Framing environmental displaced people in migration policies

Taking a closer look to migration policies of the Netherlands and New Zealand

Sjors Hendrikson

Bachelor Thesis Geography, Planning and Environment (GPE)
Nijmegen School of Management
Radboud University Nijmegen
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Preface

In the beginning of February I started writing my Bachelor thesis. The last obstacle to complete my Bachelor Geography, Planning and Environment at the Radboud University Nijmegen. All what I have learnt the past four years had helped me to bring this thesis to a successful ending. After a half year of research this is the end result, entitled ‘Framing environmental displaced people in migration policies’. After this project I have a better view on what it means to do scientific research. It is challenging, constantly reflecting and you learn also more about yourself.

The subject of this thesis is a subject with the potential to become more relevant in the future. With the upcoming dominant role of climate change, migration due to this climate change will play a more and more significant role in our society. This research tries to contribute to a more clearer view on how environmental displaced people are framed in migration policies of the Netherlands and New Zealand. This will be achieved through the analyses of multiple migration policy documents and interviews with experts.

I could not do the research by myself. I want to thank the interviewees, Ingrid Boas, James Renwick, Han Nicolaas, Shawn Shen, Jay Marlowe and Dennis Wesselbaum, for their time and effort to answer my questions. In addition, I have to say thank you to my fellow students who were always willingly to give feedback. And last but not least, I want to thank my supervisors Mirjam Wajsberg and Joris Schapendonk for their time, constructive criticism and Skype meetings.

My job is done and I hope you enjoy reading my thesis.

Nijmegen, June 27th 2019, Sjors Hendrikson.
Summary

In 2014 an inhabitant of the island Kiribati asked for asylum in New Zealand because of the rising sea level (NOS, 2017). His request was refused, but the request made him the first ‘official’ climate refugee (NOS, 2017). The concept of the environmentally displaced person has changed a lot among the years. “Lack of conceptual clarity and consensus is a key problem that hinders research on climate refugees, in particular comparative research programs and data collection” (Biermann & Boas, 2010, p.62). This makes it even harder for policy-makers to create an adequate migration policy. My objective with this thesis is to unpack the framing of environmental induced migration in the political discourse of the Netherlands and New Zealand in order to discuss the differences and similarities in terms of the two countries’ policy approaches. The objectives mentioned above result in the following main question: How are environmental displaced persons framed in migration policy in the Netherlands and New Zealand, and in what way see these policies climate change as a migration driver?

As the concepts framing in migration policy and root causes of migration are central in this research, and two countries are compared, a comparative case study is the best design of this research. This will be done by semi-structured interviews of experts and policymakers, and by the analyses of migration policy documents of the Netherlands and New Zealand.

New Zealand is trying to deal with the growing needs surrounding a solid migration policy for EDPs. It is remarkable how the view from different Ministries and Departments differs from each other. From an economic approach from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment to a securitization approach at the Ministry of Defence. Compared to the Netherlands New Zealand is steps ahead when it comes to actual action points regarding EDPs. Where the Netherlands is still lingers in the discussion about the multicausality of migration, New Zealand tries to translate these scientific findings into accurate policy. Notable is the frequent use of the securitization frame and the adaptive agency frame and the little use of the humanitarian frame and the political subject frame. Possible explanation could be that the securitization frame makes it more ‘touchable’ and involves other actors with more attention, resources and money.

The environmental displaced people are stepping into the spotlight. Still, both countries have to deal with some obstacles and insecurities when it comes to policymaking. First, multicausality of migration makes it difficult to point out migrants who moved purely because of environmental issues. Second, it is sometimes difficult to measure if some extreme weather events are caused by climate change. Extreme weather events have always been around. But to what extent is it possible to qualify people as EDP? This also makes it difficult to give a solid definition to EDPs. Third, it is difficult to what extent EDPs are forced into migration. When your house is under water due to sea level rise, you cannot stay where you are. But the refugee convention relies on the notion of persecution to get the refugee status. Because climates do not persecute it limits the ability to support environmental displaced people, when the precarious nature of their situation can be indeed serious.
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1. Introduction

1.1 Project framework
In a briefing update in May 2018 of the European Parliamentary the EPRS, European Parliamentary Research Service, warns the council of the rising trend of people who get displaced by natural disasters (Apap, 2019). Since 2008 26.4 million people worldwide were displaced by floods, windstorms, earthquakes and droughts (Apap, 2019). This is not the first report that warns about the growing number of environmental displaced people (EDP). In 2008 the IOM, International Organization for Migration, estimates that there will be 200 million climate migrants by 2050 (Brown, 2008). This daunting number suggests that there is a serious problem on the horizon. However, some researcher such as Tacolli (2009) do not agree with the daunting number of climate refugees. “This over-simplified view is based on ‘common sense’ rather than on an understanding of the complex relationship between environmental change and human agency” (Tacolli, 2009, p.4). “A lot of researches have shown that his research was weak, they called it guess work,” argues Boas (personal communication, May 6, 2019). According to Tacolli (2009) the figure is an estimate of the number of people at risk, rather than the number people who are likely to move. On the other hand it is still a substantial addition to the already existing migration numbers, so how are national migration policies dealing with this development?

In 2014 an inhabitant of the island Kiribati asked for asylum in New Zealand because of the rising sea level (NOS, 2017). His request was refused, but the request made him the first ‘official’ climate refugee (NOS, 2017). Three years later New Zealand’s new government considered creating a visa category to help relocate people from the Pacific islands who were displaced by climate change (Anderson, 2017). New Zealand is with this statement the only country worldwide that is considering creating a visa for EDPs, while the prediction made by the IOM (Brown, 2008) indicates that the whole world should be thinking about this topic. Based on the indications by different international organizations it might be suggested that more countries should consider to create a visa category for EDPs.

Environmental displaced persons are not a new phenomenon, the terminology just changed over the years. Following Tacolli (2009), the term ‘environmental refugee’ was first used in the 1970’s influenced by neo-Malthusian assumptions. Population growth would lead to migration and conflict caused by resource scarcity (Tacolli, 2009). In the 1990’s the term was criticized for its focus on the change in the physical environment in decisions about human migration (Morrissey, 2012). This would ignore the other potential factors, such as economic or political factors, that could play a significant role.

In the next attempt to conceptualize the term ‘environmental refugee’ there was a separation between refugees who react on rapid-events or those who move due to slow-onset processes (Morrissey, 2012). People who fled from environmental disasters were distinguished from people who moved voluntary in the context of environmental stress, a slow-onset process (Morrissey, 2012). The framing of the reason why somebody has fled the area is apparently key to which the label they get. According to Brown (2008) the separation can be seen as ‘climate events’ and ‘climate processes’. “Climate events are sudden and dramatic hazards who force people off their land much more quickly and dramatically. Climate processes are
slow-onset changes such as sea-level rise and desertification. These are the two types of climate drivers for climate migration" (Brown, 2008, p.17).

Morrissey (2012) is not so sure about the separation of the two types of climate drivers; "The question of whether or not environmental refugees exist, has come to be interpreted as whether or not environmental change can cause (or worse, force) human migration”.

Brown (2008, p.18) also states the existence of non-climate drivers; "A natural disaster only becomes a natural disaster if a community is particularly vulnerable to its impact". A community’s vulnerability is a function of its exposure to climatic conditions (such as a coastal location) and the community’s adaptive capacity and recovery (Brown, 2008). This is conformable with the statements of Tacolli (2009) that there is a growing consensus on the importance of multiple and overlapping causes in most migration flows, including economic, social and political factors. Kothari (2013) agrees that the environmental refugee concept naturalises the economic and political causes of environmental degradation, and masks the role of institutional responses to it.

These overlapping causes of migration flows are also an important subject in this research. Following Tacolli (2009) and Kothari (2013) it is difficult to point out a single reason why someone has migrated. “Migration is too complex a process to label simply as environmental or climate induced,” states Kothari (2013, p.132). It is maybe better to look at the roots causes of migration. According to Carling and Talleraas (2016, p.6) the notion of root causes implies a chain of mechanisms that eventually produce migration. They continue, “root causes of migration are basically thought of as the social and political conditions that induce departures, especially poverty, repression and violent conflict” (Carling & Talleraas, 2016).

Drivers of migration is a more inclusive term that also encompasses the mechanisms that eventually produce migration outcomes, for instance social networks and access to information” (Carling & Talleraas, 2016, p. 6). So where drivers of migration are more internal influences, for example the accessibility to information to move, root causes can be seen as the external influences, like the political environment.

Earlier in this chapter the discussion of the conceptualization of the environmental migrant was mentioned. This was not only for practical reasons for this research, but the formulation of the term also plays a role in the legitimacy and urgency of the problem. The term ‘refugee’ has strong moral connotations of societal protection in most cultures (Biermann & Boas, 2010). By using the term ‘environmental refugee’, the word has another implication than when the term ‘environmental migrant’ is used. How migrants and migration are described, categorised and represented matters, not only in legal ways but also for society. Especially when it is done by politicians who represent us, and by news media whose ‘cultural authority’ is premised upon speaking truth to power and representing the world of events to us (Berry, et al, 2015). The framing of (environmental) migrants is a phenomenon that is not only known in the media sector. Kothari (2013, p.133) is even more specific: “despite ongoing concerns over definitional, methodological and policy issues, the diverse political motivations and agendas underpinning discourses of climate change and migration, and their impact, remain largely under-acknowledged”.

According to Barnhisel (2016) political framing knows two extremes; the humanitarian frame and the securitized frame. "A humanitarian frame is discourse
that places a greater concern for human safety and human rights than other competing concerns, like public safety, cultural cohesion or the economy” (Barnhisel, 2016, p. 23). In contrast of the humanitarian frame, there is the securitized frame, ‘in which political discourse places a greater concern on state stability over other competing concerns’ (Barnhisel, 2016, p.23). So the humanitarian frame focuses on the migrant as ‘victim’ and the securitized frame focuses on the safety issues. These two frames are not the only political frames being used on (environmental) migrants. In chapter 2 there will be a further and a more nuanced outline of other political frames used on environmental migrants.

While there has been a lot of research about environmental displaced people and about the framing of migrants, but the combination together is hardly ever made. This research paper attempts to make this connection and could contribute to the further exploration of combining these two phenomena combined. This is relevant because of the potential numbers of EDPs in the future. Besides the scientific relevance, this research is also relevant for society, especially in the future. Maybe the number of 200 million environmental displaced people by 2050 is a bit exorbitant, but the climate migration is getting more relevant every year (Tacolli, 2009). Therefore countries should prepare themselves so they will know how to handle when the first EDPs arrive.

1.2 Research objectives
As previous stated, the concept of the environmentally displaced person has changed a lot among the years. “Lack of conceptual clarity and consensus is a key problem that hinders research on climate refugees, in particular comparative research programs and data collection” (Biermann & Boas, 2010, p.62). The thought that climate change could be a single reason for people to flee their homes is questioned by multiple researchers discussed above. There are a lot of unclarities regarding the definition of environmentally displaced people. This makes it even harder for policy-makers to create an adequate migration policy. My objective with this thesis is to unpack the framing of environmental induced migration in the political discourse of the Netherlands and New Zealand in order to discuss the differences and similarities in terms of the two countries’ policy approaches. The academic discussion to what extent climate change can be called a driver or root cause for migration is still going on. This thesis aims to contribute to clarify some discussion points on these topics.

Besides the academic contribution, this thesis will also give more insight into the creation of environmental migration policy by policymakers, the (un)conscious framing of it and hopes to contribute to future development between migration policy and framing.

1.3 Research model
To reach these goals this thesis will look at the framing of EDPs in migration policies of two countries, the Netherlands and New Zealand. Practical reasons are the most underlying explanation of the choice of these countries. For the research it is best that the migration policy analysis is done in Dutch or English, so the chance of misunderstandings is minimal. New Zealand is very interesting to research, because they were the first country to consider the creation of a visa for environmentally displaced people. Besides the policy analysis, this research will also outline the possible different migration contexts of those two countries to explain differences or
similarities within the framing. Moreover, there will be expert interviews to get a better insight into the creation of framing in migration policies and on the role climate change is playing in the root causes of migration. The interviewees who I will introduce later in this thesis are experts in the area of climate change, environmental policy or migration policy. In this way the interviews and the literature review will be related to each other.

1.4 Research questions
The objectives mentioned above result in the following main question: How are environmental displaced persons framed in migration policy in the Netherlands and New Zealand, and in what way see these policies climate change as a migration driver?

Sub questions:
- How is framing used in governmental migration policies?
- How is the environmentally displaced person framed in terms of voluntary and forced migration?
- How is the environmentally displaced person framed in terms of humanitarian and securitized approach?
- How are the differences between the framing of the Netherlands and New Zealand explained?
2. Theory

2.1 Theoretical framework
The role of framing environmentally induced migration was already introduced in chapter 1, but in the following chapter the most important concepts and their underlying theories will be furthermore explored.

**Conceptualization environmentally displaced person**
In chapter 1, two important separation came forward: first, the difference between slow-onset stresses and rapid-onset disasters. The reason of fleeing is key to which label people will get. Where climate events have a more slowly changing character, people who get displaced by climate processes will be labelled as voluntary movement. Second, is the separation of the humanitarian and securitized approach. In what way are environmentally displaced people labelled in migration policies? As mentioned earlier, there is a difference in the use of the terms ‘refugee’ and ‘migrant’. The term ‘refugee’ has strong moral connotations of societal protection in most world cultures and implies certain legal rights (Biermann & Boas, 2010). It also carries fewer negative connotations than ‘migrant’ which tend to imply a voluntary move towards a more attractive lifestyle and it implies the “pull” of the destination more than the “push” of the source country (Brown, 2008). This way migrants are seen as searchers for economic benefits. Biermann and Boas (2010) agree that adopting voluntariness as a definition criterion would be either analytically not useful or morally dubious. “People who managed to relocate in time before the natural disaster strikes, would be denied the status of refugee and would be classified as people who voluntary opted to leave their land (Biermann & Boas, 2010). This way the misleading image arises of people who have to make way for climate change. Moreover, when these people who can ‘afford’ to move would also be included as migrants, the population of potential migrants increases a lot.

However, from an international law perspective the word ‘refugee’ cannot be used if it is for environmental reasons. According to the United Nations’ 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol a refugee is “a person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country” (Brown, 2008, p. 13-14). So the refugee status is only for those who flee prosecution for the reasons mentioned above. Environmental reasons do not count in the institutional definition of the term refugee.

There are more problems with the term ‘refugee’. Strictly speaking a refugee has to have crossed an international border to be categorised as refugee. Someone displaced in their own country is called an ‘internally displaced person’ (IDP). This may understate the problem of refugees displaced by climate change, because most of them will likely stay within their own borders (Brown, 2008).

Furthermore, in the discussion of the conceptualization of the environmental migrant two aspects play a significant role in defining the environmental migrant. First, the separation of people who react on rapid- or slow-onset events (Morrissey, 2012). This separation is also mentioned by Brown, but he calls it ‘climate events’ and ‘climate processes’ (2008).

Second is the ongoing debate whether environmental migrants should be labelled as refugee. The concept of environmental refugee naturalises the economic,
social and political factors (Kothari, 2013). So when the focus is on the environmental motive to flee, the other factors who are likely to play a role in the decision making are looked over. Migration have always been a mechanism to deal with climate stress, especially within nomadic societies (Brown, 2008). Nomadic people, for example, have historically moved from land to land with their animals in response to drought. Another example is families sending older male family members to a near city in an adaptive response to a drought (Brown, 2008). So, this person can send remittances to support the family’s income and to reduce the draw on local resources. This is a good example for overlapping causes of migration. Is this an environmental, economic or social reason to migrate? For all three there is an argument to make.

Environmental migration theories
Where there is a lack of conceptual clarity and consensus on the term environmental displaced person, the world is not short of migration theories. This research is especially interested in the ones where environmental change is considered in the theory. Samers and Collyer (2017) narrow it down to two general views; the maximalist and minimalist point of view. In the maximalist point of view climate change receives disproportionate blame for forcing migrants to leave their homes. This view, in which the environment is the main cause of migration, has led to predictions of mass migrations with a result that this migration is generally viewed as a threat (Samers & Collyer, 2017). Samers and Collyer’s (2017) argument is in agreement with Morrissey (2012) that it is probably useful to distinguish between environmental factors as ‘slow-onset stresses’ and ‘rapid-onset disasters’. With this separation time/temporality become significant factors, because in case of an disaster the danger is much more adequate than in case of a stress.

The minimalist approach states that environmental change is viewed as one ‘driver’ among many. Other factors are taken into account, like political ecology. This is the relationship between politics, power and the environment to explain the decision to migrate (Samers & Collyer, 2017). Geddes et al. (2012) states that environmental change can drive migration, although its effects are likely to be observed through its interaction with and effects on other systems, like economic, social, political, demographic factors.

Black et al. (2011) and Samers and Collyer (2017, p.139) argue there are two other basic conceptual approaches to understand the environment-migration nexus. “The first approach sees ‘vulnerability’ and ‘adaptive capacity’ as shaping migration, so that an environmental event can have different consequences for different people”. This correspondence with the argument Brown (2008, p.18) makes that ‘a community’s vulnerability is a function of its exposure to climatic conditions (such as a coastal location) and the community’s adaptive capacity and recovery’. The second approach of Brown et al. focusses more on the rivers and sea-level rise. Latter is seen as more permanent than river flooding and it is for this reason that it is more like to produce significant displacement (Black, et al., 2011). So what Black et al. (2011) do is build a model that incorporates ‘structural’ drivers and ‘behavioural’ drivers in which they distinguish between the environment and environmental change, and they see migration as part of adaptive response to change, not just a reaction to it (Samers & Collyer, 2017).
Framing in migration policy

Environmental migration policy frameworks, the way images and discourses of migrants and refugees are stated in migration policies, have mushroomed. According to Kothari (2013, p.133) ‘despite ongoing concerns over definitional, methodological and policy issues, the diverse political motivations and agendas underpinning discourses of climate change and migration, and their impact, remain largely under-acknowledged’. The combination of the two phenomena climate change and migration do not have the attention it deserves. Ransan et al. (2015) lined up four different framings of environmental displaced people; environmental displaced persons as victims, as security threats, as adaptive agents and as political subjects.

The earliest framing of environmental migrants saw them primarily as victims (Ransan, et al., 2015). This framing was often driven by INGO’s, International Non-Governmental Organizations, creating more urge for environmental migrants framing them in danger because of natural disasters. In this way the Global North is typically construed as ‘saviour’ of the Southern environmental ‘refugee’ (Ransan, et al, 2015). The victim framing is being used the raise awareness, promote policy action or to sell news. A critical side note with this frame is the one-dimensional understanding of what produces vulnerability. Victims will be seen as passive and helpless in facing climate change. So the victim framing is unlikely to promote a more nuanced understanding of the vulnerability of environmental migrants (Ransan, et al., 2015). This framing is comparable to the humanitarian framing of Barnhisel (2016), but Ransan’s et al. is more nuanced in the way why the refugee is framed as a victim. This follows almost the statement Biermann and Boas (2010) mentioned, terminology plays an important role. With the use of the term ‘refugee’ instead of ‘migrant’ the protection of climate refugees will receive the legitimacy and urgency it deserves (Biermann & Boas, 2010, p. 67).

Environmental displaced people are also presented as threat to global, regional or national security (Ransan, et al., 2015). Barnett (2003) states this frame places solutions to environmental migration generally within the realm of the military and the protection of sovereignty rather than as a global commons problem and an issue for foreign policy. This security approach in combination with nationalism creates a racialised distinction between ‘us’ and ‘them’, ‘citizen’ and ‘foreigner’ (Ransan, et al., 2015). This way of framing is not unknown in the North according to Biermann and Boas (2010). The largest attention the problem of the growing number of environmental displaced people has found in the North is so far among military and defence planners (Biermann & Boas, 2010). The security approach was also mentioned by Barnhisel (2016), but it was labelled as securitized framing.

The third framing according to Ransan et al. (2015) is the environmental displaced people as adaptive agents. Migration is considered as part of the solution to environmental change that assists with adaptation. With this frame policy-makers are encouraged to recognize and facilitate the role that migration will play in individual, households and national adaption strategies. A key term relating to this frame is remittances. Ransan et al. (2015, p. 111) argues that ‘migration of some individuals can help a community to remain viable in the long run, for example if money and goods are sent back to help build their resilience’. On the other hand, revenues are not always used to increase the resilience of communities or villages to climate change (Ransan, et al., 2015).

In the fourth frame the environmental displaced person is seen as a political subject. In this frame the historical, institutional and political nature of the environment-migration dynamic is highlighted (Ransan, et al, 2015). Ransan argues
that ‘policy proposals from this frame would look to see how institutions could be reformed and/or new governance designed to provide potential migrants or non-migrants with a greater degree of choice in their mobility decisions, in areas such as labour law, access to adequate resources and improving access to decision-making processes’ (2015, p. 112).

In conclusion there are enough frames to use as basis with the policy analysis. Ransan’s et al. (2015) four frames: humanitarian, securitization, adaptive agency and political subject frame will be used to analyse the different migration policy documents of the Netherlands and New Zealand. Words, sentences and even images in these documents will be categorised in these frame as far as possible.

2.2 Conceptual model

![Conceptual model](image)

In figure 1 is the conceptual model of this research is displayed. For the operationalization of the terms in figure 1 it is important to understand that in the policy analysis certain words will indicate a certain approach, frame or migration type. For example, a clue for a humanitarian approach in migration policies could be the word ‘aid’, for the securitized approach the mentioning of ‘borders’ could be a sign. Voluntary and forced migration is dependent on the mentioning of climate events or climate processes. Besides the obvious signs for these factors, this research will keep an open view for other indicators than named by the research. There is always the possibility of unknown factors who will come forward along the way.
3. Methodology

3.1 Research strategy
The research's nature is based on human geography and environmental studies, because of its focus on migration and climate change. As the concepts framing in migration policy and root causes of migration are central in this research, and two countries are compared, a comparative case study is the best design of this research. This will be done by semi-structured interviews and policy analysis, which will be elaborated later in this chapter.

This research will analyse the migration policy documents of the Netherlands and New Zealand. The choice of these two countries is not at random. The Netherlands is chosen because of practical reasons. This research will take place in the Netherlands, so it should be easier to acquire research material. New Zealand is chosen because in 2014 they received the request for asylum from the first 'official' environmental migrant (NOS, 2017). Besides New Zealand was the first country to deal with this phenomenon. New Zealand will have more of these migrants from the Pacific Islands in the future. According to Shen & Binns, “the prospects of increasing Tuvaluan migration associated with sea level rise has provoked new ways of thinking about human mobility in an era of climate change” (2010, p.18). This research will seek for similarities or differences between the Netherlands and New Zealand in the way they frame EDPs in their migration policies. The Netherlands with zero experience in environmental migrants and with New Zealand with most experienced country in environmental migration, this should bring up some interesting issues.

The choice of which migration policies to analyse was made by practical reasons. The search for migration policy documents started at the Ministries who are responsible for migration and climate change. Furthermore, different Departments were approached where migration played a big role in their policymaking. For the Netherlands the next Ministries and Departments were chosen: the Ministry of Safety and Justice, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the WODC (scientific research and documentation center for the Ministry of Justice) and the WRR (scientific counsel for governmental policy). In the case of New Zealand these Ministries and Departments were chosen: the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Labour.

3.2 Interpretative analysis
Moreover, interviews with experts (in the area of climate change, environmental policy or migration policy) and policy-makers, migration policies will be analysed. According to Wagenaar (2015) interpretive approaches to researches focus on meanings that shape actions, institutions, and the ways in which they do so. Interpretive policy analysis is not one but many approaches. Labels such as frame analysis, ethnomethodology, discourse analysis, narrative analysis etc. indicate an enormous variety of approaches to interpretation in social research. What makes interpretive policy analysis difficult to do is that each approach has its underlying philosophical assumptions about society, power and social identity. However, what they have in common is that interpretive policy is always an interpretation of something; people acting, fighting, communicating, negotiating, experimenting, and so on. No amount of sophisticated philosophizing can alter that basic truth (Wagenaar, 2015). This research will be mainly based on frame analysis and discourse analysis. Due to the nature of the concepts migration and climate change
discourse and framing play a significant part in their terminology, especially when framing is part of the main question. Discourse analysis will be used to explain possible differences and similarities between the case of the Netherlands and New Zealand.

Framing in migration policy can best be researched when a case study is used. The Netherlands and New Zealand are not the only countries who have to deal with this phenomenon. But with the practicality in consideration it is best to limit the number of countries to two. The concepts can be best studied in a specific situation, how their migration policy frames EDPs, instead in one with a wider range.

To the question why policy actors frame at all, Laws and Rein had this answer; “Policy actors frame so they know how to act in the situation at hand. Frames are like stories in this respect” (2003, p.173). ‘Through the process of naming and framing, the stories make the “normative leap” from data to recommendations, from fact to values, from “is” to “ought’,” adds Wagenaar (2015. P.224) to the question. In this way different stories are told by different frames, while it is basically the same story. So policy actors select for attention a few features from what would otherwise be a complex reality. They simplify a complex reality to make it understandable through the selection of salient elements.

There is a central challenge of policy analysis: to grasp the continuous interchange between theory and action, representing and intervening. Analysis without action is sterile, action without analysis is blind (Wagenaar, 2015). Policy analysis should provide the set of tools that helps the analyst travel between the worlds of action and intellect. It should connect the scientific concepts accomplished by different researches and should find these scientific concepts translated in the practical reality of policy.

As mentioned above, this research will use the method of frame analysis. Frame analysis helps to articulate hidden value assumptions. Yet, frame analysis raises several problems. The most discussed one is that it is unclear when to call a frame a frame. The frame concept does not contain a set of demands or recognised rules. Are frames actually in social reality to be discovered by the analyst or are frames a conceptual shorthand for an interpretation about social reality? The first position is called meaning realism, the second meaning constructivism (Wagenaar, 2015). This research will use frames that are already identified in the project and theory framework: the humanitarian, securitization, adaptive agency and political subject frame (chapter 1.1 and 2.1). Based on literature, indications of possible frames will be categorised, but an open view will remain for possible new concepts.

Besides frame analysis, this research will also use discourse analysis to understand the context around multiple concepts such as migration and climate change. Essentially, a discourse analysis involves asking questions about how language, at a given time and place, is used to construe the aspects of the situation as realized at that time and place and how the aspects of the situation network simultaneously give meaning to that language (Gee, 2005). Key words and sentences will be picked from the transcribed interviews and the selected migration policy documents and this research will question what situated meanings these words and phrases seem to have. A situated meaning is an image or pattern that we assemble “on the spot” as we communicate in a given context, based on our construal of that context and on our past experiences. Situated meanings do not simply reside ready-made in individuals’ minds; very often they are negotiated between people in and through communicative social interaction (Gee, 2005).
3.3 Research material
This research will gather information from two kinds of resources; first, in-depth interviews with Dutch experts Ingrid Boas and Han Nicolaas and New Zealand experts James Renwick, Shen Shawn, Jay Marlowe and Dennis Wesselbaum. Their expertise will be introduced further in this thesis. Second, migration policy analyses. The policy analysis will focus on the used framing within these policies and analyse them by applying content analysis. Migration policies from multiple ministries from the countries New Zealand and the Netherland will be analysed to see if there is any use of framing of EDPs in the specific documents. The Dutch Ministries and Departments are: the Ministry of Justice and Safety, Foreign Affairs, the WRR and the WODC. In the case of New Zealand the Ministries and Departments are: the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defence and the Department of Labour. These Ministries and Departments are chosen because they have written the most about the subject of migration and climate change. Content from 2009 until the most recent units will be used.

In-depth interviews will be held with two kind of persons; experts in the area of migration and environmental change, and policy-makers in the area of migration. This research aims to interview from each country one expert and one policymaker. Multiple questions will be prepared for the interview based on the literature review to confirm or deny certain statements, but there will also be room for stories and information this research had not seen before. The aim for the interviews with the experts is to clarify the relation between migration causes and environmental change, so sub question 4 and 5 could rely on these interviews. The interviews with the policy-makers have another aim, which is to get insight into how policy (and the framing within) is created. Possible new information and knowledge resulting from the interviews will be used in the analysis of the migration policies. In this way sub question 1, 2 and 3 are answered. The log of this research and the planning of the interviews can be found in the Appendices, Appendix A. The interview guide for the semi-structured interviews can be found in Appendix B.

The analysis of these interviews and policy will be made in Atlas.ti, so the transcripts of the interviews and policy can be coded and divided in categories of terms that are used in the theoretical framework. Quotes from the interviews will be used to give more body to the data analyses and maybe explain and substantiate certain statements. In figure 2 an example is given how the coding is done. Atlas.ti is an coding program where you can apply codes to transcribed interviews. This way a clear view is given about what codes are applied to which interview.
Figure 2: Example coding in Atlas.ti. Source: Hendrikson (2019).

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[Atlas.ti interface with codes and notes]

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[Sample text from Hendrikson's work]

Hendrikson's research highlights the complexity of environmental migration, where people leave their homes due to climate change-induced environmental degradation. The example text from Hendrikson's work reads:

"In this study, we use qualitative data from interviews with residents of a small coastal community in New Zealand to explore how they are adapting to the challenges of climate change. Our findings suggest that environmental migration is a complex process, influenced by a range of factors including cultural, economic, and political factors. The community's adaptation strategies include building new homes on higher ground, moving to newly constructed neighborhoods, and implementing community-level climate change mitigation efforts. These strategies reflect the community's resilience and adaptability in the face of climate change-induced environmental challenges."
4. Data analyses

4.1 Dutch migration policy documents

In this section multiple Dutch migration policies will be analyzed through the lenses and approaches discussed in the theoretical framework and insights that were given by the interviews. The policies are from different Ministries and Departments and are chosen from the period 2009 to 2019. In the case of the Netherlands policies from the Ministry of Justice, the WRR (scientific counsel for governmental policy), the WODC (scientific research and documentation center for the Ministry of Justice) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were selected. These Ministries and Departments were chosen because they write the most about migration regarding to climate change. Especially the Ministry of Justice reports regularly on migration, so multiple publications will be analyzed to give a better insight into changes from to period 2009 to 2019. The analysis will be looking for what kind of framing is used in regards to EDPs and in what way climate change is labeled as a driver of migration. Throughout the analysis the specific document title and authors are stated so it is clear which document is discussed.


In this document the research department behind the Ministry of Justice (WODC) is describing the situation around migration in 2009 in the Netherlands and tries to find explanations for it. “The meaning behind the first Migration Chart was to obtain a proper view on what happens and had happened in a migration country like the Netherlands” states Han Nicolaas (personal communication, June 4, 2019), statistical researcher at the CBS (Central Bureau of Statistics). “To look back in history, research the present and also a little bit the future. The first two versions were really extensive. We tried to make the last one more public-friendly,” he continues (Nicolaas, personal communication, June 4, 2019) Overall, environmental displaced people is mentioned once in the document. The possibility that climate change could cause migration flows is only mentioned under the paragraph ‘future expectations’. So in terms of the framing of EDP, this document doesn’t have a lot to offer. Nevertheless, still some interesting statements are made in the policy document.

What stands out in the preface is the separation between labor and asylum migration, because according to the document the Ministry of Justice is responsible for these types of migration. In the document asylum migration is divided in three categories; armed conflict and systematic violation of human rights, economic poverty and ecological migrants. “You can see migration from different angles,” states Nicolaas (personal communication, June 4, 2019). “I think it is useful to look to the migrant’s motive, because it is from huge importance for the further course of their stay in the Netherlands.” The ecological migrant is defined as someone who flees for the natural disasters of the consequences of climate change (Jennissen, et al., 2009, p. 94). But there is side note behind the definition of the ecological migrant that refers to another document where it’s discussed whether the ecological migrant
is part of the Refugee Convention. So the only time when something like an EDP is mentioned, it’s status of an asylum migrant is questioned.

Furthermore the document explains when the secretary of state of justice can set a categorial protection policy for asylum migrants. One of the indicators for this possible exception in policy is the policy of other European Union countries. This with the introduction of the term ‘waterbed effect’, when the flow of migrants in country A decreases the flow of migrants in country B increases, the migrant looks like a political subject (Jennissen, et al., 2009). Countries adjusting their migration policy because a change in other foreign migration policies could be seen as the frame of the migrant as a political subject.

Besides the political subject frame, it’s arguable that the victim frame is applied in the document. Human trafficking is constantly named in the document and after the quote: “Some people are left behind by their smuggler” (Jennissen, et al., 2009), the migrants could be labeled as victim.

Like mentioned before, in the future expectations paragraph of the document the possibility of migration due climate change is noted, but it isn’t more than that. The focus of the whole document was on the labor and asylum migrants. The ecological migrant was nothing more than a category on the side. Environmental change and natural disasters were named as a possible drivers for migration, but further into the document it was neglected.


This publication is the successor of the previous document. Where the document of 2009 was more focused on labour and asylum migration, this publication is meant to provide researchers and policy makers of theoretical and empirical background of recent migration flows. Again, the spotlight of the publication is on labour migration, family migration, study migration and asylum migration like the previous publication in 2009. The documents also underlines the economic approach because “Most of the theory-forming research in the area of international migration is from an economic point of view” (Jennissen, et al., 2011, p.19). “Also the non-economic factors like psychologic aspects and physical safety who influence migration decisions, can be treated as economic factors to a certain extent,” the publications argues (Jennissen, et al., 2011). This almost homo economicus approach of migration is in line with the adaptive agent frame of Ransan (et al., 2015). Migrants are seen as rational decisive people who are in charge of their choices.

And again, like the publication in 2009, EDP’s are described as the ecological migrant. The definition neither changed from the document in 2009: “people who flee from natural disasters or climate change” (Jennissen, et al., 2011, p.179). Even the doubt if these migrants are covered by the Refugee Convention has not changed compared to the document in 2009. So in this area the minimal coverage the environmental displaced people had in 2009, is the same in the publications two years later. “It is no official reason of staying or motive of migration,” argues Nicolaas (personal communication, June 4, 2019). “I do not think someone will find a visa due to extreme weather events. It is difficult, even for the IND (Integration and Normalisation Service), to give someone a visa because of climate change.”
In the conclusion of the publication environmental displaced persons are mentioned once, categorised within the asylum migration. “Poverty and natural disasters could also play a role in why asylum seekers leave their country. Most of the worldwide refugee population finds shelter in their own country or in their neighbouring country, few travel to Europe” (Jennissen, et all., 2011, p.335). This also probably the reason why there is so few policy written for environmental displaced people. Most of them stay in their own region. Ingrid Boas, assistant professor at the Environmental Policy Group at Wageningen University, agrees that climate migration is sometimes a much more internal than an external issue. “Some environmental displaced persons go to the city or slums where they know people. People try to keep their own lives and adapt with the help of their social network. Most of the time these connection are within the region” (personal communication, May 6, 2019).


In the third edition of the Migration Chart the writers keep the design of the publication the same as the predecessors. Migration is again divided in four categories: labour migration, asylum migration, study migration and family migration. Only this time a chapter is added with intra-EU-migration.

Where climate change was not mentioned that much as a driver of migration in the previous versions of the Migration Chart, this edition is not an exception. In a short summary in the beginning of the document it is mentioned that “poverty and natural disasters could also play a role why asylum seekers leave their homeland” (Jennissen, et al, 2014). Unfortunately, this is the only time that this document mentions something that has common ground with environmental migration.

Nevertheless, there are still some interesting suggestions and statements made in this document, starting with the definition of a migrant. According to Jennissen (et al) the definition has a temporal and a spatial dimension. “To become a migrant, someone needs to pass an international border (spatial dimension). The temporal dimension is more difficult, not everybody who passes a border is a migrant. The time someone stays in a certain country, could be an useful additional measure to determine if someone as a migrant” (Jennissen, et al, 2014, p.17). The CBS, who provided the statistics of this publication, sees someone who is planning to stay longer than four months as a migrant. The spatial dimension of the definition plays a significant role when it comes to environmental displaced people. When this definition is used, only the people who cross borders are seen as a migrant. But when it comes to environmental displacement most people will seek coverage in their home country. This could be an explanation for the little attention environmental displaced people are getting in these publications.

Furthermore, the four categories are mentioned in the document as migration types. “With migration types we aim on the (official) reason why someone decided to leave migrate,” explains Jennissen (et al, 2014). The writers are aware that the actual reason why migrants migrate has not to correspond with the official reason. “Still in this study the registered migration motive is the basis of the further analysis, because motives can overlap each other” (Jennissen, et al, 2014). In the case of
environmental displaced people this is a particular issue. In previous editions of this document the existence of the environmental migrants is questioned and statements were made that the environmental displaced person does not fit in the agreements of the Refugee Convention. So migration motives of environmental substance have no legal ground. It is not weird that migrants use another official migration motive why they migrated.

As discussed in the predecessors of this document, the ‘waterbed effect’ (when the flow of migrants in country A decreases the flow of migrants in country B increases) is also mentioned in this publication as an important phenomena in the European Union. But the document also explains the dispersion of asylum requests along Europe on the basis of two factors. First, "The policy of individual countries that the actual possibilities for entry and stay in member states and the whole of 'Europe' influences." Second, "the policy changes of individual member states" (Jennissen, et al, 2014, p.135). This tactical and political way of looking to migration policy and seeing the migrant as a political playball substantiate the political subject frame (Ransan, 2015).

Another point that stands out in the document is the term ‘invited refugees’. "These refugees are selected by the IND (Dutch Immigration and Naturalization Service) in nomination of the UNHCR (United Nations Refugee Agency) and have the right of a residence permit without having to pass through the asylum procedure," explains the document (Jennissen, et al, 2014). This special category of refugees is for people who have been living in refugee camps for years. The Netherlands invites 500 people annually. "During so called 'selection missions' refugees are judged whether they are eligible for this special procedure," continues the document (Jennissen, et al, 2014). This way of selecting refugees is in line with the humanitarian frame and humanitarian approach of Ransan (et al, 2015) and Barnhisel (2016). The Dutch government is in this paragraph stated as a sort of hero who rescues people in need. The refugees are framed as helpless victims who are in desperate need of saviour because they are living for years in refugee camps.

In the future prospects chapter of the document four different future scenarios are given for the Netherlands in 2040, see figure 3.

Figure 3: Four possible future scenarios for the Netherlands in 2040. Source: Huizinga & Smid, 2004, p.26
This economic view on the future is in line with the whole basis of the document. "Explaining variables who are used often in migration projections are macro-economic variables, like unemployment and the GDP (gross domestic product)," explains the publication (Jennissen, et al, 2014). What stands out is the ‘Strong Europe’ scenario in the section of ‘Public’ and ‘International cooperation’ in figure 3. It is described as a scenario where the Netherlands hand over authorization to the EU (Jennissen, et al, 2014). But with the choice of this name it sounds more like the creating of an ‘us’ and a ‘them’. Especially with the adding of ‘strong’, like it is necessary to underscore the securitization of Europe.

Overall EDPs are little mentioned in the three versions of the Migration Chart through the years. In the first two versions displacement due to climate change was only mentioned in the future expectations of the documents. According to Nicolaas, the quantity of the group EDPs is just not big enough to take seriously. In addition, the a legal status regarding possible refugee rights is for an EDP is simply missing. Those are possible explanations for the minimal policy around EDPs.

Schaik, L. van, Bakker, T., (2017), Climate-migration-security: Making the most of a contested relationship, Planetary Security Initiative, Clingendael Institute, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The next document is a policy brief from the Planetary Security Initiative in cooperation with the Clingendael Institute. The Planetary Security Initiative (PSI) aims to catalyze action in affected contexts. PSI sets out best practice, strategic entry points and new approaches to reducing climate-related risks to conflict and stability. The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs launched the PSI in 2015, which was operated by a consortium of leading think tanks until 2019 (Planetary Security Initiative, 2019). The policy brief starts with almost a disclaimer/apologize. “Research is inconclusive on key issues, such as how many migrants may come to Europe due to climate change. However, given the political urgency and potential scale of the issue, it is not possible to wait for academic consensus to emerge” (Schaik & Bakker, 2017). It becomes clear that the policy brief wants to be as neutral as possible, but at the same time definitely wants to discuss the matter due to political urgency.

The policy brief continues with a more reserved approach towards the link between migration and climate change. “There has been considerable evidence linking climate change to migration, but the effects appear mainly indirect and context-dependent. Many of the other factors have to do with governance and the resilience of societies to climate change” (Schaik & Bakker, 2017). So, the relationship between migration and climate change is blurred with other factors. Boas agrees with the mentioning of the multicausality around migration. “But that does not mean climate change is not important, but to determine the right policy matters you have to be aware of the context,” she argues (personal communication, May 6, 2019). The mentioning of governance and resilience of societies indicates that EDP’s could be considered as adaptive agents. Especially when the policy report mentions that “people could migrate both pre-emptively as an adaption strategy to a changing environment, or as a last resort when other means are no longer available” (Schaik & Bakker, 2017) the adaptive framing is notable. In addition, further in the text examples of migration as a common way to adapt to environmental change in Bangladesh, the Sahel and West Africa are given. Migration as a solution to climate change is in line with the frame of adaptive agents, discussed by Ransan (et al.,
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2015). Boas warns about the adaptive agency frame. “If you look only from an adaptive agency angle towards climate change, you will stay to much in the area of climate policy. Sometimes you will forget the broader social context why some groups are helped and other groups are left out” (personal communication, May 6, 2019).

In addition, the policy brief discusses the international political debate on climate migrants. Schaik and Bakker perceive that “because of the link between security implications and climate change, some argue this has led to a ‘securitization’ of climate change.” According to them the explanation behind the reframing of an environmental and developmental problem as a security threat is to move it up the political agenda (2017). This is in line with the political subject frame Ransan describes (et al, 2015). This frame the focus lies on changing institutions and new governance. Moving up the political agenda could be seen as a part of this frame. But media coverage is not only in the political subject frame important. “When certain natural disasters are in the news, the victims are in the attention and donors will occur,” Boas argues. “Most of the time outstanders see these natural disasters as shock events, something that has to be fixed immediately. But when it is old news and does not have that many attention anymore, donors will leave again” (personal communication, May 6, 2019). From this view the humanitarian frame is also very dependent on media coverage. Yet not all environmental displaced people like the label of victim. “People feel like they are also labeled as passive and not able to make decisions. They feel like they are left out of the discussion” continues Boas (personal communication, May 6, 2019).

But this is not the only frame that is been used in the policy brief. The documents describes the two-pronged strategy response of the European Union to irregular migration and stability. “One on focusing on the root causes of migration through development, the other on strengthening the capacity of security forces of transit countries” (Schaik & Bakker, 2017). In this description of the policy of the EU, the framing takes a turn from the political subject frame more to the securitization frame. Strengthening the security forces in transit countries is definitely a form of securitization. In the following paragraph of the policy brief the document is talking about instruments the EU uses to prevent migration to the EU (Schaik & Bakker, 2017). This only substantiate the use of the securitization approach. Sometimes it is dubious if a securitization frame is rightful. “Sometimes it is used to change the subject,” states Boas. “When you change the subject from environmental issue to safety issue, other actors are suddenly involved. This can be used to create more interest, resources or money” (personal communication, May 6, 2019). In certain ways this could work out, but it is dubious whether it is in the interest of the people who need the help.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is much more active concerning environmental induced migration than we have seen in the policy documents of the Ministry of Safety and Justice. Nicolaas is careful about the different approaches from the different Ministries to EDPs. “It is difficult to say, but I think there is a different way people at the different Ministries look to migrants. The Ministry of Safety and Justice is only interested in the admittance of migrants, after that they lose interest. The IND sees the migrants in a total different setting” (personal communication, June 4, 2019). The framing of EDPs from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is variably between the securitization frame and the adaptive agency frame. Multiple times migration due to climate change is explained as a adaption strategy, but when it comes to Europe,
the framing changes in a much more to a securitization frame. It is difficult to explain where this change is based on. Possible answer is the closed borders around Europe.

*Lucassen, L., Scheffer, P., Hirsch Ballin, E., (2018), Regie over migratie: Naar een strategische agenda, WRR*

This essay bundle is written by the WRR (Scientific Counsel for Governmental Policy) in preparation of a meeting about migration policy. At this meeting a company of those who are responsible of migration policy, governors and scientists will discuss the most significant developments in society around this subject. The objective of this essay bundle was to stimulate the debate about migration policy. It seems a relevant document to analyze, because of its informative character.

When the publication tries to describe what we can expect from migration in the future, it discusses migration in relation to climate change. “One of the starting points of this government is to handle the root causes of migration. With that it aims on the poverty and climate change in Africa and Asia” (Lucassen, et al., 2018). Remarkable is the recognition they first give to climate change as a root cause of migration, but later in the document the writers invalidate this statement: “the relation between climate change and migration is far from linear and unambiguously” (Lucassen, et al., 2018). This is not the only time this document warns the reader about the multicausality of the causes of migration. When it discusses the five causations of migration, it specifically states that “none of these causations are singular, they influence each other” (Lucassen, et al., 2018, p. 65). The document explains that it is difficult to speak about environmental migrants, because movements of people are most of the time not directly linked to climate change. “Deterioration in the natural living environment induce social inequality or political instability and encourage people to move” (Lucassen, et al., 2018). It is clear that the publication does not question the existing of environmental displaced people, but does not see climate change as a singular cause of migration.

In addition, what stands out in this document is the consideration of migration as an adaption strategy. “Migration from the affected area is a adaption strategy that partly solves the problems for the migrant, but can cause new ones due to the movement to overloaded megacities” (Lucassen, et al., 2018, p.67). This view on migration comes close to the adaptive agency frame where migration is considered as part of the solution that assists with adaptation (Ransan, et al., 2015).

Again the adaptive agency frame is applicable to this migration policy document. Migration is considered as a adaption strategy to the multicausality of migration.

Environmental displaced people are not much of an issue in the migration policies of the Netherlands. In the three publications of the Migration Chart no numbers of statistics on EDPs are given. It all remains with some future expectations where climate change could play a significant role in the future migration patterns. “We get our data from the IND,” explains Nicolaas (June 4, 2019), co-writer of the Migration Chart. “You will not find a migrant with a climate motive. The IND has no official motive for this, yet,” he continues. Legal boundaries are playing an entangling role in the possible creation of a visa for EDPs. However, in the policy documents of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the WRR the securitization frame and the adaptive
agency frame are more dominant and the EDPs get more recognition. Still, the multicausality of migration is always underscored when climate change is related to migration. Climate change is according to these not a singular driver of migration.

### 4.2 New Zealand’s migration policy documents

In this part, I will analyse the migration policy documents of the New Zealand government. This will be done the same way as the Dutch migration policy documents have been analysed, by critically reading the policy documents and trying to find out how EDPs are discussed and in what way they are framed. With the multiple frames discussed in the theoretical framework of this thesis and the interviews with experts in the area of migration and climate change, there is a good basis to find some possible frames. In this way it will be analysed how the governmental departments of New Zealand use framing in their migration policies. Multiple policy documents published between the years 2009 to 2019 by different governmental departments will be discussed. In the case of New Zealand those will be the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Labour. These Ministries and Departments were chosen because they are the main Ministries that deal with migration policy, at least write about it.

*Bedford, R., Hugo, G., (2012), Population Movement in the Pacific: A Perspective on Future Prospects, Department of Labour, Wellington*

This report was made by the Department of Labour to address the contemporary and possible future drivers of migration in a region that will pose many challenges for the populations in the islands as well as in Australia and New Zealand over the next 40 years (Bedford & Hugo, 2012). The document tried to link developments in population growth and urbanisation globally and in the Pacific with international debates about migration and development.

The report starts with the observed trend of urbanisation linked to climate change. “In every country in the Pacific, urban population growth is exceeding the national growth rate. A combination of high unemployment, climate change and a looming energy crisis means radical new thinking is needed about how best to evolve our cities and town for the future” (Bedford & Hugo, 2012). In this way it looks like the focus is more on the innovation of the cities than on the realisation that climate change could induce this urbanisation. Later on in the report it states that in the next 40 years it is likely that the migration population increases in the Pacific Islands region, given the population growth and limited prospects for economic growth. “Ongoing concerns about climate change and associated rises in sea level will affect island environment and societies” is mentioned as one of the factors causing the limited economic growth” (Bedford & Hugo). It seems that migration due to climate change is only considered in a function of the economic growth and not as a singular issue in itself for the future.

This assumption needs immediate correction when the next chapter starts with naming “extreme weather events, leading to rising sea levels in coastal locations a potential time-bomb for their mobility and mortality” (Bedford & Hugo, 2012). According to the report, in acknowledging how much climate change affects the
communities and their livelihoods, the leaders accepted the need to mainstream climate change plans into national plans and systems and develop an appropriate adaption strategy (Bedford & Hugo, 2012). This development of an adaption strategy is in line with the adaptive agency frame where migration is considered as a part of the solution (Ransan, et al, 2015).

But caution is needed according to James Renwick, professor and head of school of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences in Wellington, when migration is mentioned as adaption strategy. “I think everybody has a very strong sense of place. Once I was invited to talk in front of some local people in a town who is vulnerable to extreme weather events. After all the depressing information the major said: you have heard the bad news, but this is our town and we are going to stay. Everyone cheered after that, because no one wants to give up their home” (personal communication, May 10, 2019). To actually make a decision to leave your home and your community and move somewhere else, you have to have a pretty good reason for that.

Bedford and Hugo (2012) argue that relocations of coastal people inland if their low-lying communities become uninhabitable as environmental conditions change is possible, but very hard. “Obtaining land for resettlement within countries, especially if entire communities have to be relocated, will be very challenging where most land belongs to customary owners” (Bedford & Hugo, 2012). Internal migration, especially into urban areas, create more pressure on housing, sanitation, water supply and jobs. “Most Pacific urban areas are already feeling severe environmental and social stress. Climate change will add pressure on the decision of the residents to move elsewhere, before conditions become so intolerable that permanent mass relocation is needed” (Bedford & Hugo, 2012, p. 46). Again it seems that the adaptive agency frame is used, but this time with future intolerable environmental conditions as harsh deadline.

In addition, what is stands out in the section of future migration trends is the increased investments by Australia, New Zealand and the United States in education and economic development initiatives (Bedford & Hugo, 2012). “Improved education standards and levels of achievement will stimulate increased mobility within the islands as well to countries on the Pacific Rim” (Bedford & Hugo, 2012, p. 83). This way populations become more literate and numerate and begin to aspire work and lifestyles not found in rural communities. Question could be asked behind the purpose of these investments. Are foreign powers already investing in future migrants for their own profit? Because it is possible these people end up in their country. Or are they educating people so their living is less likely to be affected by climate change. “Effects of climate are perceived to be larger in countries that rely more heavily on agriculture” argues Dennis Wesselbaum, macroeconomist at the Otago Business School (personal communication, May 11, 2019). When a part of the population is educated for job in the service sector, people are likely less effected. According to Bedford and Hugo (2012, p. 83) “the more skilled and better educated migrants in local towns might qualify for entry into neighbouring metropolitan countries, and it is they who tend to seek residence overseas.” This way it is prevented these people are even categorised as environmental displaced person. Renwick is positive about the results that are booked from the foreign investments. “Some organizations are doing really good work on the environmental problems, and at least documenting what is going on and what the different scenarios say for the future of the Pacific Islands. But the other thing that is going on in the Pacific is broadly speaking that the population is quiet religious. They will argue like: its God
The ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment writes almost annually a report about migration trends. "Monitoring migration trends provides a better understanding of the wider global environment in which migration takes place, important developments in New Zealand’s key markets, and the impact and success of current immigration policies," argues the ministry (Stevens, 2013, p.1). In the upcoming section the version of 2012/2013 will be discussed, followed by the version of 2016/2017. When the reader starts with the foreword of the report of 2012/2013, it immediately is evident that this report originates from the ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment. "Immigration is a critical economic enabler and contributes to the Government’s Business Growth Agenda (p.1)". Stevens continues his argument that "New Zealand can fill skill and labour shortages through effective and efficient immigration policies and processes (p.1)." The first two sentences are indicating that this report will mostly argue from an economical point of view. "Historically, New Zealand had a lot of people coming in from the surrounding islands for all sort of reasons," explains Renwick. "To improve financially, for education or employment. And now there have been a lot of people who have family here in New Zealand, so people might come to New Zealand purely for family reasons" (personal communication, May 10).

In chapter 1 of the report a separation is made between temporary and permanent migration which is further categorised in sub classes. Temporary migration is categorised as visitor, work, student and limited visa policy. Permanent migration is further divided in four residence streams; skilled/business, uncapped family, capped family and international/humanitarian stream. According to the report "the international/humanitarian stream enables New Zealand to fulfil its international obligations and commitments regarding refugees and people recognised as requiring protection. It also enables New Zealand to uphold its special relationship with Pacific nations" (Stevens, 2013, p.5). It would not be far-fetched to see the political subject frame, discussed in the theoretical section, in this explanation of the international/humanitarian stream. Especially the last part of the argument suggests that the humanitarian/international stream is used to uphold New Zealand’s relationship with the Pacific nations. In this way migrants from the international/humanitarian stream become a political playbook.

Most of the migrants in the international/humanitarian stream in 2012/2013 originated from Pacific countries, specifically from Samoa (30 percent) and Tonga (9 percent) (Stevens, 2013). According to the report, this reflects the large proportion of this stream through the Samoan Quota Scheme and Pacific Access Category. The Samoan Quota contains an annual ballot where New Zealand’s government encourages Samoan citizens to register themselves. If your registration is drawn you get invited to apply for residence in New Zealand. The only requirements are that the applicant has to have a job which pays enough to support their family and you must be able to speak, read and write English (New Zealand Immigration Service, 2019). The Pacific Access Category works the same, only with Kiribati, Tuvaluan, Tongan and Fijian citizens (New Zealand Immigration Service, 2019). Thus, every year the
New Zealand’s relocates 1100 Samoan, 75 Kiribati, 75 Tuvaluan, 250 Tongan and 250 Fijian citizens to New Zealand. It is like the New Zealand’s government offers the possibility to migrate as a solution with the different migration programs. From this point of view, it looks like the migrants are framed like adaptive agents, the third frame discussed in the theoretical framework by Ransan (et al., 2015).


In the 17th annual report of the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) the series examines trends in temporary and permanent migration to and from New Zealand. This is also the latest and most up to date variant of the series. This makes it even more interesting in what way it differs from the previous one discussed above.

Almost five years later the substantive layout has not changed a bit. Again the focus is on the same temporary (visa, work, student and limited visa) and permanent (skilled, family and humanitarian) categories of migration as in the version of 2013 (MBIE, 2018). The economic approach, which you can expect from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, has not changed compared to the previous discussed report of 2013.

What stands out is the increase of the number of migrants from the Samoan Quota Scheme and the Pacific Access Category. From 938 (29%) and 431 (13%) in 2012/2013 (Stevens, 2013) it increases in 2016/2017 to 1121 (28%) and 655 (16%) (MBIE, 2018). The nominal increase of migrants is not explained in the document, but the role of climate change could be considered. The report also explains when New Zealand is accepting someone as a refugee. “Refugees considered for resettlement must be recognised as a refugee under the mandate of the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees” (MBIE, 2018). The legal side of recognition is not working in the advance of the environmental displaced person, because it’s refugee status is dubious. “The problem is how do you know that someone moves because of the impacts of climate change? The crucial part of this discussion is whether we are able to tell people with a very high degree of certainty person X is an environmental displaced person. If we can do that, we should generate the class of environmental refugees. If not we have to find other ways to support these people” argues Wesselbaum (personal communication, May 11, 2019). One fairly obvious and measurable reason is sea-level rise. Therefore, maybe a good starting point. Jay Marlowe, associate professor in refugee studies and migration policy at the University of Auckland, agrees to the issues around legal recognition of environmental displaced people. “The refugee convention relies on the notion of persecution to get the refugee status. Because climates do not persecute it limits the ability to support environmental displaced people, when the precarious nature of their situation can be indeed serious” (personal communication, May 7, 2019). Renwick thinks the number of environmental displaced people needs to be higher. “There is talk about what should happen, but there has not been a lot of action to make things happen. I picture that New Zealand will take on a lot of migrants the next few years, but I suspect the situation has to become more acute, there have to be more people and more desperate need, to make New Zealand open their doors” (personal communication, May 10, 2019). So nothing can be done until causation of certain extreme weather events are explained by climate change and in the meantime the
situation needs to escalate further until the New Zealand government is forced to do something.

It looks like the New Zealand government is struggling with the international legal entangling around the visa for EDPs. In the current legal boundaries of the international Refugee Convention EDPs can not be seen as refugees cause there is no persecution around EDPs. But the danger is truly serious as noted above. It is going to be interesting how New Zealand is going to deal with this struggle, because the chances are high that within a few years they have to deal with the upcoming number of EDPs.


This Defence Assessment was led by the Ministry of Defence with support from the Defence Force and other agencies. “Defence assessments enables the ministry to identify changes in the international strategic environment and consider their possible implications for New Zealand’s Defence policy, capability and ultimately funding,” states the report (2018, p.3). The defence assessment starts with some key points that serve as a summary of the overall content of the document. The key point that stands out is the following: “The impacts of climate change will require more humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, stability operations, and search and rescue missions” (New Zealand Defence Force, 2018). The Ministry and Defence Force are already convinced that there will be more humanitarian assistance operations. Whether the operations are within their own borders or abroad is not mentioned. Renwick has another view on the humanitarian assistance operations of the New Zealand Defence Force. "The military would probably travel to the place and to rebuild the community and restore infrastructure for the purpose of helping the people to stay where they are. I think presently the reaction to that kind of extreme event is to look to assist the community to get back on its feet in the same place” (personal communication, May 10, 2019).

Also, it is notable that the ministry and the Defence Force mention human aid and thereby tend to the humanitarian frame, where maybe it was expected they would lean more to a securitization point of view. On the other hand, Ransan (et al., 2015) argued that mainly NGO’s are using the humanitarian approach to help EDP’s. So the use of the humanitarian frame by a Defence Force could also be explained as a securitization of the humanitarian frame. According to Shawn Shen, assistant professor at the Daegu University and researcher in Tuvaluan migration to New Zealand, it is not so much about slow-onset stresses or rapid-onset disasters. “It has to do with peoples responding time for rescuing resources and efforts. People in Tuvalu do not have the resources to protect or adapt themselves to climate change. So I think whether it is a slow-onset stress or rapid-onset disaster, it really has to do with how people respond to their situation in his/her context” (personal communication, May 8, 2019). In this way vulnerability to slow-onset stresses and/or rapid-onset disasters are a function of the adaptive capacity of the area.

The defence assessment recognizes the danger of the consequences of climate change. “For some Pacific countries, the threats posed by climate change are extreme”, states the report. “Across the Pacific, at least eight low-lying islands have already been immersed by rising sea levels” (New Zealand Defence Force, 2018). The report estimates that 43.680 residential buildings are at risk from a sea
level rise of 1.5 metres or less (New Zealand Defence Force, 2018). So, beside the warning for the possible threat in the foreign area, the report also recognizes the threat in New Zealand itself. It is clear that the report is warning of the consequences of climate change. Figure 4 is a copied figure from the defence assessment. In this figure the security impacts of climate change are schematically displayed.

Climate migration (marked in yellow in figure 4) is categorised as a social impact alongside with for example water and food scarcity. So, climate migration is seen as an impact on society due to climate effects and environmental impacts. A side note has been made by the category social impact, which is that social impacts are often interconnected with economic and political factors. So also according to the New Zealand Defence Force, climate migration is interconnected with economic and political factors. According to Shen, the multicausality is inherent with human beings. “Since the cause of climate change is due to human beings, certainly it will always have to do with other combinations of factors including political and economic factors. It is also useful to see it as a combination of effects, as it will help us to seek better solutions to the problems of climate change based on multiple drivers, including political, economic and social-cultural factors. Not just the climate change itself” (May 8, 2019).

But migration is not only mentioned within the category of social impacts, also in the category security implications. According to the New Zealand Defence Force one of the security implications is violence from mismanaged adaption and migration (marked in blue in figure 4). “Across the region, there have been instances of communities being split up for relocation, some being moved to areas with different cultures without prior consultation with the host communities, and others being moved into already crowded areas,” explains the report. “In such cases, there have been reports of low-level conflict over land – sometimes deadly – and reports of increased levels of violence, including against women and children” (New Zealand Defence Force, 2018). This approach towards migration could be seen as the securitization approach Ransan discussed (et al, 2015). The report suggests that mismanaged migration causes violence. This is conformable with framing the EDP as
a threat to national security because they could cause violence when migration is mismanaged.

Overall this document sounds like a warning for the present and coming governments. The urge of interference and the need of actual policy on migration due to climate change stands out in the defence assessment of the Ministry of Defence. Noticeable is the several mentioning of the possible consequences of climate change: it will require more humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, stability operations, and search and rescue missions. This way the New Zealand Defence Force uses a securitization frame, but with what purpose? Possible answer could be to help people stay where they are, and rebuild their lives in their own community.

Peters, W., (2018), Pacific climate change-related displacement and migration: a New Zealand action plan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Wellington

This document was a redacted cabinet paper. The cabinet paper builds a case for early, calibrated and transparent New Zealand action on Pacific climate change-related displacement and migration. This paper suggests several actions: “utilising Official Development Assistance (ODA) to avert and delay climate related displacement and prepare for Pacific climate migration; facilitating a regional dialogue and exploring a regional instrument through the Pacific Islands Forum; strengthening international language and frameworks through multilateral action; championing the progressive development of international law to protect Pacific Island countries’ coastal state rights over maritime zones in the face of sea level rise; and commissioning robust research to better understand future trends as well as social and economic impacts on New Zealand and Pacific countries” (Peters, 2018, p.1). This introduction of the document makes it clear that the time of talking about EDPs is over. Action is needed and these are the first points who direct to a starting point.

What stands out in the beginning of the document is the following sentence: “Pacific climate migration refers to current and future displacement or migration of Pacific peoples in response to the impacts of climate change. The term ‘migration’ is interpreted broadly to include relocation within borders” (Peters, 2018). This is the only policy document discussed in this thesis that includes environmental displaced people who stay within their own country. In this way the potential population of environmental displaced people grows and the category will be more relevant. At the same time the paper warns of internal conflict because of the pressure on natural resources and internal movement as a result of climate migration. So, the securitization frame is not only used when it is considered about external migration, but also in the case of internal environmental displaced people.

In addition, the paper perceives that there are no instruments of international law considering the climate change migration. “Climate migrants will not fall within the protections available to refugees fleeing persecution through the 1951 Refugee Convention and their plight is not covered specifically by the major international human rights instruments” (Peters, 2018). Peters states that “more work is needed to determine what protections are needed, for whom and where” (2018, p. 14). This is a call for new legal instruments in the area of climate change migration and therefore in line with the political subject frame. Typical for this frame is the search how institutions could be reformed and/or new governance could be designed (Ransan, et al., 2015).
The urge of policy for EDPs and the need of action instead of words is well displayed in this redacted cabinet paper. Some actual action points passed, but what stands out the most is the recognition of internal displaced people due to climate change. It adds a new dimension to current dominant belief in migration policies that EDPs are migrants from abroad.

In conclusion, New Zealand is trying to deal with the growing needs surrounding a solid migration policy for EDPs. It is remarkable how the view from different Ministries and Departments differs from each other. From an economic approach from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment to a securitization approach at the Ministry of Defence. However, there are still some struggles New Zealand tries to deal with. The legal boundaries around the categorisation of EDPs as refugee is difficult to change, as the definition of a ‘refugee’ is internationally agreed. It is difficult to prove to what extent environmental migration is voluntary or forced. When your house is under water due to sea level rise, you cannot stay where you are. But the refugee convention relies on the notion of persecution to get the refugee status. Because climates do not persecute it limits the ability to support environmental displaced people, when the precarious nature of their situation can be indeed serious (Marlowe, personal communication, May 7, 2019). Still, New Zealand is aware of the potential size of the future EDPs. With present publications of migration policies from the Ministry of Defence and Foreign Affairs where EDPs are actually discussed and possible action points are mentioned, they are pro-active to help the EDPs.

Compared to the Netherlands New Zealand is steps ahead when it comes to actual action points regarding EDPs. Where the Netherlands is still lingers in the discussion about the multicausality of migration, New Zealand tries to translate these scientific findings into accurate policy. Notable is the frequent use of the securitization frame and the adaptive agency frame and the little use of the humanitarian frame and the political subject frame. Possible explanation could be that the securitization frame makes it more ‘touchable’ and involves other actors with more attention, resources and money (Boas, personal communication, May 6, 2019). Moreover, communities do not like to be framed as helpless victims who are unable to make decisions on their own (Boas, personal communication, May 6, 2019). Therefore, more agency is handed to the migrants. In this way migration was multiple times recognised as an adaption strategy.
5. Conclusion

This part of the research will discuss the most important finding in the data analyses and will work to an answer of the main question: ‘How are environmental displaced persons framed in migration policy in the Netherlands and New Zealand, and in what way see these policies climate change as a migration driver?’ This will be done on the basis of these most important findings and the answers to the sub questions. At the end of the chapter, contrary findings will be discussed and suggestions for follow-up research will be made.

The environmental displaced people are stepping into the spotlight. Where migration policies from the Netherlands and New Zealand around 2010 mentioned EDPs as something to take into account when it comes to the future, current publications show the urge and need for solid policy around this group of people. Especially New Zealand is taking the EDP seriously with publications from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defence where actions points are described. The Netherlands is in this area two steps behind. The recognition of migration due to climate change is present, but the absence of actual policy around this certain type of migration makes them pursuing New Zealand.

Still, both countries have to deal with some obstacles and insecurities when it comes to policymaking. First, multicausality of migration makes it difficult to point out migrants who moved purely because of environmental issues. Climate change as a driver of migration is always seen in a combination with other factors, such as economic and political factors. On the one hand, this makes it difficult to research what the surrounding issues of environmental migration are. On the other hand, it is also useful to see it as a combination of effects, as it will help us to seek better solutions to the problems of climate change based on multiple drivers, including political, economic and social-cultural factors. Not just the climate change itself.

Second, it is sometimes difficult to measure if some extreme weather events are caused by climate change. Extreme weather events have always been around. But to what extent is it possible to qualify people as EDP? This also makes it difficult to give a solid definition to EDPs. It also depends how EDPs are framed. The securitization frame and the adaptive agency frame were mostly used in the migration policy documents of the Netherlands and New Zealand. A possible explanation for the use of the securitization frame is the including of other actors with more attention, resources and money. The reason behind the frequent adaptive agency frame could be the attitude of the migrant himself. Migrants do not prefer to be labelled as ‘victims’ or ‘unable to make their own decisions’. With the use of their own network, they are adaptive to the situation. Most of them are also likely to stay in their own region, which adds another spectrum to the discussion, internal migration. This is also why current policies use the adaptive agency frame frequently. Migration can be seen as an adaptive strategy, which is inherent to an adaptive agency frame where migration is considered as part of the solution that assists with adaptation.

Third, it is difficult to what extent EDPs are forced into migration. When your house is under water due to sea level rise, you cannot stay where you are. But the refugee convention relies on the notion of persecution to get the refugee status. Because climates do not persecute it limits the ability to support environmental displaced people, when the precarious nature of their situation can be indeed serious.
In conclusion, the legal and practical definition of the EDP play a significant role in the recognition of the EDP. The third mayor influence on the kind of recognition for the EDP is the framing in migration policies. Are they victims that need help, or should we help them to stay where they are? More and more the EDPs gain attention and recognition in policy documents and over time more action points and solid policy for environmental displaced people will arise. Hopefully, it will continue this way and turns the policy writing into actual implementation of the policies. Because, well… the sea is rising to.

5.1 Discussion
In this part interesting findings who are relevant for following-up research will be discussed, starting with the legal aspect around the definition of refugee regarding the EDP. The legal aspect of this research came to mention several times in the data analyses and the conclusion. Why are EDPs not within the boundaries of the international term ‘refugee’. The danger of a potential persecution is present in the case of an EDP. Why is it that they are not recognised as ‘refugee’.

In addition, the increased investments by Australia, New Zealand and the United States in education and economic development initiatives in the Pacific region is also an interesting topic for following-up research. Why are they doing this? What is the reason behind these foreign investments?

Moreover, there could be more research about this subject but with different countries. The Netherlands and New Zealand are probably not the only ones dealing with EDPs. Especially, what is the influence of the EU in this situation? One thing is certain, there is enough interesting work to do in the area of environmental displaced people.
6. Reflection

In this chapter I will reflect on the way how this research is constructed. Every part of the thesis will be discussed to bring up some points that could be improved or went wrong. In this way I and future researchers can learn from the mistakes, so follow-up research can do better in the future.

The first part of my thesis was the project- and theoretical framework. I think this thesis has a solid introduction to the subject of environmental displaced people. There is a lot of literature around framing and migration, but the environmental aspect narrowed it really down, still enough reading can be found. This is also maybe a point to improve in my theoretical framework, the structural explanation of relevant topics. These explanations could be sometimes more explicit, so the argument becomes stronger.

The methodology section has had some changes along the way. It was difficult to get contacts in the Netherlands and in New Zealand. Policymakers are not that accessible as thought in the beginning of my thesis. It is difficult to find the people who are responsible for certain policies, in the Netherlands and in New Zealand. In addition, interviews by mail are more difficult than expected. The way you form your questions is crucial, because you cannot rephrase them if the interviewee understands it different. Not in the way it is possible with an interview face-to-face. Sometimes by mailing interviews, questions were interpreted in another way and the answer is not something that could contributes to the research.

With the face-to-face I also made some rookie mistakes, like finishing the sentences of the interviewee or asking a suggestive questions. Also I made the mistake assuming that people who were co-writers of an policy document could be seen as policymakers. It is not always like that.

The numbers of interviews was also difficult to reach. Partly due to underestimating the difficulty to get in touch with the right people in New Zealand. Moreover, because of a last moment cancelation of an interview I was desperate to reach my number of interviews that this affected the quality of the interview.

The analysis of the policy documents has also some points of improvement. I think the documents discussed are well connected to governmental policies of both countries and have diverse scale of Ministries and Departments. The difficulty lies in the length of these documents. Most of them are longer than 100 pages, sometimes more than 200. It is difficult to be as critical at page 90 than when you started the document. In the future, a better selection of sections of policy document has to be made, so at every part of the document the same critical analyses is made.
7. References

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- Shen, S., (2019, May 8), personal interview.
- Wesselbaum, D., (2019, May 11), personal interview.
7.1 Figures

Figure 1: Hendrikson, S., (2019), *Conceptual model*

Figure 2: Hendrikson, S., (2019), *Example coding in Atlas.ti*

Figure 3: Huizinga, F., Smid, B., (2004), *Vier gezichten op Nederland: Productie, arbeid en sectorstructuur in vier scenario’s tot 2040*, Den Haag: CPB.

Figure 4: New Zealand Defence Force, (2018), *Security impacts of climate change*,
## 8. Appendices

### Appendix A: Log

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Interview date</th>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<td>06-05-2019</td>
<td>Ingrid Boas</td>
<td>Wageningen</td>
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<tr>
<td>07-05-2019</td>
<td>Jay Marlowe</td>
<td>By mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08-05-2019</td>
<td>Shawn Shen</td>
<td>By mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-05-2019</td>
<td>James Renwick</td>
<td>Nijmegen/Geneva</td>
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<td>Dennis Wesselbaum</td>
<td>By mail</td>
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<td>04-06-2019</td>
<td>Han Nicolaas</td>
<td>The Hague</td>
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<tr>
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<th>What</th>
<th>Special events</th>
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<td>Working on research proposal</td>
<td>Organization lunch meeting MundusNext (12-02) Meeting thesis group (14-02)</td>
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<td>Meeting thesis group, Meeting MundusNext (20-02)</td>
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<td>Organization career event Mundus (28-02) Deadline research proposal (01-03)</td>
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<td>Reaching out for interviews, exploring reading or improve research proposal</td>
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<td>Deadline 2nd opportunity research proposal (29-03)</td>
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<td>Reaching out for interviews, Extra writing and preparing interviews</td>
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<td>Freedom Day (05-05)</td>
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<td>Waiting for / processing feedback</td>
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<td>Week 26: 24-06 / 30-06</td>
<td>Processing feedback and improve thesis</td>
<td>Deadline final version or 2nd draft version (27-06)</td>
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Appendix B: Interview guide

Sub questions that needs to be answered through the interviews:
- How is framing used in governmental migration policies?
- How are the differences between the framing of the Netherlands and New Zealand explained?

Other talking points:
- Conceptualization environmentally displaced person (EDP)
- To what extent the environment can be seen as a migration driver
- The factor of time/temporality in ‘slow-onset stresses’ and ‘rapid-onset disasters’
- The relation between environmental events and vulnerability and adaptive capacity

Practical points:
- Duration interview +/- 30 minutes
- When interviewee speaks Dutch, the leading language of the interview will be Dutch. When this is not the case, the interview will be in English.
- The interviews are semi-structured. The interviewer will ask trough when new or interesting points are discussed.
- Quotes will be used in the end product, when necessary it will be translated to English.