider the actual family relationship plausible. For all other family members without documents, a DNA test is first performed. If there is a biological link, it is supplemented with an identifying test" (AVCZ, 2014, p. 34). This means that intensive interviews with children in order to determine the family relationship are in principal not performed anymore, unless there are speculations that something is not right (Oers-Verschueren, 2013). In the case of foster children, a DNA test is not necessary. In these cases, there are still hearings with the sponsor and the dependent family members. This policy change meant that the DNA test became the standard examining method again for proving biological family ties.

In 2013, the family reunification policy changed again. This change was related to the definition of an 'actual family relationship'. From this change onwards, "a 'family life' will also be interpreted for the children of refugees who wish to reunite with their parent, as in Article 8 of the EHCR. This means, among other things, that the family relationship in asylum family reunification procedures will no longer be considered broken if a child is permanently included in a family other than that of the parent in the Netherlands" (Kinderombudsman, 2013, p. 26). In this way, the term 'actual family relationship' in the asylum family reunification policy is interpreted in the same way as in the regular family reunification policy (ACVZ, 2014). There are a couple of circumstances of which it can be assumed that a minor child does no longer belong to the actual family. For example, (1) when a child lives independently and provides for his own maintenance; (2) when the child forms his own family by entering into a marriage or relationship; (3) when the child is charged with caring for an illegitimate child (Oers-Verschueren, 2013).

The policy change of 2013 can be seen as a relaxation of the strict family reunification policy (ACVZ, 2014; Oers-Verschueren, 2013). However, this relaxation only applied to minor children. For dependent children who have reached the age of majority, the situation was different as the requirements for family reunification became stricter for them. According to Klaassen and Lodder (2016), "the alignment with the regular family reunification policy for the interpretation of the question whether there is an actual relationship between children and the sponsor meant for adult children that, in line with the jurisprudence of the EHCR on family life, there should be 'more than normal emotional ties'" (p. 41).

5. Findings

This chapter provides an in-depth portrayal of the results of both the policy document analysis and the conducted interviews. The first part of this chapter consists of an overview of the changes in the family reunification policy with regard to dependent young adults. These findings are solely based on the information found in the document analysis including both parliamentary documents and documents of the non-governmental actors. That way the first sub-question of this research will be answered: *(1) Which changes have been made to the policy on family reunification regarding the rights of dependent young adults?* The following parts of this chapter will dive into the advocacy strategies used by the non-governmental actors. The findings in this chapter will be presented along the lines of the theoretical concepts and indicators discussed in the operationalization table (chapter 3.2). The findings in section 5.2 up to and including 5.5 are based on the information which was given by the respondents in the interviews. These sections will provide answers to the remaining sub-questions: *(2) Which advocacy strategies were used by VluchtelingenWerk and immigration lawyers?* And *(3) In what way did the advocacy strategies and the corresponding activities contribute to the changes of the family reunification policy regarding the rights of dependent young adults?*

5.1 Overview of Policy Changes regarding Young Adults in Family Reunification

5.1.1 Policy change of 2014

As discussed in chapter 4, the family reunification policy relaxed a couple of times in the years prior to 2014, for instance, due to the reintroduction of the DNA test. This enabled parents whose first application for the reunification of their children were denied prior to this reintroduction to re-apply for family reunification. According to a political party, "the members of the SP receive signals of parents who, due to the recent changes in the family reunification policy and the reintroduction of the DNA test, were able to reunite with their children after all, as long as they were still minors" (PD02). However, the reintroduction of the DNA test and the general relaxation of the policy did not automatically mean that the situation for dependent young adults had changed. For that reason, politicians from a couple of political parties started to ask questions about the situation of dependent young adults. A question that was often asked was 'what happens with dependent young adult children who were minors when their family members started with the procedure for family reunification, but turned over eighteen when the IND made its decision and whose application got denied?' (PD01; PD02). A member of the

PvdA, Marit Maij, asked the State Secretary if he could give these young adults who have been rejected before the change of policy the opportunity to apply for a new procedure for family reunification (PD01). Similarly, the SP also asked this question: "It is possible that some children over the age of majority, who were minors before the changes of the policy, still cannot be reunited with their parents because they have become adults over time. Families are still torn apart, because for example a couple of (underaged) children are allowed to come over and the other (now of age) children are abandoned. Is the State Secretary willing to be more flexible handling these cases in which children have become of age, but are below the age of 21? If not, why? It is about children who were during the application, applied prior to the changes, underage and have become of age during the re-application after the changes" (PD02).

The State Secretary of Justice and Security, Fred Teeven, reacted to these two questions on the 28th of April 2014 in the following way: "During the evaluation of family reunification applications, the explanation of the term 'actual family relationship' is as much as possible linked to article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). […] This is in fact the policy for new family reunification applications by young adults, also for people who have the age of majority after a previous application. So, this means that the family reunification is also possible for that last group still when 'more than normal emotional ties' exist. In this way, the family reunification policy for this group is still more generous than what is obligated according to the Directive on the right to family reunification" (PD02). In other words, the State Secretary did not agree with the opinions of the PvdA and SP as he did not want to be more flexible in case a dependent young adult was underage during the first application for family reunification.

Despite this reaction of the State Secretary in April 2014, it seems that his opinion changed in the months that followed. On the 23rd of October that year, the State Secretary announced in a letter that he was in fact going to change the policy (PD03). On this day, he announced that the IND is more likely to assume that there is an actual family relationship between dependent young adults and the sponsor applying for family reunification when the young adult was a minor when the sponsor fled from his country of origin. In his letter, the State Secretary said, "for this specific group, in principle it will be assumed that there is an actual family relationship if the sponsor demonstrates that the child, who has now reached the age of majority, has always belonged to his family, unless there are contra-indications. These contra-indications may include that the adult child has started a family of his own, lives independently or provides for his own subsistence. If such a contra-indication is present, the

IND will assess individually whether the actual family relationship should be considered as broken" (PD03).

According to the State Secretary, this change of policy has been done as a result of a ruling of the Council of State of 2 July 2014 and jurisprudence of the ECHR. However, Teeven did not explain how the jurisprudence and the case of the Council of State have contributed to the policy change. Therefore, questions were asked in the following general meeting with the Commission for Justice and Security (PD04). During this meeting, Teeven explained his decision in the following way: "Why relaxation? Why seeking alignment with national and European jurisprudence? The jurisprudence is increasingly emphasizing the applicant's family situation and individual circumstances when the sponsor has left the country of origin, even if the person concerned has reached the age of majority at the moment of application. The child's minor age at the time of the sponsor's departure is therefore more likely to establish an actual family relationship." (PD04).

To summarize, in the beginning of 2014, several political parties addressed their concern when it comes to dependent young adults. In particular, they had concerns regarding the situation of dependent children who reached the age of majority after the sponsor fled the country of origin. At first, the State Secretary did not agree with the opinions and concerns of these political parties. However, a couple of months later, the State Secretary changed his opinion after taking European jurisprudence and a case of the Council of State into account. In a news article of their website, VluchtelingenWerk wrote that they were pleased with this decision (DNGA03). In the news article, it was said that "VluchtelingenWerk has been pushing for changes to this policy for some time. 'We see in practice how heartbreaking it is for parents that only their child who has just reached the age of majority must be left in an unsafe refugee camp," says Dorine Manson, director of VluchtelingenWerk" (DNGA03). Although VluchtelingenWerk was happy with the decision, it was not enough as they think "that the unsafe situation should also be taken into account for adult children, especially if they are left alone. VluchtelingenWerk also raised this point for discussions in the House of Representatives on this subject on Wednesday 29 October" (DNGA03).

5.1.2 Policy change of 2015

After the policy change with regard to dependent young adults in October 2014, there were still concerns. Although several political parties such as the D66 and PvdA, and other actors such as VluchtelingenWerk announced that they were content with the decision of the State Secretary

to change the policy in 2014, there were still issues concerning dependent young adults (PD04; PD07). These issues were predominantly related to the required level of dependency that dependent young adults should have in order to be able to reunify with their family. As mentioned before, the required level of dependency for young adults changed in 2013 from a 'normal dependency' to a 'more than emotional' dependency. In April 2014, the PvdA started to ask the State Secretary some questions concerning the required level of dependency (PD02). The party asked questions related to the way the IND tests the level of dependency of young adult children. For instance, they asked "is it true that the test deciding whether adult children who belong to the refugee family may come over [to the Netherlands], is limited to the criterion of 'more than normal emotional ties', which comes from regular migration law? How does this relate to the dependence test as prescribed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees?" (PD02). Moreover, they also asked about situations in which some minor children are allowed to come to the Netherlands while other brothers/sisters who have reached the age of majority of that family are not: "how does the IND deal with the problem if some dependent children of a family have reached the age of majority and others have not? Which test regarding dependence and / or 'more than normal emotional ties' then takes place? How heavy does this consideration weigh in maintaining family unity? How heavy does this weigh up to the fact that young adult children may have to remain without parents in the (often unsafe) country of origin if they are rejected?" (PD02).

As the PvdA did not receive the reaction of the State Secretary that they wanted, they sent another letter to him in December 2014. In this letter, Attje Kuiken, refers to a news article of the NOS which said that family reunification often does not work for dependent young adults (NOS, 2014). In this news article, an example of a 19-year-old Syrian girl who is left behind in Lebanon because she has reached the age of majority while her family lives in the Netherlands is taken, and the UNHCR speaks about this by saying that "the family reunification policy is good, but it could be a little better on this small matter" (NOS, 2014). This way the UNHCR calls for an extension of the rules (NOS, 2014). Politician Kuiken takes the opportunity to bring this news article and the statement of the UNHCR to the attention of the State Secretary. Nevertheless, State Secretary Teeven kept referring to the 'more than emotional ties' rule in his response to the questions asked by Kuiken (PD15).

One month later, another general meeting between the Commission for Justice and Security and the State Secretary of Justice and Security was scheduled. During this meeting, politicians of different political parties asked the State Secretary questions about the situation of dependent young adults who are left behind in their country of origin and the level of

dependency the IND requires for these young adults. Similar to 2014, both the PvdA and the SP expressed their concerns about the situation of dependent young adults. According to Kuiken, "the PvdA is of the opinion that the criterion 'more than normal emotional ties' is now being applied too strictly, which is causing problems particularly for young female adults and distressing situations are created. It concerns young adult girls who previously belonged to the family, but after the flight no longer had the opportunity to travel to the Netherlands with their father, mother and the rest of the children. In our opinion, a physical or mental limitation is a too narrow formulation of dependency. That is why I would like to ask the State Secretary if he is willing to promise that in the cases of young adults and in particular girls, more tailor-made services can be provided to ensure that individual girls who are not married and without financial opportunities are left alone in the country of origin or during their flight" (PD07). The SP shared these concerns by asking the question why the criterion of 'more than normal emotional ties' is so strictly formulated by the IND. What differs from the situation in 2014 is that during this meeting, more political parties began expressing their concerns. For instance, Joël Voordewind of the ChristenUnie agrees with the argument of the PvdA by saying "I welcome the PvdA's position on family reunification. There really has to be a breakthrough in this and the tightening has to be removed so that the 18-plus daughters – I have a daughter of 19 years old myself and I should not think that she would now be obliged to separate from me – will no longer be separated from the family" (PD07). The other parties who asked questions during this meeting are CDA, Groenlinks and D66. The latter two specifically asked the State Secretary to interpret the dependency of young adults along the European Family Reunification Directive instead of using the criterion of article 8 ECHR (PD07).

Prior to this meeting between the Commission for Justice and Security and the State Secretary, a couple of letters were sent by non-governmental actors in which the issue regarding dependent young adults was raised. Firstly, VluchtelingenWerk sent a letter to the Commission expressing their concerns about the situation of dependent young adults who are left behind because of the national policy (DNGA04). According to VluchtelingenWerk, the policy is too strict when it comes to dependent young adults because of the 'more than normal emotional ties' criterion the IND uses to assess the situation of refugee young adults. VluchtelingenWerk believes that the criterion of 'more than normal emotional ties' is not obliged by the European Court. Moreover, "these rulings by the European Court [referring to the 'more than normal emotional ties' criterion] also relate to regular migrants. For adult children who remain behind in the country of origin, unlike "ordinary migrant children", it could mean that the parent and child may never see each other again if the Netherlands rejects them. Refugee children can also

be particularly at risk if they are the only ones left behind without the protection of the rest of the family or if they are already victims of persecution. Aspects such as the risk of prosecution or inhuman treatment are explicitly not included in the assessment made by the IND, as is apparent from the decisions" (DNGA04). VluchtelingenWerk also refers to the Family Reunification Directive by stating that the Dutch policy is too strict as it undermines the purpose of the Directive, which is to promote family reunification. Therefore, they "call for the policy as it applied before 1 June 2013 for adult dependent children to be restored, so that the policy is brought into line with the Family Reunification Directive on this point as well" (DNGA04).

The Commission for Justice and Security also received a letter from the College voor de Rechten van de Mens prior to the general meeting. This organization agrees with the argument of VluchtelingenWerk as it is "of the opinion that this term [dependency] should be interpreted on the basis of the Family Reunification Directive and not on the basis of the criteria from Article 8 of the ECHR. In addition, the College is concerned about single Syrian young women who cannot reunite with their families residing in the Netherlands. […] After all, there is an age limit of eighteen years. This impedes their exercise of their right to family reunification under the European Family Reunification Directive and puts them at significant risk of inhuman or degrading treatment, as prohibited in Article 3 of the ECHR. In view of the extremely vulnerable position in which these women and girls find themselves and the family ties that these women have with the family members admitted in the Netherlands, the College advocates that these daughters should be given priority for the resettlement policy or the criteria for the family reunification policy for this group of women in accordance with the European Family Reunification Directive" (DNGA07).

During the meeting on January 14th, State Secretary Teeven responded in an understanding way to the questions asked by politicians and the non-governmental actors. He acknowledged the fact that families are torn apart because young adult children are left behind as he has heard about this issue during visits in asylum seekers centers. Besides this, he reacted in the following way: "The Netherlands has opted to offer adult, unmarried children the option of family reunification. The family directive does not oblige us to do this. [...] The condition for admission to the Netherlands is that there is more than normal emotional dependence. The IND then assesses on the basis of the individual circumstances brought in by the foreign national whether there is more than normal emotional dependence. There is always an individual assessment, taking into account all circumstances that have been introduced at any time. I believe that the test that the IND is currently conducting is in line with the test that is explicitly discussed in the guidelines of the European Commission. […] The test therefore fits

within the legal framework" (DP07). Despite the fact that Teeven is still convinced that the IND assesses the individual cases in the right legal way, he acknowledges the concerns that have been raised not only by fellow politicians but also by NGOs. He said, "I do understand the concerns expressed by various members, but also by the UNHCR and VluchtelingenWerk. I recognize some of those signals. We share the view that the situation of unmarried girls who remain behind can in some cases be very precarious. That is why I am willing to see whether these precarious situations can be met. At the same time, this must be feasible. It should not encourage abuse. There should be no child trafficking or other forms of human trafficking; we must pay close attention to that. I will try to arrange this quickly" (PD07).

On the 21st of May, the new State Secretary of Justice and Security, Klaas Dijkhoff, announced in a letter that he is about to change the family reunification policy with regard to dependent young adults (PD08). More specifically, he decided to change the requirement of 'more than normal emotional ties' for dependent young adults into a normal relationship of dependence between parent and children who have reached the age of majority in case the young adults have always been a part of the family until the departure of the sponsor (PD08). In the Staatscourant of July, the policy change was officially announced in the following way:

> "For young adult children, it also applies that the child must in fact belong to the family of the sponsor. In this case, there must be a normal relationship of dependence between the sponsor and the adult child and the sponsor must demonstrate that the adult child has always actually belonged to his family abroad and that the actual family relationship has not been broken. In order to assess whether the adult child actually belongs to the family, not only is the family situation at the time of the assessment of the application involved, but also the family situation at time of the departure of the sponsor from the country of origin (or country of stable residence). In one or more of the following circumstances (contra-indications), it can in any case be assumed that the adult child no longer actually belongs to the family of the parent(s) (1) the child lives independently; (2) the child provides for his own maintenance; (3) the child has entered into a marriage or relationship; (4) the child is charged with caring for an illegitimate child. In the case of one of more contra-indications, it will be assessed per individual case whether the actual family relationship has been broken." (PD09)

In this way, the Vreemdelingencirculaire[7] was changed in 2015. According to Dijkhoff, "it means that the same policy framework for family reunification will apply to adult children, irrespective of whether the child was a minor or over the age of eighteen at the moment of the sponsor's departure. This benefits the feasibility of the family reunification policy, while leaving room for an individual assessment of the actual family relationship" (PD08). Furthermore, it is important to notice that "there is not a precise definition of young adults in

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[7] Translated as 'Foreigners circulaire'

the jurisprudence of the EHCR" but in the national policy young adults should be between 18 and 25 years old (PD12).

Both VluchtelingenWerk and the College voor de Rechten van de Mens were pleased with the decision of Dijkhoff (DNGA06; DNGA09). In a news article, the director of VluchtelingenWerk wrote "It is good to see that politicians have taken the harrowing situations seriously that both VluchtelingenWerk and the legal profession have brought to the attention. This prevents parents from having to leave their child alone, while the rest of the family is allowed to come to the Netherlands. […] It is great that the State Secretary has repaired this previously tightened policy" (DNGA06).

5.1.3 Policy change of 2016

In response to the policy change of 2015, further questions regarding the situation of dependent young adults were asked. A politician of the D66, Sjoerd Sjoerdsma, sent questions to the State Secretary of Justice and Security in July 2016. In this letter, Sjoerdsma expressed his concerns about the situation of dependent young adults who were brothers or sisters of unaccompanied minors who have received a residence permit in the Netherlands. According to the family reunification policy, it was not possible for an unaccompanied minor to be reunited with his brothers or sisters who have reached the age of majority. In other words, the unaccompanied minor was only able to request for the reunification with his/her parents and his/her minor siblings. According to Sjoerdsma, it was unfair that these dependent young adults were not allowed to come to the Netherlands when an unaccompanied minor did a request for reunification while their request would have been approved in case a parent submitted the request. He asked the State Secretary the following questions: "Are you aware that the request for family reunification submitted by an unaccompanied minor for the same adult child […] is rejected?", "are you aware that this distinction means that mostly young Syrian unmarried girls aged 18 or older are left alone in Syria or their country of refuge, while the rest of the family is admitted to the unaccompanied minor?", and "do you share the view that an application for an unaccompanied minor refugee to family reunification of his adult sisters or brothers should be treated in the same way as stated in the letter of 21st May 2015, as is the case for parents who submit the same request?" (PD11).

On the 7th of September, State Secretary Dijkhoff responded to the questions asked by Sjoerdsma in an understanding way. He shortly explained the decision he made in May 2015 and acknowledged the concerns of Sjoerdsma by stating, "in the cases you have mentioned, it

is possible that these conditions are met materially, but the order of entry [to the Netherlands] creates a formal obstacle. This was not foreseen in the policy change of May 2015. Since it is undesirable that a 19-year-old sibling should ultimately be left as the only family member in a refugee camp, I will correct this omission. These requests for family reunification will be individually assessed against Article 8 of the ECHR. The assessment framework will be adapted for this purpose" (PD13).

In the general meeting between the State Secretary and the Commission for Justice and Security on September 8th, Sjoerdsma thanks the State Secretary for this response and the willingness to change the policy on this point. Furthermore, Gesthuizen of the SP, also raised questions related to unaccompanied minors: "what does the IND's work instruction for adult brothers and/or sisters look like? I have heard that refugees first paid 250 euros, applied for family reunification and then were told that family reunification for adult brothers and/or sisters is never granted. What about this and can this be done differently? How does the State Secretary view the practice that unaccompanied minors cannot apply for family reunification with adult brothers and/or sisters?" (PD14). The State Secretary answered in the following way: "Sjoerdsma rightly pointed out to us that in practice it can also be different in terms of the order of entry. If an underage brother first comes in, we should first let the parents come in, and then they should start a new procedure for the 19-year-old sister to come in. We now adjust it in such a way that this can be done in one time. That obstacle is therefore removed. I believe that the work instruction was published and put into effect on September 7th" (PD14).

5.2 Problem Stream

5.2.1 Problem recognition

As mentioned in the theoretical framework (section 2.2.1), the problem stream mainly relates to the recognition of a problem. In other words, policy entrepreneurs recognize a certain issue and they attempt to attract sufficient attention from policymakers in order for the issue to be put on the policy agenda. In the case of immigration lawyers and VluchtelingenWerk, it becomes clear that these actors generally recognize problems from practice. For VluchtelingenWerk this usually works as follows. The regional organizations within VluchtelingenWerk help and legally support permit holders with their application for family reunification. This means that they are in close contact with permit holders and their dependent family members. Moreover, the regional organizations also monitor the process of all individual cases in which they provide

support giving them the opportunity to monitor the overall process of all cases. In this way, the regional organizations are able to capture issues or irregularities in the decisions made by the IND, for example, a sudden increase in the number of family reunification applications that have been denied for a particular reason. When something like this appears, the regional organizations raise the issue to the advocacy department of the national office of VluchtelingenWerk. As a respondent working at a regional organization said, "the regional organizations are in fact on the frontline. The national office does not have contact with the clients. We are actually the ones who are in contact with people, so we pick up signals and raise it to the national office of VluchtelingenWerk" (R3).

The regional organizations are not the only ones within VluchtelingenWerk catching upon issues from practice. The national organization also has a helpdesk for both their own counselors guiding family reunification procedures and lawyers. According to a respondent working at the advocacy department of the national office, "people contact the helpdesk to report they have a rejection or when they come across something they have never seen in procedures before, so a particular reason why a family reunification procedure is denied. This is one of the ways, thus catching upon things from practice, to see that a change in policy has happened" (R1).

In the case of dependent young adults, VluchtelingenWerk also came across the issue in practice. According to a respondent, "we started to see the issue because of decisions taken in practice that the 'more than emotional ties' part written down in the family reunification policy in fact meant that the dependency of young adults had to be very strong. For example, when there was a medical situation, the IND accepted a dependent young adult" (R1).

Besides VluchtelingenWerk, immigration lawyers also catch upon issues from practice. As immigration lawyers often handle individual cases from people whose first application for family reunification has been denied, it becomes clear to the immigration lawyers when something does not seem right or when there are irregularities in decisions of the IND. This was also the case in 2016. Several immigration lawyers came across the fact that when an unaccompanied minor received a residence permit in the Netherlands, he/she could not be reunified with his/her brothers and sisters in the case that they were dependent young adults, in practice. In other words, the unaccompanied minor could solely apply for the family reunification of his/her parents and minor siblings.

5.2.2 Manipulation of the cognitive biases of policymakers

As explained in the theoretical framework, it is important to influence the cognitive biases of policymakers in order to capture their attention. Strategies for this are, for instance, framing an issue in a way to reduce ambiguity and uncertainty, telling persuasive stories and making emotional appeals. According to a respondent working at VluchtelingenWerk, it is important to have specific appealing examples of cases to present to policymakers (R1). That is why VluchtelingenWerk collected a series of individual cases of dependent young adults whose application for family reunification were denied and presented this to the House of Representatives. Furthermore, some respondents indicated that is it essential to explain the issue in a simple and practical way. For example, lawyers should not explain the issue by using legal terms and legal language because it would not be appealing and would be seen as too difficult (R2). Related to this is the use of emotional appeals. According to a respondent, some people explain the issue to policymakers in an emotional way, making it more complicated for policymakers not only to grasp the idea but also to believe it (R1). Therefore, this respondent believes that it is not recommended to make emotional appeals.

5.3 Policy Stream

5.3.1 Research

When it comes to conducting research in order to provide new information about an issue and to come up with solutions, it becomes clear that both VluchtelingenWerk and immigrant lawyers have not done much regarding the issue on dependent young adults. In general, VluchtelingenWerk does not often conduct research, especially not on family reunification. However, VluchtelingenWerk is often asked to participate in a steering group of a study conducted by research institutes. According to a respondent, this is a good way to influence policymaking in an indirect way as it gives the opportunity for VluchtelingenWerk to give their opinion and to raise certain obstacles or problems in a policy (R1). Nevertheless, all respondents said that they did not conduct a specific research on the issue of dependent young adults.

5.3.2 Feedback

An important part of the policy stream consists of the constituent feedback on policies promoted by a policy entrepreneur. What becomes clear from the interviews is that there are several ways

VluchtelingenWerk and the immigration lawyers give feedback on the policy and the way the IND handles the applications for family reunification. First of all, both actors have regular meetings with the IND in which they have the opportunity to discuss the situation and possible bottlenecks. More specifically, VluchtelingenWerk also has meetings with the 'Directie Migratiebeleid'[8] at the Ministry of Justice and Security and is in close contact with the 'Nareisunit'[9]. According to a respondent working at VluchtelingenWerk, the organization "is represented almost everywhere when it comes to policy. We try to exercise our influence and actually change the minds [of policymakers]" (R3). Another respondent working at VluchtelingenWerk states, "in between the meetings, there is also contact by telephone and e-mail. For example, the helpdesk has frequent e-mail contact with the policy department of the IND or the 'Nareisunit' in order to address when there are small uncertainties or when we see decisions of which we have the idea that they are not in accordance with the policy. In those cases, we ask what has happened. This is in fact also a moment in which we can influence policymaking. You can get the response that there has been made a mistake and that they will fix it. Or that it is in accordance with the policy and this is a signal for us to go further up the chain" (R1).

This means that besides the official meetings VluchtelingenWerk has with the IND and the Ministry of Justice and Security, they also have contact by telephone and e-mail in which they can ask for the clarification of certain issues. However, VluchtelingenWerk is not the only actor which has regular contact with policymakers. In 2016, an immigration lawyer called several politicians of different political parties to address the issue around the family reunification of young adult brothers and sisters of unaccompanied minors. In this way the immigration lawyers gave feedback on the policy and proposed solutions for the problem. When a politician responded, the lawyers wrote down all the information and solutions in an e-mail, which was later discussed in a debate in the House of Representatives.

Another way that is used for the provision of feedback on a policy and solutions for the issue, is sending a letter to the State Secretary of Justice and Security or to members of the House of Representatives. This is, for example, a way VluchtelingenWerk has provided feedback and addressed the issue in the case of dependent young adults in 2015 (DNGA04). VluchtelingenWerk sent this letter to the Commission for Justice and Security of the House of

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[8] Directie Migratiebeleid is a department within the Ministry of Justice and Security responsible for the formulation of the national migration policies.

[9] The 'Nareisunit' is a department within the IND which is responsible for the family reunification procedures of asylum seekers and refugees

Representatives prior to a scheduled general assembly of the commission with the purpose to be discussed during this assembly.

5.4 Political Stream

5.4.1 Coalition building

An important advocacy strategy for non-governmental actors is collaborating with other advocating actors and building coalitions with these actors. As a respondent from VluchtelingenWerk said, "as VluchtelingenWerk and as a policy officer [within VluchtelingenWerk] you have quite a large network that you try to maintain and from which you sometimes get signals. At least you can also feed them with current developments and signals" (R1). This shows the importance of a network of actors with which one could collaborate. From the interviews, it becomes clear that both VluchtelingenWerk and immigration lawyers collaborate with all different kinds of actors. In this section, the collaboration between VluchtelingenWerk and the immigration lawyers will firstly be discussed. This will be followed by a discussion of the collaboration between immigration lawyers themselves. After this a discussion of the collaboration with, respectively, the following actors is presented: NGOs, research institutes and advisory bodies, and academics.

The collaboration between VluchtelingenWerk and immigration lawyers is an important one. According to a respondent from VluchtelingenWerk, "we have a collaboration with the 'Orde van Advocaten[10]'. There are a few lawyers who have affinity with our target group. But in general, we do have a very good connection with lawyers" (R3). Moreover, this respondent also stressed that the collaboration with immigration lawyers has been very effective in the past because it has helped to raise issues to policymakers.

Another respondent from VluchtelingenWerk also stressed the importance of their collaboration with immigration lawyers: "I realize that there are two other important partners in the network of actors of VluchtelingenWerk: lawyers working in the field of family reunification. What is really good is that there are a few immigration lawyers who are very active and specialized in the family reunification policy. These [lawyers] had an e-mail group in the past with lawyers in which they were the experts. So, they helped other lawyers with the argumentation of their cases. In fact, we as VluchtelingenWerk have a similar role because all

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[10] The 'Orde van Advocaten' can be translated as 'the Netherlands Bar' and it is the professional organization of the legal profession in the Netherlands.

immigration lawyers are a member of the working group 'Rechtsbijstand Vluchtelingen' of VluchtelingenWerk. Twice a year we organize information meetings for this working group and family reunification is often a topic to be discussed. Sometimes we ask such a specialized immigration lawyer to speak about the latest developments regarding family reunification. Litigating is in principal related to an individual case, but there are decisions, especially when it comes to decisions taken by the Council of State, that are relevant for all dependent family members because it can sometimes lead to a change in policy. Lawyers are thus a very important actor, also for influencing policy" (R1). Likewise, immigration lawyers also stressed the importance of their collaboration with VluchtelingenWerk. For instance, a lawyer explained that VluchtelingenWerk provided all kinds of cases of dependent Somalian children which had received negative decisions by the IND. Because of this, the immigration lawyer and VluchtelingenWerk started to compare the cases and discussing them with each other. That way, a whole project started which eventually led to a change of policy regarding dependent Somalian children.

The collaboration between VluchtelingenWerk and immigration lawyers was also strong when both actors advocated for policy change regarding dependent young adults. An immigration lawyer said that she has worked together with the national office of VluchtelingenWerk on this specific topic (R2). Another respondent working for VluchtelingenWerk acknowledged this by using the example of the advocacy for dependent young adult brothers and sisters of unaccompanied minors. According to this respondent, immigration lawyers were the main actors who advocated for this issue. However, "they have consulted this with us. They discussed the cases they had and asked for our opinions. In that way you help each other with the argumentation. But eventually they were the ones that made a case of it and addressed the issue" (R1). By saying this, it could be said that VluchtelingenWerk played an indirect and small role in the advocacy for that particular issue.

Besides the collaboration with other actors, immigration lawyers also share their experiences and information among themselves. That way, it can be said that immigration lawyers also work together, even when they are not part of the same law firm. For example, a respondent said that the immigration lawyers have contact with each other in e-mail groups, meetings and by telephone (R2). This immigration lawyer said that sometimes another lawyer calls or sends an e-mail with a question. That way the lawyers help each other out and it is also informative for themselves.

VluchtelingenWerk does not only collaborate with immigration lawyers, but also with other actors. First of all, VluchtelingenWerk often works together with fellow NGOs, such as

Defence for Children, Stichting Vluchteling, and the UNHCR. When it comes to family reunification, the organization often works together with Defence for Children (R1). Secondly, VluchtelingenWerk has frequent contact with research institutes and advisory bodies such as the 'College voor de Rechten van de Mens', the Ombudsman, the Children's Ombudsman, and the 'Adviescommissie voor Vreemdelingenzaken'[11] (ACVZ). According to a respondent, "you cannot call them lobby partners, because we inform them about issues and important themes. It is up to them when they write policy recommendations or reports or have separate meetings to take our opinions into account. It surely has influence on the State Secretary, the cabinet, and the parliament. It has a lot of added value when these actors additionally report that something is going on. Thus, it is very important for us in order to influence policy" (R1). Finally, VluchtelingenWerk cooperates with academics on certain issues. According to a respondent, "some academics write notes to important jurisprudence and there are also academics who literally write things such as 'this policy exceeds the directive when it comes to family reunification" (R1). VluchtelingenWerk can then get into contact with such academics.

5.4.2 Demonstrations

In the interviews, it becomes clear that both VluchtelingenWerk and the immigration lawyers have not organized or participated in any public protest or campaign on the issue regarding dependent young adults. In general, VluchtelingenWerk organizes campaigns but this is only once or twice a year on a big theme, such as the EU-Turkey deal or the situation of refugee children. Therefore, it seems like the issue of dependent young adults is too small to start a campaign. One respondent said that they often ask for attention for smaller topics with news articles on the website, e-mails sent to donors and interested supporters and the magazine which is published a couple times a year (R1). However, it is unclear if this was also the case regarding dependent young adults.

5.4.3 Media advocacy

During the advocacy on the issue of dependent young adults, neither VluchtelingenWerk nor immigration lawyers have intentionally reached out to media platforms in order to get more attention for the problem. Generally speaking, VluchtelingenWerk reaches out to media platforms to raise attention for problems related to asylum seekers and refugees. According to

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[11] Translated as 'Dutch Advisory Committee on Migration Affairs'

a respondent, "the director of VluchtelingenWerk is often present in media in order to make our voice heard" (R3). However, when it specifically comes to the issue regarding dependent young adults, VluchtelingenWerk has not reached out to the media. Likewise, the immigration lawyers advocating on this issue have also not reached out to media platforms. One respondent says that lawyers regularly get calls from journalists working for newspapers, but they barely reach out to the media themselves (R2).

5.5 Window of Opportunity

5.5.1 Relationships with the political elite

When it comes to the relationships with policymakers and politicians, it becomes clear that the approaches of the actors differ. On the one hand, VluchtelingenWerk has a network in which they put a lot of effort to maintain. According to a respondent working at VluchtelingenWerk, they try to build a good relationship and maintain it "preferably with all political parties, but some parties do not even want an introductory meeting with us. We have a division, so the manager of the policymaking team keeps in contact with the most important members of the House of Representatives. Since a couple of years, we also have a separate political employee to make sure that we maintain good contact" (R1). VluchtelingenWerk does not only try to develop and maintain a close network on a national level, but also on the local level. According to a respondent working at a regional organization within VluchtelingenWerk, "we do have close contacts in The Hague. But because I work at a regional department, we try to maintain local contacts with for example, city counselors and mayors within the region" (R3).

These close contacts with politicians and policymakers seem to be very useful for VluchtelingenWerk. For instance, the national office of VluchtelingenWerk was aware of the fact that some members of the House of Representatives had also signaled some issues regarding dependent young adults from practice. According to a respondent, "you can make the choice to send a letter to all members of the House of Representatives with all the argumentation or to ask a specific member of whom you know he or she has is invested in the subject to take action" (R1). Later on the respondent said, "it is definitely good, when members of the House of Representatives see issues from practice themselves or when they have received signals in other ways. This is always a good one for us, because they can reach out to us when they signaled something and ask if we recognize this. If it is something we are also working on, it makes it a lot easier for us to politically address it in a good way" (R1). This was the case with

the issues regarding dependent young adults in 2015 as VluchtelingenWerk was aware of the fact that members of the political party PvdA had received signals from practice, paving the way for VluchtelingenWerk to reach out to these politicians. According to the respondent, VluchtelingenWerk "made a collection of individual cases [of dependent young adults who were left behind in their country of origin] and we gave this to a political party. We gave this collection to the 'Partij van de Arbeid', and you can see in the debates of the House of Representatives that a politician of that party addressed this. She used some of these cases as examples" (R1).

On the other hand, immigration lawyers are not actively seeking to have close relationships with policymakers or politicians. It seems to be sufficient when they call or send an e-mail to a couple of members of the House of Representatives when there is an issue. One respondent states that it is not necessary for lawyers to have close relationships with the political elite, but that it is different other advocating actors as they might need to know people well in order to get their message through. In general, immigration lawyers meet policymakers or politicians during meetings but the lawyers are not trying to make friends with them.

5.5.2 Credibility

When it comes to the creation of credibility by acquiring support and maintaining a good reputation, both immigration lawyers and VluchtelingenWerk stress its importance. According to a respondent from VluchtelingenWerk, a good reputation is essential because policymakers and politicians are more likely to do something with your information (R1). When you have a good reputation, policymakers tend to listen more carefully and believe you more easily. That way you can increase the chance that they will do something with the information you provide. Moreover, a good reputation also helps because policymakers and politicians are more likely to reach out to VluchtelingenWerk with questions. As a respondent states, "we have a lot of knowledge and we are seen as experts" (R1).

A couple of things that are in particular very important according to the respondents are honesty, expertise and sharing the right information. According to a respondent working at VluchtelingenWerk, "policymakers want to rely on the right information, and this is something we value ourselves very much. Certainly when you, for example, give numbers or explain how big a problem in practice is, one should try to be very careful" (R1). An immigrant lawyer agrees with this and says that even though you have read the law numerous times and you have dealt with similar cases before, you still need to make sure to give the right information (R2).

5.5.3 Ability to identify policy window

As discussed in the theoretical framework, it is important for policy entrepreneurs to monitor the events happening in the political climate in order to seek a window of opportunity. For example, immigration lawyers monitor the political developments regarding family reunification through a website 'Migratienet" which is a website of the foundation 'Migratierecht Nederland' (R2). This website keeps track of all publications of the House of Representatives and letters from the State Secretary for Justice and Security and summarizes it. This way, immigration lawyers keep themselves updated of all political developments. Furthermore, immigration lawyers keep close contact with each other and other actors such as VluchtelingenWerk.

However, monitoring the political climate is not enough. As a respondent working for VluchtelingenWerk states, "you have to put forward your argumentation, but you should also look whether there are opportunities for you" (R1). Regarding the issue of family reunification and dependent young adults, it seems that VluchtelingenWerk was able to find a window of opportunity to which they could respond. A respondent said, "there was at a certain time a general meeting with the House of Representatives in which we proposed all the individual cases. This was definitely the moment to get the issue on the agenda of the chamber. This is also an important point, because in the general meeting of the House of Representatives they always discuss letters which have been sent to them before. When there is not a letter opening up the way to discuss this topic, it will make it difficult for us. But I think that at that time there was a letter that opened up the way for us to jump in. This is proved with the letter we sent to the House of Representatives" (R1). In other words, the respondent of VluchtelingenWerk acknowledges that they caught upon a moment in which they realized that it was their moment to jump in and send a letter to the House of Representatives. This was predominantly based on the fact that there was already a letter sent by another actor which opened up the way for VluchtelingenWerk to act out.

5.5.4 Ability to couple streams

One of the most important parts of the MSF is the ability to couple the problem, policy and political streams during a window of opportunity as this is essentially the way advocacy could lead to policy change. From the interviews, it seems that all respondents felt like VluchtelingenWerk and the immigration lawyers were able to couple the three streams

regarding the issue of dependent young adults. However, some respondents were a bit cautious in expressing whether their advocacy had been effective. For example, a respondent from VluchtelingenWerk said "this is always a difficult part of our work. You never know what the decisive factor has been. That is also the reason why we keep trying in all kinds of ways" (R1). Later on in the interview, the respondent said, "well honestly, regarding the specific policy change in 2015, I think it [the advocacy] is identifiable. Identifiable is a big word, but the fact that we approach them with all kinds of cases. […] It definitely was the effort of VluchtelingenWerk which was the deciding factor. However, at the same time I will be very cautious with that. You do not only need the approval of the State Secretary, you also need the officials to prepare the policy change and you will need to have them informed and convinced as well. Politics is always very complicated. There are often many different interests and it is a matter of give and take" (R1).

The immigration lawyers also have the idea that their advocacy has been effective. A respondent gave a few examples of cases related to family reunification of which the lawyer believes that the advocacy has definitely contributed to policy changes. The examples include a policy change specifically related to Somalian and Eritrean permit holders and their dependent family members. Nevertheless, this lawyer also believes that the advocacy she initiated regarding the family reunification of dependent young adults has contributed to the policy change in 2016.

6. Analysis

In this chapter, the results based on the document analysis and the interviews are analyzed. In order to come to an answer to the research question, the sub-questions need to be answered first. As the first sub-question was of a descriptive nature, it was already answered in previous chapter (see chapter 5.1). In this chapter, the remaining two sub-questions are answered. In the first section, the advocacy strategies used by the non-governmental actors, VluchtelingenWerk and immigration lawyers, in order to influence the family reunification policy with regard to dependent young adults are analyzed, providing an answer to the second sub-question. After this, the contribution of these advocacy strategies to the three policy changes between 2014 and 2016 is discussed, giving answer to the third sub-question.

6.1 Advocacy Strategies of VluchtelingenWerk and Immigration Lawyers

The purpose of this section is to give an answer to the second sub-question: *Which advocacy strategies were used by VluchtelingenWerk and the immigration lawyers?* Comparing the indicators described in the operationalization table (chapter 3.2) with the results of the interviews, it becomes clear that VluchtelingenWerk and the immigration lawyers did not use all the advocacy strategies described in the operationalization table. In other words, the actors invested more in some advocacy strategies whereas they did not put any effort in other strategies. In the following paragraphs, the advocacy strategies are presented per stream of the MSF clarifying whether VluchtelingenWerk and the immigration lawyers have put much effort in each stream. This section includes a table in which the advocacy strategies of both actors are visually summarized in the end.

6.1.1 Problem stream

As described in the operationalization, the advocacy strategy within the policy stream is formulated as 'defining the problem definition with the aim to capture attention'. Two activities within this advocacy strategy are the problem recognition and the manipulation of the cognitive biases of policymakers. When it comes to the first activity within this advocacy strategy, it can be said that the recognition of the issue regarding dependent young adults was quite straight-forward for both non-governmental actors. As both VluchtelingenWerk and the immigration lawyers encountered the issue in practice, recognizing the issue went naturally for them. Both

actors came across the issue when they realized that many applications done by dependent young adults were denied by the IND. This made them aware that something was not right and they began to examine what had happened. It can therefore be said that the actors have not been very consciously involved in monitoring the policy and the way it is acted upon by policymakers or the IND as they recognized the issue regarding dependent young adults in practice.

Compared to the effort both non-governmental actors invested in the problem recognition, it can be said that the actors put more effort in the manipulation of the cognitive biases of policymakers when describing the issue regarding dependent young adults. In order to be able to influence the cognitive biases of policymakers, the respondents stressed the importance of simple language when framing an issue. According to the MSF, simple and practical language is needed because it reduces ambiguity and uncertainty among policymakers (Cairney, 2018). Thus, this was acknowledged by the respondents. Moreover, the importance of telling persuasive stories was also noticed as VluchtelingenWerk collected several poignant cases of dependent young adults who were left behind in unsafe conditions and showed this to members of the House of Representatives. However, the importance of emotional appeals was not recognized by the actors as this would make things more complicated for policymakers to understand. It therefore has no added value.

6.1.2 Policy stream

The advocacy strategy related to the policy stream is predominantly about the development of solutions to issues and promoting these solutions to policymakers in order to capture their attention and to convince them of your proposed solutions. Within this advocacy strategy, two different activities have been identified: research and feedback. When looking at which activities related to the policy stream VluchtelingenWerk and the immigration lawyers have done, it can be said that both actors have put much effort in one activity whereas they have not put any effort in the other activity. The former is related to the promotion of constituent feedback and the latter is related to the conduction of research. In other words, both VluchtelingenWerk and the immigration lawyers have not conducted any research on the issue regarding dependent young adults. However, the actors have promoted quite some feedback on the family reunification policy, particularly regarding the situation of dependent young adults. The actors have done this in several ways and on different moments of time. Firstly, both actors have regular meeting with, for example, the IND and the Ministry of Justice and Security in

which they have the opportunity to provide feedback on certain issues and influence policymaking. Secondly, both actors had regular contact by e-mail or telephone with for instance policymakers, employees of the IND or members of the House of Representatives. This has been a way for the immigration lawyers in 2016 to seek attention for the issue. Finally, there is also the possibility to send letters to, for example, the State Secretary of Justice and Security or members of the House of Representatives. As discussed before, this was a way VluchtelingenWerk provided feedback on the issue regarding dependent young adults and sought attention.

6.1.3 Political stream

The advocacy strategy of the political stream is described as 'influencing the political climate'. This strategy is divided into three activities: coalition building, demonstrations, and media advocacy. Taking the advocacy of VluchtelingenWerk and the immigration lawyers into account, it can be said that these actors have solely put effort in the first activity. In other words, the actors have not organized or participated in public demonstrations, they did not set up or participate in campaigns, or reached out to media platforms concerning the issue of dependent young adults. The activity of coalition building, however, seems to have an important role in the advocacy of both actors in general but also specifically focused on dependent young adults. As discussed in the previous chapter, VluchtelingenWerk and the immigration lawyers have worked closely together on this issue. For example, they informed each other on this issue and helped each other out with their argumentation. Not only has the collaboration between VluchtelingenWerk and the immigration lawyers themselves been essential, there was also an important cooperation with other societal actors such as NGOs, advisory bodies such as 'het College voor de Rechten van de Mens' and academics.

6.1.4 Window of opportunity

The final advocacy strategy, strengthening the organizational capacity, is not directly related to one of the streams of the MSF. However, it is related to the ability of societal actors to create or respond to a window of opportunity. As discussed in paragraph 2.3, the strengthening of the organizational capacity could have helped the non-governmental actors to create, recognize or respond to a window of opportunity effectively. In order to strengthen the organizational capacity, four different activities are identified: building relationships with the political elite,

creating credibility, being able to respond to identify a policy window, and being able to couple streams. When it comes to the relationships with the political elite, a difference between VluchtelingenWerk and the immigration lawyers can be identified. On the one hand, VluchtelingenWerk stressed the importance of these relationships as the organization is always occupied with maintaining the network with politicians and policymakers on a national and local level. It seems that the network has been effective because VluchtelingenWerk knew which member of the House of Representatives they had to approach with the issue concerning dependent young adults in 2015. On the other hand, the immigration lawyers did not think that they would need to have close relationships with politicians or policymakers. For them, it was enough to approach these political actors by e-mail or telephone when an issue arrives but it is unnecessary to build up close relationships. This approach also seems to have been effective in 2016 when a couple of immigration lawyers sent an e-mail to a politician which resulted in this politician starting to ask questions to the State Secretary. These lawyers did not have a close relationship with this politician.

When it comes to creating credibility, the actors are on the same page. Both actors stress the importance of having a good reputation. Moreover, it is also important to be honest in the advocacy and to have expertise so you do not make mistakes. When these factors are all in place, it is more likely that policymakers are willing to listen to the actors and to actually believe in what they are saying.

According to the MSF, it is very important for advocates to find a window of opportunity and to be able to couple the three streams. A way to be able to identify a window of opportunity is to monitor the events happening in the political climate. The immigration lawyers stressed the importance of keeping track of political events, particularly those related to family reunification. VluchtelingenWerk also claims that it is important to jump in at the right moment. With regard to the issue of dependent young adults, a respondent of VluchtelingenWerk claims that they have indeed jumped in at the right moment when they sent a letter to the House of Representatives. When it comes to the ability of coupling the three streams of the MSF, it becomes clear that this is very difficult to measure. In order to do this, it is essential to gain sufficient attention for the issue and the proposed solutions. Nevertheless, both actors agree that they were able to couple the streams because their advocacy was effective.

Table 3: Overview of the advocacy strategies used by VluchtelingenWerk and the lawyers

Advocacy strategy	Activity	Activity used by VluchtelingenWerk and immigration lawyers
Defining the problem definition with the aim to capture attention	Problem recognition	+ The issue was recognized from practice
	Manipulation of the cognitive biases of policymakers	+ Persuasive stories - Emotional appeals + Framing in a simple way
Developing policy solutions	Research	- No research
	Feedback	+ Meetings with the IND and ministries + Contact by e-mail and telephone with policymakers and politicians + Letters to members of the House of Representatives or the State Secretary
Influencing the political climate	Coalition building	+ Collaboration between VluchtelingenWerk and the immigration lawyers + Collaboration with other societal actors such as NGOs, advisory bodies and academics
	Demonstrations	- No demonstrations - No campaigns
	Media advocacy	- No media attention
Strengthening the organizational capacity	Relationships with political elite	+ Network building (VluchtelingenWerk) + Direct contact with politicians - No close relationships with politicians and policymakers (immigration lawyers)
	Credibility	+ Building a reputation + Expertise + Honesty
	Ability to identify policy window	+ Monitoring political events and developments
	Ability to couple streams	+ Three streams are coupled

6.2 Contribution of the Advocacy Strategies

In this section, the following sub-question is answered: *In what way did the advocacy strategies and the corresponding activities contribute to the changes of the family reunification policy regarding the rights of dependent young adults?* This section is divided into the different factors contributing to policy change which are directly related to the streams of the MSF (see 3.2).

6.2.1 Agreement on problem definition

When the advocacy efforts belonging to the problem stream are done successfully, it could lead to an agreement on the problem definition between policymakers and the advocating actors. The agreement on the problem definition is therefore a factor that could lead to actual policy change. Taking the advocacy efforts of VluchtelingenWerk and the immigration lawyers on the issue regarding dependent young adults into account, one could argue that there was an agreement on the problem definition between the policymakers and the two non-governmental actors. However, it took some time for the non-governmental actors to realize this and to convince policymakers that the issue existed. For example, in the first debates in which the issue regarding dependent young adults was discussed of 2014 and 2015, the State Secretary of Justice and Security did not recognize the issue and its urgency. He was convinced that the way the IND handled the strict policy regarding dependent young adults was the right way and he did not agree with the concerns raised by several political parties. Nevertheless, the State Secretary's opinion changed as the parliamentary debates followed. In the analysis of the parliamentary documents, it seems like the State Secretary was predominantly convinced by politicians since he responded to their questions and he did not directly refer to the non-governmental actors. However, the State Secretary was aware of the advocacy of VluchtelingenWerk, the immigration lawyers and other non-governmental actors on this issue. For example, in January 2015 he stated "I do understand the concerns expressed by various members, but also by the UNHCR and VluchtelingenWerk. I recognize some of those signals" (PD07). This is a direct reference to VluchtelingenWerk which is not coincidental because of the letter VluchtelingenWerk sent to him prior to this parliamentary debate. This shows that VluchtelingenWerk had a role in the recognition of the issue of the policymakers.

Furthermore, the manipulation of the cognitive biases of policymakers is another way which could eventually lead to an agreement between policymakers and the advocating actors. VluchtelingenWerk and the immigration lawyers emphasized the importance of framing an

issue in a simple and convincing way and telling persuasive stories of individual cases. Both actors tried to frame the issue regarding dependent young adults in this way when they raised the issue to members of the House of Representatives and the State Secretary. In the parliamentary debates in which politicians asked questions about the issue and expressed their concerns, the same framing is used. For instance, the politicians used the same simple language and used examples of individual cases to explain the urgency of the issue. This can be interpreted in different ways. On the one hand, one could argue that the particular framing used by VluchtelingenWerk and the immigration lawyers was adopted by the politicians. On the other hand, one could argue that this had no direct relation as the politicians unconsciously framed the issue in the same way. Hence, it is difficult to state that VluchtelingenWerk and the immigration were able to directly manipulate the cognitive biases of the policymakers and that this led to the agreement between them on the issue regarding dependent young adults. However, the role that they played could have been indirectly.

6.2.2 Agreement on solutions to problems

Another factor that could lead to policy change is the agreement on the problem solutions between policymakers and the advocating actors. When it comes to the proposal of solutions by both VluchtelingenWerk and the immigration lawyers, it becomes clear that the provision of feedback is important. This provision of feedback seems in fact to have contributed to the agreement on problem solutions because it seems that the State Secretary has listened to the feedback. For example, an important moment in which VluchtelingenWerk provided feedback was in January 2015 when they wrote a letter to the State Secretary in which they not only explained the issue regarding dependent young adults and criticized the family reunification policy, but also proposed solutions. Moreover, both VluchtelingenWerk and the immigration lawyers claimed that the moments in which they gave feedback on the policy were also moments of influence for them. By providing constituent feedback, the two actors had in fact the opportunity to influence the opinions of policymakers and therefore influence the policy.

6.2.3 Increasing the political will

The factor contributing to policy change that is related to the political stream is the increase of the political will. When advocating actors are able to influence the political climate and receive their support, it can increase the political will. Ways in which this could be done are coalition

building, organizing campaigns or demonstrations, and media advocacy. As described in the previous section, the latter two were not of any relevance for VluchtelingenWerk and the immigration lawyers in the case of dependent young adults. However, coalition building has been an important way to increase the political will in the case regarding dependent young adults. The collaboration between VluchtelingenWerk and the immigration lawyers and the collaboration of these two actors with other societal actors such as NGOs, advisory bodies, and academics was beneficial because of the increased level of knowledge. In other words, the actors shared information and knowledge among each other which increased the expertise of the actors.

Moreover, the collaboration and the formation of a coalition between the actors also improves your position in relation to the political climate as it can result in more political support. For instance, when you want to raise an issue to the political climate all by yourself, it is more difficult to be heard and believed. If you are able to form a coalition with other significant actors that have a good reputation, it is more likely that you would receive political support. Important cooperation partners to form a coalition with are advisory boards such as the 'College voor de Rechten van de Mens' and the ACVZ. As a respondent working at VluchtelingenWerk said, "It surely has influence on the State Secretary, the cabinet, and the parliament. It has a lot of added value when these actors also report that something is going on. Thus, it is for us very important in order to influence policy" (R1). The importance of the cooperation with these actors also becomes clear when looking at the parliamentary debates. Politicians and policymakers refer a lot to the opinions of these advisory boards and stress their importance. The collaboration with the 'College voor de Rechten van de Mens' has therefore been very important for VluchtelingenWerk and the immigration lawyers regarding the issue of dependent young adults.

6.2.4 Increased ability to create/recognize/respond to window of opportunity effectively

As described in the theoretical framework (section 2.3), strengthening the organizational capacity is an advocacy strategy which could lead to an increased ability to create or respond to a window of opportunity effectively. In order to strengthen the organizational capacity, it is important to build credibility, have close relationships with policymakers or politicians, and to monitor events happening in the political sphere. When looking at the importance of credibility in the case regarding dependent young adults, it becomes clear that the credibility and reputation of both VluchtelingenWerk and the immigration lawyers played an essential role. As these

actors have a good reputation and are known for their expertise, it has helped them to convey a convincing story regarding dependent young adults. This way they were taken seriously more easily by politicians and policymakers. For instance, if they were not seen as credible actors, the politicians they approached would not have asked questions regarding the issue in the parliamentary debates. Because their concerns and advocacy were taken seriously, politicians of the PvdA and D66 started to ask questions. Furthermore, if VluchtelingenWerk did not have such a good reputation, it is likely that the State Secretary would not respond to the letter they sent in 2015 in the way he did.

Another factor that has been of great importance, at least for VluchtelingenWerk, is the relationship with political actors. As discussed before, VluchtelingenWerk puts a lot of effort in building close relationships with political actors. This network is sometimes very useful. This was also the case with the issue regarding dependent young adults as VluchtelingenWerk approached a politician of the PvdA in 2015. Because of their good relationship, VluchtelingenWerk was aware that this politician would be willing to listen to them. The politician eventually asked questions in a parliamentary debate. In contrast to this, the immigration lawyers do not put a lot of effort in building close relationships with political actors. However, when they sent an e-mail to a politician of the D66 in 2016, it also led to questions asked by this politician in a parliamentary debate. This shows that close relationships are not always necessary to convince political actors of your opinion.

The third factor that helps to strengthen the organizational capacity, is to monitor political events. Both non-governmental actors usually keep track of political events helping them to recognize or respond to a window of opportunity. In the case of dependent young adults, it seems that VluchtelingenWerk was able to respond to a window of opportunity in 2015 whereas the immigration lawyers in 2016 were not. As discussed before, a respondent at VluchtelingenWerk claimed that they were able to jump in at the right moment when they sent the letter to the State Secretary and the House of Representatives in January 2015. This letter was sent a couple of days before a general meeting of the Commission for Justice and Security in which the issue regarding dependent young adults was put on the agenda. VluchtelingenWerk was aware of this item on the agenda and therefore they chose to write a letter right before this meeting. In the case of the immigration lawyers in 2016, it seems like there was not a real window of opportunity to which they responded. It seems that the immigration lawyers came across the issue of dependent brothers and sisters of unaccompanied minors in practice and they decided to approach some politicians with the issue. Sjoerdsma of the D66 was the one to respond and to send a letter to the State Secretary. Because of the policy changes in 2014 and

2015, it was easier for the immigration lawyers and the politician to convince the State Secretary on a rather small issue. In other words, the policy changes of 2014 and 2015 paved the way for the final policy change as it would be a rather small change for the policymakers compared the others. Therefore, it can be said that the immigration lawyers did not respond to a window of opportunity in 2016 per se. The policy change in that year was more logically following the other changes.

7. Conclusion

The aim of this research has been to provide a comprehensive overview of the policy changes in the Dutch family reunification policy with regard to dependent young adults and to examine how the non-governmental actors, VluchtelingenWerk and immigration lawyers, have used their advocacy to shape this policy. By mapping out the three policy changes regarding dependent young adults that have been implemented between the years of 2014 and 2016 and by conducting interviews with the non-governmental actors to see how their advocacy was orchestrated, this research aimed to provide an answer to the following research question: *How have the advocacy strategies used by non-governmental actors such as VluchtelingenWerk and immigration lawyers contributed to changes of the Dutch family reunification policy between 2014 and 2016 regarding the rights for family reunification of dependent young adults?* This question is answered in the following part. After this, the limitations of this research are given. Finally, the overall relevance of this research is discussed and some ideas for further research are given.

In order to examine the contribution of the actors' advocacy, this research has used the Multiple Streams Framework. Taking the advocacy activities of VluchtelingenWerk and the immigration lawyers into account, it becomes clear that the non-governmental actors were, to a certain extent, able to contribute to the policy changes in the family reunification policy regarding the issue of dependent young adults. First of all, the two actors were able to come to an agreement on the problem definition of the issue with the policymakers. It took some time but eventually the State Secretary realized that the policy with regard to dependent young adults had to be changed. It is difficult to say to what extent the non-governmental actors were able to manipulate the cognitive biases of policymakers. However, as they came to an agreement on the problem definition, it can be argued that the two actors were able to influence the opinions of policymakers on this issue. By stating this, it can be said that the first expectation is proven correctly: if there is an agreement between policymakers and non-governmental actors on the problem definition of an issue, it could lead to actual policy change.

Secondly, VluchtelingenWerk and the immigration lawyers were able to come to an agreement on the solutions of the issue regarding dependent young adults with policymakers as they have listened to the feedback provided by the actors. Therefore, it can be stated that the provision of feedback by these two actors has been an opportunity for them to influence the policy. This meets the second expectation: if there is an agreement between policymakers and non-governmental actors on the solutions for an issue, it could lead to actual policy change.

Thirdly, both VluchtelingenWerk and the immigration lawyers managed to increase the political will to a certain extent as they were successfully collaborating with each other and other societal actors. This collaboration helped the actors to increase their expertise on the issue regarding dependent young adults by sharing their knowledge and helping each other's argumentation. Moreover, the collaboration with other important societal actors also improved their position in relation to the political climate as the support base expanded. Remarkably, VluchtelingenWerk and the immigration lawyers were still able to increase the political will despite the fact that they did not organize campaigns or sought media attention concerning the issue of dependent young adults. This suggests that in some cases it is possible to increase the political will without these two activities. This shows in turn that coalition building and collaboration with other actors are crucial factors for increasing the political will and are therefore crucial factors within the political stream of the MSF. All in all, the effort of the two non-governmental actors within the political stream proves the third expectation: if non-governmental actors are able to influence the political climate and increase the political will, it could lead to actual policy change.

Fourthly, VluchtelingenWerk and the immigration lawyers had the organizational capacity to be able to respond to a window of opportunity and/or to couple the three streams of the MSF successfully. As both actors had a good reputation, it was easier for them to be taken seriously by both policymakers and politicians. Moreover, both actors had good relationships with political actors. Despite the fact that the immigration lawyers claim they had no close relationships with politicians, they were on good terms. This relationship with certain politicians has proven to be very effective when it comes to the advocacy on the issue of dependent young adults. Looking at the document analysis of the parliamentary documents, it is evident that the PvdA and the D66 have played an important role in 2015 and 2016, respectively, as they asked many questions regarding the situation of dependent young adults. It is no coincidence that those two political parties are also the ones VluchtelingenWerk and the immigration lawyers have approached in these years. So, despite the fact that the politicians do not directly refer to VluchtelingenWerk or the immigration lawyers during the parliamentary debates, the two non-governmental actors did have an influence on these politicians. Therefore, it can be said that they had influence on the family reunification policy hidden away in the background. This proves the fourth expectation: if non-governmental actors are able to create or respond to a window of opportunity effectively, it could lead to actual policy change.

All in all, it can be argued that VluchtelingenWerk and the immigration lawyers were able to contribute to the policy changes regarding dependent young adults between 2014 and

2016 by using four advocacy strategies: (1) Defining the problem definition with the aim to capture attention; (2) Developing policy solutions; (3) Influencing the political climate; (4) Strengthening the organization capacity. This way, they were able to come to an agreement on the problem definition and solutions to problems with policymakers, increase the political will, and to create or respond to a window of opportunity effectively. These factors eventually led to the three changes in the family reunification policy with regard to dependent young adults.

Overall, the influence of VluchtelingenWerk and the immigration lawyers can be divided in two different ways: direct and indirect influence. The actors raised the issue of dependent young adults directly as they approached the policymakers and State Secretary, for example during meetings and by sending a letter, and indirectly as they had an influence on politicians who raised the issue during parliamentary debates.

As this research examined the contribution of VluchtelingenWerk and the immigration lawyers to three different policy changes regarding dependent young adults, it is important to break down the overall contribution over these three changes. Combining the results of the policy document analysis and the interviews, it is possible to conclude that the contribution of VluchtelingenWerk and the immigration lawyers was not the same on the three policy changes. Looking at the policy change of 2014, it can be said that the role of these two actors has been limited. When the State Secretary announced the policy change in 2014, he stated that his decision was based on the European jurisprudence and a ruling of the Council of State. This statement of the State Secretary shows that the advocacy of the two non-governmental actors was not sufficient enough for the State Secretary to make the decision to change the policy. In contrast to 2014, the contribution of especially VluchtelingenWerk and the immigration lawyers was way more extensive in 2015. This was the year in which most advocacy happened, in particular by VluchtelingenWerk. In the following year, the contribution of the immigration lawyers was extensive whereas the role of VluchtelingenWerk was smaller. Concerning the policy change of 2016, VluchtelingenWerk played an indirect role by supporting and helping the immigration lawyers. These lawyers were in practice the ones who reached out to political actors resulting in policy change.

7.1 Limitations

The overall conclusion of this research must be slightly moderated due to the limitations of this research. Firstly, although much work was put into the collection of respondents for the interviews, the number of respondents is limited. This undermines the objectivity and, therefore,

the reliability and generalizability of this research. Moreover, there is also the risk of biased answers given by the respondents. Although there is an agreement between the researcher and the respondents to process the interviews anonymously, there is still the risk for the respondents to be recognized because of their professional function. Because some respondents work for an organization, it is possible that they were deliberately holding information back or slightly deviating from the truth. However, the interview questions were designed to be as objective as possible in order to minimize this limitation. Another limitation concerning the information provided by the respondents is that the advocacy happened quite a couple of years ago. Therefore, it is possible that the respondents did not remember things correctly or mixed things up.

Another limitation of this research is that it was not possible to conduct a couple of interviews with other important advocating actors such as the College voor de Rechten van de Mens or the UNHCR to see what their contribution has been in the issue regarding dependent young adults. Unfortunately, the researcher also did not succeed to conduct interviews with policymakers themselves. This would have shed a light on the perspective of policymakers. Finally, the influence of external factors that might have influence the three policy changes has not been considered in this research.

7.2 Recommendations

7.2.1 Recommendations for non-governmental actors

This research shows that non-governmental actors in fact have the capacity to make their advocacy successful and in that way influence policy change. Although the advocacy of VluchtelingenWerk and the immigration on the issue regarding dependent young adults did contribute to actual changes in the family reunification policy, there is still room for them to improve their advocacy in order to make their advocacy efforts successful on other issues.

Since the issue regarding dependent young adults was relatively small, it turns out that it was not necessary for VluchtelingenWerk and the immigration lawyers to seek media attention or to set up campaigns. However, seeking media attention and setting up campaigns is recommended for non-governmental actors when their advocacy efforts are focused on relatively larger issues. In that way, the actors could increase the chance that their advocacy strategies related to the political stream of the MSF would turn out to be successful. Therefore, it can be suggested to put more effort into these activities in order to increase the influence of

non-governmental actors such as VluchtelingenWerk and immigration lawyers on the political climate. In order words, seeking media attention and setting up campaigns on top of all the other efforts could give the non-governmental actors more leverage, not only politically but also publicly as it could lead to more public support as well.

7.2.2 Recommendations for further research

As described before, the relevance of this research lies in the fact that the policy changes regarding dependent young adults can be characterized as a relaxation of the family reunification policy whereas the Dutch policy is generally seen as restrictive towards refugees and asylum seekers. How do these policy changes fit into this restrictive stance of the Dutch government? Despite the relaxation of the policy when it comes to dependent young adults, the family reunification policy can still be classified as strict. The relaxation of the policy was predominantly implemented for dependent young girls of eighteen or nineteen years old who were left behind in unsafe circumstances. The IND still applies a strict examination to every application for family reunification so the policy changes regarding dependent young adults does not necessarily mean that it is easy for a young adult to come to the Netherlands via family reunification.

This research shows that it is possible for non-governmental actors to have an influence on policymaking and that advocacy does have effect. This is in particular interesting because of the restrictive stance of the Dutch government towards immigration and diversity issues. An idea for further research is therefore to study how the advocacy of non-governmental actors on other issues regarding either family reunification or other issues related to immigration or diversity has had an effect on policymaking. When it comes to the topic of family reunification regarding dependent young adults specifically, an idea would be to include other external factors which could have an influence on policymaking and to shed light on other perspectives such as the perspective of policymakers and members of the House of Representatives as well. Moreover, the inclusion of jurisprudence on both a European and national level was beyond the scope of this research. Therefore, it is a recommendation for further research to see how the European and national jurisprudence also had an effect on the Dutch family reunification policy.

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Appendix I – Overview of the documents used in the document analysis

Parliamentary documents

Code of document	Date	Type of document	Official code in database
PD01	13-11-2013	Report of a general meeting between the Commission for Justice and Security and the State Secretary of Justice and Security	19.637, nr. 1747
PD02	28-4-2014	Report of a written consultation between the Commission for Justice and Security and the State Secretary of Justice and Security	32.175, nr. 52
PD03	23-10-2014	Letter from the State Secretary of Justice and Security	19.637, nr. 1904
PD04	29-10-2014	Report of a general meeting between the Commission for Justice and Security and the State Secretary of Justice and Security	19.637, nr. 1936
PD05	15-12-2014	Questions from Kuiken (PvdA) to the State Secretary of Justice and Security	2014Z23095
PD06	18-12-2014	Letter from the State Secretary of Justice and Security	19.637, nr. 1938
PD15	12-1-2015	Answers from the State Secretary to the questions of Kuiken (PvdA)	993
PD07	14-1-2015	Report of a general meeting between the Commission for Justice and Security and the State Secretary of Justice and Security	32.175, nr. 55
PD08	21-5-2015	Letter from the State Secretary of Justice and Security	32.175, nr. 57
PD09	21-7-2015	Staatscourant	Stcrt. 22872
PD10	18-11-2015	Staatscourant	Stcrt. 43131
PD11	22-7-2016	Questions from Sjoerdsma (D66) to the State Secretary of Justice and Security	2016Z14958
PD12	4-9-2016	Staatscourant	Stcrt. 46741
PD13	5-9-2016	Letter from the State Secretary of Justice and Security	3437
PD14	8-9-2016	Report of a general meeting between the Commission for Justice and Security and the State Secretary of Justice and Security	19.637, nr. 2237

Documents of non-governmental actors

Code	Actor	Type of document	Web link
DNGA01	VluchtelingenWerk Nederland	Annual report of 2015	---
DNGA02	VluchtelingenWerk Nederland	News article, 10 September 2014	https://www.vluchtelingenwerk.nl/nieuws/gezinnen-onnodig-gescheiden-door-streng-beleid
DNGA03	VluchtelingenWerk Nederland	News article, 28 October 2014	https://www.vluchtelingenwerk.nl/nieuws/goed-nieuws-over-gezinshereniging
DNGA04	VluchtelingenWerk Nederland	Letter to the Commission for Justice and Security	---
DNGA05	VluchtelingenWerk Nederland	News article, 15 January 2015	https://www.vluchtelingenwerk.nl/nieuws/staatssecretaris-zegt-toe-gezinsherenigingsbeleid-meerderjarige-kinderen-wat-te-versoepelen
DNGA06	VluchtelingenWerk Nederland	News article, 22 May 2015	https://www.vluchtelingenwerk.nl/nieuws/meerderjarige-kinderen-niet-meer-alleen-onveiligheid
DNGA07	College voor de Rechten van de Mens	Letter to the Commission for Justice and Security	---
DNGA08	College voor de Rechten van de Mens	News article, 12 January 2015	https://mensenrechten.nl/nl/nieuws/nederland-moet-achtergebleven-syrische-dochters-toelaten
DNGA09	College voor de Rechten van de Mens	News article, 10 June 2015	https://mensenrechten.nl/nl/nieuws/goed-nieuws-voor-net-meerderjarige-vluchtelingen

Appendix II - Topic list for interviews

General information

- What is your function (within the organization)?
- How long have you done this work (within the organization / as an immigration lawyer)?
- Can you tell me something about your work (within VluchtelingenWerk / as an immigration lawyer)?

Advocacy with regard to the family reunification policy in general

- Can you tell me something about the advocacy (of your organization) with regard to family reunification?
- Which topics within the family reunification policy do you work on? (e.g. related to the admission of dependent family members, the application term, the IND's procedure)

Advocacy with regard to dependent young adults

1. Definition of the problem

- What was the issue exactly?
- How did you find out that the policy with regard to dependent young adults had to change?
- Who were the most important actors to raise the issue to?
- What have you done to raise the issue to these actors (so that they would get attention for the issue?
- In what way have you described/framed the issue? Why?
- What kind of strategies have you used in order to attract attention of policymakers and/or politicians? Can you give an example for this? Why did you do this?

2. Development of solutions to the problem

- What should according to you or your organization have be changed in the family reunification policy regarding dependent young adults?
- What kind of solutions did you or your organization propose?
- Did you conduct research on the issue? Why / why not?

- In what ways did you criticize the policy regarding dependent young adults?
    - Publication of reports/studies
    - Letters to the State Secretary

3. Influencing of political actors

- With which organizations/actors such as immigration lawyers have you collaborated?
    - Why?
    - Do you feel that this has been effective in raising the issue to policymakers?
- Did you/your organization set up campaigns with regard to dependent young adults?
    - Why?
    - Do you feel that this has been effective in raising the issue to policymakers?
- Did you/your organization reached out to the media to discuss this issue?
    - Why?
    - Do you feel that this has been effective in raising the issue to policymakers?

4. Strengthening of the organizational capacity

- Did you/your organization have close relationships with certain policymakers or politicians? Do you feel like these contacts have been necessary to spread your message?
- What do you / does your organization do to build up a good reputation and to maintain this?
- What do you / does your organization do to receive support of other actors?
- What do you / does your organization do to monitor political developments regarding family reunification?
- Did you / your organization find a moment in time in which it became clear you're your advocacy was heard?
- Was there a specific moment in which it became clear that it was time to seek attention for the issue?
- What did you / your organization do to get attention for the issue and the proposed solutions? What was effective and what was ineffective?

The end
- Do you feel like your advocacy have in fact contributed to the policy changes?

- Do you have other relevant contacts whom I should get in contact with?
- Do you have relevant documents which I should use in my research?