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Introduction

This brochure

This brochure presents a list of thesis projects for students who wish to pursue their MSc thesis at the Environmental Policy Group (ENP). ENP motivates students to align their MSc thesis with one of the thesis projects outlined in the brochure. Alternatively, there is the possibility for students to do something different and to develop their own idea for the MSc thesis in Environmental Policy. In that case the student is strongly encouraged to come up with a one-page proposal to the thesis coordinators.

The thesis projects are organized around the five research themes of ENP: Sustainable Food Transformations; Sustainable Urban Infrastructures; Governing Environmental Mobilities; Marine Governance; and Governing Climate Futures. The thesis projects are often linked to research lines and running projects of staff members. Further information on the content and running projects under each of these research areas, please check out the ENP website: <http://www.wur.nl/en/Expertise-Services/Chair-groups/Social-Sciences/Environmental-Policy-Group/Research.htm/research>

Besides listing potential thesis projects and laying out the ENP research themes, this brochure includes a list of recently completed ENP MSc theses, and a list of companies and organizations where ENP MSc students have performed internships.

Internship possibilities are also published on the ENP Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/Environmental.Policy>. For inspiration or more information you can also check the information for students pages of the ENP website: <http://www.wur.nl/en/Expertise-Services/Chair-groups/Social-Sciences/Environmental-Policy-Group/Information-for-students.htm>

How to get started...

Exploring research topics

If you intend to do an ENP thesis, please explore in this brochure which research themes and thesis projects you want to address. Also browse through previous thesis titles: [List of ENP Theses](#).

Intake meeting with your thesis coordinator at ENP

Students who would like to do their MSc thesis at ENP can contact Corry Rothuizen (corry.rothuizen@wur.nl) to make an appointment for an intake with a thesis coordinator in our group. Students are expected to prepare themselves for the intake meeting by selecting one of the five research themes to do their MSc research in and one or two thesis projects of interest that fall under that theme. Alternatively, there is the possibility for students to do something different and develop their own idea for an MSc thesis in Environmental Policy. In that case the student is strongly encouraged to come up with a one-page proposal to the thesis coordinators.

At the intake meeting, the thesis coordinator will discuss the possible supervisors for your thesis topic within the ENP group. Note that students are only allowed to start a thesis when they have completed their Bachelors and the required ENP thesis preparation courses according to their Masters programme (see study handbook).

First meeting with supervisor

Once you have made contact with a potential supervisor, you will further select and demarcate the research subject. After you agreed on the exact research subject, you should register as a thesis student. During the first meeting with your supervisor, you will obtain further information about the thesis trajectory and requirements. Important to know is that the proposal trajectory entails a maximum of three meetings for the proposal writing. During the remaining thesis trajectory, every text will only be read twice: in part (e.g. chapter or section) and in the context of the full draft thesis.

Registration as a thesis student

Once you have a supervisor assigned to you, you need to register as a thesis student at the ENP group. You do so by submitting the thesis registration form to your supervisor, including the following information: your name, and address, thesis topic, and thesis period. The supervisor will check the information and forward it to the group's administration. After registration you will obtain a 30 Euro contribution for covering printing costs and you may use the research facilities of the group. For further steps and information check the Student's Guidelines for MSc Thesis Research at the ENP Group: <http://www.wur.nl/en/Expertise-Services/Chair-groups/Social-Sciences/Environmental-Policy-Group/Information-for-students.htm>

Research programme of the Environmental Policy Group

The mission of the Environmental Policy chair group (ENP) is to *develop innovative ways of analysing and understanding social and political transformations of the environment*. Core to this mission is the analysis of how and to what extent environmental considerations become incorporated into and change modernisation and globalisation processes, and the design of environmental governance arrangements that extend across multiple levels and spatial scales.

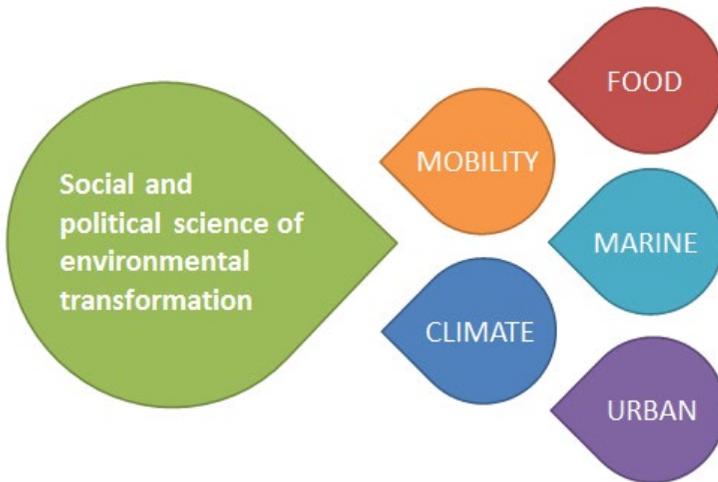
The core objectives of the research programme are threefold:

1. Analyse and understand transformations in local, national and global environmental governance arrangements, against the background of a rapidly changing cultural, political and economic global order;
2. Analyse how individuals, groups and organisations deal with, and respond to, the environmental and health risks and uncertainties that emerge as side effects of modernisation/globalisation.
3. Contribute to the institutionalisation of fair and equitable environmental and sustainability standards, requirements and criteria in (international) processes, networks and practices of production, consumption and governance.

ENP research focuses on theoretical development for understanding and critical analysis of social and political transformations of the environment. Theoretical diversity characterises the group, but it subsumes two clear lines of inquiry. First, the group continues to develop an eco-modernist perspective to environmental change, drawing on a combination of macro-sociological theories of global risk and network society, micro-sociological perspectives focused on social practices, and institutional perspectives of political modernisation and transition theory. Second, the group develops critical social science perspectives drawing on international political economy, political ecology, and global production chains and networks. Bringing these eco-modernist and eco-critical perspectives together will

enable the group to explore the tension between social innovations (e.g. policy instruments and governance arrangements) and social consequences (e.g. inequality, control and exploitation) inherent in environmental change processes.

The research programme of ENP is divided into five parallel thematic areas representing key, contemporary global environmental challenges. First, reflecting the challenges of ongoing population growth and distributive challenges of global nutrition, ENP explores the governance and practices of *sustainable food transformations*. Second, the design and governance of sustainable *urban infrastructures*, exploring the emergence of new social practices and institutions in the reconfiguration of urban infrastructures and cities at large, as well as their local and global environmental impacts. Third, the challenges involved in *governing environmental mobilities* associated with tourism, migration and transport. Fourth, the *marine governance* theme incorporates research on the planet's single largest global environmental resource, exploring issues related to spatial planning, fisheries, ecosystem conservation, shipping, and offshore infrastructures. Fifth, *governing climate futures* subsumes research on global and sub-global climate policy, including societal responses and intersections with strategies for renewable energy provision or adaptation policies.



Thesis projects

Sustainable Food Transformations

Food is an essential part of everyday life for all human beings but involves critical sustainability challenges as well. Food-related environmental impacts occur along the complete supply chain from production through to processing and trade, and consumption and waste and include biodiversity loss, climate change and social equity challenges. Critical sociological and political analysis can contribute to reducing the negative impacts. Building on social practice theories, ecological modernisation theory and transition theory, as well as theories on global value chains and production networks, ENP addresses these challenges by researching the ways in which sustainability is included in food production and consumption, and by studying how different social actors, organizations and institutions engage with innovative governance arrangements and socio-technical innovations. We study everyday practices of food consumption, consumer access to sustainable, safe and healthy food, and consumer-retailer interactions. We also study the institutional structures of globalising food networks, including labelling and certification schemes handling sustainability related food risks. By analysing the connections between different actors within food production and consumption networks we aim to offer innovative perspectives on strategies for environmental transformation. A global perspective is central to our approach and we pay particular attention to social (inequality) impacts which come along with and result from these transformations. The research aims for societal impact through the identification of promising ways to advance environmental transformations in the domain of food in an equitable manner.

Possible MSc thesis projects for the academic year of 2019-2020 under this theme are the following:

Increasing fruit and vegetable intake of low-income populations in Vietnam and Nigeria through food system innovations

Food systems should be transformed to become more nutrition-sensitive. The so-called triple burden of malnutrition encompasses undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies and overweight/obesity, and is increasingly observed in developing economies. This project addresses the problem of the triple burden of malnutrition among low-income urban populations in Nigeria and Vietnam by increasing their intake of fruits and vegetables (F&V) through food system interventions that improve access through diversification of retail outlets, enhance affordability through a client-specific coupon system, and boost acceptability of fruits and vegetables through promotional campaigns. The project is implemented in a central and a more peripheral urban area in Ibadan, Nigeria and Hanoi, Vietnam, offering different contextual situations. To inform the interventions a cross disciplinary mix-method analysis is required on readily available quantitative-qualitative mixed method data sets. The data sets include: (i) household survey data on F&V consumption practices, (ii) F&V market level assessment data, (iii) focus group data on household F&V consumption barriers, (iv) 24hour dietary recall data, and (v) F&V seasonality data. Each data set has been analysed separately. The aim of this assignment is to harvest more comprehensive understandings on the interrelation of food intake, food environment and food consumption barriers by deploying an integrated sociological and nutritional perspective. The project offers the opportunity for two students, one with a background in Nutritional Sciences and one with a background in Sociology, to collaborate. Note: Country visits could be arranged but are on own expenses.

Supervision: Sigrid Wertheim-Heck, Environmental Policy Group and Elise Talsma, Human Nutrition and Health Department

Food shopping practice among the international and national residential students of the WUR

International migration plays an important role in a person's social life and food consumption. The relocation alters ones social trajectories. Food consumption pattern also changes since migration imposes new culture,

weather, and study/work environment. The research will explore the food shopping practices according to international ethnicity and, how has it been changed due to migration? It should produce a proxy estimation for the differences in food shopping pattern in other countries compared to the Netherlands.

Supervision: Latiful Haque, Environmental Policy Group

Public Perception of Palm Oil in Malaysia

Palm oil is a topic of controversy in public and political debates in Europe and the US. Social and environmental concerns related to the impact of oil palm cultivation are expressed in this debate. These criticisms may also have an effect on public opinion in producing countries such as Malaysia. Interesting questions then are: what is the public perception of palm oil in Malaysia and what different categories can be identified within the Malaysian population. This research is organised in collaboration with the national University of Malaysia (UKM).

Supervision: Peter Oosterveer, Environmental Policy group

The impact of regional policies on the sustainability of livestock production

Several regulatory instruments are put forward to address environmental concerns of livestock production, including in the Netherlands. What different instruments are used at the regional level and what is their impact? This thesis looks at the instruments, their targets and indicators developed at regional level.

Supervision: Peter Oosterveer, Environmental Policy Group and Evelien de Olde, Animal Production Systems

Sustainability performances in governing internationally traded food/agricultural commodities

Multi-stakeholder non-state organizations promoting sustainability are nowadays an integrated part of the political landscape in the governance of global value chains. Examples are independent certification schemes (FSC, MSC, UTZ certified, RSPO, Rainforest Alliance) and convening/bridging organizations (IDH/Sustainable Trade Initiative, GIZ) .

These schemes and organizations come about in different forms and constellations, have different strategies and visions, but are without exception confronted with questions about their performances/impact. They need to show whether they are relevant, effective, efficient, and the extent to which they live up to their sustainability promises. MSc-students choosing this theme can work from different angles. Focus could be on a comparison between different organizations in how they deal with pressing demands to prove their impact. This links up to our Next Generation Governance research program. Another angle is to explore an organization's contribution to a key impact area, such as smallholders, deforestation, living wages, toxic loading.

Possible supervisors: Peter Oosterveer, Hilde Toonen; Environmental Policy Group

Globalizing green consumption: developing the international SCP-agenda

Sustainable consumption is no longer restricted to OECD-countries and developed economies. In this project students look at the role and impact of new middleclass-consumers in transition economies in Asia in particular. What strategies for the greening of consumption are used in countries like China, India or Brazil? In what respects do they differ from the strategies applied in OECD-countries when looking at the role of (retail)companies, NGO's, governments and organized citizen-consumers?

Possible supervisors: Gert Spaargaren, Peter Oosterveer; Environmental Policy Group

Food Systems for Healthier Diets (FS4HD)

In this large research projects there are several opportunities for MSc-thesis students. This project aims at increasing access to safe, sufficient, sustainable and healthy food to poor consumers in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Nigeria and Vietnam. The project takes an integrated food systems perspective and aims at making connections with different relevant stakeholders to achieve more holistic solutions. The focus is on consumer practices, the food environment, the food value chain and food system policies.

Supervisors: Raffaele Vignola and Peter Oosterveer, Environmental Policy Group

Sustainable Urban Infrastructures

Sustainability solutions on a metropolitan level change the lay-out and operation of infrastructures and the consumption of their services. They are fuelled by societal demands for climate neutrality, for creating a circular economy and new forms of citizen involvement. In response a range of innovative modes of urban governance are emerging, with new actor configurations, policy arrangements and social practices. The research of the Environmental Policy Group explores the emergence of new social practices and institutions in the reconfiguration of urban infrastructures for the provision of energy, water, food, transport and waste services. Our researchers do this by conducting research on urban infrastructures and its governance in both developing and developed countries. Applying social practice theory, a major part of the research focuses on both domestic and management practices in 'smart' systems and cities at large. We further explore infrastructures through what is referred to as the 'urban nexus', bringing networks and flows of energy, water and food together in user practice and governance arrangements and how they become integrated in circular systems of consumption and provision. We also critically explore processes of technology-society relations and system innovation through theories related to social construction of technology and transition theory.

Possible MSc thesis projects under this theme for the academic year of 2019-2020 are the following:

Consumer practices and changing urban infrastructures for sustainability

Rapidly growing demand for energy and water underpins many current global environmental, social and political problems, including climate change. While energy studies often focus on the production side, there is much less emphasis and (sociological) understanding of how the demand side works and develops, in particular in global (cross-cultural) comparison. In similar vein, domestic water consumption levels are on the rise due to changing practices of washing and bathing or flush toilet use.

A 'practice' perspective conceptualises and analyses energy or water consumption by asking what is driving demand in different (urban) contexts? What (elements of) practices are shared and which are different? How do related policies influence consumer practices and demand? How can we conceptualise and design the governance of practices? This topic is related to a number of research projects at ENP. Students can work within this practices and infrastructures framework in different geographical areas.

Possible supervisors: Bas van Vliet, Mattijs Smits, Gert Spaargaren, Sanneke Kloppenburg, Mary Greene; Environmental Policy Group

City Networks

Cities and local communities are key in climate change adaptation and mitigation. They are both sites and actors in a range of sustainability transitions. More and more cities are experimenting with innovative governance instruments, including eco-financing and 'urban laboratories'. Often cities work with other cities, but also businesses and civil society actors in trans-local and trans-national city networks. In doing so, they are breaking out of traditional top-down nation-regional-local hierarchies. These networks allow cities to learn from each other, jointly experiment and seek governance solutions to urban climate problems, and, perhaps most importantly, to bypass their national governments in the international arena. Central questions in this research theme are: What drives cities to develop and join these networks? To what extent do these trans-local networks help to overcome regional and national barriers to climate governance? What barriers do these networks raise themselves for cities in responding to climate change? This research theme ranges from small and local city networks to large and international ones. Local and trans-local examples include the [Transition Town Network](#) and a range of [energy cooperatives in Amsterdam](#). Three well-known international city networks are [ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability](#), the [C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group](#), and the [Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy](#).

Possible supervisors: Gert Spaargaren, Sayel Cortes Berrueta; Environmental Policy Group

Green urban infrastructure

Green infrastructure is a key asset in metropolitan areas today. It contributes significantly to the health of urban dwellers and the quality of urban life, by improving city climate, providing places of relaxation and recreation, and harboring biodiversity and scenic values. Governing green infrastructure in cities, however, poses big challenges. There are major problems in designating and managing green areas against the pressures of other high-stake claims on urban space. Another salient question is how to prevent gentrification and exclusion of low-income residents in areas where green provisions have improved. On a more positive note, innovations such as rooftop gardening can help combining green provisions with other urban functions, and cross-species co-habitation has resulted in striking situations where endangered species are found in higher densities in urban than non-urban areas. This research theme ranges from topics such as green governance in large cities worldwide to municipal green governance in the Netherlands. Green infrastructures can include urban farming and rooftop gardening, but also city parks and urban forestry, and urban ecological networks and species co-habitation. Typical examples to accelerate the transition to environmentally sustainable green urban infrastructures are '[De Groene Stad](#)' in the Netherlands and the city of Tokyo's [management of urban trees](#).

Possible supervisors: Bas van Vliet; Kris van Koppen; Environmental Policy Group

Engaging with renewable energy technology and landscapes

To reach the Paris climate agreement and national sustainability targets, the energy portfolios and landscapes of many countries will (need to) change dramatically towards more renewable energy. More than just a technical challenge, there are policy and societal challenges associated with transition. Notably, more and more people will be confronted with solar panels, wind turbines and other technologies in their 'back yard' in rural and urban areas, and both on- and off-shore. To address possible concerns and facilitate co-production of renewable energy projects, there is a need to go beyond 'organised participation' (informing local stakeholders about renewable energy projects to gain acceptance). This

shift will require (new) forms of engagement with renewable energy projects at various stages of development. Moreover, this engagement may touch upon combinations of landscape and technological aspects. A useful distinction may be to differentiate between local, collective and virtual (e.g. through apps and other digital platforms) modes of engagement. This topic is related to two EU wind energy projects at ENP, but is also relevant for other geographical areas and other types of renewable energy.

Possible supervisors: Mattijs Smits, Helena Solman; Environmental Policy Group

Celebrating Sustainable Urban Life(styles)?

Eco-chic is (or should become) the 'new normal', so it is argued by many front-runner citizens and consumers who are involved in experimenting with green lifestyles. They show that urban lifestyles can be made more sustainable since the city itself provides a unique, well developed range of possibilities to live a more sustainable everyday life. City bikes, car sharing and similar forms of collaborative consumption, roof-top farming and buying at fresh-markets/farmers markets, co-producing, storing and trading local, renewable energy, decoupling stormwater and rainwater from the sewage system etc. are all examples of social practices which form the cornerstones of more encompassing, greener lifestyles in the next future. This research theme investigates not only the groups of frontrunners and their social practices but more in general the motivations, emotions, interests and practical experiences of citizens participating in more sustainable urban practices of mobility, food, energy, water and waste. What drives people for participating in the new, more sustainable practices? When engaged for some times, what makes them proud, happy, disappointed, puzzling in doing things in more sustainable ways. How do they define their practices and lifestyles in relation to fellow citizens and how do they discuss their contribution in relation to the greening of wider city networks and infrastructures?

Possible supervisors: Gert Spaargaren; Environmental Policy Group

Closing cycles from toilets to food

Significant amounts of nutrients from wastewater are released into the environment where they cause eutrophication of ecosystems. Meanwhile agriculture faces nutrient shortages, which hinders food security. It would thus be beneficial – both for water quality and for agriculture – to recycle nutrients from wastewater and bring them back into the food chain. Yet, recycling nutrients from domestic wastewater into agriculture requires major technological and social changes in sanitation, wastewater treatment, agriculture and food processing. We invite thesis students to participate in investigations of circular agro-food-sanitation cycles in the Netherlands (Flevoland) or wastewater irrigation practices in urban agriculture (Tanzania). Thesis work could for example include: analysis of the legislations on re-use of waste-streams; case study research on changing practices of toilet use, water treatment and fertilization; addressing questions on upscaling existing small-scale sanitation initiatives or questioning the desirability of the concept of circular economy vis-à-vis resource use efficiency.

Possible supervisor: Bas van Vliet; Environmental Policy Group

Citizen participation in Urban Greenhouse Food production

Organized in 2018, the first Wageningen Green Challenge was to “*Design a Smart Grid embedded Urban Greenhouse*” that engages urban citizen-consumers with a range of food products that are produced in a circular, resource efficient and low-carbon manner. Next year international student teams will again be challenged to design such a greenhouse by simultaneously taking into account socio-cultural, (ICT) technical, spatial and environmental factors in a balanced way.

The greenhouse will bring professional food production (back) into urban neighbourhoods in such a way that local citizen-consumers are triggered to actively engage with the process of producing and consuming fresh and healthy food products in sustainable ways e.g. by making use of the latest knowledge on resource use efficiency, circularity, and the climate impact of food. A thesis project may emphasise citizens seeking to enrol and participate in the practices of food growing in urban Greenhouses. The

thesis could generate new knowledge on i) the role of ICT in connecting citizens to the urban greenhouse practices and ii) the division of tasks between horticulture/food experts and citizens in the context of urban greenhouse practices. Data will be generated with the help of desk research, interviews with (potential) citizen-participants, and with greenhouse experts.

Possible supervisors: Gert Spaargaren, Sigrid Wertheim-Heck, Peter Oosterveer; Environmental Policy Group

Mobile apps and digital platforms for sustainable consumption

In recent years, many digital tools, apps, and platforms have been developed with the aim of increasing the accessibility and convenience of new, more sustainable consumption practices and lifestyles. Examples of these are car-sharing or bicycle apps (e.g. MyWheels, RINGRING), food apps (e.g. Too good to go, Questionmark) and green energy tools and platforms (e.g. Toon, Powerpeers). Where some of these digital tools aim at assisting consumers to make greener choices during shopping (e.g. Questionmark), other tools are aimed at fostering reflexivity about the sustainability impact of people's current practices. Another type of tools are digital platforms that connect providers and users of food, energy or mobility (e.g. MyWheels), often with the aim of fostering collaborative consumption and peer-to-peer exchange. In this project, you build on theories of social practice (e.g. Spaargaren, Shove, Giddens) to investigate how digital tools and apps can facilitate the emergence and embedding of sustainable practices in the domain of food, energy, or mobility. You could for example do a comparative study of two or three apps in a particular domain (food, energy, or mobility), based on qualitative research among users of the app and/or participatory observation.

Possible supervisor: Sanneke Kloppenburg; Environmental Policy Group

Energy communities 4.0

Rapid developments in ICT, such as blockchain technology and smart metering, transform how people can produce, buy and consume energy. It allows people who have installed solar panels to connect through software platforms to exchange their self-produced energy and increase their energy autonomy. In countries in the global South, solar panels and smart technologies are implemented to increase energy access and reliability of supply for rural and urban households. While decentralised energy exchange is quickly emerging around the world, very little is known about how prosumers perceive the promises and limitations of the new digital technologies, and of the social and ethical aspects of more collaborative forms energy production and consumption. In this project you examine emergent energy communities and energy exchange technologies to investigate how citizens are/want to be engaged in decentralised energy exchange.

Possible supervisors: Sanneke Kloppenburg, Mattijs Smits; Environmental Policy Group

Urban Nexus

Within an Urban Nexus perspective, it is assumed that environmental flows and infrastructures for the provision and consumption of energy, water and food interact and relate to one another in achieving urban sustainable development. By understanding the Urban Nexus, our analysis seeks to build new approaches and insights into achieving sustainable cities. Thesis topics encompass the mapping and understanding of the interconnections and trade-offs in the provisioning of food, water and energy in urban areas. What are the identifiable steering points for Urban Governance to address socio-material challenges and opportunities of the urban water, energy and food nexus?; the analysis of the Urban Nexus in relation to social and environmental vulnerabilities (case studies on the practices around energy, water or food toward greater equity and resilience in informal settlements in the global South)

Possible supervisors: Bas van Vliet, Gert Spaargaren, Moises Covarrubias Perez; Environmental Policy Group

Urban water management

Water management in many global metropolitan centers is under stress due to rising sea levels, draughts or extreme weather events, while the available infrastructures of drainage, drinking water and sanitation are still based on past modernist technological ideals of draining, flushing and central treatment. Models of urban water governance that have co-evolved with the development of central water infrastructures, lead to centralised top-down modes of governance by public or private city wide water companies. With the development of alternative infrastructures for sustainable delivery of water services: drinking water, sanitation, transport and purification of sewage water, also new modes of governance emerge or need to be developed. An example of such development is the Knowledge Action programme on Water Governance at Waternet in Amsterdam. The research aim of this thesis topic is to analyze the provision and development of urban water infrastructures and services in terms of management, access and use by diverse groups in urban societies, for instance by comparative case study research within Amsterdam or between various cities in North and South.

Possible supervisor: Bas van Vliet; Environmental Policy Group

Governing Environmental Mobilities

The world today is facing continuous growth of forms of international and transnational mobility, such as tourism, travel, migration and shipping, driven by actor networks, information and communication technologies, and environmental push and pull factors. First, transnational mobility systems, like tourism, rely on a range of environmental resources (e.g. biodiversity, land, energy, water) as well as sinks (e.g. atmosphere, ocean) and thereby contribute to environmental impacts and change. Second, environmental problems are increasingly on the move as flows of materials or substances that themselves are hazardous to the environment, such as CO₂, nuclear fallout, (digital) waste, sewage water and plastic. Third, environmental change is increasingly affecting the direction and volume of transnational mobility, such as in the case of climate refugees or Arctic shipping. The sustainability of these environmental mobilities depends on our ability to design and implement innovative governance arrangements that steer towards eco-efficiency in natural resource use, equitable and effective sharing of benefits, accountability and transparency, within critical planetary boundaries. By drawing on recent sociological and political science concepts ENP researchers aim to understand the changes, the sustainability challenges and the governance arrangements in transnational mobility, as well as to suggest ways for improvement. Conceptually, this research builds on social practice theories, the network society, mobilities, discourse theory, political modernisation theory, as well as theories on informational governance and the science-policy interface. Empirically, our research is situated in areas of the world where the transnational and dynamic character of mobility systems can be studied, such as in marine environments, the Polar Regions, and in climate vulnerable areas.

Possible MSc thesis projects under this theme for the academic year of 2019-2020 are the following:

Who are the end-users of improved polar climate services?

This is a concrete project for a student related to the Polar Prediction Project (PPP); a programme initiated by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in response to rapid environmental change in the Polar Regions. The primary goal of the PPP is to advance scientific knowledge such that society, both within and outside of the Arctic and Antarctic, may benefit through applications of improved weather, ice and climate services. This includes improved understanding and prediction of physical parameters and the ways people use the available information. As part of the social science agenda within PPP there is need for a stocktaking of projects that have been endorsed by PPP with regard to the societal interests served by these projects. What are key end-user groups mentioned in the project documentation (shipping, tourism, indigenous communities)? Are stakeholders implicitly or explicitly mentioned as end-users? Is there mentioning of consultation of, or a co-creation process with, particular stakeholder groups? By undertaking a content analysis on PPP documentation and endorsed projects, and by possibly interviewing project leaders, we aim to establish an important baseline for evaluating PPP in the coming years. This work could potentially raise interest and be impactful in the consolidation phase of this global initiative.

Supervisor: Machiel Lamers; Environmental Policy Group

Climate resilience in a digital society

Communities around the world are experiencing climate impacts, ranging from droughts to extreme storms, damaging basic services and putting additional pressure on communities' livelihoods and resilience. Strengthening societal resilience – of marginalized communities but also of businesses and other actors – is crucial in order to address and adapt to a changing climate.

Up-to-date information and information exchange is vital for societies to prepare for and adapt to increased climate risk. Nonetheless, little is known as to how information shapes climate resilience and what role

information and communication technologies (ICTs) can play in that regard. Research into this topic involves the analysis of who produces climate information (top-down/bottom-up/co-production); who decides what is done with the information; how information is interpreted and how it interacts with more traditional coping strategies to environmental change.

Possible supervisors: Machiel Lamers, Sanneke Kloppenburg, Berill Blair (Topic cross-cutting climate futures theme); Environmental Policy Group

Closing industrial resource cycles

Industrial ecology, Cradle-to-cradle, circular economy: these are all models that aim at moving from 'linear' to 'circular' modes of production and consumption. Particularly Cradle-to-cradle and circular economy have a wide appeal to companies, designers, and policy makers. Both aim to close material and resource loops as a solution to simultaneously deal with wasting waste as well as with growing scarcity of natural resources. Closing these loops requires the forming of new networks through collaboration between designers, production companies as well as waste and recycling companies. In addition, policy makers seek ways to steer society and companies in particular towards circular ways of production. Little experience and social scientific understanding exists about how these networks and the role of government within these networks look like and how they are governed. By taking particular resource flows as a starting point, i.e. water or plastics, MSc-thesis research can contribute to generating more understanding about networks through which resource flows become circular. What (successful) governmental or industry initiatives exist to increase re-use and recycling of (waste) water and plastic? How does collaboration emerge between companies and between companies and governmental or civil society actors in making water or plastic resource flows more circular? Who are included and excluded in such networks? How are resources and knowledge shared between actors within these networks? And what does this mean for the power relations between actors and between companies and government?

Possible supervisor: Judith van Leeuwen; Environmental Policy Group

Sustainability transitions in international shipping

International shipping is vital to our global economy and one of the most global industrial sectors that exist. In terms of environmental management, however, it is lacking behind more land-based (transport) sectors. The shipping sector is still reactive and crisis-oriented when it comes to environmental issues. Some frontrunners have emerged in container shipping, but most of the other segments within shipping still see environmental regulation as a cost and additional burden. At the same time, civil society is increasing its pressure on the shipping sector to become more environmentally friendly and is developing partnerships as well as information-based governance mechanism to push the industry ahead. How does the reactive nature of the sector affect possibilities for such partnerships or information-based mechanisms to become a success? And why is the container industry so much further ahead? How do companies deal with implementing environmental regulation and what is needed to advance their environmental management? And how do the new information-based governance mechanisms relate to existing environmental regulation of shipping developed by the International Maritime Organization? Who is involved in these information-based initiatives and what is the potential of such mechanisms accelerate sustainability transitions in shipping?

Possible supervisor: Judith van Leeuwen; Environmental Policy Group

Controlling marine mobilities in Chilean Patagonia

The remote Chilean Patagonia, in the southern South America, is a place plagued of islands, fjords and channels, where navigation is many time the only way to reach some places. In this space, Chilean marine authority exerts particular power in controlling and channelling different types of marine and coastal mobilities, such as artisanal vessels, tourist sailboats, freighter ships, and cruises, among others. Besides the rules and directions established by marine authority in order to track and control the network of navigation, mobile marine agents are continually challenging marine governance by deploying their own values and interest while moving through the sea. Nowadays, the expansion of conservation areas including the sea's surface is bringing new challenges to marine and coastal

governance. This thesis, should be oriented to shed some light about marine governance from mobilities perspective, considering the extent to which the strategy of national authority to govern marine and coastal mobilities is confronted with the non-ruled displacement of marine agents, who seem to govern through their own mobilities.

Possible supervisors: Jose Barrena, Machiel Lamers; Environmental Policy Group

Adaptation in vulnerable marine tourism destinations

Coastal regions and islands are among the most popular tourist destinations. They are also highly vulnerable to global environmental change. The literature on vulnerability and adaption of tourism destination is still scarce. There is still a dearth of knowledge on what vulnerable tourism destinations can do to decrease their vulnerability, and how various adaptive measures relate and interact. What adaptation measures or policies contribute to reducing environmental vulnerabilities, and how do such measures affect other societal or environmental interests, including cultural heritage, marine protected areas or coastal livelihoods? Thesis research can take the form on in depth case studies of Mediterranean, Caribbean or South East Asia islands, or comparing insights from a range of destinations.

Possible supervisor: Machiel Lamers; Environmental Policy Group

Energy tourism: a new frontier in sustainable tourism?

There are many different types of tourism. One relatively new type is energy tourism, which falls more broadly under sustainable or eco-tourism. Examples are tours to islands in Indonesia that want to switch to 100% renewable energy sources or day trips to villages in Thailand that generate their own electricity through hydropower. There are more questions than answers in this field. What is energy tourism exactly and how 'big' is it? What types of people are attracted to this type of tourism? What is the role of tourists, NGOs, tour operators and local people in these projects? Does this type of tourism help to support more sustainable forms of energy production and consumption or does it rather do the opposite, for example by encouraging people to undertake long-distance travels?

Student choosing this topic have the opportunity to delve into this uncharted territory, both theoretically and empirically.

Possible supervisors: Machiel Lamers and Mattijs Smits; Environmental Policy Group

Tourism and water

Fresh water is crucial for life and livelihood, but its limited availability is threatened by population growth, climate change and irreversible use. Tourism is the largest service industry on the planet and therefore among the largest consumers of water. To reduce tourism-related water use, a better understanding of the behaviour surrounding its use is needed. Social practices theory provides a relevant and fitting framework for analysing tourism activity as a collection of 'water-use practices'. By focusing on one or relating more of these tourism-related water use practices our understanding of the behavioural dynamics of water uses can be enlarged. In addition, the research can focus on innovative measures suggested by providers of water and tourism services and assess their effectiveness in relation to the dynamics of the tourism related water use practices, such as smart water meters, rainwater harvesting, recycle showers, etc. An in-depth case study in one of many water scarce tourism destinations (for example islands) forms the empirical basis of your thesis.

Possible supervisor: Machiel Lamers; Environmental Policy Group

Governing Marine Futures

The ‘marine (governance)’ research theme of the Environmental Policy Group addresses the institutional dynamics of several maritime and coastal activities (including fishing, aquaculture, oil and gas production, offshore wind energy, shipping, and tourism) and the enabling and constraining conditions for their governance. Key questions of our research include: How are public and private marine governance arrangements institutionalised? How can we assess the quality of marine governance structures and processes? How to design effective and equitable (state-based or market-based) governance arrangements to achieve sustainable marine management? How can stakeholders in marine governance processes be meaningfully involved?

Building on the policy arrangement approach, political modernization, institutional theories, informational governance, as well as theories on global value chains and global production networks, our empirical research addresses the development, evaluation and design of public and private marine (sectoral and cross-sectoral/integrated) governance arrangements, and the role of knowledge and information in marine governance (such as labelling and certification schemes and forms of participatory knowledge production)

Our research contributes to the development of innovative and legitimate marine governance arrangements. A more sustainable and equitable future for the largest commons in the world will benefit from a better understanding about the ways decision-making processes in the marine context are (and could be) organized.

Possible MSc thesis projects under this theme for the academic year of 2019-2020 are the following:

Transparency and traceability in global seafood trade

Illegal, unreported or unregulated fisheries (IUU) is thought to contribute to unsustainable fisheries. One way to combat the global trade of IUU fish is to enhance the transparency in value chains. Transparency can either be driven by public policy, i.e., government regulation, or can be driven by value chain actors. One way to operationalize transparency is through traceable seafood, whereby information about the origin and processing path of fish or seafood items is communicated. A wide range of traceability systems are rapidly being developed and implemented in seafood value chains, often with different goals, technologies, requirements and users. How do traceability systems become embedded at various nodes of seafood value chains? How do various stakeholders define traceability? And how do traceability systems transform fisheries management and global seafood trade? Field work is focussed on producers and traders in the Philippines or buyers and retailers in Europe or the United States.

Possible supervisor: Simon Bush; Environmental Policy Group

Bottom up sustainability standards for SE Asian aquaculture?

SEASIP is a collaborative of Southeast Asian partners developing a set of standards specifically designed to develop more inclusive market-based eco-standards for shrimp production in the region. There are a few opportunities under this programme – including: 1. Testing their protocols and standards on farms in Vietnam, Thailand and Indonesia. 2. Researching the possibility for small-holder group certification using SEASIP. 3. Assessing the programme itself to determine how SEASIP can better impact small holder inclusion into the US certified market, while maintaining a necessary level of impact as measured by Seafood Watch. The position also comes with funding, the level of which will be determined by the design of the specific project.

Possible supervisor: Simon Bush; Environmental Policy Group

Social dynamics of technological innovations in fisheries

Environmental concerns in fisheries and challenges in fisheries management have led to a focus on technological fixes to solve a range of sustainability issues. Examples include trackers for Fish Aggregating

Devices (FADs) but also wider gear transitions driven by goal to reduce the environmental impact and use of mobile applications to collect data to verify fisheries are operating legally. Whilst technologies offer new opportunities, there are often gaps between what is prescribed and what is done in reality. This brings along various questions about the evolution of technologies and social uptake which is key to understanding the potential and thus the implications of technological innovations in fisheries.

Possible supervisors: Marloes Kraan, Simon Bush, Hilde Toonen; Environmental Policy Group

Big data in ocean governance

Technological innovations designed to collect spatially referenced data are becoming formative forces in ocean governance. Satellite-related tracking systems for (fishing) vessel activity for example are indispensable in informational processes that support policy-making, monitoring and auditing. More and more, big data technology platforms, often open-access and led by non-state actors, are used to map out multiple uses of the sea. Topics for thesis research include explaining how open-access information systems facilitates transparency and democratization in ocean governance, for whom and why? Focus could also be on analysing the extent to which technological innovations induced by non-state actors enable or hinder state-based governance.

Possible supervisors: Hilde Toonen, Simon Bush; Environmental Policy Group

Sustainability transitions in international shipping

International shipping is vital to our global economy and one of the most global industrial sectors that exist. In terms of environmental management, however, it is lacking behind more land-based (transport) sectors. The shipping sector is still reactive and crisis-oriented when it comes to environmental issues. Some frontrunners have emerged in container shipping, but most of the other segments within shipping still see environmental regulation as a cost and additional burden. At the same time, civil society is increasing its pressure on the shipping sector to

become more environmentally friendly and is developing partnerships as well as information-based governance mechanism to push the industry ahead. How does the reactive nature of the sector affect possibilities for such partnerships or information-based mechanisms to become a success? And why is the container industry so much further ahead? How do companies deal with implementing environmental regulation and what is needed to advance their environmental management? And how do the new information-based governance mechanisms relate to existing environmental regulation of shipping developed by the International Maritime Organization? Who is involved in these information-based initiatives and what is the potential of such mechanisms accelerate sustainability transitions in shipping?

Possible supervisor: Judith van Leeuwen; Environmental Policy Group

Area based management and certification of aquaculture in Southeast Asia (SUPERSEAS Research Programme)

The sustainability of aquaculture is managed at the farm scale, while many of the social and environmental impacts of this food production system accumulate across landscapes. Within an exciting new NWO funded project you will have the opportunity to help define how 'area-based management' arrangements can be designed and implemented. A variety of questions can be addressed: What can we learn from area based management in other food sectors? How does area-based management compare to concepts like integrated coastal zone management, different forms of collective action in aquaculture management, landscape approaches and inclusive business? How can shrimp, pangasius and tilapia farmers organise themselves in area based associations, and what benefits does this provide them? How can you measure the environmental impact of area-based management? Is area-based management being applied in private certification schemes in other food sectors? What claims can be made about area-based approaches by retailers? Students will have the opportunity to travel to Thailand, Vietnam or Bangladesh to answer these questions.

Possible supervisors: Simon Bush, Peter Oosterveer, Mariska Bottema; Environmental Policy Group

Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) in the tropical Atlantic

Oceans and seas provide for economic growth and employment, yet new frameworks will have to be set in place in order to regulate and optimize the range of feasible uses of the marine environment. At the same time, its natural values should be conserved and protected. Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) aims at reconciling human uses and conservation, and is becoming integral part of the policy toolbox in the Global North, especially in the European Union (EU) in particular. However, ocean space all around the world, including EU bordering marine areas like the tropical Atlantic, are in need of planning and balancing economic use and marine conservation. There is a pressing need to build theory and methods for MSP in tropical areas, whereas learning from European experience is useful. But research should also critically address the fact that the policy framework originally designed for the EU may not fit the specificities of Southern countries. Thesis studies will address opportunities and limits of tropical MSP and contributing to designing innovative approaches to MSP in the tropical Atlantic (highlighting Senegal, Cape Verde and/or Brazil). Students can for example focus on conducting a (comparative) policy analysis, stakeholder analysis, study of community commitment and capacity building. They may choose a multi-level approach or limit their research to the local or national level. Thesis studies fit in to our research related to the PADDLE project (PADDLE = Planning in A liquid world with tropical Stakeholders: solutions from an EU-Africa-Brazil perspective).

Possible supervisor: Hilde Toonen; Environmental Policy Group

Marine Spatial Planning and regionalization

In March 2013 the EU presented its Directive on Marine Spatial Planning. Maritime spatial planning (MSP) is about planning when and where human activities take place at sea. It is presented as a transparent and comprehensive process based on stakeholder involvement. Its aim is to draw up plans which identify the most efficient and sustainable current and future use of maritime space. This topic looks at MSP as a process of regionalization (how does it relate to other marine policies)? What are the distributional impacts of MSP? How to understand spatial, environmental

or social justice in MSP? And how to understand the power dynamics of MSP?

Possible supervisor: Hilde Toonen; Environmental Policy Group

Governing marine litter

Recent studies have made clear how extensive the pollution of the marine environment by litter is. While global in scope, there is no international treaty that governs marine litter pollution. At the same time, a plethora of regional conventions (i.e. the OSPAR convention) do, but seem to be ineffective. We also see a lot of initiatives from civil society and industry actors to prevent or mitigate marine litter. For example, there are multiple examples of beach clean-ups that are organized by eNGOs. But also companies have engaged in this issue, by developing products from marine plastics (e.g. Method, Addidas, Interface). Do these initiatives indeed provide an effective alternative to international environmental regulation? And what can explain their emergence? Who are involved in these initiatives and what is their motivation? How does collaboration between civil society and businesses take place? And how do we go from single, but separate initiatives to a coordinated effort to prevent marine litter from entering the oceans? What is the role of the UN or the EU in doing so?

Possible supervisor: Judith van Leeuwen; Environmental Policy Group

Deliberate governance in European coastal and marine cultural heritage

European maritime and coastal regions are at the crossroads of connections and movement of diverse peoples and cultures. These coastal zones are also historically rich with unique land/seascapes, tangible artefacts, and intangible cultural heritage. Realising the potential of CH in these terms can generate prosperity, bring new jobs and improve environments in ways comparable to Blue Growth initiatives. Yet, coastal cultural landscapes face risks from climate change, pollution, urbanisation, mass tourism, demographic challenges in remote regions, the fundamental transformation of the European fishing industry, and inconsistent policies of sea and shore conservation across governance scales and between regions. In a thesis project, the student can apply a multi-actor scope, and focus on whether and how deliberations will effectively link different

stakeholders and decision-makers, will enable co-production of knowledge across sectors and interests and ensure improved integration of cultural and environmental policy arenas. Also, emphasis can (additionally) be put on the design of deliberative tools for social learning, in the sense of a change in understanding, which goes beyond individuals to become situated in wider social groups or communities, where social processes are a catalyst to changes in values, beliefs and understanding and better recognition of each other's perspectives and concerns across sectors. Students Thesis studies fit in to our research related to the PERICLES project (Preserving and sustainably governing Cultural Heritage through deliberation and Participation). Our case regions are Malta and the Wadden Sea, but students are welcome to explore other regions.

Possible supervisors: Hilde Toonen, Loes Witteveen, Marloes Kraan, Machiel Lamers; Environmental Policy Group

Marine ecosystem restoration

Faced with increasing loss of biodiversity and persistent ecosystem degradation, a paradigm shift in global biodiversity policy is unfolding, moving from the traditional 'preservation paradigm' or a hands-off stance to conservation, towards more active forms of intervention in nature through ecosystem restoration. Restoration is defined as "the process of assisting the recovery of an ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged or destroyed." The goal is to steer the process of recovery towards a desired state of the ecosystem. This definition by the Society of Ecological Restoration is widely accepted and used in the academic literature.

However, divergent interpretations exist of what the process of assisting the recovery of a degraded ecosystem means in science and in practice.

Multiple visions are often articulated of the desired state of the ecosystem to be pursued, based on different underlying motivations for restoration, understandings of ecological baselines, ways of knowing and acceptable levels of human intervention in nature. Various framings and discourses of restoration thus structure how actors and coalitions define problems and their approaches to solutions. Ongoing collaboration with the REEFolution project in Kenya and the MERCES project in Europe offers students the possibility to study topics ranging from how marine ecological restoration

is defined and restoration goals are implemented; development of evaluation frameworks for ecological restoration; the role of citizen science in restoration; or the science-policy interface in restoration governance of various ecosystem types in diverse geographical locations.

Possible supervisor: Eira Carballo-Cárdenas; Environmental Policy Group

Climate engineering in the oceans

Coral reefs are among the most productive and biologically diverse ecosystems worldwide, and also highly vulnerable to global environmental change. Geoengineering technologies being proposed to protect the Great Barrier Reef in Australia from coral bleaching are highly controversial, generating calls for geoengineering governance with robust rules to ensure critical review of such new technologies. Geoengineering proposals include 'shading' the reef by spreading biodegradable polymer film on the water, as well as cloud brightening, a type of local solar radiation management. In addition, some propose cooling shallow water reefs by mixing it with cooler water pumped up from deeper ocean layers. Research questions to be explored by students around these novel and controversial technologies may revolve around science-society relations, stakeholder and power relations, public acceptability and political accountability.

Possible supervisors: Eira Carballo-Cárdenas and Myanna Lahsen; Environmental Policy Group

Coastal and marine indigenous knowledge and the global biodiversity regime

The global biodiversity agenda post 2020 is being negotiated within parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Knowledge plays an important role in defining policy problems and solutions regarding persistent biodiversity loss, however, local and indigenous knowledge are often relegated or ignored in global assessments and negotiations. Students are invited to investigate the topic of coastal and marine indigenous knowledge on biodiversity in one of the following lines of enquiry: i) a case study examining how the participatory processes within IPBES that encourage more inclusive knowledge production for global

assessments have played out in practice, or ii) how local and indigenous coastal/marine knowledge could play an active role in defining the CBD's agenda to 2050.

Possible supervisors: Eira Carballo-Cárdenas; Environmental Policy Group and Sylvia Karlsson-Vynkhuyzen, Public Administration and Policy Group

Governing Climate Futures

Climate change is one of the most profound, complex transboundary and transdisciplinary sustainability challenges facing us today. Governance of climate change requires action at all levels and from all actors, as well as multiple governance strategies and approaches. Increasingly, the key challenge is how to collectively imagine, anticipate and govern climate futures, which are characterized by extreme uncertainty and potentially highly unequal spatial and temporal distributional impacts. ENP research explores and assesses key aspects of this anticipatory climate governance challenge. These include the role of *science, knowledge, information and transparency* in public understanding of challenges and solutions and in national and multilateral governance arrangements, including those under the United Nations. We also examine governance challenges associated with needed, large-scale dietary shifts, as well as controversial new options such as *climate engineering*; as well as the functioning of *carbon markets and carbon trading* in the Global South; the role of new ICT technologies in responding to *climate migration*; and the role and functioning of key tools of *anticipation* (such as foresight, modelling and scenario building) in designing anticipatory climate governance arrangements.

Possible MSc thesis projects under this theme for the academic year of 2019-2020 are the following:

Transparency in the Paris Agreement: Furthering Effective and Equitable Climate Action?

Transparency is one of the most widely heard concepts of our age, resonating across diverse global policy domains, including in the domain of sustainability. The driving force behind a transparency turn in global environmental governance is the belief that it will result in more accountable, democratic and effective sustainability actions and outcomes. Yet does transparency fulfil these promises? This project explores whether transparency is indeed a transformative force, including in multilateral climate governance. The climate agreement adopted in

Paris in December 2015 calls for a bottom-up ‘pledge-and-review’ approach to climate action, with an ‘enhanced transparency framework’ applicable to all countries. Through *making visible* who is doing what, transparency is expected to help with holding countries to account for meeting their obligations, enhancing trust, and furthering fair and ambitious climate action. Yet is transparency contributing to these objectives? An MSc thesis project on this topic can focus on a number of aspects: first, negotiations of the Paris Agreement’s transparency framework, including the information provided by countries relating to their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs); second, how the existing transparency framework is functioning, and lessons learned about the conditions under which transparency can actually increase ambition or fairness of outcomes. An overarching question is how the transparency framework operationalizes the climate regime’s principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities,” which requires burden sharing based on different historical responsibilities and capacities to act of different countries. Is there a trade-off between equity and ambition?

Possible supervisors: Aarti Gupta; Nila Kamil; Environmental Policy Group

Contemplating Climate Engineering Governance: Key Challenges

Climate engineering (CE) refers to novel technologies now being contemplated to make large scale intentional interventions into the Earth’s climate system to attempt to counteract the effects of anthropogenic climate change. MSc thesis projects can contribute to ongoing ENP research on this topic, including: (a) the geopolitics of climate engineering governance debates, e.g., the (minimal) involvement to date of developing countries; (b) the role of scientific experts in shaping the climate engineering governance debate and directions; and (c) the types of governance mechanisms that are or should be in place to shape decision making regarding testing and deployment of these technologies.

Possible supervisor: Aarti Gupta; Environmental Policy Group

Governing Climate Change Knowledge

The long-standing assumption is that once produced, science will be useful and used, but evidence suggests a more complicated reality. Over the past

decades, thousands of scientists worldwide have engaged in fast-paced resource-intensive efforts to produce scientific evidence and a succession of assessment reports on the state of the global environment. Much less attention has been given to whether or not intended audiences are receptive to it, to understanding the factors conditioning or undermining such receptivity, and to bringing this understanding to bear on efforts to improve the science-policy interface. What explains the enormous gap between science and societal responses, and how might it be overcome? What kind of science policy and science-society interactions are needed to translate climate change issues into long-term processes of successful societal and political change? In what ways are these needs – and more generally the science-policy dynamics – nationally variable?

Possible supervisor: Myanna Lahsen; Environmental Policy Group

Climate policy networks in Brazil

Environmental risks increasingly dominate preoccupations and politics in contemporary societies. This thesis research would probe how a wide variety of Brazilian organizations with stake in climate policy view the threat of human-caused climate change and which policies they endorse. Drawing on recently collected, ready-to-use questionnaire-derived data obtained from nearly one hundred Brazilian organizations spanning government, industry and a wide variety of civil society groups, the student would perform qualitative and quantitative analysis (the latter by learning to use softwares such as NodeXL) to explore patterns in the surveyed organizations' perceptions and policy preferences related to, among other things, deforestation and land-use policies, energy sources, international negotiations outcomes and North-South dynamics and justice issues.

Possible supervisor: Myanna Lahsen; Environmental Policy Group

International variation in climate skepticism

Powerful “anti-environmental” forces against environmental policies have mobilized to global environmental problems. Most is known about their manifestations in North America and a few other rich country contexts. One of its expressions, climate scepticism, is much less studied – and also

less detected – in less developed countries. Some therefore conclude that climate scepticism largely is a Northern, rich nations phenomenon. But might it also be because existent studies rely on assumptions and methodologies that fail to detect its varied manifestations around the world? This thesis topic would explore that question through analysis of news coverage of climate change in less developed countries. These could also examine expressions of anti-environmentalism around other environmental issues, such as the need for dietary changes for sustainability.

Possible supervisor: Myanna Lahsen; Environmental Policy Group

Sustainable Diet Trajectories: The Challenge of Beef

Beef production poses great challenges for efforts to address climate change and avoid resource depletion. An extremely inefficient source of protein, multiple planets would be necessary to feed the world's growing population the same amount of red meat consumed by the average person in the more developed parts of the world. Reducing beef consumption is also increasingly recognized as an especially quick and efficient means of achieving greenhouse gas reductions compared to energy. How are societies responding to that knowledge? What are current and projected diet trajectories and their impacts, and how might more sustainable, alternative trajectories be achieved? Answering this question requires knowledge of the drivers of beef production and exploration of alternative sources of protein and how to make them available on a large scale. It also requires understanding the consumption side: what institutions, assumptions and attitudes underpin current consumption patterns and what kinds of interventions might help steer both individual and cultural preferences in new directions? How do current information and knowledge systems variously obstruct or support positive diet transitions?

Possible supervisor: Myanna Lahsen (topic cross-cutting with food theme); Environmental Policy Group

Climate engineering in the oceans

Coral reefs are among the most productive and biologically diverse ecosystems worldwide, and also highly vulnerable to global environmental change. Geoengineering technologies being proposed to protect the Great Barrier Reef in Australia from coral bleaching are highly controversial, generating calls for geoengineering governance with robust rules to ensure critical review of such new technologies. Geoengineering proposals include 'shading' the reef by spreading biodegradable polymer film on the water, as well as cloud brightening, a type of local solar radiation management. In addition, some propose cooling shallow water reefs by mixing it with cooler water pumped up from deeper ocean layers. Research questions to be explored by students around these novel and controversial technologies may revolve around science-society relations, stakeholder and power relations, public acceptability and political accountability.

Possible supervisors: Eira Carballo-Cárdenas and Myanna Lahsen (topic cross-cutting with food theme); Environmental Policy Group

Municipal climate governance in the Netherlands

Municipalities play a key role in meeting Dutch climate change commitments. Many of them have formulated ambitious climate policies for the coming years, but face challenges in realizing them. To what extent can municipalities set out their own policies – spatial planning, taxes, subsidies, and 'creative' application of national regulation – towards climate neutrality? How can they optimally facilitate energy initiatives of citizens and companies without losing their legitimacy and impartiality? How is municipal council politics playing out in this? These highly actual questions can be investigated in one or more municipalities.

Possible supervisors: Bas van Vliet, Kris van Koppen; Environmental Policy Group

The politics and practices of carbon market mechanisms in a post-Paris world

Market-based mechanisms have taken up a prominent role in the mitigation of climate change. Carbon markets and carbon market mechanisms could prove instrumental to achieve these goals by increasing

the amount of sustainable energy while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. An increasing number of these carbon markets are emerging at global, regional, national, and even local scales worldwide, including in the Global South. However, their function, mutual interaction, and contribution to sustainable energy development remain poorly understood. What are these different markets and mechanisms? What is their role in the broader context of climate (and energy) policies and politics? What are the main stakeholders involved (and who are excluded)? What is their relation to sustainable development (goals)? How do they influence local practices? This exciting and rapidly changing field requires novel theoretical and empirical approaches. Students can link up with existing research (in Southeast Asia), target other geographical regions, or study specific instruments.

Possible supervisor: Mattijs Smits; Environmental Policy Group

NGOs and environmental movements in climate and energy transitions

Climate and energy issues increasingly become the site of heated controversies. Examples are climate mitigation and adaptation policies and projects, the siting of coal-fired or nuclear power stations, and even renewable energy projects. In these controversies, environmental movements can play a central role, highlighting what is at stake in these developments. Often, these movements are not merely 'local' phenomena, but link different actors, issues and policies at various scales. Sometimes, they 'fail' and move quietly to the background, but sometimes, they lead to lasting changes at national or even international level. How can we study these environmental movements and their practices? How do they transform something into a 'matter of concern'? What is the influence of movements on local, national and global climate and energy policy and vice versa? Students are encouraged to explore these questions through existing research and networks in Southeast Asia, or in other parts of the world.

Possible supervisor: Mattijs Smits; Environmental Policy Group

Climate resilience in a digital society

Communities around the world are experiencing climate impacts, ranging from droughts to extreme storms, damaging basic services and putting additional pressure on communities' livelihoods and resilience.

Strengthening societal resilience – of marginalized communities but also of businesses and other actors – is crucial in order to address and adapt to a changing climate. Up-to-date information and information exchange is vital for societies to prepare for and adapt to increased climate risk.

Nonetheless, little is known as to how information shapes climate resilience and what role information and communication technologies (ICTs) can play in that regard. Research into this topic involves the analysis of who produces climate information (top-down/bottom-up/co-production); who decides what is done with the information; how information is interpreted and how it interacts with more traditional coping strategies to environmental change.

Possible supervisors: Machiel Lamers, Sanneke Kloppenburg, Berill Blair (Topic cross-cutting environmental mobilities theme); Environmental Policy Group

Internships

Another possibility for formulating a thesis topic is to link it to an internship. Recent developments at public or private organizations where students perform their internship might provide an excellent case study to be worked out in a MSc thesis on environmental policy. If you would opt for a thesis research opportunity associated to an internship, thorough consultation with the ENP thesis coordinator is needed.

The following (incomplete) organizations and firms recently acted as internship providers for MSc environmental policy students:

- Akzo Nobel, Amsterdam
- Alliander (Grid administrator) Arnhem
- Amsterdam Smart City, Amsterdam
- Arcadis (consultancy firm) Apeldoorn
- Arnika (Environmental NGO), Prague, Czech Republic
- Beerenschot, Utrecht
- Bin Bang, Utrecht
- Both Ends, Amsterdam
- Centrum Landbouw en Milieu, Culemborg
- CBI, The Hague
- CREM, Amsterdam
- Dynniq, UK
- DuurzaamBedrijfsleven.nl, Amsterdam
- EarthRights International, Myanmar
- Embassy of Germany, Dhaka, Bangladesh
- Embassy of the Netherlands, Sydney, Australia
- Enexis, Den Bosch
- E-On Benelux Rotterdam
- European Centre for Nature Conservation, Tilburg
- European Union Delegation to Timor-Leste, Timor-Leste
- Evert Vermeerstichting, Amsterdam
- Fair Politics, Brussel, Belgium
- Gemeente Arnhem

- Gemeente Den Bosch
- GIZ (German development agency), Germany and Thailand
- Greenvis, Utrecht
- Greenpeace, Amsterdam, Netherlands
- GRID Arendal, Norway
- Haskoning, Nijmegen
- ICCTF, Indonesia
- IFOAM EU Group, Brussels, Belgium
- KWR (Water Research Institute), Nieuwegein
- Lisode (water management consultancy), Montpellier, France
- Milieuloket, Utrecht
- Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, The Hague
- Ministry of Environmental Protection, Beijing, China
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs ,Water and Environment Dpt., The Hague
- Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment (The Hague)
- Nederlands Normalisatie Instituut, Delft
- Oeko Institut, Berlin, Germany
- Primium, Amersfoort
- RET Rotterdam
- Rotterdam Municipality, Urban Planning Dpt., Rotterdam
- Stichting de Noordzee, Utrecht
- Stimular, Rotterdam
- Squarewise, Amsterdam
- SYKE Finnish Environment Institute, Finland
- Taste before you Waste, Amsterdam
- Tauw, Enschede
- The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies, The Hague
- Triodos, Zeist
- UNFCCC, Bonn
- United Nations Volunteers, Bonn, Germany
- World Business Council for Sustainable Development, Geneva
- World Future Council, Germany.
- WWF, Zeist