



# Understanding the historical institutional context by using content analysis of local policy and planning documents: Assessing the interactions between tourism and landscape on the Island of Terschelling in the Wadden Sea Region

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## HIGHLIGHTS

- Understanding the historical and institutional context can help local policymakers.
- Content analysis is a valuable tool to identify the changing dynamics of policy.
- The orientation of policy and plans (e.g. re landscape and tourism) fluctuates.
- Acknowledging synergies has historically been limited in policy and plans.
- There should be greater focus on the synergies between tourism and landscape.

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## ABSTRACT

Content analysis is a valuable tool to identify changes in policy. By analysing historical documents, policymakers and planners can improve their understanding of the institutional context in which decisions were made. Using the Island of Terschelling in the UNESCO World Heritage Wadden region of the northern Netherlands as our example, we show how content analysis can be used to understand the historical institutional context. We analysed policy and planning documents from 1945 to 2015, which was supported by semi-structured interviews with local key informants. We specifically considered tourism–landscape interactions. Although there were fluctuations between socio-economic development and nature protection over time, we found that there has been an increasing awareness of synergy. Synergies are crucial to balance nature protection with socio-economic development and to increase the social-ecological resilience of regions. We conclude that, by using content analysis, local documents can be used as a proxy for the institutional context.

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## 1. Introduction

For policymakers and planners to understand the current situation better and to improve future policies and plans about tourism and landscape, a better appreciation of the institutional context, past and present, is necessary. The institutional context is where planning and policy making occurs, but it has received little

attention in the tourism literature (Hall & Page, 2006). This institutional context is influenced by past decision-making processes and therefore exploring the historical relationship between society and the environment is an essential part of understanding this context (González, Montes, Rodríguez, & Tapia, 2008; Parra & Moulaert, 2016). Walker et al. (2002) showed that an analysis of the historical context can reveal a great deal about the present situation and how it might respond to future changes. A methodological problem is that it is often hard to establish the historical institutional context. The specific focus of this paper, therefore, is to demonstrate how the institutional context (and how it has changed over time) can be assessed.

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We show how content analysis of local documents can be used to understand the historical institutional context. Understanding the past can be achieved by analysing how issues are represented in policy and planning documents at the local level and how they change over time. These local documents can be used as a proxy for the institutional context. We use content analysis to analyse these documents to consider the changing dynamics in policy. In our example, we specifically consider tourism–landscape interactions regarding the Island of Terschelling in the northern Netherlands for the period 1945 to 2015. Our analysis is supported by semi-structured interviews with local experts and other key stakeholders.

## 2. Synergies in tourism–landscape interactions

Tourism and landscape interact in many ways (Liburd & Becken, 2017; Terkenli, 2004). Nature-based tourism, for example, is not just a socio-economic activity that provides income and other benefits to local communities, it also plays an important role in facilitating understanding of natural heritage, gaining public support and raising funding for conservation (Libosada, 2009; McCool & Spenceley, 2014). However, tourism (in general and nature-based tourism) has often had negative impacts on the landscape (Buckley, 2011; Saarinen, 2006) and on host communities (King, Pizam, & Milman, 1993; McCombes, Vanclay, & Evers, 2015). Tourism is highly dependent on aesthetic landscapes to remain attractive to tourists (Liu et al., 2007). The finding of synergies between tourism and landscape is essential to cope with future social and ecological change. Synergies can be described as situations in which the interactions between elements of a system catalytically combine in ways that result in a greater sum-total outcome than would have been achieved otherwise, with benefits across the full range of social, economic and ecological dimensions (Persha et al., 2011).

Policymakers and planners often struggle to find synergies in their attempts to balance socio-economic development and nature protection. The inadequate preparation of policies and plans, and/or a one-sided approach that is exclusively focused on either nature protection or socio-economic development, hinders the development of synergies between tourism and landscape. For example, in locations where the focus lies only on socio-economic development, degradation of nature will likely occur. Conversely, a focus only on nature protection may lead to suboptimal economic development. In most rural areas, there usually is a focus on either nature protection or socio-economic development – tourism, however, mainly takes place at the intersection of these trajectories (Hartman & de Roo, 2013). This means that tourism does not always fit the ways institutions and landscapes are traditionally structured (Hartman & de Roo, 2013). Because of this, opportunities for synergies between landscapes and tourism are underexplored (Cumming et al., 2015; Hartman, 2015; Heslinga, Groote, & Vanclay, 2017).

The interactivity between tourism and landscape, and the potential synergies between them, can be understood in terms of socio-ecological systems (SES) thinking. A SES perspective presumes an integrated system including human society and ecosystems, with reciprocal feedback loops and interdependencies (Berkes, 2007; Levin et al., 2012). Traditional ecology, however, has typically excluded humans from the system, while traditional social science has typically under-prioritised the ecological consequences of human action (Berkes, 2007; Folke, Hahn, Olsson, & Norberg, 2005). The advantage of using the SES approach is that both ecological and social research have to consider human and ecological components (Liu et al., 2007). In such a way of thinking,

the distinction between social and natural systems is considered to be minimal. In SES thinking, institutions provide a linking mechanism between social and ecological systems, and are therefore important in managing social-ecological interactions.

If the potential synergies between tourism and landscape are recognised and regional development options that find a balance between tourism and landscape are selected, then tourism could be an opportunity to increase the social-ecological resilience of a region (Buckley, 2011; Heslinga et al., 2017). Resilience is a characteristic of a social-ecological system and can be considered as the ability to continuously change, adapt and transform in response to present and future stresses and tensions (Carpenter, Westley, & Turner, 2005; Imperiale & Vanclay, 2016). Resilience is a key concept in SES thinking (Anderies et al., 2004; Folke et al., 2010). In the tourism literature, resilience has mainly been discussed as a theoretical concept with little application to the real world (Lew, 2014). To stimulate the identification and facilitation of synergies and to increase resilience of tourism destinations, we analyse the institutional context in which social-ecological systems operate. To understand the changing dynamics of the tourism–landscape interactions in policy, there is need for a historical and contextual approach (González et al., 2008; Parra & Moulart, 2016).

## 3. Data and methods

The main contribution of this paper is to demonstrate a method by which it becomes possible to understand the historical institutional context. We articulate how content analysis can be used for this purpose. We applied content analysis to local documents from 1945 to 2015 in order to identify fluctuations and shifts in the focus of these documents. This content analysis was augmented with semi-structured interviews with local experts and other key stakeholders.

We consider that all coding of raw data is qualitative, because all reading of texts is in essence qualitative, even when they are converted into numbers which can be counted (Drisko & Maschi, 2015). However, quantitative techniques can be used to analyse the frequencies of coded data. Such a hybrid approach is in line with what Drisko and Maschi (2015) call ‘basic content analysis’.

### 3.1. Content analysis of local policy and planning documents

To identify the changing foci of local policies, plans and strategies over time and how this has influenced the current situation, a content analysis of 12 key local documents from 1945 to 2015 was undertaken (listed in Appendix A). Our research sought to identify the changes in the interactions between tourism and landscape over time. Krippendorff (2013) defined content analysis as a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts and other materials to understand the institutional and other contexts in which those media are used. In the field of tourism studies, content analysis is widely used, especially in relation to destination image representations (Choi, Lehto, & Morrison, 2007). However, based on the literature review we conducted, it would appear that content analysis has not yet been applied to the study of tourism–landscape policy interactions. Using content analysis to analyse historical documents to consider changes in policy and planning makes sense because: (a) the analysis can be done for any time period, well beyond the availability of live people to interview; (b) there are likely to be changes in the perceptions and reflections of key informants over the course of their lifetime. Therefore, content analysis can be argued as having high reliability and validity (Krippendorff, 2013).

In this paper, the focus of the analysis is the municipal level

(Terschelling). Although developments in tourism and landscape are influenced by policies at multiple levels, this research was interested in the impact of policies from the higher levels on the local level. In a nested multilevel system, local policy and planning is not detached from higher levels. Therefore, policies at the provincial, national, and international levels were used to support, understand and interpret the content analysis of the local documents. The 12 local documents included in the content analysis were identified from a thorough search of the academic (e.g. [Sijtsma, Wener & Broersma, 2008](#)) and popular literature (e.g. [Hoekstra, Zijlstra, Zwart, Smit-Zwanenburg, & Kok, 2009](#); [Oosterveld, 2011](#)) and from interviews with key informants. Three of these documents were available online, the others were accessed from the archives of the Municipality of Terschelling. The documents collected from the archives were not available in digital form, but were scanned (or rather photographed with a high quality digital camera) and later converted into editable text using the optical character recognition software (Adobe Professional 10) so that they could be coded and analysed with qualitative data analysis software.

Coding is the heart and soul of content analysis ([Glaser & Laudel, 2013](#); [Krippendorff, 2004](#)). Codes can be derived from theory beforehand (i.e. *a priori* coding), they can be derived from the text itself (i.e. emergent coding), or a mix of both can be applied ([Drisko & Maschi, 2015](#)). In our case, the three main or higher-level codes were derived from theory: nature protection; socio-economic development; and the synergies between them. These codes represent the different ways tourism and landscape can interact. 'Nature protection' means that the emphasis is on protection, with tourism being considered as having a negative impact on landscape and nature. It was revealed by wordings such as: landscape, conservation, or salt marsh. 'Socio-economic development' indicates an emphasis on the utility of nature; it is seen as a resource that is beneficial to the growth of tourism and was revealed by words such as recreation, entrepreneur, or hotel. The code 'synergy' implies that tourism and landscape should be in balance and can create win-win situations. It is revealed by words such as balance, integrated, or collaboration. The full list of subcodes is provided in [Appendix B](#). The subcodes were derived by theoretical reasoning, reflection on the interviews, a general understanding of policy at the higher levels, and from a preliminary skim-reading of the local documents (see [Appendix A](#)). The content analysis was performed using the qualitative data analysis software, ATLAS.ti (version 7.5.12). By using its 'Word Cruncher' function, the frequencies of the subcodes were calculated, and the relative proportions of the main codes were determined.

Although we argue content analysis is a useful method to understand the institutional context, we do acknowledge there are some limitations, especially in the way we implemented it. We note that we demonstrated only a basic content analysis (based on frequency counts), and that a more sophisticated analysis would provide a deeper understanding of the documents. However, we note that the primary purpose of this paper is to demonstrate how content analysis can be used rather than to specifically consider the Terschelling situation in great detail. We emphasise that local documents are only a proxy means by which to understand the historical institutional context. The results of any such application should be considered only as a representation of the institutional context and thus can be subject to different interpretations. Finally, we note that content analysis helps to show patterns of change over time, but it is also important to attach meaning to these changes. Semi-structured interviews and other means of triangularisation are desirable to be able to obtain a full understanding of these meanings.

### 3.2. Semi-structured interviews with local experts and other key stakeholders

Interviews with local experts and other key stakeholders were conducted in March to May 2015, for three main reasons. First, the interviews were used to nominate some of the major shifts in policy orientation. The interviews helped to understand the influence of relevant issues prior to 1945 that were not included in the content analysis. Second, the words used in the interviews were helpful to nominate some of the subcodes for the content analysis. Third, the interview data provided background that helped in interpreting the patterns emerging from the content analyses and to help understand the role of policy and its influences on tourism development on Terschelling.

The people interviewed were recruited through the researcher's network, snowballing and by online searching. A total of 8 interviews were held ranging from 1 to 2 h in length. They included representatives of *Staatsbosbeheer* (the national forestry management agency), various interest groups, a civil servant, a former mayor, a historian, and a local tourism expert. The interviews addressed issues such as the changes in the physical, institutional and socio-cultural domains on Terschelling, and how these changes affected the way tourism and landscape interacted over time. The actual and potential conflicts between stakeholders in relation to the development of tourism on the island were also discussed. Prior to the interviews, the respondents were provided with a research information sheet and were asked to complete a consent form which covered issues of anonymity, use of the research, and their rights during and after the interview ([Vanclay, Baines, & Taylor, 2013](#)). With the permission of all respondents, the interviews were audio-recorded, and later transcribed. The interviews were analysed qualitatively using ATLAS.ti.

### 4. Some relevant background information about Terschelling and the Wadden region

Our research interest was the Island of Terschelling in the Dutch Wadden area. The Wadden is the largest natural area in Western Europe and is one of the largest tidal wetlands in the world ([Kabat et al., 2012](#)). It stretches from the northwest of the Netherlands, along the German coast, and up the western part of Denmark. The Wadden is renowned for its biodiversity and as a highly valued landscape, which led to its designation as a UNESCO World Heritage region in 2009. These natural qualities and its international recognition have made the Wadden very attractive for tourists ([Revier, 2013](#)). During the last decades, tourism has become a well-developed socio-economic activity in the region ([Sijtsma, Daams, Farjon, & Buijs, 2012](#)).

The World Heritage listing of the Wadden in 2009 is likely to have contributed to an increase in the range and extent of tourism activities ([Buckley, 2004](#); [Sijtsma et al., 2012](#)), but also creates a responsibility to take care of the outstanding natural and cultural values which attract the tourists. Proper management of this area is therefore necessary, but finding an appropriate balance between nature protection and socio-economic development is difficult and under constant discussion ([Kabat et al., 2012](#); [van der Aa, Groote, & Huigen, 2004](#)). Managing the area is complicated because the Wadden is not a remote ecosystem with minimal human influence from which human impacts can be excluded. Instead, the Wadden experiences contestation over land use and conflicting interests. The Wadden adjoins an urbanized coastal area, which, although considered 'rural' by Dutch standards, is used for a wide variety of socio-economic activities such as farming, fishing, shipping, mining, gas extraction, manufacturing, electricity generation, and tourism ([Kabat et al., 2012](#)).

Terschelling has a land surface area of 8616 ha, of which around 80 percent comprises dunes and salt marshes (Hoekstra et al., 2009) (see Fig. 1). Terschelling is an established tourist destination attracting over 400,000 visitors annually (Sijtsma, Broersma, Daams, Hoekstra, & Werner, 2015; Municipality of Terschelling, 2016) with around 1.8 million overnight stays (Municipality of Terschelling, 2014).

Our interviews suggested there were three important historical factors that influenced the development of Terschelling. First, the island landscape changed due to the afforestation activities of *Staatsbosbeheer*, the national forestry management agency. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the landscape mainly consisted of sandy dunes. Terschelling was relatively poor and the inhabitants made a living out of fishing, agriculture and beachcombing. In 1915, the national government implemented a plan to provide coastal protection and improve the economic situation of the islanders. *Staatsbosbeheer* started planting pine trees, originally as a job creation (social welfare) scheme, as well as to provide wood for the mining industry in the southern Netherlands. It continued to expand the area under forestry well into the mid 20th century, and it continues to manage the forests, although the purpose has changed from wood production to nature. The forests are now one of the reasons why tourists visit the island and are seen as a key characteristic of the island landscape.

Second, the accessibility of the island increased over time, especially because of a regular ferry service. In 1923, the shipping company, Doeksen, started a regular ferry connection between Terschelling and the mainland (Hoekstra et al., 2009). Furthermore, largely because of the afforestation project, the road network on the island was upgraded and expanded between 1915 and 1929 (Hoekstra et al., 2009). This road network that was once used for the development of forest plantations is nowadays the main infrastructure for tourism and recreation.

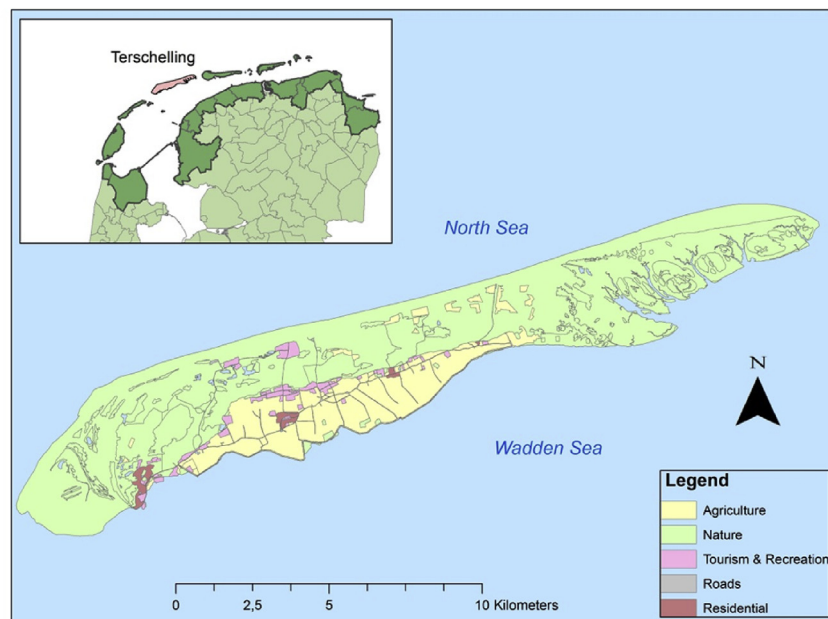
Third, starting from the 1920s, various real estate development activities, such as holiday homes, beach resorts and hotels, stimulated tourism. Under pressure from the national government which wanted to promote social and economic development,

*Staatsbosbeheer* was required to offer prime allotments along the North Sea coast so that rich people could build relatively-cheap holiday homes, and in 1927 the first houses were constructed (Hoekstra et al., 2009). About the same time, there were also plans to build a large seaside resort complex, although this did not come to fruition.

Despite the various initiatives to stimulate development on the island, there were many constraints to the early tourism development. The Great Depression of the 1930s led to a stagnation in tourism development. For example, the construction for the resort complex was cancelled and the construction of many holiday houses was stopped for some years. There was increasing competition for tourism from the other islands in the Wadden Sea. While the other islands have similar qualities, Terschelling and Vlieland were the last islands where tourism developed in the Wadden area, primarily because of their relatively long distance from the mainland. By way of comparison, it currently takes 120 min to go Terschelling, while the islands of Ameland and Schiermonnikoog are only a journey of 45 min, with Texel being even closer. With the occupation of the Netherlands by the Nazis during the Second World War (1940–1945), tourism was prohibited on the islands, with all non-residents officially banned. Many holiday homes and beach pavilions were demolished or destroyed by the Germans. After the war, it took at least five years before people were able to get their lives back together and for tourism to recommence (Hoekstra et al., 2009).

## 5. Clarifying the concept of synergy in tourism–landscape interactions

The controversy surrounding the creation of a light industrial park on Terschelling provides an illustrative example of what is meant by synergy (or at least the lack of synergy) between tourism and landscape. Because of the growing tourism sector, by the 1980s there was arguably a strong need for a business park/light industry zone to accommodate suppliers and services for the tourism sector and the local population. After years of discussion, it was decided



**Fig. 1.** Land use on Terschelling.

Source: Created by author based on the *Basis Bodem Gebruik* land use dataset (2010 data).

Note: The insert map shows the position of Terschelling in the Northern Netherlands and the Dutch Wadden Region.



that an industrial area for light industry could be built and by 1990 the first buildings began to be constructed in the polder just outside of the village of West-Terschelling (see Fig. 2). Although it had been argued that the business park should have been located elsewhere, for example out of view in the middle of the forest, at the time *Staatsbosbeheer* would not allow this. The location of the industrial park in the polder was a pragmatic compromise. However, while entrepreneurs were glad to have the park, the location was (and still is) regarded as undesirable by many islanders because it was highly visible and considered to be unattractive. Nowadays, it is generally regarded by all parties that the current location was the wrong decision and that the industrial park should have been placed in the forest. Knowledge about ecosystems has increased over time, and it is now understood that the polder habitat is a much more important ecosystem than the forest. The current location of the industrial zone is detrimental to the image of the village of West-Terschelling as a tourist destination, given that it now houses a sewage treatment plant, a recycling plant, a sand and gravel supplier, and an auto repair workshop, amongst other businesses. Thus, it is now very evident that putting the park in the forest would have been a win-win outcome for nature and tourism. This example clearly shows that opportunities for synergies between landscape and tourism were overlooked when the business park was built. However, the example also shows that the decisions made at any point in time have to be interpreted in their historical context. Therefore, in developing policy, it is vital to consider the historical institutional context and how it has evolved over time.

## 6. Tourism–landscape interactions in policy about Terschelling since the Second World War

Our content analysis covers the period after the Second World War. From 1945, the importance of tourism as a source of income on Terschelling grew steadily. The development of tourism on Terschelling followed a similar pattern to the rest of the Netherlands. After the War, people had greater wealth and more leisure time to spend (Williams, 2009). This growth is reflected in

our analysis of the local policy and planning documents (see Fig. 3). After the war, the tourism sector grew exponentially on Terschelling, starting with relatively small-scale and camping sites (Interview 2, Interview 4). To meet the demands of the tourists, local residents would rent out their backyards or houses to gain additional income.

“At first, tourism was quite limited, but after the Second World War, tourism began to develop under the influence of social change. The history of tourism on the islands is not very long.” (Interview 4)

The period of the 1960s and early 1970s is often characterized as having a shift away from socio-economic development towards a stronger focus on nature protection – for example, the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment was held in Stockholm in 1972. This shift is evident in the local documents for the year 1972 (see Fig. 3). However, the documents from 1974, 1977 and 1986 all have a higher share of social-economic development. An explanation for this anomaly could be that there was already a shift to nature protection on Terschelling as early as 1952. The municipality realized at an early stage that something needed to be done to maintain the island's character.

“It was found that there was a need to stabilize [the number of tourists] and make sure the tourism demand could be managed properly. Now, the island is still beautiful and relatively intact. This is the reason why tourists visit the island and is something that should be preserved. At that time [the 1960s and early 1970s], a cautious and conservative policy was implemented, which was eventually recorded in the municipality's First Structure Plan of 1974.” (Interview 2)

Measures implemented in 1974 included a fixed maximum number of tourist beds (20,000), whereas before there was no maximum set. Additional measures include attempts to extend the tourist season by the hosting of events, quality improvement,

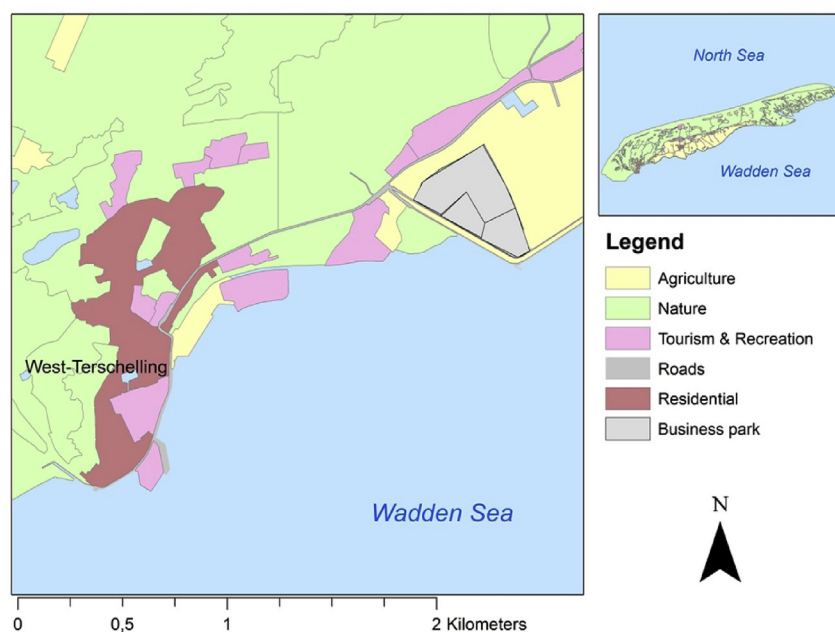


Fig. 2. Location of the business park near West-Terschelling.  
Source: based on the *Basis Bodem Gebruik* land use dataset (2010 data) edited by author.

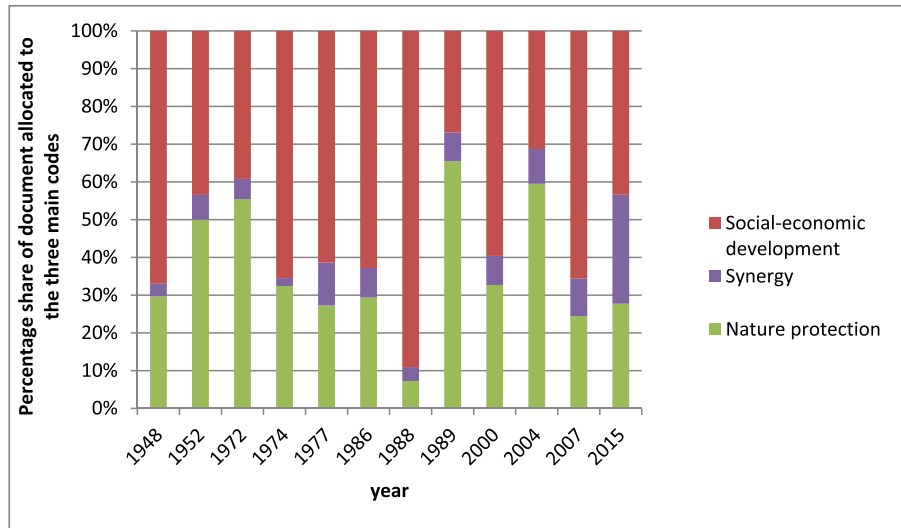


Fig. 3. Change in the relative proportions of three main topics in policy and planning documents by year.

restricting the number of motor vehicles, and land use zoning restrictions. These ‘Stabilization Policy’ measures (as the *First Structure Plan* became known) are considered as having had a great influence in steering the development of tourism and are still valid now (Interview 2).

From the 1980s on, the development of tourism–landscape interactions in policy can be characterized by fluctuations and inconsistencies. The documents from 1988, 2000, and 2007 have a strong orientation towards socio-economic development, while in the documents from 1989 to 2004, the emphasis lies more on nature protection. The results appear to show a pattern in which the different documents seem to be responses to each other, just like a pendulum swing.

The documents analysed differ in character partly because we selected documents that addressed tourism, landscape and spatial dimensions. In the documents that were predominately landscape oriented (1972, 1989, 2004), more emphasis was placed on nature protection. In contrast, the documents predominately focussed on tourism (1948, 1952, 1986, 1988) had an emphasis on socio-

economic development (Fig. 4). In all documents, but especially the tourism documents, discussion of synergies only played a minor role.

If we focus on the discussion of synergies between tourism and landscape, it seems that this is a relatively recent idea. Fig. 5 shows that the importance of synergies in the documents remained limited before about 2000. However, in the most recent decade, the importance of synergies has increased, although it still remains limited compared to nature protection and socio-economic development. The most recent document (2015) shows an even distribution between nature protection, socio-economic development, and synergies. Thinking in terms of synergies remains a challenge for the municipality (Interview 2)

“For the municipality, it is important to keep a good balance between what is acceptable for the inhabitants and how entrepreneurs can get enough space to do business.” (Interview 2).

Looking at the usage of synergy at the level of the subcodes

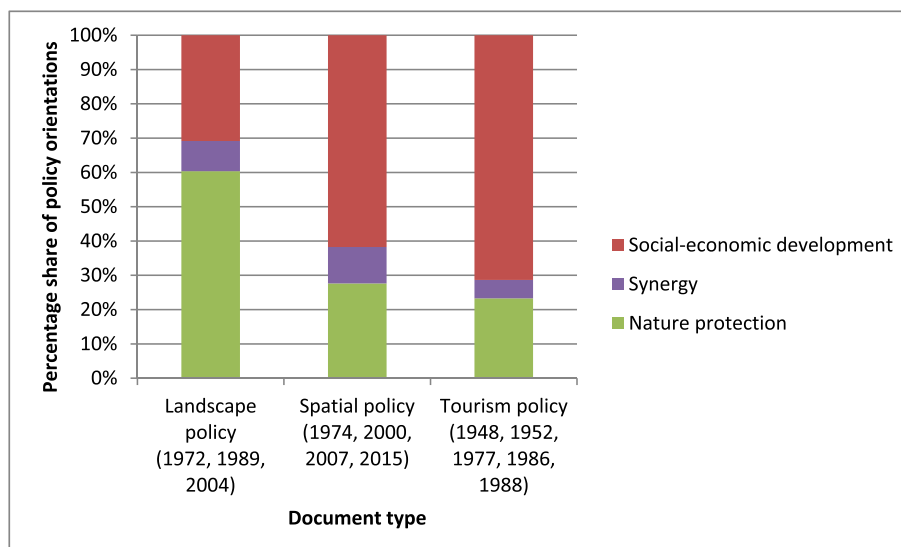


Fig. 4. Policy orientations per document type.

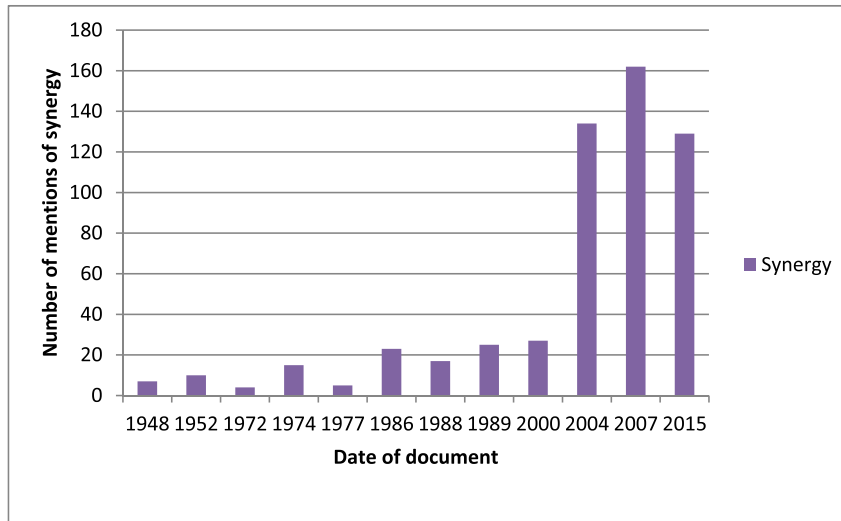


Fig. 5. The development of 'synergy' on Terschelling.

(Appendix B), we see that the increase in the amount of synergy in documents can be explained by an increase of terms such as: sustainability, collaboration, together, responsibility, integrated and involvement. Fig. 6 shows the usage of the eight subcodes that were used most often through the years. The recent increase of synergies in policy is something that is considered to be a positive development (Interview 5).

“Everything on the island is interwoven with each other: spatially, socially, economically and in terms of family ties. Therefore, integration in policy would be very useful.” (Interview 5)

However, this observation can be challenged as well, because integration of policy domain is considered to be something different than the implementation of it (Interview 8)

“Saying that you want integration of policy is something different than practice. They say it, but the end result does not go in that direction.” (Interview 8)

### 7. Interpreting the historical institutional context of Terschelling

The first part of the analysis illustrated that past policies and plans influenced the course of future developments, but also had unintended consequences. We observed that tourism development was enabled thanks to interventions that initially had other objectives, although it was constrained due to major events. The interventions on Terschelling and the subsequent improvements in infrastructure led to the island becoming perceived as more attractive for tourism. Nevertheless, the development plans of the 1930s were constrained by a financial crisis and a war, which perversely helped to maintain nature and the landscape in a state where the impacts of tourism were minimal. It is evident that major events can have a large influence regarding tourism–landscape interactions on Terschelling. To understand these interactions better, seeing coastal areas as a social-ecological system where tourism and landscape are constantly interacting with each other can be helpful. Seeing Terschelling as part of a dynamic and complex system can help to explore past patterns and behaviours and

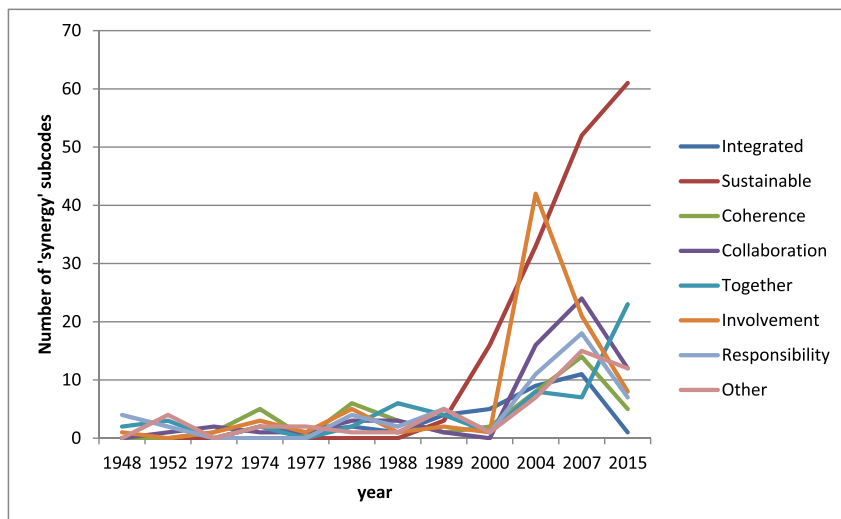


Fig. 6. The number of subcodes relating to 'synergy' in planning documents about Terschelling by year.

thereby better understand the current situation.

According to the literature about the Wadden in general, halfway through the 1970s is considered to be a turning point in the way the region was being managed (Meijer, Lodders-Elfferich, & Hermans, 2004; Oosterveld, 2011). Therefore, it is surprising that our results from the content analysis showed a relative early shift to a more nature protection oriented policy. A possible explanation for this could be that this emphasis on nature was based on local cultural arguments rather than the ecological arguments of external environmental interest groups operating at a national or international scale (Interview 5). The demand for more and better tourist accommodation and facilities led to a proliferation of accommodation and activities. These developments were considered undesirable by some islanders, because they had a negative effect on the traditional island culture (Interview 5). This created some local resistance to tourism developments, leading to the establishment in 1962 of the protest group, S.O.S. Terschelling, which is still active today. S.O.S. Terschelling advocates the need to maintain the unique character of the island. At that time, as now, they perceived a need to stabilize development to make sure that the demand for tourism could be managed properly by minimizing its impacts on the landscape and the community (Interview 2).

The policy measures of the 1970s were effective in slowing down the development of tourism and in limiting impacts on the landscape. However, this also hindered adaptation processes to both social and ecological change (Interview 4). The ‘Stabilization Policy’ of 1974 successfully limited the growth of tourism on the island. Most of the major changes that affected the landscape were implemented between the 1930s and 1950s. However, as one person indicated, tourism markets keep changing constantly, and in order to respond to these changes, innovation is required. Because of the Stabilization Policy, options for innovation in tourism development were also constrained. Remaining an attractive tourism destination and securing tourism as an important source of income for the future is a challenge for Terschelling (Interview 4) and requires constantly looking for a balance between tourism and the landscape on which tourism is dependent.

“The disadvantage is that there is not much attention towards what happens in the world around us. How does the market change and how do you anticipate this? This does not mean you have to flog the island, but you are dependent on tourists for 90 percent. Therefore there is a need to maintain them and connect them with the island. This is something Terschelling has to watch out for.” (Interview 4)

Our content analysis showed that in the 1980s and 1990s, there were fluctuations in the focus of policy. This can be interpreted as the coexistence of documents with an emphasis on nature protection and socio-economic development, but where the next document is often a reaction to the previous document. The focus on nature protection gained greater standing after the 1970s, not only in local policy, but especially in policies at higher levels such as at the European level (e.g. *Bird Directive 1979* and *Habitat Directive 1992*) and the national level (e.g. *PKB First Policy Report Wadden Sea 1980*; *PKB Second Policy Report Wadden Sea 1994*; *Management Plan Wadden Sea 1996* and *Nature Protection Law 1998*). Similarly, the focus on socio-economic development can be explained by the difficulties the tourism sector on Terschelling experienced in the 1980s. After years of growth, there was an economic downturn, which also affected the islands. Tourism turned out to be sensitive to the business cycle and tourist numbers dropped. The local tourism entrepreneurs developed a Tourist Recreation Action Plan Terschelling which was published in 1988. This plan stated that the municipality must create opportunities for

the tourism sector to expand and modernize. It argued that the tourism sector had not adequately evolved in terms of improvements in quality or in terms of efforts to extend the tourist season. The entrepreneurs believed that the previous stabilization policy limited Terschelling’s ability to innovate and to adapt to the changing tourist market. Thus, over time there a bifurcation emerged in desired goals and strategies, which became a source of tension on the island.

Synergy is a relatively recent phenomenon and thinking in terms of synergies has only slowly become important in policy. Our analysis showed that such change take time. The example of Terschelling showed that even though tourism development and the protection of nature were both important in the second half of the twentieth century, thinking in terms of synergies took a couple of decades to take hold.

Reflecting on SES thinking suggests that the island of Terschelling is a coupled system – it is a small island where many social and ecological issues are inter-related with each other. However, the island was managed as if tourism and landscape were separate systems. The results showed that, in the past up until about 2000, the focus of policy tended to be either nature protection or socio-economic development, with only limited attention given to possible synergies. The illustrative example of the industrial park on Terschelling revealed that thinking in terms of synergies between tourism and landscape is highly desirable. The example showed that there was a realisation that the way the industrial park was constructed was suboptimal and that, with the benefit of hindsight, the construction could have been done better.

## 8. Conclusion

Content analysis of local policy and planning documents is a valuable tool to understand the historical institutional context and to show how it has changed over time. In our study of Terschelling in the Wadden Sea Region, the content analysis revealed a greatly changing emphasis in policy documents between nature protection and socio-economic development. However, in recent decades, the focus on synergies between these orientations has increased. We suggest that these patterns are likely to apply elsewhere in the world, although there may be differences with regard to the relative amount of synergy present, and in terms of when synergy was first mentioned. Content analysis helps in identifying these historical institutional patterns.

Acknowledgment of possible synergies in policies and plans has been limited throughout history. The example of Terschelling showed that there had been an increase in the discussion of synergies between tourism and landscape only since 2004. However, our analysis also showed that the usage of synergy in documents is still limited in comparison to nature protection and socio-economic development. We conclude from this that the idea of using tourism to balance the needs of nature protection and socio-economic development is promising, but not easy to pursue.

We used social-ecological systems theory as our conceptual starting point and we specifically looked at the institutional context where decisions regarding tourism–landscape interactions are made. To understand this institutional context fully, an historical approach is necessary. By using local policy and planning documents as a proxy for the institutional context, we used a content analysis to reveal these changes in tourism–landscape interactions over time. Understanding the changing institutional context can be augmented by an assessment of changes in public opinion and how people interpret local policies and plans and act upon them, which we have discussed elsewhere (Heslinga, Groot, & Vanclay, 2018).

To conclude, we have three key suggestions for policymakers and planners. First, understanding the historical and institutional



context can help in developing better policies. Second, a content analysis of past documents can be a helpful and effective tool to systematically reveal the past patterns that have shaped the current situation. Third, there is considerable potential for synergies between tourism and landscape and there should be a greater focus on this. Nevertheless, achieving these synergies is not easy and can take time. Designing policies and plans that take an integrated approach is a good first step.

### Short statement of the contribution made by each author to the paper

Jasper Heslinga is the primary author of the paper and was responsible for the initial idea of the paper, data gathering, data analysis and writing the first draft of the paper. This is one of the papers comprising Jasper's PhD, which was awarded by the University of Groningen in January 2018.

Dr Peter Groote, as a cosupervisor of the PhD, contributed to the design of data gathering, the analysis and interpretation of the results, and to the content and structure of early versions of the paper.

Prof Frank Vanclay was the primary supervisor (promotor) of the PhD and, as a native English speaker, contributed significantly by rigorous English editing various versions of the paper, as well as by discussing strategies for dealing with reviewer comments, and by critically questioning statements made in the paper.

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### Appendix B. Coding scheme

NOTE: these are the English version of the terms in Dutch.

Natural protection	Social-economic development	Synergy
<u>General-</u> nature	<u>General-</u> tourism	<u>Balance-</u> synergy
- landscape	- recreation	- win-win
- attractiveness	- leisure	- balance
- vulnerable	- economy	- harmony
- quietness	- human	<u>Integration-</u> integrated
- open space	- prosperity	- interwoven
<u>Activities-</u> protection	- profit	- sustainable
- conservation	<u>Activities-</u> development	<u>Social-</u> collaboration
- preservation	- growth	- together
<u>Actors-</u> Staatsbosbeheer	- expansion	- involvement
- Nature organizations	- building	- awareness
<u>Objects-</u> fauna	- construction	- understanding
- flora	- initiatives	- respect
- dunes	- services	- responsibility
- forest	- mass	
- beach	- industry	
- salt marsh	- investing	
- polder	- establishing	
- birds	<u>Actors-</u> entrepreneurs	
- seals	<u>Objects-</u> hotel	
- ban	- camping	
- wire	- caravan	
- fence	- pavilion	
- closed area	- traffic	
	- cycle path	
	- hospitality industry	

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