Chapter 1

Introduction
Chapter 1

1.1 Tourism ‘under the radar’

When thinking of a summer holiday destination, what comes to mind first, a Mediterranean beach or the shores of a lake fifteen kilometers away from where you live? And what about a weekend trip to a city; Paris, the capital of France, or a city in your region of residence? Arguably, the warm and sunny beaches of Spain and the streets of Paris are likely to be seen as more typical tourist places than the lakeside or cities near home. The latter might seem all too familiar to be even considered as ‘real’ holiday destinations.

The abovementioned ‘obvious’ distinctions between places belonging either to the extraordinary realm of tourism or to the ordinary everyday reflect a hegemonic narrative of tourism, which has been reconfirmed and facilitated throughout many decades of increasing global mobility and connectivity (Govers, Van Hecke, & Cabus, 2008). The culture of touristic mobility is hereby rooted in imaginaries of escaping everyday life routines, of discovering the unknown and unfamiliar (Salazar, 2012), epitomized in Urry’s ‘tourist gaze’ (Urry & Larsen, 2011). Consequentially, this logic is also embedded in strong associations with and behavioral practices of traveling (long) physical distances (Larsen & Guiver, 2013). The further from ‘home’ the more exotic or even ‘real’ a touristic trip is. The ordering of tourism (Van der Duim, 2005) forms a complex and arguably political entanglement of hegemonic and marginal discourses, imaginaries, materials, activities and experiences in which some are favored at the expense of other.

It would then appear that touristic travel and experiences are by definition impossible near home, within a person’s country, region or city of residence. Indeed, tourism is defined as “the activity of visitors taking a trip to a main destination outside their usual environment, for less than a year, for any main purpose, including business, leisure or other personal purpose,
other than to be employed by a resident entity in the place visited” (EUROSTAT, 2014a). Mainly for statistical purposes, this geographic-temporal-behavioral demarcation provides a convenient basis for getting some grip on the complexity of tourist behavior on rather low spatial resolutions and along indicators that are relatively easily available (e.g., international arrivals/departures, overnight stays). However, this definition unjustly puts emphasis on the act of travel, almost as a pars pro toto for tourism. Also, uncritical reconfirmation of this definition has resulted in a narrow understanding of what tourism is and constrains what tourism can be. Hereby, a false ontological security is sustained along “fixed dualisms between the life of tourism and everyday life: extraordinary and ordinary, pleasure and boredom, liminality and rules, exotic others and significant others” (Larsen, 2008, p. 21). So, there is an inherent tension between simplifying quantified approaches and the complex social constructions of tourism.

This observed tension is rooted in a wider theorizing about the relational, subjective nature of tourism and the interdependence of the exotic and the mundane. For example, tourism has been ‘de-exoticized’ (Larsen, 2008) by pointing to how touristic activities are embedded in and shaped by routines, just as the everyday life from which tourism claims to provide an opportunity to escape. Similarly, everyday life, including the geographical notion of ‘usual environment’ is far from homogeneous, habitual and ordinary (Govers et al., 2008). Everyday life is just as well a realm for discursive and behavioral creativity and manipulation (de Certeau, 1984), not the least directed at the spatial conventions which attempt to control the meanings and performances of tourism. Furthermore, as stated by Franklin and Crang (2001, p. 10), “touristic culture is more than the physical travel, it is the preparation of people to see other places as objects of tourism, and the preparation of those people and places to be seen.” Tourism meanings, practiced in discourses, behaviors and
experiences are thus dispersed across places that are both familiar and exotic, usual and novel. This hybrid character of socio-spatial meanings of tourism aligns with what Bourdeau calls ‘after-tourism’: a change of the status of tourist areas and practices along a “transcendence of the scope of thought, structuration and practice of tourism” (Bourdeau, 2012, p. 200).

Tourism itself, instead of being delineated by socio-spatial boundaries, thus is a space for negotiating boundaries between the ‘exotic’ and the ‘everyday’. Nevertheless, touristic dualisms have become part of a self-justifying discourse in which narrow understandings of tourism along objective indicators conceal the subjective content of tourism. This powerful dynamic leaves little room for interpretations and meanings that do not align with them. This is problematic, for example when traveled distances between home and destination are small and occur within or between meaningful spatial anchors (e.g., regions or cities) in a way that they remain ‘under the radar’ of the physical delineations used in conventional tourism definitions. Acknowledging this, reducing the distance threshold between the touristic and the usual environment has been proposed (Smith, 1999). This however would merely serve the same statistical purposes from which the disconnect with subjective understandings of touristic mobility have grown. What still remains is a lack of understanding of and attention for the hybrid nature of tourism and the usual environment, which is particularly evident on small geographical levels. Here, the meanings attributed to and derived from spatial anchors (e.g., nation states, regions and cities) can conflict and contradict, or complement and enhance each other (Jessop, Brenner, & Jones, 2008).

There is a bias in tourism studies toward international tourism and a lack of insight in and understanding of the micro dynamics of domestic tourism (Canavan, 2013; Eijgelaar, Peeters, & Piket, 2008), even though most people spend vacations within their countries of residence (EUROSTAT, 2014b; UNWTO, 2008, 2014). As a result, relatively little research has
attempted to better understand how and to what extent the ambiguity of ‘here’ and ‘elsewhere’ is shaping and shaped by tourism practices on the small level of regions within nation states. The nexus of spatial familiarity and tourist experiences is often avoided as if it were the Bermuda triangle (talking of institutionalized exotic imaginaries...). Such knowledge is timely though, given that the significance of regions as meaningful spatial units that contest conventional territorial boundaries has recently been growing (Paasi, 2009). The significance of regions is not the least reinforced by tourism development itself, increasingly being seen as tool for enhancing regional revitalization (Zimmerbauer, 2011). More generally, the attributed importance of regions is embedded in the context of (and in a response to) globalizing dynamics of networks and flows of people, goods and meanings (Jones & Paasi, 2013; Van der Duim, 2005).

This gives rise to various questions. When a globalized tourism industry has enabled people to anticipate upon and experience the whole world as a potential destination, hereby increasingly familiarizing people with places and people ‘elsewhere’, could the usual environment itself –the everyday, near home environment and activities– just as well provide opportunities for (re)discovery and hereby have potential touristic value? How do meanings of home and away, institutionalized in global tourism discourses, relate to the subtle meanings of (un)familiarity and touristic attractiveness within the localities of a region and vice versa? And to what extent do various stakeholders reinforce or contest certain touristic meanings that shape socio-spatial identities? These notions open up opportunities for (and even necessitate) an exploration of the ‘in-between-ness’ (Bourdeau, 2012) of tourism, on small geographical levels and by recognizing tourism as simultaneously being an economic, social and cultural phenomenon (UNWTO, 2010).

By being explicitly concerned with the ways how tourism’s subjective boundaries between home and away shape and are shaped by people’s
socio-spatial identities, the main objective of this thesis then is “to better understand how discursive, behavioral and experiential practices of socio-spatial identification depend on and augment/constrain touristic consumption/production of places near home.”

This aim needs some further embedding in both a theoretical approach and in a specific geographical context, in order to make possible an operationalization of more detailed research questions. Therefore, in the following sections I develop the notion of proximity tourism, argue for its relevance and introduce the Dutch province of Fryslân as suitable setting for the purpose of this thesis.

1.2 Proximity tourism: the paradox of experiential and spatial (un)familiarity
In the definition of tourism provided earlier, the ‘usual environment’ plays an essential role in the ‘othering’ of tourism: it is referred to as “the geographical area, though not necessarily a contiguous one, within which an individual conducts his regular life routines” (EUROSTAT, 2014a).

Figure 1.1 Whole Tourism System model (Leiper, 1990).

Analogous to definitions of tourism, “defining ‘usual environment’ through average distances traveled, as is suggested by many national tourism authorities or statistical agencies, lacks theoretical embedding in current views on geography” (Govers et al., 2008, p. 1058). Illustrative for the
conceptual problem of a distinction between tourism and the usual environment on small geographical levels is the spatial differentiation depicted in Leiper’s (1990) model of Whole Tourism Systems (Figure 1.1). The model discerns between geographical regions which generate tourism (i.e., where people reside when they are not engaged in a tourist activity), regions which receive visitors from elsewhere (i.e., people’s holiday destinations) and transit regions, which pertain to the places traversed while travelling. In the context of the increasingly fluid spaces of flows (Govers et al., 2008) however, this distinction does not always hold and, certainly when travel distances become smaller, there is a need for alternative approaches when tourism generating regions, transit regions and destinations overlap.

![Diagram](Figure 1.2) Discerning between work, tourism, leisure and recreation (Hall & Page, 2014).

Similarly, distinctions made between recreation and tourism in order to emphasize certain temporal and spatial characteristics of people’s activities (Figure 1.2) are historically based on differences between
concerns with public (recreation) and private (tourism) undertakings (Hall & Page, 2014). Since these realms are increasingly blurred, meaningful distinction between recreation and tourism in current (western) societies is largely irrelevant and artificial. Recreation and tourism are better understood as being part of the same “related to differences in temporary mobility in time [...] and space” (Hall & Page, 2014, p. 10) and therefore strict distinction between them suffers from the same conceptual problems described earlier. In the context of this thesis therefore tourism and recreation are understood as concepts pertaining to similar gradations of temporal and spatial mobility.

That is not to say that all touristic practices are equal and interchangeable. From a phenomenological perspective, tourist experiences can vary considerably in their intensity of out-there-ness (Elands & Lengkeek, 2012). Also, when geographical distance is decoupled from experiential otherness (Boschma, 2005; Diaz-Soria & Llurdés Coit, 2013; Kastenholz, 2010), this opens up the possibility for tourism to contribute to the experience of places in multiple ways and for people to play different roles within the same environment and vice versa. As such, this thesis is concerned with gaining an understanding of meanings, behavior and experiences of ‘proximity tourism’, which pertains to the consumption/production practices which transgress the boundaries between home and away (Bourdeau, 2012) through the paradoxical experience of touristic otherness within places that feel familiar.

It is important to note that proximity tourism thus strongly builds on a relative perspective in a physical spatial sense, as it positions touristic otherness as relatively nearby (even within) the usual environment. Similarly, touristic experiences are relatively unexpected and counterintuitive due to assumed associations of familiarity with the ‘usual’ geographical space, and because its ontology is relatively different from the societal norms for ‘appropriate’ touristic activities. Also, it builds on the notion that the
practices through which proximity tourism are consumed and produced are contingent with each other in an ongoing circulation (Ateljevic, 2000). These aspects will be further elaborated upon in section 1.3.

Important also is to realize that the emphasis on relativity certainly does not mean that conventions, dualisms and dichotomies are abandoned. Rather, this thesis seeks “how they can be employed in a multiplicity of ways to understand our increasingly fluid and mobile world” (Jeuring & Diaz-Soria, 2017, p. 7). I hereby align with de Souza Bispo, who states that “it is important to note that criticism is not levied on these terms [dichotomies] when they are used as a synecdoche, i.e., as key features of a phenomenon to refer to it. Rather, the problem occurs when a concept or a term is used as the opposite of another as a means of creating controversial boundaries among them” (2016, p. 172). In other words, the “neo-situationism” (Bourdeau, 2012, p. 199) of proximity tourism becomes possible only because of prevailing dichotomies that differentiate between tourists and residents, hosts and guests, home and away. So, without the acknowledgement of such dualisms, proximity tourism would lose the socio-spatial anchors from which it can develop its character of relativity. This way, established meanings always provide space for a converting capacity of in-between-ness to highlight the latent unfamiliarity embedded in small differences (as opposed to large contrasts) or the possibility for surprise embedded in the mundane (as opposed to the unusual).

Indeed, proximity tourism can be seen as a cultural artifact of the global-local paradox, as a form of localization and a performance of territorial identification, simultaneously enabled by and motivated to counter the homogenizing processes of globalization (Govers et al., 2008). As such, the institutionalized associations with everyday and tourist places embedded in assumptions of (un)familiarity (and related notions mentioned throughout the thesis) provide a fertile ground for a re-valuation of how
tourism is currently involved in socio-spatial identification processes (and vice versa) on the regional level.

1.3 Tourism as cultural phenomenon

It follows that for proximity tourism to exist, to be a meaningful concept, it needs to be recognized, discursively, behaviorally and experientially, by the stakeholders inhabiting a certain geographical space. Therefore, a theoretical approach is needed which takes into account the relativity, relationality and subjectivity of how such practices relate to socio-spatial identification. In other words, an approach is required that can uncover the meaning-making struggle of cultural survival and justification in which any person, object or activity is continuously involved. For this, the ‘Circuit of Culture’ (Du Gay, 1997; Hall & Evans, 2013) provides an appropriate metaphorical starting point (Figure 1.3).

According to Du Gay (1997, p. 13), culture pertains to “the production and circulation of meaning”. The Circuit of Culture offers a framework to grapple with the ways shared meanings between members of a society are produced and circulated. The Circuit has been employed to describe a large variety of material objects, but can also be used to understand the significance of meanings pertaining to immaterial ‘artefacts’, particularly when they shape people’s way of living. It is easy to argue that tourism in modern societies plays a major role in how the “whole way of life” (Du Gay, 1997, p. 13) is organized: where and how we travel provides a certain status, depends on and shapes social relations, and has become a symbol of societal progress and welfare. Thus, tourism can and should be seen as a cultural phenomenon (or ‘artefact’).

However, Du Gay at the same time points to the need to realize that certain meanings do not only pertain to the content of certain ways of life, but also to the significant practices through which these meanings are produced, shared, contested, are inscribed with power and depend on
perceptions of similarity and difference. As he puts it: "It is hard to define ‘night’ except in relation to its opposite - ‘day’. Another way of saying this is that meaning is relational. If there were no differences between them, it would be hard to distinguish between them[:] It is difference which signifies" (Du Gay, 1997, p. 17). What ‘is’ and what ‘is not’ is thus tightly interwoven and interdepend. It is through this double dependency on difference that an ongoing tension exists between established, dominant meanings and the destabilizing potential of their contestation that grows from their hegemony.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 1.3** The Circuit of Culture (Du Gay, 1997).

According to the Circuit of Culture, any cultural artefact is to be studied through five processes which become connected in articulated moments: contingent relations between different processes of ‘representation’, ‘identification’, ‘production’, ‘consumption’ and ‘regulation’. Regulation pertains to the practices which attempt to favor or delimit certain ways of consumption and production over others. Representation is the symbolic use of signs and language. Identification pertains to the internalization of meanings by individual persons or groups. Production is the process through which images of an object are
represented to others, while consumption is the interpretation of the objects.

It is from this dynamic of circulation of meanings attributed to tourism and the significant practices through which its meanings are produced and contested, that particular research questions can be posed and studies can be developed that can shed light on the significance of ‘proximity tourism’.

1.4 Rationale behind the research
But what would be the value of a study that contests definitions and meanings which actually seem to help structuring a blurred world where spatial and temporal meanings are increasingly challenged? Three arguments are provided.

A first argument for an exploration of this blind spot in tourism has already been partly addressed above, as it pertains to the globalized connectivity of hypermobile societies, signified by spaces of flows (Castells, 2002) in which geographical distance and proximity are decoupled from meanings of (un)familiarity. As put by Govers et al. (2008, p. 1058), this results in a “growth of ‘tourism reflexivity’ that ensures that increasing numbers of places around the world monitor, evaluate, and develop their ‘tourism potential’...”. Consequentially, tourism has become one of the main ways through which meanings are produced within “...'host-guest-time-space-cultures' that stabilize certain places as ‘places to play’...” (2008, p. 1058). This requires an understanding of how geographical concepts and definitions both produce and are being produced through meaning-making processes, and what this implies for people’s perceived belonging to and attractiveness of places in terms of ‘home’ and ‘away’. For example, what are the ethical implications for residents when the places they call home are framed as tourism destination? To what extent can they
participate in touristic consumption within these places, when they are framed as usual for some and non-usual for others?

Second, travelling brings along important challenges with respect to sustainability. In the current era of peak-globalization (Curtis, 2009), awareness is growing about the limitations and downsides of globalized connectivity and competitiveness, simultaneously nourished by and feeding touristic consumption and production. Tourism is by some even understood as being a force of ‘destructive creation’ (Büscher & Fletcher, 2016). While sustainability issues affect many aspects of tourism, in the context of this thesis it pertains particularly to tourism mobility/transport. Long haul travel modes (e.g., air travel) significantly contribute to mankind’s carbon footprint (Dubois, Peeters, Ceron, & Gössling, 2011), in turn enhancing global warming and its destructive ecological and societal consequences. The current way tourist travel is organized is therefore highly unsustainable and major (technological) changes are needed in order to reduce the environmental impact of physical tourism mobility.

However, next to the need for technological innovations facilitating a transition toward low carbon tourism, there is also need for a paradigmatic transition in tourism thinking toward an approach that takes away the authority of distance and economic growth and provides opportunities for (re)valuing proximity, exemplified by notions of ‘de-growth’ (Bourdeau, 2012) and ‘steady state tourism’ (Hall, 2009). Knowledge is needed that can contextualize and goes beyond the attitude-behavior gap which is identified to be impeding the implementation of sustainable behavior in tourism (Hibbert, Dickinson, Gössling, & Curtin, 2013). For example, to what extent are residents living relatively nearby considered as (potential) touristic consumer by tourism entrepreneurs? How can perceived familiarity of nearby places be re-framed in order to find ‘new’ ways for people to build relations with the places where they live, through tourism? How can people’s needs to temporarily escape their routines be
fulfilled without travelling long distances? Promising discursive, behavioral and experiential starting points for such a transition should therefore be explored in order to translate a theoretical potential into actual interventions through entrepreneurship, policies and public action.

A third argument follows from the two previous in that opportunities for societal change increasingly depend on and grow from interaction and collaboration between various stakeholders (Kavaratzis, 2012; Paasi, 2012b). This general dynamic also concerns the role of tourism as a social force and the idea that tourism should be available to all (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2006). The power to influence socio-spatial development is increasingly decentralized and territorial legitimacy is often contested (Zimmerbauer & Paasi, 2013) or enhanced (Lugosi, 2014) by bottom-up processes, for example giving voice to residents. Individual experiences and opinions can become authoritative resources for decision making through ‘informal’ communication such as Word-of-Mouth (Chen, Dwyer, & Firth, 2014), while bottom-up participation in policy making has become an acknowledged tool for citizen engagement (Rehmet & Dinnie, 2013). The notion of proximity tourism can help understand how tourism stakeholders, in their varying capacities (e.g., as residents, tourists, entrepreneurs, policymakers) deal with the politics of decentralization and citizenship in relation to the increasing capitalization on the ‘tourism potential’ (Govers et al., 2008) of places. For example, does building on citizen engagement in tourism development imply that residents have a responsibility to ‘become’ tourists and travel within the region in which they live? How does becoming a tourist within a familiar environment relate to the multiple roles and identities people develop in relation to the places they inhabit? What are the implications for the relations between various tourism stakeholders? While finding answers to all these questions lies beyond the possibilities of this thesis, together the arguments provide a robust rationale for the aims of this research.
1.5 Geographical context

The geographical focus of this thesis is principally concerned with Fryslân, a province in the North of The Netherlands (Figure 1.4). In light of the aims of this thesis, Fryslân makes for a particularly suitable frame of reference for a variety of reasons.

First of all, Fryslân is one of the twelve provinces of the Dutch nation state and hereby is an official administrative territory. As one of the twelve Dutch provinces it provides a home to about 650,000 people. Its surface covers about 575,000 km², of which over 40 percent is water. As such it is a relatively small meaningful geographical unit on the regional level, within the confines of the larger administrative territory of The Netherlands. However, Fryslân has also more subjective (cultural) meanings, which are particularly relevant within the Dutch context. These meanings result for example from it being home to the nation’s second (and only other) official language. The Frisian language is one of the signifiers of a strong ‘Frisian identity’ (Betten, 2013; Duijvendak, 2008). This regional identity is rooted in a long history of territorial and socio-spatial changes. Furthermore, within Fryslân a heterogeneous mix of spatial identities exists (Pietersen, 1969): various dialects and a strong rivalry between the province’s two major football clubs exemplify this. Already without considering any touristic meanings, this results in considerable room for multiple interpretations of Fryslân as being a (un)usual environment. Various non-linear relations between absolute and subjective notions of distance/proximity, home and away, familiarity and otherness can be expected to circulate within the various meanings attributed to Fryslân, across different layers of regional identification (Boisen, Terlouw, & van Gorp, 2011).

Second, tourism is an important economic resource within the province and various efforts are made to capitalize on its touristic potential. Around seven percent of the total jobs in Fryslân is in the ‘tourism and recreation sector’ (CBS, 2012), while the Dutch average sits just above five
percent (NRIT, 2016). Since the early 19th century tourism activity has slowly
developed, while growing fast after World War II. Among other things, this
has resulted in a particular organization of the province as a whole and of
smaller parts within it as tourism destination(s) in terms of infrastructure and
touristic meanings. Interestingly, most visitors are Dutch and 82 percent of
the daytrips of Frisian residents was situated within the province (CBS, 2012).
These numbers align with a tendency in other European countries: 76
percent of Europeans spend their holidays within their own country
(EUROSTAT, 2014b). Moreover, they illustrate the demand for a better
understanding of the phenomenon of tourism near home.

Figure 1.4 The province of Fryslân in The Netherlands.
(Source www.nl.wikipedia.org)
Finally, since regions have been under increased attention and scrutiny as ‘new’ meaningful geographical units (Jones & Paasi, 2013; Paasi, 2012a), an understanding about their cultural significance from various perspectives is needed. This concerns not the least the context of tourism (UNWTO, 2010), particularly since tourism development is for many cities and regions a simulacrum of prosperity and success. Therefore it is currently a popular but tool for regional development, but with mixed results (Jóhannesson & Huijbens, 2010; van Rekom & Go, 2006), which in Fryslân is illustrated by the difficulties to establish a long-term destination marketing strategy. In sum, the context of Fryslân is a favorable ‘living lab’ for studying socio-spatial identification in and through tourism, in which various notions of ‘home’ and ‘away’ are produced and contested.

1.6 Research questions and outline of the thesis

Du Gay states that it is the full circuit through which “any analysis of a cultural text or artefact must pass if it is to be adequately studied”(p.3). However, I do not claim that in this thesis this criterion is met, as such an analysis is not the purpose here. Rather, the main use of the Circuit of Culture in this thesis pertains to its relational epistemology of how meanings about tourism as cultural artefact are produced and circulated. As such, the five cultural processes of the circuit provide a coherent structure for this thesis to make inferences across and beyond the different studies: the interdependent relation between consumption/production is not studied in isolation, but as a process for which its meanings are contingent on the relations with practices of regulation, representation and identification.

The core of this thesis consists of five studies (Chapter 2-6). In these Chapters, three stakeholder perspectives are addressed (Policy and marketing, Chapter 2; Tourism entrepreneurs, Chapter 3; Residents, Chapter 4-6). Chapter 2, 3 and 4 attempt to understand how each stakeholder group perceives and negotiates proximity tourism in the context of Fryslân
as tourism destination. Chapter 5 and 6 turn to specific cases in which practices of socio-spatial identification by residents of Fryslân and The Netherlands are related to particular production and consumption activities of proximity tourism (Table 1.1; Figure 1.5). The main research questions per chapter are as follows.

### Table 1.1 Stakeholder perspectives, circulation processes and practices per research question and chapter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Research question</th>
<th>Stakeholder perspective</th>
<th>Meaning-making processes affecting touristic consumption/production in Fryslân</th>
<th>Practices of socio-spatial identification</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Marketing/Policy</td>
<td>Regulation &amp; Representation</td>
<td>Discursive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>SMEs/Entrepreneurs</td>
<td>Identification &amp; Representation</td>
<td>Discursive, Behavioral</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Residents</td>
<td>Identification &amp; Representation</td>
<td>Discursive, Behavioral, Experiential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Residents</td>
<td>Regulation &amp; Representation</td>
<td>Discursive, Behavioral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Residents</td>
<td>Identification &amp; Representation</td>
<td>Experiential</td>
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**Research question 1:** How is Fryslân positioned as tourism destination in regional tourism marketing strategies and what are the implications of certain destination positioning discourses for Fryslân as a potential place for proximity tourism?

This research question is discussed in Chapter 2 and pertains to the perspective of tourism marketing and regional policy making in Fryslân. Using a qualitative approach, the chapter is concerned with the power of
discursive representation in relation to regulation, particularly in that, through destination positioning, certain socio-spatial identities are commodified (i.e. produced), shaping imaginaries of Fryslân as a tourism destination that is privileging some people, places or roles above other.

**Research question 2**: Which touristic roles do tourism entrepreneurs in Fryslân attribute to residents of Fryslân and to what extent do they see residents as potential consumers?

Complementing the policy perspective in Chapter 2, this research question forms the basis for Chapter 3 and is concerned with the perspective of tourism businesses. Employing a qualitative approach, it explores how stakeholders who are directly gaining income from tourism consumption negotiate the different potential roles of residents living in Fryslân in relation to their tourism businesses. As such, this chapter is explicitly building on the interdependence of production and consumption and provides insights in their connection with identification processes, particularly in terms of role attributions. Extending the knowledge gained in Chapter 2, the findings point to how the meanings attributed to tourism and to Fryslân enable or limit touristic participation of residents and their collaboration with entrepreneurs. Next, chapter 4-6 shift to the perspective of residents themselves and are concerned with the ways they make meaning of Fryslân as destination for proximity tourism.

**Research question 3**: To what extent do subjectivities of distance and proximity affect the image and attractiveness of destinations that are physically close to home?

In Chapter 4 subjective understandings of both distance and proximity in relation to perceived attractiveness of and touristic behavior in places near
home are scrutinized, from the perspective of residents living Fryslân. Using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, the study sheds light on how Fryslân as ‘proximity tourism’ destination is constructed, endorsed and appreciated (or not). The chapter highlights the relative, temporally sensitive ways that people negotiate distance and proximity in their perceptions of being at home and away.

**Research question 4:** To what extent do residents of Fryslân feel responsible to engage in promoting the province as tourism destination?

Chapter 5 again takes on the perspective of residents living in Fryslân, by focusing on the relation between processes of socio-spatial identification and citizen engagement in tourism development. Employing a quantitative study, it explores word-of-mouth communication as practice of citizenship behavior and examines the extent to which residents feel responsible for communicating destination images within their social network.

**Research question 5:** How do weather perceptions relate to the image and attractiveness of domestic holidays and which role do weather experiences play in experiences of (un)familiarity?

This research question follows up on findings in previous chapters, particularly Chapter 4. There, the weather was attributed a major role as signifier of ‘home’ and ‘away’ and an important attribute shaping the image and attractiveness of tourism destinations. In this chapter a quantitative study is employed among domestic camping tourists in Fryslân, scrutinizing linkages between identification and representation processes, affected by weather perceptions. Hereby, the chapter highlights how physical experiences, as qualitative aspects of places, inform socio-spatial
identification and affect perceptions of (un)familiarity across various spatial levels.

Finally, Chapter 7 synthesizes the findings from Chapters 2-6. It draws conclusions on the significance of proximity tourism as underpinning for socio-spatial identification in the context of Fryslân. A number of theoretical and practical implications are discussed, which can inform an augmented understanding of tourism, in which everyday life and touristic otherness are rather mutually inclusive instead of opposing. This way, proximity is embraced as potential commodity for tourism development. In turn, this approach provides a perspective on tourism that is based on multiplicity and circulation and in which the societal opportunities of proximity tourism can become more strongly embedded in regional development.

Figure 1.5 Connections between chapters.
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