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Intra-regional tourism in Friesland: Image, attitudes & behaviour of Frisian residents

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PhD Research outline

People tend to travel all over the world, often overlooking the touristic attractiveness of near home destinations.

In this PhD research (2013-2017), I study the phenomenon of 'proximity tourism', in order to better understand the touristic value of places and activities in proximity of people's everyday lives.

With the Dutch province of Friesland as a spatial context, three stakeholder perspectives are taken into account:

1. regional policy/marketing
2. entrepreneurs
3. tourists/residents living within the province.

The results presented here pertain to the perspective of tourists/residents of Friesland.

Research aims

Goal of the study was to get insight in:

- The image of Friesland as holiday destination for residents of Friesland;
- The attitudes towards (proximity) tourism within the province of Friesland;
- Tourist behaviour within the province of Friesland.

Methodology

- Online panel survey with Fries Burgerpanel, a voluntary pool of residents who participate in surveys on various societal aspects at play in Friesland;
- 913 respondents (71% response rate);
- 49% male, 51% female;
- Average age is 54 years.

Data collection and analysis in collaboration with Partoer, Leeuwarden. Tables and figures based on publication 'Fries burgerpanel over toerisme in Fryslân', Partoer 2015



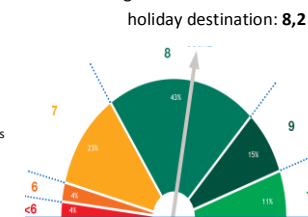
Results: image of Friesland as holiday destination

Preferred Frisian holiday regions for own holiday.

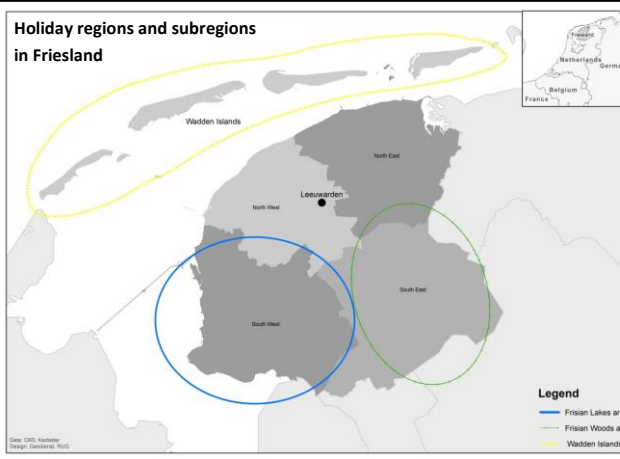


- Wadden Islands
- Southwest
- Southeast
- Northeast
- Northwest

Average score for Friesland as holiday destination: **8,2**



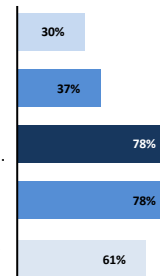
Holiday regions and subregions in Friesland



Results: attitudes towards (proximity) tourism

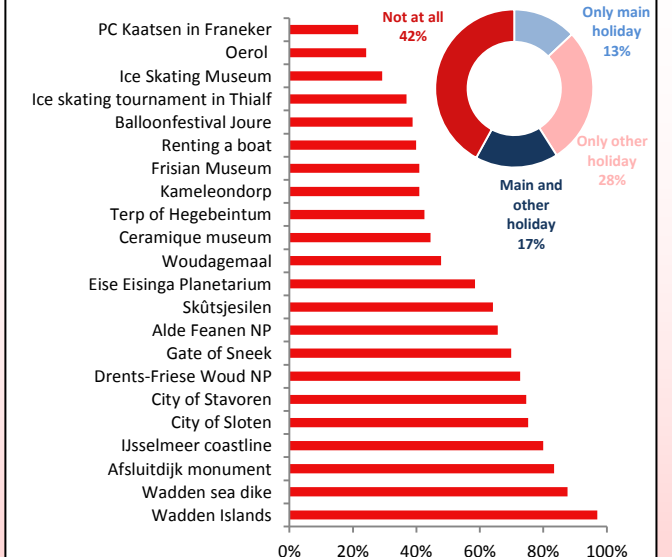
Extent to which people (strongly) agree with statement:

- Residents of Friesland should more often go on a holiday in their own province. (30%)
- For residents, taking a holiday in Friesland is one of the ways to positively contribute to a sense of community within the province. (37%)
- When I visit tourist attractions in Friesland, I contribute to the local economy of the province. (78%)
- Visiting tourist attractions in Friesland is a good way to improve my knowledge about the province. (78%)
- In my free time I regularly visit tourist attractions in Friesland. (61%)



Results: intraregional tourist behaviour

- In the past 5 years, have you spent a holiday in Friesland?
- Which tourist attractions/places have you visited?



- Within the next two years, do you plan to spend a main holiday in Friesland?
- ☺ Yes: 19%
- ☹ Maybe: 26%
- ☹ No: 55%

Conclusions and implications

- Residents of Friesland are very positive about their province as holiday destination, however...
- ...mainly for holidays of others; positive attitude not translated into intra-regional tourist behaviour;
- Frisian Lakes and Wadden are much more popular than other regions → intraregional differences;
- Most people see limited societal responsibility to engage in proximity tourism - mainly economic benefits;
- Possibilities for policy and marketing to increase regional engagement through tourism, beyond tourism as economic tool.