



A FEMINIST ANALYSIS  
OF VALUES AND NORMS  
SHAPING CLIMATE  
POLICY IN ICELAND

AUÐUR H INGÓLFSDÓTTIR

# CLIMATE CHANGE AND SECURITY IN THE ARCTIC

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A feminist analysis of values and norms shaping climate policy in Iceland

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LAPIN YLIOPISTO  
UNIVERSITY OF LAPLAND

Rovaniemi 2016



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## Abstract

This research is a contribution to feminist scholarship on the interrelationships among climate change, gender, and security. I explore the relationship between climate change and security and discuss why, in spite of the obvious threats that climate change poses to both the natural environment and human security, states of the world have been slow to react. What political and economic interests and cultural values are preventing the international community from addressing this important issue in an effective way? This overarching question is explored through three research questions, in which a case study approach in one Arctic state – Iceland – is used to explore climate change impact, policy discourses, and the values underpinning those discourses. A feminist social constructivist perspective is employed, through which concepts from feminism and gender studies are used as analytical tools. The empirical data comprises policy documents, interviews with policy shapers, and speeches by key politicians.

The case study analysis reveals that although climate change is perceived as a threat in Iceland, it is seen as an abstract and distant threat, and scant research exists on the socioeconomic impact. After evaluating climate policies and public discourses on climate change in Iceland, my overall conclusion is that the underlying values guiding public policy can be labeled neither overwhelmingly masculine nor overwhelmingly feminine. A key observation, however, is that in order to obtain a holistic picture, climate discourses need to be viewed in the larger context of more mainstream discourses on security and economic development. An examination of public discourses related to the emerging oil and gas sector in Iceland demonstrates that masculine values still dominate mainstream economic policy and that man's right to exploit nature is deeply engrained into the culture. Yet, with a strong civil society, increased awareness of the climate crisis, and active resistance to dominant views, it is possible to carve out space for alternative values, emphasizing a more feminine approach toward the relationship between humans and nature.

The main obstacles preventing states from taking action to address the climate crisis appear are not to be an opposition to specific climate policies or explicit denial of climate change as an issue worthy of attention. Rather, climate issues are ignored, pushed to the side or actions delayed when other issues, considered more pressing, consume time and resources. Short-term economic gains still receive priority over long-term ecological and human security.

## Ágrip

Þessi rannsókn er framlag til feminískra fræða um tengsl á milli loftslagsbreytinga, öryggismála og kyngervis. Ég skoða hvernig loftslagsbreytingar og öryggismál tengjast og ræði hvers vegna ríki heims hafi ekki brugðist við þeim augljósu ógnum sem sem stafa af loftslagsbreytingum. Hvaða pólitísku og efnahagslegu hagsmunir og menningarlegu gildi koma í veg fyrir að við grípum til aðgerða? Ég leita svara við þessari spurningu með þremur rannsóknarspurningum þar sem tilviksrannsókn er beitt til að skoða í einu ríki á Norðurslóðum – Íslandi – áhrif loftslagsbreytinga, pólitíska orðræðu og undirliggjandi gildi þessarar orðræðu. Kenningarlegur bakgrunnur rannsóknarinnar er feminísk mótunarhyggja þar sem hugtök úr feminisma og kynjafræði eru notuð sem greiningartæki. Gögnin sem stuðst er við samanstanda af stefnumarkandi skjölum, viðtölum við fólk sem hefur beitt sér í umræðu um loftslagsmál og ræðum stjórnámálanna.

Tilviksrannsóknin sýnir að þrátt fyrir að fólk upplifi loftslagsbreytingar sem ógn á Íslandi þá sé ógnin óljós og fjarlæg og litlar rannsóknir eru til um samfélagsleg áhrif hennar. Niðurstaðan, eftir greiningu á stefnumótun og orðræðu um loftslagsmál á Íslandi, er sú að þau undirliggjandi gildi sem vísa veginn í opinberri stefnumörkun eru hvorki afgerandi karllæg né kvenlæg. Rannsóknin dregur hins vegar fram mikilvægi þess að horfa heildstætt á umræðuna í samfélaginu og setja orðræðu um loftslagsbreytingar í samhengi við ríkjandi orðræðu um öryggi og efnahagsþróun. Greining orðræðu um olíu- og gasleit við Íslandsstrendur leiðir í ljós að karllæg gildi ráða enn för í ríkjandi efnahagsstefnu og hugmyndin um óskoraðan rétt mannsins til að nýta náttúruna liggur djúpt í menningu þjóðarinnar. Engu að síður er mögulegt að skapa rými fyrir aðrar skoðanir, sem byggja á kvenlægari gildum um tengsl manneskju og náttúru. Til þess þarf sterkt borgaralegt samfélag, aukna meðvitund um loftslagsvandann og virka móttstöðu gegn ríkjandi hugmyndafræði.

Tilviksrannsóknin sýnir hvaða hindranir koma helst í veg fyrir að tekist sé á við loftslagsvandann. Hindranirnar virðast ekki endilega felast í beinni móttstöðu við tiltekna aðgerðir til að sporna við loftslagsbreytingum eða afneitun á loftslagsbreytingum sem mikilvægu viðfangsefni. Málefni sem snúa að loftslagsbreytingum gleymast hins vegar, þeim er ýtt til hliðar eða aðgerðum seinkað ef önnur málefni kalla eftir athygli, tíma og fjármunum. Skammtíma efnahagshagsmunum er forgangsraðað fram fyrir langtíma öryggi mannfólksins og náttúrunnar.

## Abstrakti

Tämä tutkimus tarkastelee ilmastonmuutoksen, sukupuolen ja turvallisuuden vuorovaikutussuhdetta feminististen tieteiden näkökulmasta. Tutkin ilmastonmuutoksen ja turvallisuuspolitiikan vuorovaikutusta ja pohdin miksi valtiot ovat reagoineet niin hitaasti ilmeisistä riskeistä huolimatta. Mitkä poliittiset sekä taloudelliset intressit että arvot estävät kansainvälistä yhteisöä toimimasta tehokkaasti ilmastonmuutoksen hillitsemiseksi? Tutkimuksessani lähestyn näitä kysymyksiä kolmen tutkimuskysymyksen avulla yhteen arktiseen valtioon, Islantiin, keskittyvän tapaustutkimuksen kautta. Tutkimuksen tieteellinen tausta on feministisen konstruktivismin teoriassa, joka perustuu feminististen ja sukupuolitutkimuksellisten käsitteiden soveltamiseen analyysivälineenä. Empiirinen materiaali koostuu poliittisista asiakirjoista, haastattelusta mielipidevaikuttajien kanssa sekä poliitikkojen virallisista puheista.

Tapaustutkimus todistaa että vaikka ilmastonmuutos ymmärretään uhaksi Islannissa, asia koetaan abstraktina ja kaukaisena, ja sen sosioekonomisista vaikutuksista on hyvin vähän tutkimustietoa. Analysoityani Islannin ilmastopolitiikkaa ja yhteiskunnallista keskustelua asian tiimoilta johtopäätökseni on, että arvomaailmaa, joka ohjaa julkista päätöksentekoa, ei voi mieltää ylivoimaisesti maskuliiniseksi taikka feminiiniseksi. Sen sijaan tutkimus paljastaa miten kokonaisvaltaisen käsityksen luodakseen on tärkeää tarkastella ilmastopoliittista keskustelua yhtenä kokonaisuutena turvallisuus- ja talouspoliittisen keskustelun kanssa. Arvioitaessa julkista keskustelua öljy- ja kaasualan kehittämistä Islannissa on selvää, että maskuliiniset arvot hallitsevat edelleen talouspolitiikkaa ja ajatus ihmisen rajoittamattomasta oikeudesta hyödyntää luontoa on edelleen olennainen osa kulttuuria. Tästä huolimatta on mahdollista luoda tilaa vaihtoehtoisille lähestymistavoille, jotka korostavat feminiinisiä arvoja ihmisen ja luonnon suhteessa. Tähän tarvitaan vahvaa kansalaisyhteiskuntaa, lisääntynyttä ilmastotietoisuutta ja aktiivista vaihtoehtoisten näkökulmien vahvistamista.

Tapaustutkimus osoittaa myös mitkä tekijät estävät valtioita ryhtymästä tehokkaihin ilmastonmuutosta hillitseviin toimenpiteisiin. Ongelma ei niinkään näyttäisi olevan suoranaisten ilmastotoimenpiteiden vastustus tai ilmastonmuutoksen kieltäminen. Pikemminkin, ilmastokysymykset sivuutetaan ja toimenpiteitä lykätään muiden kiireellisemmiksi koettujen asioiden viedessä huomiota, aikaa ja resursseja. Näin lyhyen aikavälin taloudelliset edut priorisoidaan edelleen sen sijaan, että panostettaisiin pitkän tähtäimen inhimilliseen ja ekologiseen turvallisuuteen.

## Acknowledgments

Writing this dissertation has been both an intellectual and emotional journey. When I started the research, I was at a low point in my life. I had recently returned from a peace-keeping mission in war-torn Sri Lanka and was traumatized by the violence I had witnessed. At the same time, I was frustrated to discover that during the three years I had spent on overseas missions, little progress had been made in tackling the climate crisis – an issue with which I was deeply involved and on which I had previously spent much of my working hours. To say that I had lost faith in the ability of humans to tackle the most pressing problems of the present would be an understatement. Embarking upon this research has helped me to regain faith. Feminism, in particular, enabled me to view the world through a fresh lens, by deepening my understanding of how dominant systems have created and sustained discriminating practices and contributed to the imbalance in the relationship between humans and nature. Feminist ideas also offered hope that an alternative vision of the world was possible – one in which greater balance would be reached between masculine and feminine values.

During the seven years I have worked on this research, many people have helped, both directly with practical assistance and indirectly by engaging in stimulating discussion about the topic, helping me to shape my thinking. First, I must mention my two supervisors: Lassi Heininen and Þorgerður Einarsdóttir. Lassi has not only generously shared his knowledge of the Arctic and security, but has also been instrumental in introducing me to Arctic research networks and making it possible for me to participate in a number of Arctic conferences where I could discuss my work at its various stages. Þorgerður's knowledge of feminism, the area of the research with which I was least familiar, was extremely valuable to me, as was her guidance on methodology and her constant encouragement and support. Every time we met, I left her filled with energy and excitement about the work ahead.

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## **PART I: THEORY – METHODS – CONTEXT**

The first part of this dissertation comprises four chapters. First is an introduction, followed by a chapter on the state of the art and theory, summarizing the knowledge base on which the research is resting and giving an overview of the theories used to frame the analysis. Chapter 3 explains the methods used to collect and analyze data, and Chapter 4 on the Arctic and climate change provides the necessary context for the case study that is the main topic of Part II.

# 1. Introduction

This doctoral research focuses on climate change in the Arctic, using Iceland as a case study. I explore the relationship between climate change and security and discuss why, in spite of the obvious threats that climate change poses to both the natural environment and human security, states of the world have been slow to react. What political and economic interests and cultural values are preventing the international community from addressing this important issue in an effective way? Given the crucial role of fossil fuels in the climate equation, the oil and gas sector will be at the forefront when digging for answers about the obstacles preventing us from tackling the root causes of climate change.

Although this research is interdisciplinary in nature, it is rooted in the field of international relations (IR). I approach the topic from a feminist social constructivist perspective, using concepts from feminism and gender studies as analytical tools. Constructivists within IR emphasize the social dimensions of international relations, including the importance of norms, rules, and language and the possibility of change (Fierke, 2010).

My interest in this topic can be traced back more than twenty years. I was first introduced to the issue of climate change as an undergraduate majoring in international studies. I was drawn to this subject not only because I realized the significance of the relationships between human activities and the global atmosphere, but also because this was a challenge that could be addressed only with close collaboration of the international community. Old methods of international relations, in which states focus primarily on protecting their self-interests and maximizing their power, would not work in dealing successfully with the challenges of climate change. It was clear to me that this new global challenge would call for new approaches to problem solving at the international level.

During my Master's studies in international relations, I chose international environmental and resource policy as my area of specialization and was able to dig further into questions related to climate change and international politics. I finished my Master's degree in 1999, and in the next few years I was engaged with climate-related projects in various ways. I served as a special advisor in the Icelandic Ministry for the Environment for 15 months, where I participated in negotiations within the UN Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC) as a representative of Iceland, and I was a project manager of a climate project run by the Icelandic environmental NGO, Landvernd, the aim of which was to analyze the available options for reducing emissions domestically. The longer I worked on climate-related issues, however, the more

pessimistic I became. In spite of many successful initiatives, overall emissions continued to rise and the climate challenge kept growing larger, without any drastic measures taken by the states of the world. This realization created a longing to explore in greater depth the obstacles that are preventing us from addressing the root causes of climate change.

## 1.1 Aims and Objectives

This research grew out my curiosity to understand why states of the world have been slow to react to the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, in spite of evidence for the way climate change is threatening both the natural environment and human security. Although lack of awareness is sometimes blamed, or even the psychology of denial in the face of a daunting task (Norgaard, 2011; Stoknes, 2015), it seemed to me that some forces other than simple ignorance or denial were at work. It is necessary to take a critical look at our economic and political systems and the power relations and values that feed those systems in order to gain an understanding of our inability to produce effective solutions for addressing the root causes of human-induced climate change.

The more the topic has been on my mind, the more convinced I have become that part of the problem lies in the imbalanced relationship between humans and nature. Rather than treating nature with respect and honoring her boundaries, the human race has viewed nature merely as a resource for humans to exploit. I also see a clear parallel between the imbalance in the relationship between humans and nature and the imbalance between men and women in different places around the world. Having lived and worked in several countries and continents, I had observed that while the manifestation of abuse is different depending on culture and local situation, women are being discriminated against in all places, and characteristics that are considered feminine are valued less than corresponding masculine traits. These observations finally lead me to feminism as an academic discipline that could provide useful tools to use for analysis of the climate problem.

So with these thoughts as a starting point, this research explores the relationship between climate change and security in the Arctic, by looking in depth at one Arctic state: Iceland. The overarching question always playing in the background is the one that ignited the research, and relates to the puzzle of why reaction to climate change has been so slow, in spite of the obvious security threats. Or as asked in the previous section: “What political and economic interests and cultural values are preventing the international community from addressing this important issue in an effective way?” A case study approach is used to examine this question by asking three research questions:

- How is climate change impacting security in the Arctic, and more specifically, in Iceland, which serves as the main case study site?

- What do existing dominant political, economic, and security discourses reveal about the values underpinning policy decisions related to climate change and security?
- How much room is there for alternative approaches in public discourses related to climate change – especially feminist perspectives – and do such perspectives offer any new and useful ideas on how to address issues related to climate change and human security?

Although I consider all three questions significant for this research, they do serve different purposes, and some receive more attention than others. The first question is crucial to setting the stage, whereas the second and third questions receive more attention in the analysis because they deal more directly with the main task of the research: to examine the underlying values of policy, to aid in an understanding of the obstacles that are preventing action.

I examine these questions using a variety of qualitative methods. My data include interviews with policy shapers and written texts in the form of policy documents, speeches of key politicians, media reports, and transcribed texts from discussions in the parliament. I also rely on information I obtained as an observer (and sometimes also a participant) of public discourses about climate change and energy issues in Iceland over the past 15 years. The interviewees for this research are people who have participated in public discourses about climate change as politicians, civil servants, activists, or other experts. I call them policy shapers, because although only some of them have been directly involved in public policy making, all of them have tried to influence policy by publicly expressing their concerns about climate change and by emphasizing the need to respond.

In the sections that follow, I explain in greater detail my choice of topic, the theoretical and methodological approaches used, and why the small state of Iceland can serve as a relevant case study.

## **1.2 Why Climate Change?**

Earth's climate is changing. The burning of fossil fuels, land-use changes, industrial processes, and other human activities are increasing the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, resulting in the warming of the atmosphere. According to the International Panel of Climate Change (IPCC), average global temperature increased by 0.85°C between 1880 and 2012, and most of this warming is considered to be human induced (IPCC, 2013). Drastic climate changes will deeply impact all aspects of life. Although the changes may bring some new economic opportunities, especially in the North, they will also create some major challenges for humankind.

As Vogler (2008) notes, climate change is on a radically different scale from anything that the international system has previously encountered. There is almost no dimension of international relations that climate change does not actually or potentially affect. Thus, it is no surprise that climate change is the subject of discussion at a number of high-level meetings. One such example is the 15<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties (COP 15) meeting in Copenhagen in 2009, where parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) met. Hopes were high at the meeting that a new climate treaty would be negotiated. This was one of the largest gatherings of world leaders ever to occur outside the United Nations (UN) Headquarters in New York, with a total of 115 heads of states and governments attending, and more than 40,000 other participants representing governments, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), intergovernmental organizations, and the media, among others (UNFCCC, 2009). In spite of high hopes, no binding agreement was reached. Thus, the Copenhagen meeting is widely considered a failure, highlighting the inability of the international community to tackle the climate issue.

The failure in Copenhagen delayed the process of a new climate agreement by six years, but finally, in December 2015, the Paris Agreement was negotiated. Although it remains to be seen how effective the Paris Agreement will be in tackling the climate crisis, at least it provides more hope for optimism than did the failed attempt for a new agreement several years earlier.

Climate change is not only on a different scale than other issues dealt with on the international agenda, but the nature of the problem is also significantly different. Because the atmosphere is a global common pool resource, solutions to climate change are not to be found within single states. In fact, even if all heads of states were to agree on a way forward, they would be unable to implement their policies without help from the business sector, the NGO community, and local authorities within their states. Climate change calls for the cooperation of all states and other players in the international system. It is the business of every individual on this planet, both current and future generations.

Yet, in the everyday lives of most people, climate change is a distant and abstract problem. The consequences of climate change (impacts) can appear far from the emissions that caused them. In other words, our actions here and now can have negative consequences in faraway places, and far into the future. When people experience the negative consequences of climate change, they are not necessarily able to connect the dots and see a clear relationship between the causes (collective global greenhouse gas emissions) and the changes they are experiencing at the local level. To complicate the picture further, the impact gets entangled with other local political, economic, and cultural factors that influence the daily lives of people around the world.

For all these reasons, political discourses and the way we frame the climate change issue at the international, regional, national, and local level, is a fascinating subject

from an intellectual point of view. Such research, however, is not purely an intellectual exercise; it also constitutes an important contribution to our efforts to deepen our understanding of this complex topic.

### 1.3 Why Security?

Framing climate change as a security issue calls for an explanation. Climate change is one of several issues that have emerged in recent decades that can be categorized as new threats to security that military forces cannot cope with. Other examples include drug trafficking, failed states (that are unable to protect their own citizens), transnational crimes, terrorism, migration of diseases, and ethno-political conflicts (Barnett, 2001). Even more recent threats include issues as cyber security and threats related to failures of financial systems, as became apparent in the global financial crisis in 2009.

As Barnett explains, mainstream (realist) discourses of national security focused in the past mainly on the threat of armed attack – threats that originate outside the border of the relevant states, for which military forces are used as protection. The “new threats”, however, do not fit well into this narrow understanding of security, which has pushed both scholars and policy makers to take a critical look at traditional notions of security, and, in many cases, to redefine security, broadening the concept to create room for these emerging threats.

Although the topic of climate change has been on the international agenda as an environmental issue since the early 1990s, the reference to climate change as a security issue is much more recent. As scientific data have become more definite, and the consequences of global warming are beginning to emerge, concerns about climate change have increased. It was not until 2007, however, that climate change really entered the discussion as a security issue (Brzoska, 2009; German Advisory Council on Global Change, 2008). That was the year Al Gore and the International Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) received the Noble Peace Prize for their efforts in alerting the world about the dangers of climate change. This was also the year that climate change was discussed for the first time in the UN Security Council (Security Council, 2007). Although other issues, like the global financial crisis and the refugee crisis, have been attracting the attention of world leaders, climate change remains high on the agenda in international affairs as a threat that the states of the world will be forced to address.

The securitization of climate change has occurred in parallel with the same process that has involved the broadening of the security concept in academic writings and in policy circles. The traditional state-centric understanding of security, with a primary focus on securing states from external threats and relying on military strategies as a solution, has been challenged by new ideas about security, including the more people-oriented approach of human security. The concept of human security can be traced

back to a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report, published in 1994, in which the traditional concept of security is questioned:

The concept of security has for too long been interpreted narrowly: as security of territory from external aggression, or as protection of national interest in foreign policy or as global security from the threat of a nuclear holocaust. It has been related more to nation-states than to people. (UNDP, 1994, p. 22)

Instead, the UNDP argues for a shift in focus from the armed security of territories to people's security through sustainable human development. This new approach was welcomed by many groups, including environmentalists, human rights advocates and workers in the development field, all of whom contended that the more traditional security approach was outdated. By employing this broader understanding of security, climate change can be viewed as a human security issue, threatening the livelihood, health, and welfare of people around the world.

Comprehensive security is another term often used when discussing the environmental and human aspects of security and their relationship with traditional security. A comprehensive security framework includes both general human security and the more specific human ecological security, referring directly to environmental security threats to people and their communities (Heininen, 2014).

## 1.4 Why the Arctic?

The Arctic<sup>1</sup> is extremely vulnerable to observed and projected climate change and climate changes are being experienced particularly intensely in the region. This development, along with broader trends linked to globalization, such as increased international trade and long-range pollution, has put the Arctic in the spotlight of international attention. One needs only to follow news in the mainstream media to realize that the Arctic has become a hot topic in recent years. Big powers like China, India, and the EU have lined up to request observer status within the Arctic Council, and large corporations are knocking at the doors of Arctic nations. Rapid changes due to a warming climate create not only threats to the region, but also opportunities. The melting of the icecap has ignited interest in new shipping routes (Humpert & Raspotnik, 2012) and has created hopes that oil and gas reserves in the area will become more accessible (Keil, 2014).

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1 The Arctic, as the term is used this dissertation, refers to Alaska, Iceland, Greenland, The Faroe Islands and the northern areas of Russia, Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Canada. A more detailed discussion on the definition of the Arctic region can be found in Chapter 4.

One example of the intensity of climate change is the average temperature in the Arctic, which has risen at almost twice the rate of temperature increases in the rest of the world (Arctic Council, 2004). The results are far reaching. The melting of the Arctic icecap will not only influence the Arctic, but will contribute to rising sea levels worldwide. Other consequences include thawing of the permafrost soils of the tundra and increasing erosion of the coasts by wave action and storms. The 5<sup>th</sup> assessment report of the IPCC (AR5) not only confirms earlier predictions for the Arctic, but also highlights the fact that changes are taking place more rapidly than expected, which will impact both natural and social systems at a rate that may exceed their ability to adapt successfully (Larsen, et al., 2014).

The changes in nature will impact northern populations in various ways. Severe coastal erosion is expected to increase the vulnerability of many coastal communities; thawing ground will disrupt transportation, buildings, and other infrastructure, and indigenous communities will continue to face major economic and cultural impacts. Vegetation zones will shift, and animal species will be affected. On the bright side, reduced sea ice is likely to increase marine transport and access to resources (Arctic Council, 2004). Even this potential positive impact, however, has been a cause of concern among the people who worry about a “race for resources” in the Arctic (Borgerson, 2008). Another thought-provoking point is the reality that easier access to resources, in particular oil and gas resources, can prolong dependency on fossil fuels, further intensifying the climate problem. This dilemma, in which climate changes will open access to resources, the utilization of which will further speed the changes, is commonly referred to as the “Arctic Paradox”<sup>2</sup> (Palosaari, 2011).

In short, the Arctic is a relevant region for exploring the relationships between climate change and security. It also provides some interesting examples of the separations of discourses on mitigation and adaptation (of which the Arctic Paradox is a prime example), but this separation is one manifestation of the reluctance to address the root causes of climate change.

## 1.5 Why Iceland?

Using a small state as a case study in research that is exploring questions related to global climate change may, at first sight, seem odd. This section provides arguments for why the state is the most logical unit of analysis for examining climate policy and

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2 In recent years, referrals to the Arctic Paradox have become more common among scholars, policy makers, and the media. I first heard about the concept, however, in May 2011, in a lecture by Teemu Palosaari, as part of the Calotte Academy, located in Inaari, Finland. His talk was based on a draft version of the article cited, that was published later the same year.

climate-related discourses and justifies why the small state of Iceland is a relevant case study in the Arctic context.

Given the nature of the problem, climate change is not an issue that can be solved by individual states, let alone small states with limited power in the international system. In addition to states, a variety of other actors play an essential role in addressing challenges related to climate change, including international organizations, non-governmental organizations, businesses, and consumers. Yet, states still play a key role in the international system, in regional cooperation, and in shaping and implementing public policy. As Giddens (2011) explains, the state continues to be an all-important actor, because so many powers remain in its hands – powers related to both domestic and international policy. States cannot be forced to sign international agreements; emission-trading markets can work only if regulated by the state, and important policy tools such as the planning, taxes, and subsidies are under the control of the state. The state, however, includes not only the national government, but also local authorities. The ability of the state to draw from the creativity of far-sighted individuals and the energy of civil society is crucial. In today's world, states operate within the context of multilayered governance, in which they must work with a variety of actors, both internationally and domestically (Giddens, 2011).

Iceland is by far the smallest Arctic state in terms of population size. It is, however, the only independent state that is located entirely within the Arctic region, as it is most commonly defined. Its location as an island in the middle of the North Atlantic Ocean provides an interesting site to study the impact of climate change, and the small population and relatively simple political administrative structure makes it easier to trace trends in public discourses than would be the case in larger, more heterogeneous societies.

Yet, Iceland's identity as an Arctic state is a relatively recent phenomenon. Ever since Iceland gained its independence from Denmark in 1944, Icelandic authorities have identified Iceland as a Nordic country belonging to Europe. With respect to national security, the most important ties were with the United States and NATO. The Arctic identity of Iceland has not been strong. This situation has been changing in recent years, however, as can be seen from the following quote by Iceland's former foreign minister, Össur Skarphéðinsson<sup>3</sup>: "In essence, the Arctic is our home and its development is inherently linked with our own fate as a nation state" (Skarphéðinsson, 2011).

As a small island state with an economy that relies heavily on the utilization of natural resources, Iceland is relatively vulnerable to changes in the natural environment. Because of its status as a fishing nation, changing distribution of fish stocks and degradation of the marine environment due to acidification of the oceans or pollution from increased

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3 Össur Skarphéðinsson is a member of the Social Democratic Alliance (Samfylkingin) and was the foreign minister of Iceland, from 2007 to 2013.

traffic in the Arctic region can be especially threatening. Climate change could therefore create some serious human security challenges nationally and at the local level in specific regions. Its location in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, however, also means that Iceland may be able to reap the benefits of some of the new economic activities expected to take place in the Arctic as the icecap melts.

But this location could also create challenges. Questions have arisen about the search and rescue capacity of Icelandic Coastal Guards if shipping in the region were to increase drastically. Furthermore, the fact that Iceland is a small state without an army makes it especially vulnerable if there were an increase in military tension between states in the region, related to access to resources (Icelandic Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2009b).

As for mitigation policies, the smallness of the country prevents Iceland from having the power to influence total emissions directly at the global level. Even if Iceland's greenhouse gas emissions were reduced to zero, it would barely make a noticeable dent in global emissions. Nevertheless, given its abundance of renewable energy sources, Iceland could play a role beyond its size – as a role model. I have argued elsewhere that small states can influence the behavior of larger states by acting as norm entrepreneurs (Ingólfssdóttir, 2014). This idea could be applied to Iceland in the context of climate change and mitigation measures.

From a feminist point of view, Iceland is also a relevant case study, given its track record in gender equality. The feminist movement in Iceland is strong, and Iceland has held the top spot for several consecutive years in the Global Gender Gap Index, published annually by the World Economic Forum (World Economic Forum, 2014). Thus, according to this index, Iceland has the narrowest gender gap in the world.

Because one of the aims of this study is to explore how much room there is for feminine perspectives and values in public discourses related to climate change, the status of Iceland as a state where gender equality is highly prioritized makes it an interesting site to study.

Although exploring climate-related policies in one small state obviously does not provide answers that allow for generalizations, it can provide valuable insights into the kind of obstacles hindering progressive climate policies from being implemented. The hope is that this research can also deepen our understanding of the role played by values when collective community decisions are being made about ways of responding at the local level to a global problem like climate change.

## **1.6 Why a Feminist Approach?**

Feminism as an academic discipline grew out of the feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s, but feminist perspectives first entered the international relations discipline at the end of the 1980s, about the same time as the end of the Cold War. One interest-

ing example of this early work is the book *Bananas, Beaches & Bases* by Cynthia Enloe (1990), in which she asks: “Where are the women”? A simple question, yet one that had rarely been asked in the context of international politics before. This situation was to change with scholars like Enloe and others who entered the discipline with fresh insights. The feminist researchers had a different starting point, and asked some critical questions that challenged the underlying assumptions that had shaped IR-related research when it was almost entirely male dominated (Tickner, 1992).

Most feminist research within the field of international relations has not followed the positivist path, whereby hypotheses are formulated and then evidence gathered to test, falsify, or validate them. Rather, feminist scholars in the field have situated themselves within theories of social constructivism, being conscious of how ideas help shape the world (Tickner, 2006). Although feminism includes a variety of perspectives, what unifies all of them is the belief that inequality exists and that action should be taken to move toward greater gender equality and more social justice.

As mentioned, feminist scholars have brought fresh insights into IR by asking critical questions and by deconstructing dominant theories through the exploration of underlying assumptions. The same is true for feminists within other disciplines relevant to this research, such as economics, environmental studies, and ethics. I provide further information about some of the most influential feminist scholars in those different disciplines in the theoretical chapter and give examples of how their ideas can be useful as frameworks when analyzing climate-related discourses and the power structures underpinning those discourses.

Feminism is, of course, only one of several critical approaches that have emerged in recent decades, challenging mainstream theories. Within security studies, a subfield of international relations highly relevant for this research, a wide range of scholars has conducted critical research. Shepherd (2013a) discusses these critical approaches in her introduction in the book *Critical Approaches to Security*. In her view, a key dimension of critical approaches is the scholar’s desire to challenge and unsettle anything that is taken for granted in the research process. The book introduces various critical approaches, including human security, green security, securitization theory, security as emancipation, post-structural security studies, post-colonial security studies, and feminist security studies.

Although those approaches differ on many points, they have in common a rejection of positivism, which is the theoretical foundations of realism, the most dominant theory within security studies. Those that adhere to positivism assume that reliable and “true” knowledge can be generated only through rigorous and value-free observation and prefer to adopt the methodologies of natural sciences to explain the social world. Another aspect of most IR theories and conventional security studies is their tendency to be foundationalist – to assume the social world to be an objective reality that exists independent of our perception. Methods have also tended to be quantitative, whereas

critical approaches often adopt qualitative methods in their research (Sheperd, 2013a).

This also means that feminism is only one approach of many I could have chosen to grapple with the questions I am posing in this research. The reason I chose a feminist approach, rather than some of the other critical approaches available, is that it offers an intriguing way to study the power relations that I believe are at the core of our resistance to change, even in cases in which it seems obvious that such changes would be beneficial for the whole.

One unique feature of feminism is the close relationship between activism and academics, between the feminist movement and feminism as an academic discipline. Einarsdóttir discusses the relationship between the two, arguing that ideas originating within the academic arm of feminism provide an important fuel for the transformative power of feminism as a movement. She advocates that new ideas have the power to move, to create, and to transform, and that this transformative power, which can often be explosive, means that feminism challenges dominant ideas, values, and power structures (Einarsdóttir P., 2000). In this sense, feminist research often has some elements of action research engrained, wherein one of the explicit objectives of the research is to facilitate social change. As Berg (2009) explains, action research is a research framework whereby groups undertake a collective, self-reflective enquiry in order to improve some conditions or situation they are involved in.

It is exactly the transformative power of feminism that Einarsdóttir refers to that makes it an interesting approach for exploring questions related to human-induced climate change. Traditional approaches to problem solving seem to come up empty handed in finding solutions to the climate problem, and are also insufficient in explaining why we are failing to address the root causes of climate change. By exploring the values that guide policy making from a feminist perspective, some important new insights can be gained.

Chapter 2 of this dissertation draws upon some key feminist writings in different disciplines, in order to demonstrate how masculine values are underpinning the political, economic, and social theories that have been the most dominant in recent decades in shaping our understanding of the world and the relationship between humans and nature.

## **1.7 Academic Value**

Climate change is one of the most complex issues on the agenda of the international community. Although global in scope, the changes manifest differently in local context. Scientific findings indicate that climate change will have great impact on the natural environment, which could pose a serious threat to human communities in various locations around the world. Yet, both states and other key players have been slow to

react to this new challenge. Thus, it is of great importance to shed light on the kind of political and economic interests and cultural values that are preventing the international community from addressing this important issue in an effective way. This research is a step in that direction, through an analysis of the climate and security discourses in one small state: Iceland as a case study. The qualitative nature of the research will not allow for generalizations. Nevertheless, the results from the case study can provide important insights into the way values and beliefs shape policy related to climate change and security in Iceland, and more generally in the Arctic.

## **1.8 The Role of the Researcher**

One of the key contributions of feminism to academic research is the critical questions feminists have asked about the ability of the scientific method to approach a topic from a completely neutral and objective perspective. Over forty years ago feminist sociologist Dorothy Smith questioned whether sociology could be different if the starting point of the discipline were women's traditional place and their daily realities (Smith, 1974). She points out that objectivity, so highly valued in her discipline, is made possible only because the male researcher is able to detach his work as a researcher from his direct personal experience. When he goes to work, he enters a conceptually ordered society in which he can work with facts and information about his research topic without having to worry about fulfilling his own bodily needs, because others satisfy those needs. Women are outsiders to this structure, although they participate in it by providing clerical work, nursing, and secretarial work.

It was clear to Smith at the time that women sociologists did not enter the discipline on the same terms as men. It was not possible for women to separate their work from their direct experience to the extent that men could. This experience made her question sociologists' claims that their work constituted an objective knowledge independent of the situation of the researchers that were producing this knowledge. "We can never escape the circles of our own heads," she stated (Smith, 1974) and suggested that rather than pretend that complete objectivity is possible, an alternative approach would be to use one's experience as a starting point in understanding the world.

Sandra Harding takes this idea further in her writings about standpoint epistemology. According to Harding, all knowledge attempts are socially situated. She rejects the conventional idea that knowledge building should break free of their ties to local, historical interests, values, and agendas. On the contrary, she argues for the need to locate knowledge in history and to understand the different kinds of politics that influence the production of knowledge. According to her: "The most fruitful feminist problematics have emerged out of the gaps between the values and interests of women's lives and those that have organized the dominant conceptual frameworks" (Harding

S., 1996, p. 244). In other words, rather than denying that our values and experience could be influencing our research, we should make an effort to explain our starting point clearly and use our own experience to enrich the research with our unique perspective.

In the spirit of standpoint feminism, I recognize that my research is not and could not be value neutral. As a Western, middle-class, white, heterosexual woman, my views have been shaped by my background and identity. My perspective is also influenced by the fact that I have been involved in public discussions about climate change in Iceland for the past decade, first as an independent expert, for a short period as a civil servant in the Icelandic Ministry for the Environment, and later as the project leader of a climate project run by an environmental NGO. The starting point for my research is the normative position that climate change is a serious problem that we, as humans, should be responding to.

Although I would not categorize my research as action research, I recognize that my active engagement with the topic before and during the research process means there are some elements of action research integrated into my work. Action research refers to a type of research in which researchers are involved in the processes they are studying. The goal of most action research projects is to encourage social change by deepening the understanding of the specific topic under study, uncovering problems and identifying possible solutions (Berg, 2009). In Chapter 3, which deals with methodology, I discuss in greater depth how my personal position could have influenced my data collection and my interpretation of the data.

## 1.9 Dissertation Structure

The dissertation is divided into three parts, each part containing several chapters. The individual chapters are then divided into sections in an effort to help the reader to follow the arguments. The first part of the dissertation, entitled “Theory – Methods – Context” provides an overview of the existing knowledge base and the theoretical framing of the research. It also describes the methods used to collect and analyze data and ends with a chapter about the Arctic, which gives the necessary context for the case study discussed in the second part.

In Part II, the case study focuses on climate change and climate policy in Iceland. After a background chapter on Iceland, the next chapter is dedicated to climate impact and security threats, the next discusses past and present mitigation policies in Iceland, and the final chapter examines discourses related to oil and gas explorations off the coast of Iceland and how those discourses are linked (or not linked) to climate policy.

Part III, the final part of the dissertation, is called: “Discussions – Analysis – Concluding Remarks”. It provides more systematic discourse analysis, using the data from the case study. It also includes discussions in which I pick up threads from the case

study and weave them together with some observations from the theoretical chapter in Part I. The final chapter draws together the main conclusions and provides some condensed answers to the research questions posed in the beginning.

## 2. State of the Art and Theory

This chapter draws out the relationships among climate change, security, and gender, and provides a broad overview of the existing knowledge base in those intersecting fields. It discusses how climate change is perceived and responded to as a threat and points out the relevance of gender and feminism in this contexts. This chapter also presents the theoretical framework I use when addressing the research questions and analyzing the data.

### 2.1 Human-Induced Climate Change

Earth's climate is changing, and human activities are the driving force behind this change. According to the Fifth Assessment Report of the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), average global temperatures rose by 0.85°C between 1880 and 2012. The increase in temperature has resulted in more extreme weather and climate events. Beginning around 1950, for example, the frequency of heat waves has increased in large parts of Europe, Asia, and Australia, and the frequency or intensity of heavy precipitation events has increased in North America and Europe (IPCC, 2013). Temperature is expected to continue to rise in the coming decades, but the level of increase depends on future trends in global greenhouse gas emissions. Warming temperatures will impact the natural environment in a variety of ways, and changes in the natural environment will, in turn, have far-reaching consequences for human life on Earth.

Climate has changed throughout history due to natural factors. Current climate changes differ from those of the past, however, in that they can be blamed primarily on human activities; concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere is directly related to the average global temperature.

Greenhouse gases (GHG) occur naturally in the atmosphere. They are essential to the survival of life on Earth, because they prevent some of the sun's warmth from reflecting back to space. Without greenhouse gases, the planet would be a very cold place indeed. But a balance is necessary. Since the beginning of the industrial revolutions, human activities have been adding greenhouse gases to the atmosphere through the burning of fossil fuels (coal, oil, and gas), the clearing of forests, certain farming methods, and other activities. Thus, for the past 150 years, GHG emissions have been steadily increasing, leading to higher global average temperatures (UNFCCC, n.d.).

The complicated science behind climate change has been subject to rigorous debates (Giddens, 2011). Diving into these debates is far beyond the scope of this research and my academic background, which is rooted solidly in the social sciences. Therefore, I rely on scientific results from the IPCC – the most significant authority in climate science internationally. Although I recognize that many aspects of the science remain unresolved, a certain consensus has been reached. By now, the scientific community clearly accepts human-induced climate change as a crisis that needs to be faced.<sup>4</sup>

Climate change as a social problem is no less complex than the physical science behind it, however. Social scientists often refer to climate change as a “wicked problem”, in the meaning of complex, tricky or thorny. Wicked problems emerged as a term several decades ago in discussions of complicated social problems with no clear solution. Rittel & Webber (1973) were among those who first introduced the concept in their effort to confront conventional planning methods, claiming that technical approaches to planning and policy were too simplistic and narrow for the type of social problems they claim fall into the category of a wicked problem (as opposed to “tame” problems with straightforward solutions). A wicked problem, according to Rittel & Webber, cannot be easily described; nor does it have a simple and clear solution. Head (2008) identifies climate change as a prime example of a wicked problem in public policy. He gives several reasons, among which are the interplays among global, regional, national, and local impacts; the tensions between short-term and long-term impacts; the complications related to allocation of responsibility; and the patterns of burden sharing. Later writers have taken this analysis a step further, labeling climate change as a “super wicked problem”, emphasizing climate change as a problem in which time is running out, that those who cause the problem are the same people who are seeking solutions, and that the central authority needed to address the crisis (the international community) is weak. As a result, policy responses discount the future irrationally (Levin, Cashore, Bernstein, & Auld, 2012).

The discussion about climate change as a wicked problem clearly demonstrates that the climate crisis cannot be resolved using technological fixes. The problem is inherently political and needs to be addressed at that level. Thus, climate change has been as much a subject of international politics as it has been the topic of scientific debate. The issue first entered the scene of international politics when states of the world signed the UN Convention of Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1992. The treaty entered into force in 1994 and marked the beginning of a long and tedious process whereby parties meet to

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4 The scientific consensus is clear in the most recent IPCC summary for policy makers from Working Group I, which discusses the physical science basis. The report states that it is virtually certain that globally the troposphere has warmed since the mid-20th century. Furthermore, it is extremely likely that human influence has been the dominant cause for this change (IPCC, 2013). Earlier IPCC publications used weaker descriptives such as “very likely” or “likely”, but with time the uncertainty has been reduced.

discuss what could be done to reduce emissions and cope with temperature changes. A few years later, in 1997, the Kyoto Protocol was signed, with more powerful (and legally binding) measures than the UNFCCC had included (UNFCCC, n.d.). Negotiations about how to strengthen the climate regime further have been ongoing for several years although progress has been slower than many hoped for. A failed attempt for a new agreement in Copenhagen in 2009 set the process back, but finally, in December 2016, the Paris Agreement emerged.

The two key methods used to address challenges related to climate change are mitigation and adaptation. Mitigation aims at preventing or limiting change by implementing policies to reduce emissions. Adaptation refers to initiatives to reduce vulnerabilities of natural and human systems to current and projected changes. Earlier efforts focused almost exclusively on mitigation, but as time has passed, and attempts to reduce overall global emissions have failed, adaptation has received more attention. Although adaptation strategies can help us cope with changes, there are limits to this approach. The more rapidly global average temperatures increase, the more drastic changes will take place, making adaptation more difficult.

States that have signed and ratified the UNFCCC have committed themselves to preventing dangerous climate change. There has been some debate, however, about what exactly can constitute “safe” warming. The Alliance of Small Islands States (AOSIS)<sup>5</sup> claim, for example, that a warming beyond 1.5°C would be a serious threat to their survival, but for a long time the larger powers within UNFCCC were not ready to accept this low limit. Instead, they committed themselves to 2°C warming as a threshold, admitting that more warming could result in “dangerous” climate change. This issue was revisited in negotiations for the Paris Agreement, with the results that the main aim of the agreement is to keep the global temperature increase well below 2°C and drive efforts to limit temperature increases even further, to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels (UNFCCC, 2015).

Yet, in spite of this commitment, even if all states will fully implement their Paris pledges, the warming is still likely to reach 2.7°C (Climate Action Tracker, 2015). Earlier, before the Paris Agreement was reached, the World Bank had calculated that the pledges associated with the Copenhagen Accords would likely lead to a level of warming close to 4°C by 2100. If commitments to reduce greenhouse gases are not met, the warming may even exceed 4°C by that date (World Bank, 2012).

A report issued by the World Bank draws attention to this situation, outlining the range of risks the world would be facing should a 4°C warming become a reality. The report paints a pessimistic picture:

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5 AOSIS is a coalition of 44 small-island and low-lying coastal states that share similar challenges due to climate change. AOSIS functions primarily as a negotiation voice for small-island developing states within the UN system.

A world in which warming reaches 4°C above preindustrial levels..., would be one of unprecedented heat waves, severe drought, and major floods in many regions, with serious impacts on human systems, ecosystems, and associated services. (World Bank, 2012, pp. xiii-xiv)

The report highlights such issues as a dramatic increase in the intensity and frequency of high-temperature extremes, a sea level rise of 0.5 to 1.0 meters or more by 2100 (compared to around 20 cm sea level increase with a 2°C warming) and significant increase in water scarcity in many regions. In a world of 4°C warming, climate change would surpass habitat destruction as the greatest threat to biodiversity. Furthermore, ocean acidity could increase by 150 percent, a situation that would likely result in a serious degradation of marine ecosystems (World Bank, 2012).

These are but a few examples of the destructive impact that climate change could have in the future, should emissions continue to rise. The World Bank is not the first to draw attention to this bleak future. Scientists have published results on selected issues, and similar impact projections have been made in the assessments report of the IPCC, not to mention the countless warnings by environmental NGOs. The importance of the World Bank report, however, lies in the fact that it is published by a mainstream international organization, with considerable political clout. Thus, it clearly demonstrates that warnings of the disastrous consequences of climate change are coming not only from lone and marginalized scientists or alarmists, but are recognized by mainstream actors in the international system.

The fifth assessment report of the IPCC (2014) was published two years after the World Bank report, reaffirming the dangers posed by climate change. Although the IPCC assessment reports do not publish any new research results, the publications of the panel are highly significant, because they review all existing knowledge about current and projected climate change and gather it together in one place. The report stresses the high risks associated with a warming of 4°C or more, explaining how this could include severe and widespread impacts on unique and threatened systems, substantial species extinction and large risks to global and regional food security. The risk associated with crossing multiple tipping points (points that could lead to abrupt and irreversible change) also increases with rising temperature. An issue receiving increasing attention in recent years is ocean acidification, which poses substantial risks to marine ecosystems, especially polar ecosystems and coral reefs. Rapid acidification of the oceans can have detrimental consequences for fisheries and livelihoods associated with the fisheries sector (IPCC, 2014a).

As both the World Bank and the IPCC reports have noted, the distribution of climate change impacts is not even. The most serious consequences are likely to be in the Global South, where many of the world's poorest regions are located. Furthermore, the impact on humans will depend not only on the scale of natural changes in each place,

but also on the economic, institutional, scientific, and technical capacity of each state to cope and adapt. Thus, climate change will manifest differently in different regions in the world. Nevertheless, the impact will be felt worldwide, and it is highly unlikely that any region can escape every negative consequence.

Given these dangerous trends, one would assume that effective mitigation measures to slow the warming would be placed high on the political agenda in all states. Yet, this is not the case. Although almost all states of the world have ratified the UNFCCC and have formed their own climate policies, these efforts have not always translated into concrete action. And even when policies have been successfully implemented and have curbed emissions in certain sectors or individual states, the scale of the measures has not been large enough to counteract the global growth in emissions.

According to the IPCC, despite a growing number of climate policies aimed at reducing emissions, the annual global greenhouse gas emissions are growing at an accelerated rate. Although their average growth between 1970 and 2000 was 1.3 percent, they grew by 2.2 percent per between 2000 and 2010 (IPCC, 2014b). To put those numbers into perspective, it is useful to keep in mind the extent to which emissions need to be cut in order to stay within the 2°C limit. According to IPCC, global emissions need to be 40 percent to 70 percent lower in 2050 than they were in 2010, and by 2100 they need to be close to zero (IPCC, 2014b).

Although sources of greenhouse gas emissions are multiple and are derived from a range of human activities, the burning of fossil fuels is by far the largest contributing factor. In 2010, the energy sector accounted for more than two-thirds of total emissions. Yet, energy consumption continues to increase, led by fossil fuels, which in 2012 accounted for over 80 percent of global energy consumed. Contrary to expectations, given the scientific evidence about climate change, this percentage has been increasing gradually since the mid-1990s (International Energy Agency, 2013a). Global energy-related carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions reached a record high of 31.6 gigatonnes (Gt) in 2012 (International Energy Agency, 2013b).

With this information in mind, it seems clear that energy has a crucial role to play in tackling climate change. Reducing emissions from the burning of fossil fuels is crucial, yet the trend is going in the opposite direction. Duncan Clark, a journalist at *The Guardian*, pinpoints the dilemma:

We have far more oil, coal and gas than we can safely burn. For all the millions of words written about climate change, the challenge really comes down to this: fuel is enormously useful, massively valuable and hugely important geopolitically, but tackling global warming means leaving most of it in the ground – by choice. (Clark, 2013)

Yet this choice is proving to be an amazingly difficult step to take. The stakes are high, and although a reduction in emissions would benefit everyone, some powerful actors have high stakes invested in the current energy structures. In fact, governments seem to be going in the opposite direction, subsidizing the fossil fuel industry by billions of dollars every year. Despite political rhetoric about the importance of increasing the level of low carbon sources of energy, information from the International Energy Agency reveals that the fossil fuel industry is supported by subsidies that amounted to 523 billion USD in 2011, up by almost 30 percent from 2010. These subsidies are six times higher than subsidies to renewables (International Energy Agency, 2012). Whitley draws out the contradictions between government emission goals and their policies regarding fossil fuel subsidies:

If their aim is to avoid dangerous climate change, governments are shooting themselves in both feet. They are subsidizing the very activities that are pushing the world towards dangerous climate change, and creating barriers to investment in low-carbon development and subsidy incentives that encourage investment in carbon-intensive energy. (Whitley, 2013, p. v)

Given the enormous role that fossil fuels play in the climate equation, they will be in the spotlight in this dissertation, as I examine the obstacles that are hindering progress in the vitally important task of keeping the global temperature increase under the 2°C limit. A focus on the role that fossil fuels play in the climate problem is also fitting in the Arctic context, given that warming temperatures and the melting of the Arctic icecap are expected to make oil and gas resources in the Arctic region more accessible than they have been in the past.

## **2.2 Climate Change as a Security Issue**

As evident from the previous section, climate change poses a variety of threats to humans. Yet, defining climate change as a security issue is not as straightforward as one would expect. Security is a concept with multiple meanings, and, as discussed in this section, there is a lively debate among scholars about the definition of security and the types of issues that can constitute a security issue.

As for the climate, it is only in recent years that concern over climate change has impacted the notions of security in international relations. Vogler describes this process:

As the public becomes more sharply aware of the full magnitude of the climate problem, political discourse begins to securitize the environment, that is, to characterize the environment as a security problem. Because governments

usually prioritize security matters, people wishing to mobilize political attention and resources, and encourage potentially painful societal adaptation, will be tempted to stretch traditional definitions of security. (Vogler, 2008, pp. 365-366)

But what does this mean? Will different types of policy actions result from treating climate change as a security issue rather than a mere environmental and/or social issue? Does securitization imply a threat to national security and a danger of armed conflict? Who is the enemy in the fight against climate change? The answer to those questions rests on how we as a society define and understand security and the process of securitization.

In recent decades, there has been a clear trend toward a broader understanding of security. The traditional understanding of security relies on realist theories, whereby the political power of states is considered the main driving force in international relations. Realist theories assume that states are power-seeking entities with a principle goal of gaining and maintaining power over territories and resources. In this context, it is the sovereignty of the state that defines its existence as a state. The state must remain sovereign in order to exist as a state and security practices therefore focus on ensuring the survival of the state. For realists, then, security is mostly about the way states can protect their territories from external threats, most often by using military force (Sheperd, 2013a).

An example of such a narrow, state-centric view of security is presented in Walt's much-cited article, in which he argues that security studies are about war and can be defined as "the study of the threat, use and control of the military force". He warns against widening the security agenda outside the military domain, claiming that defining the field in that way would "destroy its intellectual coherence and make it more difficult to devise solutions to any of these important problems" (Walt, 1991, pp. 212-213).

In spite of this resistance, the trend has been toward the broadening of the security concept. The state-centric, militarized view of security might have been relevant during the Cold War, but in today's globalized world its application is rather limited. Not only have a number of new global issues emerged on the scene, but states can no longer claim to be the only relevant actors in international relations, as they have to share the stage with such other influential actors as transnational corporations, international non-governmental organizations, and other transnational actors.

The Copenhagen School of Security Studies has made a systematic attempt to widen the security concept without losing coherence, by examining the process of securitization. The pioneers of this school of thought have laid out their arguments in a book entitled *Security: A new Framework for Analysis* (Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde, 1998). They argue for a wider conceptualization of security than the traditionalist position that security must relate to military threats. This does not mean they would categorize

any threat or problem as a security issue. Rather they propose that for threats to be categorized as a security issue, “[t]hey have to be stated as existential threats to a referent object by a securitizing actor who thereby generates endorsement of emergency measures beyond rules that would otherwise bind” (Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde, 1998, p. 5).

In other words, security is partly an act of speech; something is designated as an international security issue because it can be argued that this issue is more significant than other issues and that it should take absolute priority. Thus, an issue can become a security issue, not necessarily because a real existential threat exists, but because the issue is presented and perceived as threat. In response, emergency measures are discussed and justified.

Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde reject the idea of security being restricted to the military sector, arguing that a wide range of issues can emerge as security issues through the process of securitization. In their book, they divide security issues thematically into issues that belong to the military, environmental, economic, societal, or political sector.

The emergence of environmental degradation as a security issue is of particular interest for the purposes of this dissertation. Although concerns about the vulnerability of humans to environmental degradation were growing in the 1980s, spurred by events like the Exxon Valdez oil spill and the Chernobyl disaster, debates about whether and how environmental degradation should be linked to security emerged only in the early 1990s (Haldén, 2011). One example is Mathew’s 1989 article in the US foreign policy journal, *Foreign Affairs*. “The 1990s will demand a redefinition of what constitutes national security,” she wrote in a call for greater attention to be given to environmental and resources issues (Mathew, 1989). As Barnett (2001) points out, the article was clearly aimed at influencing policy makers by elevating environmental concerns to the level of security issues. In other words, environmental problems were securitized, in hopes that this would elevate them higher on political agenda.

Discourses on environmental security can be divided into two main camps. One focuses on the linkages among environmental degradation, violent conflicts, and national security; the other is concerned with exploring environmental security in the context of human security, in which the degradation of the environment poses a variety of threats – not necessarily involving open violence – to the daily lives of peoples around the world.

The first discourse, linking environmental issues to the traditional understanding of national security, is concerned with the potential for humans to engage in violent conflicts over resources, which, in turn, threatens the security of the state. Although much has been written about the potential relationship between environmental degradation and violent conflict, the research has failed to establish a clear relationship between the two and seems to be theoretically driven rather than based on empirical evidence (Haldén, 2011). Others are doubtful about this approach and argue against linking environmental degradation and national security. Deudney (1990) is an often-

cited example. In his view, security is first and foremost related to violence, and most of the causes and cures of environmental degradation are likely to be found outside the domain of the traditional national security system related to violence.

The proponents of the second environmental discourse do not necessarily disagree with Deudney about the point that the traditional national security system is not well equipped to deal with environmental degradation. Barnett (2001) agrees that as long as national security continues to be the domain of the military, national security logic will be incapable of grasping environmental issues and dealing with them effectively. This is not, however, the point that most writers who link environmental issues to security are actually aiming at. Most of them are also calling for a redefinition of the security concept and are critical of the realistic understanding of security, with its narrow focus on military security and its assumption that the military is the most relevant actor (Barnett, 2001).

As a better alternative for treating the environment as a sub-theme of traditional national security, Barnett proposes the following definition of environmental security:

The process of peacefully reducing human vulnerability to human-induced environmental degradation by addressing the root causes of environmental degradation and human insecurity. (Barnett, 2001, p. 129)

This definition implies that rather than linking environmental degradation directly to national security, it should be viewed as one dimension of human security. When environmental security is nested in the human security framework, it shifts the emphasis from national security and the armed protection of territories toward a focus on the security of individuals and sustainable human development. More recent literature establishes a clear relationship between climate change and human security. O'Brian, St. Clair & Kristoffersen (2010), for example, emphasize that climate change is not simply an environmental issue that can be managed through behavioral changes, sectoral interventions, or new regulations. Rather, it should be viewed as a problem that can be resolved only by focusing on climate change as a human security issue. Such an approach includes a thorough examination of what it means for humans to be "secure". It also moves the focus away from the more traditional, technical, problem-solving approaches toward a framing that recognizes the capacity of individuals and communities to respond to and create change and shape their own futures.

The human security concept emerged from policy circles rather than from academia, although scholars who had been critical of the traditional meaning of security undoubtedly facilitated the process. States like Canada and Norway were at the forefront, but the most influential publication in putting human security on the agenda is a UNDP report from 1994 that argues for a shift in focus from the armed security of territories to people's security through sustainable development (UNDP, 1994). The

UNDP groups threats to human security into seven categories: economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security.

This new approach was welcomed by, among others, environmentalists, human rights advocates, and people working in the development field, all of whom considered the more traditional security approach to be outdated. Þórarinsdóttir, for example, embraces the concept as important in giving voice to the powerless:

The human security approach is not only a matter of shifting the focus from the state to the people. Even more revolutionary, human security gives voice to the marginalized and powerless in the discourse about security and places it within the bigger framework of sustainable development. (Þórarinsdóttir, 2009)

Skepticism about the usefulness of this concept has also surfaced. Paris asks if human security really represents a paradigm shift or is simply a concept filled with hot air. According to Paris, human security is a great deal like sustainable development:

...everyone is for it, but few people have a clear idea of what it means. Existing definitions of human security tend to be extraordinarily expansive and vague, encompassing everything from physical security to psychological well-being, which provides policymakers with little guidance in the prioritization of competing policy goals and academics little sense of what, exactly, is to be studied. (Paris, 2001, p. 88)

Although this criticism merits some attention, the danger of oversimplification is more worrying. We live in an increasingly interconnected and complex world, and relying on assumptions about security that are too simplistic is not only naive, but runs the risk of states using outdated military measures to protect themselves against security risks that are fundamentally different from the threats of the past. This realization has been the driving force behind the many initiatives related to the broadening of the security concept. In this respect, the human security perspective is only one of several propositions about ways of viewing security through a different lens. Heininen (2014), for example, discusses the concept of “comprehensive security” as an even wider concept that embraces both the traditional ideas of security and the environmental and human aspects of security. In this context, he emphasizes the need to examine the many aspects of security related to threats or risks and the people and locations they affect: individuals, communities, regions, or countries. Whereas a risk is something that is possible to quantify, rank, and measure, a threat is a more subjective term, often related to fears that may or may not be based on some actual risks.

### *The Securitization of Climate Change*

The debate on environmental security has been revitalized in recent years due to the increasing spotlight on climate change as a security issue. In the 1990s, climate change was discussed as part of the environmental security discourse, but it emerged as a separate issue at the beginning of the 21st century (Haldén, 2011). During the securitization process, a similar tension surfaced, as was present in the earlier debates on environmental security, wherein some scholars and policy makers immediately connected climate change with future conflicts, while others emphasized the human security dimension.

A turning point in the securitization process of climate change occurred in 2007 when the IPCC published its fourth assessment report, repeating its earlier message about human-induced climate change with much greater scientific certainty than before (IPCC, 2007). This was also the year when Al Gore and the IPCC were awarded the Noble Peace Prize for bringing attention to the danger of climate change, and the UN Security Council held its first debate about the impact of climate change on peace and security. The Chair of the Council, Margaret Beckett, the British Foreign Secretary at the time, was clear in her assertion that climate change is a security issue, but not a matter of narrow national security. Rather, it was about collective security in an increasingly interdependent world: “Climate change can bring us together, if we have the wisdom to prevent it from driving us apart”, she declared (Security Council, 2007).

In 2007, studies that addressed climate change as a security issue also increased in number. Brzoska (2009) examines four recent studies that pose climate change as a problem for security. He observes that in all four studies climate change is seen as great danger for international peace and security in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and that the authors expect major consequences for human security in several areas of the world. Among the many potential security threats identified are an increase in the number of violent conflicts, leading to inter-state wars; military interventions in poor countries by armed forces of Western states (to prevent humanitarian catastrophes and destabilization of states); massive migration; new safe havens for terrorists; and conflicts over changing coast lines and resource exploitation in the Arctic.

The tension between the traditional understanding of security and the more recent ideas about security as a broader concept are evident in Brzoska’s analysis of the four studies. He is critical of the studies, arguing that the framing of climate change as a security issue is based not on well-founded analysis, but largely on ad hoc theories on the relationship between environmental degradation and violent conflict. He notes that although all four studies recognize climate change as a security threat, different conceptualizations of security lead to different types of recommendations on dealing with the consequences of climate change as they relate to peace and security. “Traditional security conceptions are still around, but they

have lost their monopoly status, both in discourse and in practice. They have been supplemented and – at least in rhetoric and non-governmental circles – replaced by wider conceptions of security,” he says (Brzoska, 2009, p. 144).

In spite of this widening of the security concept, Brzoska warns that the securitization of climate change may push the climate-change discourse toward the use of traditional security instruments. This is clearly not the aim of the writer of these reports, however. The authors of a study by the German Advisory Council, which is the most detailed and comprehensive of the four studies, state as their core message:

...without resolute counteraction, climate change will overstretch many societies' adaptive capacities within the coming decades. This could result in destabilization and violence, jeopardizing national and international security to a new degree. However, climate change could also unite the international community, provided that it recognizes climate change as a threat to humankind and soon sets the course for the avoidance of dangerous anthropogenic climate change by adopting a dynamic and globally coordinated climate policy. If it fails to do so, climate change will draw ever-deeper lines of division and conflict in international relations, triggering numerous conflicts between and within countries over the distribution of resources, especially water and land, over the management of migration, or over compensation payments between the countries mainly responsible for climate change and those countries most affected by its destructive effects. (German Advisory Council on Global Change, 2008, p. 1)

In other words, the study emphasizes the importance of recognizing climate change as a threat to security, in order to avoid militarization and violent conflict occurring as a reaction to those threats. By acknowledging climate change as a threat to humankind, the international community is more likely to strengthen the political processes necessary to prevent the crisis.

This analysis highlights the importance of challenging the traditional, state-centric view of security. As O'Brien et al. (2010) suggest, the people-oriented approach to human security may be a more appropriate framework for analyzing threats posed by climate change. By employing a human-security perspective, the focus also moves from the global to the local, providing a fruitful framework for exploring the relationship between human security and the socio-economic impact of climate change. The focus is not so much on the fear that climate change will increase the risks of violent conflicts, but rather on the way environmental changes will influence the security of common people in their everyday lives. An important feature of this approach is the opportunity to analyze security threats as they apply to subgroups of society – to move the focus to the way such factors as gender, race, class, and social status influence how people

are affected by climate change. This makes it possible to explore questions related to whether the risks differ for men and women, if the poor are in greater danger than the rich, or if people in certain geographical areas more threatened than others are. By identifying vulnerable groups, policy interventions can be better targeted and are more likely to address the real security needs of people at risk.

Although some feminist scholars have been critical of the human security agenda (Natasha, 2013), this approach is more appealing to feminist researchers than the traditional security concept is. Feminist scholars studying security have generally sought to emphasize marginal groups and give voice to the powerless, using gender as an analytical tool.

Before exploring in greater depth feminist writings about the relationships among gender, security, and the environment, a discussion about some key concepts of feminist analysis is useful. What does it entail to view a topic through a feminist lens?

### **2.3 Key Feminist Concepts as Analytical Tools**

In this section, some key concepts used for analysis, including gender, masculinity, and femininity, are defined and discussed. I also introduce the idea of masculine and feminine values and discuss the relevance of these different types of values in policy making, especially in the context of social constructivism theories in IR, wherein the importance of norms, values, and ideas is highlighted.

When feminism as a discipline entered the academic scene, the attention of most feminist scholars was on patriarchal discourses that were either hostile about women or remained completely silent on the topic. As Gross notes, feminists were preoccupied with the inclusion of women in spheres from which they had been excluded. Instead of being ignored from theory, women were to be included as possible objects of investigation, and issues of direct relevance to women's lives were to be included as a relevant and worthy object of intellectual concern (Gross, 1987). Broadening dominant discourses to include women was not always possible, however, and more and more feminist academics began to question the basic assumptions underlying methodology and theories. "The whole social, political, scientific and metaphysical underpinning of patriarchal theoretical systems needed to be shaken up," Gross states (1987, p. 357).

As part of this development, feminists concern themselves not only with women and what have traditionally been considered "women's issues", but also with such topics as theories and systems of representation. In her article about feminism as an academic discipline, Einarsdóttir explains how gender studies is an interdisciplinary field that addresses not only men, women, and gender relations, but also the symbolic representation of gender in language and culture. Gender and related concepts are used

as analytical tools to examine power relations and the way some issues are prioritized over others. Gender relations are put in a larger context than has been the case, and the role they play in the interpretative frameworks we use to understand the world is examined (Einaradóttir, 2004).

This study falls into Einaradóttir's last category, using a feminist lens to explore climate-related discourses and to examine the degree to which those discourses and related policy decisions are influenced by dominant patriarchal paradigms. It relies on analytical concepts like gender and descriptive adjectives like feminine and masculine to reveal power relations within public discourses.

I consider gender to be a socially constructed concept, the meaning of which varies across cultures and time. As Joan Wallach Scott explains, her definition of gender rests on two core propositions: "Gender is a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes, and gender is a primary way of signifying relationships of power" (Scott, 1988, p. 42). It follows from this definition that gender is a social organization of sexual differences. This does not mean that gender reflects biological differences between the sexes. Rather, gender is a socially constructed term that establishes different roles for men and women in society based on their bodily differences. I share with Scott the curiosity to understand how hierarchies such as those of gender are constructed or legitimized. Underlying this curiosity is the belief that if gender is a socially constructed phenomenon, it can be deconstructed and reconstructed in a different form. New norms can emerge and become legitimized, leading to a different understanding of gender and gender relations.

Although all feminist theorists agree that gender matters, not all of them understand the concept in the same way. Shepherd claims that theories of gender can be broadly grouped into three categories: essentialist, constructivist, and post-structuralist. These three approaches offer different explanations for the relationship between the body and behavior (Shepherd, 2013b). Essentialists assume the most direct relationship between body and behavior: women are more likely to be nurturing, attached, and emotionally attuned because of their biological features, and men's biological features make them more likely to be assertive, calculative, and rational. In other words, sex equals gender, because gender roles are based on biology rather than on social construction. Constructivists, however, see a clear separation between sex and gender. Whereas sex is biological, gender is socially constructed. The concepts of "feminine" and "masculine" emerge from constructivist theories, linking certain types of behavior to socially constructed gender roles. Post-structuralist theorists of gender take the social construction of certain concepts a step further, challenging the assumption that bodily differences exist in reality between the sexes. In other words, sexual differences are also socially produced, resulting in little difference between the two concepts of sex and gender. Whereas essentialists collapse gender into sex as categories of analysis, post-structuralists do the reverse and collapse sex into gender (Shepherd, 2013b).

As previously stated, the analysis in this dissertation relies on the constructivist approach, assuming that although certain biological differences exist between the two sexes, this difference is not sufficient to explain the different cultural roles assigned to men and women in most societies, and the associated characteristics defined as feminine or masculine. Although I label values as either feminine or masculine, this does not mean that I consider only women as able to hold feminine values and only men to prefer masculine values. Rather, values are categorized as feminine and masculine depending on their association with the traditional gender roles in modern Western cultures.

The idea that femininity has been historically placed in a subordinated position relative to masculinity is closely linked to the concept of hegemonic masculinity. Connell invented the term “hegemonic masculinity” to explain how one type of masculinity can occupy the hegemonic position in a pattern of gender relations. She defines hegemonic masculinity as “...the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women” (Connell, 1995, p. 77). According to Connell, hegemonic masculinity is sustained through its opposition to various less-valued masculinities (e.g. homosexual males) and through its relationship to various devalued feminine qualities, creating unequal power relations among various groups of men and between men and women.

The normative starting point is that dualism, wherein femininity and masculinity are constructed as opposite but not equally valid concepts, results in a world in which the feminine is repressed, exploited or given limited space in certain spheres of society. Moving beyond this dualistic view of the world toward a more integrated and holistic approach offers hopes that other ideas can gain ground, not only ideas about gender and gender relations, but also about other socially constituted relations, including the relationship between humans and nature. For this to happen, more balance is needed in public policy between masculine and feminine values.

It is useful in this context, to clarify what I mean by masculine and feminine values. First, although I label values as either feminine or masculine, this does not mean that I consider only women to prefer and being able to hold feminine values and only men to prefer and be able to masculine values. Rather, values are categorized as feminine and masculine depending on their association with the traditional gender roles in modern Western cultures. Second, when I refer to masculine or feminine values, I am in most cases referring to the more positive traits associated with each gender. On the masculine side this could include characteristics such as bravery, autonomy, logical thinking, initiative, and ambition. Corresponding positive feminine traits could include compassion, the ability to cultivate relationships, intuition, receptivity and cooperativeness. I do not claim that one set of values is better than the other, but rather that they are complementary and that we need both types of values for balanced decision-making. Unfortunately, however, this type of balance has rarely existed. Although femininity and

masculinity have been constructed as opposite concepts, they have not been treated as equally valid in public policy. Masculine values have ruled in the public sphere, whereas feminine values have been considered more relevant in private settings.

But how could more space for the feminine transform our ideas about the relationship between humans and nature? Studies exist that relate certain types of values with environmentally friendly behavior. One relevant study was published in a paper by Corner, Markowitz & Pidgeon (2014), wherein they examine the role of values in the public engagement with climate change. Their core argument, supported by a number of research results, is that people who endorse self-transcendent values and who exhibit high levels of altruism are more likely than those holding more self-enhancement values to engage in sustainable behavior, show higher concern about environmental risks, perform environmentally friendly actions such as recycling, and engage positively with climate change. In fact, the more likely people are to endorse hierarchical and individualistic worldviews, the more likely they are to downplay environmental risks.

Although Corner, Markowitz & Pidgeon do not label values as feminine or masculine, the cluster of values associated more strongly with environmental awareness and concern for climate change has some clear resemblance to feminine characteristics, whereas the other cluster of values, belonging to those more likely to downplay environmental risks, can easily be linked to masculinity. Hence, one can logically draw the conclusion that greater emphasis on feminine values in public discourses is likely to produce more environmentally friendly policies.

Although feminine and masculine values are not necessarily tied to gender, socialization generally results in women and men identifying with the dominant gender roles in their societies. In Western cultures, for example, boys often learn that masculinity means being competitive, independent, and unemotional, whereas girls learn that femininity means being compassionate, cooperative, and empathic (McCright A. M., 2010). It comes as no surprise, then, that in most studies on the topic, women tend to be more likely to engage in environmentally friendly behavior than men do (Salehi, Pazuki, Mahmoudi, & Knierim, 2015). This is one of the reasons why gender balance in policy making is one factor (but not the only factor) that could contribute to greater balance between feminine and masculine values in public policy.

Once again, the discussion needs to be understood in the context of social constructivism. One of the key elements of constructivism is the belief that our social reality is largely socially constructed, which also means that this same reality can be reconstructed and reshaped. A person with the mindset of a constructivist, therefore, includes in his or her worldview the possibility for positive social changes, especially if space is allowed for new ideas to gain ground.

Constructivist theories of gender rely on the same basic assumptions as constructivist theories within IR do, in that they emphasize the importance of ideas and focus on the social process of the emergence and legitimization of norms. IR theories in this

category also include the discussion of the relationship between structure and agency, the proponents of which claim that although the structure of the international system influences state behavior, this does not mean that states have no agency to influence social structures. In his article, “Anarchy is what states make of it”, Alexander Wendt points out that state interests are not static: “State identities and interests can be collectively transformed within an anarchic context by many factors – individual, domestic, systemic, or transnationals – and as such are an important dependent variable,” (Wendt, 1992, p. 424).

Constructivists within IR reject the idea that the world can be described as an objective reality. Instead, they argue that international politics is a world of our making, and they emphasize the process of interaction. Actors make choices in the process of interacting with others, resulting in distinct historical, cultural, and political realities. In this respect, international relations are socially constructed, rather than existing independently of human meaning and action (Fierke, 2010).

## 2.4 Gender, Security, Economy, and the Environment

As indicated previously, few topics are off limits for feminist scholars. Thus, exploring the role of gender in international politics and the relationships between gender and different sectors of society are already familiar topics within feminist theory. This section examines how feminist scholars have challenged dominant theories within the various disciplines most relevant for this study. Of special interest are three relationships: between gender and security, between gender and political economy and between gender and environment. A fourth component that is also of relevance is the work of feminist scholars who have developed the concept of the ethics of care as an alternative to dominant moral theories focusing on rights and justice. This prior work forms an important knowledge base that I use as a foundation for my analysis in later chapters, in which I focus on the role of values and dominant ideologies in public discourses about climate change and the actions and policy decisions that derive from those discourses.

### *Gender and Security*

Few subject areas within international relations have been as clearly labeled “masculine” as has the field of security studies. As elaborated upon in Section 2.2, security has traditionally been associated with state survival, including competitions between states and a focus on the military capabilities of a state to defend its territory. In her landmark book, *Gender in International Relations*, Ann Tickner argues that because men have largely conducted foreign and military policy, the discipline that analyzes these activities is bound to be primarily about men and masculinity. “We seldom realize we think in these terms,” she writes, “however; in most fields of knowledge we have become

accustomed to equating what is human with what is masculine” (Tickner, 1992, p. 5).

Tickner emphasizes the need for feminist theories to go beyond the injection of women’s experiences into various disciplines. There is a great need to challenge the core concepts of the disciplines. She takes such central concepts within IR as power, sovereignty, and security as examples of concepts that have been framed in terms that we associate with masculinity. Her analyses reveal how in realism, the most dominant school of thought within IR, the ideal of the glorified male warrior has been projected onto the behavior of states. Throughout history, characteristics associated with masculinity, such as toughness, courage, power, independence, and even physical strength, have been those most valued in international politics. This glorification of the male warrior celebrates only one type of masculinity, but places other types of masculinity into a subordinate position, which fits well with Connell’s concept of hegemonic masculinity, mentioned previously. Tickner claims that in international politics, the characteristics associated with hegemonic masculinity are projected onto the behavior of states, for which success as international actors is measured in terms of their power capabilities and capacity for self-help and autonomy (Tickner, 1992).

To support her arguments, Tickner examines texts of several male writers who have been important actors in shaping theory in international relations. Morgenthau is one example of such a realist scholar, but in his influential book, *Politics among Nations*, he constructs a world almost entirely without women. He states that individuals are engaged in power struggles in all their interactions because the tendency to dominate exists at all levels of human life (Morgenthau, 1973). Tickner notes that because women have rarely occupied positions of power, Morgenthau’s arguments about domination refer primarily to men, albeit not all men. Thus, she concludes that his “political man” is a social construct based on partial representation of human nature, drawn from the behavior of elite men in positions of public power (Tickner, 1992).

But how does this gendered construction of the state and the international system influence our ideas about security? According to Tickner, it leads to security discourses that privilege conflict and war and silence other ways of thinking about security. She argues that by privileging masculine values over feminine values, the options available to states and their policy makers to tackle the global challenges of the present are seriously constrained. Because knowledge about the behavior of states and the international systems depend almost entirely on assumptions derived from men’s experiences, a large part of the human experience is ignored, limiting our ability to devise innovative and transformative solutions to problems.

Tickner’s analysis was published more than two decades ago, and since then several feminist scholars have used her work as a starting point, expanding on certain components of her work in books of their own. Hooper (2001), for example, turns the question around in *Manly States*, by exploring not how masculinity shapes international relations, but how international relations shape masculinity. And in *Gender, Violence*

& *Security*, Shepherd (2007) investigates UN Security Council Resolution 1325, addressing gender issues in conflict areas. Detraz (2012) also writes about international security through a gendered lens, in *International Security and Gender*. And Tickner herself has written a follow-up book, wherein she extends some of her arguments and recognizes the growing work of feminist scholars in her field (Tickner, 2001). In spite of this more recent scholarship, Tickner's analysis of how masculinity and masculine values have shaped international relations is still highly relevant, and it ended up being the material I found most useful as a critique of dominant IR theories, to be used as a general framework for the analysis presented later in the thesis, where I discuss the Icelandic case study.

But even before Tickner's 1992 book and long before the human-security agenda emerged, feminist scholars had been critical of the traditional state-centric view of security and the absence of women and the daily lives of ordinary people from security discourses. Enloe, for example, asks the question: "Where are the women?" From this simple question, she demonstrates that, although invisible in international politics, women's daily lives are indeed relevant, and women have played important roles in matters related to war, peace, and security, whether as diplomatic wives, secretaries, or prostitutes. By taking all women's lives seriously, Enloe claims, important new insights can be discovered (Enloe, 1990).

One important contribution of feminist scholars to an understanding of security is their analysis of the way structural violence can threaten the security of individuals and groups. Peace researcher Johan Galtung first introduced the concept of "structural violence" as a term to describe social injustice. He used the concept to explain how systems created by societies can discriminate, often unintentionally, against individuals in certain groups (Galtung, 1969). Feminists have developed this concept further to explain the exploitation of women under the patriarchal system and have pointed at the various dangers posed to certain groups in society, even if national security is not threatened (Shepherd, 2007; Detraz, 2012).

This criticism by feminist scholars of the narrow definition of security did not reach the mainstream discourse in security studies, however. Thus, the status of human security as a notion accepted by many mainstream policy actors as an alternative to the more traditional state-centric view of security creates an important gateway for feminist analysis to enter into debates about security. It should also be noted that although feminist insights were usually not recognized in mainstream security discourses, their analyses made an important contribution to the emergence of the human security agenda. Þórarinsdóttir points to three ways in which feminism influenced the human security agenda. First, the writings of feminist scholars on security issues helped create fertile soil for the new concept. Second, women activist organizations had prepared the ground by drawing attention to gender-based violence in conflicts. Third, it can be argued that the increasing number of women in positions of power, both in national

governments and within international institutions, helped pave the way for new ideas to emerge and gain acceptance (Þórarinsdóttir, 2009).

In spite of feminist contributions to the development of the human security concept, some feminists have been critical of the approach, claiming that there is a lack of gender sensitivity in the “human” part of human security (Natasha, 2013). Other feminist writers have argued that instead of abandoning the concept, gender theory should be incorporated into further development of the human security perspective. Hoogensen and Stuvøy argue that top-down articulations of security concepts often do not address the security needs of those “below” – on lower rungs of the hierarchy. They suggest that a gender approach to human security not only gives the concept more credibility and substance, but also makes it possible to be more reflective of security concerns that originate from the “bottom up”. Because gender analyses point toward relationships of power, they provide a useful framework for examining structural relations that often go unrecognized – namely relations of dominance and non-dominance (Hoogensen & Stuvøy, 2006).

In her book, *Feminist Security Studies*, Wibben also argues that feminists have played an important role in proposing alternative conceptions of power and violence that go beyond the more traditional notions of military security – including ideas of common and cooperative security arrangements and the role of non-state actors. Wibben uses a feminist narrative approach to explore the security concept. By telling security narratives from the ground up and by adopting a bottom-up approach to security, the attention is aimed at the way security policies influence the everyday lives of people (Wibben, 2011).

The broadening of the security concept, the increasing emphasis on human security, and the focus on exploring how people experience security in their everyday lives indicate a shift, giving feminine values increased space in security discourses. One of the objectives of this thesis is to examine whether or not this shift is manifesting in climate discourse and climate-related policy decisions, focusing specifically on Iceland as an Arctic state known for its high awareness on gender issues.

### *Gender and Political Economy*

Whereas realism has been the ruling theory in academic and policy circles dealing with security, liberalism is the dominant ideology within the field of international political economy. In contrast to realists, who emphasize competition and power struggles, liberals are advocates of free trade and cooperation between and among states that will maximize benefits. According to liberals, human beings are driven by rational self-interest. The rational economic man is offered in contrast to Morgenthau’s political man. Tickner argues that in spite of this difference, masculine values also underpin liberal theories. In fact, the rational economic man has many similarities to the political man, although his aggressive passions have been tamed by the rational pursuit of

profit. Women are still absent from the picture, and feminine values related to caring, nurture and service, all of which are crucial for the reproduction and survival of the younger generation, are nowhere to be found in liberalism (Tickner, 1992).

Liberalism – particularly neo-liberalism – has close ideological ties with classical economic theory, sharing assumptions about rationality and self-interest as key motivators for the way actors in a system (states or individuals) behave. Similar to feminist scholars within IR, feminist economists have questioned some of the basic assumptions and values that underpin current economic practice. Nelson, for example, claims that various perspectives on subjects, models, methods, and pedagogy within the discipline of economics have been mistakenly perceived as value free and impartial, when, in fact, those perspectives are strongly gendered, prioritizing masculine values: “Traditionally, male activities have taken center stage as subject matter, while models and methods have reflected a historically and psychologically masculine pattern of valuing autonomy and detachment over dependence and connection” (Nelson, 1995, p. 132).

The rational, autonomous, self-interested individual is placed at the center of mainstream economic models. These individuals have no childhood or old age, are dependent on no one, and are responsible only for themselves. The economic models, however, capture only a small piece of reality as most people experience it. All humans need caring and nurturing at some point in their lives, as a child, when sick or as an elderly person.

Mellor (1995) is on similar wavelength as Nelson, arguing that the social construction of the “economic man” is the basis of the economic system that prioritizes what men value and do and undervalues what women value and do. In this system, based on the economic models that rest on the hierarchical dualism so influential in Western society, both women and the natural world are treated as externalities. Mellor claims that this approach will not work in the long run, as the current capitalistic market system is both socially and ecologically unsustainable. She puts her faith in the alternative feminist perspectives, which, she claims, are beginning to emerge.

One such alternative is Nelson’s vision of an economic system that embraces a holistic view of the human being. Nelson does not argue for an alternative in which a masculine bias is replaced by a feminine one. Rather, she suggests a different way: to separate our judgments about values (superior/inferior) from our perceptions of gender (masculine/feminine). According to her, human behavior can encompass both: autonomy and dependence, individuation and relation, reason and emotion. Those qualities can manifest in economic behavior of individuals of either sex (Nelson, 1995).

Nelson takes her analysis further in *Economics for Humans*, in which she suggests that the metaphor, first proposed by Adam Smith, of “the economy as a machine” is replaced by a new metaphor: The market as a beating heart. A healthy beating heart circulates blood to all parts of the social body, while also serving as the center of compassion and care (Nelson, 2006).

Although Nelson is critical of the traditional understanding of the economy, she rejects the rhetoric of anti-market groups that claim that markets, corporations, and capitalism are always fueled by the self-interest of those in power. In her view, the critics are starting from the same basic assumptions as classical economic theorists, by viewing the market as a machine, unable to consider moral values. Instead, she argues for an approach in which economic principles and ethical issues are integrated.

Because the economy is not a machine, both the pro-business and anti-market advocates have only a partial picture. By respecting the good things that each side values but dropping the idea that these good things are automatically either provided or destroyed by the market, we gain a better understanding of the relationship between economics and ethics. Table 1 presents Nelson’s vision; in it the metaphor of the beating heart is emphasized by listing the positive features of economic (pro-business) and ethical (anti-market) perspectives.

**Table 1: The Market as a Beating Heart**

Recreated from *Economics for Humans* (Nelson, 2006, p. 55)

	Economics (pro-business advocates)	Ethics (anti-market critics)
Positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Production of goods and services that support survival and flourishing</li> <li>• Creation of employment opportunities</li> <li>• Self-support and financial self-responsibility</li> <li>• Opportunities for creativity, innovation, and growth in the enjoyment of life</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aesthetic, moral, and spiritual development</li> <li>• The creation of emotionally healthy, mutually respectful relations among people</li> <li>• Care and concern for the weak and needy</li> <li>• Ecological balance and sustainability</li> </ul>
Negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An exclusive focus on short-term profit</li> <li>• Creation of boss/worker relations of oppression and alienation</li> <li>• Greed and selfishness</li> <li>• A fixation on growth and runaway consumerism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passivity about provisioning of goods and services</li> <li>• Otherworldliness, with little attention to practical needs or constraints</li> <li>• Financial non-responsibility, leading to dependency</li> <li>• Fear of money and power</li> </ul>

Although coming from a completely different background of natural sciences and environmentalism, David Suzuki arrives at the same conclusion as Nelson, rejecting the view that markets are controlled by forces that humans are unable to influence. In *The Legacy*, he writes about his vision for a sustainable future, stating: “Capitalism, free enterprise, the economy, markets, corporations, and currency are not natural elements or forces of nature. [...]. We created them and if they are not working, we can change them” (Suzuki, 2010, p. 39).

But will viewing the economy as a beating heart rather than a machine change economic behavior? Nelson celebrates the work already accomplished by a number of people who are concerned with creating and preserving a healthy, vital economic life. The problem, according to her, is that neither the pro-business nor the anti-market camp is taking this work seriously. On one hand are the conservative economists who strongly believe that the market works fine without any ethical considerations – a view that is well captured in Milton Friedman’s famous essay, “The social responsibility of business is to create profit” (Friedman, 1970). On the other hand the anti-market advocates view corporate social responsibility as a contradiction, assuming that efforts by large corporations to show that ethical behavior can never be anything other than shallow public relations schemes. The strong image created by the metaphor of the economy as a machine is blocking dialogue and useful action. By deconstructing the metaphor and replacing it with another, Nelson argues that terms like “business ethics” and “the economics of care” seem less like oxymorons. On the contrary, a metaphor of the economy as a beating heart calls for an economic life that is caring and responsible (Nelson, 2006).

Nelson’s metaphor of the economy as a beating heart is an interesting attempt to create space for feminine values within economics. An increasing emphasis on social responsibility within the business sector provides an opportunity to explore whether a real value shift is occurring or if the shift is mainly rhetoric, useful for public relations, as claimed by the anti-market camp. The relevance of these trends for this study becomes obvious given the tension with which most societies struggle between the need to reduce greenhouse gas emission and the pressure to continue exploiting nature for short-term economic profit.

### *Gender and the Environment*

Although the literature on gender and climate change is growing, it is only in recent years that feminists have paid attention to climate change. Writings about relationships between gender and the environment, however, can be traced back much further in time.

One often-cited source in this context is Ortner’s “Is female to male as nature is to culture? In the article she grapples with the question of why, in spite of cultural differences, the secondary status of women seems universal. Her argument is that women tend to be assumed, over and over again, to be closer to nature than men are. For reasons that seem to relate to women’s reproductive roles, they are identified with something that every culture defines as being of a lower order of existence than itself – namely “nature”. Culture is linked to human consciousness and how humanity tries to control nature. What follows, Ortner argues, is that culture is considered not only distinct from nature, but superior to it. Although Ortner does not believe that women are “in reality” any closer to (or further from) nature than men are, she does identify several reasons why they may appear to be, which in turn contributes to gender inequality (Ortner, 1974).

Part of Ortner's argument is that, in all societies, nature is constructed as inferior to culture. Other feminist writers have noted that hierarchical dualism culture/nature and male/female are specifically linked to Western culture, however, referring to the ideological changes related to the scientific revolution and the Enlightenment that took place in Europe in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Merchant, for example, argues in *The Death of Nature* that before the Enlightenment, nature was regarded as the benevolent mother of all things. During the scientific revolution, a model in which the domination of man over nature was a more integral feature gradually replaced this metaphor. With science, nature's secrets were revealed, and it became easier to control nature. Conceptions of Earth as nurturing began to change to conceptions of nature as a resource to be exploited (Merchant, 1980).

Both Ortner and Merchant are examining themes associated with ecofeminism, a subdiscipline of feminism that links the domination of women and the domination of nature with values and activities specifically associated with women, including child-bearing and nurturing. In the 1980s and 1990s, ecofeminism was harshly criticized by many feminist academics for being essentialist and for naturalizing women's domestic roles. Merchant discusses this criticism in an essay written 25 years after the first publication of her book. As she explains it, ecofeminism was thought to imply that not only was it in women's nature to nurture, but that it was women's role to clean up the environmental mess made by men. Thus, women who came to the defense of nature as eco-feminists, were refueling their own oppression in the very same hierarchies that had identified men with culture and women with nature (Merchant, 2006).

More recent scholarship on ecofeminism, however, has explicitly rejected an essential connection between women and nature, stressing instead that the oppression of women and the domination of nature are both results of patriarchy. Warren, for example, emphasizes that what unites all eco-feminists is not a belief in essentialism, but an agreement that there are important connections between the domination of women and the domination of nature. Integrated into modern Western culture is a value-loaded dualism, wherein whatever is historically associated with femininity (e.g. emotion, body, nature) is regarded as inferior to that which is associated with masculinity (e.g. reason, mind, culture). This dualism has become part of an oppressive conceptual framework in which relationships of domination and subordination are justified and maintained (Warren, 1998).

For eco-feminists, one feature of addressing oppression is to dismantle the man-made rift created between humans and nature. For example, Ruether writes:

We need to think of human consciousness not as separating us as a higher species from the rest of nature, but rather as a gift to enable us to learn how to harmonize our needs with the natural system around us, of which we are a dependent part. (Ruether, 1993, p. 396)

Ruether envisions a world where mutual interdependency replaces the hierarchies of domination as the model of relationships between men and women, among human groups, and between humans and other beings. “All racist, sexist, classist, cultural, and anthropocentric assumptions of the superiority of whites over blacks, males over females, managers over workers, humans over animals and plants, must be discarded,” she claims (Ruether, 1993, p. 397).

There are, of course, a number of thinkers other than feminists who have drawn our attention to the need to take better care of the environment. Heininen (2013) gives an overview of the environmental awakening that started in the 1960s in the West and then became a global movement. This awakening eventually led to the “politicization” of environmental issues, making it difficult for policy makers to continue to ignore the environment in their decision making. According to Heininen, the global movement that emerged from this awakening was “...a moral protest against a new kind of modernized socio-economic development and the belief in progress based on economic growth and modernization.” (Heininen, 2013, p. 37).

Examples of important contributions to this environmental awakening are *Silent Spring* (Carson, 1962) and *Limits to Growth* (Meadows, Meadows, Randers, & Behrens III, 1972), that was a report on the work done by the Club of Rome. In *Silent Spring*, Rachel Carson, drew attention to the dangers to the environment of man-made chemicals, particularly DDT. Written in a style easy for the public to comprehend, the book became highly influential in creating awareness about the vulnerability of nature to various types of human interventions. *Limits to Growth*, published ten years later, served as an important reminder of the ecological limits of the planet. Computer models were used to create future scenarios that could unfold, given the development of certain key variables, including world population, industrialization, pollution, food production, and resource depletion. The idea was to simulate the possible consequences of human interaction with nature.

Following this environmental awakening, the term “sustainable development” was born as a compromise; it was meant to decrease the tension between the competing interests of economic development and environmental protection. The concept was introduced in the report *Our Common Future* (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987), and popularized in subsequent international meetings, such as the Rio Summit in 1992. There were high hopes that this new concept would help change our thinking about ways to manage the environment. Just like human security, however, the concept of sustainable development has been criticized as being ambiguous and slippery, allowing businesses and governments to articulate support for sustainable development without undertaking any fundamental change in their present course.

Hopwood, Mellor & O’Brian have mapped out the various approaches to sustainable development, dividing the different interpretations into those that support the status quo, whereby only minor adjustments may be needed to protect the environ-

ment; those that call for the need to reform but maintain that this can be done within existing structures; and those that call for a more radical transformation. Those whose interpretations belong to the transformation group see the mounting environmental and social challenges as problems rooted in fundamental features of present-day society and how humans relate with each other and the environment. Hooper et al. point to the deep divide between the supporters of the status quo approach and those who call for the need for transformation. Advocates of the status quo see change occurring through management of the existing structure of decision making, whereas transformation advocates understand change as taking place through political action inside and outside of existing structures. The sustainable development discourse at present, they argue, is dominated by the managerial outlook, which defends the status quo (Hopwood, Mellor, & O'Brian, 2005).

Ecofeminism clearly falls into the transformation group. Given the current structure of the international system, whereby states seek to enhance their own security at the expense of the natural environment, successful solutions to global environmental problems seem out of reach. Tickner argues that, although many new thinkers have realized the need for a fundamental restructure of the system in order to tackle emerging environmental challenges, few make similar references about the need to restructure the relationship between humans and nature. Ecofeminism offers this more radical view: that only by changing our relationship with nature can real ecological and human security be achieved. Or in her own words:

Only through the emergence of a system of values that simultaneously respects nature, women and a diversity of cultures – norms that have been missing from the historical practices of statecraft – can models that promise an ecologically security future be devised. (Tickner, 1992, p. 126)

In spite of existing literature on the linkages between gender and the environment, references to gender surfaced in climate change discourses only in recent years. Some of the first to pay attention to the relationship between gender and climate change were experts working for development organizations who noticed that climate change was affecting men and women in different ways in many developing countries, with women more often belonging to vulnerable groups. One example is Oxfam's publication, *Gender, Development and Climate Change*, in which several authors discuss various linkages among those three fields (Masika, 2002). International organizations like FAO have also paid attention to these relationships (Lambrou & Pana, 2006), and more recently, emphasis on gender has been integrated into international negotiations within the UNFCCC (WEDO, 2013).

Although women's vulnerability to climate change impact has been attracting most of the attention in discussions about gender and climate change in developing

countries, some research also points at the fact that women as a group tend to create a lighter carbon footprint<sup>6</sup> than men do. In this case, the spotlight is on mitigation in industrialized countries, where different lifestyle choices and consumption patterns of men and women are examined, to estimate how different behavior contributes to emissions. A Nordic report, summarizing existing research on gender and climate change, gives several examples of topics that have been explored under this theme. One is the different transportation patterns of men and women; men are more likely to use private cars whereas women are more likely to use public transport. Another involves eating habits; men usually eat more meat than women, contributing to emissions that derive from raising livestock. Women, however, play a key role in everyday consumption patterns, because they are often responsible for shopping for the entire family. Thus, some researchers have argued that as consumers, women have more power than men to push for reduction in emissions (Oldrup & Breengaard, 2009).

This early research on gender and climate change illustrates the ways in which women suffer more from the impact of climate change than men do and pollute less than men do. Arora-Jonsson draws attention to these two themes, claiming that women are painted as either vulnerable or virtuous in relation to the environment. She argues that this focus can draw attention away from inequality in decision making, and generalizations about women's vulnerability and virtuousness can lead to the expectation that women shoulder more responsibility without reaping corresponding rewards (Arora-Jonsson, 2011).

Arora-Jonsson argues for the need to direct attention to connections to the larger political economy and to the use of discourses that exacerbate and cause vulnerability and inequalities. She reminds us that marginality needs to be viewed through the power relations that produced vulnerability in the first place. She also stresses the importance of studying the role of gendered institutions to which men and women have to relate. In the few years since her article was published, a shift in focus can be detected, and several publications have emerged with a focus on the linkages among climate change, gender, and political discourses. One example is Alston & Whittenbury's (2013) edited book, wherein various authors discuss gender and climate change from different viewpoints, including an exploration of climate discourses, how knowledge production can be gendered, and issues related to climate justice. *Hyptaia, a Journal of Feminist Philosophy*, also published a special issue on climate change in 2014, which included articles discussing more varied themes than the earlier writings on the topic (Cuomo & Tuana, 2014).

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6 "Carbon footprint" is a term used to describe the level of greenhouse gas emissions for which a given actor is responsible. The more emissions that can be associated with our actions, the deeper our carbon footprint.

Because this research relies on feminist concepts as analytical tools, an article exploring climate change through the lens of intersectionality is of special interest (Kaijser & Kronsell, 2013). In this article, the authors explore how intersectionality can be employed as an analytical framework for understanding complex dimensions of climate change. Intersectionality is a concept that emerged within feminist theory and through which researchers examine the interactions among gender, race, class, and other identities. As an analytical tool, the concept can help shed light on the ways in which structures of power emerge and interact. An intersectional analysis, according to Kaijser & Kronsell, goes beyond an identification of power patterns to an examination of the underlying social identities and how they are reinforced or challenged in the light of climate change.

Although intersectionality is not used as an analytical concept in this dissertation, it could serve as a useful tool in similar analyses – particularly where the communities under study are more diverse and heterogeneous than in Iceland, the site of the case study in this research.

This more recent scholarship on the linkages between gender and climate change directs us closer to the approach taken in this dissertation, whereby the attention is not so much on men and women in relation to climate change, but rather on how gender relations and associated power inequalities influence climate-related discourses. Climate-related discourses are discussed in greater detail later in this chapter, but first we turn to the fourth example in which feminist scholars have influenced a discipline by questioning the basic assumptions underlying theories: the discipline of philosophy, more specifically ethics and moral theories.

### *Ethics of Care*

The ethics of care approach is relevant to this dissertation because it offers a moral theory that emphasizes the importance of relationships and recognizes emotions as an important and relevant element in moral decisions. Feminist philosophers have developed the ethics of care as an alternative to Kantian moral theory and utilitarianism, the most dominant moral theories when feminism entered the scene in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Their efforts were motivated by a desire to validate and make women's experience more relevant when discussing moral questions.

Virginia Held (2006) explains how this approach challenges dominant theories. Kantian moral theory is concerned with rights and justice. It assumes all persons to be free, equal, and autonomous individuals who could agree to certain impartial, abstract, universal principles of justice. Utilitarian theories are more concerned with maximizing the utility of all persons than protecting individual rights, but just like Kantian theory, they rely on impartial, universal principles.

The ethics of care, Held suggests, differs from these theories in its assumptions, goals, and methods. A key feature of ethics of care is the view of persons as relational

and interdependent – as opposed to Kantian and utilitarian moral theories that focus primarily on the rational decisions of persons as independent and autonomous individuals. All human beings need care, at least in their early years, and often also later in life, due to either illness or old age. A moral theory that rests on the idea that humans are all independent, autonomous, and rational individuals overlooks the reality of human dependence and the type of moral decisions related to this dependency.

Held emphasizes a second characteristic of care ethics: It values emotions. In contrast to the dominant rationalist approaches, emotions such as sympathy, empathy, sensitivity, and responsiveness are seen as moral emotions that need to be cultivated as an important element when making moral decisions. This does not mean raw emotions can be a guide to morality, because feelings need to be reflected upon (Held, 2006). What is important to note is that the ethics of care does not deny the role of rational thinking in morality. Rather, what is emphasized is the notion that emotions and rational thinking can be complementary factors that both can contribute to moral theories and to good moral decisions.

The ethics of care approach demands not only equality for women; it calls for equal consideration for the experience that reveals the values, importance, and moral significance of caring. This approach addresses moral issues that arise in relationships between those who are unequal and dependent, not only within the household, but in wider society as well.

An implicit agenda of ethics of care is to shine light on feminine values, giving them space in moral theories. This also includes emphasizing the importance of caring and care work, and giving due recognition to the unpaid care work women around the world carry to a much greater extent than men do. In order to avoid falling into the trap of essentialism, however, it is vital that this approach be complemented with the awareness that the feminization of care work is socially constructed, and attention must be placed on the fair distribution of the burden of care work. Or, as Held says, “The ethics of care must thus also concern itself with the justice (or lack of it) of the ways the tasks of caring are distributed in society” (2006, p. 16).

The distribution of care work is also of great importance when the idea of care is extended to the environment. Fiona Robinson is a feminist scholar who has applied the ethics of care in her writings about international relations, including a book focusing on the ethics of care and human security. Just like Barnett (2001), she argues that environmental security should be viewed as an integral part of human security and should include a recognition of the dependency of humans on the natural world. She does not propose an ethic of “caring for the environment”, but rather frames care ethics in this context as the moral responsibility to care for the environment because the health and flourishing of the environment is closely connected to the wellbeing of people. Or in her own words: “Our ability to care for each other depends fundamentally upon our ability to maintain a healthy environment” (Robinson, 2011, p. 144).

Robinson discusses ecofeminism as an example of an approach whereby an ethic of care is applied to the environment, but agrees with those that are critical of this approach in the form in which it presents women as closer to nature than men are because of such biological traits as their reproductive roles. As discussed in the previous section, this approach also carries the danger that the main burden of care for the environment will be placed on women. In other words, the essentialist form of ecofeminism places disproportional duty on women to take care of the environment, based on the assumption that women are somehow more naturally inclined to do so than men are. Robinson rejects this assumption, but asks if it would be possible to preserve the ethical ideas included in ecofeminism without endorsing the claims related to essentialism.

As discussed previously, more recent scholarship on ecofeminism explicitly rejects an essential connection between women and nature. Instead, the focus is on drawing out the parallels between the oppression of women and the domination of nature and demonstrating how both phenomena are products of patriarchy. In both cases, the value-loaded dualism so dominant in Western thought is playing a role. Grounded in this perspective of social constructivism, ecofeminism offers some useful ideas that are relevant when expanding the ethics of care to take environmental issues into consideration.

Robinson argues for an ethic of care that recognizes that our relationships to the environment are crucial to our ability to perform life-sustaining tasks. “A healthy biosphere is not just a background to security through care; it is inextricably intertwined with it,” she says (2011, p. 155). She reminds the reader how discourses of femininity and masculinity shape our understanding of the distribution of responsibilities for care and that awareness is needed to ensure that both men and women take their responsibilities toward the environment seriously.

Neither Held nor Robinson discusses the role of emotions specifically in the context of care for the environment. As a moral theory, however, the ethics of care does recognize the relevance of emotions and how they can play a constructive role in moral decisions. This is one of the key reasons why the ethics of care is a relevant theory to discuss in the context of this dissertation, as one of the issues revealed by the interviews with policy shapers was that compassion and caring emotions for the environment can be an important driving force for environmental protection. This point is further discussed in Chapter 9, where the key motivations driving policy shapers are examined.

## **2.5 Climate-related Discourses**

In this section, I consider the relationships between gender and climate-related discourses, and how discourses can be viewed as feminine or masculine. I use the term

“climate-related discourses” to capture public discourses on topics in which climate change is at center stage and discourses in which economic development or security is at the forefront, but climate concerns are included as subthemes (or not included, yet the policy decisions produced by those public discourses can greatly affect either emissions or the capacity to adapt to climatic changes).

Examining public discourses is one approach to the study of power. Exploring how discourses enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce, or challenge relations of power and dominance in society can provide valuable insights into the values and norms that guide policy making. Not every citizen has equal access to or control over public discourses. As Van Dijk notes, most ordinary people tend to be passive receivers of text or talk of their bosses, teachers, or public authorities who tell them what to believe or what to do. Members of more powerful social groups, however, have much easier access to public discourses and can influence and control certain types of public discourses, depending on their status. Professors control academic discourses, for example; journalists are in the best position to influence the discourse in media; and political leaders are in control of policy discourses (van Dijk, 2001).

In light of the various linkages between climate change and gender, discussed in the previous section, I am particularly interested in how dominant discourses consistently frame the climate change issue as a scientific, gender-neutral problem. Sherilyn MacGregor addressed this topic in an article wherein she argues for the need for deeper gender analysis of climate change by examining the discursive constructions and categories that shape climate politics. She suggests that the study of gender relations should involve the analysis of power relations between men and women and social constructions of hegemonic masculinities and femininities that shape the way we interpret, debate, articulate, and respond to phenomena like war, economic crisis, and climate change (MacGregor, 2010). She asks the question: What are the implications of gendered assumptions about men and women for the climate debate?

MacGregor identifies several discourses related to climate change that she categorizes as masculine and feminine, based on the underlying values and associations with feminine or masculine characteristics. The two discourses she labels as masculine are the ecological modernization discourse and the discourse on environmental security. The ecological modernization discourse emphasizes how science and economics can work together for win-win solutions. This approach favors technological solutions and calls for the partnering of techno-innovators and brave capitalists. This discourse tends to be dominated by men, and the associated image is one of clever men solving complex problems. The environmental security discourse, according to MacGregor, is the other dominant discourse used to frame climate politics. This discourse stresses the danger of climate change resulting in conflicts over scarce resources between and within states, calling for militaristic approaches to address the consequences of climate change. By securitizing and militarizing the climate crisis, it becomes a problem re-

quiring technical and military solutions, harmonizing directly with traditional ideas about hegemonic masculinity. Both the ecological modernization discourse and the environmental security discourse favor top-down approaches and the use of powerful institutions to implement policies. Both are mostly silent on the importance of cooperation, sustainable lifestyles, ethical consumption, and the precautionary principle as necessary elements of solutions to the climate crisis.

The two other discourses MacGregor identifies are closely linked to our ideas about femininity and come from the opposite direction, emphasizing bottom-up solutions whereby the importance of the behavior of individuals is highlighted. This includes the green duty discourse and the discourse on neo-Malthusian population control. Whereas the masculine discourses focus on technical solutions, there are parallel feminine discourses placing the responsibility on individuals as caretakers and consumers. Because women still bear the main burden of domestic activities within households, the call for individuals to tackle climate change by conserving energy, recycling waste and moving toward a low-carbon lifestyle is not gender neutral, but aimed at women more than at men (MacGregor, 2010).

MacGregor uses her analysis to demonstrate how the social constructions of masculinity and femininity emerge and are reproduced through these dominant discourses on the different dimensions of climate change. These discourses continue to keep men and women in separate worlds. On one hand is the world of highly valued science, economics, and defense (the masculine world), and on the other hand is the world of devalued social reproduction and private domestic duty (the feminine world). One consequence, she argues, is that women are excluded from positions of leadership and citizenship, and given the choice of the much less attractive roles of victims, saviors, or culprits.

I borrow MacGregor's categorization of masculine and feminine discourses when analyzing my own data in the following chapters. I use her model as a starting point for analyzing public climate discourses. Yet my analysis also reveals a weakness in her approach, given that her framework captures only discourses directly focused on climate, but overlook the important discourses that can be categorized as being climate related, even though climate change is not at the center of these discourse – discourses related to security and economic development, for example.

One interesting aspect of the broader climate-related discourses is the way dominant discourses on security and/or economic development are sometimes completely silent on the subject of climate change, even when discussing policies that will have a clear impact on greenhouse gas emissions or influence the capacity of the state to adapt to climate change. The silence about climate change is especially noticeable in dominant discourses about oil and gas developments in the Arctic, as discussed in some of the following chapters. Because MacGregor's categorization captures only discourses directly related to climate policies, I rely on insights from Tickner and Nelson about the

masculine values underpinning our shared understanding of political and economic systems, to help explain the absence of climate considerations in those discourses.

## 2.6 Concluding Remarks

The goal of this chapter has been to summarize the existing knowledge base upon this dissertation builds. It starts with an explanation about what I am referring to when I talk about climate change and how climate change is associated with security and then moves on to discuss the key feminist concepts I use as analytical tools in the dissertation. It also provides the theoretical framework used for discussion and analysis in the chapters that follow and demonstrates how feminism has entered and interacted with the various disciplinary fields associated with this topic – namely IR and security studies, economics, and environmental studies. Feminist contributions to moral theory in the form of ethics of care are also discussed.

As must be evident by now, using a feminist lens to approach my topic does not involve an analysis of the way in which climate change is influencing men and women differentially; nor does it focus on determining if men and women contribute to emissions in different ways. Rather, my approach is to explore the role of values in policy making. The feminist lens refers to the concepts I use as analytical tools. Gender-related concepts developed within feminism are powerful analytical tools for exploring dominant paradigms, unraveling inequalities, and illuminating underlying assumptions.

I use Tickner's suggestion as a starting point; she claims that to create an ecologically secure future, we need a shift in values whereby there is more balance between masculine and feminine values. I am using those terms as labels for characteristics historically associated with either males or females, and one set of values has been prioritized over the other as superior within public domains. I emphasize, however, that as a social constructivist, I make no claim that only men can hold masculine values and only women can be advocates for feminine values. On the contrary, my view is that both masculinity and femininity are socially constructed concepts. By elevating feminine values so they receive equal space and respect in public decision making as the masculine values that have traditionally underpinned policy, we will be taking a crucial step toward dissolving the hierarchy that fuels both gender inequality and the tendency of humans to overexploit natural resources. Once such balance has been reached, categorizing values as masculine or feminine may become irrelevant, but until this is the case, the terms are useful to unveil biases created by the dominant paradigm, labeled by feminists as the patriarchal system.

I use the feminist concepts introduced in this chapter as a framework for analyzing the data I present in the following chapters, especially related to the case study about Iceland. The hope is that applying those concepts can provide a unique perspective on

the political, economic, and cultural obstacles that have hindered progress in reducing emissions and preventing dangerous human-induced climate change. I do not expect that this approach will answer all questions or solve the climate crisis once and for all, but I do firmly believe that it can provide some fresh perspectives on those pressing questions that could open up cracks for new approaches to be tested in our search for solutions.

### 3. Methodology

This dissertation relies on qualitative research methods for both data collection and the interpretation and analysis of data. Unlike research in the positivist tradition, where the aim is to identify cause–effect relationships among variables, the main focus of interpretive qualitative research is on understanding events by discovering the meanings human beings attribute to their behavior and the external world (Della Porta & Keating, 2008). Although feminist scholars use a variety of methods, most feminist scholars within the field of international relations, being mindful of the power of ideas in shaping reality, have rejected the positivist path and have instead situated themselves within theories of social constructivism (Tickner, 2006).

This chapter explains the methods I used to collect and analyze data for this study. Before discussing research design, data collection, and methods used to interpret and analyze information, I ponder questions related to my role as a researcher. This is in line with feminist ideas about standpoint and situated knowledge. In which context is the research conducted, and how is my own personal position as a researcher influencing my work?

#### 3.1 Feminist Standpoint and Situated Knowledge

Maintaining a value-neutral position has generally been considered a critical component of scientific research in both natural sciences and social sciences. Researchers are expected to study the world as external investigators, removing themselves and their views and values from the equation. In research based on positivist theories, neutrality is a key ingredient. Feminist scholars and other researchers using critical theories have rejected the idea of neutrality, arguing that research can never really be completely value free. Or as Berg explains in his book on qualitative research methods: “The fact is research is seldom undertaken for a neutral reason. Furthermore, all humans residing in and among social groups are the product of those social groups. This means that various values, moral attitudes, and beliefs orient people in a particular manner” (Berg, 2009, p. 201).

Standpoint theory claims that all knowledge production is socially situated, and that we need to be aware of the starting point of a research project and how this starting point is influencing the knowledge being created. Sandra Harding (1996) points out that in societies with a structure shaped by politics of race, ethnicity, class, gender, and

sexuality, the activities of those at the top are more influential and visible. The activities and experiences of those at the margins tend to be ignored and not visible. She argues for the need to conduct research in which the starting point is different and explains how the activities of those at the bottom of social hierarchies can provide interesting starting points for research. The experience and lives of marginalized peoples have been devalued and their relevance in creating knowledge ignored, but their lives, from their own perspectives, can reveal important information about the ways in which marginal lives are shaped by the values and beliefs of those at the center, who are engaged in politics and decision making (Harding S. , 1996).

With the awareness that all knowledge is socially situated, I find it necessary to articulate my own starting point and demonstrate how my personal situation may have influenced the research. This is also the reason I choose to stay present in the text, using freely the first singular “I” in my writing.

As explained in the introduction, I have engaged with the topic of climate change for the past 15 to 20 years, both through my studies and in my work. I have long been convinced that climate change is indeed taking place and these changes are – for the most part – driven by human activities. I consider it the responsibility of humans to modify their behavior and respect the ecological limits of the planet. I also believe that we in the West, historically responsible for the bulk of greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere, should take the lead in implementing progressive policies to address the climate changes. In my attempt to understand why we are not stepping up toward this responsibility, I chose to study climate-related discourses and policies in my own country, rather than examining policies in a place further away, where I would have more of an outsider’s view. This approach has benefits, but also creates certain difficulties. The benefits include me having followed and taken part in these discourses for a long time before I even began this research project. This meant I was already familiar with the discourses although I had not studied them in the context of the questions posed in this research. Being an insider also means that I have good access to information, understand the local language, and know where to look for data. The complicating factor is that I am studying processes that I have at times been involved in myself. As a civil servant in the Ministry for the Environment in 2002–2003, I worked on climate issues and attended one UNFCCC meeting as a representative for Iceland. In 2003–2004, I was the project manager for a climate project for the environmental NGO, Landvernd, the ultimate goal of which was to encourage the government to adapt and implement a more ambitious climate policy. I am a member of the Social Democrats, and although I have not been active in the party, I have at times expressed my opinions on issues related to climate change and oil and gas explorations in meetings organized by the party. I am known in policy circles in Iceland as a person with good knowledge of the politics of climate change and have taught courses on the subject at a university level for several years.

Overall I think my experience strengthens the research, as this involvement has provided me with an enhanced understanding of the many dimensions of the topic and made it possible for me to explore the questions I am working with from a unique perspective. I did make a conscious decision, however, to withdraw from active participation in policy discussions about climate change, both within the Social Democrats and in public forums, after I started the research because I found it necessary to create some distance. In interviews with policy shapers, I tried to keep my opinions to myself and stay in the role of an active listener, but I am aware that some people I interviewed knew who I was beforehand and had some knowledge about my engagement with the topic in the past – an unavoidable situation in a small society like Iceland.

Although I was not studying marginalized lives, as Harding refers to in her discussion about standpoint theory, I was looking for voices and perspectives that have been marginalized or silenced and trying to find out if it is possible to give those perspectives more space in public policy.

Although I chose not to be an active participant in policy dialogues on climate issues during the time this dissertation was in making, I did give a number of lectures on climate change or climate-related topics, including the oil and gas issue, but those were all related to my research and given in that context. Most of them were at academic conferences, but some were in forums where politicians and policy makers were the main audience. I also gave three radio interviews during this time, in which I discussed different components of my research, and was interviewed once by one of the Icelandic newspapers with national distribution. Being ready to talk about my research, even though I was in the middle of it and not able to offer any final conclusions, was helpful in shaping and sharpening my thinking, and the feedback I received was useful, thought provoking and (most often) encouraging.

### **3.2 Research Design and Data Collection**

Qualitative research methods refer to both the type of data gathered and how this data are analyzed and interpreted. Data collection methods for qualitative research include interviews, focus groups, ethnography, participatory approaches (including action research), and case studies. Qualitative research does not usually start with a set hypothesis, in which the aim is to collect data to test that hypothesis. The process tends to be more intuitive, deductive, and non-linear than the quantitative research process, conducted in the positivist fashion. Qualitative research can often take the researcher in unexpected directions. This does not mean qualitative research is without methodological rigor. On the contrary, good qualitative research should be rigorous and use systematic approaches (Berg, 2009). In this section, I discuss the main approaches I used when designing the research and collecting data.

### *The Case Study Approach*

Berg defines the case study as a method involving a systematic gathering of information about a particular person, social setting, event, or group. The researcher needs to gather enough information about the case in order to understand how the subject operates or functions (Berg, 2009). Data collection for case studies is usually extensive, drawing on multiple sources of information, such as interviews, documents, audiovisual material, and observation. Creswell (2006) describes a typical procedure for conducting a case study, which involves a detailed description of the case, history, and chronology of events. After this description, the researcher may focus on a few key issues or themes to assist in an understanding of the complexity of the case. The final phase draws conclusions about the meaning of the case and provides lessons learned. Although a single case study using qualitative methods for data gathering and interpretation does not usually allow for generalizations or provide answers in the form of absolute truths, such in-depth analysis can provide useful and valuable insights into complex phenomena.

The unit of analysis in a case study can vary from single individuals to large corporations, or as in this research, the political unit of a sovereign state. Because the topic under study includes examination of public policies, one individual state is a logical unit of analysis. Even though climate policies are shaped and influenced by a number of non-state actors, the state is still a central actor in forming and implementing climate-related policies. I have already explained and justified in the introduction why Iceland is a relevant choice as a site to study with the research questions in mind, but the decision is also a practical one, relating to my location and background.

The key sources I used to for my case study comprise policy documents, interviews with policy shapers, and speeches of key politicians. I also relied on news accounts in the media and read through parliamentary discussions that related to climate policies, security, the Arctic, or oil and gas explorations. I have systematically listed in the bibliography all sources from which I drew specific information. My background knowledge about the topic and the case study, however, is broader than the list of references. Given the length of time I have been engaged with this topic, it would be impossible to list all references that I have read over the years that have shaped my thinking. This broad knowledge base was, however, a great asset when I was summarizing and drawing conclusions from the data.

### *Policy Documents*

One of the key sources of information I relied upon for the case study were public policy documents, including government declarations, government policies, municipal policies, and declarations or legislations passed in the parliament. I used the policy documents as starting points for an overview of the various topics, but because the text in policy documents is generally the result of some political negotiations among those in power, those documents are also useful as indicators for the dominant discourse for a given time.

Following is a list of the policy documents I reviewed for the case study, but they are also listed in the relevant chapters where those policies are discussed:

#### Government Declarations:

- Policy Declaration of the Government of the Independence Party and the Social Democratic Alliance (2007)
- Declaration of Cooperation of Government (2009)
- Policy Declaration of the Progressive Party and the Independence Party (2013)

#### Arctic Policy Documents:

- Iceland in the Arctic (2009)
- Arctic Strategy (2011)
- Iceland's Interests in the Arctic; draft (2015)

#### Security Policy Documents:

- Risk Assessment for Iceland (2009)
- Report by a Committee about a National Security Strategy for Iceland (2014)

#### Climate Policy Documents:

- Iceland's Fourth National Communication on Climate Change under the UNFCCC (2006)
- Climate Policy (2007)
- Report of the Scientific Committee on Climate Change (2008)
- Reykjavík Climate and Air Quality Policy (2009)
- Climate Action Plan (2010)
- Legislation About Climate Issues (2012)
- Iceland's Sixth National Communication and First Biennial Report under the UNFCCC (2014)

I did read a number of other policy documents on issues either directly or indirectly related to climate change. For example, I scanned through the annual reports the Minister of Foreign Affairs introduces in parliament on key issues in foreign policy, to see if climate issues and Arctic affairs were on the agenda, and I also went through several policy documents related to gender equality. Even though I do not include those documents systematically in my analysis, they formed part of the background knowledge on which I relied.

### *Interviews with Policy Shapers*

Interviews are a common method used in qualitative research. I knew early on that I wanted to use interviews to try to tease out perspectives on climate policies that may not be evident in policy documents or mainstream political discussion. In the beginning, I thought about interviewing people at the local level to find out how they viewed climate change and if they perceived it as a threat. This would have been in line with the approach taken by several feminist researchers in security studies who have emphasized the importance of viewing security through the lens of the everyday lives of common people (Wibben, 2011; Enloe, 1990; Hoogensen Gjørsv, 2014).

In August 2009, I conducted interviews in a rural village in northeast Iceland for a research project on gender and mobility, unrelated to this one (Karlsdottir & Ingolfsdottir, 2011). I included two climate-related questions toward the end of the interviews, testing the ground for a dialogue on climate change. I quickly found that this was not an issue about which the people I interviewed had given much thought. Just like Norgaard (2011) found out in her research in Norway (see Section 4.2), the local people in this rural community found it difficult to connect climate change to their own lives. A few expressed some concern at the abstract level, but they did not perceive climate change as a threat in their everyday lives, and it was not an issue that was much on their minds.

I therefore turned to another group for my interviews, focusing on individuals who had already shown interest in climate change by participating in policy discussions in public forums. Although only some of them are directly involved in policy making as civil servants or as politicians, I refer to them as policy shapers because they all have tried to influence policy through their participation in policy dialogues about climate change.

My rationale was that those individuals had already recognized climate change as an important issue worthy of their attention, and they were therefore more likely to have thought enough about climate-related issues to be able to provide some in-depth answers to my questions. I used a targeted sample to choose the people to interview, meaning that the individuals had to fulfill a certain criteria in order to be eligible. The first criterion was that they had demonstrated, either through their work or participation in public discussion, that they were concerned about climate change. The second criterion was that they needed to belong to one of four groups: civil servants, politicians, activists, and experts. Some of those interviewed had participated in forming climate policy directly, either as politicians or civil servants; others had had indirect influence through their role as activists or experts. Because they can all be considered to have taken part in shaping policy, they all fit the term “policy shaper” as I use it in this dissertation.

One of the elements I sought for in the interviews was to find out if the values expressed by the policy shapers could be labeled as more feminine than the values and

norms shaping the dominant climate-related discourses. My logic for expecting that the values of the policy shapers might deviate from the dominant discourse was that simply by identifying climate change as a topic worthy of attention (as opposed to focusing mainly on exploitation of resources for economic gains), those individuals would be more likely than others to hold views that emphasized the interdependence between humans and nature. To stay true to my belief that feminine and masculine values can be held by both males and females, I decided to target both men and women, and ended up interviewing a total of 18 individuals – 9 men and 9 women. Table 2 gives an overview of the policy shapers interviewed and the group to which group they belonged.

**Table 2: Overview of interviews**

A total of 18 interviews were conducted with 9 females and 9 males. Some of them were involved in policy, mostly at the local level (L), some at the national level (N), some at the international level (I); some of them had participated in shaping policy at more than one level. Similarly, although all of those interviewed belonged to one of the four targeted groups (civil servant, politician, activist, or expert) some of them played more than one role. A lower-case “x” is marked in the relevant column if they had played a different role earlier in their career.

Overview of Interviews with Policy Shapers				
Interviewees; age	Civil Servant	Politician	Activist	Expert
1 – Male; 50+				X (L/N)
2 – Female; 30+	X (L)			
3 – Male; 50+	X (N/I)		x	
4 – Male; 40+	X (N/I)			
5 – Female; 40+	X (L/N)			
6 – Female; 50+		X ( N / I )	x	
7 – Male; 30+	X		X ( N )	
8 – Female; 40+		X ( N / I )		
9 – Male; 40+				X (N)
10 – Male; 50+			X (N/I)	
11 – Female; 40+				X (L/N)
12 – Female; 30+	X (I)	X		
13 – Female; 50+		X (N/I/L)		
14 – Male; 60+		X ( N )		
15 – Male; 30+			X ( N )	
16 – Female; 60+			X (L/N)	
17 – Male; 60+				X (N)
18 – Female; 20+			X ( N )	

As can be seen in Table 2, I do not reveal the names of those I interviewed, but identify them only by age, gender, and group. I made a conscious decision before I started the interview process that I would promise anonymity to those I talked to, meaning I would not reveal who I talked to and would refrain from using information from the interviews that could be traced back to specific individuals. I have tried to stay true to this promise by not using any names in my analysis and presenting the information in such a way that participants cannot be identified from the context.

Some of the policy shapers were surprised when I told them their names would not be revealed, and a few claimed they did not care if I used their names or not. Although the policy shapers did not all have formal access to power, they all had – in the name of their position or expertise – more opportunities to influence public discourses than the average citizen does. In this sense, the interviews can be considered elite interviews. Elites are usually not considered to be a particularly vulnerable group, but this does not make anonymity irrelevant. Blakeley (2013) explains how she decided not to reveal the identities of the elites she interviewed even though they spoke on record, because she recognized that the information could be sensitive for them, even if they were unaware of that possibility. In my own research, I often found that people were willing to share more than they otherwise would have knowing their names would not be revealed. Even some that in the beginning stated that they were willing to speak on record, shared information with me later that they said they would not have shared if I had not promised them anonymity.

All the interviews were conducted face to face, and I made a point of creating an atmosphere of both silence and privacy. Sometimes I met people in their office and sometimes in their homes, and sometimes I provided office space myself. Each interview lasted between 40 and 80 minutes, with most of them being a little under one hour. They were recorded and then transcribed. Once all 18 interviews were transcribed, they generated about 400 pages of data.

The interviews were conducted in Icelandic, but I have translated the direct quotes used in the analysis. The format of the interviews was semi-structured. I had a list of questions as guidelines (see Appendix I), and tried to at least touch on all of those questions in each interview, but I also allowed the conversation to flow and picked up on themes that emerged unexpectedly. Overall, the interview process was a pleasant one and with one or two exceptions, everyone contacted agreed to meet me.

### *President's Speeches on Climate Change and the Arctic*

Qualitative research often takes researchers in unexpected directions, and using the speeches of the Icelandic president as data, to complement information from policy documents and interviews, had not been part of my plan. I started reading his speeches to gain greater understanding about a specific question that emerged from my interviews, but after having spent a week reading through the speeches, I realized that they

told an important story and decided to include them in my data set when analyzing climate-related discourses in Iceland. The speeches not only provide a thorough overview of the views and values of a person in power, but also give several examples of how the dominant discourse of each time can limit even the powerful in how and when they express their views. Most of the interviews with policy shapers were conducted in 2012 and 2013. The speeches of the president, however, span a much longer time period – a total of 15 years. The speeches not only complement the information gathered in the interviews but also add the dimension of time to the data.

The Icelandic president is a leading political figure in Iceland, and even though his direct political power is limited, his power to influence political discourses is considerable. The speeches that I am using as part of my data were all given by the same president, Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, who was elected to office in 1996 and was serving his fifth term at the time of this writing. President Grímsson was one of the first high-level politicians to discuss the danger of climate change, and he was also instrumental in placing Arctic issues on the agenda. His first speech in which climate change was a special topic was his New Year's speech in 1998, and one of his first public speeches on the Arctic was given later that same year, at University of Lapland, Rovaniemi, Finland. In the next 15 years, both climate change and the Arctic were recurrent themes in his speeches, and with time the two topics have become more intertwined. During the period 1998–2013, Grímsson gave close to 70 speeches on those topics, some in Iceland, but increasingly in later years in various international forums, where he is a sought-after lecturer.

As is the case with the policy documents, I list only those speeches that I cite directly in the bibliography. I did, however, read all of them for the period mentioned and use them collectively when I am drawing conclusions about the views the president expresses. All of the speeches are available on the website of the presidency<sup>7</sup>.

Just like my interviewees, Grímsson is a policy shaper, in the sense that he has expressed himself in public on a number of occasions, trying to influence climate policy. Because of his status as a prominent politician, his words can have more influence than the words of the other policy shapers may have, but he is still at times expressing views on climate change that have been more progressive than those of mainstream politics in Iceland during this period.

When I read through his speeches, the questions I had in mind were linked to the topics covered in the interviews with policy shapers. The key questions were:

- What are President Grímsson's views on climate change?
- Does he perceive the changes as a threat, and if so, what type of threat?
- When discussing the Arctic, does he emphasize threats or opportunities?

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7 See here: <http://www.forseti.is/Raedurogkvedjur/Raedur2015/>

- What kind of solutions does he see to the climate crisis?
- Does he voice his opinion about the development of oil and gas resources in the Arctic?

In addition to the president's speeches, I also read a number of speeches by other key politicians, including speeches made in parliament, some of which I refer to in the analysis. But I did not systematically analyze those speeches in the same way as I did with the president's speeches.

Viewed together, the policy documents, the interviews with the policy shapers, and the speeches of the Icelandic president, provide data that is rich in content and gave me the necessary material to work with in my case study.

### 3.3 Critical Discourse Analysis

Deciding the type of data to collect is important, but so is deciding on the methods to use when analyzing and interpreting those data. Because I am interested in the values and norms that shape policy, discourse analysis was a method that appealed to me. This method also makes sense for research that relies on theoretical approaches belonging to social constructivism, in which the attention is on the power of ideas and how norms emerge and are legitimized. I use a method often labeled as Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which is a type of discourse analysis in which the focus is on how social power, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context (van Dijk, 2001).

As van Dijk explains, the ideology and values of dominant groups in society are often integrated in laws, rules, norms, habits, and even general consensus. Thus the ideas of elite groups take the form of what Gramsci called "hegemony" (Gramsci, 1971). Connell (1995) used Gramsci's concept as the basis for developing the concept of "hegemonic masculinity" (see Section 2.3), used to explain how masculine values often underpin dominant ideologies.

There is often little awareness of how the dominant groups are exercising their power because their ideas become an integral part of actions so common in everyday life that they become taken for granted, even if they include discrimination or exploitation of certain groups (racism or gender discrimination, for example) (van Dijk, 2001). This is similar to what Fairclough (1989) refers to as "common-sense assumptions" in his book, *Language and Power*, in which he explains how language rests on common-sense assumptions and how power relations can be ideologically shaped by those assumptions. In this way, language can be used to dominate and oppress vulnerable groups. Fairclough also stresses that just as humans create discourses, so do they have the power to change what they have created. Part of social struggle is the struggle to challenge

dominant discourses. Those who hold power at a given time must reassert their power constantly, and those who do not hold power are always liable to make a bid for power (Fairclough, 1989).

Critical discourse analysis is a method that fits feminist analysis well, not only because of the focus on power relations, but also because, as a method, it rejects the possibility of a value-free science. Just like political discourses, scholarly discourses are also part of and influenced by social structure and produced in social interactions (van Dijk, 2001). In fact, feminist scholars have been at the forefront of using critical discourse analysis in their research. This method can be useful in illuminating the complex, subtle ways that taken-for-granted gendered assumptions and hegemonic power relations are discursively produced, sustained, negotiated, and challenged in different contexts and communities. Or, as stated by Lazar (2007), the marriage of feminism with critical discourse analysis can produce a rich and powerful political critique for action.

When working with the data, I first read and reread the policy documents, the transcribed interviews, and the president's speeches with specific questions in mind related to the formation of climate policy in Iceland. I had previously identified specific questions before reading the documents: if and how climate change was perceived as a threat and how the different actors in society should respond. I searched for information about policies aimed at adaptation and the types of policy measures that were being formulated and implemented with the aim of reducing emissions. The oil and gas issue emerged as a theme on its own through the interviews, but once I had identified this theme, I began to search systematically for information regarding views on the oil and gas explorations as well. As I was examining these themes, I simultaneously tried to detect the underlying values. I also approached the topic of values more directly, by asking all interviewees about their personal motivations in advocating for the importance of attending to climate change specifically and environmental issues more generally.

Once I had read and reread these data, I created memos on the different themes, using the interview data. I also wrote a ten-page narrative using discourse analysis to tease out themes, struggles and tensions, and historical junctures in the text of the president's speeches. The memos and the narrative served as important material for the analysis I provide in the case study.

When writing the case study, I started each chapter by describing the context, and then summarized information from the data; I pulled out specific quotes to draw out tensions and struggles in the discourse. The case study comprises an introduction, followed by three chapters, each focusing on one of the three main themes:

- Climate change as a security threat (Chapter 6)
- Domestic mitigation policies (Chapter 7)
- Discourses related to oil and gas explorations in the Dreki area (Chapter 8)

In the conclusion of each chapter, I link the main discourses identified in the analysis to some of the concepts and theories discussed in the theoretical chapter, although the connection with theory is made more thoroughly in the final part.

In Part III of the dissertation, I take the analysis from those three chapters in the case study and provide a more holistic discourse analysis, integrating the three themes using the step-by-step process introduced by Jóhannesson (2010) to identify more systematically discursive themes, legitimating principles, historical junctures, and normalization in the climate-related discourses identified in the case study. The concepts of power and silence also play a role. As Jóhannesson explains, patterns in the discourse create discursive themes. These patterns are legitimating principles that guide what is appropriate or safe to say at certain moments or in certain places.

When an alternative perspective is expressed, challenging the dominant discourse, it often involves pushing the boundaries of those legitimating principles to influence what is allowed to be said and what is being silenced. A historical juncture is a concept capturing what happens when there is interplay between historical events and political developments that change the dynamics of the discourse, and new ideas and practices gain more legitimacy. With time, these ideas are accepted as truth and are normalized through the power relations underlying the discourse (Jóhannesson, 2010).

In Part III, I also make an effort to weave together insights from the case study with concepts and ideas introduced in the theoretical chapter in Part I and offer some lessons learned from the case study.

### **3.4 Concluding Remarks**

As can be seen from the description in the previous sections, the research process was neither linear nor straightforward. There were plenty of surprises and unexpected discoveries, and I had to make decisions along the way about what to include and what to leave out. In some cases, I ended up dropping topics I had originally thought would play a large role in the analysis and including others that had not been part of my agenda. As can be seen from the list of questions in Appendix I, the last two questions focus on the relationship between gender and climate change. As the interviews progressed, I found that those questions did not necessarily provide fruitful answers, and I ended up placing less emphasis on them and keeping awareness of gender issues in the background rather than addressing them through direct questions. At the same time, the oil and gas issue emerged unexpectedly as a strong theme in the interviews, which eventually led to an entire chapter being dedicated to this topic.

In spite of the surprises along the way and the dynamic, non-linear process of the research, certain principles were used throughout the research to ensure academic rigor. I had a clear criterion in mind when deciding who to interview and which policy

documents to use. I was systematic in approaching those I asked for an interview, the type of information I provided them in advance, and how I conducted the interviews. The same applies to the way I used the methods I chose to rely on for analysis and interpretation of the data. With all this in mind, I feel confident that the research is carried out with the methodological discipline necessary to provide reliable results.

## 4. The Arctic: Is Climate Change a Threat?

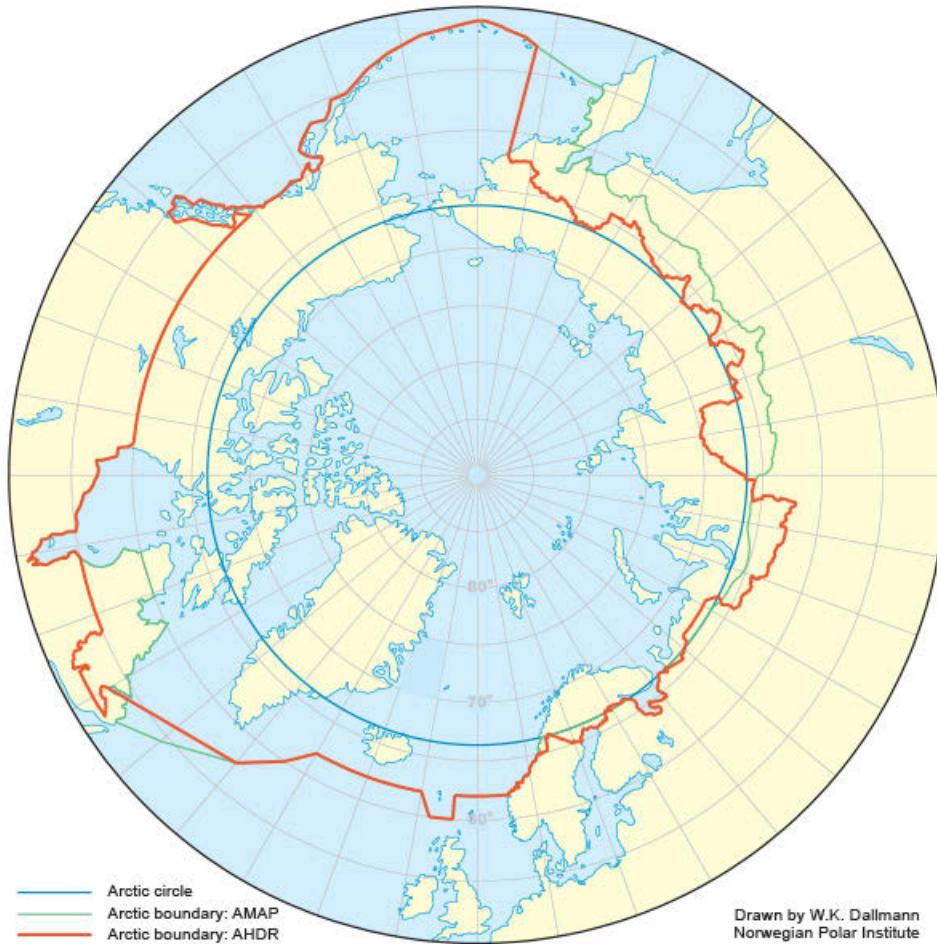
Because climate change is a global issue, looking at the impact of climate change in Iceland in isolation from the rest of the world does not make much sense. Geographically, Iceland is located in the Arctic, which has been identified as one of the areas in the world most vulnerable to climate change. Framing the case study of Iceland into the larger context of the Arctic region, therefore, is both relevant and useful as a way to obtain a better sense of how climate change is impacting security in this part of the world.

This chapter addresses the question: How is climate change impacting security in the Arctic? In it, I examine the relationship between geopolitical concerns and local human security challenges related to the impact of climate change. Background information on the Arctic is provided, Arctic regional security is discussed, and examples about local climate-related challenges are presented. As in other chapters, a feminist perspective and the roles that masculine and feminine values play in Arctic discourses are integrated into the analysis when relevant.

### 4.1 The Arctic Region

When discussing the Arctic, it is not always clear what geographical area is being referred to. Various methods have been used to define the geographical boundaries of the Arctic. In some cases, the Arctic refers to anything north of the Arctic Circle (66°N), but in most cases, when the region is being discussed in the context of politics or economic development, the area defined as the Arctic is broader.

Heininen and Southcott (2010) refer to the circumpolar north rather than the Arctic and define the region loosely as Alaska, Iceland, Greenland, the Faroe Islands, and the northern areas of Russia, Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Canada. The Arctic Human Development Report (AHDR) provides a similar, albeit more precise definition. In the AHDR, the Arctic encompasses all of Alaska; Canada North of 60°N, together with northern Quebec and Labrador; all of Greenland, the Faroe Islands, and Iceland; and the northernmost counties of Norway, Sweden, and Finland. In Russia, the areas included as part of the Arctic are Murmansk Oblast, the Nenets, Yamalo-Nenets, Taimyr and Chukotka autonomous okrugs, Vorkuta Citi in the Komi Republic, Norilsk and Igrska in Krasnoyarsky Kray, and those parts of the Sakha Republic whose boundaries lie closest to the Arctic Circle (Young & Einarsson, 2004). When I refer to the Arctic, I am referring to the area defined in the AHDR.



**Figure 1: The Arctic Region**

The red line represents the area belonging to the Arctic as defined by the AHDR (Young & Einarsson, 2004, p. 18). This study relies on the same definition when discussing the Arctic region.

### *Characteristics of the Arctic*

The Arctic is a homeland to approximately 4 million people. People have been living in the region for thousands of years. According to the second Human Development Report, the overall population has remained roughly the same since 2000, although there have been regional variations (Heleniak, 2014)<sup>8</sup>. In the past, however, the Arctic

<sup>8</sup> The two Arctic Human Development Reports were published in 2004 and 2014. The first publication was a major effort in collecting and compiling aggregate information about the Arctic as a region. The second report builds on the first and expands upon many of the topics. Whenever possible, I rely on information in the second report for the most updated data, but in some cases this is not possible, and I refer to chapters in the first report.

has often been presented as a pristine territory, waiting to be discovered. Arctic explorers' travelogues created an image of a cold, dangerous, distant, and mysterious region. Only the brave and heroic dared to travel there. The gendered aspect of discourses related to Arctic exploration in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century is obvious. Not only were all the explorers men, but the image of the explorer was one of a warrior, whose goal was to conquer. In *The Future History of the Arctic*, Emmerson recalls a quote from a letter the famous explorer, Fridjof Nansen, wrote to journalist W. T. Stead: "True civilization will not have been reached until all nations see that it is nobler to conquer nature than to conquer each other" (Emmerson, 2011, p. 17). Whereas the image of the explorer is that of the masculine hero, the Arctic as a region is feminized. The Arctic environment is pristine, untouched, and almost virginal. It is to be "conquered" by the brave explorer, as demonstrated in Nansen's quote.

Heininen and Southcott (2010) argue that since the 1970s, the notion of the Arctic as a frontier has been pushed aside and replaced with the notion of homeland: "The world outside this region has started to realize that people live here and that these people have aspirations to control their destiny in the same way that people in other regions have" (Heininen & Southcott, 2010, p. 1).

Yet, the external image of the Arctic as a frontier and untouched territory is still alive. During the 2<sup>nd</sup> Arctic Circle conference<sup>9</sup> in Iceland, held in October 2014, *Morgunblaðið*, one of the largest newspapers in Iceland, published a special 50-page edition focusing on the Arctic. In flipping through the pages, one could easily conclude that the Arctic was only ice and snow, and most of the articles describe adventurous trips of white Western men exploring the region. There were no photos from local communities, hardly any discussion about indigenous groups, and no women were present. Heiðar Guðjónsson, an Icelandic economist and one of the investors in the emerging oil and gas sector in Iceland, wrote a five-page feature article in the edition titled: "Conquering the North" (*Morgunblaðið*, 2014). In other words, the masculine discourses about the Arctic are not merely a thing of the past; they are clearly noticeable in present-day discourses.

Images of the Arctic are one thing, but describing actual geographical and social features is another. The Arctic spans a large area and conditions vary from place to place. There are, however, certain characteristics that merit the label of the Arctic as a unique geographical region. Some key elements include a cold climate, high latitudes with low levels of solar energy, limited biodiversity, and the existence of ice and snow.

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9 The Arctic Circle is an assembly held for the first time in Reykjavík, Iceland, in October 2013. The initiator of the Arctic Circle was Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, President of Iceland, 1996–2016. He envisioned the event as becoming an annual international gathering of leaders from Arctic states: academics, politicians, environmentalists, business executives, representatives from indigenous groups, and other stakeholders in the region.

These conditions have shaped the lives of people living in the Arctic region. Some of the key social elements shared by many Arctic communities include isolation, limited forms of agriculture, dependence on natural resource exploitation, and lack of diversified economy (Heininen & Southcott, 2010).

In addition to geographical features, there are certain population characteristics that make the various Arctic populations closely related to each other and different from those living in the more southern parts of their countries. Fertility rates tend to be higher in the Arctic than the southern parts and life expectancy lower. The region has been suffering from outflow in migration in recent decades, and this also contributes to an unusual age structure, with a relatively high proportion of population in the labor-force age group and younger, and a smaller portion in older age groups (Bogoyavlenskiy & Siggner, 2004).

Gender composition is another notable factor; the Arctic region has a higher male gender ratio than the rest of the world. This should come as no surprise, given the high reliance on resource extraction. The gender composition, however, differs greatly within the region. A new pattern has emerged, whereby females are increasingly seeking higher education. This has resulted in out-migration of women, first from smaller to larger settlements and then out of the Arctic, either to cities in the southern parts of Arctic states or abroad, in seek of employment that matches their skill levels (Heleniak, 2014). At the other end of the spectrum is Russia, where male gender ratios in periphery regions in the Arctic have declined – not because of the out-migration of males, but because of their lower life expectancy. The lower life expectancies have been explained by Russia's economic transition that disproportionately affected men, and the impact was even greater in the Arctic regions than in the rest of Russia (Heleniak, 2014).

The 4 million inhabitants of the Arctic are not evenly distributed around the region. The chapter about demographics in the first ADHR (Bogoyavlenskiy & Siggner, 2004) revealed that about half of the Arctic population resides in northern regions of Russia, the second largest group is in Alaska, followed by the Nordic countries. Canada, in spite of having almost as large geographical area located in the Arctic as Russia does, has only about 130,000 people living in its northern territories.

This distribution could be changing, however The 2nd ADHR, published in 2014, provides updated information on population trends, showing that in contrast to rapid global population growth, the population of the Arctic has declined slightly since 2000, primarily because of the continued population decline in the Russian Arctic. Alaska, Iceland, and the Canadian Arctic, however, all grew faster than the global rate. (Heleniak, 2014).

Another key feature that makes the Arctic different from the rest of the world is the extremely sparse population, with vast uninhabited territories and relatively big settlements. About two-thirds of the total population live in communities of 5,000 or more, but the pattern varies across countries and regions. In Arctic Russia, over 80 percent live in large communities, over 70 percent in Iceland, 60 percent in Alaska, and over half in northern Sweden. In Arctic Canada about 40 percent live in large settlements,

less than 40 percent in northern Norway and the Faroe Islands, and only one-third in Greenland (Bogoyavlenskiy & Siggner, 2004).

Part of the population of the Arctic is indigenous to the region, meaning that their ancestors have been living in the area for over a thousand years. In contrast, those considered non-indigenous are people with European background that migrated to the region much later, and remain closely connected to the societies south of them. Although indigenous populations account for less than 10 percent of the current population, the situation of these groups deserves special attention. They tend to rely more directly on natural resources than non-indigenous populations do, being engaged in traditional subsistence sectors, such as reindeer herding, fishing, or hunting, and are therefore especially vulnerable to climate changes.

Indigenous groups are as different as they are many and have diverse cultural backgrounds. They do, however, share certain characteristics. In most cases, those groups were marginalized when the modern states were created. They speak a language that differs from that of the dominant group and have often experienced discrimination in both the political and legal system (Csonka & Schweitzer, 2004).

In summary, although Arctic external images often paint the region as untouched and isolated, the area is a homeland to over 4 million people. Although Arctic populations are diverse, certain commonalities can be identified across the region. Similarly, in spite of variations in the natural environment, certain common geographical features can be identified – features that have shaped the Arctic communities.

### *Governance in the Arctic*

The Arctic is clearly a geographic region where the different areas share certain common features. But defining the Arctic as a political region is more problematic because, whereas eight sovereign states have territories within the region, only the most northern areas of these states belong to the region. (The one exception is Iceland, which is located entirely within the Arctic.) These northern regions are at the mercy of national governments located in the southern part of their respective states, where the majority of the population lives. This not only makes it difficult to collect economic and demographic data specifically for the Arctic, but also complicates shared decision-making processes on issues that call for collective action – various environmental issues, for example, including climate change. This situation leaves us with the question of how an effective governance system<sup>10</sup> can be built in the region without undermining the sovereignty of Arctic nations and the autonomy of indigenous groups.

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10 The term “governance” is a concept with multiple and sometimes conflicting definitions. In this context, a useful and reliable definition is presented in the Arctic Yearbook published in 2015, in which governance and governing is the main theme. There, governance is defined as: “Numerous principles, objectives and meanings that create the space in which actors will implement ideas, policies and institutions and/or institutional arrangements in a way to achieve collectively decided objectives” (Heininen, Exner-Pior, & Plouffe, 2015).

In spite of these complicating factors, an active region building has taken place in the last twenty years, in which the Arctic has emerged as a distinct political region with its own unique governing system. Starting from the assumption that regions are socially constructed, Jegerova (2013) uses a theory of new regionalism to argue that the Arctic is a fairly well developed region. The individual Arctic regions have relatively strong social and political ties and strong incentives for cooperation. The notion of the Arctic as a political region, however, is a relatively recent phenomenon. During the Cold War, the area was highly affected by the political and military competition and arms race between the two superpowers: the United States and the Soviet Union. As the Cold War came to an end, cooperation among Arctic states and among Arctic civil society organizations increased. Since then, there have been some interesting and often innovating developments in the governance of the region, both at the local level, in the form of more self-government, and at the regional level, where international cooperation has increased. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to give an in-depth analysis of this development, but two issues – devolution and cooperation – are discussed here.

First, devolution has occurred in many areas where power has been transferred to the subnational level and self-government increased, empowering communities to make decisions on their own affairs without the interference of external forces. McBeth (2010) discusses this development in a book chapter with a focus on political changes at the subnational level in seven Arctic states, (Iceland is excluded because it is one administrative unit and does not have sub-national governments.) He argues that in most Arctic states there has been a growth in new political structures that have had the effect of increasing the self-governing capabilities of people in northern communities. The editors of the *Arctic Yearbook* support this argument by proposing that Arctic governance is less hierarchical and more decentralized than conventional governance (Heininen, Exner-Pior, & Plouffe, 2015).

Second, increased regional cooperation has characterized the Arctic since the end of the Cold War, wherein representatives of states, civil society, the research community, and the private sector have been involved. Again, the approach at the regional level has been to avoid hierarchical discussions and decision making, and the focus has instead been on an inclusive approach, involving diverse stakeholders.

In 1991, the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) was created, eventually leading to the establishment of the Arctic Council. The Council was established as a high-level intergovernmental forum for promoting cooperation, coordination, and interaction among the Arctic states. Member states are Canada, Denmark (including Greenland and the Faroe Islands), Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden, and the United States. Membership in the Arctic Council is also open for civil society organizations of indigenous peoples in the region (Arctic Council, n.d.). The Arctic Council and associated working groups have been instrumental in creating a platform for cooperation, but as a soft-law body without a clear policy mandate,

and no permanent secretariat until recently<sup>11</sup>, its effectiveness as the key governance institution in the Arctic has been questioned.

This is, of course, the situation with international relations in general, because the international system is organized around sovereign states as the main actors. Although states have traditionally cooperated on a variety of issues, there is a certain reluctance to enter into legally binding agreements if such agreements compromise their sovereignty. Instead, the softer approach of a political arrangement without legal obligations is sometimes preferred. Abott and Snidal (2000) discuss the difference between hard and soft law in the international system, explaining that hard law generally refers to legally binding obligations that are precise and delegate authority for interpreting and implementing the law. Soft law, in contrast, does not impose the same level of binding obligations on states and is therefore often easier to achieve than hard legislation. Sometimes soft-law arrangements develop over time into more legally binding agreements. This does not mean, however, that soft law cannot be valuable on its own. Soft law can create a forum for cooperation and helps to create new norms and discourses that can reshape international politics.

The Arctic Council was originally established as a soft-law instrument and is not based on a legally binding agreement between the Arctic states, but is a political declaration, signed in Ottawa, Canada, in 1996 (Arctic Council, 1996). In recent years, however, steps have been taken to strengthen the Council. The signing of the *Agreement on Cooperation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic* in 2011 is one sign of this development, but the signature marks the first time the Arctic States signed a legally binding agreement that was negotiated using the Arctic Council as a platform. The agreement was signed at the same ministerial meeting in Nuuk, Greenland, when agreement was reached to establish a permanent secretariat of the Arctic Council. Exner-Pirot (2012) argues that the meeting marked a move from a soft- to a hard-law approach to governing the Arctic region, and notes that the search and rescue agreement may be only the first of several legal instruments with the aim of regulating the Arctic Ocean. Other initiatives include the development of a mandatory Polar Code for ships that is being negotiated within the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and an international instrument on Arctic marine oil pollution, preparedness, and response (Exner-Pirot, 2012).

In addition to the Arctic Council and specific Arctic-related agreements, there are international conventions, the rules of which apply in the Arctic, as elsewhere, even though those agreements are not specifically focused on the Arctic region. The most important one is the UN Law of the Sea Convention (UNCLOS), which provides

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11 In 2011, at the ministerial meeting in Nuuk, the member states agreed to establish a permanent secretariat of the Arctic Council to strengthen its capacity to respond to emerging challenges and opportunities of the region (Exner-Pirot, 2012). The secretariat is located in Tromsø, Norway.

the legal basis for most issues relating to the oceans and continental shelves. The Convention establishes the rights of coastal states to claim a 200-mile exclusive economic zone (EEZ), but it also gives the option to states to claim an even larger EEZ – up to 350 nautical miles – if they can prove that their continental shelf extends that far into the sea (United Nations, 1982). This option is of particular relevance in the Arctic, because it may result in some overlapping claims.

Both globalization and environmental change, including climate change, are creating new challenges in the Arctic that are calling for a re-evaluation of the current governance structures. It remains to be seen if this will lead toward a governance system whereby binding agreements play a larger role, as argued by Exner-Pirot. What does seem clear already is that climate change has become entangled with questions related to geopolitics (and power politics) and is influencing security in the region. Concerns have been raised about the way climate change will impact both national security of Arctic states and human security at the local level. This topic is discussed further in the following section.

## 4.2 Security in the Arctic

Although the image of the Arctic as pristine territory waiting to be conquered by brave male explorers has been challenged in last few decades, masculine values continued to play an important role in the geopolitics of the region during World War II and the Cold War, when the Arctic had often served as a playing field for superpowers to demonstrate their military power. In recent times, however, the international relations in the region have been conducted in a more cooperative spirit, and increasing attention has been placed on human security at the local level.

Heininen (2010) identifies three stages of security in the Arctic in past decades. The first stage started during World War II, when the Arctic was militarized. During this period, open battle took place –bombings of the harbor of Kirkenes in Norway, for example, and the harbor and town of Murmansk in the Soviet Union. The struggle between states about sovereignty had reached these northern regions and military tension was high.

The second stage of security covers most of the Cold War, and Heininen identifies this stage as “military theatre”. During this period, political and military competition between the two superpowers – the USA and the Soviet Union – was a dominant factor, and the arms race was at its height. By the end of the Cold War, the Arctic was heavily militarized, the region was one of the most important platforms for nuclear weapons systems, and there was a strong sense of the enemy state being a threat to national security on both sides of the conflict.

Heininen’s third stage is the transition stage, indicating the shift toward demilitarization of the region after the Cold War. The transition was inspired by the 1987

Murmansk speech of Mikhail Gorbachev, then the President of the Soviet Union, and included not only demilitarization, but also an increase in civil cooperation in several fields such as economics, environmental protection, and science (Heininen, 2010). The establishment of the Arctic Council, discussed in the previous section, was an important component of this third stage.

Although masculine values of competition and control over territory can easily be linked to the two first stages of security, the transition phase introduces some new elements, indicating a possible shift in values. Heininen and Southcott's (2010) argument that the Arctic is being viewed increasingly as homeland for indigenous peoples and as a platform for international and interregional cooperation supports the idea that a shift is taking place. This emerging vision not only challenges the myth of the Arctic as primarily frozen, extreme, and exotic, but also the view of the region as a military playing field.

But how do climate change and the melting of the Arctic ice influence this picture? Will the environmental changes threaten peace and stability of the region, leading to a race for resources and competition between and among states? Or will climate change provide added incentives for cooperation among states and other stakeholders, changing the third security stage identified by Heininen from a "transition" stage to a more long-term "transformation" stage?

### *The Impacts of Climate Change*

Climate change in the Arctic not only influences nature, ecosystems, and communities in the region, but can have far-reaching consequences at a global scale. The melting of the Arctic ice cap will contribute to sea-level rise, ocean currents can be affected, and the thawing of tundra can lead to the release of large amounts of methane into the atmosphere (Arctic Council, 2004; Larsen, et al., 2014). The local and regional impacts will also be significant, and the increasingly rapid rate of climate change is already testing the resilience of Arctic communities in a number of ways and will continue to do so in the future. Severe coastal erosion is expected to increase the vulnerability of many coastal communities; thawing ground will disrupt transportation, buildings and other infrastructure; and indigenous communities will continue to face major economic and cultural impacts. Vegetation zones will shift and animal species will be affected.

On a more positive note, although many of the changes can threaten livelihoods and the wellbeing of northern communities, other changes may provide new economic opportunities. Reduced sea ice is likely to increase marine transport and access to resources. The three sectors most often discussed in this context are fishing, shipping, and the oil and gas sector. As for the first of the three – fishing – there is still great uncertainty about how climate change will impact fish stock and the management of fisheries in the Arctic. Some things, however, are more likely than others. Fish populations will move further north and certain fish stocks are likely to expand their range or alter their

migration patterns, which means that they will straddle the EEZs of numerous states. In some cases, stock abundance and productivity may increase (Jeffers, 2010). The potential for increased shipping in the Arctic as the ice melts is another topic that has received considerable attention. New shipping routes, previously blocked by ice, may become an attractive alternative to current routes, saving shipping companies both time (due to shorter distances) and money (less fuel cost). The Northern Sea Route (NSR), north of Russia, is the most promising, but the North-West Passage, north of Canada, is also of great interest to the shipping sector, whereas the Transpolar Sea Route (TSR), directly across the North Pole, is a more distant option (Humpert & Raspotnik, 2012). Finally, warmer temperatures and the melting of the Arctic ice are expected to make previously inaccessible oil and gas resources attractive options for utilization. The often-cited US geological survey published in 2008 estimated that the Arctic could hold about 13 percent of the world's undiscovered oil reserves and up to 30 percent of the world's undiscovered gas reserves (U.S. Department of the Interior, 2008).

Even the potential positive economic impact of climate change in the Arctic, however, has been a cause of concern for many, who worry that this greater access to resources will turn into a “race for resources”. In fact, it is this tension between states about who has the right to resources in the Arctic that has grabbed a large share of the public attention when it comes to the relationships between climate change and security in the Arctic.

In an article published in *Foreign Affairs*, Borgerson (2008) argues that global climate change has given birth to a new scramble for territory and resources among Arctic powers. “Although the melting Arctic holds great promise, it also poses grave dangers. The combination of new shipping routes, trillions of dollars in possible oil and gas resources, and poorly defined picture of state ownership makes for a toxic brew,” he says (Borgerson, 2008, p. 73).

Borgerson's concern has been echoed in numerous newspaper accounts in recent years (Pilkington, 2007; Rosenthal, 2012). Diplomats and officials of Arctic states have complained, however, about an overemphasis on the potential for conflict. The rhetoric of states is clearly one of cooperation. As described in the previous section on Arctic governance, international cooperation has increased over the past two decades, and a number of regional initiatives and forums have been created that have built a good foundation for peace and stability in the region. In a conference in 2010, Karen Elleman, the Danish minister for Nordic cooperation and the environment at the time, emphasized that when it came to the predicted rush for resources in the Arctic, there wasn't very much to rush for. Around 97 percent of the resources to be found under the Arctic Ocean fall within states Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) according to UNCLOS, so there is not much left for other outside players. “In other words, there is not much left to disagree about,” she claimed. “The Arctic is not – and will not – be an area of conflict, no matter how much of the ice sheet should melt or how fast. All Arctic

states agree on a peaceful future for the Arctic.” (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2010, p. 14). A Russian official, Anton Vassiliev, expressed similar frustrations at the same conference over the emphasis the media has given to potential conflicts in the Arctic:

The predominant feature of state of affairs in the Arctic is low tension, growing cooperation and mutual trust among the regional states, who will not allow to “rock the boat” or impose on themselves non-existent or artificially overblown problems. (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2010, p. 32)

In spite of this emphasis on cooperation, some tension is lurking beneath the surface. For example, secret US embassy cables released by WikiLeaks in May 2011 quoted comments by Russian Ambassador Dmitriy Rogozin to NATO saying: “The 21<sup>st</sup> Century will see a fight for resources and Russia should not be defeated in this fight.” Also released was the claim that the Danish Foreign Minister Per Stig Moeller joked with the Americans, saying: “If you stay out, then the rest of us will have more to carve up in the Arctic” (Jones & Watts, 2011).

The same kind of mixed messages can be detected when reading through the Arctic strategies of the eight Arctic states. A comparative study of the strategies reveals that all states recognize the current stability and peacefulness of the region. Yet, state sovereignty is also emphasized as a major priority in many of the strategies (Bailes & Heininen, 2012). Also noteworthy is the fact that all states except Russia identify environmental protection and climate change as a priority or basic objective, yet all the Arctic strategies name exploitation of fossil fuels as one of the main economic activity and business opportunities in the Arctic region (Bailes & Heininen, 2012).

Keil (2014) expresses criticism that much of the discussion about potential resource conflict in the Arctic is speculative rather than empirically based. By looking systematically at the oil and gas interests of the five littoral Arctic states that have access to the Arctic Ocean (USA, Canada, Russia, Norway, and Denmark via Greenland), she finds that the potential for inter-state conflict is low. The USA and Canada are unlikely to join in a rush for Russia’s Arctic resources, given their own resource base, not only in their northern regions, but also in more southerly regions. Norway and Denmark both concentrate on their own resources, which are important for both economic and autonomy reasons. Should a conflict arise, she claims, it would be most likely to be related to the complicated business relationships between the Russian state and foreign oil and gas companies wanting to get a share of Russia’s vast hydrocarbon resources to satisfy European demand (Keil, 2014).

Even though the fisheries sector has received less media attention than the oil and gas industries have, when stories about the potential rush for resources are published, actual inter-state disputes may be more likely to appear in this sector. When migration patterns of fish stocks change, they may begin to straddle into new EEZs, disrupting

existing fisheries practices and creating confusion about which states have the right to exploit the resource. The mackerel dispute between the EU and Norway on one hand, and Iceland and the Faroe Islands on the other, is one example and has sometimes been labeled as the first climate-related fisheries conflict (Davies, 2010).

In summary, the increasing access to resources in the Arctic is likely to create some tensions among states, but this does not necessarily have to lead to open conflicts. On the contrary, cooperation is increasing, and the rhetoric of states indicates that this cooperation will deepen in the future.

Whereas the potential for tension over access to resources has frequently made headlines, other issues of concern related to human security challenges at the local level are receiving less attention, with the exception of some focus on indigenous communities. This means that little research has been conducted on the socio-economic impact of climate change on non-indigenous communities in the Arctic, and scant attention has generally been paid to the possible threats that climate change poses at the local level.

### *Global Concerns – Local Challenges*

Climate change has generally been framed as a global issue. Nilson (2009) argues that this focus on the global character of the problem can delay a regional response and make policy makers less aware of the need for local adaptation. How an issue is framed, she explains, refers to the way we define a problem, its impact and potential solutions in ways that highlight certain aspects and downplay others. Framing is important because it molds and influences policy debates. Nilson uses the process of the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA) as a case study to demonstrate how moving the focus from the global to the regional brought new actors into climate knowledge production and policy, with an increased emphasis on the complexity of the social and cultural impacts of climate change among indigenous peoples (Nilson, 2009).

One consequence of framing climate change first and foremost as a global issue is that climate change becomes an abstract problem in people's minds, and they find it difficult to relate it to their daily lives. Even in cases in which climate changes are having a direct impact on communities, those changes can become so entangled with other environmental factors or with local economic, political, and cultural issues, that the local people may not recognize the role of climate change. As a result, the local population may channel all its efforts into adapting to the changes, but put no pressure on policy makers to address the root causes of the changes, which would include more focus on reducing emissions.

This is exactly what Noorgard (2011) found in her field research in a small community in Norway. During the winter of 2000–2001, unusually warm weather occurred in the rural community where she was conducting her research. The winter was recorded as the second warmest in the past 130 years. As a result, the local ski area did not open until late December (and then only after investments in artificial snowmaking equip-

ment), which had a measurable negative impact on the community. Also, the local lake did not freeze sufficiently to allow for ice fishing. Both local and national media related the unusual weather directly to climate change. Yet, residents did not respond by pressuring politicians to address root causes of climate change. In spite of being well informed and living in a democratic society, they did not write letters to the editor or pressure decision makers or take measures to cut down on the use of fossil fuels. Norgaard suggests this lack of response is due to a socially organized denial, whereby abstract knowledge of climate change exists among the population, but this knowledge is disconnected from political, social, and private life (Norgaard, 2011).

I found the same level of complexity when I started collecting information about climate policy nationally and at the local level in Iceland. As discussed in greater detail in the next chapter, the people I interviewed were knowledgeable about climate change and concerned about the consequences, but generally did not view it as an issue that had any relevance to their daily lives.

Would framing climate change differently lead to different results? A feminist understanding of security often takes a bottom-up approach, starting from the everyday lives of ordinary people at the local level. Wibben (2011), for example, argues for a narrative approach to security by framing events in such a way that bottom-up narratives are listened to and taken seriously. She takes as examples the stories of ordinary women about how they experienced the events of 11 September 2001 in New York and Washington DC, and how these events influenced their already-complicated lives. “The framing of events in a particular narrative always has implications for action,” she states, claiming that the framing decides what we hear and how we respond (Wibben, 2011, p. 3). Hoogensen Gjørvi (2014) suggests a similar approach in a book chapter in which she discusses the relevance of human security in the global North. By defining security from the bottom up, it becomes possible to dig deeper into the security perspective of communities, states, and regions, and security is articulated from the point of view of those who are most insecure or those who are often on the margins. With this approach, the individual experience is considered relevant, not just at the level of the individual, but also in the context of the community, the state, and the global order (Hoogensen Gjørvi, 2014).

If we approach security from the bottom-up grassroots level, starting from the everyday lives of people at the community level, it could influence the stories we tell about climate change and how it is impacting security. In fact, our perception of climate change as a security threat could be quite different if viewed more as local issue relevant to the daily lives of ordinary people. An example from the past can help clarify how this process can work in practice.

The role that indigenous groups played in the international negotiations about Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) leading up to the signing of the Stockholm Convention in 2001 provides an interesting example of how a global issue was reframed as

a local issue threatening the human security of Arctic Inuit communities. During the negotiations, Sheila Watt-Cloutier, representative of the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), emerged as a forceful voice, telling stories about how chemicals released into the environment in more southern regions were poisoning the traditional food the Inuit people had enjoyed for centuries. She asked the negotiators and observers to imagine the emotions of her people – the shock, panic, rage, grief, and despair – as they discovered that the food that had nourished them and kept them whole physically and spiritually was now poisoning them (Johnson N. , 2014). Her words were backed up by scientific findings; researchers had discovered that concentrations of contaminants were five to ten times higher in the breast milk of northern women than in the breast milk of women in the south, even though the northern locations were further from the industrial centers responsible for much of the pollution. Some of those chemicals travel through air currents to the Arctic and fall with snow into the tundra and into the ocean, where they are taken up by lichen, plants, and algae that are then consumed by many of the animals that Inuit like to eat and depend on for nutrition (Johnson N. , 2014). To further emphasize her point, Watt-Cloutier presented the negotiators with a gift, a carving of an Inuit mother breastfeeding her child. The gift was not only accepted, but placed at the high table in front of the facilitators of the negotiations, acting as a reminder of the ethical dimension of the negotiations and putting a human face on the otherwise somewhat technical problems under discussion.

Watt-Cloutier's interventions in the negotiation process were in essence an act to carve out space for feminine values to be taken seriously. She did that by humanizing the issue and using the language of emotions to create empathy. Johnson, who has documented the process, summarized the role of the ICC with the following words: "Inuit knowledge was made visible and tangible in the negotiation process through personal narratives that encouraged empathy by way of shared feeling, as well as through the gift of an Inuit carving" (Johnson N. , 2014, p. 163).

Although there have been some attempts to put a human face on climate change by sharing stories about the impact of changes on local communities, both in the Arctic and elsewhere<sup>12</sup>, the dominant discourse is still highly influenced by the framing of climate change as a global problem. Even in the Pacific Islands, often considered the most vulnerable of all regions in the world to climate change due to the risks associated with rising sea levels, the focus has been on top-down modeling approaches. This has included evaluating the impact rather than focusing on human security using a bottom-up approach in which the concerns and insights of people at the community level would be taken seriously (Barnett, 2010).

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12 See, for example, a website on the Canadian Inuit perspectives on climate change (ITK, n.d.) and projects conducted by the international development agency CARE (CARE, n.d.).

In the Arctic, the emphasis on the global nature of climate change, rather than highlighting the local dimension, manifests as an emphasis on adaptation; whereas the discussion about ways in which the states of the regions could collectively address root causes by reducing emissions (and pressuring other states to do so as well) is much less visible. In other words, climate change is something that is happening to the Arctic and the focus is on ways to adjust to the current and upcoming changes. This approach not only highlights protection against threats against national and human security; it also focuses on ways to take as much advantage as possible of the economic opportunities. The fact that utilizing the resources that now are likely to become more accessible – most notably the oil and gas resources – could further intensify the climate problem is only rarely mentioned and does not seem to lessen the interests of states to take full advantage of the oil and gas resources in the region. Man's right to exploit nature is not questioned. On the contrary, the older images of the Arctic as a frontier have been revitalized, and once again the region has become a challenge for brave males to conquer. This time around, instead of discovering new land, the focus is on overcoming the obstacles of the harsh environmental conditions still present in the Arctic to conquer the resources that are now becoming more readily accessible. The earlier reference to the article written in an Icelandic newspaper by an oil investor, entitled "Conquering the North", is one example of the revitalization of the frontier discourse (Morgunblaðið, 2014). Another can be found in Bergeson's (2008) article, in which he uses the phrase "Go North – Young Man" as a subheading – as a metaphor to compare the Arctic to the Wild West – the North America frontier in earlier times, when young men were encouraged to "Go West" to conquer new lands.

Whereas the dominant discourse has focused in recent years on taking advantage of economic opportunities, alternative discourses can also be traced – discourses that focus more on ecological destruction due to climate change; the related human security threats at the local level; and the policy measures that would be necessary at the local, regional, and global level to reduce these insecurities.

These discourses do not appear out of thin air. They build on earlier environmental discourses that have influenced policy in the region and were instrumental in starting the process that eventually led to the establishment of the Arctic Council. Heininen (2011) claims that environmental concerns gained more attention in the Arctic in the 1980s and links it to the environmental awakening that had already begun in the 1960s in the Western world (see Section 2.4). According to Heininen, indigenous groups and other non-state actors pushed Arctic states to place environmental issues on their agendas. The Arctic states reacted positively to this demand and started the so-called Rovaniemi Process for Arctic environmental protection, which later developed into the Arctic Council and associated working groups. From the beginning, environmental protection has been a core issue dealt with in these Arctic forums (Heininen, 2011). In other words, a discourse emphasizing the importance of environmental protection

has been present for some time in the Arctic, although the message about how to take advantage of economic opportunities has become more dominant in recent years, in association with climate change and the melting of the Arctic icecap.

The question remains, however, whether these counter discourses that warn against the dangers of climate change are loud enough to be heard and responded to by policy makers. Is the soil in the Arctic region fertile enough for some shift in values toward a more feminine way of viewing the relationship between humans and nature?

### **4.3 The Potential for a Value Shift?**

In spite of the masculine themes evident in Arctic discourses, there is great potential for a counter discourse celebrating feminine values as an important contribution to the achievement of peaceful relations, economic justice, and environmental and human security.

Two factors deserve special attention as a source of optimism. First, in many indigenous cultures, the view of the relationship between humans and nature is quite different and more harmonious than the Western scientific rationalism dominant in Europe and North America. Listening to the voices of indigenous groups in the Arctic and giving their opinions some space can allow them to play an important role in introducing an alternative perspective. Second, the Nordic countries, all of which belong to the Arctic, have been known as states that pay special attention to gender equality and social justice. Although the three other Arctic states (USA, Russia, and Canada) are larger and more powerful, the smaller Nordic states still have a seat at the table in the Arctic Council and have various ways of expressing their voice in Arctic forums.

Indigenous groups tend to emphasize the mutual relationship between humans and nature more than does the Western worldview, wherein the domination of humans over nature is a stronger theme. In an article about the ways in which indigenous groups in Alaska observe and respond to climate change, the authors emphasize the importance of recognizing and honoring the knowledge that indigenous perspectives can offer: “A western science emphasis on facts and an indigenous emphasis on relationships to spiritual and biophysical components indicate important but distinct contribution that each knowledge system can make” (Cochran, et al., 2013).

Cochran et al. argue that in spite of their keen awareness of climate change, indigenous groups in Alaska have not played a central role in national or international assessment of climate change. Yet, their perspective is vitally important. Indigenous groups recognize Earth as a coupled socio-biophysical system in which all things are connected. This view can provide an ethical framework that can guide our response to climate change (Cochran, et al., 2013). The same theme about the interconnectedness between human and nature can be seen in the message of Sheila Watt-Cloutier, who was

the leading indigenous voice in the POPs negotiations. Watt-Cloutier has continued her work as an environmental advocate, presenting examples of indigenous perspectives in climate change discourses. She has argued for the need to put a human face on climate change, framing it as a human-rights issue. In 2010, the Transformational Canadians program selected her as one of 25 transformational Canadians for her role as an Inuit activist. In an interview after her nomination, she described her approach: “The style of leadership that I have is one of bringing people together and understanding that we’re all one here. The planet and its people are one” (Rockel, 2010).

Indigenous female leaders like Patricia Cochran<sup>13</sup> in Alaska and Sheila Watt-Cloutier in Canada have drawn attention to alternative perspectives on climate change, rooted in indigenous cultures but with a clear link to feminine values, such as the importance of relationships and the role of emotions in policy making. But what about the Nordic countries, which are known for their emphasis on gender equality? Has the emphasis on feminine values in Nordic cultures influenced climate policy in the Nordic states?

The Nordic countries are often referred to as states where gender equality and feminine values have high priorities. This can be seen in welfare policies that emphasize childcare, maternal and paternal leaves, and the political participation of both women and men. The five Nordic countries usually place in the top rank in the Gender Gap Index, published annually by the World Economic Forum. This index benchmarks national gender gaps on economic, political, educational, and health-based criteria. In 2014, the five Nordic countries were placed in the first five seats. Sitting at the top of this list, for the 6th year in the row, was Iceland (World Economic Forum, 2014). One of the key factors that set the Nordic countries apart from the rest of the world is the political empowerment of women, indicating that women have more influence over public policy than do women in other regions.

The Nordic countries, along with the Netherlands, are also on the top of the list in Hofstede’s analysis of cultures that score high on characteristics that he labels as feminine (Hofstede, 2011). The masculinity versus femininity index is one of six dimensions<sup>14</sup> Hofstede has used to analyze and compare the national cultures of 76 states. A masculine culture is likely to prefer competition and assertiveness over cooperation and caring for the weak. Gender roles are also likely to be more traditional in cultures that score high on the masculine dimension, whereas greater emphasis is placed on gender equality in the more feminine cultures (Hofstede, 2011).

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13 Patricia Cochran, the lead author of the article cited about indigenous views on climate change in Alaska, is, like Watt-Cloutier, a former chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Council and served as the chair of the Indigenous People’s Global Summit on Climate Change.

14 The other five dimensions are: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism versus collectivism, long-term versus short-term orientation, and indulgence versus restraint.

Thus, the Nordic countries have shown leadership at the global level in eliminating gender equality and should be more open than many other states to feminine views, challenging the more dominant masculine worldview.

But does this have any influence on climate policy? The results of the Climate Change Performance Index indicate that there may be some relationship between an ambitious climate policy and the cooperative elements more noticeable in feminine cultures than those that score high on the masculine dimension. The index, which is published by the environmental NGOs German Watch and the Climate Action Network, uses standardized criteria to track the climate protection performance of 58 countries that together are responsible for more than 90 percent of global energy-related emissions. In the most recent report, three out of the five Nordic countries are placed in the group of twelve states considered to have “good” climate policy; i.e. Denmark (4<sup>th</sup> place), Sweden (5<sup>th</sup> place) and Iceland (13<sup>th</sup> place). The first three places in the index are reserved for countries with a climate policy that can be considered “very good” and those spots remain empty because none of the countries being evaluated have an ambitious enough policy to be categorized in that way. Norway is ranked 27<sup>th</sup>, belonging to a group of states with moderate climate policies, but Finland’s number 32 spot puts it in league with countries whose climate policy is considered “poor”. The three larger Arctic states are all below the Nordic countries on the list, with the USA in 44<sup>th</sup> place and also belonging to the group with “poor” policies, but Russia (56<sup>th</sup> place) and Canada (58<sup>th</sup> place) are close to the bottom, with “very poor” policies (Burch, Marten, & Bals, 2014).

Research by Magnúsdóttir & Kronsell (2015) illustrates, however, that although the Nordic countries have an image of being both climate- and gender-friendly, balanced gender representation in decision-making on climate policy does not automatically translate into gender-sensitive policies. These authors discovered that in spite of a relatively equal representation of men and women in institutions that shape climate policies in three Nordic states (Sweden, Norway, and Denmark), climate policies remain silent on gender. So although the Nordic countries can be considered successful in reducing greenhouse gas emissions according to their stated goals and although they have a fairly equal gender representation in institutions dealing with climate policy, awareness of the relationship between gender and climate is low. The authors of the study propose that one reason for this silence could be masculine norms and power, which are so deeply institutionalized in climate-relevant institutions that policy-makers, regardless of their gender, accept and adapt their views to fit these norms (Magnúsdóttir & Kronsell, 2015).

Values and beliefs are important in how we view the world. They are a key factor in how cultural norms emerge, and can be an influential factor in how public policy is shaped and implemented. Thus, exploring the values underlying discourse on climate change and security in the Arctic is an important step in our search for solutions to

new security challenges associated with climate change. In Chapter 2 (State of the Art and Theory), an argument was presented claiming that dominant theories in international relations are based on a partial view of human nature that is stereotypically masculine. The current dominant discourse about the Arctic, emphasizing the inevitable exploitation of resources and the potential resource conflict is one example of how these masculine values can manifest. A worldview that is more inclusive of the feminine characteristics, paying attention to both the conflictual and cooperative elements of human nature, would broaden our policy options and be more likely to address the real security needs of people at the local level. Such a perspective gives hope for an international community that is more cooperative, capable of prioritizing long-term common benefits over short-term individual gains, and reshaping human interactions with nature away from a relationship of domination into one that bears the spirit of partnership.

In spite of the dominant Arctic discourse focusing on resource exploitation and competition between states, a counter discourse exists wherein more feminine values are in the forefront. Yet, it is not clear if those alternative voices are loud and powerful enough to influence policy and how Arctic states approach challenges related to climate change. A closer look at one Arctic state, where climate-related discourses are analyzed in more detail, could shed some light on this question. This will be the topic of Part II of this dissertation, where Iceland will be presented as a case study.

#### **4.4 Concluding Remarks**

In this chapter I have sought to answer the question: How is climate change impacting security in the Arctic? The discussion has included an examination of the relationship between geopolitical concerns at the international level and human security challenges at the local level.

To answer the question about how climate change is impacting security, one must be clear about what is meant by “security”. In this dissertation, security is approached as a broad concept, encompassing not only traditional national security concerns, but also human security challenges at the local level. Although climate change may create some risks for the Arctic states that could threaten their national security and increase the likelihood of inter-state disputes, this danger has been overplayed in media accounts. Currently, the Arctic region is a relatively peaceful and stable region with good cooperation among the Arctic states, and there are no strong signs to indicate that this situation will change in the future. Although threats to national security may have been overplayed, the opposite is true with respect to the threats that climate change may pose to human security. The framing of climate change as a global problem tends to mask local consequences and create the feeling that climate change is an abstract and distant problem.

This point links us to the relationship between geopolitical concerns and local challenges. Because of the framing of climate change as a global issue, local consequences have often been overlooked. The picture is further complicated by the fact that the climate impact at the local level often gets entangled with other environmental issues or economic and political factors. There is a need for more stories from the grassroots level, helping us to understand the current and emerging local consequences of climate change in the communities most heavily affected. A feminist approach to security offers a more bottom-up approach to understanding security by drawing on narratives from the local level. Such an approach not only puts a human face on climate change in the Arctic, but helps us to understand the relationship between global climate change and the threats that those changes can pose to the daily lives of people in the Arctic region.

## **PART II: CASE STUDY – ICELAND**

The second part of this dissertation presents the case study, where the research questions are examined by focusing on climate security, climate policy and climate discourses in one Arctic state, Iceland. The case study includes four chapters. The first one (Chapter 5) sets the stage for the case study and gives some relevant background information about Iceland. Chapter 6 examines the climate impact and whether climate change is perceived as a threat in Iceland, whereas Chapter 7 is focused more on mitigation and the values that are guiding climate policy in addressing the root causes. Chapter 8 focuses on one specific angle of the climate discussion in Iceland: the debate about whether Iceland should start its journey as an oil state by opening up for oil and gas exploration in the Dreki region northeast of the island. The oil and gas debate is relevant because it reveals the tension between different types of values and demonstrates how an open, democratic discussion can – over time – shift what is considered an acceptable view and be instrumental in shaping the norms that influence policy makers in their decision making.

## 5. Iceland as an Arctic State

This case study will focus on the way one state deals with climate change. It touches on all three questions that are at the heart of this dissertation. Is climate change perceived as a threat? What are the fundamental values underlying dominant climate-related discourses? How much room is there for alternative, feminine values in public discourses related to climate change? It does so by in-depth examination of climate-related discourses in one Arctic state, Iceland. The discourse on the recent oil and gas developments in Iceland is given special consideration, with a focus on how this discourse is linked (or not linked) to climate change discourses.

Chapter 4 presents the argument that in the Arctic, climate change is generally perceived as a threat, although a somewhat distant and abstract threat at times. This case study will take a look at how this threat is being dealt with domestically in Iceland, both on the mitigation and adaptation side. What is being done and what is not being done? Which issues dominate in public discourses and which ones are marginalized or silenced? How is the discussion framed?

I rely on public policy documents, speeches of key political figures and material from interviews with policy shapers as my main sources when exploring those questions. At times I also refer to discussions that have taken place in the parliament, in the media, during a conference or in other public forums, although I have not systematically analyzed information from these sources.

As discussed earlier, Iceland is the only Arctic state that is located entirely within the Arctic region, as defined in the Arctic Human Development Report (Young & Einarsson, 2004). Nevertheless, Arctic identity building is a relatively recent phenomenon in Iceland. Since gaining independence from Denmark in 1944, Icelandic authorities have emphasized the fact that Iceland is a Nordic country belonging to Europe. With respect to national security, the most important ties were with the USA and NATO. In recent years, however, the Arctic has been pushed higher on the political agenda in Iceland's foreign policy. One of the first sign of this development can be traced to 1998, when the parliament established the Stefánsson Arctic Institute in the northern town of Akureyri. It bears the name of the Arctic explorer Vilhjálmur Stefánsson, who had Icelandic roots, and operates under the Icelandic Ministry for the Environment and Natural Resources. The Institute is meant to promote and facilitate Arctic research and has been involved in a number of Arctic initiatives, including acting as a secretariat for the two Arctic Human Development Reports (Stefanson Arctic Institute, n.d.). Iceland's chairmanship in the Arctic Council in 2002–2004 also served to put Arctic

issues on the political agenda and shape Iceland's identity as an Arctic state. As discussed later in the case study, the Icelandic president also took special interest in Arctic affairs and emphasized the importance of this region for Iceland in many of his speeches.

The added emphasis on Arctic identity became more noticeable during the time of the left wing government that was in power from 2009 to 2013, when the Parliament adopted a special Arctic strategy for the first time, but the emphasis on the Arctic has been even greater under the more right-wing government that came to power after the elections in 2013. The same cannot be said about awareness of climate change when there was a noticeable backlash with a change in governments in 2013.

Today it can be safely stated that Icelandic authorities consider Iceland to be an Arctic state, and Icelanders identify with living in the Arctic. What is unique about Iceland as an Arctic state, however, is that the entire country is categorized as belonging to the Arctic region. The discussion about northern communities located in the Arctic region being marginalized and far away from their southern capital does not apply, therefore, because Reykjavik – the capital – also belongs to the Arctic region. Furthermore, Iceland is the only Arctic state that is not home to any indigenous groups. Nevertheless, Iceland shares a number of challenges with other Arctic states related to its location, and participates fully in Arctic regional cooperation as one of the eight Arctic states belonging to the Arctic Council.

Before digging into the analysis on discourses related the Arctic, security and climate change, a short discussion about the general political and economic landscape in Iceland is necessary. A special section on feminism and gender equality in the country follows. Together the two sections in this chapter give the necessary background information to put the chapters that follow, which focus specifically on climate-related discourses, into a wider context.

## 5.1 Political and Economic Landscape

Iceland is a small state. With a population of only 325,000<sup>15</sup> (Statistics Iceland, 2015) Icelanders number less than the population of a medium-sized city in most other countries. Nevertheless, Iceland has been a well-functioning sovereign state since independence, with full control of its internal affairs and active participation in international relations.

Norwegian immigrants first settled Iceland in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. The Norwegian Vikings brought slaves with them, adding Celtic to the gene pool. The settlers entered into a relationship with the Norwegian King in 1262, and in 1380 Norway's rights passed to Denmark, which meant Iceland was under Danish control until 1944, when

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15 As of 1 January 2015

it gained full independence (Bailes & Cela, 2014). Because the ancestors of the modern-day Icelanders are mostly of Nordic and Celtic origin, Icelanders are generally not categorized as indigenous, in spite of the fact that no other groups lived in the country before it was settled by the Norwegians.

Since independence, Iceland has been a constitutional republic with a parliamentary government. Although the head of state is the president, who is directly elected by the public, the government exercises executive power. The legislative power is in the hands of the parliament (*Althingi*), with the president having a veto power, and judicial power is in the hands of district courts and the Supreme Court and is independent of both the executive and legislative branch (Government Offices of Iceland, N.d.).

According to the constitution, the president holds considerable power, but in reality presidential power has been limited, and the power of the president rests in the ability to be a voice of influence more than the ability to exercise direct power. Even though the president has the power to veto new legislation and refer the decision to a direct vote in general elections, for example, the first four presidents never used this option. President Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, who was elected in 1996 and was serving his fifth term as a president when this dissertation was in making<sup>16</sup>, has gone against this tradition and used his veto power on three occasions<sup>17</sup>. Using veto power is only one of several ways President Grímsson has stretched the power of the presidency, and during his time in office the image of the Icelandic president has moved from a symbol of unification toward the idea that the president can act as an independent political actor.

The parliament comprises 63 members, and parliamentary elections take place every four years. Iceland has a multi-party system and the members of parliament usually come from 4 to 6 different parties. Historically, the Independence Party (Sjálfstæðisflokkurinn) has been the largest party, but the Progressive Party (Framsóknarflokkurinn), The Social Democratic Alliance (Samfylkingin) and the Left-Green (Vinstri græn) all have loyal followers. A number of other parties have been created, many having at least temporary success, although none of them have survived more than 2 or 3 election periods.

Generally, the government has been formed with representatives from 2 to 3 parties that have formed majority in the parliament. As with the other Nordic countries, Iceland can be categorized as a welfare state, although some scholars have argued that

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16 President Grímsson stepped down from office after his fifth term; a new president, Guðni Th. Jóhannesson, was elected in June 2016 and took office in August the same year.

17 The first time President Grímsson used the veto power was when he refused to sign new legislation on ownership in media. The parliament withdrew the bill, and there was no referendum. The second time was in 2010, when he did not sign a bill on Iceland's repayment of debts related to the ICESAVE accounts. The third time was in 2011, when another ICESAVE bill was passed in parliament. On these two occasions, the public rejected the ICESAVE legislation in referendums that followed the veto of the president.

in comparison to its neighbors it lags behind in progressive social policy. Jónsson (2001), for example, argues that for the greater part of the 20th century, the state was focused more on economic tasks than on social policy. Social issues played a subordinate role in public policy, and the Icelandic welfare system has been less committed to social equality than the other Nordic countries have, resting instead on a policy that emphasizes market solutions and self-reliance. Jónsson suggests one explanation for this difference: the weakness of the Left in Icelandic politics compared to the Left in other Nordic countries and the dominance in government of the more right-leaning Independent party during the Post-World-War-II period (Jónsson, 2001). Thus, when it comes to the role of the government to provide economic and social security, economic security tends to be prioritized. The economy in Iceland is also unusual, in the sense that in spite of being an industrialized country with a high standard of living, it relies considerably on primary natural resources, including fishing, renewable energy sources and – increasingly – nature as an attraction for a rapidly growing tourism sector.

Fisheries have historically formed the backbone of the Icelandic economy, but in the past two decades aluminum production and tourism have become equally important sectors for foreign earnings. In 2010, the tourism sector provided 19 percent of total export of goods and services; 28 percent was from the aluminum sector, and marine products accounted for 26 percent (Statistics Iceland, 2015). Aluminum production in Iceland consists of aluminum from foreign-owned factories whose investors were drawn to Iceland for its low-cost hydropower and geothermal energy. Tourism also relies on the natural world, with nature consistently being rated as the greatest tourist attraction the country has to offer. In recent years there has been an explosion in the number of foreign visitors. In 1990, the total number of foreigners was about 140,000; the number was up to 300,000 visitors in 2000 and 800,000 in 2013 (Icelandic Tourist Board, N.d.). In 2014, the total number of foreign visitors was close to 1,000,000 and the increase from 2013 to 2014 was 23.6 percent (Icelandic Tourism Board, 2015).

Iceland is a developed country whose citizens generally enjoy high standards of living. A serious backlash to economic development happened in 2008 when the Icelandic banks crashed as part of the global financial crisis, leading to an economic recession. For two years in a row economic growth was negative (-4.7 percent in 2009 and -3.6 percent in 2010), but recovery has been faster than expected, partly because of the huge boom in the tourist sector. Since 2011, economic growth has been positive again, and the long-term impact of the crisis seem less than originally predicted (Statistics Iceland, n.d.).

In some ways, Iceland is a forward-looking society with progressive social policies, but in other aspects it holds on to the past, emphasizing traditional exploitation of natural resources and celebrating nationalism (the latter being one of the key reasons Iceland has chosen to stay outside the European Union).

In terms of progressive social policies, gender equality is among the issues that allows Icelanders to proudly boast about some real success. This has not happened without a fight, however. Feminist movements have been active in Iceland for decades, and continue to stir up social debate on a regular basis.

## 5.2 Feminism and Gender Equality

On 24 October 1975, Icelandic women left their occupations and gathered on the streets of Reykjavík and in towns around the country. Up to 90 percent of Icelandic women took the day off. In Reykjavík alone 25,000 women met at Lækjartorg, the main square of the city, to bring attention to the role of women in society (Einarsdóttir Þ., 2000). What made the event noteworthy was the exceptionally high participation, which, more than anything else, made the day a significant milestone in the battle for gender equality. According to Einarsdóttir (2000), the Icelandic women were able to demonstrate a united effort, and the power of this unity was seen by many as a threat to a stable society that rested on traditional gender roles.

Although developments related to gender equality in Iceland have been shaped by international trends, Icelanders have not merely followed ideas originated outside the country. At times, in fact, events in Iceland have served as an inspiration and an example for changes elsewhere. Women's Day Off was one such event. Another noteworthy event occurred in 1980, when Vigdís Finnbogadóttir was elected as the fourth President of the Republic of Iceland – the first woman in the world to be democratically elected Head of State (Centre for Gender Equality Iceland, 2012).

Because the topic of this thesis is focused on politics and climate-related public discourses, the role of women in politics is of special interest. As elsewhere, politics has traditionally been the domain of men, and only in the past few decades did the proportion of women in politics reach a two-digit number. An important milestone in this development was the establishment of the Women's Alliance (Kvennalistinn) in 1983; its main objective was women's liberation and the increased representation of women in politics. Before the existence of the Women's Alliance, women comprised 5 percent or less of parliamentarians, but after the elections in 1983, that figure rose to 15 percent (Centre for Gender Equality Iceland, 2012). The goal of the Women's Alliance was to enter politics, not on the traditional right-left spectrum, but to bring the special experience of women to the table. This idea about women having a special experience related to the understanding that Icelandic society was infused with rules, norms and use of language, the underlying values of which were clearly masculine. The common experience of women was marginalized and silenced. The new party wanted to emphasize the experience of women and such feminine values as the importance of nurturing, intuition and holistic solutions (Einardóttir, 2004). Although the Women's

Alliance had representatives in the parliament for only three election periods (1983, 1987 and 1991) its influence on women's representation in politics was considerable, not only because of their own members, but also because the existence of the Alliance encouraged other parties to pay more attention to gender equality and increase the representation of women in their own parties. The proportion of women in the parliament has continued to rise, and reached more than 40 percent for the first time in the 2009 elections, when 42.9 percent of those elected were women. The corresponding number in the 2013 elections was 39.7 percent (Althingi, n.d.) . At the local level, the number of women in municipal councils reached close to 40 percent in elections held in 2010, and four years later the percentage was 44 percent (Centre for Gender Equality Iceland, 2014).

Not only is the political participation of women high compared to other countries, but Iceland also boasts the highest rate of women's participation in the labor market among OECD countries: 77.6 percent (Centre for Gender Equality Iceland, 2012). One would expect – with such a high level of participation in both politics and the economy – that there would be few sectors where women had not left their mark. Yet, this is not the case. The labor market is highly gender segregated, with women being the majority employed in education, health care and certain service sectors and men still dominating the industrial sector. Women are still a minority in private-sector management positions. In 2009, only 19 percent of managers in the private sector were women and women represented only 13 percent of members on corporate boards (Centre for Gender Equality Iceland, 2012).

This strong gender segregation became quite obvious in the years leading up to the financial crisis that resulted in the crash of the Icelandic banks in the fall of 2008. Although more women than men were employed in the financial sector, they were primarily in the role of customer service officers, whereas men were much more likely to be experts and managers. A woman was a rare sight in the top management layers of the banks, and the financial sector was controlled by relatively small groups of homogenous males, whose actions were strongly colored by masculine values and ideas about hegemonic masculinity (Einarsdóttir & Pétursdóttir, 2010).

As Einarsdóttir and Pétursdóttir (2010) point out, the top executives of the Icelandic banks were often described as Vikings, and the discourse around the expanding banking activities abroad was loaded with masculine symbolism. Not only did the bankers themselves use this discourse, but key politicians did as well, and it became a generally accepted mainstream discourse in the years leading up to the crisis. The bankers were not only clever, but brave, quick to think and showing initiative. The discourse about the Icelandic bankers as “winners” was woven together with nationalism, and their nationality used as an explanation for their brilliance.

The crash of the financial sector was followed by a period of intense self-examination. This included some critical analysis of the dominant discourse. The gender imbalance

among top managers was one component often mentioned as a possible explanation for the reckless decision making that had occurred. The post-crash period also saw women taking leadership roles in the restructuring work, to rebuild the financial sector and to find ways to adapt society to a new reality. Women were put in charge of two of the three new banks that were established on the remains of the banks that had crashed, and for the first time in the history of Iceland, a woman became a prime minister. Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir assumed the position of prime minister in February 2009, and remained in that position until the spring of 2013.

The role of women in the aftermath of the financial crisis did not go unnoticed by the foreign media. As Janet Elise Johnson wrote in the US magazine *The Nation*: “After a testosterone-fueled boom and bust, the women of Iceland took charge” (2011). The quote is the subtitle of the article but the main title of the article is “The Most Feminist Place in the World”, referring to the fact that the Gender Gap Index has rated Iceland’s gender gap as the smallest in the world for several consecutive years.

There have also been words of caution about not over-glorifying the success of gender equality in Iceland. As Johnson, Einarsdóttir and Pétursdóttir (2013) point out, in spite of Iceland’s high ranking in global equality indexes, gender equality is often missing in practice. They discuss the role of neoliberal political policies in Iceland in the 1990s and the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which have been partly blamed for creating the conditions that led to the financial crisis, and give examples of how these policies contributed to gender inequality. The transnational business masculinity celebrated in the Icelandic banking sector before the crash was complemented by a reconstruction of femininity, with young Icelandic women being highly sexualized. Tourism, for example, was promoted with images of stunning Icelandic women ready and willing to “party” with visiting American and European men. Although the authors recognize the important role played by women in the aftermath of the crisis and the emphasis on gender-sensitive policies promoted by the left-wing government in power between 2009 and 2013, they argue that the evidence is still mixed, and they caution against jumping too quickly to conclusions about a feminist success in the post-crash years (Johnson, Einarsdóttir, & Pétursdóttir, 2013).

Developments in the Icelandic financial sector in the years leading up to the crash demonstrate how gender inequality can exist in specific spheres of society, even in countries where the overall situation in gender equality is considered to be in good. It should be noted, however, that women did not wait until after the crash to try to have some influence in the financial sector. Among the few financial companies that did not lose massive amounts of money during the crash was a small investment fund established by two women who had purposely withdrawn from high-level management positions in the financial and corporate world because they felt that there was too little room for feminine values. Instead, they created a small investment fund called Auður Capital, in which the explicitly stated goal was to integrate feminine values into financial

services. Halla Tómasdóttir, one of the two women, explained how they managed this integration in a Ted Talk given in New York a couple of years after the financial crash. In her talk she emphasized four principles: Risk awareness (we don't invest in things we don't understand), straight talking (we use simple language that people understand), the valuing of emotional capital (people make or lose money, not excel sheets) and profits with principles (we care how profit is made) (Tómasdóttir, 2010).

In summary, even though feminism continues to be hotly debated, it stands strong in modern day Icelandic culture, and an emphasis on gender equality has reached most areas of Icelandic society. Even in the financial sector, where certain elements of masculinity were praised and highly valued during the boom years, the seeds of an alternative approach, embracing more feminine principles, had already been planted before the crash of 2008, and those seeds started to bear fruit in the period when new solutions were being searched for. In October 2011, six large companies established a new non-profit organization called Festa, Icelandic Center for Corporate Social Responsibility. Three years later the number of companies that were members of Festa had reached 49, including all three of the large banks, energy companies, aluminum production companies and insurance companies (Festa, n.d.). This development indicates that principles of social responsibility are gaining ground in the private sector, and this could serve to counterbalance the still-present demands for quick and easy profits.

But does the influence of feminism reach even some of the most masculine sectors of all – the security sector and the energy sector – organizations that are highly relevant when preventing and adapting to climate change? How much room is there for feminist values in those sectors and the associated climate-related discourses? Exploring this question is one of the tasks of this dissertation and an underlying theme in the analysis that follows. I begin by turning attention to the relationship between climate change and security.

## 6. Is Climate Change a Threat to Security?

This chapter reviews public policy documents and draws upon information from interviews with policy shapers, to examine if and how climate change is perceived as a threat in Iceland. Speeches by the Icelandic president also serve as data.

Several policy documents have been published in Iceland in the past decade, in places where risks associated with climate change are discussed. This includes documents discussing Arctic issues, security issues and climate change more generally. References to the dangers of climate change have also become more common in more mainstream policy documents the main focus of which is foreign policy or economic development. President Grímsson, however, was one of the first high-level politicians in Iceland to warn about the dangers of climate change<sup>18</sup>. In his New Year's speech on 1 January 1998, shortly after the signing of the Kyoto Protocol, he highlighted the importance of paying attention to the risks associated with climate change:

The dialogue in Iceland about the risks of climate change, and the negotiations in Kyoto, all too frequently forgot to mention what is at stake for us in Iceland – not in the form of exemptions from a new international agreement, but rather in the threat posed to conditions for life in our country if mankind fails to adopt effective action.

...

Iceland's geographical position and the key role of the Gulf Stream in our region mean that the impact of atmospheric change would be felt most severely by us in Iceland and make our country almost uninhabitable for our children and their descendants (Grímsson, 1998).

The alarmist tone in the president's speech is noteworthy, especially in light of the fact that the evening before, the prime minister at the time, Davíð Oddsson, had also discussed climate change, mainly from the point of view that it was important not to be scared by alarmist propaganda (Ingólfssdóttir, 2008). In other words, the president was emphasizing the risk of climate change at a time when other dominant political figures had

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18 Other politicians before President Grímsson had warned about the danger of climate change. Guðmundur Bjarnason, for example, Minister for the Environment when negotiations around the Kyoto Protocol took place in 1997, had published two news articles in the newspaper, *Morgunblaðið*, in the summer of 1997, in which he expressed his concerns about climate change. Bjarnason was quickly silenced by more powerful ministers in his own party (Ingólfssdóttir, 2008).

not accepted the issue as a topic worthy of attention. It took several more years for references to the risks associated to climate change to become commonly referred to in public documents, but since the publication of the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (Arctic Council, 2004), the dangers of climate change have been discussed more frequently.

## 6.1 Iceland, Climate Change and the Arctic

As in the rest of the world, climate change is taking place in Iceland and impacting nature in various ways. The sixth national communication of Iceland to the UNFCCC summarizes some of the key impacts (Icelandic Ministry for the Environment and Natural Resources, 2014a).

The mean annual temperature has already risen by 1.2°C compared to the average 1961–1990 temperatures. Glaciers are melting at a rapid rate, and past measurements indicate that precipitation will increase with warmer weather.

The climatic changes have already impacted agriculture. Barley production has increased, for example, and new crops are now grown in the warmest periods. The high climate variability, however, is a cause for concern. One example is an untimely snowstorm in September 2012 that caused thousands of sheep to be lost in North Iceland. Overall, however, the impact on agriculture is expected to be more positive than negative.

Projecting how climate change will influence the marine ecosystem is challenging. Most likely, both primary and secondary production will be enhanced in warm periods. Some changes in the distribution of commercial fish stocks have already been noted, and certain southern species (e.g. haddock, monkfish and mackerel) have moved further north. Of special concern is the rapid ocean acidification that has been measured in the Icelandic sea at 68°N. The impact of ocean acidification is still uncertain and requires further research (Icelandic Ministry for the Environment and Natural Resources, 2014a).

More recent research indicates that the melting of glaciers could also lead to more frequent volcanic eruptions. As the glaciers melt, the pressure on the underlying rocks decreases, causing more eruptions (Kluger, 2015).

A glimpse into key policy documents can help shed light on the way changes to the natural environment could influence the economy and Icelandic society and help address the question of whether present and projected climate impacts are perceived as a threat to security. Some of the most relevant policy documents in this context are:

- Iceland in the Arctic (2009)
- Arctic Strategy (2011)
- Iceland's Interests in the Arctic; draft (2015)
- Policy Declaration of the Independent Party and Progressive Party (2013)

- Risk Assessment for Iceland (2009)
- Report by a Committee about a National Security Strategy for Iceland (2014)
- Report of the Scientific Committee on Climate Change 2008)

In 2009 the Icelandic Ministry for Foreign Affairs published a report entitled *Iceland in the Arctic*, and in 2011 the parliament adopted a special Arctic strategy for the first time. When those documents are reviewed, it becomes clear that security concerns related to climate change are an important factor for this added emphasis on Iceland's foreign policy regarding the Arctic.

Environmental security is a major focus in *Iceland in the Arctic*. The report states that the risk of armed conflict between states in the region is not high. Thus, key security threats in the region are not so much about inter-state conflicts as they are about environmental changes, like the increasing danger of oil spills due to increased shipping traffic in the area and the risk of accidents due to utilization of natural resources that were not previously accessible. The report concludes that Arctic security will be ensured only with close cooperation of the relevant states, focusing on environmental security and creating trust and cooperative atmosphere among all players (Icelandic Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2009a). The same kind of emphasis on a broad security concept can be found in the Arctic strategy adopted by *Althingi*, the Icelandic parliament, in March 2011 (Althingi, 2011). The strategy states that Iceland should protect its security interests in the high north. The focus should be on the security of citizens, and militarization of the region should be opposed. The importance of contributing to the mitigation of climate change in the region and adaptation to the change already taking place is highlighted as important in order to secure the general wellbeing of inhabitants and communities in the north.

The Arctic strategy received support from all political parties, and there was a general consensus about its content in the parliament. The emphasis on Arctic affairs continued with the new government that came into power in 2013, but concern about security risks related to climate change has taken the backseat to the economic opportunities that climate change might bring to the Arctic region. Or as it says in the governmental agreement between the two parties in power: "The government will aim for Iceland to be a leading power in Arctic affairs and an active participant in West-Nordic cooperation. Preparations to utilize opportunities that will be created with the opening of shipping routes will begin and an effort put into drawing shipping related projects to Iceland"<sup>19</sup>

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19 My translation. The original Icelandic text reads: "Ríkisstjórnin mun vinna að því að Ísland verði leiðandi afl á norðurslóðum og virkur þátttakandi í vestnorrænu starfi. Undirbúningur verður hafinn að nýtingu tækifæra sem skapast með opnun siglingaleiða um norðurslóðir og áhersla lögð á að verkefni þeim tengd verði vistuð hérlandis."

(Prime Minister's Office, 2013). Although climate change is mentioned as an issue elsewhere in the document, mainly to emphasize the importance of renewable energy and forestation projects, it is not referred to as a threat or security risk in the document.

A bit more balanced approach to threats and opportunities appears in a more recent policy document under the same government, revealed in draft form on the website of the Prime Minister's Office (Minister Committee on Arctic Affairs, 2015). The starting point in the report is that Iceland has increasingly important interests in the Arctic region, not only because of the potential of new economic opportunities, but also because of the danger climate change poses to the vulnerable Arctic environment. The draft report points to increasing military tension in the region due to Russia's aggression in Ukraine and recognizes a dwindling interest among investors to explore for oil and gas in the Arctic region, at least in the short term, due to lower prices. There is a special chapter on climate change, emphasizing concerns related to the melting of the tundra and how melting of the Arctic ice cap can accelerate warming. Ocean acidification is given more attention than in previous reports and compared to other reports, in which the main focus is on Iceland's interest in the Arctic, there is greater emphasis on the importance of reducing emissions to limit the impact of climate change (Minister Committee on Arctic Affairs, 2015).

It is not only in the Arctic context, however, that climate change has been discussed as a security issue in Icelandic policy documents. Climate change found its way into Iceland's general security policy around the same time the issue was being securitized in international forums (see Section 2.2).

The geopolitical status of Iceland changed drastically after the Cold War. Shortly after gaining independence, the US army established a NATO base in Keflavík. The base was the corner stone of Iceland's defense system for the next 55 years, but on 30 September 2006 the base was closed, and the last US soldiers left Iceland (Ingimundarson, 2008). For the first time in history, the prime responsibility for forming a national security policy for Iceland rested on the shoulders of Icelanders themselves. In 2009, the Icelandic Ministry for Foreign Affairs published a risk assessment for Iceland, written by a team of experts, in which global, societal and military threats were analyzed (2009b). Climate change was one of the factors identified as a threat to Iceland's security in the assessment. The experts noted that climate change will increase the danger of natural disasters and that the Civil Protection Department needs to take this factor into consideration in the future. The report concludes that there are no indications of a military threat to Iceland in the near future and that the focus should rather be on societal or civil security. This approach is more in line with the human security agenda than the traditional security approach, in which military threats tend to be at the forefront.

Taking a more long-term perspective, however, the experts pointed out that tension may grow in the Arctic due to the future importance of the region and the potential for conflicts about access to resources. In this respect, according to the experts, increased

militarization of the region would go against Icelandic interests, but they also stress that there are no current indications that the Arctic will be a site for military conflict in the foreseeable future (Icelandic Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2009b).

In early 2012, the foreign minister, at the request of the parliament, appointed a committee whose role was to come up with suggestions for a national security policy for Iceland. The committee members were members of parliament and came from all the political parties with parliamentary representatives during the 2009–2013 term. The committee published its final report in March 2014. Just like the experts who wrote the risk assessment report, the committee members emphasized the importance of approaching national security from a broad perspective, highlighting not only traditional military threats, but also a number of other threats associated with environmental security, cyber security, terrorism and financial and economic security.

Climate change and the increasing importance of the Arctic is the first point highlighted in the report, as an example of how the security environment of today is changing. The more frequent intense weather events are mentioned as a threat, as are the potential natural disasters associated with these events. The committee reminds the reader how dependent Icelanders are on the resources of the land and sea for their livelihoods and emphasize how increased shipping and increased utilization of resources in the Arctic would not only create new economic opportunities for Iceland, but also present a direct security threat because of the country's vulnerability to environmental disasters such as oil spills or other types of pollution (Committee for Formation of National Security Policy for Iceland, 2014). The report does not ignore threats related to military security, but as in other recent policy documents, the main emphasis is on the broader understanding of security, emphasizing human security rather than traditional military security.

Given the focus on human security in policy documents, one would expect that public documents on climate-change policy would provide an elaborate analysis of the potential socio-economic impact of climate change and how they could threaten the security and wellbeing of people living in the country. Yet, this is not the case. On the contrary, most of the research on climate change has been focused on either the impact on the natural environment or mitigation measures. The potential impact of climate change on humans have received much less attention. The national communications Iceland regularly turns in to the UNFCCC have taken special notice of the lack of research available in this area. For example, Iceland's Sixth National Communication on Climate Change states:

Most of the climate-related research in Iceland is focused on climate processes and climate system studies and impacts of climate change. Other efforts involve modeling and prediction, and large ongoing projects deal with mitigation measures, but there has been less research on socio-economic

analysis. (Icelandic Ministry for the Environment and Natural Resources, 2014a, p. 150)

This lack of information on the socio-economic impact of climate change is also noticeable in a report by the Scientific Committee on Climate Change, published by the same ministry a few years earlier (Björnsson, et al., 2008). The composition of the committee writing the report is the first indicator of an imbalance between natural sciences and social sciences. In a group of ten, there are experts on meteorology, biology, forestry, geology and engineering. Not a single social scientist was appointed to the committee. In spite of this, the report does cover socio-economic impact, related to both predicted changes in natural disasters and the impacts on such sectors as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, transportation and energy production. There is also discussion about the potential health effects of climate change and a chapter on the need to account for rising sea levels when designing harbors and other coastal constructions. In many cases, however, the analysis is relatively shallow and does not seem to have much research to build upon. This is particularly true in creating a link between potential environmental changes and how these changes will influence people and communities. The report states, for example, that climate change will likely have a positive impact on agriculture, due to higher temperatures and longer growing seasons. But what does this mean for farmers in Iceland? Will it improve their economic situation? Are those changes likely to create more jobs in the agricultural sector? If climate change influences which areas are best suited for farming and growing crops, will changes in settlement patterns follow?

A bit more sophisticated analysis is provided for the fisheries sector, one of Iceland's key export sectors. Three scenarios are introduced: 1) an optimistic assumption that fish stocks will increase by 20 percent in the next 50 years; 2) a pessimistic assumption that fish stocks will slowly decrease by 10 percent in the next 50 years; and 3) an even more pessimistic assumption that fish stocks will soon collapse or decrease by 25 percent within five years. The most likely development was seen to be a slow increase in fish stocks (Scenario 1), but it was not considered that this possibility would have substantial long-term effects on Gross Domestic Production (GDP). A sharp decline (Scenario 3) could have substantial negative effects on GDP and economic growth in the short term, but such changes would not lead to more long-term changes than would a slow decrease in fish stocks over a longer period. A final conclusion is that effective fisheries' management is likely to be more important for the fisheries sector than is the potential impact of climate change (Björnsson, et al., 2008). Although overall impact was not found to be a great threat to the long-term economic growth of the country, analysis is missing on how potential changes could impact fishing communities around the country or the various groups that rely on fisheries for employment. A sharp decline in a specific stock, for example, could be a trigger for some deep social

changes in certain communities that rely on the utilization on this species, and those changes may not be reversible, even if the overall economic impact at the national level will not be measurable in the long run.

The scientific committee evaluates the socio-economic impact as likely to be positive more often than negative. Also, in the cases where negative impact does occur, they are predicted to be manageable for a society like Iceland, with strong institutions and the capacity to cope with change. This leads one to wonder if discussing climate change as a security issue in Iceland is even relevant.

Yet, in spite of limited knowledge about the socio-economic impact of climate change in Iceland and the scientific committee's prediction that the socio-economic impact already been identified is likely to be more positive than negative, public documents consistently identify climate change as a threat. This position is emphasized in the scientific committee's report, which states that climate change creates multiple threats (Björnsson, et al., 2008) and in the risk assessment report published by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (2009b), in which the following quote can be found in the English summary:

Climate change is now considered the greatest global environmental threat, and its impact has already been noted in Iceland. While it is not possible to predict the consequences of global warming in Iceland with any accuracy for the next 10-15 years, it is clear that efforts must be made both to fight and reverse climate change and curtail its effects. (p. 131)

But to whom, exactly, do those threats apply? Do they apply only to ecological systems, plants, and animals, or are humans also at risk? And if so, which humans? It is now time to turn to the interviews with policy shapers to see if more insightful answers to those questions can be gained.

## **6.2 Perceived or Actual Threats? Views of Policy shapers**

The 18 policy shapers I interviewed were all well aware of the risks associated with climate change and readily acknowledged many of the current and projected impacts as security risks. The most commonly mentioned impacts in the interviews included the melting of glaciers; rising sea levels; and impacts on the marine ecosystem, including the movement of fish stocks and ocean acidification. A few policy shapers also referred to associated social, economic or political impacts such as a threat to Iceland's sovereignty due to its increased geopolitical importance and an increase in international fisheries disputes similar to the mackerel dispute and to instability in other parts of the world that will negatively impact Icelandic society.

“Will we still be able to get coffee in Iceland?” one interviewee asked. This question was in some ways unusual because the policy shapers did not generally link the threats posed by climate change to their daily lives. In fact, although they all agreed that climate change posed a number of threats, few admitted that they felt personally threatened, and they did not expect that their own lives would be heavily influenced. A female politician offered the following answer when asked if she felt a personal threat:

I experience no more and no less fear than when I was growing up and was worried about a nuclear war. This is the same type of fear. And, I mean...it is not a more serious fear than for people in Africa who do not have access to clean water and live in fear every day. Humankind lives in constant fear due to our exploitation of nature. So...I think we can all sleep because of it.

A male expert readily admitted he was fearful, but also stated he would not necessarily be willing to say so publicly:

I can admit, when the two of us are talking...when I am talking to another adult who knows what this is about, that I am very worried. I am very pessimistic. But this is not something I share, however, when I am lecturing to people whose behavior I am trying to influence.

This informant touches on an important issue that will be discussed in more detail later: the role of fear in behavior change. Is fear likely to be a good motivator for humans to change their behavior, or could fear of climate change end up being counteractive, paralyzing our ability to take action? But even if this person admits to being deeply worried, this does not translate into a fear that climate change will somehow negatively impact his personal life in the near future. But he was worried on behalf of his children and perhaps his grandchildren.

The worry on behalf of future generations was a common theme, as demonstrated by this quote taken from an interview with a male in his forties who is an active environmental advocate:

Yes, I feel fear, but not for myself. Perhaps rather for my children. There is a lot of uncertainty about the future. But for me personally (laughs), I only have a few more decades to live. I don't expect any drastic changes before that time. I think it is more of a future threat. Unless we will experience a tipping point, leading to more rapid changes. But I cannot say that I experience this yet as a direct threat.

Given the emphasis on future generations, it is perhaps fitting that the youngest person interviewed was also the one who most readily admitted her personal fears: “I went into panic when I first started reading about climate change. I started to think about what would happen to my child or to me?”

The fear of the young generation was echoed in the words of one female politician, who said she was most likely to sense real concern and fear among young people. Her guess was that this related to the uncertainty, in turn, to the future impact of climate change. “I sense this fear more when discussing this at home with my children than in the political discussion,” she said, and added that not only did politicians show little fear, but in most cases they stayed silent when the topic was put on the agenda in the parliament. The few that did show up, would even make fun of the discussion.

This tendency to silence the discussion about the danger of climate change has been felt by other politicians who have tried to draw attention to the issue. Although President Grímsson discussed the dangers of climate change in his New Year’s address in 1998, he remained mostly silent on the topic for a few years after that speech, or until the publication of the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA) in 2004. His silence seems to be directly associated with the strong opposition he experienced after his 1998 speech. In more recent years, he has explicitly discussed the difficulty of talking about climate change when skeptical views were more dominant in public discourses. In his 2007 New Year’s address, for example, he talked about a new tone that had entered the discussion on climate change. He noted that few people now dispute the fact that climate change is posing a great threat to the world. This, he said, is a radical shift from the dominant views in 1998:

Many people thought I painted far too dark a picture nearly a decade ago, and various people let their views be known. Now things have changed, and the majority of those who talk about the problem see it as a matter of urgency that the nations of the world take a united stance (Grímsson, 2007a).

In a speech in Bangladesh in 2008, he expressed similar views:

For a long time it was an uphill battle even to discuss climate change, because the doubters and the nay-sayers occupied centerstage. Recently, however, we have seen a fundamental shift, primarily because the evidence is now overwhelming. (Grímsson, 2008)

It seemed then that the key reason President Grímsson refrained from going into much depth when mentioning climate change in the years immediately following his speech in 1998 is related to the fact that his opinions deviated too much from the dominant political views at the time for him to feel comfortable emphasizing them in his speeches.

As this example illustrates, there are clear limits to the extent that prominent political players can deviate from dominant discourses, if the aim is to influence the discourse or introduce new ideas to the agenda. If they engage in a discourse that is too radically different from the mainstream discourse, they risk being sidelined and not taken seriously. Many of the interviewees expressed frustrations about negative reactions they received if they deviated too far from the dominant discourse when stressing the importance of paying attention to the dangers of climate change. One civil servant explained how she was scolded by a group of people after she had criticized a lecturer at a public meeting for emphasizing only the opportunities climate change might bring to northern regions and ignoring the dangers experienced by other parts of the world: “Some of the politicians of the municipality were asked if it was appropriate for a civil servant to stand up at a meeting like this and voice her opinion,” she said. A female politician had a similar experience if she tried too often to air an opinion that went against the generally accepted norm:

The way the public discourse is in Iceland means that as soon as you stick your head out it becomes chopped off. I have experienced this. So I think often people, both consciously and unconsciously, think: Do I have to take this fight as well? You see, because it is always the same people.

She goes on to explain the importance of someone echoing your views, for them to be taken seriously, preferably from another party. If a person not known for an environmental agenda articulates concerns, she wonders, can that person’s voice be more powerful than the voice of someone known for environmental advocacy.

Another female politician is a bit more optimistic. She feels that the discourse has shifted in recent years and that green issues have moved somewhat from the left to the center in political debates. She had been heavily criticized a couple of years earlier by representatives from the business sector because of a stand she took on a certain environmental issue: “There can be extremely harsh and strong reactions. Perhaps you just get used to it.... Because it is not comfortable. But still... I of course also received a lot of support,” she explains. A colleague of hers had not been so fortunate; she had received no support when involved in a controversial environmental debate a few years earlier.

This tendency to silence discussion about the dangers of climate change seems less visible in recent years, after the scientific consensus becomes stronger and more and more international reports confirm the present and future dangers posed by climate change. When it comes to responding to this threat, however, particularly suggesting ways of minimizing risks by reducing emissions, some topics seem off limits in the public discourses. This tendency is further discussed in the two following chapters. Before turning to that topic, I offer a brief discussion about the views of the general public on climate change in an effort to give a more holistic picture of the extent to which climate change is perceived as a threat in Iceland.

### 6.3 What Does the General Public Think?

One way to determine the level of threat is to ask a representative sample in a survey. According to a Gallup poll conducted in January 2010, 40 percent of Icelanders are gravely concerned about climate change, one-third is neutral toward the issue and 27 percent are not worried. Women are more concerned than men and older people are more concerned than younger people<sup>20</sup>. Political views also seem to influence how people answered; 61 percent of those supporting the Left Greens fell into the “gravely concerned” group, as did 51 percent of Social Democrats, 33 percent of those voting for the Progressive Party and only 27 percent of those supporting the Independent Party. This result mirrors studies from other regions of the world, showing a tendency for women to be more concerned than men, and those tilted to the political left to be more concerned than those on the right. McCright and Dunlap (2011) found, for example, that conservative, white males are significantly more likely than other Americans to be climate-change deniers, meaning they either do not believe climate change is taking place or are skeptical that there can be a link between human action and climate changes.

Respondents to the 2010 Icelandic Gallup survey were asked if believed that climate change was already seriously impacting their local environment. Respondents who described themselves as gravely concerned about climate change were slightly more likely than other Icelanders to agree that their lives were already seriously impacted; with 6 percent answered “strongly agree” and 30 percent answered “somewhat agree”) (Capacent Gallup, 2010).

In other words, the survey responses suggests that more than one-third of the population is gravely concerned about climate change and believes that climate change is already having a local impact. Nevertheless, identifying exactly how those changes will impact socioeconomic factors seems to be a difficult task. This also complicates an evaluation of the risks and the ability to discover if specific groups or communities are being threatened, making the issue distant and abstract in people’s mind. Additionally, because climate change is often referred to as global warming (which is only one component of the larger and more complex issue of climate change), some people may even see it as something positive, hoping for warmer weather and more sunny days. This was, at least, a common view among the policy shapers, when asked about how they felt the general public perceived climate change. A male civil

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20 At first glance, this information seems to be in opposition to the discussion in the previous section about younger people being more likely to feel personal fear related to climate change. Yet, this need not be a contradiction. All of the policy shapers interviewed did express grave concern about climate change. Their concern did not necessarily translate into a personal fear about how it could negatively influence their own lives, however, mainly because they believed that the most serious changes would not happen for a few decades.

servant, heavily involved in climate negotiations, does not sense much concern from the public:

I think most people do not see climate change as a threat. Rather, they are happy about a milder climate. Perhaps they complain that they can't go skiing as often in the Reykjavik area. Something like that. I do think some will feel a loss when the glaciers start to disappear. But overall, I don't think Icelanders see climate change as a threat. For instance, the discourse about the Arctic has been the other way around...that climate change will create opportunities, new sailing routes, and Iceland will be more strategically located.

A female politician expresses a similar view:

These are not changes that Icelanders believe are bad. Some people just joke that it is good to get better weather. But some people are worried about the extremes in the weather. Strange weather in November and so on. It makes people wonder, and perhaps get a little scared. I feel this more with the older generation that remembers further back.

Some of those interviewed believe this lack of interest is related to denial rather than ignorance. A female civil servant stated: "My feeling is that the Icelandic public is rather behind and thinks climate change is not a real threat. It is also a challenge to reach through, because it is uncomfortable to face the facts."

This lack of interest can be seen in policy making at the local level. In spite of the fact that (according to the Gallup poll) more than one-third of the population claims to be gravely concerned about climate change and believes that the changes are already impacting the local environment, there is little pressure from the general public on municipalities or the national government to form an adaptation policy stating how authorities plan to respond to those changes.

As discussed in more detail in Chapter 4, climate change has generally been framed as a global issue. This could also explain why the public is not putting pressure on authorities to respond to climate change. At the local level, the impact of climate change is often only one component of many interacting factors that contributes to vulnerability and the capacity of a community to adapt to change. Thus, local adaptation to climate change might not even have been identified as such in a separate climate policy, but might rather have been integrated into such other policies as urban planning, health policies or local economic development plans.

Because of this complexity, it is difficult to trace where concern for climate change is influencing public decision making at the local level, at least with respect to the adaptation side. As discussed further in the next chapter, Reykjavík (the capital area) is the

only municipality in Iceland that has adopted a special climate policy (although some others address climate change in Local Agenda 21 documents). Even the Reykjavík policy, however, is focused primarily on global responsibility to mitigate emissions locally, and there is no mention of local adaptation in the policy or associated documents (Reykjavíkurborg, 2009).

## 6.4 Concluding Remarks

In summary, although both experts and a large proportion of the population perceive climate change as a threat, the securitization of climate change seems to come from “above” rather than originating in local communities at the grassroots level. The securitization of climate change at the international level has influenced how climate change is presented in domestic policy documents in Iceland. This has happened in spite of the fact that scant information exists about the socioeconomic impact of climate change and threats to national security, and human security threats at the local level are poorly defined.

The data collected from policy shapers through interviews and speeches reveals that some of them have felt a certain pressure to remain silent on issues related to climate change, or at least not to be too outspoken. Too much emphasis on the dangers associated with climate change has sometimes lead to harsh criticism or resulted in an experience whereby the individuals involved felt they were ignored or sidelined in public discussion. This tendency to silence or sideline voices emphasizing climate-related threats has decreased as new information have been brought into the discussion and the scientific consensus on climate change has grown stronger.

When climate change is discussed as a threat in policy documents, the president’s speeches, and in interviews with policy shapers, the topic is most often approached from the perspective of security as a broad concept and the threats discussed are focused on human insecurities rather than military security. In other words, the environmental security discourse that MacGregor (2010) identifies as one of two dominant masculine discourses in climate politics (see Section 2.5) is not very evident in political discourses about climate change threats in Iceland. MacGregor describes this discourse as one that stresses the danger of climate change resulting in conflicts over scarce resources between and within states, calling for militaristic solutions. This, she argues, harmonizes with traditional ideas about hegemonic masculinity. Whereas the danger of resource conflicts is mentioned in policy documents, and did arise occasionally in interviews with policy shapers, it is not a major theme, and other dangers were given more attention. Iceland, as a state without an army, consistently rejects military solutions to deal with tensions at the international level. In fact, in their comparative study on the Arctic strategies of the eight Arctic states, Bailes & Heininen (2012) specifically draw attention to how

the Icelandic strategy is the most explicit of all in warning against militarization of the Arctic region. The emphasis is on comprehensive security, as is the case with Finland and Sweden, whereas the five littoral states of the Arctic Ocean (Canada, The Kingdom of Denmark, Norway, Russia and the USA) put greater emphasis on state sovereignty and defense (Bailes & Heininen, 2012).

Although adaptation is crucial in dealing with the consequences of climate change, addressing the root causes is necessary for long-term environmental security. This means focusing on mitigation and finding ways to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. This is in line with Barnett's definition of environmental security, discussed in Chapter 2 (Section 2.2) which refers to the process of peacefully reducing human vulnerability to human-induced environmental degradation by addressing the root causes of this degradation and the associated human insecurity (Barnett, 2001). Yet, it is exactly this task that seems so difficult to accomplish. In spite of our knowledge about the relationship between human activities and climate change, and the explicitly stated goals of most states of the world that they will attempt to reduce emissions, the trend keeps moving the opposite direction. The desire for short-term economic gains outweighs the need to pay attention to the more long-term environmental security. The fact that emission reduction by a few people does not enhance environmental security unless others follow in their footsteps further complicates the situation. The temptation to act as a free rider is great, and global climate change is a prime example of the "Tragedy of the Commons" phenomena described by Garreth Harding in his famous 1968 article in *Science*.<sup>21</sup>

Because of the nature of climate change as a problem related to an overuse of a global common (the atmosphere), incentives to reduce emissions need to be coordinated and managed from "above", which entails that states of the world need to negotiate at the international level and then form and implement policies domestically to follow up on international agreements. As the history of the UNFCCC and the associated Kyoto Protocol has shown, this is a challenging task. Not only is it difficult to reach an agreement at the international level, but individual states are also finding it difficult to implement policies that result in real emissions reductions in line with their international commitments. A close look at the formation and implementation of climate policy in one small state, again the site of the case study, Iceland, could reveal some of the obstacles that stand in the way.

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21 Harding (1968) used the example of cattles on pasture land to explain the problems associated with utilization of open-access resources. If the land is unmanaged and herders can freely graze as many cattles as they like, there is great danger that the land will be overexploited. If ownership is not clear, individual herders have no interest in reducing the number of their own cattle, as their sacrifice would be of no use if someone else adds their cattle instead.

## 7. Addressing the Root Causes: Mitigation

The previous chapter established that there is a general consensus in Iceland that human-induced climate change is a threat that needs to be taken seriously. Iceland has participated in climate negotiations at the international level from the beginning, when the first climate agreement was negotiated, and Iceland has signed both the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol. But international commitments are not automatically translated into ambitious domestic climate policy. Has the business sector and the general public modified their behavior in order to reduce emissions? What type of solution is preferred: changes in lifestyle or large-scale technological solutions?

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze domestic climate policy in Iceland, examine the associated climate-related discourses and explore the underlying values that are guiding the policy process. I begin by giving a short overview of Iceland's greenhouse gas emissions before diving into a discussion of climate policy and related discourses. As in the previous chapter, I rely on policy documents, interviews with policy shapers and speeches of the president as my key sources of information.

Some of the key policy documents of relevance for this analysis are:

- Policy Declaration of the Government of the Independence Party and the Social Democratic Alliance (2007)
- Declaration of Cooperation of Government (2009)
- Policy Declaration of the Progressive Party and the Independence Party (2013)
- Iceland's Fourth National Communication on Climate Change under the UNFCCC (2006)
- Iceland's Sixth National Communication and First Biennial Report under the UNFCCC (2014)
- Climate Policy (2007)
- Climate Action Plan (2010)
- Legislation About Climate Issues (2012)
- Reykjavík Climate and Air Quality Policy (2009)

## 7.1 Iceland's Emission Profile

In some ways, greenhouse gas emissions in Iceland are unusual, and differ from those of other industrial countries in several ways. Energy use per capita is among the highest in the world, at 750 PJ per person. About 85 percent of the primary energy used, however, is domestically produced (mostly geothermal energy and hydropower) and about 15 percent – mostly oil – is imported (National Energy Authority, n.d.). Geothermal energy is used for space heating and hydropower and geothermal energy are used for the production of electricity. Oil is mainly used in the transport sector and as fuel for fishing vessels.

Due to the high proportion of renewable energy sources used, greenhouse gas emissions from the residential sector are much lower than in other industrialized countries. The key sources of emissions are energy use in the transport sector and from fishing vessels and industrial processes. The high proportion of emissions from industrial processes is another unique feature of Iceland's emission profile. Those are greenhouse gases released during the production phases in large-scale industries, mostly when producing aluminum. Due to the easy access to renewable energy sources, international companies involved in energy-intensive production like aluminum production, have been attracted to the country. By placing their factories in Iceland, they not only have access to relatively cheap energy, but the energy is renewable, which improves the environmental profile of the company. But even if there are no emissions from energy use in those companies, greenhouse gases are still released through industrial processes during the production phases.

The Environmental Agency of Iceland is responsible for compiling inventory reports every year with detailed information about greenhouse emissions, and send to the secretariat of the UNFCCC agreement. The table that follows is taken from the inventory report compiled in 2014 and gives a summary of total emissions of greenhouse gases in Iceland by source for the year 1990, and then for the period 2008–2012 (in Gg CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalents).<sup>22</sup>

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22 CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent is a metric used to compare the emissions from various greenhouse gases, based upon their global-warming potential (GWP). Total emissions include the six types of greenhouse gases covered by international agreements, and are most often expressed as “million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents” or Gg CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalents.

**Table 3: Iceland's Total Emissions by Gg CO2-equivalents**

(Environment Agency of Iceland, 2014).

	1990	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Changes '90-'12	Changes '11-'12
Energy	1,779	2,075	2,021	1,869	1,770	1,718	-3.44%	-2.95%
Industrial Processes	869	2,020	1,861	1,890	1,798	1,883	116.70%	4.71%
Emissions fulfilling 14/CP.7		1,161	1,205	1,225	1,209	1,279		
Solvent and Other Product Use	9	7	6	6	6	6	-31.95%	-2.08%
Agriculture	737	704	680	671	669	678	-7.95%	1.42%
LULUCF	1,175	856	834	791	746	706	-39.91%	-5.30%
Waste	145	216	211	210	198	183	26.27%	-7.72%
Total emissions w/o LULUCF	3,538	5,022	4,779	4,646	4,441	4,468	26.28%	0.60%
Total emissions excluding CO2 emissions fulfilling 14/CP.7		3,861	3,574	3,421	3,232	3,189		
Removals from KP 3.3 and 3.4		256	272	307	338	366		

Decision 14/CP.7 allows Iceland to exclude certain industrial process carbon dioxide emissions from national totals. LULUCF refers to Land Use and Land Use Change and Forestry. KP 3.3. and 3.4 refer to the emissions that can be deducted from national totals due to carbon sequestration through forestation or revegetation.

As can be seen from Table 3, Iceland stayed within the limits set by the Kyoto Protocol for the period 2008–2012, when Iceland was allowed to increase emissions by 10 percent, compared to 1990 emissions, after taking into consideration emissions that can be excluded due to Decision 14/CP.7. Iceland's commitments under the Kyoto Protocol, however, were not very strict. If the country is to shoulder its part of the global responsibility for addressing the root causes of climate change emissions, cuts will need to be much more drastic in the future. Do current climate-related policies at the national and local level indicate a move toward more ambitious goals in cutting emissions?

## 7.2 Climate Policy at the National and Local Level

Icelandic authorities did not seem to take climate change seriously for the first 15 years after signing the UNFCCC, but a shift in policy can be noted in 2007.

Although Iceland participated in the UNFCCC negotiation process from its beginning and is a party to both the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol, climate change was not perceived as a threat for much of this period or defined as such in policy documents.

In a study I conducted in 2006, in which Iceland's negotiation strategy was analyzed in international negotiations about climate treaties for the period 1990–2005, I came to the conclusion that the main drive for defining Iceland's position in the negotiations was the desire to prevent any limitation put on the country's opportunities for economic development, more specifically, the opportunities to attract foreign investor for energy intensive industries (Ingólfssdóttir, 2008). Therefore, concern for the climate was not the driving force behind Iceland's participation in the negotiations, but rather economic interests. Iceland's commitments according to the Kyoto Protocol were a result of this strategy. Not only was Iceland allowed to increase greenhouse gas emission for the period 2008–2012 by 10 percent compared to 1990 emissions, but the negotiation team also managed to push through a special decision, Decision 14/CP.7, on the "Impact of single project on emissions in the commitment period", in which emissions from specific types of industrial projects are not included in total emissions (Icelandic Ministry for the Environment, 2006).

This lack of concern about the dangers of climate change at the political level was also demonstrated in the weak policy the government introduced in 2002, after Iceland had ratified the Kyoto Protocol. The policy included only seven measures, and not all of them were implemented. Environmental NGOs criticized the government for this lack of ambition, but received little attention (Ingólfssdóttir, 2008). In Iceland's *Fourth National Communication to the UNFCCC*, the aim of the climate-change policy is described as: "to curb emissions of greenhouse gases so that they do not exceed the limits of Iceland's obligations under the Kyoto Protocol" (Icelandic Ministry for the Environment, 2006). In short, the aim was to implement minimum measures to avoid exceeding commitments Iceland was bound by as a party to the Protocol, but there was no further ambition. Adaptation is not even mentioned.

The year 2007 was a turning point for climate debate in Iceland. This was, without doubt, influenced by the securitization of climate change in the political discourse at the international level, but changes on the political domestic scene also played a role. In parliamentary elections in the spring of 2007, the coalition government of the Independent Party and the Progressive party, which had been in power since 1991, was replaced by a new coalition of the Independent Party and the Social Democratic Alliance. Both the new minister of environment and the new foreign minister were Social Democrats, and more occupied with global responsibility than their predecessors. For the first time, climate change was mentioned specifically in the political agreement between the two parties, and was categorized not only as an environmental issue, but also as an important foreign policy issue (Prime Minister's Office, 2007). This emphasis continued with a new government in 2009, in spite of all the turmoil related to the collapse of the Icelandic banks in October 2008 and the subsequent political and economic crisis. The government that took over in 2009, included the Social Democratic Alliance and the Left Green, both of which had a stronger focus

on environmental issues than did the parties that were in power prior to 2007. In their declaration, the two parties stated their willingness to participate in the formation of a new international climate treaty, but the declaration was signed when the COP 15 meeting in Copenhagen was upcoming (Prime Minister's Office, 2009). Noteworthy in the declaration is the fact that there is no more emphasis on protecting the special economic interests of Iceland in the negotiations; rather, the emphasis is on a need to contribute to solve the problem at the global level.

After the 2013 elections, the Independence party and the Progressive party, which were in power from 1991 to 2007, reunited and formed a new government. Unlike previously, when the main emphasis in climate policy was to protect the special economic interests of Iceland in climate negotiations and domestic policy was either non-existent or weak, the two parties recognized climate change as an important issue in their declaration in a special chapter about environmental issues. There, they emphasize the need to reduce the use of fossil fuels and call for a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, both directly by reducing emissions, and indirectly, by increasing carbon sequestration with afforestation, soil conservation and other types of reclamation projects. Yet, this emphasis seems to be only halfhearted, because in the chapter about foreign affairs, Arctic issues are highlighted only because of the economic opportunities the melting ice could bring, and there is no mention of the danger of climate change. Furthermore, in spite of the statement in the environmental chapter that a reduction of the use of fossil fuels is necessary, the declaration has a special chapter dedicated to oil and gas, emphasizing the support of the new government for oil and gas developments in the Dreki region, northeast of Iceland (Prime Minister's Office, 2013). What is interesting is that there is no reference to climate change in the chapter discussing oil and gas developments and the government seems to separate completely the issue of climate policy to fulfill Iceland's obligations under international treaties and the policy to encourage oil and gas developments offshore in the Dragon region. This tendency to separate climate discourses from oil and gas developments is discussed in greater detail in the next chapter (Iceland as an Oil State?).

### *Negotiation Strategy and Domestic Policy*

References to climate change in governmental declarations demonstrate that climate change is being taken seriously as an issue that needs to be addressed in public policy. But this emphasis does not automatically translate into a more ambitious domestic climate policy. Another factor that needs some attention is an exploration of the kind of policy solutions that are being promoted to mitigate emissions.

As mentioned, the climate policy published in 2002, after Iceland ratified the Kyoto Protocol, was not ambitious and only partially implemented. A new policy was published in 2007, however, in which a more long-term approach was taken. This was followed with an action plan in 2009 and a special legislation about climate issues in 2012.

The policy from 2007 was published in February, before the parliamentary elections and a change in governments. It included the long-term goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 50–75 percent before 2050, compared to the 1990 levels. Emphasis is placed on reducing emissions as efficiently as possible by focusing on new technologies, economic incentives, carbon sequestration through afforestation and revegetation, and by financing development projects abroad (Icelandic Ministry for the Environment, 2007). Although the new policy is more comprehensive than the one published in 2002, it does not set any short-term goals as mileposts toward the bigger goals of 2050, and the actions proposed are not time-lined or prioritized. Nevertheless, it was sign of a more ambitious climate policy and laid the groundwork for much of the work that was done later. Of special importance is a decision the parliament made around the same time as the policy was published, devoting resources to two expert committees: one with the role of discussing climate impacts and adaptation; another that focused on analyzing the different options available for mitigation. The policy report states that the policy will be reviewed once the expert report on mitigation measures is published.

The report on possible mitigation measures was published two years later and gave a comprehensive overview and cost analysis of the various mitigation measures that could be implemented in the different sectors (Davíðsdóttir, et al., 2009). A year later, the government published a climate action plan with ten key actions that were introduced as priorities when the policy is to be implemented (Icelandic Ministry for the Environment, 2010). Other possible actions are also discussed, but the following ten are at the forefront:

- Implementing the EU Emission Trading Scheme (ETS)
- Implementing carbon emission charge on fuel for domestic use
- Changing of tax systems and fees on cars and fuel
- Enhancing the use of environmentally friendly vehicles at governmental and municipality bodies
- Promoting alternative transport methods like walking, cycling, and public transport
- Using biofuel in the fishing fleet
- Using electricity as an energy resource in the fishmeal industry
- Increasing afforestation and revegetation
- Restoring wetlands
- Increasing research and innovation climate issues

The action plan also refers to the fact that in international negotiations Iceland had indicated a willingness to aim for a 30 percent reduction of emissions before 2020, in cooperation with the EU. This was in line with the approach Iceland took at the COP

15 meeting in Copenhagen, when states of the world failed massively in negotiating a follow-up to the Kyoto Protocol.

Although not discussed much publicly, a major change was taking place in 2009 and 2010 about the way Iceland was approaching the international negotiations. The government decided to drop demands for special exemptions but instead align itself with the EU in the climate negotiations and put their pledges forward as a part of the wider EU package. In the report in which the action plan is detailed, an explanation is provided for this shift in policy: Because Iceland is bound by the EEA agreement<sup>23</sup> to implement the EU Emission Trading System, emissions from large-scale industries, including emissions from aluminum smelters, would eventually fall under the trading scheme. Being part of the trading scheme and at the same time asking for exemptions regarding emissions from large-scale industries in small economies would create double standards of commitments for Iceland that would be difficult to navigate. Based on this situation, Iceland approached the EU with the aim of getting under its umbrella of shared burdens for the period 2013–2020. The EU granted this request in a letter written shortly before the COP 15 meeting in Copenhagen (Council of the European Union, 2009), and since then Iceland has aligned itself with the EU in the international negotiations.

And interesting component of this policy shift is the fact that it was implemented with barely any public discussion. The topic received little attention in the parliament and was not discussed in the media. This is especially noteworthy given that the Icelandic exemption in the Kyoto Protocol was a highly political issue in the parliament in 1997, when the Protocol was being negotiated, and the alignment with the EU touched on another politically sensitive issue – the accession talks with the EU. Two factors seem to constitute the main explanation for this lack of discussion.

First, the method used by the Ministry for the Environment was to discuss the issue in private meetings with all relevant stakeholders, rather than stirring up public discussion. Some of the policy shapers interviewed were involved in this process, and when asked about this topic, they confirmed that it had been a conscious decision not to make it a political issue, but rather to approach it from a technical point of view and explain how the complexity of a double system would work against Icelandic interests. This method seems to have worked well, and was sufficient to convince key stakeholders, within industry and in the political parties. One interviewee summarized the position of the industry with the following quote:

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23 The EEA agreement (Agreement on the European Economic Area), which entered into force on 1 January 1994, brings together the EU member states and the three EFTA states (Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway) in a single market. In addition to the four freedoms (free movement of goods, services, persons, and capital), the EEA also covers cooperation in other areas, such as research and development, education, social policy, consumer protection, tourism and culture, and the environment (EFTA, n.d.).

The business sector wants certainty and to have some idea what kind of regulatory framework will be implemented in the future. The business representatives did not like the idea of difficult international negotiations about the Icelandic exemption occurring at the same time as the European Trading Scheme was being implemented.

Second, the level of complexity in the international negotiations and the EU regulatory framework seems to prevent politicians from initiating political discussions about this topic. This tendency can be noted when parliamentary discussions are reviewed the few times climate policy has been on the agenda in the parliament. Not only do few politicians speak, but some of them simply admit that they find it difficult to form an opinion due to the complexity. An example is a discussion that took place in the parliament in March 2011, 16 months after the EU Council had agreed to include Iceland in their scheme of shared burdens. When reading through the speeches, it becomes obvious that some of the parliamentarians are confused about what had happened to the idea of special exemptions for Iceland in the climate negotiations and how that issue is related to the European Trading Scheme. Kristján Júlíusson, representative of the Independence Party, was one of those participating in the discussion, criticizing the government for not asking for a continuation of Decision 14/CP.7 about a special exemption in the international negotiations. Later in the discussion, he declared: “I will be the first one to admit that I have neither extensive nor deep knowledge about this trading scheme with emission permits<sup>24</sup>,” (Júlíusson, 2011).

This level of complexity may also explain why the media paid no attention to the news release from the Ministry for the Environment about the agreement with the EU, in spite of the fact that this was a radical policy shift in Iceland’s strategy in the climate negotiations.

A similar lack of interest was noticeable in parliamentary discussions one year later, when a comprehensive legislation about climate issues was adopted (Althingi, 2012). The new legislation was to replace earlier legislations about climate-related issues that had been fragmented. This new legislation was an important step in increasing the weight of climate change as an independent issue, rather than just one of many sub issues of environmental affairs. The legislation states four main objectives:

- To reduce greenhouse gas emissions in an economically efficient way
- To increase carbon sequestration
- To encourage adaptation to climate change

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24 My translation. Original quote in Icelandic: „En ég skal verða fyrstur manna til að viðurkenna að ég hef hvorki mikla né djúpa þekkingu á þessu viðskiptadæmi með loftslagsheimildirnar”.

- To create conditions so the government can fulfill Iceland's international climate obligations

The documents associated with this legislation were long and comprehensive and they touch on some important interests of various stakeholders. In spite of this there was no discussion in the parliament about the issue, with the exception of one parliamentarian complaining about the short time available to work with the draft legislation in the environmental and transportation committee, especially given how large the topic is.

As this discussion demonstrates, it seems that the drive to put climate change on the agenda of the government or in the parliament often comes from outside pressure, from the need to fulfill international obligations. Climate-related policy documents or legislation receive little attention and generate little discussion in public forums. Perhaps the issues in the documents could be undisputed, or perhaps there is a lack of understanding and fear of participating in discussion about complex issues, as demonstrated in the previous quote from one politician, or perhaps there is simply lack of interest. The fact that politicians are elected for four-year terms, whereas climate change is an issue that calls for a long-term vision could also play a role. Although climate change is recognized as an issue that needs to be addressed, it is not necessarily prioritized high on the agenda when other issues compete for the attention of policy makers. This explanation is in line with views expressed by many of the policy shapers interviewed.

### *Policy at the Local Level*

The lack of political interest could also be related to the fact that pressure to put climate change seems to come from above, from the international community, rather than from the grassroots level – from the voters the politicians rely on to stay in office. This brings us to the role of municipalities in climate policy. Municipalities are in a position to influence greenhouse gas emissions, especially through their power in planning processes, but also by paying attention to climate issues when working on various issues that are the responsibility of local governments – waste management, for example. They also play a key role when it comes to adaptation. In spite of this, few municipalities in Iceland have paid much attention to climate change. With respect to mitigation, Reykjavík is the only municipality with a formal climate policy, although climate change is mentioned in Local Agenda policy documents of some other municipalities. Additionally, some municipalities are involved in climate-related projects funded from outside sources, aimed at reducing emissions. One example of this is a project the environmental NGO Landvernd initiated. The project started in 2013 when one municipality was chosen as a pilot project and in late 2014 the second municipality, Fljótsdalshérað, was added. Landvernd works with municipalities in establishing a system to monitor emissions from transport, energy use and the waste sector. Once a baseline has been established,

an action plan is designed with steps the local authorities can take to reduce emissions from those sectors (Landvernd, 2015).

As mentioned, Reykjavík was the first municipality to adopt a formal climate policy. A closer look at the formation of the policy reveals some of the challenges related to putting climate change on the agenda at the local level. The city council agreed on the policy at their meeting on 1 September 2009. The aim of the policy is to monitor emissions, inform citizens and work in cooperation with inhabitants, businesses, neighboring municipalities and the government to reduce emissions. The brochure that was published to introduce the policy gives an overview of sources of greenhouse gas emissions in the municipality. Almost 70 percent originates from the transport sector; 22 percent is from waste management; and the rest is from industry, agriculture and other sources (Reykjavíkurborg, 2009). What is especially noteworthy about the climate policy is that it is lumped together with air quality and introduced as climate and air quality policy. Interviews with policy shapers that participated in forming the policy confirm that this was first and foremost for political reasons. It related to the reluctance of politicians to talk too much about climate change; worrying the topic wouldn't be popular among voters. "You will not convince people to drive less and bike more to protect global climate. You need to refer to something closer to them, something that affects them directly, like the kindergarten, saying that kids cannot go out and play on certain days if air pollution goes over a certain limit," one of the interviewees shared with me when asked why climate and air quality had been tied together into one policy. This view harmonizes with one of the conclusions in the previous chapter, where it was illustrated how most people did not see climate change as something that was going to threaten them personally or influence their daily lives, but rather viewed it as an abstract and distant threat that would be influential in the future or have negative impacts in faraway places.

In summary, a review of public documents demonstrates that climate change has been receiving more and more attention as the years have passed, and this seems to be an issue that policy makers take seriously. More ambitious emission reductions targets have been put forward in international negotiations, followed by a more comprehensive domestic policy than in the past.

When actual emission numbers are examined (see Section 7.1) one can see that Iceland managed to fulfill its obligations under the Kyoto Protocol for the period 2008–2012. Although overall emissions have increased, total emissions excluding those that fall under Decision 14/CP.7, have actually decreased compared to 1990 levels. The annual inventory reports compiled by the Environmental Agency not only provide numbers, but also analyze trends and give explanations for why emissions are increasing or decreasing in different sectors. According to the inventory report published in 2014, outside factors seem to be the main explanation for a decrease in emissions for the period 2008–2012, rather than direct policy interventions aimed at decreasing

emissions. As the report explains, overall emissions are heavily influenced by general economic conditions and have been increasing during times of high economic growth, but started to decrease following the banking crisis in 2008. Factors like oil prices are also influential. Emissions from the transport sector, for example, continued to increase from 1990 to 2008, but high fuel prices are an important reason why emissions from this sector have been declining in recent years<sup>25</sup>. One of the few cases in which emissions have decreased substantially as a direct consequence of a climate policy measure is the reduction of PFCs emissions from aluminum smelters due to the implementation of new technologies (Environment Agency of Iceland, 2014).

In other words, in spite of relatively ambitious targets, comprehensive policy, action plan and new legislation, the actual impact of domestic climate policy on emissions is unclear. Implementation is based on small steps rather than a radical, systematic change that would create strong incentives for industry or individuals to change behavior. With this in mind, it is interesting to find out what the policy shapers interviewed think of domestic policy. President Grímsson's speeches will also be used as data for this next section, where the views of policy shapers on the role of mitigation in dealing with the climate crisis will be explored.

### 7.3 The Views of Policy Shapers

In general, policy shapers were not overly impressed with domestic climate policy in Iceland. This was true both of those directly involved in policy making as civil servants and politicians and those who tried to influence policy indirectly as experts and or advocates. Many of them referred to a fairly ambitious policy, but one that lacked systematic implementation.

One expert explained that in spite of targets set and several initiatives aimed at developing solutions to reduce emissions, those tended to be small-scale solutions. He takes carbon sequestration as an example, including tree planting and the reclamation of wetlands: "We are moving very slowly there, especially when it comes to reclamation of wetlands. There is not much happening...small grants but mostly this is done as volunteer work by interested farmers. Nothing large scale," he says, and then goes on to discuss technological solutions in the transport sector, where he also says the small-scale thinking dominates: "These are sporadic initiatives, which indicates that a holistic governmental policy is missing."

Among the policy shapers there was a general feeling that climate policy quickly took the back seat when other issues called for attention, especially issues related to

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25 High oil prices after 2008 are related not only to price fluctuations in the international market, but also to the sharp devaluation of the Icelandic krona following the banking crisis.

economic development. They felt the emphasis was on small-scale technical solutions, but not on systematic changes, and the tendency was to focus on policy measures that did not require changes in lifestyle. A civil servant working at the municipal level shared her opinion that policy at the national level was too focused on technical solutions avoiding any measures that would involve lifestyle changes. “In my mind this is about a change in lifestyle, a change in mindset and a change in how people behave in their daily lives,” she said. She pointed out that municipalities are in a unique position to work with those factors, but that the national government was not seeking advice or support from municipalities when forming and implementing climate policy. This comment is interesting, given that some of the priority actions in the action plan rely on municipalities to be involved in implementation: priority actions 4 and 5, for instance (to enhance the use of environmentally friendly vehicles at governmental and municipality bodies and to promote alternative transport methods like walking, cycling, and public transport).

Other policy shapers also mentioned the role of municipalities and most believed that local governments had failed to integrate climate concerns into their policies. Lack of discussion was mentioned as a factor, as were the role of interest groups and reluctance of the public sector to allocate funding to initiatives aimed at reducing emissions.

Given the legislative power of the state, the national government plays a central role in creating incentives for municipalities, but also government institutions and the business sector. Without such incentives, it can be difficult to prioritize climate issues, even if those in charge are interested in doing so. One interviewee shared an example from the health sector. Although the healthcare sector is a subject with a number of requirements related to health surveillance, environmental surveillance barely existed in her opinion, and there was no pressure from the government to reduce emissions. Thus, it was difficult for managers to justify costly measures to reduce emissions, even if the technical solutions were available.

A civil servant working on climate policy at the national level also expressed frustration that politicians were not taking climate policy seriously enough. Although he recognized the importance of technical solutions, he also emphasized the need for a change of values, especially in industrialized countries, in order to stop the endless race for more economic growth and to focus instead on welfare and quality of life from a broader perspective. As for the role of Iceland, he felt that a clear political vision was missing, especially as part of the foreign policy: “What is Iceland’s vision in the international context? We could create a great vision, because of our renewable resources. If we would allocate some resources to this subject, we could do some really neat things,” he said.

The criticism from the policy shapers was not so much on the current policy but rather on the lack of implementation. Some of my interviews were undertaken in 2011–2012, when the left-wing government of the Left Greens and the Social Democrats was

in power, but some were taken in 2013–2014, when the more right-wing government was in charge. There was less difference than could have been expected, however, in the criticism on national climate policy, depending on which government was in power. Some of those interviewed when the left-wing government was still in power expressed disappointment about how little difference there was when a government was finally in power with representatives from parties that presented themselves as parties that wanted to prioritize environmental issues. One said the left-wing government was, in fact, implementing several measures, but that their public relations strategy was poor because the government did not really communicate to the public what they were doing.

This criticism on the slow pace of implementation raises the question of what is standing in the way for the government to implement its own policy. Where are the obstacles? When policy shapers were asked this question, most of them mentioned lack of funding, and this answer was often followed with a comment about a low awareness of the importance of climate issues within the Ministry for Finance. Some also mentioned a lack of interest in the Prime Minister's Office. Also, while politicians may support the climate policy, their day-to-day work is often colored by reacting to pressure from various interest groups. There is little time left to be proactive and systematically form and implement policy on specific issues.

The tendency of politicians to be reactive is interesting to explore in relation to the direction from which the pressure of forming a climate policy is coming. As discussed previously, most of the pressure seems to come from above, from the international community, rather than from the voters at the grassroots level. Consequently, the civil servants who are working directly on climate issues are usually well aware of the importance of the topic, but as one interviewee noted, the responsibility of the climate policy is too much on their shoulders. In her opinion, stronger political leadership is needed. But she also notes that such leadership will not emerge unless the public (voters) puts pressure on politicians. In other words, top-down pressure from the international community is not enough; more pressure from the grassroots level is needed to activate the politicians.

Underlying all those obstacles, and sometimes mentioned explicitly by those interviewed, are the values that guide decision making in policy, values that are too often colored by greed, and an emphasis on consumerism and economic growth. Short-term economic gains receive priority over more long-term interests of environmental security. "Within the government, there is often conflict between those who emphasize exploitation and those who are concerned with conservation. And the values favoring conservation seem to lose more often," one civil servant noted.

This focus on greed and consumerism is not a unique Icelandic phenomenon, of course, but rather an integral component of the global capitalistic system. The tension between the pressure to focus on economic growth and exploitation of resources and to care for the environment is also a core tension in the international negotiations on climate change.

This tension was well described by one politician interviewed, one who had participated in the COP 15 meeting in Copenhagen in 2009. She talked about the challenges involved in the negotiations, including the power struggles between the most powerful countries:

What this reminded me of is that the global financial system that emphasizes economic growth as the main tool to evaluate welfare.... this is a system that will destroy us in the end. I mean... we just really need to put the market economy to the side... it is not working. This is the underlying conflict, even if we are talking about climate issues.

The same person, later in the interview, noted the same tension in Iceland between the demand for emission reduction and the wish to prioritize economic growth. She observed that Iceland was most successful in reducing emissions when the country was going through economic crisis (when the emission reduction was a side effect of the crisis). “So the best way to reduce emissions is to reduce economic growth.... But at the same time our main goal is to increase economic growth, which will increase emissions,” she said, giving this as an example of the inherent tension underlying climate policy – not merely in Iceland, but globally.

When reflecting on the comments made by the policy shapers interviewed, it is interesting to note that the main obstacles do not involve open opposition to specific measures or explicit denial of climate change as a topic worthy of attention. Rather, climate issues are ignored, pushed to the side, or actions are delayed when other issues, considered more pressing, consume time and resources. When specific measures are implemented or certain initiatives supported, they tend to be sporadic and small-scale, requiring neither large investments nor systematic changes. There is little pressure to change lifestyles or undertake a fundamental rethinking of consumption patterns or the exploitation of natural resources.

With this in mind, the focus of President Grímsson’s speeches that relate to tackling climate change is especially noteworthy. His emphasis is on large-scale, systematic changes in the energy sector, and he uses Iceland as an example to demonstrate that such changes are possible. As noted in Chapter 6, the president was one of the first high-level politicians in Iceland to pay attention to the dangers of climate change. After the publication of the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment in 2004, he traveled the world and used the message of the report as a starting point to emphasize the danger of climate change and the need to respond. A narrative that later became a major theme in his speeches started to emerge during this period: The example of Iceland that was able – within the span of one generation – to transform energy use for space heating from fossil fuels to geothermal energy. This theme was developed more fully in 2007 under the title: “If we can do it so can others,” (Grímsson, 2007b). Although the change

happened in the 1970s, mainly as a response to the oil crisis rather than as a response to climate change (because it happened before climate change became a recognized issue on the international agenda), the story is still relevant because it shows that deep, transformational change is possible and can be beneficial both environmentally and economically. The narrative is meant to inspire and encourage leaders to have faith that practical solutions exist. In his 2007 speech, Grímsson emphasized the importance of a new vision to successfully tackle the challenges of climate change:

Of course there are no easy solutions, no single road to success. The outcome will depend on many measures, international actions, common policies, global agreements – but above all on a new vision, on the inspired conviction that nations, regions, cities and homes can change their economic behaviour sufficiently to create basis for new sustainable and sound energy systems that neither threaten the security of billions of people in different parts of the world nor destroy the environmental viability of Mother Earth. (Grímsson, 2007b)

In this context, the president sees his own country, Iceland, as an important role model. The successful transition from fossil fuels to geothermal energy in space heating in the 1970s can serve as an example for others to follow. This approach differs from the free-rider approach the Icelandic government used in the international climate negotiations leading up to the Kyoto Protocol, in which the small size of the country was used as a rationale for negotiating exemptions. This observation brings us to an interesting question, which is the role of small states<sup>26</sup> in contributing to finding solutions to a complex global problem like climate change.

#### **7.4 Small State: Free Rider or Role Model?**

When climate policy and climate-related discourses in Iceland are examined, a certain powerlessness can sometimes be noted, due to the small size of the country. In spite of relatively high per-capita emissions in Iceland, the overall emissions are only a tiny fraction of global emissions. Even if emissions would be cut to zero, it would not make a noticeable dent in the overall output. This fact creates a great temptation for small

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26 Small states have often been defined in terms of population or as states that have less than 5 to 10 million inhabitants. The modern small-states literature, however, takes other factors into consideration: the state's image, the way it is perceived by domestic and international actors, and the aims and priorities of state leaders (Thorhallsson & Bailes). As for Iceland, however, no matter which metric is used, the country falls into the category of a small state, and smallness is a defining feature of Iceland's role in international politics.

states to act as “free riders” in contributing toward solving the climate crisis. In some ways, this is what Iceland did during the negotiations for the Kyoto Protocol, when the main emphasis of the negotiation team was on special exemption for Iceland, rather than focusing on common interests. Another approach, however, is noticeable in the president’s speeches and in the quote of one of the policy shapers interviewed (calling for a clear future vision), where the unique position of Iceland as a country with abundance of renewable energy is emphasized, indicating that Iceland could, in fact, play a role well beyond its size by acting as a role model.

Climate change is being framed as a security issue in this dissertation. In this context, mitigation is an important component of enhancing long-term environmental security. This is in line with Barnett’s definition of environmental security as a peaceful process to reduce human vulnerability to human-induced environmental degradation by addressing the root causes of this vulnerability (Barnett, 2001). But what options does a small state have in the face of a global problem like climate change, given that the main sources that create the threat are outside its borders?

Being a small state is not equal to being a weak state. Small states, like the Nordic countries, that enjoy high standards of living and strong infrastructures, are in a better position to adapt to moderate climate change than are many larger states that are more economically and politically fragile. If the climate impact become more dramatic, however, the adaption capacity of even the more well-off states may be exceeded. Thus, it is clear that mitigation is a vital component of enhancing long-term climate security. In this case, small states like Iceland have little direct power to influence overall global emissions. In a book chapter I wrote about small states and environmental security (Ingólfssdóttir, 2014), I argued that although small states are vulnerable to environmental threats, especially when such threats originate outside their borders, they also have opportunities to influence policy at the international level by acting as “norm entrepreneurs”<sup>27</sup>. The power to shape norms, however, is weakened if domestic policies are in conflict with the ideals that small states are advocating in international forums.

This argument is relevant in the context of climate change. Because reducing domestic emissions in one small state will not solve the problem, states that want to contribute to solving the climate crisis in a meaningful way need not only change their own behavior, but also try to influence the behavior of other states, especially the large states that are responsible for the bulk of the emissions. In this case, small states have more limited options than large states do. Small states cannot threaten the use of military power or economic sanctions to put pressure on other, more powerful states. What they can do is to enter into bilateral partnership with stronger states or reach agreements through multilateral methods. They can also rely on the power of ideas (Ingebritsen, 2006), and

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27 The term “norm entrepreneur” is borrowed from Christine Ingebritsen, who has written a great deal about the role of the Nordic countries in world politics (Ingebritsen, 2006).

it is through this last approach that small states may be able to exercise their power to influence the climate agenda most effectively. This includes being active participants in planting new ideas and shaping new norms.

With the rise of social constructivism in international relations, the power of norms has been receiving increasing attention. Norms must usually go through three phases before they are institutionalized as legitimate behavior: norm emergence, norm acceptance, and norm internalization. Norms do not emerge as a coincidence. They are actively pursued by agents having strong opinions about a desirable behavior (Ingebritsen, 2002). Several studies have specifically explored the power of small states to influence norms in international politics, including Ingebritsen's research on the Nordic countries and Kronsell's study on the effectiveness of Sweden to push for environmental norms within the EU. Kronsell identifies four factors as important for small states if they want to be effective as norm setters: reputation, expertise and knowledge, progressive domestic policies and an international negotiation strategy in alignment with national interests (Kronsell, 2002).

In some ways, Iceland has indeed tried to act as a role model with respect to climate policy. This is noticeable mainly in two areas: the utilization of renewable energy sources and the emphasis on integrating gender concerns into climate policies. As discussed in Section 7.1, about 85 percent of the primary energy used in Iceland is domestically produced. This includes geothermal energy for space heating and both hydro power and geothermal energy used for electrical production. Politicians, governmental institutions and business representatives have all capitalized on the positive image of Iceland as a producer of green energy. One example is an information booklet published by the National Energy Authority, emphasizing the role of renewables to mitigate climate change. One of the messages in the leaflet is almost identical to the narrative President Grímsson has created:

Iceland has succeeded in doing what many consider impossible: transforming its energy system from fossil fuels to clean energy. The use of geothermal energy in Iceland is highly cost-effective, reliable, clean and socially important. It has also dramatically increased the quality of life for the inhabitants (National Energy Authority, 2009).

Good reputation, one of the factors identified by Kronsell as important for norm setters, is clearly there in the field of renewable energy. So is expertise and knowledge. Sharing expert knowledge in harnessing renewable energy sources, especially geothermal energy, has been central in Iceland's development policy in the last few decades. This has been most clearly demonstrated with the UN Geothermal Training Programme that Iceland has financed and operated since 1979, offering technical training to fellows from developing countries in the field of geothermal energy (United Nations

University, n.d.). Progressive domestic policy also seems to be in place when considering that Iceland has one of the highest proportions of renewable energies in the world. A closer look, however, reveals that the picture is not quite so simple. Progress has been limited in reducing emissions from sectors that still rely on fossil fuels (like the transport sector), and recent initiatives related to oil and gas explorations (further discussed in Chapter 8) do not seem to fit well with the image of a country famous for its production of green energy.

Iceland's emphasis on gender and gender equality within the international climate negotiations is also interesting to explore with the norm-entrepreneur concept in mind. This is a topic that in recent years has become an integral part of Iceland's message in the negotiations, and the Icelandic negotiation team has been instrumental in putting gender on the agenda in the international negotiations. According to one civil servant interviewed, this initiative has been well received both domestically and at the international level. Domestically the reaction has been positive because it is a good fit with the Icelandic identity as a state that emphasizes gender equality in its foreign policy. At the international level, the emphasis on gender has created a niche for Iceland as a small state with a special contribution to the global discussion. "We have good credibility because Iceland scores high in gender equality compared to other places," she said.

In spite of Iceland's emphasis on gender in the international negotiation, gender is not visible in domestic climate policy documents and is rarely an issue that is mentioned when climate change is discussed domestically. This is in line with the results of Magnusdottir & Kronsell's (2015) study on the visibility of gender in Scandinavian climate policies (see discussion in Section 4.3).

The gendered impact of the Icelandic climate action plan, however, have been analyzed as one component in a larger project on gender budgeting. Three reports were published as part of this initiative: one in 2012 that analyzed the gendered impact of the action plan; a progress report in 2013; and a final report in 2014, in which a specific action was chosen to work with further from a gender perspective. In the first report there is information about gender balance among those involved in forming the action plan. The committee appointed included four males and four females. The gender balance was not as great, however, among the experts and representatives of stakeholders the committee called in to give input when forming the plan. Of the 30 people who met with the committee, 25 were males and only 5 were females. When estimating the gendered impact of various actions, the report concludes that, in general, the proposed actions are likely to create more jobs for men than women, especially in the agricultural sector. Another point emphasized was the importance of considering the lighter ecological footprint of women – in the transportation sector, for instance – and that this should be kept in mind when implementing actions in this sector (Icelandic Ministry for the Environment, 2012). In the final report for the initiative, one item in the action plan, increased afforestation and revegetation, was researched further to

discover if resources allocated to this action item in government budgeting benefited men and women equally. The findings showed that due to certain requirements related to refunding of value-added tax, the system tended to be more beneficial for men than for women (Icelandic Ministry for the Environment and Natural Resources, 2014b).

This analysis reveals that even in a state where gender equality is highly prioritized, gender concerns are not automatically integrated into policy making in all sectors and a specific intervention is needed to ensure that gender issues are taken into consideration.

As this discussion indicates, the role of a norm entrepreneur is a challenging one, because it requires a long-term vision and the willingness to take a higher moral ground, advocating for policies that aim at supporting the common interests of all states rather than the special interests of the few. Whereas those ideals are often praised in political speeches and policy documents, they become more difficult to live up to when implementing policy, in a situation of tension between various interests and when the demand for quick economic growth tends to dominate. In many ways, the elements needed to act as a norm entrepreneur fit well with the feminine values that are so often pushed to the side in geopolitics and domestic power politics. Adopting and implementing climate policy that is more inclusive of feminine values, as argued for in this dissertation, is therefore likely to strengthen the capacity of small states like Iceland act as norm entrepreneur at the international level.

## 7.5 Concluding Remarks

Although Iceland has participated in international climate negotiations since 1992, when the UNFCCC was signed, the emphasis was largely on protecting Icelandic economic interests, and domestic policy was weak. A policy shift can be noted in 2007. This shift was influenced by discussions taking place at the international level and further strengthened with a change in government in the 2013 national elections. A more comprehensive policy has been adopted with ambitious emission reduction goals. The policy has been followed up with an action plan, and extensive climate legislation was passed in the parliament in 2012, giving climate change a stronger status in the legal framework as an independent issue. In the international negotiations, a shift in Iceland's positions was also noticeable; before the Copenhagen meeting in 2009, Iceland dropped its demand for a continuation of a special exemption for single projects in small economies and aligned itself with the EU in the international negotiations.

This shift in policy and in the negotiations tactics at the international level went unnoticed, for the most part, in domestic political discourses and has not been discussed much in public forums. As for implementation, emissions kept increasing from 1990 to 2008, but have been decreasing in the last few years. A closer look at trends, however, reveals that high oil prices and the economic crisis following the collapse of

the Icelandic banks in 2008 have been the most important factors influencing emissions. The direct impact of domestic climate policy on emissions is unclear, but does not seem to be substantial. This observation is in harmony with the views of many of the policy shapers, who felt that implementation of climate policy was sporadic and that it focused on small steps rather than systematic change.

Going back to McGregor's framework on stereotypically masculine and feminine climate discourses (MacGregor, 2010), the policy discourses in Iceland can be linked to elements of both the ecological modernization discourse and the alternative green duty discourse. As McGregor explains, the ecological modernization discourse advocates the use of technology to solve environmental problems in an economically efficient way, creating a win-win situation. The approach focuses on cooperation among governments, science and business to solve environmental problems where techno-innovators and capitalists join forces. The narrative President Grímsson has used in many of his speeches, in which he tells the story of Iceland's transition from a reliance on fossil fuels for space heating to a utilization of geothermal energy is an example that fits well into the ecological modernization discourse. The government's emphasis on the utilization of renewable energies, both domestically and by importing technological knowledge abroad via development aid and business partnerships, is another example. Many of the action items in the Icelandic climate policy, such as the emphasis on carbon sequestration and on research and innovation, also fit well into this agenda.

Although McGregor recognized that technical innovations are necessary for a more sustainable future, she is critical of the way ecological modernization discourse places so much faith in technical solutions that it ignores other important elements such as precaution, the awareness of ecological limits and the need for lifestyle changes. She also argues this discourse alienates women, focusing on clever men solving problems with innovative technology. The issues women have traditionally been more likely to organize around, such as environmental health, habitats and livelihoods, are marginalized.

Although the masculine ecological modernization discourse is clearly noticeable in climate discourses in Iceland, the parallel green-duty discourse is also present. This discourse, which McGregor labels as a feminine, focuses on the role of individuals as caretakers of the environment. In this discourse, climate change is being tackled from the demand side, emphasizing the responsibility of individuals to make lifestyle change, for example by conserving energy, recycling waste and growing food locally. If the Icelandic policy is examined, traces of this approach can be found, although the technical solutions are usually higher on the list. Some of the policy shapers called for more attention to the importance of lifestyle changes and the need to examine and re-evaluate the values underlying lifestyle choices. McGregor points out that the green-duty discourse is not gender neutral, because the burden of the lifestyle changes advocated for are likely to fall more on women than men, because women still tend to be more responsible for unpaid work in the home than men are. This observation

was validated in the report that analyzed the likely gendered impact of the Icelandic Climate Action Plan (Icelandic Ministry for the Environment, 2012). The analysis revealed that if the actions were to be implemented, they would likely to create more jobs for men than women – in the waste sector, for instance (with increased emphasis on recycling), but that women’s unpaid labor in the homes could increase because the work related to separating the waste in the home to render it suitable for recycling is more likely to fall on their shoulders.

As can be seen from this discussion, elements of both the masculine ecological modernization discourse and the more feminine green-duty discourse can be noted in Iceland’s climate policy and associated discourses on climate change and mitigation measures, although the ecological modernization discourse seems to be more dominating. Looking only at discourses as they appear in climate policy documents, however, is not enough. In this case, the framework provided by MacGregor is too limited. The climate discourses need to be put into larger context of the more mainstream discourses about economic development and the tension between the need for economic development and nature conservation. If climate concerns are not integrated into the more general economic policy, climate issues are likely to remain marginal. How present are climate issues when the government or businesses are planning the future and making decisions about new ventures? One way to explore this question is to step out of the environmental box and explore discourses within other sectors, where economic development is in the forefront, but decisions made can heavily influence emissions. This is the topic of the next chapter, where discourses related to possible oil and gas developments in offshore from Iceland are examined.

## 8. Iceland as an Oil State?

Given Iceland's image as a producer of green energy, it may come as a surprise that since 2009 several steps have been taken to turn Iceland into an oil state. Three exploration licenses have been granted for the Dreki area on the Jan Mayen ridge northeast of Iceland. This chapter will examine public discourses related to oil and gas explorations northeast of Iceland, specifically examining the relationship between the oil and gas discourses and the climate change discourses. As explained in Chapter 2 (Section 2.5), I find it important to look at climate discourses broadly. I therefore use the term "climate-related discourses" to refer both to discourses where climate change takes the center stage and to discourses in other sectors where policy decisions can influence either the adaptation or mitigation component of climate change, regardless if this impact is recognized in public discussions. By widening the lens to go beyond more narrowly defined types of climate discourses, some important additional information can be revealed about the underlying values that guide decision making in public policy.

The oil and gas sector is an example of a sector where the main emphasis has been on new economic opportunities and potential for a positive contribution to economic growth, but decisions made in this sector are still directly related to climate change, because the burning of fossil fuels is the single largest contributor to human-induced climate change. In this chapter, I first give an overview of how oil and gas explorations became part of the political agenda in Iceland and then provide an analysis of the way oil and gas discourses have included (or excluded) references to climate change. My interest in the oil and gas question was ignited by interviews with the policy shapers, in which the topic repeatedly came up in spite of not being on the original list of guiding questions. I rely heavily on the interviews as my data when discussing the oil and gas discourses, but I will also take notice of discussions in the media and refer to information in the president's speeches.

One central question is: Can Iceland become an oil state and still preserve the image of a state that is a promoter of green energy? Related to this is the question of if it is possible to develop and implement an ambitious climate policy and be simultaneously involved in fossil fuel production? If oil and gas reserves are to be found off the coast of Iceland, would it even be a realistic option to decide not to use such resources, given the growing global need for energy? These are some of the questions addressed in the following sections. These questions relate to the overall research questions about the influence of dominant political and economic paradigms on climate-related policies and help shed light on the values underlying policy decisions.

## 8.1 The Dreki Area

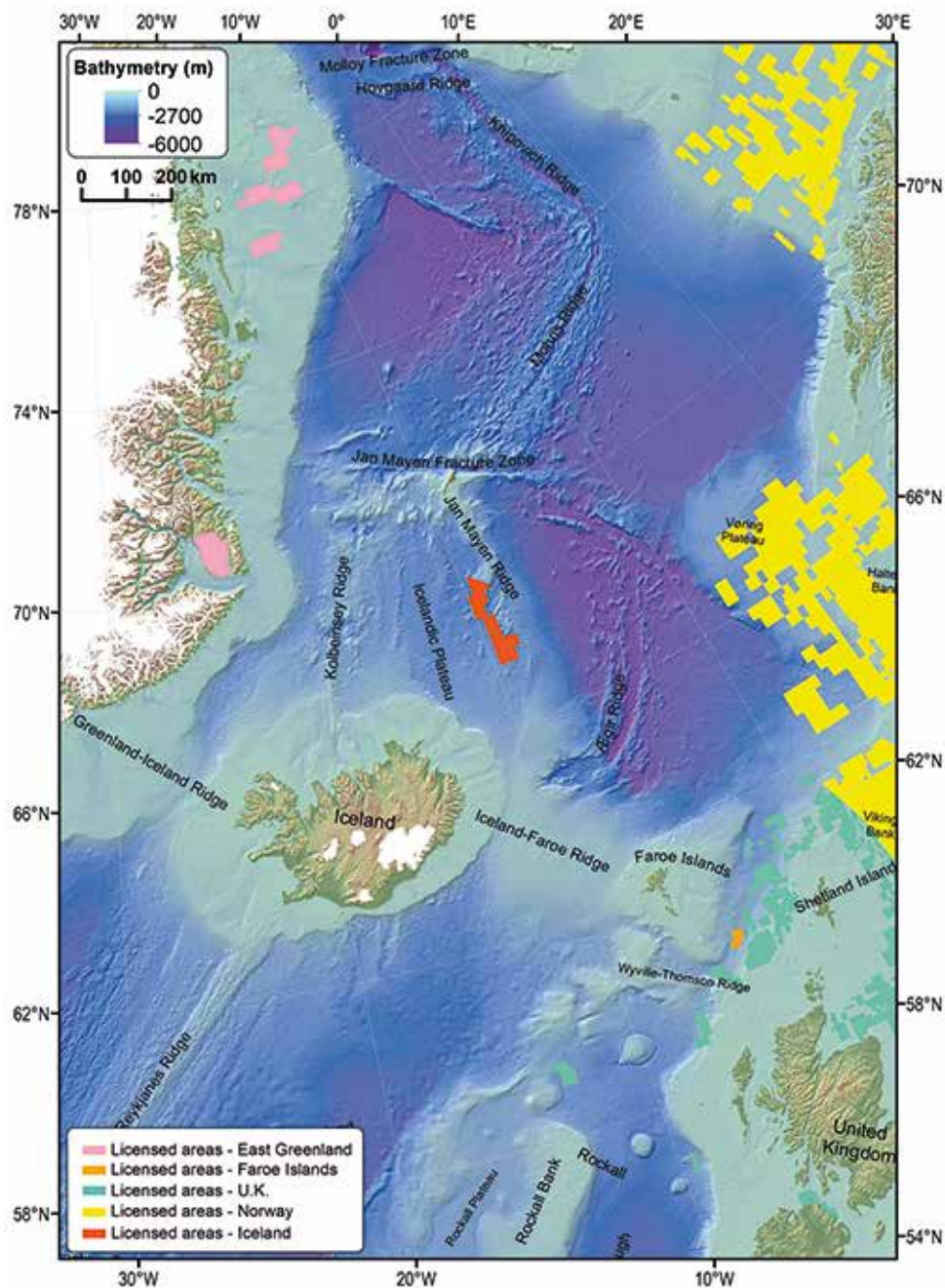
In 2007, the Ministry for Industry published a report with a proposal to issue exclusive licenses for exploration and production of oil and gas in the northern part of the Dreki area on the Jan Mayen Ridge, located in the northeast of Iceland. The report also included a strategic environmental assessment of the proposed plan (Icelandic Ministry of Industry, 2007). The proposal and associated strategic environmental assessment served as basis for the first and second licensing rounds that were conducted in 2009 (first round) and 2012 (second round). Because the first round did not result in any licenses being issued, a decision was made to repeat the process. The results of the second round were the issuing of three licenses: two in 2013 and one in the beginning of 2014. The exploration licenses will last up to 12 years, but may be prolonged to a maximum of 16 years. If exploration is successful, a priority can be given to the license holder for a production license for up to 30 years (National Energy Authority, 2014).

The idea to explore for oil and gas in the Jan Mayen Ridge, however, can be traced back further in time. In 1981 Norway and Iceland reached a bilateral agreement on the delimitation line on the continental shelf in the area between Iceland and Jan Mayen. The agreement also established cooperation between the two states in connection with the exploration and potential exploitation of hydrocarbon resources in the region. This included joined seismic and magnetic surveys and the right of Iceland to participate with a share of 25 percent in petroleum activities on the Norwegian side of the region and Norway having the same right on the Icelandic side (United Nations, 1981).

Norway has used its right to participate in exploration licenses on the Icelandic side through the company, Petoro Iceland, owned by the Norwegian state. All three licenses have been issued to investors comprising one foreign company, one Icelandic company and Petoro Iceland. The first two licenses were issued in January 2013, one to Faroe Petroleum (67.5 percent), Iceland Petroleum (6.7 percent) and Petoro Iceland (25 percent); the other to Ithaca Petroleum (56.25 percent), Kolvetni (18.75 percent) and Petoro Iceland (25 percent). The third license was issued in January 2014 to CNOOC International (60 percent), Eykon Energy (15 percent) and Petoro Iceland (25 percent) (National Energy Authority, n.d.).

In December 2014, the investors led by Faroe Petroleum returned their license, saying that initial research results did not give promising results, and the investors preferred to focus on other projects in the Arctic with lower risks involved (Unnarsson, 2014). The other two licenses, however, were still valid as of late 2015.

The report from 2007 includes a strategic environmental impact assessment of the proposal for issuing licenses for oil and gas explorations and production in the Dreki area. Although a strategic environmental assessment is not as detailed as an environmental impact assessment, it does evaluate what could be the key environmental impacts. The report identifies a number of environmental issues that need to be considered,



**Figure 2: The Dreki Region**

A map showing the Dreki area on the Jan Mayen Ridge, northeast of Iceland (National Energy Authority, 2014, p. 2)

such as noise pollution, marine pollution and air pollution. The relationship between oil and gas production and climate change, however, is never mentioned in the report (Icelandic Ministry of Industry, 2007), and this issue never comes up in the comments about the proposal that were received from representatives from 15 stakeholders. In other words, the fact that the burning of the oil and gas resources pumped from the Dreki area would contribute to climate change was not considered relevant when possible environmental impacts are evaluated.

This should come as no surprise, given that the bookkeeping of greenhouse gas emissions that all UNFCCC member states are required to keep is organized around the demand side rather than the supply side. Emissions are tracked by monitoring the users of fossil fuels rather than focusing on those involved in production. This also means that climate policies have, for the most part, aimed at changing behavior on the demand side, assuming that as demand drops, supply will automatically be reduced. As the discussion in Section 2.1 revealed, however, this is not the case. Huge economic interests are at stake, and the fossil fuel industry has deep roots in the power structures that shape global politics. A report from the International Energy Authority has demonstrated that global subsidies to the fossil fuel industry are up to six times higher than subsidies for renewable energies (International Energy Agency, 2012), and investors are showing no sign of slowing down, in spite of governments around the world announcing more ambitious climate policies in the future.

In recent years, scientists have tried to estimate how much more of Earth's fossil fuels can be extracted and burned and still stay within the 2°C limits, identified by the international community as the necessary target in order to avoid severe global warming. A study with results published in *Nature* suggests that in order to meet the target of 2°C, one-third of global oil reserves, half of gas reserves and over 80 percent of current coal reserves need to remain in the ground between 2010 and 2050 (McGlade & Ekins, 2015). The authors not only evaluate the overall global share of fossil fuel reserves that can be safely burned, but attempt to map out how much can be used in different regions from the point of view of economic efficiency. As for the Arctic region, they conclude that the 100 billion barrels of oil and 35 trillion cubic meters of gas they estimate to be located within the Arctic Circle should all be classified as unburnable.

McGlade & Ekins do not consider political factors in their analysis, which of course are of crucial importance when it comes to energy and the utilization of fossil fuel resources. With an international system, in which sovereign states each try to maximize the benefits from its own resources, giving up the right to utilize resources within its borders seems unthinkable. At the same time, it is clear that the climate crisis will not be avoided unless massive cuts are made in the burning of fossil fuels. With this in mind, analyzing the oil and gas discourses in the Icelandic context, and whether they are related or not related to climate concerns, is a worthy endeavor.

## 8.2 Oil and Gas Discourses

Although some preparatory work had been done in the parliament in the years preceding the report published in 2007, public discussion about a possible oil and gas exploration off the coast of Iceland was barely noticeable. It was not really until 2009, during the first licensing round, that the topic of oil and gas exploration off the coast of Iceland reached mainstream media. In the beginning, there was an almost unified consensus among political parties and the public in support of oil and gas exploration. The support was so strong that the few that dared to question the oil initiative were quickly silenced. It took a few years before critical voices, offering an alternative perspective, had carved out space to voice their concerns. By that time, the three licenses had already been issued and the course set for the future.

The following discussion provides an analysis of public discourses in Iceland on the oil and gas sector, and how this discourse has changed over time. As previously explained, I rely on media accounts, the president's speeches and information drawn from interviews with policy shapers as my primary data.

### *The Lonely Opponent*

In April 2009, during the first licensing round and shortly before national elections were to take place, Kolbrún Halldórsdóttir, a parliamentarian for the Left Greens and the Minister for the Environment at the time, publicly criticized her government's plans for oil and gas exploration in the Dreki region in the evening news on one of the TV stations. In the interview she expressed doubts if oil and gas production could be in harmony with sustainable development and questioned if this were the right path to recover from the economic crisis that followed the collapse of the Icelandic banks in October 2008 (Vísir, 2009). As Guðni Elísson (2011) has noted, in an article where he critically analyzed the discourses related to oil and gas exploration in Iceland, the minister was harshly criticized, not only by her political opponents, but also by her own party. Within an hour after the interview was aired on TV, the other parliamentarians belonging to the Left Green party had sent out a declaration, disagreeing with her views. Elísson also reviewed reactions to the interview in various social media platforms where the minister was also harshly criticized. She was called "stupid" and "crazy" and accused of working against national interests. In the elections that followed, Halldórsdóttir not only lost her seat in the parliament, but close to 25 percent of the voters that did vote for the Left Greens in her region crossed her name off the list (Elísson, 2011).

The doubts expressed by the former minister should not have come as a surprise, given that she was a representative of the Left Greens, a party that presents itself as guardian of the environment. Although criticism coming from her political opponents was to be expected, the rejection of her views by key politicians in her own party are

more puzzling. Not only did many of them openly disagree, no one stepped into the discussion to defend her position. The strong reaction to the views expressed in the TV interview clearly illustrate that there was little space for an alternative perspective at the time. Iceland was going through an economic crisis, and both politicians and the public were eagerly seeking new economic opportunities. In this context, the potential for lucrative oil and gas production off the coast of Iceland was too attractive to consider the option not to use this resource, should it become available.

In the next 3 to 4 years, the developments for a new licensing round took place with hardly any criticism, and when the oil and gas developments were discussed publicly, climate change was rarely mentioned as an issue. Politicians referred to how we should learn from Norway, use the best available technology and implement strict environmental regulations. When the Dreki region was discussed in the parliament in the period 2010–2012, the discussions centered on the status of the licensing and few parliamentarians participated. This was at the same time as the same government was developing a climate action plan, passing new climate legislation in the parliament, and emphasizing the importance of an ambitious climate policy (as described in Chapter 7). The political discourse on climate policy and on the oil and gas development were neatly kept in separate boxes, and politicians repeatedly avoided mentioning climate change when discussing the oil question.

The same was true for the Icelanders who participated in the public discussion and were involved in the oil and gas licensing process as investors. One example can be found in a book written by Heiðar Guðjónsson, one of the investors, about new opportunities in the Arctic. Guðjónsson writes how Iceland can take advantage of new economic opportunities in the Arctic. Although he recognized that those opportunities are at least in part a consequence of a warmer climate and the melting of the ice, he never mentions climate change explicitly in the book and completely ignores the associated threats. In a chapter about oil and environment he briefly discusses the perspective expressed by the former Minister for the Environment that Iceland should show global responsibility and stop all plans for explorations and productions of oil and gas. He quickly dismisses this perspective, claiming that because CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are higher from burning coal than oil, it would be beneficial to increase the use of oil and reduce the use of coal somewhere else instead (pointing specifically to the rapid increase in coal production China in this context) (Guðjónsson, 2013).

But what about politicians like the President Grímsson, who had been so outspoken about the danger of climate change? Did he not see the relationship between oil and gas production in the Arctic and the climate issue? Although the Icelandic President usually does not participate in the day-to-day political discussion, President Grímsson continued to talk about both climate change and Arctic affairs during this period, as he travelled the world and gave speeches in various forums. The speeches clearly demonstrate that he is well aware of the tension that exists between the threats

climate change poses to the Arctic region and the potential economic opportunities the warming climate may bring. In a speech in Russia, Arkhangelsk in 2011 he said:

It is paradoxical: new venues for economic progress and the well-being of our nations being opened up, while at the same time we are reminded that the threat of climate change has become urgent. A failure to reach international agreements on carbon-emission reductions will expose us to the possibility of man-made disaster on a catastrophic scale. (Grímsson, 2011)

And he also recognized the paradox this presents for his own country:

Similarly, the opening by the Icelandic National Authority of bids for exploration of oil in the so called Dragon Area, off the northeast coast of Iceland in the Jan Mayen Ocean we share with Norway, indicates how the resource-rich North faces us with unexpected challenges. Iceland, a country that has prided itself on its clean-energy success, with all electricity and space heating now derived from green energy resources, is cautiously taking the first steps into a potential oil-production future. (Grímsson, 2011)

On numerous occasions, Grímsson has emphasized the need to change the nature of energy system fundamentally in order to tackle challenges related to climate change. Yet, when the topic of oil and gas became an integral part of Arctic discourse, he initially refrained from questioning the wisdom of utilizing the oil and gas resources in the Arctic, both in international forums and in domestic discussions in Iceland. When he refers to the upcoming oil and gas developments in the region in many of his speeches, he seems to assume they are inevitable, but emphasizes the importance of responsible implementation of such endeavors. By doing so, he has played his part in legitimating the separation of discourse on the danger of climate change and the economic opportunities in the Arctic due to the melting of the ice, ignoring the obvious links between the two topics.<sup>28</sup>

In summary, from the time Kolbrún Halldórsdóttir received the harsh reaction for expressing her doubts about the wisdom of oil and gas explorations in the Dreki region in April 2009, there was almost complete silence on the issue for more than three years – until the beginning of 2013, when the first two licenses were issued. It was exactly this silence that caught my attention in the initial stages of my research.

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28 The president's speeches that formed part of the data set for this research were from the period 1998–2013. In more recent speeches, during the Arctic Circle conference in 2015, for example, President Grímsson has been more critical of oil and gas developments, arguing that instead of focusing on new fossil fuel resources, the Arctic states could explore opportunities as potential providers of clean energy for Europe (referring specifically to Iceland and Greenland in this context).

### *The Views of the Policy Shapers*

The silencing of alternative views first became evident to me during my interviews with policy shapers. I started the interview process in late 2011, when the Dreki area was not in the spotlight. I had not even planned to ask about oil and gas explorations in the interviews, and this topic was not part of my initial list of questions, as can be seen in Appendix I, which lists the guiding questions I used in the interviews. The topic emerged on its own, however, through discussions about general climate issues, early in the interview process. After the first 2 to 3 interviews, I began systematically integrating questions related to oil and gas exploration in the Dreki region, often as a follow-up question to discussion about domestic climate policy.

The oil and gas question first came up in an interview conducted in spring 2012 with a person working for an international institution. He had noticed the increased interest in utilizing oil and gas resources in the Arctic and felt people were blind to the negative consequences because they were so occupied with the economic potential. Discussing this in public forums seemed pointless in his view, because no one was ready to even put this on the agenda, so those concerned with the environment had instead focused on making sure the oil production would only be allowed under strict environmental regulations. In spite of his choice to stay silent in public forums, his views were clear: "...yes, there is a clear paradox. To go and get the last 10 to 15 percent of the world's oil and gas resources in the Arctic, as this will only add to global warming and have serious consequences."

The oil issue came up again a few weeks later in an interview with another civil servant, this one working at the municipal level:

Do we need oil? Us Icelanders with all this renewable energy? (Laughs). I think it would have been great...it would have been really cool if we would have said: There is oil there and we know about it. But we have this renewable energy and we are going to focus on those resources. I would have liked to see that [...]...but I am a careful civil servant. I find it difficult to...I never feel like I am in a position to be able to express myself.

The power of civil servants to shape policy is related to their direct access to politicians, but this comes at a price: They are not always free to express their opinions publically. But what about other policy shapers, like activists and the politicians themselves? A representative of the NGO community mentioned oil and gas exploration in the Dreki region as an example of the powerlessness of the NGO sector due to their limited resources:

Like the current discussion, if we relate it back to climate change, about oil exploration in the Dreki region. There is no discussion. There is no discussion because the NGO sector is too weak to provide professional analysis.

For the politicians, the fear of being marginalized is what stops the discussion. The politician quoted below started talking about the Dreki region at her own initiative, relating it to the increasing interest of oil and gas resources in the Arctic region:

I am not sure...my personal opinion is that we should not go down this path. But I realize that it is extremely difficult to try to stand against it. It is almost impossible. That is just the way it is. Are you going to oppose that we do some research to find out if it is possible to drill there? That is just... you might as well crucify me tomorrow.

This politician belongs to a different party than Kolbrún Halldórsdóttir, the former Minister for the Environment, but is known for emphasizing the importance of environmental issues. In her view, it is difficult when the same people are always responsible for bringing up the environmental issues.

These quotes are all from interviews conducted in 2012, when there was almost complete silence on the relationship between climate change and oil and gas exploration in the Dreki region. The remaining interviews were conducted in 2013 and 2014, after the licenses had been issued and critical voices had become louder. In fact, some of those interviewed during this period had already spoken publicly against oil and gas exploration and were not as shy about their views as could be noted in the earlier interviews. “Personally I find it unethical”, one expert stated and emphasized that he felt the same about Norwegians and other Arctic nations that are choosing to take advantage of the warming of the region by utilizing previously inaccessible oil and gas resources. Another expert brought out the opportunities associated with making a conscious decision to leave the resource in the ground:

I think it would be great opportunity to be a role model by... not using the oil. We don't know what the consequences will be from exploring in the area. We have no idea about the ecological impacts. We don't even know what the price of oil will be when we finally might get some oil out of there. I think we should not touch it. Just say: This oil can stay there and we are going to focus on other things. That would be really cool if we, as a nation, would decide to do that.

One interviewee, belonging to the younger generation, did not hesitate when asked about the Dreki region: “I personally think we should not do this because somewhere someone has to say no to oil production and consumption. And we don't need it.” She finds her approach completely realistic, but admits the idea is still “out of the box”, because the dominant thinking tends to favor exploitation. “But this is a thinking we need to change,” she said. “Because it is not like that. We cannot continue to burn

fossil fuels. We know that. And we don't need it to survive. So we could channel our energy into something else.”

This policy shaper has been involved in politics and has also, on occasions, participated in some international negotiations on behalf of Iceland. She provided an interesting perspective on why the ideology of exploitation of natural resources is so dominant in Iceland:

Our entire foreign policy is built around the idea that we are a nation that relies on natural resources. It is ingrained into our administrative system. So to speak against it is a big no-no. I also think this is related to the fact that in international forums we are consistently involved in fights that focus on our rights to use our resources, rather than speaking from a conservation point of view, even if we emphasize the sustainability factor. But still...this is a very dominant discourse within the administrative system. That Iceland is a resource-use nation and our survival and quality of life depends on the use of natural resources.

This referral to “fights” for rights to use resources is linked not only to Iceland’s emphasis in the negotiations for the Kyoto Protocol that a new climate regime would not limit Iceland’s opportunities to utilize renewable energy resources, but even more to the negotiations Iceland is constantly involved in to protect its interests as a fishing nation. The controversy about whaling also plays a part, but for decades the Icelandic Foreign Service has been active in defending Iceland’s rights for sustainable use of marine mammals in international forums.

The oil issue was discussed in 13 of the 18 interviews with policy shapers. In 11 out of 13 cases, the policy shapers expressed strong opposition to oil and gas exploration in the Dreki region, or more generally in the Arctic region. The issue did not come up in five interviews<sup>29</sup>, but at least three out of those five have, at some point, expressed themselves in a public forum to speak against potential oil production. In two interviews in which the oil and gas issue was discussed and the policy shapers did not express their opposition, they did not actively support the oil initiative either. Rather, they conveyed that they did not believe that this issue was important enough to put at the forefront in the climate discussion. One of them, a politician, admitted that he found the discussion about the Dreki region to be quite complicated. He claimed that it was difficult to oppose, given the strength of public support. “Why should only we sacrifice ourselves?” he asked.

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29 These five interviews were all in the early stages of the interview process before I had identified the oil and gas issue as an important theme. After the first few interviews, however, I began to integrate questions related to the oil and gas development into the discussion more systematically, even though those questions were not listed on the original list of questions developed for the interviews (see Appendix I).

In spite of this ambivalence, it is interesting to note that in general there was a strong sense among the policy shapers that the decision to issue licenses for oil and gas exploration off the coast of Iceland was the wrong one, and they connected the decision easily with the climate issue. At the same time, political discourses on the two issues were strangely separated. Although awareness of the dangers of climate change was increasing, both among the public and in political circles, support for oil production was overwhelming. It was only in late 2012 and early 2013, almost four years after the controversial TV interview with the former Minister for the Environment, that critical voices started to emerge in the public discussion.

### *Other Critical Voices*

In January 2013, 80 percent of Icelanders supported oil production in the Dreki region, according to a poll conducted jointly by Stöð 2 (TV station) and *Fréttablaðið* (newspaper). Only 5 percent were against it, but 11 percent claimed to be neutral. Although the support was greatest among voters of the Independence Party and the Progressive Party, the majority of those that supported the Social Democrats were also in support of oil production (75 percent in favor, 17 percent against) and the same was true for the Left Greens, although opposition was stronger there (61 percent in favor, 30 percent against) (Valþórsson, 2013).

In March 2015, the Social Democrats almost unanimously passed a declaration at their biannual assembly rejecting oil and gas explorations on the basis of its lack of harmony with Iceland's climate policy (Samfylkingin, 2015). Within the Left Greens there was also growing opposition against oil and gas explorations, especially among the youths in the party (Arnarson, 2015), and in October that same year the party passed a similar declaration as the Social Democrats at their biannual assembly (Vinstri græn, 2015). Although the two parties in power still fully supported oil and gas exploration, there had been a clear shift in the political discourse, with alternative perspectives taking up more room. But what had changed since two years earlier?

Elísson (2011) clearly links the oil and gas discussion to climate change in his article where he discussed the harsh reaction Kolbrún Halldórsdóttir received after her TV interview in 2009. His article is one of the first references that explicitly recognizes the relationship between climate change and oil and gas explorations in the Dreki region. It was not until late 2012 and early 2013, however, that others came forward with the same perspective. Initially this included a few articles and blogs in which the wisdom of Iceland becoming an oil state was questioned, but in early 2014, the first official protest was organized against oil and gas explorations.

Guðmundur Hörður Guðmundsson, who at the time was the Chair of the Board of the environmental NGO, Landvernd, was one of the first one to publish a blog speaking out against oil and gas explorations in the Dreki region. In the blog he accuses the Icelandic government of prioritizing the interests of oil investors over climate protection.

If Iceland would have publicly stated oil and gas explorations would be delayed, with the interests of future generations in mind, this could have brought some positive world attention and further strengthened Iceland's image as a role model in environmental affairs (Guðmundsson, 2012). In February 2013, six theologians published an article opposing oil and gas explorations in the Dreki area, emphasizing the ethical dimension of oil production. "In this world everything is connected: nature, the oceans, the earth and the surrounding atmosphere,"<sup>30</sup> they state and call for an awareness of how domestic actions can contribute to global problems (Guðmundsdóttir, et al., 2013).

The articles mentioned above were not met with the same kind of harsh criticism as was the case in 2009. In fact they did not receive much attention and were not picked up by mainstream media. Comments made by Ari Trausti Guðmundsson at an Arctic seminar in the spring of 2013, however, triggered the interest of a journalist at *Morgunblaðið*. Guðmundsson, a geologist, author and a presidential candidate in the elections in 2012 (when President Grímsson was elected for his fifth term), was a guest at a seminar where President Grímsson and Sauli Niinistö, the President of Finland, talked about Arctic affairs. Guðmundsson asked to speak after panel discussions; he was not only critical of oil and gas production in the Arctic, but challenged the two presidents to speak about developments in the oil and gas sector in the Arctic in the context of the danger of climate change. According to *Morgunblaðið*, neither of the two presidents responded to this comment, but the director of the Icelandic National Energy Authority (NEA) said a few words in support of oil and gas exploration in the Arctic, claiming such production was better than using other fossil fuels such as coal (Arnarson, 2013).

What is noteworthy about Guðmundsson's intervention is not only that the discussion reached mainstream media, but also the fact that he was in a position to ask influential policy shapers (the two presidents) directly about their position. Their silence at the meeting confirms once again the tendency to ignore the relationship between climate change and oil and gas exploration in the Arctic, treating it as two separate issues. The reaction of the director of the NEA is also in line with the reasoning used by supporters of the oil and gas exploration the few times they do address the climate question, namely to refer to the fact that somewhere else someone is doing something that is even worse for the climate.

The experts and activists mentioned above are all established in their fields and experienced in participating in public discourses. The groups most influential in shifting the discourse, however, by creating a more systematic opposition to oil and gas exploration in the Dreki area, all belonged to the younger generations. In August 2013, a workshop on how to engage in activism to protests against oil and gas productions

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30 My translation. Original quote in Icelandic: "Hér í heimi er allt samtengt: náttúran, hafdjúpin, jörðin og lofthjúpurinn umhverfis hana."

was on the agenda of a summer school hosted by the grassroots movement “Róttæki sumarháskólinn”<sup>31</sup>. The movement identified itself as a radical, left-wing organization (Róttæki sumarháskólinn, 2013). The people who attended later established the group, Grugg, and opened up the website grugg.is.

The seeds from the workshop later materialized in the first public protest against oil and gas explorations in the Dreki area that was held in Reykjavík on 22 January 2014, the same day the government issued the third exploration license for the Dreki area. Although only 70 to 80 people participated in the protest, the event received considerable attention and was covered in all mainstream media outlets. Part of the protest was to issue a declaration that was signed by twelve NGOs, including both the older and more established environmental NGOs and the more recent ones were the youths who organized and led the protest were most active. The declaration is clear on that it is the relationship between climate change and oil and gas production that is the key reason for the opposition. The organizations that signed the declaration demand that the government and the parliament immediately stop all plans related to oil and gas production within the Icelandic Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). By doing so, Icelandic authorities would act in a globally responsible manner and send a strong message to the world that Iceland intends to be a leader in progressive climate policy (Sigurðsson, 2014).

The wide participation of NGOs and the attention the protest received in the media was a demonstration that the soil was much more fertile for alternative views on whether fossil fuels resources should be utilized within Iceland’s EEZ than was the case five years earlier when the fateful TV interview took place. But the day of the demonstration also marked a milestone, in the sense that all three licenses had been issued and oil and gas explorations were becoming a reality. If a shift had taken place in the public discourse, was it coming too late? Had decisions already been taken far into the future that would be impossible to revoke?

### **8.3 Is a Shift Taking Place?**

Discussions in the parliament in January 2013 shortly after the first two licenses were issued, illustrated that although there was still overwhelming support for the oil and gas explorations, there was more tolerance for perspectives other than those under political discussion a few years previously. Einar K. Guðfinnsson, member of the Independence party, started the discussion. After celebrating the recent licensing, he expressed his surprise at protesters who were criticizing the oil and gas explorations, indicating that such views were ridiculous and would never be heard in other countries

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31 In English: The Radical Summer University

(Guðfinnsson, 2013). He used the same tactic as had been used to silence the Minister for the Environment in 2009, but this time several parliamentarians disagreed and rejected his attempt to silence the critics. Although none of them clearly stated that they were against oil and gas explorations, a few expressed concerns and posed some challenging questions, validating the views of those opposed as being at least worthy of discussion. Margrét Tryggvadóttir, member of the Movement<sup>32</sup>, pointed out that environmentalists existed in all countries, so Iceland was not the only country where critical perspectives were expressed. “I miss democratic discussion about this issue,” she said, believing that important decisions had been made before the necessary dialogue had occurred, to inform both politicians and the public what was at stake (Tryggvadóttir, 2013).

Articles and blogs started to appear around the same time, and more critical discussion about the oil and gas issue was beginning within the left-wing political parties – both the Left Greens and the Social Democrats. In both cases, the youth movements within those parties were the ones pressing for this issue being discussed. By 2015, perspectives challenging the dominant consensus were clearly established as legitimate views although political support of the government in power was still in favor of oil and gas exploration. The climate question was no longer completely ignored.

Although the government has not changed its position on the oil issue, the debate has influenced the dominant discourse, making it more difficult for those in power to focus only on the opportunities in the Arctic, while ignoring the threats. One example of this shift in discourse can be found in a draft report about Iceland’s interests in the Arctic, published on the website of the Prime Minister’s Office (discussed briefly in Chapter 6). Instead of the opportunistic discourse that dominated previously, the analysis is more balanced, emphasizing both threats and opportunities. The threats associated with ocean acidification receives more attention than in previous public documents and the potential tension between the image of Iceland as provider of green energy and as a potential oil state is recognized, at least implicitly, as the following quote demonstrates:

The discussion about energy issues in the Arctic is often focused on the production of fossil fuels (coal, oil and gas). The interests of Iceland include bringing attention to renewable and environmentally friendly energy options in the Arctic region, partly as a way to counterbalance an increase in greenhouse gas emissions. Also, it is important to think about how to

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32 The Movement (“Hreyfingin” in Icelandic) was a short-lived political movement that emerged from the grassroots movement that was most active in the Pots and Pan Revolution in Iceland in January 2009, which eventually led to the resignation of the government in power during the collapse of the Icelandic banks in late 2008.

protect the image of Iceland as a country with a clean environment where environmentally friendly energy sources are harnessed wisely.<sup>33</sup> (Minister Committee on Arctic Affairs, 2015, p. 11)

One noteworthy factor in the shift in discourse is that those concerned with climate change are placing increasing attention on the supply side of the energy sector instead of focusing solely on the demand side of energy use. This was the explanation given by the leaders of the Social Democrats when they were asked why they supported the declaration opposing the oil and gas exploration passed at their biannual assembly, after having been keen supporters of the licensing process in the Dreki region. One example is Katrín Júlíusdóttir, the Vice Chairman of the Social Democrats and Minister for Industry during the first licensing round. In a TV program on the Internet-based TV, Hringbraut, she discussed her change in opinion regarding oil and gas explorations in the Dreki area. She explained that when the licensing process began, the dominant view was that the best way to reduce emissions was to implement policies that focused on the demand side of energy use. The 5<sup>th</sup> Assessment Report published by the IPCC in 2013 showed that past policies were not working, and that this called for some radical thinking and new solutions. According to her, this was one of the reasons her party concluded that it was important to look at the supply side as well (Heimsljós, 2015).

As is the case with climate policy, the oil and gas discussion in Iceland does not take place in a vacuum. Iceland is not the only Arctic state where the supply side of energy has been largely ignored in climate policy, and there are examples from other places where the calls for a change are getting louder, putting more pressure on the suppliers.

Although the situation is quite different and much more complex in the larger Arctic states (Russia, Canada and USA/Alaska), Norway provides some interesting comparisons. Even if Norway is smaller than Russia, Canada and the USA, it is still a much larger player than Iceland, both because Norway is a larger state and because the state has been heavily involved in oil and gas production for decades. Yet supporters of the development of an oil and gas sector in Iceland frequently refer to Norway as an example to demonstrate that it is possible to be a producer of fossil fuels while being considered an environmentally conscious state.

Just like Iceland, Norway prides itself of being a state with high environmental awareness, and the Norwegian government has repeatedly expressed its interest for

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33 My translation. Original quote in Icelandic: "Umræðan um orkumál á norðurlóðum fer oftan ekki fram undir formerkjum vinnslu jarðefnaeldsneytis (kolafna, olíu og gass). Hagsmunir Íslands liggja meðal annars í að vekja athygli á valkostum endurnýjanlegrar og umhverfisvænnar orku á norðurlóðum, meðal annars til að vinna á móti aukinni losun gróðurhúsalofttegunda. Jafnframt þarf að huga að því að verja hina jákvæðu ímynd landsins sem tengist hreinni náttúru og skynsamlegri nýtingu á umhverfisvænum orkugjöfum."

Norway to be a role model when it comes to ambitious climate policy. At the same time, Norway is an oil state, and investments in fossil fuel continue in spite of the increasing recognition of threats related to climate change. In this context, the High North (the part of Norway that belongs to the Arctic) is receiving more and more attention. Kristoffersen (2015) notes that in political discourses about the High North, the threat of climate change has been reframed into a scenario of possibilities, in which changes in the Arctic are seen as opportunities. Kristoffersen uses the term “opportunistic adaptation” to explain how economic benefits of climate change are prioritized over efforts to address the causes. She explain how this approach has helped to keep discussion about mitigation strategies separate from adaption strategies and notes how this attitude can promote a scenario in which climate change in the Arctic context is an environmental problem to be managed, but not resolved.

Kristoffersen also discusses the logic used by supporters of increased oil production. Just as in the Icelandic case, the rationale is that the oil and gas production in Norway is somehow “better” than fossil fuel production in other places. In the Norwegian case, one rationale used is that by providing energy to poor countries Norway is helping facilitate economic development in the Global South (Kristoffersen, 2015). Another common tactic in Norway, that was also evident in the Icelandic case, is to move attention away from the climate question by focusing on other environmental aspects of fossil fuel production. This approach assumes that regardless of climate change, the world will need more energy in the future and it is unrealistic to believe that fossil fuels will not continue to be an important part of the global energy mix. In this context, what is important is not *if* those resources are used but *how* they are used. The emphasis should be on environmentally friendly production rather than the question of whether the resources should be used or not.

The petroleum discourse is one factor that Jensen (2012) examines in a comprehensive discourse analysis of how the High North is framed in Norwegian policy. His analysis reveals how the anti-oil production discourse – extracting oil in the Barents Sea was too risky, due to the sensitive environment – was turned on its head by those in support of opening up the area for production. The discourse was met with arguments that it was, in fact, an environmentally sound idea to start production in the area as soon as possible. By getting ahead of the Russians in utilizing the petroleum resources in the area, Norway would be able to lead by example and show good environmental management in practice, thereby increasing the likelihood of the Russians considering environmental factors when they started drilling on their side. In other words, the supporters not only argued that economic benefits outweigh environmental risks, but went further by indicating that the environment would in fact benefit if Norway would start production as soon as possible. As Jensen explains, this argument rests on the image of Russia as an environmental laggard – an assumption seemed to have been taken at face value in the Norwegian debate. For the period he examined (2002–2005), the

discourse arguing that oil production in the Barents Sea would benefit the environment managed to overshadow the anti-oil drilling discourse.

In spite of the dominant discourse, those views are increasingly being challenged; Kristoffersen cites interviews she conducted with two politicians who have been critical of the opportunistic discourse. Politician Erik Solheim of the Socialist Party is one example. He has been particularly critical toward the rationale behind the arguments that Norway is drilling for oil for the climate and for the world's poorest countries. In his view, those that claim they are drilling for climate mitigation and global development may have a point if they would focus only on gas, but they undermine their views when they simultaneously justify part of the global climate solution their involvement of Statoil, the Norwegian-government-owned oil company, in tar-sand projects in Canada (Kristoffersen, 2015).

Both the Icelandic and Norwegian cases are examples of the so-called "Arctic Paradox" briefly discussed in Section 1.3. The Arctic Paradox refers to the peculiar situation that climate change has created conditions by which oil and gas resources in the region are easier to access. Using those resources, however, will further intensify the climate problem. Because oil and gas are associated with lucrative businesses, most Arctic states are eager to take advantage of the new economic opportunities, which is one of the key reason for the tendency to ignore the obvious relationship between climate change and oil and gas production in the Arctic. As long as the public stays unaware (or in denial) of the links between causes and consequences, the separation between the two discourses will remain unchallenged.

In both Iceland and in Norway, there are some signs of the alternative perspective challenging the dominant views. This is also the case in some other Arctic states. In Alaska, Shell was under such heavy criticism for its plans to restart drilling in the Chukchi Sea that it eventually abandoned its plans. The criticism has not only involved the dangers that drilling could pose to the fragile Arctic ecosystem, but the relationship to climate change has also been used. In an interview with *The Guardian*, Greenpeace representative Tim Donaghy, was critical of the federal government allowing Shell to operate in the Arctic and referred to scientific arguments for why Arctic oil must stay in the ground if catastrophic climate change is to be avoided (Neate, 2015).

On the global scale there are also calls for reductions in fossil-fuel production, with the focus moving away from the demand to the supply side. A symbolic step in this direction was taken in October 2014, when the Rockefeller Brothers Fund announced that it would stop investing in fossil fuels and focus instead on clean energy. With this decision, the Fund joined more than 180 institutions and 650 individuals who are taking part in a growing global initiative disinvesting from fossil fuels. The symbolic value of the Rockefellers joining this initiative rests on the fact that this famous foundation is built on oil wealth. The director of the fund, Stephen Heintz, was convinced that the founder of the fund, oil tycoon John D Rockefeller, would have agreed with the move

to divest from fossil fuels: “...if he were alive today, as an astute businessman looking out to the future, he would be moving out of fossil fuels and investing in clean, renewable energy,” Mr. Heintz said to media when the decision was announced (BBC, 2014).

Although this global initiative to disinvest away from the fossil fuel sector has symbolic value, it is currently on a relatively small scale compared to the size of the global energy market. The initiative is an indication that new perspectives are gaining ground, but that they are not yet influential enough to make a real difference in global emissions.

## 8.4 Concluding Remarks

The oil and gas discourse in Iceland clearly shows that even in a country that sits at the top of the list of the Gender Gap Index and with a culture that scores high on characteristics labeled as feminine (as per Hofstede’s analysis, see Section 4.4), masculine values still dominate in certain sectors of society – in this case the energy sector. The acceptance of feminine values in one sphere of society does not automatically open up space for policy based on the same values in other sectors.

In Iceland, as many other places, sectors focusing on the utilization of natural resources have traditionally been the domain of males, whereas women are more involved in the service sector and care work. This is true for the fisheries sector and for the energy sector, and it is certainly true for the emerging oil and gas sector. In an article on the website of the Icelandic anti-oil group, Grugg, the gender composition of the oil investors in the Dreki region is analyzed by compiling photos of top managers and members of the boards of all of the companies involved, whether Icelandic owned or foreign owned. The results are striking. Not one woman was found in a management position or as a board member in any of the companies holding the three exploration licenses (Olguson, 2014).

Although masculine and feminine values are not necessarily tied to biological sex, women and men learn to identify with the dominant gender roles through socialization. Thus a great gender imbalance in one sector is unlikely to produce policies with a balance between masculine and feminine values. This is clearly noticeable in the Icelandic oil and gas discourse, where there is a heavy tilt toward masculine values in the dominant discourses.

The Icelandic oil and gas discourse does not fit into MacGregor’s framework on masculine and feminine discourse, because her framework is limited to discourses focusing directly on climate policies. Therefore a broader framework is needed, one that also considers dominant political and economic theories and underlying moral theories.

The oil and gas discourse can easily be linked to the political and economic discourses that Tickner refers to – discourses that rest on realist or liberal theories of how states behave. As Tickner argues, and is explained in more detail in the theoretical chapter

(Section 2.4), these dominant theories that have shaped politics and international relations in the past are underpinned with masculine values, projecting the behavior of elite males on the behavior of states. States are expected to mainly focus on protecting their self-interests and find ways to maximize their power. Nature is there for men to exploit. In this worldview, women are absent, and feminine values are relevant only in the personal sphere of the home and in people's private lives.

Similarly, the masculine view of the market as a machine driven by rational, autonomous, self-interested individuals also has some relevance in the oil and gas debate. As Nelson argues (see Section 2.4), this view of the market ignores the more feminine traits of human nature and creates an unnecessary gap between economics and ethics. By assuming that only one type of behavior can be expected in the market, actors are freed from the responsibility to take ethics into consideration in their decision making. This could be one reason why the focus of climate policies has been almost entirely on the demand side of energy use rather than on the suppliers. Producers are expected to respond only to a reduction in demand – not to ethical pressures that would require them to look beyond their own narrow self-interests. Those that hold enough power to make influential decisions, either in politics or in the business sector, are assumed to be individuals caring only about themselves and the potential that all humans have to act from a place of compassion and care for others or the environment is downplayed.

But even if the oil and gas discourses in the Icelandic case study reveal how traditional masculine values still dominate certain sectors, the analysis also demonstrates that with strong civil society, increased awareness of the climate crisis, and active resistance to dominant views, it is possible to carve out space for alternative values, emphasizing a more feminine approach toward human interaction and toward the relationship between humans and nature. The emphasis of those objecting to oil and gas exploration has been on the ethics of care and our responsibility to protect the global environment. Even though other states are utilizing their fossil fuel resources, this does not automatically mean that Iceland should do the same. Rather, the opponents argue, Iceland could act as a role model, showing the rest of the world that consciously choosing not to exploit potential oil and gas resources is a realistic option.

This shift does not happen automatically, however, but takes time and consistent effort. For feminine values to be recognized as a legitimate perspective in sectors traditionally dominated by masculine views is an important step, but it does not automatically translate into a change in behavior. There are many hurdles along the way from values to policy to implementation.

As this chapter on oil and gas discourses in Iceland shows, identifying the hurdles that prevent us from successfully tackling the climate crisis requires us to go beyond narrowly defined climate policies and look more broadly at the economic and political policies that drive the decision making of those in power.



## **PART III: DISCUSSIONS – ANALYSIS – CONCLUDING REMARKS**

The third and final part of the dissertation comprises two chapters. In the first one (Chapter 9), I offer a more systematic discourse analysis of the climate-related discourses discussed in the case study and weave together some of the insights I gained from the case study with the theories, concepts, and context introduced in the first part. I also dig deeper into my data in my search for underlying values, by exploring what motivates those trying to influence policy. In Chapter 10 I revisit the research questions raised in the introduction and provide condensed answers to those questions, drawing from the conclusions reached in the previous chapters.

## 9. Feminine Values and Climate-related Discourses

In this chapter, I explore in greater depth the values underpinning climate policy, drawing from the analysis in the case study and the theories, concepts, and context discussed in Part I. I start by offering a more systematic discourse analysis of the texts used in the case study, applying Jóhannesson's (2010) step-by-step process. This includes teasing out the discursive themes that emerged from the data, identifying the struggles and tensions in the discourses, and looking for historical junctures that shifted the discourse. I also elaborate more thoroughly than in previous chapters on how the various discourses match the masculine and feminine climate discourses in McGregor's (2010) framework and how they fit some of the concepts and theories discussed in Chapter 2, especially those related to Tickner's and Nelson's analysis of how masculine values underpin the dominant political and economic models.

This analysis is followed by a section in which I explore the values underlying the different discourses, by examining the motivations that drive policy shapers. I make an effort to link those values to moral theories, particularly the feminist theory of the ethics of care. The final section of the chapter entails a more detailed discussion about one of the factors that consistently arose in the data, related to a lack of action in addressing the climate crisis: the importance of relating climate change more directly to the daily lives of people at the local level. This section also includes a discussion about the importance of social movements to push for radical changes.

### 9.1 Climate Policies and Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis is an approach whereby discourses are examined to reveal power relations, domination, and social inequality. As Jóhannesson (2010) identifies, a discourse is a process rather than a static phase. People who participate in the discourse produce and reproduce it with conscious and unconscious practices.

The step-by-step process Jóhannesson introduces as a way of conducting discourse analysis in a systematic way comprises six steps:

- Selecting an issue or event
- Choosing the material relevant to shed light on the issue or event
- Analyzing the documents/texts
- Analyzing struggles and tensions in the discourse

- Identifying historical junctures in the discourses
- Documenting the results

I have already described in the introduction the issue being studied and why I chose this topic (Step 1), and in the chapter on methods, I described the material I chose to collect as data (Step 2). I therefore focus only on Steps 3, 4, and 5 in this section. The sixth step, which is documenting the results in some sort of report or a narrative, includes the work I have done both in preparation for writing this dissertation (including memos and the narrative analyzing the president's speeches) and the actual writing of this dissertation.

### *Discursive Themes*

The first task when analyzing the data was to identify discursive themes or patterns in the text. Guiding questions are a useful tool, and I used two key questions. Is climate change perceived as a threat? What types of policy measures are emphasized to mitigate emissions? In the second question, I was particularly curious to discover if there was tension between conservation values and values emphasizing exploitation of resources, and if so, which set of values was more dominant.

As for the first question, climate change as a security threat is clearly a discursive theme, but the way this threat is constructed in the text frames the changes as something that will threaten the security of people in the future or in faraway places. Policy documents describe changes in nature, but an analysis of the way these changes can impact socioeconomic factors and threaten human security is missing. Both policy shapers (in interviews) and the public (through surveys) identify climate change as a threat, but this seems to be an abstract threat rather than something that they think will affect them in their daily lives. The fear they express is not personal, and they do not worry about their own safety. Rather, they communicate concerns about the wellbeing of future generations, and some of them wonder about how this will impact poor people in developing countries. The securitization of climate change seems to come from above as a warning in reports from the IPCC or from international organizations, rather than originating at the grassroots level. The main exception to this view of climate change as a distant and abstract threat was held by the youngest policy shaper interviewed, perhaps indicating the younger generations that are aware of the climate crisis are more likely than their older counterparts to experience climate change as a personal threat.

As for the second question (What types of policy measures are emphasized to mitigate emissions?), the main emphasis at the policy level is on technical solutions that are economically efficient and do not involve any radical systematic changes. Lifestyle changes are often mentioned as important in policy documents as well, but they are usually not listed as priority actions, and there is no discussion about how the national and local governments should work together on implementing policies that

involve lifestyle changes – in the transport sector, for example, where the planning power of municipalities is highly relevant. Some of the policy shapers criticized what they perceived as lack of emphasis on lifestyle changes, which, in their minds was more important than focusing only on technical issues.

Although the climate policies adopted and implemented usually involve small steps and adjustments of current rules and regulations rather than transformative changes, President Grímsson argues for the importance of transformational changes in the energy sector when he speaks in international forums. He repeatedly refers to the transformation in Iceland in the 1970s, when geothermal heat was used to replace oil for space heating. “If we can do it, so can you,” is his message to the world, ignoring that the shift in Iceland was purely on economic grounds, following the oil crisis, and no similar transformative changes have been suggested on moral grounds as part of Iceland’s climate policy. Public institutions in the energy sector have also capitalized on the image of Iceland as a provider of green energy in their publication material, yet this image seems to have played no role when authorities decided to embark upon the journey of opening up the Dreki region for oil and gas explorations. So the discursive theme in which Iceland is identified as a role model does not seem to cut deep and is quickly pushed to the side if economic opportunities that do not fit this image appear.

The Arctic and climate change are frequently linked in the data I examined and can be considered a discursive theme. The Arctic discourse, however, changes over time from focusing on the threats that climate change poses to the Arctic to an emphasis on the new economic opportunities that climate change is bringing to the region. This opportunistic discourse is similar to what Kristoffersen (2015) noticed in her study of Norwegian climate-related discourses, which she calls opportunistic adaptation.

This shift can be noticed in policy documents; an emphasis on threats was more evident in the early report on the Arctic published by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Icelandic Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2009a), but an opportunistic discourse on the Arctic is more noticeable in later years – in the declaration of the government that came into power in 2013, for example (Prime Minister’s Office, 2013).

The shift of focus from threats to opportunities can also be clearly seen in President Grímsson’s speeches and is indicative of the increasing interest among private-sector investors in the Arctic region. Although the president often uses alarmist language to describe the threats related to climate change, he presents himself as an optimist offering realistic solutions. His common narrative about the shift from fossil fuels to geothermal energy for space heating in Iceland is one example. His agenda also includes a focus on the importance of the Arctic and toward the increasing geopolitical importance of this part of the world. In his New Year address in January 2014, the president dedicated the last part of his speech to Arctic affairs. He referred to the Arctic as a region that used to be beyond the edge of the habitable world but is now being drawn increasingly

into the center of global concerns. And he emphasizes how this could create new opportunities for Iceland:

This new development creates a multitude of new opportunities for Iceland – in the sciences, commerce, the economy and culture. Our island, once isolated in the far north, is now on the global highway in a key position in a region that will play a decisive role during this century, both as a staging post, as more and more is done to exploit natural resources and transport goods across the Arctic and, not least, in serving millions of tourists from all parts of the world who are eager to experience the wonders of nature and to see the Midnight sun and the Northern Lights. (Grímsson, 2014)

This message is in stark contrast to the alarmist tone a few years earlier, when the key thrust was a warning about the dangerous impact that climate change could have on the Arctic region.

Along with the increasing interest in economic opportunities, the oil and gas explorations off the northeast coast of Iceland emerge as a separate issue in the Arctic discourse as it appears in domestic political discussion, first in the media, then later in government declarations. Although climate change and the melting of the ice are frequently mentioned as reasons why oil and gas resources in the Arctic will be easier to access in the future, the fact that the burning of those fossil fuels will further intensify the climate crisis is rarely mentioned in the early phases, when the oil and gas issue first emerged as a political issue. The issue did arise in interviews with policy shapers, however, and also became evident in later public political discourses, after all three licenses had been issued.

### *Tensions and Struggles*

An important step in discourse analysis is to identify the internal struggles and tensions within the discourse and recognize contradictions. The policy documents, president's speeches, transcribed interviews, and other data used in this analysis cannot be read in isolation from the general discourse in society about climate change or related topics, both domestically and internationally. The policy shapers are engaged with a dynamic discourse, and the boundaries of what is accepted in the discourse are constantly moving.

One obvious tension in the data is the safety issue involved in presenting climate change as a threat. The most striking example occurred when President Grímsson later shared that he had received strong negative reactions to his New Year's speech in 1998, when he discussed the dangers of climate change. After having painted a dark picture of the potentially negative impact of climate change, the president barely mentioned the danger of climate change again until several years later, after the ACIA report was published in 2004. A few years later, once the IPCC had published its 4<sup>th</sup> assessment

report in 2007, and climate change had been recognized as a security issue in key international forums, including the UN Security Council, he openly discussed the harsh criticism he had received for painting a picture of the consequences of climate change that was considered too dark, and stated that talking about climate change during that time had been an uphill battle. Although the president stated that times had changed and a number of public documents describe the dangers of climate change, some of the policy shapers interviewed mentioned negative reactions if they publicly talked about the importance of paying attention to the danger of climate change. One politician explained how she had experienced reactions of either total ignorance or parliamentarians in other parties laughing at her if she put the issue on the agenda in the parliament. (She was referring to the period 2010–2013, several years after the publication of the 4th assessment report in 2007.)

As evident from these examples, there are limits to how much even influential figures like the president can deviate from the dominant political discourse if the aim is to influence the discourse and introduce new ideas to the agenda. If they engage in a discourse that is radically different from the mainstream discourse, they risk being sidelined and not taken seriously.

This is exactly what happened in 2009 to Kolbrún Halldórsdóttir, former Minister for the Environment, when she expressed her doubts that oil and gas explorations in the Dreki area would be in line with Iceland's international commitments. Her views clashed with the dominant discourse, and she was quickly sidelined, even by some of her own party members. With time, however, the dynamic of a dominant discourse can change. After refraining from talking about climate change in the years immediately following his 1998 speech, President Grímsson resumed the theme in 2004, and this time his message met with less resistance. The same can be said with respect to the oil and gas issue. When other politicians questioned the oil and gas explorations a few years later, they did not receive such harsh reactions as the former minister did. Even though the dominant discourse was still in favor of oil and gas explorations, there was more room for different perspectives.

The reference to the Dreki area brings us to another issue in which tension can be clearly identified in the texts analyzed. Once it was finally recognized that human-induced climate change was actually occurring, tension emerged in the political discourses about the Arctic between emphasizing threats associated with climate change and highlighting opportunities that the changes could bring. This can be clearly seen in the president's speeches and in policy documents, whereas the policy shapers interviewed tended to be critical of the opportunistic discourse. One policy shaper, after having expressed his frustration over what he felt was weak climate policy manifesting in sporadic initiatives to reduce emissions, turned his attention to the opportunistic discourse about the Arctic:

To top this, all I listen to ministers, the president, and business men...[...] who paint the exploitation of Arctic resources in rosy colors and think it is a given that we will engage, for example, in drilling for oil and gas. I don't think this will happen in the immediate future, but those speaking assume that it is fine to utilize those resources, in spite of the fact that most experts, even conservative financial institutes, agree that only about a quarter of known oil, gas, and coal reserves can be utilized... not to mention new reserves.

The policy shapers frequently expressed their wish that Iceland would be more proactive as a role model, acting as a norm entrepreneur for energy production and the implementation of climate policy. The same vision occasionally appears in public policy documents, although such ideas are quickly pushed aside if they seem to compromise Iceland's opportunities to utilize natural resources.

Two underlying ideas, both of which could be categorized as "common-sense assumptions" as Fairclough (1989) uses the concept (see Section 3.3), are helpful in explaining why the idea of Iceland acting as a norm entrepreneur has not taken off. First, even though the desire that Iceland can influence international affairs beyond its size can be detected, this desire is weakened by a deep-seated belief that small states will always have limited influence in international relations, so their main objective should be to protect their own interests in a harsh world. Although this belief is not often expressed explicitly in public discourse, it can often be sensed as an underlying assumption, not only in climate-related discourses, but also in other domains – in discourses related to EU accession talks and European integration, for example. This assumption is, of course, closely related to the assumption underpinning realist theories dominating international relations, both in the academic discipline and among policy makers. The unspoken assumption is that the main aim of all actors, be they states, corporations, or individuals, is to maximize their own power or wealth. To expand on the assumption, by deciding to act for the common interest of all, rather than focusing on narrow self-interests, they will lose the game: As a small state, Iceland is vulnerable and needs to use every opportunity available to protect its economic and political interests.

The second common-sense assumption underlying the dominant climate-related discourses is the idea that economic growth is possible only by increasing the utilization of natural resources. The desire to keep Iceland among the wealthiest nations, where the citizens can enjoy high standards of living is taken for granted. And because Iceland has relied on natural resources to create wealth in the past, the assumption is this is the only way to create wealth in the future. This assumption exists in spite of numerous examples of successful Icelandic companies that rely on human capital and brainpower, rather than the exploitation of natural resources. One of the policy shapers referred to this underlying assumption when explaining the initially harsh

reaction against the view that perhaps oil and gas resources should be left alone, even if they exist within Iceland's EEZ. As a civil servant, she had noted that the right to protect natural resources was an underlying theme in almost all aspects of Iceland's foreign policy and something that was engrained into the administrative system: "... in international forums we are consistently involved in fights that focus on our rights to use our resources, rather than speaking from a conservation point of view, even if we emphasize the sustainability factor," she said.

When a view is presented that goes against common-sense assumptions that are seldom voiced but taken for granted by the majority, it inevitably calls for a strong reaction. Other views are not automatically accepted. An active and steady resistance is needed to challenge the dominant views, and it takes time to carve out space for new ideas. But as Fairclough emphasizes, if humans have created dominant discourses, humans can change them, and this process occurs through social struggle. When it comes to climate change, specific events, including international meetings and the publications of new scientific information, have also been instrumental in shifting dominant discourses – what Jóhannesson (2010) refers to as "historical junctures".

### *Historical Junctures*

To explain why some ideas and practice gain greater legitimacy than others in the discourse, the concept of historical juncture is relevant. Several events can be identified as important historical junctures that influenced climate-related discourses in the Icelandic case study. One is the Kyoto Protocol, signed in December 1997. The signing of the Protocol marks the beginning of climate change entering mainstream political debate in Iceland. The Protocol inspired President's Grímsson's New Year's address in January 1998 (and the speech of Prime Minister Oddsson the evening before). As previously discussed, Grímsson's message about the dangers of climate change did not fall on fertile soil, and Oddsson's skepticism about climate change seemed to be more in line with mainstream views at the time. Yet the signing of the protocol put climate change on the political agenda as an issue worthy of attention, although, for the first few years, most of the focus was on how to prevent international climate conventions from putting any restraints on the Icelandic economy.

A second historical juncture is related to the publication of the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (Arctic Council, 2004). The report validated earlier information about the dangers associated with climate change and pointed at several threats specific to the Arctic, including faster-than-average temperature increases, resulting in rapid melting of the Arctic ice. The ACIA report firmly tied climate change and Arctic issues together, providing scientific backing for the policy shapers who were concerned with climate change, and giving them firm ground on which to stand. This can be clearly seen in the speeches of President Grímsson, who frequently referred to the report in the first 2 or 3 years after it was published.

A third historical juncture can be identified in 2007, when the IPCC published its 4<sup>th</sup> assessment report, and the IPCC and Al Gore were rewarded the Noble Peace Prize for their work on raising awareness of climate change. The rapid melting of the Arctic ice, which reached new a new level in the summer of 2007 (NASA, 2007), further strengthened the message of the IPCC report. That year was a turning point in the securitization of climate change at the international level, and a turning point in climate policy in Iceland, as further elaborated on in Chapter 6 and can be clearly noted in policy documents published in 2007 and later.

Identifying historical junctures closer in time is tricky, as it can be more difficult to evaluate the impact of events when they are still mingled with the noise of the present. The COP 15 meeting in Copenhagen in 2009 was certainly initiated in order to create a shift in global climate discourses. But the meeting – which was held in the shadow of the global financial crisis – was a total failure, and was more harmful than helpful in raising awareness of the climate crisis. The 5th IPCC assessment report, published in 2014, does seem to be one of the factors contributing to the shift in the oil and gas discourse in Iceland, however. Katrín Júlíusdóttir (The Vice Chairman of the Social Democrats for the period 2013-2016), for example, referred to the report when explaining her changed opinion about the oil and gas explorations in the Dreki area, as described in Chapter 8. The even more recent Paris agreement, signed in December 2016, may also have the potential to create a shift in the discourse, but only time will tell if this will actually happen.

Most of the events serving as historical junctures in the discourse relate to happenings originating outside Iceland even if they shape the domestic discussion. Reports from the IPCC and other international bodies have been instrumental in creating and distributing scientific knowledge about climate change and, as scientific knowledge has evolved, it has influenced policy discourses. Scientific knowledge, like other knowledge products, is socially situated, however, the clearest example of which is the way climate change is consistently framed as a global issue, keeping it at safe distance from the daily lives of ordinary people. Even though there is information in the reports about serious local consequences, the climate crisis is still first and foremost framed as a global problem calling for global solutions.

In the Icelandic case study, this circumstance results in a strange situation: global reports are more likely to spur debate and initiate changes in climate-related discourses than are domestic trends that can be associated with climate change, such as melting of the glaciers, movements of fish stocks, and ocean acidification.

## 9.2 Masculine or Feminine Values?

Where do the climate-related discourses identified in the Icelandic case study fall on the masculine-feminine spectrum? Are the discourses driven mainly by masculine values or are feminine values also present? I first summarize how the various climate discourses fit with the masculine and feminine discourses described in MacGregor's (2010) framework and then match the broader climate-related discourses with some of the values underpinning dominant political and economic theories, as discussed in the theoretical chapter. Those analyses are presented in bits and pieces in Part II of the dissertation, in the concluding remarks of each chapter, but are offered here in one place to provide a more holistic overview.

As discussed in Section 2.5, MacGregor identifies two climate discourses that she labels as masculine: the discourse on environmental security and the ecological modernization discourse. The environmental security discourse stresses the danger of resource conflicts, calling for militaristic approaches to address the consequences of climate change. It can be associated with the warrior image that Tickner (1992) relates to realist theories. The ecological modernization discourse favors technical solutions, and the associated image is one of clever men solving complex problems, harmonizing with the ideas underlying neo-liberal approaches, including the image of the rational economic man discussed by Tickner (1992), Mellor (1995), and Nelson (1995). According to McGregor, both discourses favor top-down approaches and the use of powerful institutions to implement policies. Both remain silent on the importance of integrating into climate policy such feminine values as a focus on cooperation, sustainable lifestyles, and ethical consumption.

When those two sets of discourses are matched with the Icelandic case study, one quickly sees some elements of the ecological modernization discourse but the environmental security discourse, as defined by MacGregor, is not obvious. As discussed in Chapter 4 on the Arctic, the environmental security discourse has been prominent in recent years and often hyped up in the media as an upcoming race for resources. This approach is not echoed in Icelandic climate discourses. On the contrary, policy documents explicitly reject this approach and emphasize that the Arctic is a peaceful and stable region and that good cooperation exists among Arctic states. As Bailes & Heininen (2012) point out in their analysis of the Arctic strategies of the eight Arctic states, Iceland stresses the importance of comprehensive security and strongly argues against militarization of the region. Although a couple of the policy shapers mentioned that they had heard references to a potential race for resources in the Arctic, this was not an issue that the policy shapers were paying much attention to or seemed occupied with. When climate change is identified as a security threat in policy documents, in the president's speeches, and in my interviews with the policy shapers, it is generally in the context of comprehensive or human security rather than military security. As

discussed in Chapter 6, however, the threat to human security is only vaguely defined. The securitization of climate change has been a top-down process; the themes of domestic climate discourses have been generated in international forums, rather than originating at the grassroots level. So even if the masculine values related to militarization cannot be detected in climate discourses exploring climate as a security threat, feminine approaches that emphasize how climate change could threaten communities and influence the daily lives of ordinary people, are not noticeable either, except in an extremely vague form. In those cases where human security is highlighted as important in policy documents, this is generally without further elaborations on what that entails. In fact, the values underlying the discourse on climate change as a security threat are particularly vague, and the discourse seems to be “borrowed” primarily from the international discourse with little analysis of how those threats could manifest locally in Iceland and who is most vulnerable to these threats.

Of the two masculine discourses identified by MacGregor, the ecological modernization discourse is much more noticeable in the Icelandic case. The most obvious fit are the views of President Grímsson, who consistently stresses the importance of large-scale technical solutions as a way of transforming the global energy sector. In this context, he presents the case of Iceland moving from oil to geothermal energy for space heating, a narrative that is in perfect harmony with the image of clever men solving complex problems using win-win solutions that are beneficial for both the economy and the environment. This emphasis on technical solutions can also be noted in policy documents, although the policy measures suggested are of smaller scale and not a systematic change transforming an entire sector, as was the case with space heating some decades earlier.

MacGregor also identifies two less dominant discourses that she labels as feminine. The green-duty discourse primarily focuses on sustainable lifestyle. The discourse on neo-Malthusian population control is occupied with the importance of curbing the number of children people choose to have. Both approaches emphasize bottom-up solutions where the lens is on the behavior of individuals. Whereas the masculine discourses focus on technical solutions, parallel feminine discourses place the responsibility on individuals as caretakers and consumers. MacGregor argues that because women still bear the main burden of domestic activities within households, the call for individuals to tackle climate change by conserving energy, recycling waste, and moving toward a low-carbon lifestyle is not gender neutral, but aimed at women more than men (MacGregor, 2010).

The discourse on neo-Malthusian population growth refers to women being seen as part of the climate problem because they have too many children, leading to unsustainable population growth. In this context, climate policies would focus on family planning and finding ways to encourage women to have fewer children. This discourse is presently relevant primarily in the Global South, where population growth is still high. Themes associated with this discourse did not emerge in the Icelandic case study.

The green-duty discourse, however, does play a strong role in the Icelandic case study, and references to lifestyle changes and ethical consumption can be found in both policy documents and in the transcribed interviews. The Climate Action Plan (Icelandic Ministry for the Environment, 2010), for example, lists the promotion of transport methods like walking, cycling, and public transport, as one of ten priority actions (number five on the list). Most of the other priority actions, however, are technical solutions and/or focus on using the market as a tool to create incentives (often with an associated complicated regulatory framework, as is the case with the EU Emission Trading Scheme). Furthermore, the implementation of the action related to promoting alternative transport methods does not seem to be a priority. The main emphasis in the climate legislation passed by the parliament in 2012 is on the EU trading scheme, and although efforts have been made in some municipalities to improve public transport and encourage bicycling, these attempts have not been systematic. With the exception of Reykjavík, municipalities have shown little initiative toward climate mitigation, and the national government has not made it a priority to team up with municipalities to implement climate policies in the action plan more effectively.

In some ways, the underlying assumption is that individuals will assume more sustainable lifestyles merely on moral grounds, if the message is repeated often enough, without any systematic measures being implemented by the public sector to facilitate the changes. This position is in stark contrast to the assumption underlying most of the decisions based on the goal of influencing the private sector: that businesses will respond only to economic incentives. This assumption is in line with underlying assumptions in dominant economic models: that each actor will focus on maximizing its own interests. The messages about sustainable lifestyles, however, refer to the moral responsibilities of those in charge of households, a responsibility that women are still shouldering more than men are. As the analysis in the gender budgeting project conducted on the Climate Action Plan revealed (see discussion in Section 7.4), a focus on sustainable lifestyle without a conscious decision to design gender-sensitive measures is likely to lead to women spending more hours doing unpaid work (Icelandic Ministry for the Environment, 2012). What is interesting to note, in this respect, is that when men are the main targets (managers in the business sector), policy measures focus on economic incentives, but when policies are aimed at households, where women tend to have more decision-making power, references are made to moral responsibility. In other words, the policies are legitimizing and reproducing the stereotypical gender roles, whereby men are assumed to be motivated only by self-interest, but women are expected to be more caring and altruistic.

The green-duty discourse was even more noticeable in interviews with policy shapers than in policy documents, and many of them stressed the importance of lifestyle changes. Interestingly, President Grímsson rarely mentions the importance of lifestyle or overconsumption in his speeches when talking about solutions to climate change.

His sole focus is on technical solutions in the spirit of ecological modernization.

As indicated, one danger of the green-duty discourse is that it places the burden of lifestyle changes disproportionately on women. While men get the glory of coming up with clever technical solutions, women are pressured with the duty of cutting back their consumption and modifying their behavior. As MacGregor states in her article, targeting women specifically for climate policies that aim for lifestyle change is more common in developing countries, where development programs often rely on the free labor of women doing volunteer work, assuming they are the natural caretakers of the environment. In the developed world, the pressure on women is subtler and often unintentional. Women are more likely than men to be targeted as consumers, for example. Small cars are sometimes advertised and talked about as “wife cars”<sup>34</sup>, indicating that small, fuel-efficient cars are acceptable for women but not masculine enough for men. A few years ago, a book was published in Iceland under the title: *Women Can Change the World by Adopting a New Lifestyle*. In the book, author Guðrún Bergman argues that because women hold more power than men as consumers, they have the power to make more ethical consumption choices (Bergmann, 2009).

When evaluating climate discourses in Iceland using MacGregor’s framework, the overall conclusion is that they can be labeled neither overwhelmingly masculine nor overwhelmingly feminine. When it comes to adaptation, the tilt is toward a more feminine perspective, emphasizing the importance of human security but rejecting militarization of the climate crisis. Yet, the underlying feminine values are relatively vague. This results in an emphasis on human security, but the ways in which climate change could threaten human security are poorly defined, and bottom-up stories about the impact of climate change at the local level are missing. On the mitigation side, the results are even more conflicted. There are some clear elements favoring technical solutions, but calls for lifestyle changes are also present, although they tend to be pushed to the side if they call for a compromise on the comforts of modern lifestyles. In fact, some of the policy shapers, whose views tend to be more progressive than mainstream policy, have expressed frustration in society’s resistance to scale down consumption and face the reality that Earth cannot sustain our excessive lifestyles in the long run.

The analysis of the masculine and feminine values underlying dominant discourses does not stop here, however. In order to obtain a holistic picture of the dominant values that influence how climate change is responded to, we need to look beyond narrowly defined climate discourses and explore the values driving the more mainstream discourses on security and economic development.

With this in mind, we can broaden the analysis to include climate-related discourses, such as discourses on economic development and, more specifically, the oil and gas discourses. From this perspective, masculine values are more dominant than what can be

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34 In Icelandic: Frúarbill

noted when examining only the more narrowly defined climate policy discourses. Man's right to exploit nature – a central value in Western thought and an underlying assumption in dominant economic and political theories – is a fundamental, virtually unquestioned idea in the oil and gas discourse in Iceland. As one policy shaper noted, the right of Iceland, as a sovereign state, to exploit resources is engrained in the administrative system. This view manifested clearly in the aftermath of the TV interview with the former minister in 2009, when she expressed doubts about the plans of her government to start a licensing process for oil and gas explorations in the Dreki area. The same values were the driving force behind Iceland's lobbying for a special exemption (Decision CP.7/14) in the Kyoto Protocol. As a small state, Iceland's primary duty is to protect its economic and political interests, so the argument goes, and if a clash exists between economic security (including protecting short-term economic gains) and enhancing long-term environmental security (as in the case with climate change), economic security has the upper hand.

The emerging oil and gas sector in Iceland is highly male dominated, with no women among the oil investors. Although this fact alone will not automatically translate into decision-making based only on masculine values, the socialization of men and women to behave in accordance with traditional gender roles increases the likelihood of a heavy tilt toward masculine values if there is no gender balance among top managers.

Analysis of the oil and gas discourses reveals that both politicians and investors systematically ignored the relationship between climate change and oil and gas explorations and were able to get away with it because climate policies have focused almost entirely on the demand side. Those involved in the production side are assumed to be ruled entirely by the free market and will decrease production only if demand drops. This perspective is not gender neutral, because women are relatively active consumers and are therefore the targets of information aimed at pressuring individuals to make more ethical consumer choices. On the supply side, however, where men dominate as investors and managers, a similar pressure for ethical behavior is missing, although the seeds of a new approach can be detected through recent initiatives like campaigns to disinvest from fossil fuels (discussed in Chapter 8).

As can be seen from the analysis in this section, dominant political and economic theories tend to assume that humans are autonomous individuals driven by self-interest and that their desire is to maximize either their material wealth or their power to control others. As pointed out by feminists in the various disciplines, these theories rest on limited ideas about humans, taking into account only the masculine traits of human nature but ignoring other traits, more often associated with feminine characteristics, such as the need for relationships, the fact that we all need to be taken care of during some periods of our lives, and our abilities to be nurturing and caring toward others. Is it possible that human beings can be driven by other motives, more closely related to human traits that have been historically associated with the feminine qualities? This idea is explored further in the upcoming section.

### 9.3 What Motivates Policy Shapers?

One of the key themes in this dissertation is an exploration of the values underlying climate-related discourses and the associated public policies. In this context, I consider values to be guiding principles in a person's life, associated with his or her worldview and instrumental in shaping the choices an individual makes about how to live life. In this sense, the values we hold are the driving force that motivates us and gives meaning to our daily lives. With this in mind, one of the questions I asked all the policy shapers I interviewed was about their motivations and why they continued their work, which included raising awareness of climate change.

As discussed in Section 2.3, research has demonstrated that people who endorse self-transcendent values and who exhibit high levels of altruism are more likely to engage in sustainable behavior, show higher concern about environmental risks, perform such actions as recycling, and engage positively with climate change, as opposed to those holding more self-enhancement values. In fact, the more people endorse hierarchical and individualistic worldviews, the more likely they are to downplay environmental risks (Corner, Markowitz, & Pidgeon, 2014).

The same article also discusses a qualitative study that explored in detail the values of a group of individuals who had made concrete changes in their lifestyles in response to climate change. The findings were that although concern for the environment was a motivating factor for some of the people, the perceived social injustice climate change would bring was more dominant as a motivation factor. Another study showed that individuals with stronger egalitarian and communitarian worldviews perceived climate change as riskier than did those with individualistic and hierarchical values (Corner, Markowitz, & Pidgeon, 2014).

Although these authors do not label values as feminine or masculine, the cluster of values associated more with environmental awareness and concern for climate change can easily be linked to characteristics traditionally labeled feminine, whereas the other cluster of values, belonging to those more likely to downplay environmental risks, have some clear resemblance to our ideas about masculinity. (See Section 2.3 for a discussion of my definition of feminine and masculine values.)

Based on this knowledge, one of the key criteria I used when selecting people for interviews was that those individuals had shown some initiative in raising awareness of climate change. I wanted to interview policy shapers who would be likely to endorse more feminine values than could be detected in the dominant climate-related discourses and was curious to find out if they experienced tension when expressing their views in public forums. In my questions related to values and guiding principles, I did find out that most of the policy shapers were driven by values that could be located on the feminine side of the feminine-masculine spectrum. What surprised me, however, was that some of them were hesitant to discuss their values, initially masking them with

answers indicating that they were guided by more rationalistic, individualistic motives than really was the case. This was especially true for the men I interviewed, although a hesitation to discuss the deeper underlying values was also present among some of the women.

“This is my work. I make a living by pushing forward certain ideas”, one male civil servant said when asked about his motivations. After I pushed the issue, he admitted that there was also a feeling of responsibility involved, especially toward future generations. Later in the interview, he revisited the issue on his own initiative:

The interest does not get ignited at any one point. It gets ignited when you are a child. When you realize you enjoy being out in nature. When you have a good natural science teacher that helps you put things into a larger context.

Having followed the work of this individual for several years, I knew he was deeply passionate about nature conservation, and it surprised me that he did not mention his love for nature immediately when I asked about his motivation. But it seemed that expressing something that was associated with strong emotions (in this case caring for the environment) was difficult in this context; a reference to the rational, materialistic explanation “I get paid for it” was a safer choice.

“This is, of course, first and foremost, part of my job,” was the initial reaction of another male interviewee. And a third one, when asked about his motives, stressed that his interest in climate change was based on his interest in science, not on an ethical position on environmental protection. Yet, as the conversation continued, a strong ethical position emerged:

I have always deeply believed that we don't own nature. We don't own Esja. There are some owners registered for the land around, and the government probably owns the common areas, but we are only creatures that walk there for a short amount of time. Ownership is the legal side, but in the large context, we are just a small piece in the chain of life. Our legal structures are just something that help us get along without hurting each other.

A woman civil servant also hesitated when asked about her motivations. “I cannot answer without being sentimental,” she said, as if she were obligated to warn me. Her motivation was linked to her strong feelings toward nature:

I have a deep connection with nature. I am a country girl and feel that I have deep roots in the land. I tend to think far ahead, both in my own life and others...far into the future. But I just feel there is a connection...how we think about the environment and...[...] There is this great power that I

can feel in our nature that makes it impossible for me not to become aware of certain things.

When asked why she felt the need to apologize in advance for her answer, she admitted she worried about the reaction to such an emotional answer:

There is some sort of masculine discourse where the informed rational man relies on logic when he speaks. Emotions are something that have generally not been viewed positively in the public discourse in Iceland. Therefore, perhaps I am shy to express emotions as my driving force.

As can be seen from these quotes, strong affiliation to nature is one of the factors that motivates the policy shapers. Another theme that emerged as a major driving force was social justice and a sense of responsibility. Although social justice is also a value often associated with strong emotions, the policy shapers seemed more relaxed about expressing their views related to social justice than those related their relationship to nature.

“It is a sense of justice,” one male expert replied, relating environmental degradation to greed and inequality in the distribution of world resources. “This is something that has been going on for centuries,” he said, “and I feel a duty to take a stand and do something about this.”

A woman expert talked about her passion to improve society:

When I studied biology, I realized the seriousness of environmental affairs but also that there are plenty of actions that can be taken. So I found it very intriguing to work on that. I very much like working towards change. I am also very interested in how you can influence the behavior of people through policy.

“I think it is a sense of justice and the will to fight,” one female politician said. “You need to show you are awake and allow your thoughts and emotions to create some actions.” This policy shaper referred to people who relied primarily on logic as “excel people”, whereas activists, she believed, were driven by emotions. Interestingly, she can be seen as being on the other end of the spectrum, because she devalues a rational approach to decision-making. Perhaps this approach is a defense mechanism, as she had often been publicly criticized for being overly emotional and not rational enough in her approach to environmental issues.

Another female politician emphasized the importance of being guided by a clear vision rather than by fear. She also explained how part of her vision in politics was to listen to vulnerable groups and give a voice to people who cannot speak for themselves. With respect to climate change, she believes she is speaking on behalf of future generations:

So my guiding light and my values are social justice, sustainability... and then there are some additional concepts like moderation...but also the importance of living fearlessly. To be fearless in the face of ruling powers and fearless against the tasks at hand, even if they seem to be without a solution.

Only one of the policy shapers mentioned fear as a motivating factor. “I am just very worried about the future of my children,” she said referring to fears about the availability of food in the future, how ocean acidification will impact fish stocks around the country, and other factors that could influence the daily life of her family.

The role of fear as a motivating factor is an interesting issue to ponder. The case study clearly illustrated that voters are not putting much pressure on politicians to respond to climate change, and although members of the public are aware of the risks associated with climate change, they seem to perceive climate change as an abstract and distant threat. Connecting the impact of climate change more directly with the daily lives of ordinary people may be a way to increase awareness at the local level and encourage more grassroots-level initiatives. But communicating information about climate change can be tricky. On one hand, the message needs to be clear enough that the public can sense the urgency of the issue. On the other hand, if the message is framed with too much alarmist language, there is the risk that people will be paralyzed by fear and will feel powerless to react. This is the type of scenario that can push people into the state of denial described by Norgaard (2011) in her case study from Norway. (See discussion in Chapter 4.)

This point also brings us to the topic of emotions more generally – not only fear, but other emotions related to justice and to humans caring for each other and for the environment. Some of the policy shapers referred to motives that fit well with the key features of the ethics of care that feminist scholars have offered as an alternative to the more dominant moral theories that are occupied more with abstract principles and human beings as autonomous rational beings. (See discussion in Section 2.4.) The hesitation, or even shame, some of the policy shapers appeared to exhibit when expressing these emotions – especially if they suggested that they cared for nature – is consistent with the fact that these are emotions associated with ethics of care and feminine values. It seems that some of the policy shapers fear their motivations will be associated with irrationality and weakness – some of the negative traits associated with femininity – whereas a reference to rationality and self-interested motives are more likely to be accepted as valid.

These findings from the interviews were surprising in some respects and worthy of greater attention. I elaborate more on the role of emotions in the next section, but I also believe that this is a topic requiring greater in-depth discussion in future research. A recent book by Per Espen Stoknes, a Norwegian scholar educated in economics and psychology, provides a noteworthy contribution to the field. Stoknes identifies five

psychological barriers preventing action on climate change and suggests some ways to overcome those barriers. Although his work is coming from a completely different theoretical background than mine is, some of his solutions are in harmony with the findings of this research: the relevance of framing, the importance of storytelling as a way to help people to link climate change with their daily lives, and the benefits of igniting positive emotions that will motivate people to join forces to develop more sustainable communities (Stoknes, 2015).

In the fourth and final section of this chapter, the attention turns to what it would entail to connect the impact of climate change more closely with people's daily lives and how climate change could – now or in the future – threaten human security. Is it possible to reframe discourses about climate change in such a way that they will have more relevance for the common citizen? And would it be possible to do this in a way that would empower people at the community level and inspire them to take action, rather than merely creating fear and hopelessness.

#### **9.4 Securitization from the Bottom Up**

Feminist writers have emphasized the need to articulate security not only with national security in mind – protecting borders from outside threats – but also to address the security needs at the community level. One example is Hoogensen and Stuvøy, who argue that a gender approach to human security makes it possible to be more reflective of security concerns that originate from the bottom up. A gender focus generally includes analysis of power relations and can provide a useful framework for examining structural relations that are often ignored – namely relations of dominance and non-dominance (Hoogensen & Stuvøy, 2006). Wibben also argues for the need of a bottom-up approach to security. She uses a narrative approach, telling stories about how the incidents of 9/11 influenced the daily lives of ordinary women living in the United States at the time. By reframing the events through security narratives from the ground up, the attention moves away from traditional national security concerns to the way security policies influence the everyday lives of people (Wibben, 2011).

Although Barnett does not identify himself as a feminist scholar, his arguments in his study on adaptation policies in the Pacific Islands are along similar lines as Wibben's. Rather than relying on modeling to evaluate the impact of climate change, he advocates for a bottom-up approach, in which local knowledge is valued and emphasis is placed on the local context (Barnett, 2010).

Would this type of approach – collecting narratives from the local level about the influence of climate change on the daily lives of people around the world – change our perception of the problem? How would this type of securitization of climate change from the bottom up influence climate-related discourses? Would it change how peo-

ple view climate change, and would this shift in attitudes lead to more action at the local level and an increasing pressure on politicians to implement policies aimed at mitigating climate change?

Using such a narrative approach would include the introduction of emotions into the political discussion and putting a human face on climate change. This is similar to the method leaders of Arctic indigenous groups used in international negotiations for a convention on persistent organic pollutants (POPs), in which story telling was used to create compassion and empathy: to speak from the local to the global, rather than only the other way around.

Part of integrating more feminine values into climate policy is the creation of more room for emotions in public discourses, in line with the principles argued for in the ethics of care as a moral theory. As Held (2006) explains, in the ethics of care, such emotions as sympathy, empathy, sensitivity, and responsiveness are seen as the kind of moral emotions that need to be cultivated as a significant element when making moral decisions – in contrast with the rationalistic approaches in the more dominant moral theories. The role of emotions, however, is not straightforward, and Held stresses that this does not mean raw emotions can be guide to morality, because feelings need to be reflected upon.

Positive emotions like compassion and empathy, along with a strong affinity with nature, can inspire and encourage positive action, but negative emotions like fear and anger can lead to hurtful action or even denial and non-action, especially if the main emphasis is on alarming messages, without offering realistic solutions to the problem.

Although knowledge and facts are crucial to understand climate change, reaching people's emotions can be equally important if the goal is to influence their behavior. Humans tend to be driven by their emotions and are likely to filter all information through their value system and worldview. Often, it is only through our emotions that we are stirred deeply enough that we may consider changing our ways. Yet, the tendency is to ignore the role of emotions in policy making, and policy makers often speak as if their decisions are based only on knowledge, facts, rationality, and logic. To admit to emotions as a driving force is somehow considered shameful or a sign of weakness. Because emotions are linked to femininity and logic and rationality are considered masculine traits, emotional responses do not receive the same respect as answers that seem to rest on purely logical thinking. This was especially striking in the interviews with the policy shapers who referred to strong emotions related to their care for the environment as their driving force. The policy shapers that referred to social justice as their key driving force were less shy about revealing their motives, perhaps because the concept of justice is more developed and accepted in dominant moral theories than is the concept of care.

But is it possible that by ignoring the strong influence of emotions on human behavior, we are missing the opportunity to use emotions in a constructive way to tackle the

climate crisis? Instead of using approaches that ignite positive emotions like compassion and empathy, policy makers rely on economic models, assuming that the only way to influence behavior is through economic incentives. The metaphor of the market as a machine is still alive and is driving policy.

A feminist approach to international relations includes a bridge over the gap between the local and the global – taking seriously the lives of people living in local communities around the world and by giving a voice to marginal groups. Individuals and individual communities have stories to tell about how climate change is influencing their lives. But unless those stories are collected, compiled, and disseminated, we may not recognize the patterns and the collective experience we are having as humans on this planet. Unless we connect the dots, the consequences of climate change are interpreted as single events and policy responses focus on symptoms rather than causes.

Another important aspect of bottom-up approaches is the ability of individuals to organize into social networks and create social movements that are strong enough to influence politics. In the Icelandic case study, bottom-up pressure from social movements was minimal, and the politicians were not experiencing great pressure from voters to implement ambitious climate policies.

Well-known Canadian activist Naomi Klein has highlighted the importance of social movements in a recent book on the politics of climate change in her book, *This Changes Everything*. Klein presents capitalism as the main obstacle preventing us from successfully tackling the challenges related to climate change and stresses the need for radical social changes that would simultaneously reduce the need for fossil fuels and reduce social inequality. Strong social movements are, in her view, the only force that could elicit the deep transformation needed. “We are left with a stark choice”, she says: “...allow climate disruption to change everything about our world, or change pretty much everything about our economy to avoid that fate” (Klein, 2014).

Klein is calling not only for different policies, but for a deeper change that can occur only if there is a clear shift in values. Or in her own words:

...the real reason we are failing to rise to the climate moment is because the actions required directly challenge our reigning economic paradigm (deregulated capitalism combined with public austerity), the stories on which Western cultures are founded (that we stand apart from nature and can outsmart its limits), as well as many of the activities that form our identities and define our communities (shopping, living virtually, shopping some more). They also spell extinction for the richest and most powerful industry the world has ever known – the oil and gas industry, which cannot survive in anything like its current form if we humans are to avoid our own extinction. (Klein, 2014, p. 63)

Klein calls for a reevaluation of worldviews and the way humans relate to nature. She emphasizes the importance of new values gaining ground. Although she does not use the terms “masculine and feminine values”, the values she is calling for have some clear resemblances to the values that have been categorized as feminine values in this research, and her criticism of dominant values and the associated capitalistic system can be easily linked to the feminist critique of the patriarchal system<sup>35</sup>. The way forward in pushing for this shift in values, she asserts, is through bottom-up mass social movements that create enough disruption to shake up current power structures. In this context, she refers specifically to the importance of recent movements fighting against the fossil fuel industry, both the anti-pipeline movements in North America and the disinvestment movement calling for investors to stop providing capital for the fossil fuel industry and to use their resources to invest in such economic options as cleaner energy sources.

Klein’s book is inspired by the question of why we are failing to respond to climate change, which is the same overarching question that spurred the research presented in this dissertation. The work on her book started around the same time I began working on this dissertation (in 2009), and I read it only after having finished writing the first draft. Although her book takes a broader and more global approach than I did in this research, it is noteworthy that many of her insights are in harmony with the conclusions of this study.

In summary, the purpose of this chapter has been to elaborate further on some of the understandings gained from the data presented in the case study and to relate them more tightly to the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 2. This discussion included providing a more comprehensive discourse analysis of the climate-related discourses described in the case study, evaluating the degree to which masculine or feminine values are underpinning those discourses, and digging deeper into the role of emotions as a motivating factor in behavioral change. It also involved an envisioning of what a more feminist approach toward addressing climate change would look like. A feminist approach, in this case, would involve framing climate change more often as a local issue by describing the influence climate change can (our could in the future) have on the daily lives of ordinary people, and by highlighting the actions available to people at the individual and community level. It would also recognize the role of emotions as a motivating factor and encourage behavior in the spirit of ethics of care, where caring emotions toward the environment are cherished and celebrated.

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35 In an interview she gave on her book, Klein recognized that her criticism of capitalism is closely related to criticism of patriarchy (Jaffe, 2014).

## 10. Key Conclusions

“Climate change is the big story of my generation,” one policy shaper stated in an interview. Human-induced climate change is influencing Earth’s ecosystems in various ways, disrupting the harmony of nature, and creating imbalances that can have unforeseen consequences for all life on Earth, including the humans that are causing the changes. Although more than twenty years have passed since climate change became an issue on the international agenda – and the scientific knowledge has been available for even longer – global greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise. Knowledge does not seem enough to ignite actions that are radical enough to address the root causes. Climate policies are too weak to counteract the increasing energy use and states, corporations, and individuals are entangled in the dilemma ingrained into what Harding (1968) called “The Tragedy of the Commons”. People tend not to be willing to sacrifice their material comfort unless they have some assurance that others do the same, because otherwise their sacrifice may not lead to any climatic benefits. This situation exists in spite of the multiple security threats that climate change is already creating and is projected to create in the future.

It was my deep desire to gain a better understanding of why the international community is failing to address the climate problem successfully that led me to the topic of this dissertation. I wanted to discover the political, economic, and cultural values that were preventing action and was eager to search for ideas on how our mindset could be shifted toward values more likely to produce effective policies. In my search for answer, I turned to feminism as a gateway to new ideas and learned that feminist concepts were useful analytical tools for examining discourses and deconstructing dominant ideas that are often hiding in the background – not expressed explicitly, yet serving as a powerful force that controls social behavior.

Rather than adding to the rapidly growing literature discussing climate change as a global problem, I have used my background to offer a unique perspective, focusing on climate-related policies in one small Nordic state. This approach has given me the opportunity to delve more deeply into the questions and keep a clear focus, in spite of the enormity of the topic and the many layers of complexity.

The research questions posed in the introduction have been the guiding lights throughout the dissertation, and each chapter addresses some components of those questions. In this final chapter, I revisit the questions and provide a more condensed answer to each one by summarizing some of my key research findings. I do not present my answers as absolute truths, but rather as insights and perspectives that build on

the information and analysis presented in previous chapters. I begin by revisiting the three research questions, and from that discussion extract some factors that I believe can help to gain insight into the more general, overarching question I have grappled with over the research and writing of this dissertation.

Returning to the first research questions posed in the introduction:

- How is climate change impacting security in the Arctic, and more specifically, in Iceland, which serves as the main case study site?

I address this question mainly in Chapters 4 and 6. In the Arctic context, climate change is impacting security in a variety of ways. If we first look at the more traditional approach to security, with a focus on sovereignty, national security, and military solutions to security threats, climate change could possibly create risks that would increase the likelihood of inter-state disputes, including the danger of conflicts over the utilization of resources that are becoming more accessible, due to the melting of the Arctic ice. In general, however, these types of security threats have been overemphasized in the media, and in spite of an increasing tension between Russia and the West over issues related to Ukraine, the spillover effects into Arctic affairs have been limited. Currently, the Arctic region is a relatively peaceful and stable region; there is good cooperation among the Arctic states and no strong signs of upcoming resource conflicts among states in the region.

This dissertation, however, looks at security from a broader perspective than the traditional national security, and has a more comprehensive understanding of the concept. The focus is more on human security, whereby threats are observed as they apply to individuals and communities at the local level. From this point of view, climate change can generate a number of threats to local communities. Changes in temperature, sea-level rise, coastal erosion, melting of permafrost, and ocean acidification – to name a few of the impacts of climate change – can all threaten livelihoods, health, and the general wellbeing of various groups and communities, especially those already in a vulnerable position. The framing of climate change as a global problem, however, tends to mask local consequences and creates the feeling that climate change is an abstract and distant problem. Climate impacts at the local level often become entangled with other environmental issues or with economic or political factors, and this further complicates the picture. The chapter on the Arctic showed that there is a need for more stories from the grassroots level to deepen our understanding of the current and emerging local consequences of climate change and how these changes are impacting human security. This need was confirmed in the case study about Iceland, in which there is an obvious lack of information about the human security challenges that climate change could create at the local level. This lack of information also means that

it was impossible to go into greater in-depth analysis of the risks and threats created by climate change at the local level and to determine which groups were most likely to suffer the consequences. Instead, the focus moved to a new level: if climate change was perceived as a threat by policy shapers, regardless of if this perceived threat had basis in actual physical evidences or calculated risks. And if so, in what way?

The case study demonstrates that climate change is considered a security threat in Icelandic policy documents and political discourses. The securitization of climate change, however, seems to come from “above” – from the international level rather than local communities at the grassroots level. So in spite of the fact that climate change is perceived as a threat by both experts and a large proportion of the population, most people seem to consider it an abstract threat and do not associate it with their daily lives.

When climate change is identified as a threat in policy documents, political speeches, and my interviews with policy shapers, the topic has usually been approached from the perspective of security as a broad concept, and most of the associated threats fall into the category of human security rather than military security. So the environmental security discourse that MacGregor identifies as one of two dominant masculine discourses in climate politics – discourses that can be clearly noted in media accounts about the Arctic in recent years – is not evident in political discourses about climate change in Iceland. Iceland, as a state without an army, consistently rejects military solutions to deal with tensions at the international level.

The issues identified as threats to human security, however, are poorly defined. Scant information exists about the socioeconomic impact of climate change and social science research that provides an analysis of how changes in nature could impact local communities is missing. This knowledge gap increases the likelihood that adaption at the local level will be more reactive than proactive, dealing with the symptoms of climate change once they appear, rather than taking steps to prepare before the changes materialize, or – even better – addressing the root causes in an effort to slow down the changes.

This lack of information could be one reason why people find climate change to be an abstract threat and distant from their daily lives. Communicating facts and technical information about climate change can increase knowledge, but it will not necessarily ignite enough passion that people will change their behaviors. Stories from the field, where narratives from the local level are told, could help put a human face on climate change and its associated impacts. Although sporadic efforts have been made to move the discussion in this direction, such narratives have not received much attention or managed to shift the global discourse on climate change. The same holds true in Iceland, where dominant discourses on climate change are shaped by the global discourse, and shifts in the discourse more often come from events originating outside the country than from social stirrings caused by the impact of climate change at the local level. There seems to be some resistance to open up the climate discussion to include personal, local narratives. Instead, the scientific community, environmental NGOs and

policy makers, continue to rely on technical, scientific information to communicate their message about climate change, that often includes alarming facts, but without the personal stories or practical solutions that are needed to move people's emotions and inspire positive action.

This last point brings us to the second research question:

- What do existing dominant political, economic, and security discourses reveal about the values underpinning policy decisions related to climate change and security?

I use the case study to explore this question, and my analysis is limited to exploring climate-related discourses in only one state. Nevertheless, discourses in Iceland cannot be viewed in isolation from the outside world, and as the analysis shows, domestic discourses are heavily influenced by climate discourses at the global level and in international forums.

After having evaluated the climate discourses in Iceland using MacGregor's framework, my overall conclusion is that they can neither be labeled overwhelmingly masculine nor feminine. When it comes to adaptation and the securitization of climate change, the tilt is toward a more feminine perspective, emphasizing the importance of human security but rejecting militarization of the climate crisis. On the mitigation side, the results are even more conflicted. Technical solutions seem to be prioritized, but calls for lifestyle changes are also present.

After viewing the discourses directly related to climate policies, one could easily conclude that a certain balance has been reached between masculine and feminine values. A closer look, however, is necessary. First, although human security is in the forefront when climate is discussed as a threat, this is not really followed through by thorough analysis of how the changes in nature could influence socioeconomic factors. Thus, human security challenges at the local level are poorly defined, and the relationships between global changes and local consequences are not highlighted. Second, even though the importance of lifestyle changes is mentioned in policy documents, most of the effort goes into such technical, market-oriented solutions as the implementation of the European emission trading scheme. In reality, there is little pressure on individuals or businesses to change their behavior, to rethink consumption patterns or the exploitation of natural resources at a fundamental level. All of this brings us to the third point – the insufficiency of examining only discourses directly related to climate policies. In this sense, MacGregor's framework is too narrow. To obtain a holistic picture, one must expand the box to include such climate-related discourses as those surrounding economic development and how dominant theories and the values underpinning those theories are shaping policy. In this context, the oil and gas discourse provides a good example.

The oil and gas discourse in Iceland clearly illustrates that even in a country that prides itself on high awareness of gender issues and with a culture that scores high on characteristics labeled as feminine, masculine values still dominate in certain sectors of society, especially in the utilization of natural resources. The acceptance of feminine values in one sphere of society does not automatically open up space for policies based on the same values in other sectors.

When oil and gas explorations in the Dreki area first appeared on the political agenda in Iceland in 2009, there was no room for doubts, and climate concerns were not even considered relevant. During the period 2009–2013, the government built on the climate policy from 2007 by creating a climate action plan, and new, comprehensive climate legislation was passed in the parliament. It seemed that policy makers were taking climate change seriously and were ready to adopt a more ambitious climate policy than ever before. When it came to the oil and gas question, however, issues related to climate change were ignored or pushed to the side. Man's right to exploit nature came across as a fundamental, unquestioned value. Or as one policy shaper noted, the right of Iceland to exploit its natural resources is engrained in the administrative system. As a small state, Iceland's primary duty is to protect its economic and political interests and if there is a clash between economic and environmental security, economic interests tend to have the upper hand.

The oil and gas discourse can easily be linked to the dominant political and economic discourses that Tickner argues rests on realist or liberal theories of how states behave. These dominant theories that have shaped politics and international relations in the past are underpinned with masculine values, projecting the behavior of elite males in power on the behavior of states. States are expected to focus primarily on protecting their self-interests and find ways to maximize their power. Women are absent, and feminine values are relevant only in the home and in people's private lives.

Similarly, the masculine view of the market as a machine, driven by rational, autonomous, and self-interested individuals, can also be traced in the oil and gas discourse. Producers of fossil fuels are expected to respond only to a reduction in demand – not to ethical pressure that would require them to look beyond their own narrow business interests. As Nelson points out, this view of the market ignores the more feminine traits of human nature and creates an unnecessary gap between economics and ethics.

The values underlying the dominant discourses are generally not explicit; rather they appear in the discourses as unspoken assumptions. In this case, the unspoken assumption is that the main aim of all actors – states, corporations, and individuals – is to maximize their own power or wealth. Anyone who decides to act with the common interest of all in mind, the value system suggests, will lose the game. As a small state, Iceland is vulnerable and needs to use every opportunity available to protect its interests.

Although dominant political and economic paradigms are strongly influential in shaping climate policy and climate-related discourses in Iceland, alternative perspec-

tives that are critical of the dominant discourse can also be detected. It is time now to turn to the third and final research question:

- How much room is there for alternative approaches in public discourses related to climate change – especially feminist perspectives – and do such perspectives offer any new and useful ideas on ways to address issues related to climate change and human security?

Again, as was the case with the second question, this question was addressed not on a global scale, but in the context of the case study, focusing on one small state. Given Iceland's status as a place where gender equality is taken seriously and feminism is a dynamic political force, the assumption was that feminine values would be more likely to find their way into climate-related discourses than would be the case in cultures where the status of women is worse and gender equality is not recognized as a priority issue.

To some degree, this turned out to be true. Climate discourses emphasize human security rather than focusing only on the ways in which climate change could threaten national security, and policy documents seem to offer a mixture of technical solutions and measures that facilitate lifestyle changes. As argued previously, however, feminine values seem to be rather superficial. The concerns for human security at the local level is mostly an echo from international reports rather than based on sound analysis from the local level in Iceland. And when it comes to implementation of mitigation policies, most of the effort has been concentrated on the technical, market-oriented solutions related to emission trading schemes. Few incentives have been created to facilitate a change toward a more sustainable lifestyle, and there is little pressure on individuals or businesses to change their behavior.

When the focus widens to include a broader set of climate-related discourses, like the oil and gas discourse, the room for feminine values is even less. Alternative voices were either ignored or silenced, and the idea that Iceland could take a leadership role in the climate debate by deciding not to explore the potential oil and gas resources in the Dreki area was not taken seriously. The interviews with policy shapers revealed that many of them felt uneasy about expressing doubts about the oil and gas explorations publicly, even though they silently questioned if it were a wise choice for Iceland. But analysis of the oil and gas discourse also showed that with a strong civil society, increased awareness of the climate crisis and active resistance to dominant views, it is possible to carve out space for alternative values, emphasizing a more feminine approach toward human interactions and toward the relationship between humans and nature. A clear shift in the discourse indicates that these alternative views have gained some legitimacy. Such a shift does not automatically translate into a change in policy or behavior, but is still an important step toward opening the dialogue to include a broader spectrum of solutions to tackle the climate crisis. For radical changes to occur, however, it is

necessary that the shift in values is not limited to a few concerned activists. As Klein argues, it is important that new ideas gain enough momentum so they become part of the mainstream discourse and reach the masses, creating widespread social movements demanding a change.

In the theoretical chapter (Section 2.6), I highlight Tickner's suggestions that in order to create an ecologically secure future, we need a shift in values whereby there is greater balance between masculine and feminine values. By elevating feminine values so they receive equal space and respect in public decision making as the masculine values that have traditionally underpinned policy, we will be taking a crucial step toward dissolving the hierarchy that fuels both gender inequality and the tendency of humans to overexploit natural resources. Inclusion of feminine values in policy would also increase the range of options available when designing solutions. A more feminine approach to climate policy would emphasize the importance of changes in our mindset and encourage behavioral changes that aim at creating lifestyles that respect the ecological limits of nature. One route toward this goal would be the merging of two of the discourses MacGregor identifies: the masculine ecological modernization discourse and the feminine green duty discourse, reshaping it into a new discourse focusing on sustainable living, whereby people – both men and woman – were encouraged to use an entrepreneurial mindset to spur innovations and find fun and interesting ways to create sustainable communities. A sustainable way of living needs to be presented as an attractive option that cannot only improve the environment, but can also enhance quality of life and the general wellbeing of people. Capitalizing on social networks and sharing successful and inspiring stories would be an integral component of such a discourse.

A feminine approach would also emphasize the ethics of care and open up space for emotions to play a role in policy. As the example from the POPs negotiations demonstrated, where indigenous leaders told stories from their communities on how the chemicals from the south were influencing their daily lives, bringing emotions into the dialogue and putting a human face on an environmental problem can help inspire action. Using emotions as arguments in public policy debates, however, can be risky. Even though emotions are more likely to reach people at a deeper level than facts, figures, and logic, there is still a tendency to ignore the role of emotions in policy making. Admitting emotions as a driving forces can be considered shameful or a sign of weakness. Because emotions are related to femininity and logic and rationality are considered masculine traits, emotional responses often do not receive the same respect as answers that seem to rest on pure logical thinking. This tendency is still evident in political discourses in Iceland, as was highlighted in the interviews with policy shapers. For feminine values to gain ground, we need to respect people who speak out on emotional grounds and accept their views as a valuable contribution to the public discourse.

The recent revolutions by young women in Iceland<sup>36</sup> who have cracked open the walls of silence surrounding sexual violence and gender discrimination by sharing their stories, can serve as a source of inspiration. Could their initiatives feed into other areas of society and create more room for emotions in other sectors as well?

With this analysis in mind, where I have summarized my answers to the three research questions, am I any closer to gaining an understanding of the key question of the thesis? It is now time to turn to the primary question that ignited this research and has been guiding me throughout the research journey:

- What political and economic interests and cultural values are preventing the international community from addressing the climate crisis in an effective way?

As stressed at the beginning of this dissertation, a qualitative study focusing on one case study cannot produce ultimate answers; rather it can provide and deepen our understanding of certain phenomena and relationships. My primary question refers to the international community, recognizing that, in spite of some valid criticism on how the global aspect has been overemphasized, climate change is still a global problem (even if it has critical – too often ignored – local dimensions) and as such it calls for a coordinated approach at the international level. That being said, the research focuses on only one state and any insights gained need to be understood in that context.

Early in the recognition of climate change issues, the main factor that prevented action in the Icelandic case was the fact that climate change was not really taken seriously. Participation in international negotiations were aimed merely at protecting economic interest. At this point, the chief obstacle to ambitious climate policy was a hesitancy to trust the emerging climate science and lack of understanding about the consequences.

A policy shift can be detected in 2007, coinciding with developments at the international level, and since then climate change has been openly recognized in political discourses as a key issue that must be addressed through public policy. Yet, even if policy documents, policy shapers, and the general public all identify climate change as a security threat, this threat seems to be abstract and distant from the daily lives of most people. One result is that although more ambitious policies have been adopted, implementation has been slow. Furthermore, the policies are often too narrow and isolated from the broader mainstream policies on security and economic development.

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36 In 2015, young women in Iceland started a campaign on social media, under the hashtag: #freethenipple. The campaign was meant to highlight the double standards for men and women about nakedness and the tendency to sexualize women's bodies. Several other campaigns followed, including one emphasizing the discrimination women experience in everyday life and another in which women publicly told stories about sexual violence they had experienced, with the aim of returning the shame to the perpetrators (Steen, 2015).

In other words, climate change is not seen as a priority issue, and it quickly takes a back seat when other issues call for attention.

A lesson learned from the Icelandic case is that the key obstacles are not necessarily an open opposition to specific measures or an explicit denial of climate change as a topic worthy of attention. Rather, climate issues are ignored, pushed to the side or actions are delayed when other issues, considered more pressing, consume time and resources.

Another important conclusion of this study is that in order to understand which factors are preventing more radical action to tackling the climate crisis, we need to go beyond narrowly defined climate discourses and explore the more mainstream discourses on security and economic development and how climate change is addressed (or ignored) within these discourses. Masculine values associated with man's unquestioned right to exploit nature are deeply engrained in the culture, resulting in short-term economic benefits overshadowing the more long-term approach needed when dealing with climate change.

It is easy to feel depressed and hopeless when exploring topics related to climate change. In spite of the dire danger that looms around the corner and is already present in some parts of the world, hardcore economic interests always seem to overshadow the softer values related to caring: caring for those most vulnerable to climate change; caring for nature; and last but not least, caring for future generations. But, just as softly flowing water eventually cracks even the most hardened rocks and reduces them to sand and soil, feminine values may eventually grow strong enough to melt our resistance to change and create soil, fertile for the deep transformation that needs to occur in the relationship between humans and nature. Will it be too late?

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## Appendix I: Interviews – Guiding Questions

A total of 18 qualitative interviews were undertaken during the period September 2011 to May 2014, 9 with females and 9 with males. The interviews were semi-structured, insofar as some guiding questions were used as a framework for the interview, leaving room for the discussion to flow and to follow up on topics as they arose. The guiding questions were asked in Icelandic but provided in English below:

1. What is your background and how have you been involved with policy making related to climate change?
2. How do you evaluate the current and potential impacts of climate change in Iceland?  
*(Possible follow-up questions: Do you experience climate change as a threat? If yes, what kind of threat? Threat to global, national, or human security? Do you personally feel threatened in your daily life?)*
3. What do you think about domestic climate policy?  
*(Possible follow-up question: For example, in comparison to other states?)*
4. In your opinion who bears the greatest responsibility for responding to climate change?  
*(Possible follow-up questions: Individuals? NGOs? The educational sector? National and local governments? Other states? International organizations?)*
5. What are the most important values that guide you in your work?  
*(Possible follow-up questions: What drives you to continue what you do?)*
6. How do those values harmonize with dominant ideas? Do you experience a fertile soil for your ideas?  
*(Possible follow-up questions: Are there any obstacles? What kind of obstacles? Have you noticed a change in the last 10 to 15 years?)*
7. Has the turmoil in Icelandic society related to the 2008 financial crisis influenced how society views climate change and associated impacts?  
*(Possible follow-up questions: Have other issues been marginalized? Did the crisis change values? More understanding of threshold and what happens if a system crumbles?)*

8. How do you understand the concept of sustainable development? Is it of any relevance in the context of climate change?
9. Do you see any relationships between gender and climate change?  
*(Possible follow-up question: Climate impacts? Contribution to the problem? How men and women view nature?)*
10. Do you believe that your gender plays any role when you participate in discussions about climate change and climate policy?