



Universiteit Utrecht

Migration Information Campaigns

A qualitative study on the role that migration information campaigns play in the migrant decision-making process through the lens of practitioners in the field of migration.



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Foreword

This thesis is written as a completion to my masters in 'Contemporary Social Issues' at the University Utrecht. The topic 'Migrant Information Campaigns' is an area of research that I had never studied before, but right from the start this versatile subject captivated me. The topic is interdisciplinary, not extensively researched yet, quite current and new initiatives are introduced on a regular basis. Four ingredients that made researching this topic both a great challenge and a great opportunity to broaden my sociological horizon.

This thesis would not have been possible without the help of my internship supervisor Djamila Schans. The topic and focus of this thesis are a result of working with her at the WODC (Wetenschappelijk Onderzoeks-en Documentatie Centrum) and the data collection and discussions on the topic helped me greatly.

Moreover I would like to take the opportunity here to thank Amy Nivette, my thesis supervisor. Also, Stefan Soeparman, my study coordinator and the second reader of this work, who remained calm when I was starting to get worried this thesis would never be completed and who had faith that it would become a good final product.

The two people that were my greatest supporters during the process of writing this thesis are my parents. They never doubted that that I would successfully complete this research even when I did at times. A special thanks to my dad who read every version and provided great feedback.

When I look back on the past few months while I was conducting this research, I have to say it was an interesting and valuable experience, which resulted in this thesis. I hope you enjoy reading it as much as I enjoyed working on it.

Summary

The aim of this qualitative study is to understand the workings of migrant information campaigns and what role they play in the migrant decision-making process. The central research question is *'What is the role of migration information campaigns in the context of migrant decision-making?'* This question will be answered based on a literature overview of numerous existing migrant information campaigns and the empirical research carried out amongst experts and practitioners in the field of migration who are/were employed in this particular area. These empirical insights are linked to the theoretical framework. This desk job study of reviewing all types of existing migrant information campaigns was done at the WODC, where the research 'Migrant Information Campaigns' (Schans & Optekamp 2016 in press) was conducted in the period February 2016-July 2016. The empirical data consists of thirteen interviews, several meetings in Brussels at the EU and a 'migrant information campaign in action'.

After the first chapter on methodology, the theoretical framework is introduced. This framework comprises of multiple migration decision-making theories due to the complexity of the decision to leave the country of origin. The theories are described, since the underlying mechanisms of migrant information campaigns are based on certain assumptions on why and how people migrate. To understand these flawed assumptions, it is necessary to take into account the theories on push-pull factors, rational choice theory and social network theory and lastly risk theory. In addition to these theories, it is essential to grasp the workings of migrant information campaigns (from research phase to implementation to evaluation). First, public information campaigns in general will be discussed followed by the description of how the act of framing is used in the implementation of these campaigns. Finally, the focus will shift to migrant information campaigns.

The analysis of the data is two-fold: a literature overview of migrant information campaigns based on the literature and accessible information on the Internet, complemented with the description of migrant information campaigns where respondents are actively involved. The description comprises of details about the goals, messages, channels, implementers, evaluations and are followed by a brief examination where theoretical and practical links are made. Subsequently, the distinct aspects of migrant decision-making are introduced. Apart from objective information about the risks provided by migrant information campaigns, elements such as sources and reliability of information, different moral frameworks and the motivations to migrate in the first place all need to be taken into account when studying the migrant decision-making process. At the end of the analysis a list of 'best practices' is included based on both the existing literature and insights from the respondents.

The answer to the central question of this thesis is that, due to the multiple factors involved in the decision to migrate, the influence of a migrant information campaign is likely to be marginal at best. Moreover, the lack of good evaluations on the impact of these campaigns illustrate that there is no hard evidence that these campaigns reach their objectives. This is not to say objective information dissemination is a useless endeavor, but the apparent flaws need to be taken into consideration in the design and the management of expectations from donors and implementers. This thesis ends with a policy recommendation based on the question whether it would be a good idea for the Dutch government to start designing these campaigns.

Introduction

In 2015, Europe was confronted with an unprecedented influx of migrants consisting of both refugees fleeing conflict areas and individuals seeking better economic prospects. Currently (summer 2016) migratory pressure remains high in the Central Mediterranean (Frontex 2016). The images of the dangerous maritime crossings that have dominated the media have become a symbol of the difficulties this continent has with controlling its border (Townsend & Oomen 2015). This is not to suggest that migration is something 'new'; in reality people have always been on the move searching for a better life whether it be because of economic or safety motives (Castles et al. 2015).

Calls for 'tackling the migrant problem' and 'finding effective solutions' have been circling around for more than a year now in European countries, which subsequently lead to an imploding popularity for right-wing parties and public tensions in general around immigration (Castles 2015). This negative sentiment surrounding asylum-seekers has not merely been a 'hot topic' in the past few years. Asylum seekers have long been regarded by part of the population as 'criminals' and 'fortune hunters' who only want to take advantage of the rich welfare system that Europe has built (Gilbert & Koser 2006: 1209).

Interestingly enough, in a time when the need for regulation of migrant influxes has never been more urgent and desired, the ability to control the migration flows has never been more flawed (Nieuwenhuys & Pécoud 2007). Governments are using numerous strategies to control migration (particularly irregular migration), varying from detection and apprehension procedures to more preventative measures such as pre-border surveillance and awareness campaigns in sending countries (Carling & Hernández-Carretero 2011). This last-mentioned strategy is the focal point of this research. The objective of these campaigns is providing potential migrants with information on the risks and dangers of the (boat) journey as well as countering narratives dispersed by smugglers (Nieuwenhuys & Pécoud 2007).

The usage of public information campaigns to inform potential migrants is not a new instrument to manage migration flows. Over the past few decades, receiving countries such as western European countries, Australia and the United States launched numerous awareness campaigns to inform prospective migrants (Pécoud 2010). However, the current 'refugee crisis' has revitalized the interest in this tool by European governments. The subsequent question that arises then is what role these campaigns might play in the decision-making of potential migrants. To answer this question, the complexity of the decision-making process needs to be taken into account, including individual and social factors, the conditions in both sending and receiving countries and the effect of policy measures. Pécoud (2010: 197) argued that 'in an ideal scenario, successful information campaigns would make border control unnecessary'. Whether this 'ideal scenario' is even slightly in accordance with reality will be studied by zooming in on the underlying assumptions of the campaigns and the complexity of migrant decision-making. The aim of this thesis is to gain understanding of the underlying mechanisms of migrant information campaigns and see what role it plays in the decision to migrate. An overview of various existing migration information campaigns is given, from design to implementation and – if available- conducted evaluations.

The versatility of campaigns (in audience, message etcetera) is covered by introducing a wide variety of migrant information campaigns. Through websites, social media, government documents and academic literature, the characteristics from these campaigns are analyzed. In addition to the description of these campaigns, the underlying assumptions on which these campaigns are based and several migration theories will be discussed in the theoretical framework. This will offer insight in the insufficiency/limitation of information campaigns in respect to 'control' migration flows. The empirical data comprises of the desk study of migrant information campaigns implemented since the 1990s, thirteen interviews are conducted with migrant policy makers and practitioners. These interviews offer on the one hand direct knowledge on the implementation of campaigns and on the other hand, the respondents discuss the outcomes of the literature.

In short, with the accounts of the respondents on the topic of migrant information campaigns combined with the overview of existing migrant information campaigns and the theoretical framework, the following question will be answered:

What is the role of migration information campaigns in the context of migrant decision-making?

Scientific/Sociological Relevance

The relevance of this research topic is two-fold. First, the issue of the increased migration flows is currently regarded as one of the main challenges of European countries (Frontex 2016) and European countries are struggling with finding durable solutions. Out of a vast array of migration management policy tools, one of the 'attractive' ones is the implementation of awareness and information campaigns targeted at would-be migrants. Interestingly enough, the existing (scientific) literature on migrant information campaigns is scarce and evaluations are hardly ever conducted. Of course, these campaigns cannot be tested in rigorous experimental designs; therefore a classical systematic review on the effects is not possible. However, governments opt for this policy measure in a time where evidence-based policies are of the utmost importance. This means that the policy decisions should be based on rational, objective, unbiased *scientific* research to increase its effectiveness (Pawson et al. 2005). The literature on migrant information campaigns is not quite extensive at the moment, but the available research shows that the assumptions on which these campaigns are based are flawed and the effects –if evaluations are done at all- are neutral to possibly negative. This shows a discrepancy between authorities wanting to implement evidence-based policies while at the same time no sound evidence for migrant information campaigns currently exist. The relevance of this research is to –quite modestly- contribute to the existing literature on this subject that is still quite under researched and conclude with a policy recommendation.

The second reason why this study is relevant –especially sociologically- is the focus on the motivations, the decisions and process of migrants leaving their home country. The question that is addressed is how this decision of migrating is 'born' and eventually carried out and whether these decisions can be altered via communication campaigns. The interplay between agency and structure is addressed, by zooming in on both social context that constrains/enables the decision to migrate and the (alleged) rationality that lies between the decision. These theories illustrate that the decision to migrate is far from a purely individualistic choice.

Research questions

The central question of this thesis has been mentioned in the introduction:

What is the role of migration information campaigns in the context of migrant decision-making?

This question generates numerous sub questions. On the one hand focused on migrant decision-making and whether this is in line with the objectives of migrant information campaigns and on the other hand focused on existing/recent developments in this specific area of campaigns.

The sub questions relating to the latter are:

1. What information campaigns have been implemented in the past, are currently implemented or will be implemented in the near future?
2. What are the goals of these campaigns?
3. How are these campaigns designed?
4. Which mediums are used to disseminate the messages?
5. What is the target audience?
6. How are the messages formulated?
7. Have these campaigns been evaluated/is evaluation on the agenda?
8. Why are these campaigns implemented (motives)?

Browne (2015: 3)) writes that 'the literature is fairly clear that the causes of irregular migration are not a lack of information about the dangers, as information interventions assume, but poverty, conflict, lack of opportunities, which information interventions do not address.'

Multiple factors and sources of information need to be taken into account in the migrant decision-making process. To illustrate this, the following sub questions were posed:

1. Why do migrants decide to migrate?
2. What does the decision-making process look like before, during and after the journey?
3. What information do they use to get from their homeland to the destination country?
4. What image do they have of Europe/The West?
5. What information do they disseminate to their home countries once they reached Europe?
6. How do they regard human smugglers?

These questions are answered based on existing literature and several conducted interviews with practitioners. The question is not whether these campaigns work or not, but understanding the underlying assumptions and mechanisms of such campaigns. In the literature this is called a 'realist review'.

Structure of the thesis

In the methodology section, the data collection, respondents, ethics and the process of analysis will be discussed. Moreover, the relevance of the interviews with the respondents is briefly touched upon. The theoretical framework is two-fold. It starts with the introduction to relevant migrant decision-making theories and subsequently the workings of (migrant) public information campaigns will be addressed. Push and pull factors, rational choice theory, social network theory and risk theory regarding migrant decision-making will be addressed, followed by an outline of public information campaigns in general, impression management by parties involved with the implementation of migrant information campaigns and finally the workings of migrant information campaigns. The analysis section is also divided in two parts; the first concerned with the literature overview of existing migrant information campaigns and the second with the empirical data in the form of the interviews and meetings and 'fieldwork' in Brussels and Calais respectively. In the analysis, the data will be linked to relevant theories explored in the theoretical framework. This thesis concludes with a conclusion, discussion and finally a policy recommendation. A list of the literature used for this research and several annexes are available at the end of the thesis.

Methodology

This research can be characterized as *qualitative*. There are different ways of conducting this type of research, but there are three features that all qualitative studies have in common. First, its nature is inductive, which means there are no strict hypotheses formulated beforehand. Second, the epistemological position is interpretivist. The main goal is then the understanding of the interpretation of the social world by respondents. Lastly, the ontological position is constructionist, whereby the social world is not 'external' and 'out there', but consists of the interactions and relations between individuals (Bryman 2008: 366).

Qualitative methods are often used for providing an in-depth understanding of the topic at hand and gaining insight in the study population. A concept that is relevant here is 'Verstehen'; a term which refers to 'understanding the life of the people whom you study from their own perspective, in their own context and describing this using their own words and concepts' (Hennink et al. 2011: 17).

The need for reflexivity in qualitative research is important. Both the researcher and the respondents share their *subjective* views of how they *interpret* the social world. Therefore, it must be acknowledged that the backgrounds, assumptions and behavior of respondents impact the data. Moreover, the researcher brings the same 'baggage' and needs to be aware of his/her own values, assumptions and ideologies. It is important to find a balance between critically reflecting upon one's work as a researcher and navel gazing (Hennink et al. 2011: 19-21). Because I –as a researcher– was not in the slightest familiar with migrant information campaigns before I started this research, my mind was relatively open. Whilst working on the research I did recorded reflective notes on the issues that were discussed with respondents.

Migrant information campaigns come in many different forms and although it is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss all existing ones, the study of this phenomenon can be characterized as a case study. 'The basic case study entails the detailed and intensive analysis of a single case (...) case study research is concerned with the complexity and particular nature of the case in question' (Bryman 2008: 52). On account of trying to demonstrate the unique features of this case, the external validity and reliability will be relatively weak, but considering the aim of the research (gain a deep understanding of aspirations) this is not problematic (Bryman 2008: 54).

The goal of this thesis is to analyze the 'case' of migrant information campaigns and illustrate its features.

Data

In this research thirteen people were interviewed and these interviews can be characterized as 'semi-structured'. This means that on the one hand there is a general topic lists (topics that are relevant to the research question; interview guide), but on the other hand it gives room to the respondent (and interviewer) to improvise and touch upon subjects that were not anticipated but might still be interesting (Bryman 2008: 437). Although the interview guides differ since the respondents have different areas of expertise, the structure of the interviews is similar. Building rapport is done in the introduction by asking about the profession of the respondent, what they find interesting about their work and what they are working on now. The second part of the interview is about migrant decision-making and migrant information campaigns. The last part

zooms in on unresolved topics and offers room for interesting additions and opinions of the respondent. The questions were open and follow-up questions were asked if necessary. Questions were replicated when an answer remained unclear or vague. The majority of interviews were transcribed, but not all of them due to the sensitive nature of the topic (e.g. the meetings in Brussels), but the majority of the interviews is transcribed and analyzed. The duration of the interviews varied from forty-five minutes to ninety minutes.

Respondents

The selection of respondents is purposive, which means that each respondent was carefully selected. 'the researcher samples on the basis of wanting to interview people who are relevant to the research questions' (Bryman 2008: 458). The interviewees were selected via the research I contributed to at the WODC and via personal approaches of people. Due to the sensitive nature of the research, all the respondents remain anonymous in this thesis. Naturally, anonymity was guaranteed and audio was deleted after the completion of the research.

Since the respondents that contributed to this research are impossible to catch in one short description, a table is provided below of the profession/organization of the respondents (sometimes with a short summary of this organization) and the reason why this person is interesting for the research. The majority of respondents were chosen due to their (direct) affinity with designing/implementing/studying migrant information campaigns, but some respondents were questioned because they could give an interesting insight in *how* potential migrants decide to leave and *how* they look at the risks involved in this decision. In addition to this table, below is a description of the meetings that were attended.

Short description of the meetings

What: DG Home: MIS Task Force Meeting. Presentation of the EASO information campaigns on the 26th of May.

Why: To gain an understanding of the current developments in the area of information campaigns for migrants. What is the message the European Commission wants to disseminate and how through which channels will these messages be spread.

What: Workshop 'The use of internet/social media in migrant smuggling and the development of information campaigns/counter-narratives' on 16th June 2016, 9.30 – 17.30, Brussels.

Why: To gather information concerning migrant information campaigns from different actors.

What: MIS Taskforce Meeting on the 30th of June.

Why: Discussion of the plans for a news platform for potential migrants to inform them on all kinds of aspects of migration.

What: Migrant information campaign in action in refugee camp (due to confidentiality the site will not be disclosed).

Why: To see how migrant information campaigns are implemented in the field.

Table with respondents and their relevance to the research

Category	Respondents	Why?
Implementers	Project leader Dutch IOM	IOM migrant information campaigns
	Project manager information campaigns at Farsight	Farsight migrant information campaigns
	High-ranking communications employee UNHCR	UNHCR migrant information campaigns
	High-ranking employee at Farsight	Farsight migrant information campaigns
	High-ranking communications employee Strada International	Anti-trafficking migrant information campaigns
Researchers	Fieldwork in West-African country	Migrant decision-making process + reception information campaigns
	Fieldwork for Farsight in Eritrea	Migrant decision-making process + Research phase of information campaigns
	Fieldwork in several African countries	Migrant decision-making process + information gathering and dissemination
Executives	Employee at COA	Migrant decision-making process + information gathering and dissemination
	Journalist working with <i>'uitgeprocedeerden'</i>	Decision-making process + information gathering and dissemination
	Employee at Vluchtelingenwerk NL	Decision-making process + information gathering + background in MIC
Government	Official at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Plan of designing possible migrant information campaigns
	Official at the Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment	Labor migrant information campaigns

Ethics

There are several principles regarding ethical issues to be taken into account, which will be briefly touched upon below.

The respondents should be given information about the nature of the research and voluntarily participate in the study (*informed consent*). All respondents were aware of the goal of the research and were informed that the interviews would be used for both the WODC report and this thesis and voluntarily contributed. The identity of the respondents is protected and *anonymity* is guaranteed. The transcripts were shared only with the senior researcher working on the WODC report and the audiotapes with the interviews were deleted after being transcribed (Hennink et al. 2011). The data remain in possession of the researcher and *confidentiality* is guaranteed. Due to the sensitivity of the topic, especially when interviews zoomed in on confidential information, not all interviews were recorded although extensive notes were taken. Also, the meetings in Brussels and the 'migrant information campaign in action' were not recorded, since this was both impossible and unwarranted. In respect to this principle, not all information that was recorded can be shared (Hennink et al. 2011). Topics such as finances in several cases, the preliminary research that is being done or zooming in on specific projects from Farsight. This is unfavorable for the research, but it is ethically impossible to elucidate these aspects. A final principle, *the minimization of risk*, is defined as 'do no harm to participants'. This definition is rather broad and can be interpreted in multiple ways. Concerning this research, there is no reference to physical, social or economic harm. The respondents could speak safely and freely and in no way does the information they shared lead back to them (Hennink et al. 2011).

Analysis

The transcripts of the interviews and the notes of the interviews that could not be transcribed are coded. Here follows a short description of the coding process. A list of the categories of codes is provided in the second annex. A line-by-line reading session of the transcripts was done whilst adding codes when sections were relevant to the research questions. This first step is done both inductively and deductively, since the research questions determine the focus of the interviews, but adding the codes is done whilst reading the data. After the initial stage, codes are evaluated, altered or removed. This means that far from all the codes are being used in the analysis. Once all the interview transcripts are intensively studied, categories are 'born' out of the large amount of codes. These categories can then be linked to the theoretical framework and they can help answer the research question (Silverman 2011). This particular mode of analyzing one's research is associated with the highly influential approach to the methodology of qualitative research: grounded theory. The main feature of carrying out research this way is that the researcher mustn't begin with prior hypotheses but construct hypotheses from the data he has gathered (Silverman 2011: 67). A final note on the process of analysis concerning theoretical saturation is in order. 'Categories are saturated when gathering fresh data no longer sparks fresh theoretical insights, nor reveals new properties of your core theoretical categories (Silverman 2011: 72)'. Due to the time sensitivity I cannot be certain that I reached this stage, but after thirteen interviews complemented, the additional empirical data and with the literature study I do think all aspects relevant to the research questions have been included in the analysis

Theoretical Framework

This theoretical framework is two-fold. It starts with the introduction to relevant migrant decision-making theories and subsequently the workings of (migrant) public information campaigns will be addressed.

There is not 'one theory of migration'. Theories of international migration operate at different levels of analysis (micro-meso-macro) and although the hypotheses do not only contradict one another, the support of one theory over another can imply very different policy formulations/solutions (Massey et al. 1993: 463). The author of a sociological review of migration theories (Richmond 1993) also zooms in on the difference between macro and micro level studies of migration. He writes that macro level theories particularly focus on studying the conditions under which increased mobility occurs, describing the economic, social and demographic composition of the migrants and the adaptation/assimilation process migrants undergo in destination countries. Micro level theories aim to expose the socio-psychological factors that separate migrants from non-migrants and the motivations and decision-making process (Richmond 1993: 8).

It is beyond the scope and relevance of this research to dive into every existing theory of migration. The theories that are discussed add to the understanding of the migrant decision-making process of potential migrants. Since the main focus of this thesis is not on migrant motivations/aspirations and no migrants were interviewed to give their take on this, the description of the theories will be brief. A basic understanding of these theories helps comprehend better why migrant information campaigns can be considered limiting in their effects.

Theories of Migration

To illustrate the sociological aspect of migration, it is useful to quote Castles et al. (2015: 25): 'Migration is hardly ever a simple individual action in which a person decides to move in search of better life-chances, pulls up his or her roots in the place of origin and quickly becomes assimilated in a new country (...) Migration is often a collective action, arising out of social, economic and political change and affecting the whole society in both sending and receiving areas'.

One popular view on migration has been around for decades and can be summarized as the 'push-pull models'. People are 'pushed out' of a place because of economic, demographic, political repression or environmental factors and are 'pulled into' places that provide the 'solutions'/relief of these problems. These 'pull' countries are then often western democratic states. This framework seems interesting, although it can be rather misleading. Critics have posited that these factors can all contribute to migration, but it is not clear how they relate to one another, rendering it an insufficient explanatory framework (Castles et al. 2015: 28)

Another caveat in this model is the expectation that the economically most vulnerable would leave their country because they have the most reasons to, however it is known that not the poorest population departs. This can be understood in the light that people who are more highly educated have access to more knowledge on different parts of the world. Moreover, they are more likely to have the (financial) means to migrate since such an endeavor is actually quite expensive (Castles et al. 2015).

Another theory that is often mentioned in regards to migrant¹ decision-making is the rational choice theory, although a decision to migrate cannot be considered fully rational. Before explaining this theory more in depth it is interesting to briefly draw attention to the seeming distinction between 'forced' and 'voluntary' migration. Richmond (1993) writes that refugee movements are usually depicted as forced but he claims that, although the choices are often grueling, they are still choices. One of the choices people can make in these horrific conditions is to flee. Richmond (1993: 17) asserts that there is a difference between 'proactive' and 'reactive' decision-making (this should not be seen as black and white but more a continuous scale). The first implies careful consideration and preparation before migrating, whereas the second type of decision-making can be characterized more as being made in a state of acute panic and threat.

Massey et al. (1993: 434) succinctly summarize this microeconomic model of migration as follows: 'individual rational actors decide to migrate because a cost-benefit calculation leads them to expect a positive net return, usually monetary, from movement.

' Costs include material costs of traveling to the destination country but also learning a new culture/language and integrating in a different society and psychological costs such as cutting old ties and investing in new ones. These costs are reduced when migrants already have ties (family and friends in their new homeland who can help them get settled, but also if they already speak the language for example because they're from former colonies of the destination country. Lastly, old ties are not as drastically cut as decades ago because of the information age we live in now; people can stay in touch much easier. Also, full assimilation to the new culture is not often the case since migrants tend to knit together into their own communities and carve out an economic and social infrastructure for themselves (Castles 2015: 40). Costs can also entail the stress of leaving home, the danger and risks of the journey, general insecurity of exploring new and unfamiliar territory and the moral deprivation in western countries that is regarded as undesirable by some nonwestern potential migrants (Schewel 2015: 10).

The neoclassical micro model of migration has been challenged by a 'new economics of migration'. A valuable insight of this theory is that individuals do not make migration decisions in isolation. In reality, family and households decide who is the right person to undertake the journey and who stays to work in the local economy. This is done to reduce the risk of economic downfall, since the people that migrate send remittances and the people that work locally have a buffer if things turn sour (Massey et al. 1993: 436).

In an article by Neumayer (2004) he examines whether migrants can be seen as 'maximizers' who choose the country with the most benefits. These benefits are not merely economic (labor market opportunities and welfare packages) but also comprise of what types of policies are in place (deterrent or more welcoming) and how asylum seekers are received by the host population (Neumayer 2004: 1). He had some interesting findings worth mentioning. First, the general image of country's economic state is more important than the current levels of unemployment and economic growth. Second, the welfare benefits do not seem to affect the decision of the destination choice. Third, there is some evidence that restrictive asylum policies are 'working' and that countries known for a negative sentiment towards 'foreigners' slightly reduces

¹ The definition of a 'migrant' is 'person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a

the influx of asylum seekers. Finally, the choice for a certain destination country is influenced by the historical colonial links and geographical proximity, but more importantly the presence of diaspora in the destination country affects the choice greatly. Neumayer concludes that -taking into account all these aspects- governments will be limited in regulating the migration flows to their countries (Neumayer 2004: 21-22). Apart from these 'rational' considerations *before* embarking on a journey, Townsend & Oomen (2015: 1) argue that migrants make active choices at each step of the journey and often recalibrate their priorities in transit or in anticipation of secondary movements'. This implies that choices are fluid instead of static. People change their minds whilst on the move, for example because they believe in better opportunities elsewhere, or because their smugglers decide which country they drop their 'clients' at.

Another theoretical framework that emphasizes the individual agency is the migration network theory. This approach also underscores the collective agency, since migrants create social ties with both the migrants already living in destination countries and potential migrants back home. To start off with a definition: 'A migration network can be defined by a composite of interpersonal relations in which migrants interact with their family or friends. Social networks provide a foundation for the dissemination of information as well as for patronage or assistance' (Haug 2008: 588). As became clear from Neumayer's research, 'such networks are meso-level social structures which tend to facilitate further migration. Factors such as welfare, colonialism, conquest, occupation, military service and labour recruitment, as well as shared culture, language and geographical proximity often play a crucial role in the *initiation* of migration processes' (Castles et al. 2015: 40). In this light, migration can be seen as a path-dependent process. Moreover, migrant networks are a form of 'social capital', which potential migrants cling to since it will give them easy access to resources in the destination country (Castles et al. 2015: 40). From the existing body of literature it becomes clear that social networks are often a significant determinant of migration plans and the choice of the country of destination. This influence embodies the entire 'migration experience' from the prevalent 'norm' in one's society to migrate to the destination country and how one assimilates in this new environment (Haug 2008: 588). This is a plausible theory, although it does not always explain the choice of a specific destination country. Migrants are constrained by external factors, such as the smugglers who decide on the destination country. Sometimes the migrant desperately wants to go to Europe and doesn't have a preference; the goal is to reach a wealthy European country. The latter is particularly the case with migrants who mainly leave out of economic motives (Farsight 2016).

Aside from the importance of social ties in these migrant networks, it is also interesting to look at the information flows in social networks. In 1970, the geographer Mabogunje founded the theory of 'migration systems', which focuses on the flows of new information and ideas. The feedback on the progress in the destination countries is spread to the countries of origin, whereby positive information would encourage potential future migration. This feedback is not merely 'instrumental' by providing the correct information for a smooth journey to the destination country, but it also enhances aspirations to migrate. People are inundated by positive images of destination countries presented by their 'own people' and especially in this global world feel like they are close to fulfilling those aspirations (Castles 2015). Not only the own network can increase migratory aspirations; education and media exposure may cause feelings of relative deprivation leading to

chasing better opportunities that are currently lacking in the country of origin (Castles et al. 2015: 29).

Most would-be migrants hear and value most the information from family and friends both at home and abroad and distrust information from official institutions. In contemporary society, social media (especially Facebook) is one of the key channels through which information is shared. The advantage of social media looking at the point of view of the migrants is the speed and volume of the information. This is particularly relevant to them, since policies change rapidly (Townsend & Oomen 2015). From the vantage point of the western governments this avid use of social media is a nightmare. It is extremely difficult to keep up with the online conversations and consequently to influence them.

Theories on risk

A great body of literature exists on risk-taking, but for this thesis zooming in on the risk-taking by (potential) migrants suffices. Many western people cannot fathom the idea that migrants would risk their lives trying to reach western shores and the ubiquitous question is 'Why do these people embark on such a dangerous journey?' One explanation in particular is often offered: (potential) migrants are *unaware* of the risks and therefore need to be properly *informed* (Nieuwenhuis & Pécoud 2007). The first assumption, the alleged unawareness, will be dissected below.

The definition of risk by William Lowrence (1980: 6) illustrates well the uncertainty surrounding risk-taking: 'a compound measure of the probability and magnitude of adverse effect'. This suggests a possible success, which in this case translates to reaching Europe and start a new prosperous life. Yet it also underscores the adverse outcomes. What are the risks for migrants? The worst possible outcomes are death or forced return, but also psychological and physical damage can be considered adverse outcomes (Hernández-Carretero & Carling 2012: 411). These risks only pertain to the journey, but obviously the risks do not evaporate after setting foot on European land.

'People make risk taking decisions based on the basis of risk perceptions, intuitive judgments about hazards. In the literature on risk, these perceptions are thought to be influenced by personal experiences and by information received through, for instance, personal networks, institutions, and mass media (...) Our ability to imagine specific hazards and assess their probability depends on the information that is available to us' (Hernández-Carretero & Carling 2012: 412). Risks cannot be reduced to objective elements. It is important to take into account that risk-taking is mediated by socio-economic vulnerability. This means that 'poverty affects people's willingness to accept higher risk thresholds, that is, to perform certain high-risk activities that wealthier individuals would not undertake' (Hernández-Carretero 2008: 34). Moreover, if the situation people find themselves in seems hopeless and is unendurable, then inaction is a greater risk than the purported risks that are mentioned in migrant information campaigns. When taking this stance, it becomes clear that potential migrants are not misinformed per se, but they see their action as a progressive act filled with the hope for a better life even if the probability of failing is omnipresent (Hernández-Carretero 2008). Townsend & Oomen (2015: 5) frame this as the idea that 'long-term risks are weighed against short-term risks, and may appear more important in a given moment; for example, migrants may worry about future obstacles to finding work or summoning family

members than about immediate risks to life and limb'. This does not mean they aren't aware of the dangers, far from it, but the potential benefits outweigh the possible adverse effects. This can both be applied to 'economic migrants' seeking a better future and refugees that are in immediate danger of their lives. For the latter counts that the risk of death or injury is more 'appealing' than the immediate threat to their safety (Townsend & Oomen 2015: 5).

It is not only about the content of information, but more important is the interpretation of this information. One of the prominent writers on the psychology of risk perception, Paul Slovic (1987) writes that individual risks attitudes are biased and distorted because they are based on wrongful probability judgments. The following quote illustrates this well: 'difficulties in understanding probabilistic processes, biased media coverage, misleading personal experiences, and the anxieties generated by life's gambles cause uncertainty to be denied, risks to be misjudged (sometimes overestimated and sometimes underestimated), and judgments to be held with unwarranted confidence' (Slovic 1987: 281).

Would-be migrants adopt various attitudes towards migrant risk information. The risk-assessment of migrants has not been thoroughly researched up to date. However, the article by Hernández-Carretero & Carling (2012) does provide a useful insight in the effects of risk on migrant decision-making. Their study on Senegalese boat migrants shows that providing risk information does not renounce people from embarking on a boat journey. Before listing several of these attitudes, it is important to emphasize that if 'new' information is provided, the question is how it will be interpreted and whether it might change the initial beliefs people harbor. According to Slovic (1987: 281) "New evidence appears reliable and informative if it is consistent with one's initial beliefs: contrary evidence tends to be dismissed as unreliable, erroneous and unrepresentative." In short, new information will not necessarily alter people's strong initial belief system.

One of the 'strategies' that (potential) migrants employ to deal with risk information is to *avoid information*; more specifically information that focuses on the hardship of maritime journeys. This kind of tunnel vision acts as a shield against the possibility of failure and instead lets the person focus on the possibility of a new and improved life. Another strategy is to *discredit the validity of the information* and calling it inaccurate biased due to vested interests from the source. The reaction of potential migrants to risk information is mediated by how credible and trustworthy they think the source is. Different levels of credibility are ascribed to different sources, but generally speaking 'formal' sources (e.g. the authorities) are often deemed unreliable (Carling & Hernández-Carretero 2012: 413). A third strategy is to *accept the information but dismiss it as irrelevant at a personal level*. This can take on different forms. When the information seems foreign to one's own situation, for instance because they see themselves as smarter than the portrayals of 'naïve' and 'dumb' people that fail to complete their migration or because they don't recognize themselves as being the target audience (Van Bommel 2015). This suggests that a 'migration failure' is ascribed to being unlucky at best or lazy at worst. Another element here is 'a discrepancy between the perception of individual risk and general risk. People tend to downplay individual risks while simultaneously accept the fact that the general risks are very high. Since it cannot be accurate that the majority of people rightfully claim to be less subjected to a particular risk than most other people, this phenomenon is a form of risk denial or unrealistic optimism' (Van Bommel 2015: 34).

In addition to these strategies on how to deal with risk information, potential migrants also have strategies to 'minimize' the risks. Before embarking on the journey, the people make sure they prepare themselves to the fullest. These preparations can be sought in the practical side of the migration process, but also in the realm of the spiritual. Pragmatically speaking, they make sure departures are planned when the weather forecasts are good, the boats must be in perfect shape and tools and devices for during the journey are taken care off. Moreover, in the Senegalese case, the captains of the boat were experienced fishermen which implies a familiarity with the unpredictability of the sea. Prayers and obtaining spiritual protection are one of the most important conditions of the journey and this is seen as a fruitful 'protective' strategy. This faith in God often makes them unafraid of death, but also frames their possible downfall as 'the will of God'. In short, people lay their lives in the hands of a greater power (Carling & Hernández-Carretero 2012: 411-412).

In sum, 'most people planning to migrate across the Mediterranean can explain, in general terms, the inherent physical risks. When they talk about their own plans, however, they usually conclude that regardless of what the risks might be, the expected benefits outweigh them (Townsend & Oomen 2015: 5). Consequently, the idea that people risk their lives because of a lack of factual and unbiased information is considerably flawed.

Public Information Campaigns: a general outline

Official messages from governments aimed at influencing citizens' attitudes, values or behavior date back to the 1940s when it was used to arouse support for the war. In the following decades, this policy instrument has been used to communicate with the public (or a segment of the public) on a wide variety of issues particularly regarding health or the environment. It diverges from the majority of policy instruments, because it works through spreading ideas and information instead of changing legislation or authority systems (Weiss & Tschirhart 1994). The key assumption of this policy instrument is that if people are given proper and objective information to guide their choices, they will make better decisions. This assumption rests on the ideal that humans are rational actors, leaving not much room for influences from the social context. In the previous theoretical section it has already become clear that this is a flawed way of thinking about how humans process information

Atkin & Rice (2013: 27) define public information campaigns as 'Purposive attempts to inform, to persuade, or motivate behavior changes in a relatively well-defined and large audience, generally for noncommercial benefits to the individuals and/or society at large, within a given time period, by means of organized communication activities involving mass and online/interactive media, and often complemented by interpersonal support'.

The question remains whether these information campaigns yield the intended results. It is relevant to point out that evaluating these campaigns is rather difficult due to several factors. Campaigns do not run in a vacuum. There are many competing influences on possible behavioral changes and other sources (with similar or different information) can have a far greater contribution than the information provided by a public information campaign. Furthermore, it is impossible to establish causal effect, especially due to the impossibility of setting up a control group (Weiss & Tschirhart 1994). Moreover, reaching the target audience in the first place can be

difficult, since people may not see the message applicable to their own situation or they simply do not look favorable upon the recommendations given by the campaign. Especially when messages are judged as unbelievable, irrelevant, uninformative, preachy or disturbing, they are often discarded by the target group (Atkin & Rice 2013: 530). There are different types of evaluations to test the effectiveness of information campaigns, but often the 'programmatic effectiveness' is given priority. This kind of evaluation entails researching whether the initial objectives of the campaign were met (Atkin & Rice 2013). It is also possible to evaluate the process of the implementation of the campaign. The relevance here is to identify 'mistakes' and process new information that is gathered during the implementation phase. This way subsequent designers have new improved tools to work with (Atkin & Rice 2013: 529).

However, this is not to say there are no clues on how to promote effectiveness. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to dive into the psychological processes of how people read/internalize a message, but it is necessary to become more familiar with how these campaigns are 'built' in order to analyze them later on in the review section.

What are the aspects that need to be taken into account when designing and implementing an information campaign?

It is important to get a clear picture of the target audience you wish to reach. Most campaigns aim their messages at 'at-risk' subpopulations. This population exists of people that might be open to persuasive messages and people who are not easily influenced and are hardly interested in the messages in the first place. This second group is difficult to reach, thus when targeting this group only marginal payoff is probable (Atkin & Rice 2013: 531). The better the target group is specified, the better tailored a campaign can be.

Apart from attempting to reach individuals directly, there are two other options: disseminating the message via 'interpersonal influencers' and aiming messages at 'societal and organizational policymakers'. The first is a key strategy, because these influencers have closer relationships with the target audience thus they are seen as more reliable and they have firsthand knowledge on the unique needs and values of the target audience. Via informal interpersonal relations, the target group might be keener on accepting the messages. These influencers differ greatly from priests at local churches or other local community leaders to role models such as celebrities or other well-respected people (Atkin & Rice 2013). Especially when the influencers are seen as either similar to the audience or they exude expertise (thus trustworthy) or attractive and likable, the message will be met more positively.

The second is a more 'structural' strategy and addresses the need for institutional change. Individuals' choices are enabled and constrained by the social context in which they live and this context can be altered by policymakers in government (and other formal institutions). Through this strategy it is more about getting a social issue on the agenda so policymakers can react instead of emphasizing individuals' responsibility to change (Atkin & Rice 2013: 532).

'Formative research is important in order to bridge the substantial gap between campaigners and their audiences, in terms of level of involvement in the topic, information holding and attitudinal orientations. The first stage (...) involves preproduction information gathering to learn more about the situation and audiences' (Atkin & Rice 2013: 529). Gaining insight in the audiences needs and values can be done via countless sources varying from focus groups to using research programs with inventories of demographic variables.

Once the target group is established and thoroughly researched it is time to frame the message and disseminate this message via the proper channels. Atkin & Rice (2013: 533) distinguish between 'prevention' and 'promotion' messages. Prevention campaigns often use fear appeals to direct the audience's attention toward the negative consequences of their behavior instead of focusing on more positive alternatives. This strategy is used when the alternatives are far from compelling and the consequences of the detrimental behavior that is emphasized is actually quite harmful. Promotion messages are usually found in marketing strategies where goods and services are being praised. Besides this first distinction the authors make a second one about the content of the messages; they can be informational and/or persuasive. It is rather difficult to draw a firm line between the two, however informational messages seek to create awareness on a specific topic whereas the persuasive goal present stimulating reasons why the audience should or should not engage in the specific behavior (Atkin & Rice 2013).

To enhance the likability of getting the message across amongst the target audience, Atkin & Rice (2013: 534) provide five key message qualities: credibility, engaging, relevant, understandability and persuasive incentives. Thus the message should be easily understood and attractive and interesting for the target group. As was mentioned before, it is important that the target audience feels the personal relevance of the message and the incentives to change the behavior should be motivational, feasible and evidence to support the incentives must be given. Last but not least, it is of the utmost importance that the message is believed. The source of the message should be regarded as trustworthy, unbiased and competent. It is important to keep in mind that the messages are interpreted in light of what individuals know of the subject prior to the campaign. Therefore if the content diverges too much from the pre-existing beliefs or the material is too complex to comprehend, people are less prone to accept the message (Weiss & Tschirhart 1994: 87).

Apart from the qualitative dimensions of the spreading of messages, there is also a quantitative aspect that is worth mentioning briefly. There are four main factors: the volume, repetition, prominence and scheduling of messages. The larger the volume of messages the more exposure it will generate and possibly the more awareness it creates. Repetition facilitates the comprehension and possible internalization of the messages. The more prominent the messages are present in the every-day life of the target audience the more exposure and perceived significance it generates. Scheduling is about the best time period the messages should be disseminated.

Numerous campaigns are launched for a limited period of time, but in order to get the message across it is necessary to continue campaigning 'indefinitely'. There are always new entrants in the target audience, people that relapse into the 'bad behavior', people that need constant reinforcement or people that gradually embrace the message and become more receptive over time (Atkin & Rice 2013: 540).

As will become clear in the overview of migrant information campaigns, various different media channels can be used to disseminate messages. This varies from the more traditional mediums such as the radio, television, leaflets and billboards to the increase in utilizing social media to spread messages. Especially the latter can reach a great number of people in short time, is relatively cheap and highly adaptable which is indispensable in this technological age (Schans & Optekamp 2016 in press).

There are several reasons why government officials select implementing public information campaigns as policy instrument. Two of the arguments in the literature are interesting to highlight with regards to the topic of this research: migrant information campaigns. First, public information campaigns can be cheaper than other policy instruments, especially in Third World countries. When public resources are scarce and the (communications) infrastructure is subpar, it might be easier to implement a campaign instead of direct governmental intervention (Weiss & Tschirhart 1994). Although some countries (particularly Australia) are spending large sums of money on the implementation of migrant information campaigns, the majority of European countries are utilizing social media to disseminate their messages, which is relatively cheap. Furthermore, it is less costly and will likely generate less negative press to conduct an information campaign than for instance invest in harsher border patrol.

Second, public information campaigns can be regarded not only as the cheaper option, but also the more 'politically palatable' one. Choosing to implement such a campaign 'embodies an assumption that the outcome of interest is created or sustained by a pattern of *individual* choices' (Weiss & Tschirhart 1994: 92). It is easier to fault individuals for their attitudes and behavior than look at the social structures, which influence and shape the lives of individuals. This is also the assumption on which migrant information campaigns are based. Potential migrants make poor decisions because they are not well informed of the consequences. When they are properly informed on the risks and they still decide to leave, it is their own 'rational' decision. This view completely obscures the social circumstances and root causes and therefore overestimates agency over structure (Nieuwenhuys & Pécoud 2007). It is easier for western governments to implement a (often one-off) information campaign than to actively engage to help diminish the structural inequalities in migrant sending countries. This policy measure (information disclosure) fits into the 'market model of regulation': 'It relies on consumers to become indirect regulators by exercising the (limited) clout of their individual, uncoordinated purchasing decisions. The market model allows government to avoid using its greater power to deal with a problem' (Stone 2012: 324).

The question is: is it effective? There exists no consensus on this topic, but the answer leans to no. According to Jan Renes et al. (2011: 38) there are several reasons why the recipient (the citizen) is not open to the message. The recipient doesn't care about the messages, already has strong opinions on the topic and people in general prefer to see themselves as autonomous and free to do whatever they want. In short, the public isn't necessary amenable for the -often well-intentioned- message from the government. This is not to say that attitudinal/behavioral change isn't possible, but it does require a well researched and thought out communication strategy. In addition to utilizing the communication strategy, it is recommended to complement this by other interventions. To illustrate this with an example written by Jan Renes et al. (2011: 64): When you want parents to take their children to school by bicycle, it's not enough to communicate this goal. It's also necessary to design safe bicycle paths and limit parking space for cars. The same can be said about migrant information campaigns. It's not enough to simply spread the message don't put yourself in danger. The entire social context needs to be taken into account: root causes need to be addressed, opportunities in countries of origin need to be broadened and legal options need to be made available.

Framing

'Framing' has two distinct foundations: psychological and sociological. The sociological aspect focuses on the 'words, images, phrases, and presentation styles that are used to construct news stories and the processes that shape this construction' (Borah 2011: 247).

In the field of sociology, Ervin Goffman (1974) was one of the first scholars who wrote about 'framing'. In the general sense, a frame helps individuals organize what they see in their every-day life. In media studies, framing concerns promoting certain images or telling certain stories (Borah 2011).

Framing implicitly suggests the inclusion and exclusion of particular information: 'To frame is to select some aspects of perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text' (Borah 2011: 248). There are two distinct research traditions on this topic. The 'equivalency perspective', which studies messages that are presented differently, yet are logically the same and the 'issue framing' perspective'. In the first perspective, the ubiquitous question is whether to formulate the consequences in terms of loss or gain. The so-called 'gain-frames' underscore the positive outcomes or the avoidance of negative outcomes if one carries out the recommended behavior or the avoided negative outcomes. The 'loss-frame' zooms in on the positive outcomes that one avoids or the negative outcomes one can expect if the behavior that is being questioned is carried out. The latter then emphasizes the risks of the behavior. It is not possible to 'objectively' say which frame proves the most effective. There are studies published on this notion of effectiveness, but there are numerous factors that influence this, particularly individual characteristics or existing social norms (Van der Putte et al. 2015: 51).

The 'issue framing' is about which aspects of the issue are highlighted. Both of these are interesting to explore in regards to migrant information campaigns.

Issue framing stems from political research on voting behavior/preferences during election periods. This act of framing is not so much about which positive or negative consequence will follow after exhibiting certain behavior but which consequence will be emphasized. The underlying idea is that through framing the audience will see an issue in the particular light the creators had in mind (Van den Putte et al. 2015). Linking this to the topic of this thesis, a frame can focus on the *possibility of dying at sea* while trying to reach European shore or it can focus on the *possibility of building a successful life in Europe*. According to research (Borah 2011), it depends on the target audience and the issue at hand which frame is most effective.

Besides studying which frames are presented, it is relevant to take a step back and ask *who* created the frames. Unfortunately, not many studies focus on this essential aspect (Borah 2011). In the case of migrant information campaigns, it is known that most campaigns are (in) directly financed by state governments. The campaigns then carry messages that are in the interest of these governments, although the interest of migrants is important as well. Stone (2012: 313) describes this aspect of persuasion as being 'indoctrination'. It might go a bit too far to apply this to information campaigns in general, but one feature she describes is partly fitting. The given information can be 'intentionally manipulative, disguising its perpetrator's hidden motives. It is designed to make its audience serve someone else's interests rather than to foster the audience's self-interest'. The author also warns that there is a blurry line between persuasion via rational deliberation or persuasion through manipulation.

The acting of 'naming' or 'labeling' is political in itself, because these labels carry stories, stereotypes and moral connotations. Apart from how people or issues are labeled (or framed) in campaigns, there is also the question of which 'neutral facts' are included (and excluded). Again, this is not a purely rational endeavor; various choices are made in developing and presenting information (Stone 2012: 317).

To link this to the topic at hand, migration can be regarded as something positive or negative. Whether the first or the second consequences are highlighted is a choice.

Interestingly enough, migrant information campaigns are filled with 'dark messages' about the risks, inevitable failure and exploitation potential migrants (might) face but are often not complemented with more positive messages of the possibility of 'making it'. Moreover the migrants are portrayed as 'naïve and ignorant and should know better' (Pécoud 2010).

Moreover, when campaigns underscore the dangers of illegal migration, they can 'be framed as benevolent and protective. Similarly, accounts of cynicism, greed and cruelty among smugglers are used to justify aggressive operations against human smuggling' (Carling & Hernández-Carretero 2011: 45). In this latter framework, the smugglers are mainly to blame for the irregular migration flows (a scapegoat if you will).

A conspicuous feature of migrant information campaigns is the mere focus on potential migrants instead of the public of receiving countries. As discussed above, migration can be framed in both a positive and negative light. The current political discourse tends to favor the negative aspects of migration and zooms in largely on the bad consequences of irregular migration. A positive way of regarding mobility across border is the so-called 'win-win-win' situation, which suggests an advantageous situation for all actors involved. The receiving state needs migrant workers to do certain jobs; the sending states supply this labor force and in exchange receive remittances (or in the long-term investments/resources if people return) and the migrants themselves whose life perspectives 'increase'. Of course, this does not mean that all migration is beneficial. Refugees and people who are trafficked are in no way examples of how migration can be a good phenomenon (Pécoud 2010). Yet, refugees can also be regarded as a group that can generate positive social change and bring human capital and skills that can help the receiving state. However, this 'positive' framing of migration flows is currently hardly anywhere to be found in the Dutch political discourse in which refugees and 'economic migrants' are mostly framed as a 'problem' or a 'threat' (Richmond 1993).²

This is not to say there are no issues with the particularly large influx of refugees and migrants in the past year, but it should be made clear that there is a *choice* in how a government decides to portray or frame these issues.

Pécoud (2010: 193) provides several examples of how migrant information campaigns are not neutral in its distribution or its messages. First, these campaigns are only implemented in sending states. Hardly any initiatives exist in receiving countries to create awareness amongst the population on the possible benefits of migrants. Second, the European media has focused greatly on the horrible fate of many migrants that lost their lives during their journey. In a sense this

²Of course, there are exceptions. One good example is the 'I am a migrant' campaign implemented by the IOM. This campaign battles against the xenophobia and racism in destination countries and it serves as a platform to give migrants 'a face' and show the diversity in migrants' stories. For more information: <<http://iamamigrant.org/>>

sends out a warning to migrants that if they migrate by sea they face potential death. However, the probability of death is quite small if you take into account that in 2015 there are approximately 3800 registered deaths at sea (IOM 2015) but the total number of migrants reaching Europe is approximately one million (note that this number also consists of people who did not travel by sea per se). Making a quick link to theories of migrant risk-taking, this translates less than one percent of the people who passed away who embarked on the journey. Of course, this amount is still worrisome but seen in this light, the framework that screams 'danger and death at sea' is slightly exaggerating. However, it hardly ever zooms in on the possibility that stricter European migration policies e.g. by denying visas might contribute to migrants choosing illegal ways. In general, the media (and governments) present the dangers that migrants face during their journey, whether it is by sea or land, are framed as 'naturally given' instead of underscoring the factors that 'pushed' the migrants out in the first place (Kosnick 2014: 5). Third, information campaigns are implemented to help people make an informed choice. However, this implicitly suggests that would-be migrants are naïve to believe in the myths about Europe in the first place and even 'stupid' for actually going once they've learned all the risks from the campaign (Pécoud 2010: 194).

Fear appeal

Oftentimes, information campaigns can be characterized as making use of the 'fear appeal message'. Conjuring up fear should allow for the (negative) consequences to become clear to the target audience. Since the 1970s numerous research has been conducted on the workings of fear appeal messages (Kruisbergen 2005). The mechanisms of fear appeals will be addressed below with the example of how they are used in migrant information campaigns to make it more vivid and palatable.

It is useful to start with some definitions of the key concepts. 'Fear is defined as a negative valenced emotion, accompanied by a high level of arousal' (Witte & Allen 2000: 591). The fear of dying at sea (or land) is an obvious one; therefore this will be the fear appeal message here. Two other important concepts are 'perceived threat' and 'perceived efficacy'. The first consists of two parts: the perceived susceptibility to the threat (how much one feels at risk for experiencing the threat) and the perceived severity (the dire consequences that are expected to come with the threat). If people dismiss, discredit or don't see the personal relevance, they won't feel afraid of dying at sea. There is a distinction between 'fear' (emotional response) and 'threat' (cognitive response), but they work reciprocally. Perceived efficacy also has two dimensions: the perceived self-efficacy and the perceived response efficacy. The first taps into the individual's belief whether he can carry out the recommended response and the second revolves around the question whether the recommended measure will help avoid the threat in the first place (Witte & Allen 2000). In migrant information campaigns, there are hardly any alternatives offered (e.g. legal avenues). The alternative then can be framed as 'don't travel by boat to Europe', but potential migrants are often highly devoted to their decision. They are aware of the risks and dangers, but the alternative is also considered a risk and the potential benefits outweigh the potential perils of the journey (Townsend & Oomen 2015: 5).

The most support was found for the EPPM (extended parallel process model) theory, which tries to predict how people will react when confronted with fear appeal messages. It explains the successes and failures of these types of messages. According to this model the calculation of a fear appeal message works as followed. The first 'phase' consists of estimating the threat and if this threat is deemed serious enough, the second phase starts which is judging the efficacy of the recommended response. Obviously, when the threat is viewed as harmless, people will ignore the message altogether. But if the message has succeeded in scaring people, they become motivated to reduce that uncomfortable feeling. This is where 'perceived efficacy' comes in: when people believe they can successfully carry out the recommended alternative they will try to control the danger. Thus, they think the recommended measure is helpful (perceived response efficacy) and they think they are capable of performing the recommended measure (perceived self-efficacy). Contrarily, if people don't believe the recommended response will work or they don't believe they can carry out the recommended response, they will instead try to control their fear. Controlling fear can be done through denial, defensiveness or reactance.

In short, the perceived threat of a message contributes to whether people respond (is there grave danger yes or no), while perceived efficacy accounts for the content of that response (either danger control or fear control). When there is a lack of information on the efficacy of the recommended measure, people rely on past experiences (Witte & Allen 2000). The article concludes with several recommendations for practitioners, whereby it supports the assumption that 'fear appeals motivate attitude, intention and behavior changes' (Witte & Allen 2000: 605). This is not necessarily in line with other research, which claims that a moderate effect on attitudes is possible but this type of messaging has a highly limited effect on behavior change. Kruisbergen (2005) found that based on empirical evidence the influence of fear appeal messages on behavioral changes is quite modest. However, if the use of fear appeals is 'desired', there are some aspects to be taken into account. The target audience takes both the content of the threat and the protective measure into account, but especially the *practicality* of the protective measure is important. If the protective measure seems unfeasible or unrealistic (for example staying in the country of origin while really wanting to leave), it will probably not be taken into consideration. In theoretical terms; there has to be high-perceived response and high-perceived self-efficacy (Witte & Allen 2000). Obstacles that prevent people from choosing and believing in the alternative option, such as high costs, lack of skills, strong emotions must be addressed before/during the release of the message (Witte & Allen 2000). Fear appeals should induce fear, but not too much that it turns unbelievable and unreliable. Finally, the message should play into the personal experiences of the target audience; it should become clear to them this message is relevant for their lives and renders them vulnerable if they continue with the undesirable behavior (Kruisbergen 2005).

Migrant information campaigns

Migration management strategies are designed and implemented in a field of tension between various policy narratives. The types of migration management measures can be divided into narratives of security, co-operation and protection. The first emphasizes the protection of Europe whereas the second stresses the importance of cooperating with sending countries and the possible benefits of migration. The last narrative underscores the safety of migrants, which can be summed

up as the 'life-saving objective' (Carling & Hernández-Carretero 2011). The tension between these seemingly contradictory frameworks is enhanced by two factors that give the issue of migration management an extra sense of urgency: the humanitarian crisis due to loss of lives at sea (the IOM registered 3771 deaths in 2015 alone) and the continuance of boat migration which the European Union states have not been able to effectively regulate up until this day (Carling & Hernández-Carretero 2011). Implementing migrant information campaigns can be regarded as a policy measure that addresses all three narratives discussed above. First, it plays into the safety of migrants aspect since the provided information should discourage would-be migrants to embarking on a perilous journey to Europe with a potentially fatal ending. Second, these campaigns are often implemented with the help of local organizations, governments or international NGOs, which implies it's a measure that stimulates cooperation. Third, although this is not a goal that is explicitly formulated by European governments the objective information that is distributed – whether consciously or unconsciously- discourages prospective migrants to come to Europe in the first place (Nieuwenhuys & Pécout 2007: 1674). This element of dissuasion is found in numerous literature on the topic (Heller 2014; Browne 2015). This measure seems relatively uncontested, because who can argue against 'objective information provision' and it is a less 'appalling' image than border patrol agents that (sometimes) forcibly remove/detain migrants.

Western states continue to search for innovative tools to enhance control on the migration flows. One of the traditional methods only renewed is the use of 'remote control', which entails better surveillance through cooperation between different actors: destination, sending and transit countries (Nieuwenhuys & Pécout 2007). Consequently, 'the geographical locus of control is thus displaced from the borders of receiving states to sending and transit regions. By operating inside sending states and using the dissemination of information to incite potential migrants to stay at home, information campaigns fit into this trend' (Nieuwenhuys & Pécout 2007: 1677).

Migration control has traditionally been approached as a classical type of power relations, in which 'law-and-order actors' (police forces and border patrol agents) implement a top-down surveillance of people (Pécout 2010: 195). Western governments largely fund the actors that mainly implement migrant information campaigns, but these non-state agents do not formally regulate migration flows nor is this their intention. This does not mean they do not exert any influence on migrant decision-making. To understand this shift in the exercise of power it is fitting to refer to Foucault's concept of 'governmentality'; power is not merely about domination and violence, but also visible in less direct forms such as trying to influence people's behavior (Pécout 2010: 196).

Migrant information campaigns are often framed as campaigns against human trafficking. 'Trafficking is internationally recognized as a human rights violation by the so-called Palermo Protocols on smuggling migrants and trafficking in persons' (Nieuwenhuys & Pécout 2007: 1678) therefore there are hardly any questions placed against these campaigns. The difference between 'smuggling' and 'trafficking' is important to make. The first concerns displacing a person across the border whereas the second implies not mere displacement but also the exploitation of trafficked people in the destination country (e.g. sex trafficking) (Nieuwenhuys & Pécout 2007: 1678).

The goal of anti-trafficking campaigns is raising awareness amongst potential 'victims'³ by providing information on the risks that come with engaging and trusting human smugglers or trafficker (Nieuwenhuys & Pécoud 2007).

There is a rather thin line between campaigns that focus on the risks of trafficking and risks of irregular migration. According to Nieuwenhuys & Pécoud (2007: 1683) 'the messages that lie at the core of antitrafficking campaigns are equally relevant to irregular migration'. Thus, even when campaigns are framed as battling trafficking and protecting individuals from harm, the messages that are disseminated are quite compatible.

Keeping this in mind, it is interesting to take a leap into the more current implementation of migrant information campaigns. As was stated in the introduction (and briefly touched upon in a more general sense in the section on public information campaigns), these campaigns are based on the premise that providing potential migrants with objective information on the risks and dangers of irregular migration decreases the number of people that risk their lives and migrate illegally (Nieuwenhuys & Pécoud 2007). The goal of these campaigns is phrased as provide objective information so potential migrants can make a well-informed decision. However, Pécoud (2010) concludes his research with the notion that western states hope that by indirectly steering migrants' attitudes and behavior in the direction of denouncing irregular migration, they might (re) gain control on migration flows. The true objective of these campaigns remains obscured: is it protection of the destination countries or protection of the migrants?

This principle of information provision implies three assumptions: potential migrants lack necessary information, their behavior is based on available information and the information is negative enough to dissuade departure (Nieuwenhuys & Pécoud 2007). Thus, objective information is the key word in the migrant decision-making process according to proponents of implementing migrant awareness campaigns. An interesting aspect of this proposition is the question what qualifies as 'objective', 'unbiased' and 'reliable' information? The information originates from agents with certain interests (often western nation states). The majority of migrant information campaigns can be characterized as emphasizing on the negative sides of migration; it is a rather one-dimensional view that is given (Nieuwenhuys & Pécoud 2007). These campaigns can be 'framed' as a more humanitarian approach instead of outright repression, since western governments claim to want to 'save lives' by providing potential migrants with the right information. Information is then an empowerment tool (Van Bommel 2015). Pécoud (2010: 195) also writes this: the proposed goal of the campaigns is to protect them from the dangers of traffickers or the consequences of irregular migration not put a stop to migration altogether. Consequently, these campaigns are funded by development and humanitarian budgets instead of by interior ministries, which implies there is no direct control exerted.

Furthermore, it is not really about the 'objective' information that is offered, but the way would-be migrants *interpret* this information. Often, 'information is interpreted to support ambitions rather than to inform decisions' (Townsend & Oomen 2015: 8). For example, when migrants hear that Europe is increasing patrols they might see this piece of information of evidence that the sea

³ For a critical analysis of the 'victim-frame' of potentially trafficked women read Andrijavesic (2004) see literature.

journey will be safer because they'll get picked up more quickly. When migrants hear that patrols are reduced, they might consider this news a blessing because detection will be less likely. Both of these trains of thought make some sense and both interpretations support their decision to migrate (Townsend & Oomen 2015: 8).

The interpretations depend on the social context potential migrants live in, which is often dire social/economic prospects and migration holding the promise of a better life. Moreover, the new information is filtered through the lens of existing opinions and is often only found reliable if it's consistent with the existing views (Hernández-Carretero & Carling 2012).

Potential migrants see migration in their own political and moral framework, which differs greatly from the framework of western migration policies. (Nieuwenhuys & Pécoud 2007). Not much research has been conducted on this distinction in frameworks, although Kyle & Siracusa (2005) found that irregular Ecuadorian migrants in Spain and the United States feel that they contribute to their destination societies by doing the dirty jobs refused by the countries' own population. They don't see themselves as 'criminals' or 'illegal', but perfectly in their right to stay in the receiving states.

Brief summary of essential points in theoretical framework

'Western states aim at erecting in people's minds the borders they fail to control between states' (Pécoud 2010: 198) by providing objective, yet often negative, information that's intended to make prospective migrants reconsider their decision to migrate illegally. By implementing a migrant information campaign –taking into account the guidelines from communication studies- and emphasizing (framing) the 'negative' consequences of irregular migration, western nations attempt to regulate the migration flow. However, it has become clear from the theories proposed above that this objective is not reached that easily. Other crucial factors need to be incorporated when studying the decision to migrate. Potential migrants have *different risk assessment models*; therefore merely pointing out the (often well known) risks and dangers of the migratory journey most likely will not change people's minds. Moreover, the *decision* to migrate is taken in a social environment where (economic) opportunities are dire or even imminent threats to lives are a daily reality. Consequently, informing people they can expect an 'austere' reception in the destination country or could die during the journey will most likely not make them reconsider their options. Lastly, the *sources of information* are infinite nowadays. A migrant information campaign has to compete with numerous sources that are seen as more reliable and useful, especially coming from trusted social relations.

Analysis

The first section of this analysis consists of an overview of past and recent migrant information campaigns. This list is not exhaustive due to the time sensitivity and scope of this thesis, but these campaigns have been selected in order to demonstrate the wide range of types of campaigns that exist. The thirteen campaigns listed below have one thing in common: They are all based on the premise that potential migrants should be well informed on the risks and dangers that come with irregular migration. The information campaigns do vary –sometimes greatly- in matter of goals and target audiences, the channels through which the messages are disseminated, who designs and implements the campaigns and finally whether the campaigns have been evaluated. This becomes clearer when studying the table below.

A number of the campaigns will be discussed more extensively (the ones that are in bold in the table). Different types of campaigns can be distinguished based on the content of the information that is dispersed. The focus of the message can be on the *dangers of migration*, *difficulties of undocumented life in the destination countries*, *communication of stricter migration policies/deterrence* and *focus on the dangers of engaging with human smugglers/traffickers*. Some overlap in the message content exists, but categorizing these campaigns makes it easier to grasp the workings of such campaigns. The discussion of the campaigns will devote attention to the implementation process from research phase to implementation and –if available- evaluation whilst linking these details to the theoretical framework. This discussion is present after the general details and description of the campaigns under the heading '*The campaign examined*'. Due to limited space, only 'striking' features of the campaigns will be highlighted.

Before, moving on with the analysis, it is important to note that what is done in this thesis can be considered a 'realist review'. This is due to the complexity of the 'intervention' of migrant information campaigns. These social interventions 'are not 'magic bullets', which will always hit their target, but programs whose effects are crucially dependent on context and implementation' (Pawson et al. 2005: 21). A realist review will not answer the question 'does it work or not?' It will however provide a detailed understanding of a complex measure, by laying bare the underlying assumptions about the measure and what effects it is likely to generate (Pawson et. Al 2005).

Table of the reviewed campaigns

Campaign details					
Campaign	Goal	Target Audience	Medium	Implementers	Evaluation
Dangers of Migration					
'Migration Aware' (2009-2011)	Inform on the risks of the journey	Potential economic migrants	From printed materials to SMS messages	University of Coventry + Nigerian NGO	None
'Safe Journey IC' (2005-2010)	Inform on the risks of migration	Zimbabwean youth who aspire to migrate	Form printed materials to radio and a road show	IOM Zimbabwe (Harare)	Yes: successful according to external evaluation IOM
Difficulty/reality of undocumented life in destination countries					
'Surprising Europe' (2015)	Inform on Europe and the journey	Potential migrants	Radio and TV broadcasts	Ghanaian NGO and 'Maatwerk bij Terugkeer'	Unclear
'Rumours about Germany' (winter 2015)	Informing potential Afghan migrants on the risks of migration	Afghans wanting to migrate to Germany	Printed ads, billboards, social media such as Twitter	German embassy in Afghanistan	No
Communicate stricter policies/deter potential migrants					
'Danish ads in Lebanese newspapers' (September 2015)	Inform on changes to the regulations regarding the asylum procedure in Denmark	Potential migrants and smugglers, but also asylum seekers who are currently in Denmark	Advertisement in newspapers, government website and social media	Danish Ministry of Immigration, Intergration and Housing	No
'Facebook campaign launched by Belgian government' (winter 2015-2016)	Dissuade from trying to apply for asylum since it will be denied	Iraqi men (25-40) who want to apply for asylum in Belgium	Facebook	Belgian government	No official one, but the Belgian government is claiming success
'Don't come' (October 2015)	Give objective view of the possibility of obtaining asylum in Finland	Young men in Iraq and Turkey who wish to enter Finland	Facebook	Finnish government	No
'Stricter asylum regulations in Norway' (winter 2015)	Give factual information on the changing asylum policies	Potential migrants who want to apply for asylum in Norway, especially Afghans	Facebook and Twitter	Norwegian government	No
'Information Campaign by Austrian government' (March 2016)	Inform would-be migrants on the strict asylum laws	Afghans who are regarded as 'economic migrants'	Facebook, advertisements on Kabul buses, TV, newspapers, social media	Austrian Government	No
The dangers of (becoming) human smugglers/traffickers					
'Ukrainian IC' (1997)	Increase awareness amongst potential victims of trafficking	Ukrainian women (and the Ukrainian population in general)	Talk show, hotline, printed materials, documentaries	NGO La Strada Ukraine (Ukrainian government and NIS-US Women Consortium)	Yes; successful according to IOM.
'Pay a people smuggler and You'll pay the price' (1999-2001)	Warn about criminality and risks of being a smuggler	Prospective migrants from various Arabic and (South) East Asian countries	Printed materials, videos and information kit	Australian Department of Immigration	No
'I know smuggling irregular migrants is wrong' (2010-2014)	Create awareness on the risks of becoming a smuggler	Poor local Indonesian fishermen and Indonesian government officials	From workshops to printed materials and giving out paraphernalia	IOM Indonesia in cooperation with the Australian Custom Service	Yes; positive effects, but there are several critical comments (see below)
'Don't be fooled by the promises of people smugglers' (2010)	Reduce the number of irregular migrants aspiring to move to Australia	Potential migrants residing in Malaysia (important transit)	Workshops, public forums, printed materials, comics	Australian Custom and Border Protection Service	Yes; awareness was raised but actual numbers did not go down according to implementers

The Dangers of migration

The 'Migration Aware' campaign, implemented in the second largest city in Nigeria (Ibidan), was funded by the European Union with a budget of 200.000 euros (Van Bommel 2015: 23). The aim of this campaign was to 'fill the information gap that prevents potential migrants from making an informed decision on whether to embark' by the distribution of information 'on the realities of the journey, the destination country and alternatives to irregular migration.' The project was not intended to 'actively dissuade migration but to provide objective information without prejudices' (Baker and Massey, 2009:3). One way of conveying this message was by printing posters that illustrate the risks and dangers of irregular migration:



Potential migrants are warned about engaging with people smugglers, the risk of drowning or dying in the desert or even the possibility of being attacked by pirates while at sea (Van Bommel 2015: 25). Apart from this printed material, a 'drama-documentary' called 'Dead End'⁴: Illegal Migration was shown in universities and community halls. The issues addressed in this film are the risks and dangers of the journey, but also the hardship one should be prepared for once Europe has been reached. Examples are disappearing in the criminal circuit, low-paid jobs and potential deportation whilst in Europe. Interestingly enough, the disseminated information largely consists of fearful imagery while no mention of legal channels or suggestions for staying put are given even if this was one of the objectives (Van Bommel 2015: 25).

The campaign examined

There is no evaluation available for this campaign, but looking at the way the messages are framed, it will likely fail to transmit the messages due to the use of exaggerated images (see image) and fear appeal messages in combination with a lack of alternatives (Browne 2015). Framed as a fear appeal message, the threat in the message is the dangers surrounding illegal

⁴ To watch this documentary: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vKGIww6ZjBM>>

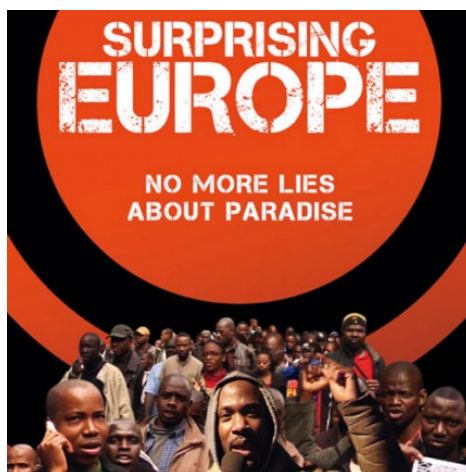
migration and the recommended response is to refrain from migrating illegally. However, what becomes clear from the literature is that would-be migrants are often rather determined to migrate and that they consider the risk of staying to be greater than the potential risks they'll encounter on their journey (Carling & Hernández- Carretero 2011).

Difficulties/realty of undocumented life in destination countries

Another interesting 'campaign' is the project called 'Surprising Europe'. This initiative provides realistic views of life in Europe by showing testimonies of migrants that have already made it to Europe⁵. Both legal and illegal immigrants give testimonies on the website; there are both success stories and stories of disillusioned people who prefer returning to their home country. Surprising Europe is an initiative by Wittfilm Amsterdam and Ssuuna Gooloba and sponsored by inter alia the Dutch ministry of foreign affairs, Maatwerk bij Terugkeer, the IOM and Al Jazeera (Surprising Europe 2016). This project was also mentioned by an official of the involved Dutch ministry in the workshop of the EMN, during which it was lauded for taking the perspective of the migrant, the lack of 'deterrent' or 'fear appeal' messages but instead a balanced and realistic image is provided, also lighter topics for example the strange behavior of Europeans are addressed and humor is added. However, there are also some negative features of this project, such as the inability to measure impact (although that begs the question what impact is preferred by the involved stakeholders) and the audience 'African people that might have plans to migrate in the future' is too broad. The need for monitoring and evaluation and more research on decision-making and motivations is desired. The difficulties pertaining to evaluating these projects will be addressed in the final section of this thesis.

In the thesis by Van Bommel (2015) he studied a smaller awareness campaign was running, which was part of the larger project Surprising Europe. The Dutch NGO Maatwerk bij Terugkeer (which is financed by the EU) financed the Ghanaian NGO to carry out this information campaign. It was not a 'printed' information campaign since the dissemination of information was done via radio shows, a website and a television broadcast. The goal was informing potential migrants on what life is really like in Europe; the official aim is to give a realistic view on the experiences of migrants that have made it to the European continent. The intention of the initiators of the campaign was *not* to discourage potential migrants from embarking on a journey but to share information so that people can make informed decisions (Van Bommel 2015: 26).

⁵ The Dutch organization Maatwerk bij Terugkeer used the portrayals in these clips to 'educate' *'uitgeprocedeerden'* on what they can expect once they have returned. The target audience thus not only consisted of potential migrants, but also those who are bound to return.



Van Bommel (2015) conducted fieldwork in Ghana and spoke with members of the target audience of this campaign. He found that Ghanaians were already aware of the risks of the journey and living conditions in Europe and that the information –although they judged the information as credible and coming from a reliable source contrarily to what is often found in other literature- did not make them change their minds about their aspirations to leave for Europe (Van Bommel 2015: 39). An interesting element from Van Bommels (2015) study is that people already seem to be quite aware of the risks of illegal migration; therefore the provision of risk information seems unnecessary in this case. In sum, well informed decision-making is not equivalent to staying in one's own country and despite the apparent credibility of the messages, people don't change their minds (Van Bommel 2015: 39-42).

Apart from the fieldwork conducted by Van Bommel (2015) this information campaign in Ghana has not been evaluated in terms of measuring whether the information has helped migrants gain a better understanding of what it means to migrate (unauthorized) nor has the Surprising Europe project been evaluated up to date.

The campaign examined

There are some aspects of this type of campaigns that is worth highlighting when looking at the existing literature on information campaigns. It is a good way of disseminating information for two reasons. First, the use of testimonies is often promoted because this 'renders the information more accessible and intelligible' and implementers are encouraged to use people 'who have experienced hazardous journeys to help influence individual choices and shift attitudes in the communities' (Browne 2015: 4). Second the balance between 'success stories' and 'disillusioned tales' is a recommended strategy, because this allegedly enhances the credibility and acceptance of the message and gives the target audience a sliver of hope (UNHCR 2010). Giving a realistic picture of the journey and the situation in Europe suggests two frames: the possibility of reaching Europe and succeeding and the possibility of encountering trouble and failing.

An example of a recent German government initiative is the campaign "RumoursaboutGermany" which is implemented by the German embassy in Afghanistan. The goal is not deterring Afghans from coming to Europe, but rather informing potential migrants. The false information circulating about how great life in Germany is must be countered (Federal Foreign Office 2015). The messages

include 'Leaving Afghanistan? Are you sure?' and 'Leaving Afghanistan? Think about it again'. The messages are in two native Afghan languages, Dari and Pashto and are conveyed via billboards and Twitter (hashtag RumoursaboutGermany) (Federal Foreign Office 2015).



The campaign examined

These billboards are displayed in large Afghan cities, therefore only urban populations will be reached. If the demarcation of this audience is intentional, then it is good 'practice' (UNHCR 2010). However, this also means that people in remote places will not be reached, especially if they don't have Internet. This campaign offers no alternatives except staying put and no recommended solution are presented to the potential 'threat' of becoming disillusioned about life in Germany. Moreover the extensive research done, inter alia, by the UNHCR, indicates that many Afghans blindly trust the people smugglers or 'travel agents' and a government source will most likely not induce any shred of fear let alone be seen as reliable. It appears that no background information on the target audience has been done, something which is underscored by several 'best practices' regarding migrant awareness campaigns. For instance, the IOM (1999: 17) writes: 'It is commonly recognised that the research and preparatory phase is as important as the dissemination. Insufficient research and preparatory phase will certainly have a negative impact on information dissemination strategy'. Correcting the distorted image people have of Europe itself by providing realistic and relevant information for the target audience can be useful, but the way the German embassy is framing these messages will likely not generate the intended result. Whether the intended result is reducing numbers or spreading factual information is up for discussion?

Communicate stricter policies/deter potential migrants

The goal of stricter policies is making the destination country less appealing for potential migrants who are planning on migrating illegally. However, 'restrictive migration policies could decrease the willingness to migrate illegally, but they could also increase it (...) The positive or negative relationship between restrictive immigration policies and illegal migration is a priori unclear' (Mbaye 2014: 5). There are two ways of explaining this potential increase. First, the restriction on obtaining visas or entry can lead to the only other alternative to reach the destination country:

enter illegally. Second, the idea that Europe wants to keep people out is an often-heard sentiment amongst potential migrants and the great lengths the continent goes to in order to protect the borders suggest that they are protecting something 'coveted' and 'beautiful' (Van Bommel 2015). This doesn't stop Australia or Europe from communicating their stricter policies to potential migrants.

Australia

A short introduction is required to fully understand the severity of migrant policies that Australia is known for and the corresponding character of migrant information campaigns as a tool to control the migrant influx. In Australia, the issue of 'boat people' or 'irregular maritime arrivals' has been a great concern of the Australian government for four decades. This is quite remarkable, because the number of migrants reaching Australian shore is much smaller than the influx of migrants trying to reach Europe or the US (Philips 2015: 2). The migrant policies differ in severity depending on which political parties govern the country, but the current stance is quite harsh. Asylum seekers are all processed offshore in detention camps in the surrounding islands Nauru and New Guinea, which has evoked criticism worldwide about the humanitarian conditions of this approach. The message from the Australian government is unequivocal: there is no room for boat refugees in the country (Garschagen 2016). Over the past two decades, several measures have been taken to curb maritime migration such as enhanced coastal surveillance and increased engagement with transit countries, but Australia was also one of the first countries that invested in grand-scale information campaigns in both sending and transit countries (Phillips & Spinks 2013: 11).

Two telling images of the dissuading character of Australian campaigns in general:



To contrast this and to make evident the 'framing character' of the Australian authorities, let's take a look at the travel advertisements of Australia. This –admittedly– exaggerated comparison does illuminate the choice of what image is presented and to whom.



In general, the Australian authorities use deterrent messages and fear appeals (see first two images) This is curious for a number a reasons: exaggerated imagery is often not effective, official sources are often distrusted and inducing fear without offering alternatives isn't effective. The 'dark' representation of migration goes so far that at a given moment, a campaign launched to dissuade migrants from coming to Australia, had to be taken down because it actually negatively influenced the tourism in Australia (Hightower 2014).

One of the most recent examples is a tragic movie made by the Australian Border Custom and Protection Service (costs 6 million dollars) targeted at potential asylum seekers from Afghanistan. The film portrays asylum seekers trying to reach Australia by boat and failing miserably. The message is to inform would-be migrants/refugees about the uselessness of trying to reach Australia by boat. This message can then be characterized as a discouraging and unwelcoming one (Van der Velden 2016).

A number of Australian migrant information campaigns have been studied and evaluated extensively. Although some campaigns have reached their objectives according to the evaluators and despite the effort of the Australian authorities to manage maritime migration, the number of smuggled migrants has only increased in the past decade and a half (Schloenhardt & Philipson 2013: 25). There are quite a few interesting examples of Australian campaigns, but I choose to dissect one in particular that warns about the dangers of becoming a people smuggler. This campaign is thoroughly reviewed, studied and implemented. In section 'the dangers of (becoming) a people smuggler, an Australian initiative will be described and examined.

Europe

Migrant information campaigns are not a completely new instrument used by European governments, but recently the tool has become the object of interest of many Member States. Europe is struggling with an unprecedented influx of migrants and refugees and one way to tackle this problem is offering objective information on what potential migrants can expect. The information that is provided consists of policy changes regarding migration and/or the warning that economic migrants shouldn't count on a warm welcome.

The Danish government was the first to adopt this strategy by placing advertisements in four Lebanese newspapers (these ads were also translated into ten languages and posted on the website of the Danish Ministry of Immigration, Integration and Housing). The costs were 252000 kroner (33676 euros) and the goal of these ads was to disseminate information on the 'recent and future changes to the regulations regarding social benefits and residence in Denmark (The Local dk

2015). The target audience is then potential migrants and smugglers, but this information was also distributed in Danish asylum centers. Possibly, this was done with the idea that asylum seekers currently in Denmark will inform their fellow countrymen of the stricter policies.

So far, there has been no evaluation of the possible effects of these advertisements. The media often framed the messages the Danish government is spreading as dissuading, since the Danish living conditions are described as sober and strict. The reception of this action of the Danish government warranted much criticism from both Danes and the rest of the world. The Danish government denies the dissuading character of the ads and instead insists it wants to inform. The question is why were these advertisements printed in Lebanese newspapers when Lebanon is not even a main sending or transit country (The Local dk 2015).

Around the same time, in winter 2015, the Belgian government launched a Facebook campaign with the aim of informing young Iraqi men not to seek asylum in Belgium when they are coming out of economic motives. The message is then a discouraging one, since the young Iraqi men (aged 25-45) are warned that they will not get asylum so why would they try to come. The Belgian government bought commercial banners on Facebook with the messages that it is no use trying to come to Belgium. The costs of the campaign were low: 200 euros. The banners appeared in Arabic on the timeline of the target group. The campaign reached 251332 profiles and was clicked on 15551 times in the first 24 hours according to a spokesperson of the state secretary of asylum and integration. It was also stated that the reception of the message is 'positive' and the target group seems to be taking the message seriously (BELGA 2015).

The campaign has not been officially evaluated, but according to an article published in the Belgian newspaper 'De Standaard', the Belgian government says the decrease of 85% of Iraqi asylum seekers and the high numbers of returns suggest the success of the information campaign on Facebook (Belga 2015).

Two Scandinavian governments, Norway and Finland, have also made use of social media to inform potential migrants on the asylum policies, such as the reduction of benefits and the extended waiting period for family reunification or the small chances of obtaining asylum in the first place. The Finnish campaign targeted young men in Iraq and Turkey and provided objective information of the possibility of obtaining asylum in Finland, which is quite small amongst that group. The title is 'Don't Come', which suggests a rather deterrent message although the Finnish government simply wants to inform (Yle 2015).

The Norwegian campaign is called 'Stricter asylum regulations in Norway', which suggests an overview of factual information on asylum policies, but is mainly targeted at would-be migrants that have no legit reason to apply for asylum. According to the state secretary of the Norwegian Ministry of Justice (Joran Kallmyr) 'Denmark has seen good results from doing this. The aim is to get the number down. The refugees choose where to travel based on what they know about the country. Although Denmark is a safe country, relatively few have sought asylum there (...) Norway doesn't intend to spend too much money on newspaper campaigns, instead relying on Facebook and Twitter. The main thing is to use social media. It is cheap and it reaches many people' (Orange 2015). The campaign received plenty of criticism, for instance by the Norwegian Refugee Council who warns that applying this strategy can lead to sending back innocent refugees who are fleeing from persecution (Orange 2015). Neither of these two campaigns has been evaluated.

Finally, one of the most recent initiatives (March 2016) is by the Austrian government.

The official goal is to inform would-be migrants on the strict asylum laws. Wrong information from people smugglers leads to false expectations and this should be countered with factual information on the reality in the destination country (EurActiv 2016). The target audience is Afghans who are mainly seen as 'economic migrants'. The materials of the campaign consists of advertisements on Kabul buses and spreading information via Facebook and TV; warning migrants not to expect a warm welcome in Austria. Two examples of the slogans are 'No asylum in Austria for economic reasons' and 'Smugglers lie! Inform yourself!' The costs are approximately 10.000 euros. No evaluation has been done (yet) (The Local 2016).



The campaigns examined

What do these recent European initiatives have in common?

Let's first address the interesting development of the channels through which information is disseminated: the use of social media is more present than ever. This is understandable, since this is not as time-consuming or as expensive as a 'traditional' campaign, but also because (potential) migrants make use of this medium more than ever. Second, the campaigns mentioned in the table are not implemented by third parties such as the IOM, but are implemented rather ad-hoc by European governments themselves. This suggests a lack of research prior to the implementation. It is curious that governments themselves are launching these campaigns, when it is often advised not to use official/formal sources, because the audience will likely dismiss this information in advance. Third, some countries demarcate their target audience to one country or area, but the majority seems to consider 'all (types of) migrants' as potential target audience. This is not recommended i.a. by UNDOC (2012): a particular 'at-risk' group should be targeted instead of a general campaign meant for the entire population. Atkin & Rice (2013) acknowledge as well that it's essential to produce tailor-made campaigns in order to best influence a target audience. A countries' population differs in cultural/motivational/opportunities etcetera in regards to migration plans. Apart from delimitating groups of interest, these audiences need to be studied and understood prior to the campaign design (IOM 1999). Fourth, there is a lack of evaluations and it does not seem like it will be high on the agenda any time soon. Several governments ascribe the decrease of migrants to their country to the campaigns that were implemented, but a clear causal effect can never be measured and therefore is it mere speculation.

Townsend & Oomen write (2015:11) 'if people are emotionally committed to emigration, it is likely that they will reject discouraging information and justify their rejection by presuming the source is

biased.’ Moreover, the complete lack of alternatives (even with the side note that indeed there are not many legal options) can be considered a ‘flaw’ since this is one of the most important ‘ingredients’ for a migrant information campaign (Browne 2015).

Although the target audiences are all supposed to be comprised of people who will not get asylum in Europe, this ‘unwelcome’ messaging can also (in) directly affect refugees. All European countries have signed the 1951 Refugee Convention, which states that nations are required to safeguard the rights for refugees (UNHCR 2016). Spreading this content –which can indirectly dissuade refugees from going to a specific country- can be seen as conflicting with the signed refugee treaty.

The European countries frame themselves as being ‘not that paradisiacal’ and although the official goal is to ‘inform potential migrants’, only disincentives and negative messages are offered.

According to Carling & Hernández-Carretero 2011: 49) these ‘information campaigns ostensibly seek to protect migrants by warning them against the dangers of migration, but are primarily geared to shielding Europe from migrant arrivals.’ In fact, when European countries individually send out these pieces of information it appears they’re competing against each other; trying to convince migrants not to come to *their* country (Schans & Optekamp 2016 in press).

The dangers of (becoming) human smugglers/traffickers

The European information campaigns targeted at potential migrants appear to be a rather new strategy to control migration flows. However, these initiatives are not a completely new phenomenon. In the 1990s the IOM, in cooperation with sending countries, already implemented and contributed to numerous information campaigns particularly designed to combat human trafficking in Eastern European countries (Nieuwenhuys & Pécoud 2007). These campaigns are mainly directed at potential victims of human trafficking.

One of these campaigns is a Ukrainian information campaign launched in 1997, which was set to last a year but due to political pressure only six months were granted. Consequently, the information strategy and implementation might have suffered because of the sudden reduction of available time (IOM 1999 annex 6: 6). There are numerous campaigns just like this one, but this particular one was evaluated extensively by the IOM. The US government funded the campaign (270.000 dollars) and IOM in cooperation with La Strada Ukraine largely implemented the campaign, although the Ukrainian government and the NIS-US Women Consortium were also involved (IOM 1999 annex 6: 1-2). The goal was to ‘increase understanding of the realities of migration among potential women victims of trafficking and relevant authorities in the Ukraine in an effort to help stem the rising tide of trafficking in women from Eastern Europe’ (IOM 1999 annex 6: 5).

Unlike many anti-trafficking initiatives, this campaign was evaluated and deemed successful. What does this mean? Interestingly enough, no indicators of achievement were established before implementing the campaign. This meant that the evaluator had to come up with own matrixes during the evaluation. A quantitative analysis was done. According to a conducted survey, the attitudes of the target audience were positively influenced through the disseminated information and approximately 3.5 million people were reached through the different mediums (see table). The report by the IOM (1999 annex 6: 9) also concluded that ‘The before and after surveys showed that the project had an impact on the target groups as well as on the global population. In

looking at some results of the second round of polling, we can note: 56% of respondents expressed greater knowledge about the methods of trafficking; 42% of respondents indicated an increase in awareness about the risks associated with employment offers abroad; 41% more individuals felt that prostitution abroad is of high risk and 20% less individuals felt that work abroad is not an adequate solution for attaining a better life.' Apart from these numbers, the evaluation did mention that 'The impact analysis of an information campaign of this type is not easy to conduct as it is linked to notions such awareness raising or to decisions taken by individuals. However, as the objective was more directed towards providing accurate information and towards prevention, it can be expected that, if the campaign is properly prepared and conducted with appropriate messages, the impact will be evident in a country such Ukraine where the needs of information are obvious' (IOM 1999 annex 6: 9).

The campaign examined

The goal of anti-trafficking campaigns is raising awareness amongst potential victims by providing information on the risks that come with engaging and trusting human smugglers or trafficker. The messages are quite similar to 'general' migrant information campaigns though; don't migrate illegally (Nieuwenhuys & Pécoud 2007). No material –apart from what is described- of the campaign is available online, therefore it is not possible to zoom in on elements of the campaign in particular. However, this campaign is good example of how information campaigns slowly began to win terrain in the field of policy.

Australia

In 2010, the Australian Custom Service together with the IOM launched a new awareness campaign, which was directed at five specific regions in southern Indonesia (this country is an important transit point for smuggled migrants). The first phase of the campaign lasted only a short period: from April 2010 to July 2010, but due to the ostensible success (see below) the Australian Customs and Border Protection invested an extra \$5 million in a second phase of the campaign, which lasted till the end of 2014 (Missbach & McNevin 2014). In these regions, poor local Indonesian fishermen are often recruited to take migrants on their boats to Australia. The campaign targeted a wider audience, but with the emphasis on potential offenders instead of potential migrants: 'fishermen, boat owners and builders, coastal industry workers, port authorities, ferry operators and local law enforcement officers at key entry and exit points for asylum seekers moving between Malaysia, Indonesia and Australia' (McNevin et al. 2016: 1). Apart from this target audience, the campaign also focused on Indonesian officials who were involved in trying to prevent or detect migrant smuggling (Schloenhardt & Philipson 2013). The main goal of the campaign was pointing out to fishermen (and other groups just mentioned) that dangers exist when accepting money to act as smugglers and thus they should not engage in these activities (McNevin et al. 2016: 1). These mostly uneducated fishermen were regarded as 'ignorant' of the risks of helping people smugglers and they needed to be made aware of the risks and dangers (Missbach & McNevin 2014). Potential offenders should 'do the right thing' and The Indonesian officials were appealed to do 'their national duty' and 'do what they can to stop people smuggling' (Schloenhardt & Philipson 2013).

In preparation for the campaign launch, the IOM worked closely together with the Indonesian Directorate General of Immigration and the Indonesian National Police. It also conducted market research, which suggested that the use of positive and 'values based' message were more appropriate (Missbach & McNevin 2014). These suggestions were incorporated in the campaign, which emphasized 'positive action' and urged people to 'do the right thing'. In order to move the target audience to 'do the right thing' the campaign contained three key messages. The first was the emphasis on the fact that people smuggling is a criminal offense (it only became a criminal offense under Indonesian law in 2011) with a minimum sentence of five years imprisonment. The second message was the probability of jeopardizing one's reputation, which was communicated by providing testimonials of Indonesian fishermen already in Australian prisons for people smuggling. Lastly, the idea that people smuggling was a sin was put forward prominently. The Indonesian churches (both Christian and Muslim) helped disseminate this message, which means religion was used to convey political messages. 'Local religious leaders were also encouraged in workshops to prepare sermons on the topic of both Christian and Muslim audiences, which were published in special booklets (*buka khotbah*). The sermons use biblical analogies and Koranic verses to explain why people smuggling is sinful and why fishermen should avoid it' (McNevin et al. 2016: 5). Whether this religious interference was effective is questionable, since most fishermen decide to help illegal migrants out of economic necessity. Therefore, the idea that people smuggling is illegal, sinful and gives one a bad reputation is of secondary importance (Missbach & McNevin 2014). In the recent article by McNevin et al. (2016), the broader context of the target audience is taken into account, something that the campaign severely lacks according to the authors of this article.

Based on fieldwork conducted amongst the target audience, various flaws of this campaign –which was deemed quite successful in the eyes of several stakeholders- come to light. One of the most important aspects that was overlooked by the implementers of the campaign was the severe economic pressure the target audience was under. These people barely make ends meet and 'economics played a crucial, if not a central role in fishermen's decision-making processes' (McNevin 2016: 5). In that sense, providing a livelihood trumps 'doing the right things' (the right thing according to the implementers). Although these pieces of information were known amongst the target audience and government officials, in the campaign no weight was put on the economic considerations in the decision-making process nor on the fact that out of economic necessity fishermen would engage in these activities and wouldn't be stopped because of secondary (see above) values (McNevin 2016: 5). In short, the message of the campaign might be optimistic ('do the right thing') but the underlying structural forces that make these Indonesian fishermen an attractive and vulnerable target for people smugglers in the first places remain obscured.

How was this message dispersed? The entire campaign was in Bahasa (official language of Indonesia). The campaign slogan '*Aku Tau Penyelundupan Imigran Ilegal Itu Salah*' (I know smuggling illegal migrants is wrong) was printed on banners and community events were organized consisting of family activities and the showing of films. An example of a fragment of these films is where fishermen serving in Australian prisons because they were arrested for people smuggling explain why they regret their actions (McNevin et al. 2016: 5).



According to McNevin et al. (2016: 8) 'One of the striking features of the campaign material is the way in which the counter-smuggling message is decontextualized from the broader issues surrounding asylum seekers (...) the idea of asylum and the legal identity of an asylum seeker are absent from the campaign delivery' (McNevin et al. 2016: 8). Instead the crime aspect is accentuated: illegal immigration and the illegality of being a people smuggler, whereby the smuggler is the person responsible for the dangers or irregular (in this case maritime) migration and the migrant is bad for trying to reach Australia illegally (McNevin et al. 2016: 8). The issue is reduced to black and white/right and wrong and the choice is considered purely individualistic.

This campaign has been monitored and evaluated. However, there are multiple perspectives on the effectiveness of the campaign. The IOM stated that they 'have achieved a radical shift in public opinion regarding the social and economic impact of people smuggling (...) people were reported to have moved from general acceptance/tolerance or ignorance, to virtually unanimous rejection of people smuggling' (McNevin et al. 2016: 1). The researchers Schloenhardt & Philipson (2013) described the criteria for effectiveness that drafted prior to the implementation. The evaluation reports state that the target audience has largely been reached and that four out of six assessment indicators had been met (based on both quantitative and qualitative research). These indicators were: greater understanding of legal consequences of people smuggling in Australia and Indonesia, greater understanding of the negative social and economic impacts of people smuggling, reduced willingness by target populations to engage in and/or support people smugglers, and increased reporting of potential people smuggling activities to authorities (Schloenhardt & Philipson 2013: 14). The authors praise the campaign on its positive and encouraging messages, but do suggest there is no evidence whatsoever that this campaign contributed to a decrease in people smuggling. Notwithstanding the flaws, this information campaign is a good example of an 'evidence-based' campaign, which has been extensively researched, designed and evaluated (Schloenhardt & Philipson 2013:).

The campaign has been evaluated by quantitative measurements such as the number of people attending campaign gatherings and the amount of people reporting changes in attitudes about people smuggling. However, these measurements do not simply indicate that these attitudinal changes last or if they motivate behavioral change. This does provide a quick overview of 'successful results' which qualifies as 'proof' that the agency (in this case the IOM) has fulfilled its goals and this in turn is favorable for obtaining similar assignments from donors (McNevin et al. 2016: 11). According to McNevin et al. 2016: 11) this does not suggest that stakeholders in migrant information campaigns act immorally or are merely financially motivated, but the preoccupation nowadays with quantifiable input and output can obscure certain parts of the

implementation of migration information campaigns.

The authors McNevin et al. (2016) propose an entirely different take on the campaign and problematize the alleged success. They do not evaluate the campaign as such, but offer valuable insight in the workings of this campaign. As was briefly mentioned above, the implementers failed to incorporate the income precariousness amongst the target audience and instead focused on legal, moral and theological aspects of people smuggling, despite the market research that was conducted and actually highlighted this pervasive economic pressure (McNevin et al. 2016: 5). Moreover, based on a detailed anthropological study by Carnegie (2014), 'illegal or quasilegal activities have long been part of the fishing communities' strategies of adaptation to precarious livelihoods' and this is 'neither abnormal nor shameful' (McNevin 2016: 12).

Furthermore, a 'perverse incentive' can be detected since the 'campaign contributed to disincentives to rescue asylum seekers stranded at sea in ways that sat in tension with both the rights-based approach advocated by the IOM and with the emphasis on saving lives at sea that currently attaches to many states' counter-smuggling initiatives' (McNevin et al. 2016: 2). This is based on narratives from informants from the fieldwork done by the authors. The fisherman said people are aware of the severe penalties for people smugglers and the fact that Australian authorities would intercept/destroy boats carrying asylum seekers even if fishermen simply try to save people instead of smuggling them to Australia (McNevin et al. 2016). Due to these facts they are already quite reluctant to engage in these activities in the first place. The looming prospect of being detained or only investigated by Australian police can mean an enormous dent in one's income. The authors assert that this 'disincentive to rescue' is not the reason why this campaign is not effective, but they underscore 'the difficulty of containing the impact of the techniques deployed in the campaign (McNevin et al. 2016: 10).

The campaign examined

The description above already entails the alleged strengths and weaknesses of this campaign, but it is interesting to include a number of links to the theoretical framework.

First, the framing of the decision of becoming a people smuggler is interesting. It is described as an individual rational choice and the smuggler is held responsible for illegal migration. This goes beyond the economic despair these potential smugglers are living with and the motivations/aspirations of migrants remain completely obscured. It paints both the smugglers and the migrants as 'criminals'. This is interesting, since smugglers wouldn't cast themselves as 'unlawful villains' but as people who are trying to make ends meet and do whatever is necessary to take care of their families. The difference in moral framework between the implementer and the target audience becomes clear here. Moreover, the migrants that wish to engage with Indonesian smugglers will likely see them as 'service providers' who 'help' them reach their destination country: Australia. Second, the intended goal is reducing the number of people smugglers (which in turn possibly reduces the number of illegal maritime crossings) by communicating with the potential Indonesian smugglers that this 'profession' is unlawful, sinful and immoral. However, as became clear in the description above, these three negative terms are of only of secondary importance to the target audience. This means the message does not carry that much weight in the decision-making process of the Indonesian fishermen.

Third, the message is basically 'don't become a people smuggler', but there is no mention of alternatives. Again; fear of being immoral, sinful and unlawful is conjured up, but no solution is offered. Where are the economic prospects these men so desperately need?

The second part of this analysis is based on the thirteen interviews that were conducted, the two meetings and one workshop at the EU in Brussels and the visit to the 'on-the-ground' campaign. Below another table is visible to illustrate the campaigns that were addressed during the interviews. These campaigns will be thoroughly described; examined; complemented with quotes from the respondents and theoretical links are interwoven in the text instead of discussed separately like the literature overview.

Apart from the focus on these particular campaigns, the respondents that were interviewed also offered insight in the decision-making process of migrants. It will become clear that informing potential migrants only has a limited effect on their decision-making process. Special attention will briefly be devoted to the importance of evaluations. The final section of the analysis includes an overview of the so-called 'best practices' of implementing a migrant information campaign.

Table of campaigns based on empirical data

Campaign	Goal	Target Audience	Campaign details		
			Medium	Implementers	Evaluation / Effects
'Labor Migrants'	Inform about right and duties	Potential Polish, Bulgarian and Romanian labor migrants	Public meetings, Facebook, websites, brochures	Dutch embassies in Poland, Romania and Bulgaria. Principal: Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment	Yes; but not open to the public
'La Strada campaigns'	Inform about the risks of being trafficked and about the rights of trafficked people	Potential victims of trafficking (both male and female), but also social services that support these people varying from law enforcement to shelters	Printed materials, hotline, social media, TV	La Strada International, often in cooperation with other NGO's or governments	Sometimes
'Telling the Real Story'	Informing potential migrants about the risks and give a realistic view on life in Europe	Potential migrants, especially in African countries	Online platform (social media)	UNHCR	Unknown
'Potential IC' designed by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Inform about the risks of migration and give objective information about life in the Netherlands	Potential migrants from the countries with the highest influx in the Netherlands	Unknown, but options varying from printed materials to public/church meetings are being reviewed	Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Possibly other actors such as IOM or other NGOs	Idea is to monitor closely and evaluate thoroughly
'Campaign 'on-the-ground'	Inform migrants on alternatives/offer objective information	Potential migrants	'On-the-ground' influencers (see analysis for more detailed information)	Employees of Farsight. These people implement the campaign 'face-to face- or 'in real life'	Yes; extensive and advanced evaluation system: sometimes actual behavioral change (see analysis)
'Migrant Information Strategy Task Force' (EU)	Inform about the risks of migrants and provide objective information about what to expect in Europe	Potential migrants (no specific groups demarcated yet)	Online 'hub'/platform but these plans are still unfolding	European Union: DG Home; other stakeholders (see in campaign description)	Evaluations are high on the agenda, but no outline has been made so far

Campaigns

Campaign targeted at potential labor migrants by the Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment

The Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment has implemented information campaigns targeted at potential labor migrants from Poland, Bulgaria and Romania who wish to move and work in the Netherlands. In the Netherlands, it is not well known that the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment is currently carrying out these information strategies, although it is in no way intentionally kept from the public. These campaigns are carried out by the three Dutch embassies in these eastern European countries. The initiative started in 2013 and runs till the end of 2016 with possible extension.

In 2007, migrant workers from Central and Eastern European countries that joined the EU in 2004 acquired access to the Dutch labor market. The largest group coming to the Netherlands consisted of Polish workers. In 2014, the same access was granted to Romanian and Bulgarian workers, but the expected increase of migrants from these countries failed to materialize. The current number of labor migrants from Central and Eastern European countries is unknown, although it is clear that the three most important sending countries are the abovementioned countries with Poland still taking the lead (McGauran et al. 2016: 12).

The Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment has given the embassies of the respective countries the assignment to 'manage the expectations' of potential migrants by providing objective information on the labor market and to warn against fraudulent employment/recruitment agencies. The official aim then of these information campaigns is to inform potential labor migrants and not specifically dissuade people from coming. Additional embassy personnel was hired, who are familiar with the living conditions of the country but are also experienced in communication studies, with the task of coming up with a communication strategy/plan to inform potential labor migrants. It differs per country what mediums are being used, although social media is quite popular in all three countries. For instance, Facebook pages offer information and websites are designed where amongst other things clips about the working conditions in the Netherlands are displayed. The advantage of using social media as a tool to spread information is the relative cheapness and little effort. Apart from these practices, regional meetings are organized in cooperation with NGO's and employment agencies with the goal to disseminate useful information. The combination of providing useful information for the target audience concerning their rights and obligations when migrating for labor reasons and the direct interaction with the target audience so that the needs of information become clearer are two 'ingredients' for a successful campaign (Browne 2015: 4).

An interesting example is the showing of a Dutch documentary called 'Meisjes van de Vleesfabriek'⁶ (Girls in the meat factory) during local Polish gatherings. This AvroTros 3 doc documentary was not made for this purpose but permission was given to show the material.

⁶ To watch: http://www.npo.nl/3doc/04-09-2014/AT_2020733

This documentary tells the story of three young Polish girls who are working in the Dutch meat industry. The work is exhausting, both mentally and physically, and the girls seem quite unhappy. However, none of them want to return to Poland because of the lack of (job) opportunities there. We see the girls at work, in their homes, the homesickness and warnings not to blindly trust employment agencies that often make false promises. This is not to say that the documentary only conveys 'negative' images and attempts to 'correct' the false images that exist about the Netherlands. The girls are in agreement that having a job is better in the Netherlands and pays more than in their home country and they can take care of themselves better. If this were not the case, they would return and be with their family and loved ones. This is a significant example of how disseminated information can be balanced; both positive and negative aspects are addressed and no judgment is made on the decision of the girls to come to the Netherlands. The stories of the girls are gritty but factual portrayal of life in the Netherlands. Apart from, the messaging the use of 'testimonies' is often encouraged since the target audience will feel more involved and will see the relevance to their own lives. According to the respondent, the main message they wish to convey is that people need to be well informed about what they can expect in the Netherlands and they need to take into account the positive and the negative features of moving to the Netherlands before making a decision. It doesn't neglect the motivation for moving to the Netherlands: rationally this is the best option for these girls. The cost/benefit analysis is obvious in this case and the (potential) migrants are not approached from a standpoint that judges these people for their ignorance, which is sometimes the case in campaigns that tackle irregular migration. Of course, the legal versus illegal target audience differs, but the goal of the campaign remains the same: to inform.

Apart from balanced information, providing alternatives is a key element when implementing migrant information campaigns. These campaigns offer several recommendations for example to look for certified employment agencies and to look up the rights and duties of a labor migrant in the Netherlands. According to the report by McGauran et al. (2016) the situation is even grimmer than one would expect. Although the Dutch government is actively trying to battle labor exploitation and unacceptable working conditions amongst Central and Eastern European migrants, this is unfortunately still reality. 'This can take the form of long working hours, intimidation by employers and recruitment agencies, discrimination, underpayment, unlawful fees or fines and other labour rights violations' (McGauran et al. 2016: 8). The proposed solution by the researchers of the just mentioned report is to regulate the recruitment agencies via the state. Up until now, this has not been the approach the Dutch government has adopted.

The campaigns are not 'polished' or 'flashy' (using the words of the respondent), but can be considered rather low profile. When asked whether this information is actually regarded as trustworthy by the target audience, the answer of the respondent was positive but the importance of other information sources was not denied:

'No they do not distrust us, because the information comes from the government and that is seen as a reliable source. But we also know that –because of studies performed on the target audience- that the question of why these people come to the Netherlands is mainly linked to the friends and family already present in the destination country. That feature plays the key role in their decision.'

This alleged high level of trust in the source is remarkable in light of the existing literature. Browne (2015) writes that prospective migrants don't trust information coming from governments or even international organizations in general and this idea is echoed in numerous other studies. A possible explanation for the assumed trustworthiness is that people at the embassies are 'one of their own' or the element of dissuasion is not that strong since emigration to EU Member States is legal.

The evaluation of these campaigns is not very high on the agenda, although a concise evaluation exists but due to privacy reasons this will not be made public. At the ministry, the initiatives by the embassy personnel are being discussed every few months but no real targets were established prior to the implementation of the projects. This is also the main disadvantage of these information campaigns according to the respondent:

'We don't know whether people are better informed because of the information we disperse. We don't know if it makes people think twice about coming to the Netherlands or if maybe the campaign actually plants ideas into people's heads 'let's go to the Netherlands' (...) I don't know if we could ever find out. The only thing I know is that the number of Poles is rather stable, but I do not claim that's because of the campaign.'

No mention was made of the reception of the information by the target audience. It is impossible to measure the impact of a communication campaign. Contrarily to some other respondents who mainly claimed success, this respondent was quite aware of this.

La Strada initiatives

La Strada International and their members (see annex for more information) utilize information campaigns to inform and educate potential victims of human trafficking but also labor exploitation. It differs per member (county) which topic has priority. The target audience consists of people who have already been exploited/trafficked and need help, at-risk groups (especially in eastern European countries) and help services such as the police, women shelters, social workers. Anti-trafficking awareness campaigns are a common technique that is used in Europe. When these campaigns are carrying the message 'don't migrate because you'll get trafficked', they will not be taken seriously by the target audience, but campaigns that actually inform the target audience to secure a better livelihood are more likely to be effective (Dottridge 2007: 41).

La Strada International (and members) divides their services approximately fifty/fifty: prevention in the shape of communication campaigns and immediate help and support for victims.

According to the respondent:

'Information is key. It is important that people receive good information and that becomes harder and harder these days because you cannot easily control information and people obviously start searching themselves. In reality, you are only one of the many messengers.'

This quote perfectly illustrates both the upside and downside of information campaigns. Informing people of the dangers –in the case of La Strada also on their rights- regarding migration is in itself a good or ‘humanitarian’ approach. However, the impact of this information remains questionable, since there are so many channels and sources of information nowadays and close relationships are trusted above all (Castles et al. 2015).

This type of information campaigns differs slightly from other campaigns addressed in this thesis, although Nieuwenhuys & Pécoud (2007) stress that distinguishing between the messages of both anti-trafficking and irregular migration campaigns is quite difficult, because the arguments made in anti-trafficking campaigns (e.g. visa, work permit, registration, think carefully) are often also presented in migrant information campaigns. ‘Even if the presentations of the campaigns insist on their anti- trafficking component, their messages may also be compatible with the fight against irregular migration (Nieuwenhuys & Pécoud 2007: 1683). In the case of the NGO La Strada this ‘skeptical’ judgment of anti-trafficking campaigns is not necessarily applicable since their goal is not ‘stop migration’, but for directly government-funded campaigns this is an interesting conception to keep in mind. In general, there is less critique on these campaigns since trafficking is ‘internationally recognized as a human rights violation (...) there is a consensus on the need to fight trafficking’ (Nieuwenhuys & Pécoud 2007: 1678). The ‘humanitarian’ goal prevails here.

There are similarities in other aspects, such as the channels through which the messages are disseminated, the (lack of) evaluations, the way the target audience is studied, the financing structure. It is interesting to zoom in on these similarities for a moment. The messages are dispersed through a wide array of channels. Social media is used quite often, but the members also print flyers and brochures. Billboards are erected at airports and embassies have prevention materials. In schools, but also for example in orphanages topics regarding human trafficking/exploitation are discussed. Many members also have a hotline where people can ask their questions. Testimonies are used but not that frequently although the respondent mentioned:

‘We should do that more. There are two reasons for it: people always want to hear stories from victims and it makes something so abstract (trafficking/exploitation) more personal. You can see twenty people were exploited, but that doesn’t really hit home. The question is how to do it. We do it in a way that people are unrecognizable and we sometimes change details or we combine several stories to tell one story.’

How is the message formulated/illustrated?

‘There are a lot of people in marketing that say you need to shock the audience, but we often feel that we don’t want to do that. What if people start to think all victims of human trafficking are bound by shackles. We have agreed not to do that. People in the campaigns should be dressed, not too sexy because that is something else you see so often: only drop-dead gorgeous women –which sure is often the case- but the group that is being exploited is so much more diverse than that image.’

Andrijasevic (2007) wrote a much-cited essay on the ‘stereotypical constructions of femininity’ in anti-trafficking campaigns. She warns that by objectifying and displaying women in an erotic or

captured way, the women are reduced to helpless victims without agency. Moreover, women's migration is equated with forced prostitution and implicitly the best idea is to stay at home. She goes as far as to state that 'this type of representation restages the familiar scenario where female bodies are portrayed as passive objects of male violence and are positioned within the spaces of the home and the nation' (Andrijasevic 2007: 26). As the respondent rightly noted, the personal relevance of the message can be lost when the target audience doesn't identify at all with the beautiful women in these campaigns, which is one of the strategies of not considering information mentioned by Hernández-Carretero & Carling (2012)

What about the evaluations of anti-trafficking projects and campaigns?

The respondent asserts that La Strada International has not evaluated national campaigns (campaigns implemented by donors) and they are not necessarily involved in those national projects. She offers two examples of campaigns that were evaluated with the members themselves: 'One Story. Two Outcomes' and 'Used in Europe'. An external evaluation was carried out –though small-scale- in the shape of an online questionnaire for the target audience on what they thought of the campaigns. What is also taken into account is the 'quantitative' way of measuring: looking at the amount of links clicked on, likes, media interest, reactions from politicians etcetera. This last feature is interesting, because La Strada actively tries to 'lobby' for their cause at national governments; one of the ways they do this is by implementing these campaigns to generate awareness. This is a good example of the 'structural strategy' that Atkin & Rice (2013: 532) discuss in their chapter, which focuses on the need for institutional change instead of only focusing on individual responsibility to act a certain way.

The respondent stresses that:

'Quite often we have called for monitoring and evaluations, also amongst our other stakeholders. And we do understand that it is important to look at impact and evaluation. Who says what we're doing is useful and are people even interested? You often see that there is just no budget to also do evaluations.'

The significance of evaluating anti-trafficking information campaigns –and projects in general- is understood. However, this is more easily said than done. 'Asking people who have received information during awareness raising campaigns what they have learned does not in itself confirm that they will pay attention to the advice given, so it is difficult to assess the impact of awareness raising initiatives without organising surveys some years later to find out how the recipients of advice behaved afterwards' (Dottridge 2007: 41).

The question is also if people feel that the message is relevant to them personally. The respondent said the following –which is again in correspondence with the mechanism of non-personal relevance mentioned by Carling & Hernández-Carretero (2011)- about this:

'People never think they are being exploited. People always think I'll be fine; it won't happen to me. Some people have left three or four times and exploited every single time and they still believe they'll get the money from their first job abroad because they are

entitled to it. Which there are of course, but they have this deep faith in these bosses and it is really difficult to change that belief.'

Who are the donors of such projects?

' We have a very diverse set of subsidiaries, which can be quite difficult. We've had core funding for a few years from the EU, always a year program for instance they had available resources for a three-year program but we didn't get that one. At the moment we only have project-based subsidies, especially from the European Commission. We receive money from the EU but the disadvantage is that if they have money available they do not have in mind precisely what types of projects it should be spend on. What you see is that everybody (all kinds of NGOs) apply for subsidy so it's incredibly competitive.'

An example of a recent information campaign that initially achieved counter-productive effects is a Bulgarian La Strada initiative. Luckily these adverse effects could be rectified.

Animus information campaign (Bulgarian La Strada) implemented the campaign titled: 'There is something rotten with this ad' (see below). The goal of this campaign was raising awareness about the outright lies listed in these specific ads. The advertisements promised 100 euros a day for picking strawberries (or other fruits), which is far from the reality of this business. The idea was to educate potential labor migrants who were interested in the profession of picking fruit that these advertisements should *not* be trusted. However, many Bulgarians started ringing the phone number (hotline of La Strada) asking about how they should go about applying for such as great job offer. Thus initially, the campaign had a counterproductive effect or a so-called 'perverse incentive': potential labor migrants believed the advertisements to be true and became interested in this lucrative job opportunity. In the end, the campaign was successful –be it with a detour– since all the potential labor migrants called the phone number of Animus and the employees of the organization could explain very thoroughly that the posters did not portray real job opportunities. Moreover these types of advertisements should never be trusted in the future.



UNHCR: Telling the real story and future plans

Before diving into the description of 'Telling the real story', it is interesting to provide some background information of the UNHCRs view on awareness campaigns. 'Information alone will not prevent irregular movements if the push factors are sufficiently serious, as individuals will embark on irregular travel regardless of the risks involved. Access to information, however, may enable individuals to make informed decisions, where they have a choice' (UNHCR 2010: 264).

UNHCR has started the online platform 'Telling the Real Story' where migrants that have already undertaken the journey can share their experiences. Important to note is that the UNHCR sees itself as a 'mediator' who gives the resources and enables the platform to thrive, but it is branded really low and the fact that the UNHCR is sponsored mostly by the EU is not conspicuous at all. The reason for this is that the target group distrusts formal institutions; thinks they have ulterior motives so they will be more sensitive to experiences from people they can identify with. The people that were initially approached were Eritreans and Somalis, because these two populations accounted for the most deaths and the most migrants coming to Europe but since the implementation two years ago people from several African countries upload their stories. The goal of the project is to help migrants make an informed decision and not dissuade them from going. This message is disseminated via real life testimonies from people (interviews, videos, audio, letters, photos etcetera) on the official website but also on Facebook. In addition to social media, schools organize meetings; posters are put up and theater versions of stories are performed. According to the respondent, approximately one third portrays positive experiences and two third negative ones. The 'mythical picture of Europe' should be corrected and offering a realistic picture of the continent can do this.

Before implementing an information campaign, it is important to understand the target audience. What channels and sources of information do they use? What information do they get from communities already living in Europe? What information do they share with their friends and family back home? The UNHCR has conducted research on these matters before implementation. Two main findings were that smugglers' information is highly valued and trusted and people report back overly positive pictures to people at home since the pressure of succeeding is immense. What about the evaluation phase? 'Telling the real story' has not been evaluated (not to my knowledge), but the UNHCR claims success. When asked 'define success' the respondent answered:

'For the UNHCR it is important that awareness is created. It is wrong to think that by implementing these information strategies numbers will go down. So we are now focusing more on the pull factors and providing migrants a more neutral image instead of the embellished ones that they so often seen'.

The respondent did add that quantitative evaluation, such as keeping track of how many likes, shares and comments online is done. This does give you an objective measurement tool, but what exactly do you measure? Whether you have created awareness or to go one step further you have made people reconsider their migration plans (which is not what the UNHCR goal is they insist)

remains unclear. To add one critical last note, this platform –initially intended for Eritreans and Somalis- is filled with horrendous stories of abuse and hardship experienced during the journey to Europe, but no alternatives are offered and the horrific stories can be regarded as fear appeal messages. This is remarkable, since the UNHCR insists its goal is *not* deterring potential migrants (Schans & Optekamp 2016 in press). Moreover, the UNHCR published a list of ‘best practices’ concerning aspects that need to be taken into account when designing an awareness campaign; providing legal avenues and including rights and obligations for refugees/migrants are essential (UNHCR 2010: 266).

The project the UNHCR (respondent for this research specifically) is currently working on is still under wraps, but the importance of the research phase is emphasized and is now almost completed. The target groups are Afghans and more broadly ‘Arab-speaking people’. There is quite a big difference between these groups and in order to design the best possible information strategy it is important to understand what brings these people to migrate and what resources do they have. How was this studied? The researchers are familiar with the languages and browse the Internet for clues of what is actually going on in the online community and what are the needs of the potential migrants so to speak. Apart from trailing the internet, they have also spoken with diaspora in four European countries to understand more comprehensively what information they disseminate to their country of origin and they are trying to look for the narratives that people smugglers put out there so they can counter it. The way the messages will be dispersed differs per target audience. According to research, Afghan potential migrants are often not highly educated, thus radio programs and ‘entertainment’ seem like the best channels. The Arabic-speaking potential migrants will mostly be reached via social media. These two target audiences are also distinct in how aware they are of what is happening in Europe. Afghans are mainly unaware of the political climate and they are often ‘completely under the spell of smugglers’. These smugglers are well-respected people in Afghan society and trusted above anyone else. Contrarily, Syrians for instance are often well educated and look for routes and recommendations online and only request the help of smugglers for parts of the journey they can’t do alone. The respondent provided a telling example of how sometimes the logic of the western world fails to grasp these differences in populations:

‘European governments posting stuff in newspapers and other formal channels are not well-informed, since most of the target audience don’t even have money to buy a newspaper, don’t generally use formal channels anyway and they definitely don’t read newspapers from Jordan or Lebanon if they live in another country (...) For example, Germany has invested in billboards and social media campaigning in big Afghan cities, but in this way you reach the city residents and the people who have WiFi but not the people in remote places.’

Whether the project will generate intended outcomes (the official goal was not mentioned but it is about informing people on what to expect) remains unclear, but this project is a good example in which the research phase is not skipped, but actually underscored.

The growing interest of the Dutch government in migrant information campaigns

The plan to implement migrant information campaigns is still in its infancy; therefore concrete details about future projects cannot be discussed here. However, it is interesting to zoom in on how this first (research) phase develops. The goal of such a campaign is providing realistic information for potential migrants. When posing the question of the goal a few times, the respondent gave the following answer:

'Yes purely informing people. Yes, you also hope that the impact in safe countries will be that less people decide to come to the Netherlands. That's a goal besides informing.'

Formulated this way, it becomes clear that although organizations and governments say it's merely informing and dedicated to the well-being of migrants, the underlying goal is often reducing the number of illegal migrants from a specific country. This corresponds neatly with the existing body of literature (Nieuwenhuys & Pécoud 2007; Carling & Hernández-Carretero 2011; Heller 2014). Creating a narrative in which 'saving lives' by providing factual information is the ultimate goal obscures the underlying motive (Carling & Hernández-Carretero 2011: 49). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Safety and Justice are involved in this endeavor and the respondent stated that the interest in these campaigns is:

'Politically driven: Germany was doing all sorts of things with information provision in the Balkan and the Netherlands is doing nothing. Why is that? That needs to change.'

This is similar to the guesses several respondents made (see next section).

The target audience is carved out by 'mapping' numerous countries, which initially means that a list of the most important sending countries is made. Subsequently, these audiences need to be studied because a clear picture is needed of the motivations, the travel routes and educational levels. The importance of this is well known amongst the future implementers. This aspect of preliminary research of the target audience to identify the information gaps is often emphasized (IOM 1999). Figures on which countries are 'sending' the most people is not particularly difficult; the CBS (Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics) or the IND (Dutch Naturalization Services) can offer help in this department. Qualitative research to lay bare the motivations, aspirations and the usage of information is harder to come by and this needs to be done in the field.

What mediums will be used remains unclear, but several channels were mentioned such as social media, local radio broadcasts, theater, and leaflets. The idea is also to cooperate with for instance the IOM, embassies, community houses, tribal elders, artists, and famous people to enhance the likability and reliability. The potential use of these sources, especially close community relations and the use of famous or people that are admired is generally found to be advantageous in terms of credibility and trustworthiness (Atkin & Rice 2013).

What about evaluations? Are there concrete criteria already formulated?

'Not yet. But it is definitely our intention to evaluate. It is important to have good indicators and demarcate the target audience'.

As becomes clear from the outline above, these ideas are still rudimentary and not yet fully formed. The interview with this respondent took place in early May, but the information strategies were set to be ready in the summer.

Farsight

Farsight's personnel have more experience than anyone in the world on migration communications campaigns and have implemented these behavioral change campaigns in Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Europe, Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Malaysia. These campaigns have reached more than 2 million migrants. The campaigns are based on extensive research, although this research is not always publicly available:

'Ultimately the donor who commissioned the research owns the data and it is up to them to decide to share it. Depending on what the issue is, the donor will make a decision about this. For example, research on modern slavery will almost always be shared by donors, but in my experience migrant communication campaign research isn't. What that means specifically for communication research is that Farsight has data from more than 30,000 interviews conducted in Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Libya, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Syria, Indonesia, France, Italy, the UK, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, Lebanon and Turkey that is not publicly available. That data gives us the opportunity to produce models and run queries on almost any question you would want to know about migrant motivations. We use those findings to evaluate our campaigns, design and tweak campaigns and to publish interesting research products on migration – some of which you will see on our site.'

This illustrates an advanced way of studying the target audience prior to the design of an information campaign.

Farsight distinguishes itself from other organizations in multiple ways. Firstly, the art of disseminating information is quite unique. The employees of Farsight directly approach their target audience (prospective migrants) and interact with them multiple times. The employees that are recruited need to be from the same community; they need to speak the language and be familiar with the norms and customs. These people are trained before entering the field; for example a new approach they're taking is have psychologists coach them into recognizing people's motivations/aspirations in order to find out how best to influence them. Discussing migration aspirations or possibly concrete plans of the target audience suggests a tailor-made and personalized approach. The advantages of this way of communicating are enhanced personal relevance, information is accepted and memorized more often and information is shared more frequently with others. Moreover, the central route is used to process the information, which

results into a greater likelihood of persuading someone (Jan Renes et al. 2011: 37). The goal then is to provide factual information and counsel people and make sure they have thought through their decisions. The first part of the goal is quite similar to other mentioned campaign (providing factual information so that would-be migrants are aware of all the facets of migrating). The implementation however is not. Here a comparison can be drawn to the marketing arena of advertisement. This distinction between more 'traditional' ways of disseminating information and more 'innovative' ways can be captured in the marketing speech with 'above the line (ATL) and below the line (BTL) advertising'. ATL is directed at big masses, mediums such as TV and billboards are used, the goal is to increase the familiarity with the brand and the effects are difficult to measure. BTL targets a selected group, approaches customers in a direct way e.g. via email listing and is focused more on short-term revenue. Consequently, the effects are measurable and the return on investment becomes clear (Factortachtig 2008).

Farsight personnel thus actively engage with its target audience and attempts to *influence* people directly. This is the second aspect that sets the organization apart from others: the way they measure impact. The interactions are all logged and after several months the people from the target audience are called and asked what they are up to now. If they are still in the country, which they initially wanted to leave, but information has made them change their minds, this is considered a success. The effectiveness can be measured in this rather advanced manner. When asked about the way the organization evaluates the respondent explained:

'Every aspect of every consultation our people have is logged and available for analysis by our analysts, project managers and coordinators. Our staff receive weekly feedback on their reporting and ways to improve their consultations. Our staff does not have impact targets (e.g. the number of people they have convinced to change a behavior) they only have reach targets (e.g. the number of people they need to consult with each month). This means they are not incentivized to provide misleading impact reports. We guard against false reporting in two ways, the first is the targets each month are achievable and most always exceed them, the second is that we conduct random check-backs on 2.5% of reports each month by calling the respondent who has their details listed separate to the consultation report.'

This is where the third distinction becomes clear: Farsight is directly involved in *behavioral change* instead of only creating awareness. One of the respondents described a 'rule of thumb' in how many people can theoretically be influenced in their decision-making: 10% of the entire population that might consider migration. Farsight will reach 15-30% of these people. This means there is behavioral change, at least in the short term since these people renounce from taking the trip. This behavioral change comes about via two approaches: official sources, for instance;

'Media influencing involves partnering with media organizations in source countries to ensure a big increase in coverage of relevant migration messages through news stories, talk shows, investigative journalism reports, documentary reports, inserts into TV shows etcetera.'

and becoming involved in the conversations about this factual information. The 'influencers' on the ground do this. If the information is objective and factual, this would suggest room for 'migration success stories' as well since this is part of reality. Or is there a constant flow of 'negative' messages? This persistent flow of negative images and stories refers to the use 'fear appeal messages' explained in the theoretical framework, which tends to not yield favorable results (Kruisbergen 2005). The respondent said:

Negative messages do work when they are reinforced by facts, other related but different negative messages and they are delivered by a trusted, knowledgeable person who never says the words 'you should not do it'. For example, one of our Local Migration Experts (LME) meets with someone considering leaving Kurdistan for Germany. This is a complex person just like you or I, who has likely thought a lot about migration and has discussed it at length with friends and family. They have probably seen people they know on Facebook that have made the journey and that makes them think their chances of success are high. No doubt they have heard one or two negative things about the journey, but people almost always underestimate the bad side of things when making an emotional decision, which is what a migration decision usually is. So in reality all people hear is good things about migrating.

The LME (local migration expert) spends an hour or two talking with this person, listening to what they are looking for from the migration attempt (e.g. a new life, safety, good job, education, etc). The LME can then give them facts about what that destination country will be like for that person on every aspect of what they have said is a motivation. Some will be positive, most will not. You then discuss with them the opportunity cost of the journey, which is an area that very few actually understand. The opportunity cost is actually pretty big – the debt of the agent, potential for injury or death (although less likely), accruing more debt while living without protection in these countries, the lost time of all of this and then what the job opportunities are for someone from another country when there are already millions of migrants in Europe. They then ask questions like, what could you do if you stayed here, what could you accomplish with all that money you are going to spend on the journey? The opportunity cost discussion at the end of the realities of life discussion (which remember is based on all the motivations they listed) is a hugely effective discussion.

As illustrated above, Farsights campaigns are different from more traditional campaigns and achieve changes in behavior, something that is incredibly difficult for any type of public communication campaign (Atkin & Rice 2013). This begs the question why other organizations aren't copying this approach. One of the respondents offered a two-fold explanation: 1. Donors tend to opt for 'familiar' organizations and NGOs when it comes to migrant information campaigns 2. Organizations have a high retention and people temporarily work on these projects before being replaced; there is no general knowledge bank on which to base future designs.

Farsights 'clients' include European governments, but which countries use their service remains obscured. Possibly because countries don't want other countries to know what they're up to and

they seem to not want to let their own population know either. This is an interesting observation, since the official goal is informing migrants about a complex decision.

Migrant Information Strategy Task Force

Europe is currently facing an unprecedented influx of migrants and asylum seekers.

One of the ways in which this issue is being addressed is by taking a closer look at the role of information provision for (potential migrants). The Justice and Home Affairs Council requested the European Commission to set up a 'common information strategy' aimed at (potential) migrants, migrant smugglers and traffickers. In answer to the request, the European Commission put together a 'Task Force on Migrants' Information Strategy' (MIS TF from here on) led by DG Home (Directorate-General of the European Commission dedicated to the policies regarding migration and home affairs). The actors of this Task Force include the 'Communication sector' of the DG Home, the Dutch Presidency (The Netherlands EU Presidency in the first half of 2016), the Council's Secretariat General, EUROPOL, FRONTEX, EASO (European Asylum Support Office) and EEAS (European External Action Service). This project is financed by the EU and AMIF funding has been made available.

What contains the Migrants' Information Strategy?

There are three phases, which will be addressed subsequently. The first phase entails the 'assessment phase', which can be seen as the 'research' phase. Before the implementation of the strategy, it is important to collect relevant intelligence on the target audience in general (motives, aspirations etcetera for migrating) and which channels they use to gather information for the journey. The emphasis on preliminary research on target audience is (re) commendable (IOM 1999). The next phase is called 'content-production'. This is still ongoing; texts on EU migration legislation and procedures are written and counter-narratives are being developed amongst other things. The final step is the dissemination of the main messages the EU wants to send to (potential) migrants. The messages will be communicated via both institutional and non-institutional channels, although the emphasis will most likely lie on non-institutional actors channels. According to the literature this is good practice -especially if the official 'sender' is the EU- because 'many will discard information if they consider that its intention is to prevent them from realizing their aspirations. Why trust negative and discouraging information from people who are visibly much better off than themselves?' (Alpes & Sørensen 2015: 3). This rhetorical question keeps popping up and this concept of 'trust' in 'sources' should be high on the agenda when implementing information campaigns in general.

The first and publicly known campaign consists of the EASO operating in existing 'Hotspots', for instance in Greece to inform migrants on the possibilities of applying for asylum and relocation and EU delegations in third countries. This target audience includes migrants that are 'stuck' in Greece, waiting to be relocated. The MIS TF is currently developing a general information strategy aimed at would-be migrants in cooperation with several actors. The plan is not ready for publication yet (hopefully September 2016), but the actors include non-state stakeholders, because of the distrust towards (European) formal institutions. The idea is to involve international media networks to communicate messages on migration. Local journalists, bloggers and

correspondents can disseminate the messages in the native tongues. The plan of developing an 'online media platform' or 'central information hub' aimed at over 300 million migrants and refugees worldwide is under revision and the content for this 'hub' would be taken care of by prominent EU media groups.

What messages should be disseminated?

1. Discouraging migrants to embark on dangerous journeys to reach Europe.
2. Explaining the EU rules on the management of external borders.
3. Disseminating counter-narratives to vulnerable migrants that could become victims of smugglers/traffickers.
4. Informing about prosecution of smugglers/traffickers.
5. Informing about migrant return operations

In addition to these messages, it must be clearly stated that migrants cannot choose in which Member State they wish to apply for asylum and that if migrants who have not fled dangerous situations will be returned as quickly as possible. Moreover, it must become clear that cooperation with the national authorities is not a choice but a demand. What is notable about these messages is that the information consists of duties not of the migrants' rights. No information on legal alternatives is given. The pull factors of Europe should be reduced, but the push factors are nowhere discussed. It is a given that a large amount of faulty information that circulates is coming from both smugglers and social ties. However, the question is whether potential migrants need this information and what's more how they even interpret this information (this will be dealt with more thoroughly in the next section).

The narratives that Carling & Hernández-Carretero (2011) propose can be recognized here. The main interests of the EU are protecting Europe and protecting migrants. External borders must be protected, which translates to the desire to control migration flows. At the same time the large-scale loss of life in the Mediterranean calls for better rescue operations, but even more so prevention of further losses of life. Carling & Hernández-Carretero (2011: 45) conclude that 'In terms of narratives, protection of migrants is not only a policy objective, but also a rhetorical tool for justifying control measures.' Seen in this light, the narrative of protecting Europe doesn't stand completely opposite of the narrative of protecting migrants, but it actually appears to be intertwined.

The following information was acquired by attending several meetings where the MIS TF presents itself, the cooperation with other actors and their goals. One of the other stakeholders, the EASO (European Asylum Support Office) gave a presentation on their work in the field on the Greek islands. Important to stress is that the target audience in this particular context comprises migrants that have already reached European shore, thus they are not potential migrants anymore. Naturally, the information they need is way different. The information that is provided by this organization is mainly on relocation and on how to apply for asylum.

The channels of information are numerous. Facebook is a significant medium; the information is presently in English and Arabic, but more languages are set to follow. This difficulty with language is one of the challenging things in general of implementing an information campaign, according to both spokespeople from the DG Home as EASO since translation takes time. A vivid example to

highlight was given: The word 'relocation' needed to be translated to Arabic, but apparently an identical translation doesn't exist. A translator then erroneously translated it to 'deportation'; the folders were printed and handed out. After some time, someone in the refugee camp asked if this was really the message the EASO wanted to distribute. The flyers were quickly retrieved and reprinted. Another challenge is keeping up with the rapid changes in the area of migration (policies, influxes).

How are these messages disseminated? The channels of information are numerous. Facebook is a significant medium; the information is presently in English and Arabic, but more languages are set to follow. Posters and banners are put up in public cases, e.g. the bus station. The development was ongoing at the moment of the meeting. Info packs are handed out, when people reach the shore, filled with useful contacts and information on registration and asylum procedures.

Videos are also made to instruct on how relocation works. It is a rather challenging endeavor since various member states do not wish to cooperate because they fear such a film 'invites' people to come to their country. However, the MIS TF stresses the importance of cooperation between member states and relevant actors.

Migrant Information Campaigns: Assumptions and migrant decision-making

In this first part of the analysis of empirical data, the common misconceptions of Europe are addressed.⁷ Subsequently the sources of information besides migrant information campaigns and the trustworthiness of information campaigns are discussed. The distinct frameworks of migrants and western societies are explored and the rationality of the migrant decision-making is questioned.

Finally, the subject of migrant information campaigns and in particular the art of evaluations is touched upon and a 'best practices' list based on all the thirteen interviews interwoven with the existing body of literature is provided.

Information

To revisit the basic premise of migrant information campaigns: they are a tool to provide aspiring migrants with factual information on the journey to and the social context of the destination country (Nieuwenhuys & Pécoud 2007). Several respondents working for organizations (listed in annex 1) maintained:

'In principle, we think it is very important for potential migrants to be well informed. That is really our most important lesson: be informed. So if there are opportunities to implement projects that have as goal informing then we will want to contribute to that. At the IOM the focus is on information and not prevention or discouragement.'

'What you want is that people know what to expect and not have the cases we have for instance with clients that say if I had known this I would've never come in the first place. That they do not make a decision on misinformation.'

Information is key. 'By raising awareness of the risks of migration and the harsh realities of life in destination countries, information campaigns should counter these illusions and thereby jeopardize smugglers' business' (Nieuwenhuys & Pécoud 2007: 1675). This notion of unrealistic expectations and images of western countries resonates with the majority of respondents:

'First of all, Europe is some sort of unity for them; the average person that comes here did not choose the Netherlands specifically but went to Europe without knowing that Europe consists of so many countries with different laws and languages.'

'Many beautiful stories about Europe are circulating in poor African countries and they of course they are maintained and produced by smugglers. There is this in exterminable myth about how great life is in Europe.'

⁷ Australia has similar issues with the 'too rosy' image of the country, but the respondents all spoke about their experiences with people who wanted to go to Europe. This is the reason why only this continent is mentioned in this part of the analysis.

'You need the feedback of the potential migrant. You need to understand what it is they want to know; what are their informational needs. And campaigns can really be useful to correct wrong ideas about Europe. For instance, 46% of the Eritreans we spoke with thought Europe needed them for labor, 64% thinks it's easy to cross the border, 37% thought you could travel freely across Europe, some don't know Europe is not one country, 30% thinks they can start a job immediately upon arrival. There are many specific things that you can inform about and it should be focused locally; an Eritrean does not identify himself with a Syrian.'

Despite Europe's (meaning all relevant stakeholders in regards to migrant information campaigns) best attempts to include images of austerity and alleged dissuasive information (e.g. stricter policies on family reunification or a cut in welfare budgets) and exclude favorable facts and ideas about the continent, this message doesn't seem to penetrate the target audience.

Looking at it from the equivalency theory –and in particular the 'loss framing'– Europe is trying to highlight the risks of migration and the potential bad outcomes. Adopting a different perspective, the issue framing, it becomes clear that Europe is emphasizing certain issues, such as experiencing hardship or even potential death, whereas it mostly hides 'success stories' or ignores positive consequences of migration (Van den Putte et al. 2015). This illustrates the flawed assumption that factual information is neutral. Stone (2012) underscores the choice of presenting what factual information is disseminated.

Mbaye (2014: 2) concludes in his study that the Senegalese migrants he spoke with often have 'biased and erroneous' expectations of migration and therefore the willingness to migrate illegally and face the risks that come with the endeavor may be based on incorrect information. 'These high expectations are often unrealistic and can lead to a negative migration experience' (Mbaye 2014: 4). This 'romanticized' image of Europe was also touched upon during the EMN Workshop (2016). The diaspora in Europe report back lies because of the pressure to succeed and not be regarded as a loser. There is a big taboo resting on the inability to 'make it' in Europe, which produces this continuous stream of 'rosy' depictions of life in Europe.

A less 'utopia-like' version of Europe was also mentioned:

'Some migrants do 'make it' in Europe. These people act as an example for what can happen. You can leave for Europe, earn money and return two years later and build a house.'

'What was curious to me was that the people who did not have concrete migration plans had a way more positive image of Europe than those you were planning to go. People who were planning on leaving were often already in contact with people there and they spoke about suffering and sleeping in the streets (...) but if you 'succeed' and you find a job or you get papers it is really great in Europe and you're judged on merit and not because of who you know. But whether you succeed is kind of seen as a lottery: you can win but you can also lose.'

'The people that have succeeded are regarded with awe and it's not like these people paint a pretty picture of a bug's life in Europe on the contrary; they had to work hard and they did suffer but they did succeed in the end.'

What must not be overlooked is the notion that if migrant information campaigns convey the message 'life is not that great in Europe', the concept 'great' is relative:

'They are at the bottom of the Maslov pyramid; they are fighting for their lives. They get water, bread and a roof over their head here and they don't have to fear for their lives. For the lowest 'level' this is improvement.'

'A teenager said to me: the west is trying to dissuade us from coming by saying it's not that great here –I don't know where he got this idea but anyway- I asked him if he regretted coming here (since he was living in the streets). He told me: even though I live in the streets, in the park here, it is still a hundred times better than the hell hole I left. And this guy came from Morocco nota bene.'

An example by Farsight (2016) also makes this notable. The Iranians (economic/security motives) respondents interviewed for this study unanimously claimed that life in Europe was much better than at home -even if their income was significantly lower than in Iran- and they were certain life would only improve from now on.

Another quote nicely catches the mismatch between views of people from sending and destination countries:

'There are all sorts of misconceptions but these misconceptions go both ways. There are lot of anti-trafficking campaigns which are quite similar to migration campaigns that have the assumption that one is safer at home and safer away. Or another example: European people/policy and the people in country of origin regard migration failure very differently. If a migrant is undocumented and working for a bare minimum as a cleaning lady for a wealthy European family, then 'we' see that as a failed migration. But in the country of origin this is seen as a great success and even if you can only send home 50 euros'. It is important to distinguish between policy makers' views on migration matters and the emic perspective of the people in the countries of origin'.

Wrong expectations of Europe do exist on a large scale and counter-information could correct these erroneous ideas. However, as was also stated during the EMN Workshop (2016) communication can only do so much. Economic prospects, education and lack of durable solutions in countries of origin are 'food' for the political arena. Jan Renes et al. (2011) also pointed to this: a communication strategy must be complimented with other social interventions to maximize the impact.

Sources and trust

Migrant information campaigns are a rather formal form of disseminating information. Potential migrants often rely on and put their trust in their social network. Friends, family and acquaintances already living abroad or currently underway to Europe provide the most useful information. This is quite uncontested in migration literature (Castles 2015):

'it remains tricky, because the media plays a key role and also the information you get from friends, family and acquaintances. There is so much information out there nowadays.' SH

'How do they (Eritreans) obtain information? There are so many influences; teachers, religious leaders, UNHCR, the government, the Internet, although the majority relies heavily on information from people that have already made it to Europe or are currently en route.'

'I think people might believe their own people more than for instance the IOM, although we use local, informal leaders or religious leaders to disperse the message so it will be met with less suspicion.'

Up until quite recently migration was equivalent to being 'uprooted', since the close ties to the community were severed once people left. Migrants did find ways to stay in contact with people from their homeland through letters and more recently via international phone calls. However, 'in today's network society, the speed and intensity of information and communication flows have increased considerably and are shaping our everyday lives more and more' (Dekker & Engbersen 2014: 401). Apart from keeping in touch with the home front through social media, this communication channel also functions as an information distribution channel. The explosive use of social media in the past few years produces a whole new infrastructure through which relevant information is communicated. Infinite more people can reach each other, creating a network of weak and latent (latent because they have not yet been activated but the possibility of activating it is there) ties. Information then becomes more readily accessible and can reach an overwhelming amount of people (Dekker & Engbersen 2014). Besides the enlarged scope of people that can be reached through social media, the information that is circulating on the web spreads rapidly and is updated continuously. Potential migrants do not only receive 'formal information' spread by governments, but can choose from a wide array of different mediums, which they are likely to trust more.

Let's now zoom in on the concept of trust. It is common knowledge that (potential) migrants are highly suspicious of government information (both their own and foreign authorities) (Gilbert & Koser 2006). Multiple respondents confirmed this and one respondent firmly stated that they (migrants) never look up information on official government websites. In accordance with Gilbert & Koser (2006) who conclude that rumors about policies instead of the policies themselves are important pieces of information. However, this differs per research, since Flea et al. (2016: 8) studied deterrence messages of the Australian governments. They found that amongst their first sample of respondents (from Afghanistan) little was known about Australian migration policies and

most information came from friends or people smugglers. Their second sample (people stuck in transit; Indonesia) told a different story: they were quite aware of the changing Australian border policies but this didn't make them change their minds about being resettled in Australia. One of the independent 'migrant institutions' whose mandate is 'orderly and humane migration' and supports migration is also sometimes regarded with suspicion:

'We (IOM) have a duty to inform these people. It's too easy to say in advance it won't work, they trust smugglers more. We should try to make these people more aware. I think we are better equipped to do that than national governments, even though the IOM has to work on their image a bit, since we are sometimes regarded as working against migration instead of in favor of the migrant. 'We (IOM) are financed by the DT&V (Return programs), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but our most important donor is in Brussels: the EU, we frequently receive money from the EU for national or European projects'. How do we protect our independence? We have our own mandate, but governments both western and nonwestern direct our policies. It is not that we blindly execute the priorities of the member states and the EU. Our mandate is not 'stop migration'; we think migration can be positive and can contribute to receiving countries, but irregular migration is something you should try to prevent. But the EU does list the priorities and if we can contribute to that without losing our principles then we will. Sometimes you are in a bit of a split. We as an organization want migration to be orderly and humane, but take for instance detention centers. Do we want to show our faces there or not; that can be a dilemma.' (IOM respondent)

This ambiguous image of what the IOM stands for was confirmed by several respondents. For instance, the IOM is seen as 'the arm of the west and potential migrants don't trust the IOM'. The same is said about the UNHCR; potential migrants are often aware that this organization receives money from European governments and that the information that is given might be biased according to one of the respondents.

Another significant source of information comes from smugglers. During the EMN Workshop (2016) this was exemplified with the Afghan case. Smugglers have an incredibly high reputation in various regions in Afghanistan. The smugglers actively recruit clients in the marketplace or by doing house visits. For example, they approach a father and tell him that his son is in danger of being taken by the Taliban, but for 9000 euros the son can be 'smuggled to safety'. Another way is by recruiting migrants through Facebook pages. Lists of prices are uploaded, false documents such as passports, visas, diplomas and medical certificates are offered and false promises such as 'you'll immediately get a girlfriend once you've reached Germany' are circulating. The smugglers are usually very much aware of the changing border and asylum policies and can adopt quickly. 'Community and ethnic ties play a role in building trust between some clients and service providers' (Farsight 2016: 13). This also shows that smugglers are not always seen as the 'great evil' (See previous part).

It is interesting to realize that (prospective) migrants don't always trust their fellow countrymen when it comes to information, particularly when they share 'negative' stories:

'It is interesting to look at what information is trusted and how it is interpreted. So you can have a Cameroonian already in Europe saying this and that is dangerous, but it will not be taken seriously and it will not have an impact on the migration aspirations of those who are still in Cameroon. Because those people will argue that the person saying only negative things about Europe because he wants to prohibit the success of the other people.'

'I know people that are desperately trying to explain to the people left in their home country that Europe is not that great and they don't have any money to send back or they will not get permanent residence, but people in the country of origin don't believe it and they don't accept it.'

'I think if you use people from those countries to convey the message 'it's not that great in Europe' that the audience will laugh at them and think they are being paid by the authorities to say that'.

'The people still in the sending country don't believe the hardship and disillusionment that migrants that have already left are enduring and feeling. They think people are lying because they don't want their fellow countrymen to come; they don't want to share the riches they have found. Once people have decided they want to migrate, they don't want to hear negative or dissuasive messages. And if they hear them, they'll make up reasons why people are lying: you have a big car why would you say you're not wealthy!'

'A few people had the tendency to act as mouthpieces; those were mainly the people who had very negative experiences and had failed. It was then their mission to warn and inform friends, family and acquaintances. People listen to these people, but even if they believe you, they might still be gone the next day to try to reach Europe anyway.'

This interpretation is rather obstinate and has already been briefly addressed in the previous discussion of 'faulty' images of Europe. People don't (want to) believe in less-than-perfect depictions of Europe and tend to ignore or discredit information that may create cracks in their idea of Europe. Even if they do find the information reliable from more or less official sources, this still doesn't mean they'll incorporate that piece of information in their decision-making.

Different frameworks

What is more difficult to influence is the moral and political framework in which (potential) migrants see themselves. They often have a different take on smugglers and risks in regards to the journey. Moreover, migrant might interpret information differently than what state actors had in mind. In this part of the analysis, a shift is made from the 'western' conceptions of migration to the ideas of potential migrants and people from sending countries.

Smugglers

Human smugglers are almost always portrayed as the 'bad guys' in western media. The corresponding image that exists is that smugglers are rational actors whose only reason for being in 'the business' is profit making (Van Liempt & Doomernik 2006: 166). Of course, 'smugglers can be brutal in their efforts to maximize profits and to minimize risks to themselves, sometimes to the detriment of migrants' (Townsend & Oomen 2015: 9). Numerous shocking stories dominate the media and smugglers are said to have abused, exploited and even murdered (Reuters 2015). Two of the research respondents painted the following picture:

'There is a difference in types of smugglers. The 'professional' bad guys that are active now are feared by and regarded as thieves by the migrants as well. Once the migrants are in Europe however, they are dependent on networks of people from their own country that can help them further (...) The way to make money is often of your fellow countrymen; you often end up in a smuggler's network and 'help' your people by buying tickets for the train or by telling them where to go and what to do'.

'If you're from Ghana for instance and you reach Libya, you will look for other people from Ghana who can help you and speak your language, this will make you feel safer. Every nationality has their own local network and the person that helps you, your smuggler, can almost qualify as a friend (...) up until the moment that you get onto a boat and are left at the devices of the 'big Libyan bosses whom they are terrified of' you are pretty much in charge of your trajectory (...) Migrants are afraid of those Libyan guys, but they don't want us (the west) to arrest all smugglers because the truth is they need them. They help them.'

This suggests a more nuanced and more complex relationship between a migrant and his smuggler than meets the eye. According to one of the research respondent:

'They see smugglers as facilitators of the journey'.

According to Van Liempt & Doomernik (2006) most of the respondents in their study didn't utter the word 'smuggler'. Moreover, they write that sociological research moves away from the typical image of 'evil criminal' and instead looks a bit further than the punishable act. They draw upon previous studies which conclude that human smugglers are oftentimes 'ordinary citizens' from diverse backgrounds. In fact, smuggling is part of the local economy; a way of making some extra money and the migrants are from the region. It is a generally accepted idea that migrants are dependent on their smugglers and they are resigned to the fact that the service of a smuggler costs money. This way a more nuanced image of human smugglers appears: 'Indeed, the general image of 'the smuggler' (...) is not that of a criminal, but rather someone who is an indispensable service provider' (Van Liempt & Doomernik 2006: 174). Seen from this perspective, human smuggling can also be framed as 'every act whereby an immigrant is assisted in crossing international borders whereby this crossing is not endorsed by the government of the receiving state, neither implicitly nor explicitly' (Van Liempt & Doomernik 2006: 166). The word 'assist'

suggests the supporting aspect of the agreement between migrant and smuggler. The emphasis on a different perspective of a smuggler is also addressed in the UNODC report in which the definition is extended a bit further even: smugglers sometimes view themselves serving migrants (despite the money), implying a certain amount of altruism involved. Vice versa, migrants often describe their smugglers as 'helpers' (UNODC 2011: 8). Van Bommel (2015: 42) also remarks that many of his respondents claimed they saw their smugglers as 'connection men' and people who 'provided a service in exchange for money'. Few migrants actually testify against their smugglers. Townsend & Oomen (2015: 9) offer reasons such as fear of reprisals; avoid being dragged along in a legal case, but also the possibility that their fellow countrymen might need a good smuggler in the future. In addition, Van Liempt & Doomernik (2006: 174) note that smugglers and migrants have a common interest and people that will want to take the journey in the future are in need of 'good' smugglers.

It is clear that smugglers are often painted as 'the bad guys', whereas migrants –not without fear– see these people as agents that can help them reach their goals.

Risks

From a western point of view, it can be hard to believe that people would risk their lives during a journey (at sea, over land) especially if people are aware of the risks. Although migrant information campaigns may suggest otherwise, the majority of people are well aware of the risky situations they might encounter (Van Bommel 2015; Townsend & Oomen 2015; Farsight 2016; Alpes & Sørensen 2015). This implies that the information on risk is not ignored or discredited, but possibly doesn't carry personal relevance or refraining from migrating is seen as a bigger risk (Hernández-Carretero & Carling 2011).

Mbaye (2014: 3) writes that 'The motto of thousands of Senegalese who try to migrate illegally is 'Barsa wala Barsakh', which in Wolof means 'Barcelona or Die'. This suggests that (potential) migrants prefer the risk of dying to staying in their home country where their situation is clouded in hopelessness. Most respondents also agreed upon the idea of awareness of the risks and dangers:

'Overall, they are aware of the risks, especially nowadays.'

'Yes they are aware of the risks, even more so than the risks that are displayed in information campaigns. They have way more detailed information and lots of people try again and again even if they lived through atrocities.'

'Risks do not present itself at the moment of departure. Staying could also be seen as a risk for the migrant. Refraining from taking action is also a risk and it seems that this is not understood by many people.'

'The majority of people is aware of the risks and despite these risks they decide to embark on the journey.'

"I think they think it's not going to happen to me; they filter information through a lens of optimism and hope'.

' I think people often think that won't happen to me and that idea is often correct. Unfortunately a lot of people die at sea but this is a small percentage of the people that cross the sea. If last year a million people made the journey by sea and approximately 3000 died... '.

'Of course people are aware of the boats that sink in the Mediterranean and they know there is a risk that they will not make it. But how big is that risk? About one percent, the vast majority of migrants does make it to Europe alive. When we asked how our respondents judged the chances of drowning about 83% said the probability of dying at sea was is 1%'.

This last quote exemplifies what was posited in the theoretical framework about risk. When more than one million people reach Europe and there are approximately 3800 registered deaths (IOM 2015), the probability of dying during the journey is in fact quite low.

Also the general 'optimism' echoes through these responses. Moreover, various respondents mentioned that if people don't succeed at their first attempt to migrate they often try again:

'His (Khalid Koser: migration researcher) central view is that migration is an economic problem and if you look at Afghans you would almost believe that statement. Afghans often calculate: what does it cost to reach that country or that country and if I get send back then I'll just try again.

These people are 'economic migrants' in the sense that they leave to earn money that they can send back to their families because they are incredibly poor (...) it's almost an economic game they play.'

This quote reflects a rational calculation, but also a persistent attitude and seemingly indifference to risk. Farsights findings (2016: 3) suggest that: 'all respondents, including those who had tried and failed, were positive about the merits of migration, and would recommend others to make the investment. All respondents unsuccessful in their migration attempt intended to try again, although timeframes were not fixed' (respondents from their study).

The strong belief in God as 'protector' or 'ultimately responsible' also came up multiple times during the interviews. This preparatory measure suggests a sense of control for the migrants, while at the same time they surrender control and put it in God's hands:

'They put their faith in God. They pray and they pray and hope they belong to the group that makes it out alive. It's all in God's hands'

"They prepare by focusing on the spiritual aspect: the Muslims suddenly went to the malam (priest) a lot to get his blessing and they started praying more often and live by the rules of the Koran. Christians did similar things, but were less open about it. There is also such a

thing as 'buying' spiritual powers, such as potions and juices to protect them, but it's a bit of a taboo.'

This does not mean that there are risks that are being underestimated or simply not thought about. Two of the research respondents concluded based on their empirical data:

'I think it's too general to say they are aware of all the risks. There are many different kinds of risks. We asked about the physical dangers such as kidnapping, detention, rape etcetera and between 78-93% were afraid of these things (...) other dangers are financial difficulties; if suddenly all your money is gone, or you're robbed, inflation, increased prices from smugglers and you can't go anywhere because you don't have any money left. I don't think they really think about those options. We also asked if they are aware of the costs of going to England or Sweden and this is highly underestimated. Besides, it is often not even their own money, but a loan from family who count on them. They think they'll easily get a job in Europe and start making money to pay people back. That it's not that simple is not on their minds it seems.'

'The risks are not always lethal. Traveling with false documents is not lethal; you only risk getting caught, possibly detained.'

The general idea of risk that exists is of dying at sea or abuse by smugglers. Financial risks or risks of being detained are less conspicuous. Migrant information campaigns often focus on the 'obvious' risks and dangers, even though research has concluded that awareness in respect to these risks is already quite high. What the implementers of migrant information campaigns are attempting is what Slovic (1987) described as trying to readjust faulty 'lay perceptions' of risk by 'educating' the audience based on expert knowledge. Taking into account the quotes and the existing literature on this topic, the question is who is the expert: the migrant or the implementer of the campaign.

Moral framework

One interesting idea that was brought up by one of the research respondents is that (potential) migrants don't often see themselves as 'illegal' or 'criminal'. From their own perspective they are simply trying to move forward in life and chase better opportunities for themselves, but even more for their (future) family:

'They are aware that it is becoming more difficult to reach/prosper in Europe, but there are those who do manage and who are able to support their families. The laws in Europe are not necessarily seen as legitimate and carrying the same norms and values as the migrants. So the migrant will want to take care of the family and if that means doing something 'illegal'.'

'We have to stop thinking of the loss of an individual life, we need to see it more from their point of view in which the potential suicide is a sacrifice that –if succeeded- can alleviate the status of an entire family/network for generations to come.'

These two quotes illustrate that not the individual but the family perspective can be of paramount importance. It is basically a 'family strategy'. Through diversification of risks within families and the sending home remittances, a person can help his family greatly (Haug 2008: 587).

Not much research has been done on the moral framework of (potential) migrants, but Emily Ryo (2013) offers a welcome exception. She studied the 'beliefs, attitudes and social norms regarding U.S. immigration law and legal authorities' and concludes that 'the decision to migrate illegally cannot be fully understood without considering an individual's underlying values and norms' (Ryo 2013: 575). These norms and values differ greatly from the western perspective. Migrating illegally qualifies as an act of 'legal noncompliance' according to western (in this case U.S.) law. Apart from the economic/rational determinants of noncompliance (e.g. perceived certainty of arrest or perceived certainty of punishment), Ryo identifies three social factors that carry considerable weight: morality, legitimacy and social norms. The first quote illustrates this quite nicely. The basic premise of morality is that people tend to see themselves as wanting to do the right thing. the 'right thing' from their perception, that is. The idea of morality is often internalized from childhood on and suggests that 'certain acts and considerations are sacred and nonnegotiable' (Ryo 2013: 582). Applying this to the case of irregular migration, the idea of being entitled to look for better life opportunities elsewhere for oneself or for the family's sake –even if you do have (lesser) opportunities in your own country- can be 'sacred and nonnegotiable'. Legitimacy is linked to the question whether there is procedural justice and when the strict migration policies of the U.S. are not judged as 'fair', people are more likely to agree with the idea that breaking the law is sometimes allowed (Ryo 2013: 585). Finally, Social norms can be defined as 'moral standards attributed to a social group or collective' (Ryo 2013: 578). Consequently, if these norms prescribe behavior that is in opposition with the law, the probability of legal noncompliance increases, since adhering to the group norm suggests courage and a high reputation. When the norm of migration dominates in your social circle -and especially if you have friends, family or acquaintances that have tried/succeeded in migrating, the threshold to migrate becomes lower. The act of migration in this case is one that brings status and demonstrates courage (Ryo 2013: 592). This prevailing of social norms is also addressed in other studies (Van Bommel 2015; Mbaye 2014; Hernández-Carretero & Carling 2012) and elucidates the importance of social status –which can be obtained by migration- in sending countries.

'They are aware of asylum procedures, but these people see themselves as refugees. They think that because they carry that label everything will be all right in Europe. Sure they hear that it is more difficult to enter Sweden for instance or that a ship has sunk, but almost everything they hear is not specifically linked to their country and their situation. If they hear that number of Syrians has died, they'll think but I'm not Syrian'.

Decision to migrate

Different types of information play a factor in the decision to migrate. This role should not be neglected or underestimated. However, the choice to migrate is based on numerous factors, which might be more important. These factors are not easily changed (apart from tackling the root causes that 'push' people out, but that is another matter). The motivations and the decision-making process are addressed in this part of the analysis. It is essential to understand this part, since reducing the choice to migrate to a mere information gap/failure doesn't do justice to the complexity of such a decision.

Rational choice and social networks

The sociological debate between agency and structure also presents itself when discussing the decision to migrate. To illustrate this nicely, one of the research respondents said:

'Agency versus structure? I think they tell themselves one thing but it is actually the other. You see I think they feel as if they don't have a choice; they need to leave because it's unsafe and I need to take care of my family, but in reality migration is super expensive and they need to work very hard to earn several thousands of dollars so they can make the trip. They need to wait for the right moment, need to engage with a smuggler, so those are all choices.'

The structural side can be seen as the push factors, such as economic, political or environmental constraints. These are some of the –admittedly limited– motivations for people to leave.

One of the executive respondents sums up:

'The motivation is very broad. There is no such thing as 'the motivation'. Asylum reasons of course and it depends on the situation of the country of origin, for instance Armenians often leave because of medical reasons, but there are also people that leave because of economic reasons (for instance in African and Eastern European). But it differs highly per person!'

The last phrase is important to stress: since this thesis is based on secondary sources (interviews with experts and literature) and not empirical data consisting of interviews with refugees or migrants, the statements about decision-making shouldn't be generalized. Everyone has his own story, but looking through sociological glasses particular trends become visible. One of the research respondents that conducted a study amongst Eritreans said:

'I can speak only for Eritreans and for them the number one reason is safety and freedom. When they flee Eritrea they are already sort of free (Eritrea has a dictator) and they may live in neighboring countries for a few years but after a while they don't feel like they can build a future there so they will want to go to Europe, the US and Australia is too far away.'

This is a recurrent topic: migrants –whether refugees or otherwise motivated- often travel to the closest/neighboring country and only decide after a period of time they want to move on to places with more opportunities:

'First they go to a neighboring or more familiar country when they flee and they often create these hubs where they all live together. And they don't really want to migrate; if their own country would offer opportunities or would be safe, they wouldn't want to leave. Once the situation in a neighboring country turns out not to be sustainable, they might want to leave for Europe.' J

This suggests a definite amount of agency on behalf of the migrants. Speaking in terms of Richmond (1993: 14) 'although the choices are often grueling, they are still choices. One of the choices people can make in these horrific conditions is to flee.'

The cost/benefit analysis also comes up during the interviews. Costs are reduced when migrants already have ties (family and friends) in their new homeland who can help them get settled, but also if they already speak the language for example because they're from former colonies of the destination country (Massey et al. 1993).

'They often go to places where they already know people, which makes it easier to integrate and enter the labor market.'

Also, if economic advancement is the goal, which for example one of the research respondents mentioned, then the choice to look for greener pastures is a rational and calculating one:

"Economic advancement is a big reason. Mainly because of social and cultural factors: in order to become an adult you need financial resources to marry, to obtain a good position in society and if they can't find that in Ghana then they try elsewhere.'

(Potential) migrants aim for rich European (or western in general) countries (Neumayer 2004). The people with whom the employee of a COA location works with are minors (mostly aged 15,16,17) from Syria and Eritrea (these two nationalities represent the largest influx of asylum seekers in the Netherlands). These minors are often sent by their parents with the goal of gaining asylum for the entire family. To illustrate this, the respondent gave the example of an Eritrean family with three children whom were all three sent to a different European country. Once one of the children has succeeded with their 'mission' and has been granted asylum, he/she applies for family reunification. This example can be linked to the literature of rational choice in the migration decision-making process: the migration decision as a family strategy (Haug 2008).

Another aspect of rationality in the decision-making process is a less obvious one: why do people decide *against* migration. The focus of this research is not why people stay, but why they leave. However, a quick detour in this realm is interesting because it illuminates how migrant information campaigns might play into these features. According to one research respondent:

'We asked 550 Eritreans and when we asked what makes you refrain from the decision to migrate. The answers were 'I love Eritrea my homeland', 'I'll miss my family (77%', the dangers surrounding migration are not merely dismissed by everyone (...) Moreover 85% said they would stay in their own country if there was real change.'

Van Bommel (2015) also found this strong bond with the motherland amongst many of his respondents. Schewel (2015: 9) lists some factors that help explain why people do not leave. First, people may feel a strong attachment to one's country of origin and/or commitment to its development. When people are dissatisfied with their circumstances they can 'exit' if possible, but they can also exercise 'voice' their dissatisfaction and try to change the dire circumstances in their country/situation or remain 'loyal' by accepting their imperfect lives. Also, the role of religion and the family and communal ties play a substantial part in a preference for staying.

Countries

Do migrants opt for a specific country or is this an arbitrary choice?

The answer in to this question is: both. When people do have a particular country in mind, this is usually because they have contacts there that can help them upon arrival.

'They want to go to Europe. A few were a bit more specific, but most of them just want to go to Europe. The specific countries are random; the preferences for countries were based on whether they had friends or acquaintances there or whether they thought they could make good money.'

Another reason is the language. This is the main reason why England is such a beloved destination country. People are sometimes desperate to reach the United Kingdom (think of the Calais camps):

'Sometimes they say they'd rather have gone to England, because of the language or because they know someone there; they have a dream image of England. On the one hand they seem deeply disappointed while at the same time the information they share with the people at home is one of optimism and opportunity and wealth.'

'No, hardly anyone chooses the Netherlands as destination country specifically... most of the migrants prefer England because of the language; they hope this will make it easier to find a job. Maybe when they already know people in the Netherlands; that could be a reason. Or because they're dropped in the Netherlands by the 'travel agent'

The study conducted by Gilbert & Koser (2006: 1213) posits that migrants often do know very little to nothing about the European country they arrive at. The idea that these people are here to 'rip off' the system is then flawed, since they claim they don't even know the system. Gilbert & Koser (2006: 1215-1219) offer several reasons why their respondents (asylum seekers in the UK) claim they hardly know anything about the UK. Migrants often don't have a say in what the destination country is going to be; people smugglers decide this. A striking example was given at the EMN

Workshop (2016) during which the notion that smugglers opt for a certain destination country because it is the farthest away or most difficult to reach and this in turn justifies the high price.

Townsend & Oomen (2015: 1) allude to the 'active choices' migrants make during their journey and warn for a 'destination bias', which means that migration journeys are usually analyzed once the journey is completed and migrants have succeeded in reaching the destination country. Farsight (2016: 3) also writes that migrants change their preference in destination country while traveling).

Gilbert & Koser (2006: 1215-1219) further list that some of their respondents had left their country in a hurry and therefore did not 'calculate' which country would suit them best; they just wanted to reach a safe haven. Sometimes the information they'd received was limited and inaccurate and the fact that many of their respondents are not well educated, which can suggest a limited access to (reliable) information in the first place and also the ability to process such information might be restricted. The more educated a migrant is, the more knowledge he tends to have about the destination country.

There is a slight difference (initially) between refugees fleeing their country in a hurry and migrants that leave for mainly economic reasons:

'The choice to flee is done consciously and the actual fleeing is done quite rapidly. The destination countries are arbitrary though; they're usually dependent on smugglers or family in countries abroad (...) I know only a few people that have chosen the Netherlands in particular mainly because of the good reputation of the country (...). Some know only a few European countries, mainly England and Sweden and they want to go there but run ashore in the Netherlands (...) They want to go to England because of the language and because the UK had many colonies on the African continent, the same is probably true for migrants that specifically want to go to France. Sweden is known for its warm welcome to migrants in the past'.

'They really plan where they're going. Their parents have a strategy doctored out and send them to specific countries. It is calculative: where do we send our children? To the countries where the chances are highest of acceptance, then reunification and a better future'.

The last quote indicates a rational calculation, whereas the first quote illustrates that people may have vague preferences but these are often not based on hard facts about specific countries.

The last quote sounds like the 'proactive' migration Richards (1993) writes about, whereas the first quote embodies the 'reactive' migration (the decision to migrate in response to acute threats).

Evaluations of migrant information campaigns

There are two interesting conclusions to draw in respect to evaluations and migrant information campaigns based on both the literature and the respondents: all involved parties stress their importance, but when it comes to actual projects the matter of evaluation loses priority.

The seemingly indifferent attitude regarding evaluations was nicely illustrated during the EMN Workshop (2016) by not mentioning evaluations at all. Although the question about evaluation and impact was asked twice, the question was quickly 'forgotten about' and not answered by any of the presenters of the workshop.

According to Dottridge (2008) who in his paper specifically focuses on anti-trafficking campaigns/initiatives (but the problems are similar to migrant information campaigns), oftentimes campaigns are not well monitored and evaluated during or after the implementation. He offers several reasons, which are in line with what the respondents said. One of the reasons, which was expressed by several respondents, is the lack of money and/or resources to conduct an evaluation:

'For us (IOM), it's a lack of money and resources. We would want to do it. But maybe for governments who assigned us with implementing a campaign may have different priorities (...) I think it would be great if independent institutes would evaluate these projects to see what the impact might be in the long-term.'

Moreover, donors often want –understandably– to immediately see what the money they invest in these campaigns is doing. This means a rather short-term view, whereas good evaluations need to be conducted a period of time after the implementation (Dottridge 2008: 28).

If campaigns are evaluated, this is often done by those who finance the projects that leave little room for critical notes (Kelly 2005).

Another reason is the difficulty of conducting good evaluations:

'Everybody agrees that you cannot really evaluate these campaigns. The call for more evaluations has been going on for years, but you never know for sure what the impacts/effects are.'

These campaigns are not experimental designs; it is therefore difficult to establish causality between a campaign and increased awareness or reduced numbers. Especially the latter is almost impossible to measure. Moreover, these campaigns do not run in a vacuum. There are countless other sources of information that reach the target audience and is in almost impossible to demarcate which pieces of information influence the decision to migrate.

It is incredibly difficult to measure if any change in awareness, attitude and especially in behavior has occurred. Therefore, another turn is often taken: quantitative research or numeric outputs. For example, monitoring the distribution of leaflets (substitute for clicks/likes on social media or anything quantifiable) tells you that the project is carried out and messages reach a certain percentage of the target audience. However, these 'output indicators' don't tell the story of whether the intended results were achieved (Dottridge 2008). These quantitative measurements are often used, which has become clear from the description of the migrant information campaigns above.

Contrarily, qualitative measurements (e.g. interviews, follow-up questionnaires) are less mentioned, both by the respondents and the available information on previous campaigns.

The IOM respondent did mention:

'In terms of evaluation, we sometimes give attendees at a meeting we organized a questionnaire or we interview them and ask what they thought of the meeting and information and usually people say yes it was very interesting thank you. That is output, but how people interpreted the information or whether they shared the information with others is unclear. How big the impact is, I honestly don't know.'

To end this section on evaluation with a quote which sums up the idea of migrant information campaigns and evaluations:

'I do want to make clear that I'm not saying these campaigns don't work period. Maybe it helps people; it might be case that some people will think okay I hadn't thought of that now I know so I'll think harder about my decision to migrate. I did not study that. What my research does show is that the majority of people are perfectly aware of the risks.'

This uncertainty of whether these campaigns generate effects begs the question why do donors and governments spend money on these projects? Furthermore, why this sudden interest in these campaigns the past few years?

The opinions of several respondents are quite clear (keep in mind that these remarks are not based on scientific evidence). The first two are from executive practitioners; the last two from researchers:

'I think they (governments) hope that the migrants won't come to their country. Maybe it's not that black and white, but I think that definitely is an important element.' VL

'I think it's politically driven. Amongst certain populations in the Netherlands there is not a lot of support for asylum seekers. I think it's also a cost/benefit calculation.'

'I think that the campaigns that are implemented nowadays, for instance in refugee camps, are implemented as a sign to the own population: 'look we're doing something' and it is relatively cheap, it's an easy solution, you reach many people, you can send out a press release. I think that plays a major role. Why else would you post signs in Hungarian when migrants would never understand that information in the first place.'

'I think it comes from an anti-migration stance and it is the easiest policy tool. I think it's political opportunism.'

These remarks can be summed up as follows: politically driven, lack of support for asylum seekers in destination countries, relative cheap costs, easy and it can be implemented on quite a short notice (see European governments' initiatives). These aspects fit neatly in the reasons that Weiss & Tschirhart (1994) list in their article, although these authors do not mention the government sending out signals to their own populations with the message 'we're working on it and we have it under control'. Interestingly enough, not one of the respondents put forward the idea that

governments are doing this for the well-being of the migrant. In other words, the official aims ('informing') in respect to the motivation of governments to do this were not mentioned.

Best practices

Although some explorations of the migrant information campaigns may seem a bit repetitive, this does suggest that certain aspects are more important or more effective than others. The following section zooms in on these 'best practices', which are distilled both from the interviews and the existing literature (the difference between both will be made clear). Many remarks and recommendations from the respondents are already well known; others offer welcome new insights in the relative unknown territory of migrant information campaigns. The findings are summed up in a table at the end of this section. Since there is a lack of evaluations in this field, the recommendations should not be seen as a 'manual' guaranteeing success, but as suggestions to improve migrant information campaigns in the future.

First of all, the goal of a migrant information campaign needs to be clear. Do you want to raise awareness? What does this mean exactly? Do you want attitudes to change? How do you want to achieve this? One step further is behavioral change (quite difficult), which translates to a reduction in the number of migrants. The goal needs to be clear-cut. Currently most campaigns simply state they want to 'inform potential migrants on such and such', whereas information is never neutral and the intended effect is never a simple shrug of the shoulders.

Second, the audience needs to be delineated. At-risk groups should be carved out and this group must be thoroughly researched. One of the respondents put it this way:

'I think it should be based on extensive research. The majority of campaigns is based on zero research. It is important to figure out which groups will go no matter what and which groups can possibly be influenced. For instance study what is the difference between a nineteen-year-old boy and a father of three and also what risks are they sensitive to.'

Third, the channels of dissemination need to be considered. If people don't have Internet access; social media will not help. However, social media permeates almost all layers and regions of society nowadays, therefore it is recommended to make use of this tool (for advantages of this medium see discussion of campaigns). Moreover, the dissemination of messages should not be a 'one-way street' activity, but an interactive process. It is important to engage with the target group in order to establish their motives for wanting to leave and gain understanding of how the messages are received. A dialogue should be created and input from the target audience (and local actors who have close relations with the target group) should be welcomed.

Fourth, the content of the messages. One very important recommendation that was cited quite often was the need for (information on) legal ways to migrate.

This sounds plausible, but the question is: are there enough regular ways of migration?

The respondents unanimously stated that alternatives should be provided, particularly because balanced information is judged as more reliable (UNHCR 2010). They also concurred in the answer to the question just posed: there are not that many legal options to begin with. A few remarked

that seasonal labor or educational programs, but these options are scarce. Moreover, the majority of potential migrants is not eligible to participate in educational programs.

The IOM respondent indicated that the reason why not that many alternatives were offered in their campaigns is due to the fact that there are hardly any and the IOM cannot create these options.

These were the views on legal avenues:

'Legal options? You can think of tourist visas. The first flow could do that, but that's been impossible for a while now. The legal options are only available to the elite and the people that come in now are not the lowest class, but mid-upper class because they can afford it; the journey, the smugglers etcetera (...) although amongst the Eritreans you also see lower-class teenagers for example because the family saved money for this occasion.'

'You do have work and study, but this is only accessible for the highly educated people. For lower educated people you just don't hear that. I do think it would be very attractive for people because you offer them some kind of hope. For instance, if you work hard this year then you might be able to go to Europe on a work visa for a selected period of time.'

The creation of *legal avenues* could generate a reduction in irregular migration, although this has not been proven yet (Townsend & Oomen 2015: 13). The option of hiring temporary workers from sending countries is an example, however some critical remarks are in order. If a large portion of the destination country is unemployment or the country suffers from a recession, the own population is often prioritized. Moreover, nepotism in regards to giving out contracts in sending countries can be a problem, possibly resulting in a distrust of the legal migration programs leaving unauthorized migrants as the 'best' option (Carling & Hernández-Carretero 2011: 51).

A 'warning' about the (over) use of fear appeal messages is in order. Two of the respondents claimed:

'You need to be honest. If you put up a billboard with the one-liner 'you will drown' then you lose all credibility because it's rubbish'.

'I don't think it should be used for deterrent reasons and messages such as 'If you go to Europe you will get into trouble' don't work. This type of messaging is way too negative and that's not what people want to hear; they aspire to a better life.'

In addition to the four points discussed above, it is relevant to look at what the *needs* of the target audience are, instead of only wanting to disperse information that seems useful from a 'western' or 'Eurocentric' perspective. After all, it is much more about the *interpretation*. Also, if you only distribute 'uninteresting, irrelevant and negative' information in the eyes of the target audience, they will likely discard it altogether:

Lastly, I think it needs to be useful. You shouldn't say to people just don't migrate; that is not what they want to hear. You must offer them information they can work with so to speak

In addition to information being relevant for the target audience, the concept of honesty came up a few times:

'Don't make promises you can't keep. Don't make people who want to leave out to be dumb and naïve. When you for instance make a clip of someone who walks to Europe, they will not take that seriously and that way the complexity of the decision to migrate is completely overshadowed. The possibility exists that this might even work counter-productively, since the audience will not recognize themselves in such a clip. They'll think what a loser, of course one does not walk to Europe.'

Finally, the perception of the migrant should be the focal point:

'MIC will only be able to produce something if A it engages with norms/terms of societies of departure, so it also incorporates the family expectations and the notion that mobility is a way forward for these people, that mobility itself is social protection and B offering alternative, legal routes to migration.'

'Migrants are exposed to a plurality of norms and controls. Information campaigns on risks can only be effective if they reckon with the moral authority not only of states, but also of migrant families and the broader need for social protection' (Alpes & Sørensen 2015: 4).

Table of recommendations

Feature of the campaign	Recommendations
Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The goal should be <i>informing</i>. Focusing on reducing the number of migrants will most likely have limited effect - Creating awareness or behavioral change?
Audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A segmented group should be targeted instead of a general campaign - Extensive research on the target audience must be carried out prior to designing a campaign - Figure out what the needs and interests of the target audience are; use their feedback
Mediums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social media is one of the most important sources - Interactive communication tools are preferred (e.g. local community meetings) - Direct communication/tailor-made and personal approaches are more effective than 'traditional' tools
Messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Legal avenues should be presented - The use of fear appeal messages without facts to back it up will most likely not be taken seriously by the target audience - Provide balanced information; only offering negative stories will work counterproductively - Provide useful and new information; risks and dangers pertaining to migration are already well known - Offer information on rights and places to seek guidance
Implementers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Governmental institutions should not be the (direct) source of information due to trust and credibility issues. - Local actors/role models should be involved in disseminating information
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluations are an essential part of the campaign. Clear targets/goals must be formulated prior to implementation. - Evaluation both during and after the implementation: monitoring + impact assessment - Focus on qualitative measurements instead of quantitative
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Take into account the potential migrant's view: take a walk in their shoes and go from there - Communication can only do so much: other interventions are necessary to curb irregular migration. In short: don't expect too much

Conclusion

The central question of this thesis is: *What is the role of migration information campaigns in the context of migrant decision-making?* To answer this question, it is necessary to address the issue of migrant information campaigns and migrant decision-making separately before synthesizing the two topics.

There are numerous different migrant forms information campaigns, whereby the actual goal of the campaign sometimes remains unclear: do donors/implementers wish to simply inform or do they also want to persuade people to *not* come to the destination country (in other words: reduce the number of migrants)? The goal is often two-fold, although donors and implementers almost always underscore the first aim and obscure the second. The line between information and persuasion is rather thin in this case. The donors of these campaigns are usually governments from popular destination countries, although the implementation is left to NGOs or other organizations. Campaigns implemented by organizations such as the IOM, UNHCR, La Strada or other NGOs generally are more open to the public, whereas initiatives from governments directly or private organizations tend to operate more below the radar.

The details/content of the campaigns can differ greatly. To illustrate this, it is comprehensible to start at the beginning of the process of setting up a migrant information campaign: the preparatory phase or the research phase. Know your audience is an often-heard phrase and this also counts for implementers of these campaigns. However, this important step is often skipped or done insufficiently. This 'harms' the campaign even before the implementation, since you need to *understand* the target audience (their motivations/aspirations/plans/sources of information etcetera) to influence them.

Campaigns can be targeted at people who aspire to reach Europe -and by realizing this dream the only option is to embark on a illegal journey- or the target audience needs to be warned/informed about becoming potential victims of trafficking or labor exploitation. In the case of Europe, the geographical focus is on Central and Eastern Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa and more recently South West Asia. Countries such as the US or Australia have different target areas.

The disseminated information can allude to frightening consequences of irregular migration or give a more balanced image of the journey and living conditions in the destination country. Testimonies of people who have experienced the journey are often used to inform the target audience to enhance credibility, reliability and personal relevance.

The channels through which the information is dispersed depends on the target audience, but the newest and frequently used medium is social media. The advantage of this is that large amounts of people can be reached in a short amount of time and outdated information can be updated rapidly. This advantage easily turns into a disadvantage. Potential migrants use social media to facilitate their journey and smugglers offer their services on the Internet and dish up unrealistic images of destination countries. In addition to social media 'traditional' forms of conveying messages are used, such as printed media and radio/television broadcasting, and more 'innovative' ways of disseminating information are employed such as direct interaction with the target audience either at regional community meetings or 'on-the-ground influencing' by engaging in conversations with the target audience.

Most migrant information campaigns lack good evaluations, which can be attributed to a lack of resources, interest or knowledge on how to evaluate a project where it is almost impossible to establish causal effect. When evaluations are conducted, it is often done by the organization that implemented the campaign and not an external contractor. Consequently, the evaluations that circulate the Internet are almost all moderately to very positive about the effectiveness and impact of the campaigns. The question of what constitutes a 'successful campaign' is also quite vague: does it mean creating awareness or changing people's behavior? Moreover, what does 'creating awareness' or 'changing people's behavior' mean exactly; how do you measure this? The call for extensive evaluations and impact assessment is urgent, but in practice this –essential- final phase of the implementation process is often neglected. So far, there is little evidence to the effectiveness of migrant information campaigns but in spite of this this tool to control migration grows more popular.

What binds these campaigns together is the official goal the implementers pursue: informing the (potential) migrant. This particular goal is overall uncontested; what argument can be given *against* providing (potential) migrants with factual and unbiased information about the journey and/or the situation in the destination country? Furthermore, an alarming amount of false information circulates on social media and is spread via word-of-mouth and this could be countered with objective information dispersed via information campaigns. However, according to the literature (and the empirical data collected for this particular research) migrant information campaigns have a limited effect on the migrant decision-making process. The reason for this is the multiple factors that need to be taken into account when looking at the decision to migrate.

This is where the first of a series of critical notes needs to be inserted. It is not simply about the factual content of the information, but also about the *trustworthiness* of both the message(s) and the sources. Potential migrants have several 'protective' measures/mechanisms to shield them from unwelcome information and tend to discredit 'fear appeal messages' that are a frequently used to communicate the dangers of illegal migration. These mechanisms and indifference to exaggerated frightening imagery are especially triggered when the information comes from 'unreliable' and 'biased' sources (from the migrants' perspective). Particularly western (but also corrupt local) authorities are regarded with suspicion and are considered untrustworthy since they have vested interests in the migrants' decision. In contrast, information coming from friends, family, acquaintances and the diaspora in destination countries both in potential destination countries and en route is much more trusted and influential. Via social media, relevant information and experiences are shared with aspiring migrants and recommendations and warnings help prospective migrants in planning their escape. Migrant information campaigns then have to 'compete' with these other sources and pieces of information and they tend to rank low in the hierarchy of most influential party.

A second critical note pertains the different framework of (potential) migrants. When looking at the act of irregular migration through 'Eurocentric' glasses, it is labeled as 'illegal', 'criminal' and a 'perilous endeavor'. Potential migrants don't see themselves as criminals. Instead they view migration as their best opportunity to chase a better life, since the prospects in their countries of origin are hopeless. The decision to migrate must be seen in the context of the migrant: this person wants to take care of the family or needs to improve his social status in order to start a family. The way to do this is by migrating to a wealthy European (or other western)

country and downplaying the riches of these countries (i.e. framing Europe as worse than it is) often works counterproductive. Refraining from action is therefore often considered a greater risk than potentially losing one's life en route to a better future. This is not to suggest they are completely unaware of the risks and dangers they might face on their journey to a destination country. Quite the opposite; the majority of potential migrants are already highly attuned to threats. However, their risk assessment models give more weight to the long-term goal of settling in a destination country than the potential harm they face while chasing that goal. Human smugglers are framed as 'evil spawn' in western societies. This completely goes against the way potential migrants judge these people. They often regard them as facilitators of the journey –not meaning they are not fearful of the smugglers- and find it logical to pay for their services. Without these 'travel agents' they would not be able to make it to their destination country. The importance of legal avenues to migrate is often mentioned when speaking about the issue of irregular migration. However, little is done (e.g. by western authorities) to enable people to do so both in terms of people fleeing from war and low-skilled workers.

Counting all these examples that substantiate a different perspective on 'irregular migration' suggests that merely informing on risks about the dangers of the journey itself/smugglers or the less-than-ideal circumstances of the destination country will not likely change migration aspirations.

A third critical note concerns the motivation to migrate. This factor doesn't have much to do with the information potential migrants search for when they plan their migration, but with the reason why they wish to leave their country of origin in the first place. Numerous migration theories were discussed and there is no space to repeat them all. However, dire economic and social prospects and raging (civil) wars are often motivations to flee. This can be linked to the risk assessment mentioned above, whereby staying put is the worst outcome. The act of migration is an active one –agency is required- but it is often made in constraining instead of enabling social structures. Implementing migrant information campaigns with (implicit) deterrent messages in unsafe countries can be seen as unethical, whereas the possible effectiveness of these campaigns in 'safe' countries can be questionable due to the strong motivations/convictions to seek greener pastures.

The implementation of migrant information campaigns has been a 'beloved' (policy) instrument for many years now and considering the ongoing 'refugee/migrant problem' Europe is still facing the interest in this tool will likely persist. The beneficial sides of these campaigns such as the relative cheapness, being easily implementable and the political palatability seem to outweigh the disadvantage: the almost impossibility to measure effects. By informing potential migrants on the risks and dangers they'll encounter on their journey, the humanitarian objective of saving lives and the 'protecting Europe' objective to reduce the number of migrants are both accomplished. However, to return to the main question of this thesis: the role migrant information campaigns play in the migrant decision-making process seems to be marginal. Based on the empirical data and the existing body of literature, there are multiple factors that determine the decision-making process (listed above) and the information disseminated by campaigns might be incorporated in the body of knowledge would-be migrants use, but the expectations should not be high, especially not if the implicit goal is to reduce the number of migrants.

Recommendations for future research and limitations of this research

This thesis offers insight in the workings of migrant information campaigns by providing an overview of details of existing campaigns complemented with interviews with experts, researchers and practitioners in the field of migration. However, many questions are left unanswered. Most importantly, the voices of the target audiences of migrant information campaigns were not incorporated in this work. The emic perspective is definitely needed to fully understand the possible effects of migrant information campaigns. It is essential to understand how (potential) migrants react to and register the messages disseminated by these campaigns. The best way to do this is by interviewing people who have been 'exposed' to these campaigns. Various researchers (some of them mentioned in this thesis) already did a great job, but more extensive research on this topic is recommended. The target audience can be interviewed prior to departure, whilst in transit countries but also once they've made it to the destination country. Interviews with people who aspire to migrate or are already underway give insight in whether informing these individuals will change their minds about their plans, whereas interviews with people who have reached their goal elucidate why the messages apparently did not work. Since the decision to migrate is such a complex decision, research on the influence of migrant information campaigns should be complemented with research on how migrants obtain and judge information before, during and after the journey but also a better understanding of their motives for leaving or staying. Moreover, more research on the role of smugglers in migrant decision-making process and the journey to destination countries is needed to grasp their influence. Once this is established, more fruitful counter narratives can be written and dispersed.

Apart from the call for more in-depth analysis of the motivations, decision-making and information processes of (potential) migrants, more overviews of existing migrant information campaigns would be interesting in order to compare and improve (or possibly discard) them. This could be extended to the general field of communication campaigns, but it is beyond the scope of this thesis to dive into that. Another reason why more overviews are recommended is the rapidity of new campaigns that are currently introduced almost every other month. A final recommendation for future research concerns the lack of evaluation and impact assessment of migrant information campaigns. More information on how to develop thorough evaluations and good measurements (both quantitative and qualitative) is desperately wanted.

Every research has its limitations and this one is no exception to the rule.

The first one has already been mentioned just now: the emic perspective is not incorporated in the analysis. Given the limited duration of the study it was necessary to focus on 'secondary sources'. The best possible research would also consist of interviews with *potential* migrants, but this would have meant traveling to a sending country and do fieldwork for a period of time and this was not feasible on such short notice. Since the surge in European initiatives (and the Netherlands is not yet one of them) is only quite recent, interviews with migrants already in the Netherlands would have contributed only slightly: hearing about their motivations and information gathering would have been interesting in respect to the central question but discussing migrant information campaigns would not have been that fruitful most likely.

Another 'flaw' is the rather modest amount of respondents (thirteen plus 'fieldwork' in Brussels and on-the-ground campaign). The versatility in their backgrounds can be considered both a strength and a weakness: advantageous because it provides a deeper understanding of the migrant decision-making process in relation to the assumptions on which migrant information campaigns are based; disadvantageous because topics discussed in the interviews differed (eight different interview guides). The specificity of respondents will make it difficult to replicate (external reliability) the study well, which is almost always a challenge in qualitative research. Moreover, the external validity is also highly questionable. Since this is a case study of migrant information campaigns, the findings cannot be generalized although existing literature backs up most of the recommendations about how to design a good migrant information campaign.

Policy recommendation

Migrant information campaigns: an interesting new policy tool for the Dutch government?

Advise on whether to follow in the footsteps of other European Member States regarding the implementation of migrant information campaigns

Introduction

The number of migrants trying to reach European soil has reached a record high in 2015 with more than a million people entering the continent (IOM 2015).

The intention of the majority of migrants is to move on to North and North-west European countries and one of these countries is the Netherlands. The Dutch government has framed the large influx facts as the 'refugee problem' (*vluchtelingenprobleem*). The fervent opponents of the influx of refugees dominate the media and the resistance against asylum seekers has not diminished. Several measures are considered, varying from enhanced border patrols to investing large sums of money in sending countries to help reduce the flows. One of the measures that has already been implemented by a number of European countries is the implementation of migrant information campaigns. The assumption is that by informing migrants on the risks and dangers of the journey to the destination country, potential migrants will reconsider their choice to migrate illegally. The question is whether this is the case: What role do migrant information campaigns play in the decision-making process of migrants? Once this is clear, the central question of this policy advise can be answered: *Should the Dutch government invest in migrant information campaigns as a solution to the large influx of migrants to the country?* To answer this question, a description of the 'problem' will be given followed by the policy objective. Subsequently the question whether migrant information campaigns will be a good instrument to reach the policy objective will be explored. Based on the details of this exploration a recommendation will be offered.

Analysis of the issue

Different stances on the 'refugee problem' are taken in Dutch society and Dutch politics. These are the facts. In 2015 58800 people applied for asylum and approximately 70% will be granted a residence permit, which means they will be recognized as a refugee. Compared to the previous year (2014) this is almost twice as much people applying for asylum to the Netherlands (29890). Note that migrants that do not register are excluded from these numbers. More than half of the asylum seekers in the Netherlands are Syrian refugees, followed by Iraqis, Eritreans, Afghans and Ethiopians. People from these countries predominantly flee from their countries out of political motives and will most likely not be able to return soon out of safety reasons (SER 2016). In addition to the people applying for asylum, there are also labor migrants entering the Dutch workforce. These people mainly originate from other European Member States, particularly from Eastern European countries with Poland taking the lead (McGauran et al. 2016). In total, 82000 migrants (both refugees and other migrants) settled in the Netherlands (CBS 2015). CBS expects that in 2016 approximately 70.000 people will apply for asylum in the Netherlands. Although the refugee deal with Turkey has decreased the influx, the number of migrants traveling via North Africa is growing and the people smuggling business is prospering (IND 2016).

Concerns about the number of (illegal) migrants are rising both in the political arena and amongst the Dutch public. The majority of migrants has fled from violence-stricken countries and will qualify as refugees. Only by addressing the root causes (e.g. ending the war) in these countries, will the influx decrease. However, there are also people who come to Europe who do not qualify for a residence permit. These people don't have formal documents or narrate false stories about why they come to the Netherlands. These people are often called economic migrants, since they leave their country of origin mainly out of economic motives. It is difficult to demarcate a person as 'an economic migrant' since motives to flee are often not one-dimensional. However, 30% of the asylum applications are denied (SER 2016). This is a considerable amount and quite a costly matter (costs of procedures during application, repatriation of the person or disappearing in the illegality in the Netherlands). Is there a manner to influence these people *prior* to departure?

Objectives of the policy

The objective is to reduce the number of migrants to the Netherlands. However, it is illegal for the Dutch government to refuse refugees since the Netherlands has signed the non-refoulement principle and besides, the question is whether it is even ethical to deny access to those who are fleeing from persecution. A considerable group of migrants (approximately 30 % of all applications) qualifies as the target audience. The objective is as follows: *How to reduce the number of migrants that will not obtain a residence permit in the Netherlands and will be returned to their country of origin?*

Preconditions

- The measure must not cost too much.
- The measure must be immediately employable, so that intended results can be measured in the short-term.
- The measure must be durable.
- The measure must not be in conflict with the 1951 Refugee Convention.

Migrant information campaigns: assessment of the measure

There are many possible measures to take in regard to reducing the number of illegal migrants, but this policy advise focuses on one measure: the implementation of migrant information campaigns.

The assumption of migrant information campaigns is that if the target audience is provided with factual and unbiased information they will likely reconsider their decision to migrate illegally. Based on the literature of this research, the majority of migrants (whether refugees or 'economic migrants') are well aware of the risks of migration, but their aspirations are too 'strong'. The image of Europe that most would-be migrants have is often too optimistic. However, the situation in the Netherlands compared to their situation in the country of origin is often considered to be a step up even if it's not as great as they thought it would be. In addition to these empirically supported conclusions, there are many factors that come into play during the migrant decision-making process and multiple aspects to be considered when implementing a campaign. Potential migrants often have links with close relations who share information with them and these sources are trusted more than official channels such as (European) governments. Moreover, where we (western

people) see an 'economic migrant', the migrant views himself as a person aspiring to improve his life. Refraining from action can be seen as a bigger risk than potentially dying while trying to chase better opportunities abroad. Would informing the target audience (potential migrants) then help reach the policy objective? Looking at it with the preconditions in mind:

- A *well-designed* migrant information campaign costs a lot of money and resources. Extensive research on the target audience is needed before framing the messages. Implementing the campaign can be done through various channels, whereby social media is the cheapest and most widespread source. More traditional channels such as television and print are considerably more expensive. Influencing people 'on-the-ground' is another option, but this is quite a costly endeavor. The campaigns must be monitored and evaluated (best to use an external party).
- A well-designed campaign needs plenty of preparation and this will take time. In addition to the preparatory phase, the results cannot be measured immediately. Short-term results will most likely not be measurable. Measurement is extremely difficult, since no experimental/control group can be set up. A reduction in applicants can be due to countless reasons.
- Most current European campaigns are implemented ad-hoc without reviewing effectiveness. In order to measure long-term effects, it is necessary that a campaign is implemented for an indefinite period of time with lots of monitoring and adaptation possibilities if necessary.
- The campaign must not target people who will be recognized as refugees in the Netherlands.

Conclusion

The question is: *Should the Dutch government invest in migrant information campaigns with the goal of reducing the number of migrants that will not obtain a residence permit in the Netherlands and will be returned to their country of origin?*

Based on the provided information and previous studies, the implementation of migrant information campaigns will be quite costly, will take quite some preparation time, short-term results will be unlikely and measurement of effect is rather difficult. The return of investment will most likely be low. If the Dutch government insists on using this policy tool, it is important to limit the target audience to labor migrants (inform them on their rights and duties and provide factual not dissuasive information) and/or people who will not be considered for a residence permit.

Recommendation

If the Dutch government goes ahead with planning the implementation of migrant information campaigns, there are a few recommendations. Extensive research is recommended to achieve intended results. Campaigns should be tailor-made instead of one general campaign for all 'unwelcome' migrants. A distinction should be made between 'economic migrants' and legal labor migrants. Legal avenues should be offered when possible. The use of formal institutions to disseminate information is discouraged; NGOs or other organizations that are regarded with less suspicion can be contracted to implement the campaigns.

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Annex 1

List of organizations that are mentioned throughout this thesis both because respondents work there and because the organizations are involved with/carry out migrant information campaigns.

Organization: La Strada International

'La Strada International (LSI) is a European NGO network against trafficking in human beings comprising eight member organisations in Belarus, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Macedonia (FYROM), Moldova, The Netherlands, Poland and Ukraine and an international secretariat based in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. La Strada International works from a human rights perspective in support of trafficked persons to ensure a world without trafficking in human beings and where human rights are respected. La Strada's primary goal is empowering trafficked persons, improving their position through promoting their universal rights, including the right to choose to emigrate and work abroad and to be protected from violence and abuse' (LaStrada 2016). One of the ways in which this organization puts its philosophy into practice is by implementing awareness campaigns (one of which is discussed in the overview of migrant information campaigns). The goal is to create awareness amongst consumers as well as focus on prevention amongst possible victims (LaStrada 2016).

Organization: IOM (International Organization for Migration)

This is the leading organization of international migration, which adheres to the mandate that 'humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society' (IOM 2016). It was founded in 1951 as the Provisional Intergovernmental Committee for the Movement of Migrants from Europe and its first task was to help European governments with the resettlement of millions of people uprooted by the Second World War (IOM 2016). The IOM is a non-governmental organization, although the European Union or nation states largely provide funding. There are approximately 100 offices worldwide (in both sending and receiving countries with strong ties to local organizations and communities) and in 1991 the first office was opened in the Netherlands. The IOM is mainly associated with facilitating voluntary returns, but the organization does much more to put its principle into practice. One of these things is implementing migrant information campaigns with the goal of 'helping potential migrants make well-informed decisions regarding migration' (Information Campaigns 1999-2000: 1).

The IOM helps design and implement these campaigns at the request of its member states (Nieuwenhuys & Pécoud 2007: 1677).

COA (Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers)

Organization: 'COA is responsible for the reception, supervision and departure (from the reception location) of asylum seekers coming to the Netherlands' (COA 2016). The mission of this organization is the safe accommodation of vulnerable people.

Organization: Farsight

The organization qualifies as a 'social enterprise' which means that 'they trade to tackle social problems, improve communities, people's life chances, or the environment. They make their money from selling goods and services in the open market, but they reinvest their profits back into the business or the local community. And so when they profit, society profits' (SocialEnterprise.Org.).

The mission of this organization is: 'To design and deliver tools for people who want to improve the world'. This mission is applied to matters of migration, conflict and justice. For this research only the migration aspect is interesting. Research, monitoring and evaluation, integrating technology, program and fund design are all part of the services this organization provides.

Implementing migrant information campaigns is one of the tools Farsight offers. Donors include European governments, but most donors remain anonymous, as does the financing.

Farsights personnel is based worldwide and the organization has implemented migrant information campaigns and behavioral change campaigns in Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Europe, Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Malaysia. These campaigns have reached more than 2 million migrants.

Organization: UNHCR

The abbreviation UNHCR stands for United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and was founded in 1950. The UNHCR has staff in 126 countries worldwide, with 85% of its employees based in the field (especially remote conflict areas). This organization has a broad scope concerning its audience: 'Our primary purpose at UNHCR is to safeguard the rights and well-being of people who have been forced to flee. Together with partners and communities, we work to ensure that everybody has the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another country. We also strive to secure lasting solutions. For over half a century, UNHCR has helped millions of people to restart their lives. They include refugees, returnees, stateless people, the internally displaced and asylum-seekers' (UNHCR 2016).

Governments and the UN mainly fund the UNHCR, but also private donors and intergovernmental institutions contribute.

Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland

This independent organization acts in the interests of refugees and asylum seekers. The staff consists of paid employees, but countless volunteers strengthen the organization. Support is offered in multiple dimensions: legal assistance information on asylum procedure, integration in society, but also counseling is done when people don't obtain status in the Netherlands. The position of the refugee is enforced via projects, creating support and acceptance amongst the Dutch population and by trying to influence policies (Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland 2016).

Annex 2

Process of coding

In this section there are two lists of codes that were applied to the empirical data.

The coding process was not merely inductive; the research question determined the focus of the analysis. Therefore, the first list consists of the 'deductive' codes distilled from the sub questions:

Migrant information campaigns	Decision-making process
Goals	Motivation
Why these campaigns: motive	Decision-making before and during the journey
Target audience	Information: sources
Messages	Image of Europe: positive/negative/neutral
Mediums	Information given to the country of origin
Implementers	View on human smugglers
Evaluation	
Positive/negative features of campaigns	

Since this is a qualitative research and respondents provide numerous new insights, the majority of codes are inductive. Out of all these codes, categories were 'borne'. For the empirical overview of existing/future campaigns these categories are: goal, medium, messages, implementers, research prior to implementation, finances (if known), evaluation/impact, pro/con campaigns. For the analysis of the migrant decision-making process combined with the underlying assumptions the following categories are formed: information, sources and trust, different frameworks, decision to migrate, evaluations and 'best practices'. This eventually determined the structure of the analysis of this thesis. These categories together substantiate the answers to the research questions.

The seven interviews (and the Brussels meetings) that were conducted with people who had experience with the implementation of migrant information campaigns or who were currently working on campaigns dealt with issues regarding migrant information campaigns and the decision-making process.

The codes that were applied and used were (in addition to the deductive codes):

Position in organization
Tasks in organization
Information on organization
Information: trust
Research prior to designing campaign
Qualitative/quantitative research
Qualitative/quantitative evaluation
Social media
Best practices/recommendations
Testimonials
Alternatives
Finances
Practical details campaigns
Cause for implementing campaigns

Impact assessment
EU role
Reception in countries of origin vs destination

The remaining interviews were less about the migrant information campaigns (although this topic was touched upon if the respondents could tell something interesting about this) and more about the decision-making process and the images of Europe that (prospective) migrants have. There is some overlap in the application of codes, since some of the research respondents had studied the phenomenon of migrant information campaigns in combination with fieldwork amongst (potential) migrants. The respondents who discussed their experiences/involvement with migrant information campaigns sometimes provided interesting insight in the decision-making process, therefore some of the codes below were also applied in their interview transcripts.

The codes that were applied were and used for this thesis are:

Position in organization
Tasks in organization
Information on organization
Information on research/fieldwork
Trust in institutions
Hierarchy of trust
Push/pull factors
Which countries and why
Agency vs structure in decision-making
Familiar with destination countries' migration policies
Risks
Faith in God
Journey description
Rational choice/calculation
Differences male/female
Social network of the migrant
Overtly positive image of Europe
Opinion on migrant information campaigns
Preparation journey
Intention to return to country of origin
Reception of 'negative' information
Why these campaigns (opinion)
'Best practices'
Trafficking
Different frameworks/perspective
Refugee vs 'economic migrant'
Images of 'supporting' organizations