Kimmelman’s NYT article reflects the conversations about coastal cities’ vulnerability, climate change adaptation strategies, and decision-making that occurred at Resilient Tampa Bay (http://sgs.usf.edu/rtb/index.php) in 2011. The keynote speech of the event, “A New Definition of Resiliency,” (Seibert; Senior Vice President for Strategic Visioning, Collins Center for Public Policy (<http://sgs.usf.edu/rtb/speakers.php>), suggested that instead of lamenting what is/was/will be “lost” as a result of storm surge, sea level rise, and urban flooding, we need to accept that what we recover may be different – *but not inferior* – than what we have lost. Resiliency, he argued, shouldn’t be defined in terms of crisis, but by purpose and opportunity. Accepting different conditions – for instance, relocating coastal residents from vulnerable areas instead of repairing what was lost due to hurricane damage – is something that the Dutch do well, and something that we should – and must – learn to do well, too.

What people often refer to as “Dutch pragmatism” has been described in ecological terms by Dr. Timothy Morton (theorist and prolific writer on ecology, philosophy, and culture; <http://ecologywithoutnature.blogspot.com/>) as “the ecological thought:” re-seeing what is “unnatural” (i.e. dikes, polders, tide gates) as part of an ecology of things that constitute a resilient existence. What Morton is arguing pertains to our way of seeing things not as “things” but as agents, participants, cooperators in our development of this new difference; resilience. Ecological thinking is long-term, futuristic-thinking; what Seibert was arguing for in urging us to define resiliency in terms of purpose and opportunity (to be determined as we make decisions for resilient engineering, etc.) versus crisis (reactionary behavior, rebuilding, etc.). This is where I believe pragmatism comes into play. Pragmatism, as that which values pluralism over universalism, flexibility over rigidity, and practical results over utopian ideals, is evident in Kimmelman’s depiction of Nol Hooijmaijers’ response to the Dutch government’s decision to use the polder as a spillway (thus relocating Nol’s home and farm). It is also evident, however, in the Dutch government’s decision in and of itself: as Kimmelman writes, “The government didn’t ask for volunteers to leave. It made a decision …”. The government’s decision was pragmatic; rising waters and severe weather wasn’t going to disappear and thus something needed to be done in order to adapt adequately on behalf of vulnerable citizens. It did so, however, by “giving affected residents adequate knowledge and agency: the ability to make choices and the responsibility to live by them” (Kimmelman). Nol’s choice, to develop the idea of building mounds around the edge of the polder for his/ other affected farmers’ resettlement, reflects one of the main goals of Resilient Tampa Bay: to turn crises of climate change into opportunities for resilience. Instead of lamenting what was lost, Nol chose to *create* an opportunity out of this new scenario, to write a new chapter to the same story. What we recover may be different than what we have “lost” – but this is the challenge of our era, and one that we certainly can make opportunistic, economically, architecturally, and socially, *if* our politicians are brave enough to make hard decisions and *if* citizens are creative in negotiating alternatives and taking responsibility for cooperating, participating, and thinking – ecologically – opportunistically.

A major component of encouraging policy-makers to make decisions for adaptation, in particular, adaptation to sea level rise, is framing: a rhetorical and linguistic strategy based on the neural activation of existing knowledge units/ “facts” held by the speaker’s audience. [My dissertation project pertains to this very challenge – the development of codes (i.e. “resilience” and methods for communicating resilience to particular audiences) that are argumentative in challenging existing “truths” (i.e. the certainty/uncertainty of climate change) persuasive in convincing decision-makers of the necessity of action for adaptation, and effective in guiding long-term, sustainable, pragmatic policies.]

Lastly, Kimmelman highly recommends reading *Sweet and Salt: Water and the Dutch*. I found a video of Tracy Metz’s presentation re: the book, at

[http://www.youtube.com/embed/lGHBz8E4kVc](http://www.youtube.com/embed/lGHBz8E4kVc   )