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Socio-spatial complexity in leisure development

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ABSTRACT

Connections between socio-spatial complexity in a social domain and Foucauldian discourse analysis gain momentum in the wider social sciences, but have been marginalized in leisure and tourism research. We combine, explore and expand theories of socio-spatial complexity with leisure-led regional development and Foucauldian discourse analysis, for the first time in tourism studies. Based on interviews with 37 local leisure and tourism stakeholders in the Dutch province of Fryslân, we analyze how discourses condition leisure development. Through Foucauldian analysis we uncover powerful discourses behind interactions that drive socio-spatial complexity. Values and meanings in these discourses condition a region's tourism and leisure development. Established discourses structure which tourism and leisure developments are pursued, and shifts in these discourses trigger structural societal changes.

Introduction

Connections between socio-spatial complexity and Foucauldian discourse analysis gain momentum in the wider social sciences, yet, these have been marginalized in leisure and tourism research (Little, 2012; Olssen, 2008). By socio-spatial complexity we refer to the ways open systems in space and place adapt to external influences and self-organize in a social domain. Broadly, interactions between people and places are at the core of socio-spatial complexity and their spatial embeddedness in leisure and tourism represent a crucial aspect in leisure-led regional development. More specifically, this paper offers a critical enquiry into how such people-places interactions structure socio-spatial complexity and influence power relations in leisure-led regional development. We showcase this with the example of the leisure development in Fryslân, a province in the northern Netherlands.

This paper is, to our knowledge, the first to combine, explore and expand socio-spatial complexity theories with Foucauldian discourse analysis in order to conceptualize the driving forces of complexity in leisure and tourism, focusing on leisure-led regional development. Combining these theoretical perspectives, we examine: 1) the way values and meanings structure non-linear tourism and leisure development, and 2) the way discourses are structured through processes of socio-spatial complexity. We anchor our discussion in Foucault's explanations on discourses as debated in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, in which the French philosopher states:

“[discourse] appears as an asset - finite, limited, desirable, useful - that has its own rules of appearance, but also its own conditions of appropriation and operation; an asset that consequently, from the moment of its existence (and not only in its ‘practical

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applications'), poses the question of power; an asset that is, by nature, the object of a struggle, a political struggle." (1972, p. 120)

We, therefore, maintain that complexity offers explanations of the processes through which discourses and development are mutually conditioned and structured by relations to the struggles of power. Thus, we open up such an academic debate which allows for further discussions to expand further Foucauldian thinking combined with socio-spatial complexity.

Leisure and tourism are often considered as possible stimuli for regional development in rural and peripheral areas (Hermans & de Roo, 2006; Walmsley, 2003). Leisure-led regional development is the focus of this paper, yet we view leisure and tourism as a heterogeneous network with a multiplicity of actors (Greenwood Parr & Lashua, 2004; Ren, Pritchard, & Morgan, 2010). Distinguishing between leisure and tourism, then, is "ultimately doomed" and these forms of behavior can best be viewed as parts of the same whole (Walmsley, 2003, p. 64).

Leisure-led regional development is not easily directed or planned. Fragmentation, a balance between development and protecting existing qualities, and crossovers between leisure and broader regional development entail a high degree of complexity and non-linear development (Meekes, Buda, & De Roo, 2017b). According to the concept of complexity, non-linear development represents the result of internal interactions between various parts in an open system, which respond to changes in the environment (Cilliers, 2005; O'Sullivan, 2004). A system, here, is any whole which consists of interacting parts; an open system implies that there is no set or closed boundary, but that the limits of a system are defined by the interactions and functioning of the parts. In complexity theories, such interactions can create a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts.

For social phenomena such as leisure and tourism, actors can be viewed as parts in a complex system. These act and interact based on influences from external conditions and contacts with others (Byrne, 2005). We argue that such interactions are framed by discourses, of which Foucault mentions:

"[discourse] exists under the positive conditions of a complex group of relations. These relations are established between institutions, economic and social processes, behavioral patterns, systems of norms, techniques, types of classification, modes of characterization; and these relations are not present in the object."

Foucault (1972, p. 45)

Foucault's interpreters in the wider social sciences, especially planning and geography, consider discourse an "ensemble of ideas, concepts and categories through which meaning is given to social and physical phenomena, and which is produced and reproduced through an identifiable set of practices" (Hajer & Versteeg, 2005, p. 175). Such discourse, then, conditions human behavior (van den Brink, 2010). A Foucauldian interpretation of discourse implies that such an ensemble creates a "complex entity that extends into the realms of ideology, strategy, language and practice, and is shaped by the relations between power and knowledge" (Sharp & Richardson, 2001, p. 195). In tourism and leisure development, various sets of actors can hold different values and meanings as central, resulting in a number of discourses that compete for influence in society. Social change in tourism and leisure can then be conceptualized as existing of shifts in the relative influence of different discourses, resulting from the competition between different conceptions of meaning (Sharp & Richardson, 2001).

We, therefore, contribute explanations of how a complexity perspective is linked to a Foucauldian view of discourses, and how an analysis of such discourses explains the mechanisms that shape complex socio-spatial systems and their non-linear behavior in tourism and leisure development. The paper combines, explores and expands socio-spatial complexity theories with Foucauldian discourse analysis so as to show the contingent status of 'knowledges' in tourism and leisure being dependent on and constructed by a variety of factors; therefore, not static, but situated in time, place and space (Little, 2012). This acknowledges the important role that values and meanings in leisure-led regional development play in shaping complex or non-linear social processes.

Another contribution of this paper is to examine how a complexity theoretical perspective can help overcome conundrums in Foucauldian thinking, concerning determinism and social constructionism; as parts in a complex system, individuals can produce novelty, uniqueness and creativity despite being the outcome of social and historical processes (Olsen, 2008). A complexity perspective, therefore, explains the aspect of unpredictability in Foucauldian thinking and helps understand how interactions are conditioned by discourses in leisure and tourism. Simultaneously, this combination allows exploring how the evolution of discourses and their power relations are affected by processes of complexity.

The theoretical and empirical contributions of this paper are further explored through a case study of leisure-led regional development in the Dutch province of Fryslân. In this province, stimulating leisure and tourism has long been formulated as a policy goal in order to strengthen development in the region and combat effects of potential population decline (Hartman, Parra, & de Roo, 2015; Provincie Fryslân, 2014). We analyze which discourses play a role in shaping such leisure-led regional development. On the one hand, this means studying the development of socio-spatial complexity influenced by existing discourses. On the other hand, we examine processes of complexity (e.g. co-evolution, self-organization, path-dependency) and how they influence the development of the leisure-related discourses in the province. Thus, we offer critical in-depth theoretical understandings of driving forces behind socio-spatial complexity in the setting of leisure-led regional development. Exploring the role of discourses in this complex process provides leisure and tourism planners and policy makers with better insights into the effects of their actions.

Next, we outline the theoretical framework, linking the complexity perspective with leisure-led regional development and with Foucauldian discourse analysis. In the methodological section we present the interviews with 37 local tourism and leisure stakeholders, including experts in the private and public sectors in the province of Fryslân, the Dutch case study. Our findings show which discursive patterns emerge in leisure-led regional development in Fryslân. These patterns focus on the meaning and value of leisure, interactions between actors, division of roles and power and how leisure is stimulated locally and regionally.

Complexity and Foucauldian discourses in leisure

In existing leisure and tourism research, non-linear approaches, based on evolutionary, path dependency or complexity approaches, have received some attention (Farsari, Butler, & Szivas, 2011; Hartman, 2015; Ma & Hassink, 2013; Milne & Ateljjevic, 2001). The potential of a non-linear perspective to tourism is, to date, not fully explored (Russell & Faulkner, 2004; Speakman, 2016). The main challenge for complexity-based theories is to integrate the intersubjective nature of socio-spatial complex systems. How actors interact with each other has a strong influence on the non-linear development of a complex social system, e.g. a tourism region. Thus, we further this discussion, by showing how a complexity perspective is linked to discursive practices, namely, meanings and values being attached to leisure-led regional development. This understanding of the role of leisure and tourism actors in complex and non-linear development furthers the debate on tourism planners' function within a complexity perspective.

Non-linearity and complexity are not new in leisure and tourism research. Tourism Area Life Cycles (TALC) is considered the first recognition of the non-linearity and especially path-dependence of tourism development, even though in its original form there was still an assumption of strong predictability (Butler, 1980, 2009; Ma & Hassink, 2013). Recently, Evolutionary Economic Geography (EEG) is employed to study leisure and tourism development over time (Brouder, 2014; Gill & Williams, 2014). Additionally, complexity theories are applied to leisure and tourism, both in quantitative modeling (Baggio, 2008; Lacitignola, Petrosillo, & Zurlini, 2010) and using qualitative methodologies (McDonald, 2009; Russell & Faulkner, 1999). A limited number of studies analyze leisure and tourism by combining EEG and complexity (Halkier & James, 2017; Ma & Hassink, 2013; Meekes, Parra, & De Roo, 2017). Such approaches recognize an aspect of fundamental uncertainty in the development of leisure and tourism. We, therefore, build on and expand these efforts, particularly focusing on the concept of complexity, and bring them further by including an aspect that is not often incorporated in non-linear approaches: the role of discourses in constructing leisure-led regional development.

Mechanisms of complexity

The essence of complexity lies in the understanding that open systems adapt to external influences through self-organizing of the component parts, moving towards a better 'fit' with their environment. The adaptation of many individual parts in a system can lead to small changes having in the end large effects, or vice versa to shocks being absorbed without much change to the system as a whole (Chapman, 2009; O'Sullivan, 2004). Adaptation to a changing environment in itself changes that environment and creates a path dependency in the system's evolution. Simultaneously, because small changes can potentially have major effects (butterfly effect), there is a constant possibility of new path creation. These properties of emergence, self-organization, co-evolution and path dependence and path creation are essential aspects of a complex system's unpredictability (Martin & Sunley, 2007).

When discussing socio-spatial complex systems, e.g. a leisure and tourism region, most developments relate to human behavior (Cilliers, 2005; O'Sullivan, 2009). Actors behave in different ways, adapt to their environment and respond to the actions of others. The most crucial parts in socio-spatial complex systems are, therefore, actors; these can be individuals, but also groups of individuals such as governments, companies or other organizations. Each of these actors responds to changes they perceive in their environment. The choice to respond to these changes is often made in contact with other actors, which influences their form of adaptation. The actions of many different actors combined can create patterns in development that, although based on the intent of each actor as such, are not necessarily the result of any form of collective intent among multiple actors. Thus, self-organization can emerge from the independent yet co-evolving behavior of various actors (Rauws, 2016).

Understanding complex processes often involves examining past developments. In the development of leisure in a region, we observe periods of dynamics and of (relative) stability. However, applying this knowledge to socio-spatial planning in leisure requires a way of recognizing ongoing processes that frame future developments. From a complexity perspective, this is possible by uncovering mechanisms that structure such evolutionary processes. In social systems, this implies identifying and understanding patterns in the way in which actors assign meaning and values to their environment. These patterns of meanings and values are simultaneously structured by their environment as well as structuring the way in which this environment functions. We explore this relationship between patterns of meaning and leisure-led regional development, by performing a discourse analysis, which in a Foucauldian perspective implies analyzing ways whereby meanings are given to social phenomena (Hajer & Versteeg, 2005).

Linking complex interactions with Foucauldian analysis

Tourism and leisure development analyzed from a complexity theoretical perspective stresses the importance of interactions between actors as the origin of fundamental uncertainty (Hartman et al., 2015). Through interactions, individual adaptations from actors can, eventually, lead to dynamics in the evolution of the system as a whole, thus resulting in structural change. Actors that spur such change are known as 'movers and shakers' (Russell & Faulkner, 1999), but the question remains why certain adaptations trigger structural change, and others remain without major consequences. One explanation lies in the existence or absence of a shared sense of urgency among actors when it comes to creating dynamics in the system. Whenever such a shared sense of urgency exists, individual adaptations are more likely to emerge through interactions and form larger scale patterns (Meekes, Buda, & De Roo, 2017a). Taking these debates further, we claim that this shared sense of urgency can be captured through the concept of shared discourses, through which meaning and value is provided to individual developments.

Employing a Foucauldian discourse analysis within a complexity perspective builds on the notion that discourses are based on the existing system, but also shape the future development of this system (Hajer & Versteeg, 2005; Olssen, 2008). Foucault maintains that "a discursive formation is defined [...] if one can show how any particular object of discourse finds in it its place and law of

emergence; if one can show that it may give birth simultaneously or successively to mutually exclusive objects, without having to modify itself" (Foucault, 1972, p. 44). Discourses make up constraining and enabling factors for development, as they structure the meanings and values that are attached to leisure, but also the various (potential) actions or adaptations by individual actors. It is through discourses that "social reality is produced and made real" (van den Brink, 2010, p. 21) and expectations of actors are influenced (Åkerlund & Müller, 2012).

According to Hajer and Versteeg (2005) "the analysis of discourses can help to illuminate why certain definitions do or do not catch on at a particular place and time and to explain the mechanisms by which a policy does or does not come about" (p. 177). This process is not limited to policies, but can be applied to individual adaptations and the extent to which these result in structural change to a complex system. Conceptualizing discourses as conditioning processes of complexity allows for greater understanding of complex leisure-led regional development. Simultaneously, mechanisms of complexity can be used to explain the development of discourses, thereby stressing the temporality of discursive practices.

Many central concerns in Foucault's work, especially as outlined in the *Archaeology of Knowledge*, show clear links to the concept of complexity (Little, 2012). Openness, indeterminacy, non-linearity, unpredictability, disorder and uncertainty are central to Foucault's work and to theories on complexity. Conundrums surrounding Foucault's explanations of determinism, creativity, social constructionism and uniqueness can be overcome through a complexity perspective (Olssen, 2008). Complexity, which involves spontaneous and evolving new trajectories, adds a mechanism for unpredictability to a Foucauldian perspective. This explains how individual behavior can be produced by social and historical processes but does not imply determinism, as the interactions between a multitude of individual actions can create a fundamentally uncertain outcome.

Simultaneously, Foucauldian discourse analysis strengthens the understanding of the neglected social aspects of complexity. Although approaches that stress interactions between actors are common in leisure and tourism (Ren et al., 2010) and in spatial planning following the communicative turn (Healey, 1996), within a complexity theoretical perspective this is often less central. The Foucauldian discursive approach used in this paper highlights how interactions between actors are structured and framed, which is a crucial aspect of socio-spatial complexity. This creates a non-linearity in the effect discourses can have on structural change. Prominent discourses will have a more direct influence on leisure-led regional development, but subordinate (and potentially subversive) discourses can spark the emergence of more comprehensive and structural changes.

Complexity in discourses

Foucauldian discourse analysis is generally performed within an approach that can be described as 'social constructionist', focusing on the struggles that take place over meaning, interpretation and implementation of concepts (Sharp & Richardson, 2001). Complexity, however, is often focused on object relations rather than intersubjective interactions by addressing a world of spontaneous transformation and non-linear change. The basic mechanisms of complexity, however, allow for a focus on actor interactions which matches the principles of Foucauldian discourse analysis. The sensitivity to small changes in conditions of a socio-spatial complex system requires both historical and cultural specificities. When a complexity perspective is applied to social systems, this means that a focus on the intersubjective interactions between actors is required, arguing that the social world is dependent on the collective power of human action for its existence. This collective power is not just the result of mechanistic and functional behavior, but also a consequence of continuous deliberations among actors seeking consensus about what actions to take. A Foucauldian discourse analysis links to this perspective, as it is concerned with "the relationship between pre-constructed social structures, practices, identities, orders of discourse, organizations on the one hand, and processes, actions, events on the other" (Fairclough, 2005, p. 923).

As discourses are considered exercises of power in socio-spatial complexity (Hajer & Versteeg, 2005), we also show which discourses are more prominent, potentially acting as attractors influencing the views of various actors, and which discourses take a more subordinate role. In a world of turbulence and change, these subordinate discourses are nevertheless relevant as these could over time emerge and self-organize into more dominant positions.

Methodological approach

Case study

The research is set up as a case study of the Dutch province of Fryslân (Fig. 1). Fryslân was chosen as it has a long standing focus on leisure as a factor in regional development policies on both the municipal and provincial level (Jeuring, 2015). As a peripheral province in the Netherlands, the region has potential for further development of leisure and tourism. However, the high number of small-scale leisure firms creates complexity in developing leisure and tourism. Therefore, the case is a valuable subject for a Foucauldian discourse analysis in which the views, meanings and values of a myriad of actors can be captured. The focus lies on the Frisian mainland, as the Wadden Sea islands along the northern coast function largely as a separate destination. A number of 37 representatives from the Frisian mainland were interviewed.

The province of Fryslân, in the north of the Netherlands, comprises 24 municipalities and has a population of 650,000 people on a total area of around 3300 km². The province lies on the Wadden Sea and the IJsselmeer and borders the Dutch provinces of Flevoland to the south, Drenthe to the south-east and Groningen to the east. Given its relatively peripheral position within the Netherlands, the leisure sector is considered a potential driver of economic development by municipal and provincial governments (Hermans & de Roo, 2006).

Fig. 1. Municipalities of Fryslân.

Study methods

Semi-structured in-depth individual interviews were conducted between August 2014 and May 2016 with 37 Dutch participants by the first author in Dutch. The group of participants is local tourism and leisure stakeholders working in both public and private spheres and includes governmental officials, private entrepreneurs, those representing additional interest groups and experts in research or consultancy on tourism and leisure. 24 respondents are men and 13 women with ages ranging from mid-thirties to late sixties. Participants were selected through a combination of selection methods based on online searches, interviews with key actors and further snowballing methods. The interviews included questions asking about the importance and value of leisure, and on expected or desired future developments. Participants signed a consent form, including permission to record and transcribe the interviews and to use selected quotes in publications.

The 37 participants in this study include nine governmental officials, two on the provincial and seven on the municipal level. Four of these respondents work in tourism and leisure, the other five deal with tourism issues as spatial planners. Additionally, six representatives of semi-governmental organizations were interviewed, including three from provincial and regional tourism and marketing organizations, two from nature management organizations and one from the provincial recreational board. Fifteen entrepreneurs in the private leisure sector were interviewed. These represent a variety of businesses, including hotels, bed and breakfasts, camp sites, holiday parks, boat rental, sailing school, day activities, a museum and a tour operator company. Moreover, two field consultants and three research experts in tourism and leisure in the province of Fryslân were interviewed.

The recordings of the interviews totaled over 38 h. The transcripts of the interviews were analyzed through qualitative coding with the aid of Atlas.ti. Open coding system was used, in which passages of the interviews were labeled with topics based on the contents of the respondents' statements. This open coding system was informed by theories and concepts related to complexity, interactions, (un)predictability and emergence. This permits exploring how discourses on leisure-led regional development can be viewed from a complexity theoretical perspective. However, the open coding also allows for topics and themes not specifically related to complexity to emerge, enabling a broad perspective on views of leisure among actors in Fryslân.

The analysis resulted in a total of 72 different codes. Out of these, a total of 35 codes were linked to a minimum of ten quotes from respondents, and were selected for further in-depth analysis. Recurring elements were deduced from these codes. Based on the recurring elements, codes were grouped to create five main themes relating to leisure-led regional development: *characteristics and meanings of leisure*; *planning, predictability and organization*; *connections and cooperation*; *identity and marketing*; and *inhibiting factors*. These themes form the main structure of the empirical section of this paper, which follows next. The codes that did not have at least ten quotes linked were checked to ascertain if they provided additional insights into the main themes, and where appropriate were further included in the analysis.

For each of the main themes a summary was created of the main views and discourses to be found among the respondents. These empirical descriptions were then combined with a complexity perspective, which meant examining the extent to which these discourses affect adaptivity, co-evolution, self-organization and emergence in leisure-led regional development and vice versa. The extent to which discourses were shared among respondents was explored to evaluate the level of prominence exhibited by such discourses. To further illustrate the analysis, participants' quotes were selected from the various codes and main themes. These quotes were translated from Dutch to English by the first author for the purposes of this paper and are included in italics in the empirical section.

Analysis of discourses on leisure in Fryslân

Bringing together, exploring and expanding Foucauldian discourse analysis with a socio-spatial complexity theoretical perspective, we serve a twofold purpose. First, we explore and expand understanding of the drivers of socio-spatial complexity. Discourses that frame and condition the interactions between actors in leisure and tourism thereby affect the complex mechanisms of emergence, self-organization and co-evolution within leisure-led regional development. Second, a complexity perspective can explain the development of discourses and the power relations between them: discourses on leisure and tourism will emerge from the individual level, co-evolve with other discourses and potentially self-organize towards a level of hegemony.

In this section we analyze discourses on leisure in Fryslân, addressing both these purposes. We identify how more prominent discourses can influence the way in which actors behave and adapt to potentially changing circumstances, and we identify subordinate discourses that may have the potential to become more prominent over time, thereby influencing development paths of Frisian leisure.

Characteristics and meanings of leisure

The way in which actors in leisure characterize the sector and give meaning to its development directs the adaptations that they are likely to pursue. Based on the participants' views in this study, the leisure and tourism sector in Fryslân is characterized by small scale entrepreneurship. There is a large number of relatively small firms with only a few larger holiday parks or camp sites. This small scale is linked to a sense of hospitality and authenticity, as well as a high degree of diversity. As one hotel entrepreneur states: *"Fryslân is Fryslân, and that also has to do with small scale entrepreneurs"* (Interview, 20-11-2015). This characterization of leisure as small scale influences the attitude towards potential large scale developments, as several actors deem such developments not fitting with the existing nature of leisure in the province.

Leisure and tourism in the province are based on landscape amenities, of which water is most important and characteristic. Even

for those entrepreneurs located away from the main lakes and canals, the image of leisure in Fryslân is directly connected to water. A research expert on leisure in Fryslân said: *“What is Fryslân? Is Fryslân the lakes, is Fryslân the woods, is Fryslân the islands? When you zoom in there is great diversity, whilst for the observer at the door it's watersports”* (Interview, 16-11-2015). Cycling, hiking and a sense of peace and quiet are also widely considered valuable and important aspects of leisure and remain central in most leisure-related initiatives. The typical Frisian identity, presented through the separate Frisian language and symbols like the Frisian flag, does not play a significant role in characterizing leisure within the province, though it is often prominent in media (Jeuring, 2015).

Although this widely shared characterization of leisure is not strongly linked to monetary or economic aspects, the value of developing leisure is mainly sought in economic discourses. The main reason for developing leisure and the main importance of the leisure sector for the province is deemed to be providing employment, income and further economic output. A tourism field consultant states: *“In almost every touristic plan from the municipalities, employment is prioritized”* (Interview, 11-12-2015). Other values are also mentioned by many actors, although these take up a clearly less important position. Leisure is linked to livability and maintaining a minimum level of services. It is also linked to promoting, sharing and protecting aspects of nature, culture, identity and history. Additionally, some respondents mention the more personal value of leisure, as a wholesome, beneficiary activity. One entrepreneur says: *“It's very good to have leisure ... It has something very wholesome”* (Interview, 29-10-2015). However, these less economically driven values are often eclipsed by the entrenched discourse of developing leisure and tourism for the sake of economic development.

The prominence of the economic discourse is in line with a larger dominance or hegemony of neoliberal discourses (Farhat, 2013). From a complexity perspective, this can be considered a co-evolving development, where discourses on leisure co-evolve with other discourses related to the importance of the economy. Nonetheless, the effect of this discourse is influenced by subordinate discourses stressing the value of leisure for issues such as well-being, nature, service levels or culture. When viewed within a complexity perspective, the well-entrenched discourse acts as a strange attractor, towards which an agreed reality moves but never fully ends up due to opposing forces (McKercher, 1999). Although such entrenched discourses will have a profound effect on the leisure-led regional development of an area, the influence of alternative discourses can create a more unpredictable and non-linear path.

Planning, predictability and organization

The unpredictability of leisure-led regional development, discussed in the theoretical section of this paper, is also reflected in the perceptions of actors in Fryslân. One field consultant says: *“You can't predict, and if you do predict, you know that won't come true”* (Interview, 11-12-2015). The small scale of most leisure firms mentioned in the characterization of leisure is considered a source of uncertainty in planning. Simultaneously, this small scale is linked to opportunities which can act as emergent and self-organizing properties. It allows for more flexibility which is described as vital for overcoming unexpected developments, for instance the recent global economic crisis. An owner of a campsite states: *“We are [flexible] just because we are small scale entrepreneurs, also just because we want to spend our time and our money as efficiently as possible so we don't want lots of meetings”* (Interview, 27-10-2015).

The perceived unpredictability affects the development of the sector, as entrepreneurs either choose to adapt in highly flexible ways, for instance through loose cooperation with others and temporary initiatives, or alternatively take on a wait-and-see attitude, only adapting to changes in a later stage. This often comes down to a personal level, in which the capability of individual entrepreneurs to adapt and respond to changes in their environment is the driving force behind actual flexibility in development. The head of the provincial recreational board states: *“It depends on the entrepreneur... Sometimes it's the smaller entrepreneurs who can quickly get things done”* (Interview, 3-11-2015).

Rules and other institutions can form obstacles to new initiatives, but according to several respondents it is the personal attitude of entrepreneurs that is relevant to the success of adaptation and innovation. In situations where entrepreneurs take initiative, but are facilitated by governments in financial and organizational terms, development is thought to be most positive. For this purpose, foundations that function as middle ground between governments and entrepreneurs have been set up in a number of places in Fryslân.

Someone working for such a foundation states: *“What's special is that I'm not employed by the government. I'm employed by a foundation that represents 400 touristic entrepreneurs in the area... Six cooperating municipalities said: okay entrepreneurs, here's an x amount of subsidy, you can do with it what you want on two conditions. There needs to be support and you need to cover the entire area”* (Interview, 21-10-2015). Such new institutions allow governments to facilitate policy development and marketing at the initiative of local entrepreneurs. From a complexity perspective, this can imply more opportunities for individual initiatives from entrepreneurs to emerge and instigate structural change.

The development of new institutions between governments and entrepreneurs is related to a perceived lack of flexibility among governments. Due to organizational complicatedness, legal prudence and an obligation to take various interests into account in a democratic discussion, governments can less easily adapt than individual entrepreneurs. As a municipal employee says: *“When it comes to spatial planning, it's a very legally technical story. No matter how flexible you make a plan, it always has to be changed later”* (Interview, 26-8-2014). Yet, governmental organizations may have more capabilities, power and democratic legitimacy to determine longstanding strategies and goals that can function as a dot on the horizon.

The lack of flexibility in governmental organizations and policies is not only mentioned by actors outside the governmental organizations, but also recognized by those within these institutions. In outward communications, however, this uncertainty is far less pronounced, especially in cases where plans still require broad support. A municipal employee working on the multi-million euro project of Holwerd on the Sea, a highly complex project involving dredging, flood protection, leisure and community strengthening (NOS, 2015), states: *“In the first calculation of costs there are huge risks involved... But the more you research, the better you can estimate*

that, so the smaller the uncertainties become" (Interview, 2-11-2015). Acknowledging or stressing unpredictability affects the (political) chances of development of a project, as politicians are less likely to back projects with large degrees of uncertainty. This is a clear example of how discourses can reflect underlying balances of power.

Unpacking such information via Foucauldian discourse analysis and theories on complexity highlights the role power relations play with in processes of leisure-led regional development. Power is essential for the expression of discourses, or as Foucault states: "true discourse, liberated by the nature of its form from desire and power, is incapable of recognising the will to truth which pervades it" (Foucault, 1972, p. 219). Although some discursive and power relations can be straight forward, e.g. when it comes to taxation by governments, others are less clear. Individual entrepreneurs may seem to possess little power, but combined they can still cause changes to develop. In line with Foucault, power can develop through the formation of discourses. This is where combining a complexity perspective with Foucault's debates on discourse provides additional insights in a socio-spatial complex system which can create structural change through non-linear processes. These changes are perhaps more likely in situations where power balances are contested. The development of new institutions on the middle ground between governments and entrepreneurs was partly due to ambiguity in the responsibility for regional branding and marketing in Fryslân. The lack of a hegemonic discourse on marketing at the provincial level created room for emergent developments from the local and regional level to self-organize, which could potentially lead to a new robust and convincing discourse.

Connections and cooperation

For new initiatives to lead to actual changes in development, a certain level of cooperation between actors, and specifically between entrepreneurs, is often required. A large majority of entrepreneurs realize that the regional product for leisure and tourism depends on cooperation, as visitors will rarely only frequent one firm. One provincial marketer says: "*You are really selling a product that belongs to 3000 owners. So, that means you'll have to cooperate with that product*" (Interview, 3-12-2015).

Respondents claim that younger entrepreneurs seem to be more aware of this necessity for cooperation, whereas more senior entrepreneurs rely more on established connections and practices. This can take the shape of a limited sense of urgency to cooperate with others, as visitors and tourists have come anyway. The head of the provincial recreational board says: "*What you see often, at the end of their career, that the older entrepreneurs often think, it's good the way it is, and then things don't develop*" (Interview, 3-11-2015). An increased and more broadly shared sense of urgency for attracting tourists and further developing the leisure and tourism sector is a strong driver for cooperation.

One aspect of balancing cooperation and competition is the level of complementarity between various firms in a region. An important factor in maintaining such complementarity is the high level of diversity in leisure in Fryslân, which was identified in the interviews. Small-scale entrepreneurs feel they offer a unique product, and therefore consider other entrepreneurs less as competitors and more as offering complementary products or catering to a different set of customers. The park manager for a bungalow park states: "*You shouldn't be scared of the people around you, because everyone offers something different*" (Interview, 19-11-2015). This has led to a number of formal or informal organizations in which entrepreneurs refer customers to each other and share knowledge and experience. In some cases, governments try to stimulate such organizations, but this can create difficulties, as they might be perceived as preferring some firms or regions over others. Additionally, government initiatives to stimulate cooperation between entrepreneurs are considered useless when few results are achieved and a low urgency for cooperation is perceived. The director of a museum explains:

I'm not going to join in with meetings and then say something sharp which again leads to nothing. So much has been attempted here, well intended with hotels and other leisure firms, but it's all half-hearted. I don't feel like doing that anymore. I mean, I've been here for eight years now, I know how it works by now. It might sound haughty, a bit arrogant maybe, but I'm not going to lose myself anymore in little projects and changes where with lots of good intent is told what we really should do, but which result in nothing.

Interview (8-12-2015)

Due to the effect on how actors view cooperation, one failed initiative can leave its mark for a longer time, as it increases skepticism among actors. The interactions of actors in leisure and tourism are affected by the shaping of such discourses on cooperation.

The effect of discourses on leisure-led regional development, or more broadly put, the effect of the discursive on the non-discursive, stems largely from the way in which interactions are conditioned and framed. The aforementioned prominence of the economic discourse causes actors to favor those interactions that are perceived to advance economic benefits. For instance, this can lead to cooperation between firms in the form of package deals – with a direct goal of increasing sales – to be more likely than cooperation aimed at strengthening community involvement or maintaining service levels in the area.

Additionally, in case of a lack of a shared discourse, cooperation and interaction can be negatively affected. When values and meanings are framed differently by actors, cooperation will likely be less fruitful. The choice of interaction (who interacts with whom), the type of interaction (on what topic interaction takes place) and the extent of interaction (amount and strength of interactions) are all affected by which discourses are most prominent and the extent to which they are shared among actors. The discourses on cooperation and interaction, thereby, condition the opportunities for new initiatives to emerge and self-organize into more structural change in leisure-led regional development.

Identity and marketing

A central issue for cooperation in leisure deals with marketing. For leisure and tourism entrepreneurs, destination marketing is an important aspect of promoting endeavors, establishing a profound spatial dimension. Although most entrepreneurs use various marketing tools to promote their own product, there is a strong sense of necessity for a regional or provincial branding that transcends the individual firm. In some cases entrepreneurs cooperate to produce such regional marketing, but there are concerns with potential free riders. One leisure and tourism consultant explains:

The entrepreneurs are willing to pay for marketing on two conditions: that they have a say in what the money is spent on, and that free riders are excluded. And that's where the bottle neck lies. Entrepreneurs can't stop free riders; an entrepreneur can't force a colleague to partake. The only one who can do that is the government.

Interview (11-12-2015)

Most entrepreneurs, therefore, see a role for governments in marketing, as they have the power to ensure contributions from all entrepreneurs, e.g. through taxation. Within Fryslân, regional branding and marketing has a turbulent institutional history. The provincial destination management organization (DMO) was forced to merge with that of the neighboring provinces of Drenthe and Groningen. Yet, this new Northern Netherlands Bureau for Tourism (NNBT) went bankrupt soon after it was set up, due to financial problems mainly in the organizations in Drenthe and Groningen. This left Fryslân without a DMO and efforts to recreate one at the provincial level failed on multiple occasions, also causing problems at the local level.

At the local level, similar organizations have often depended on support from municipal governments. Too much government support and, particularly, influence decreases the perception of ownership among entrepreneurs. One owner of a bed and breakfast says of the local DMO, which was closed down in 2013: *"Slowly the municipality took over the function of the DMO. In the end the municipality completely ran the DMO. Without input from the entrepreneurs...In the end the entrepreneurs agreed: close it down"* (Interview, 9-10-2015). There is a concern for too strong a role of governments when it comes to the content of marketing. Choosing a single message is considered crucial for marketing, but governments often aim to include aspects of all areas and actors in a region in their regional marketing output. A former head of the provincial marketing organization says: *"It's very complicated. Politics and marketing generally don't go together. Because politics wants to serve everyone and please everyone...but it's very difficult to make choices."* (Interview, 3-12-2015). Additionally, for actors in municipal and provincial governments, marketing is a responsibility of entrepreneurs, who need to sell their own product. The balancing out of power and responsibility in marketing between governments and entrepreneurs has contributed to new institutions, as described above, which allow for new forms of cooperation.

Like the responsibilities, the content of marketing is also a source of varying viewpoints. The province of Fryslân is known to have a strong regional identity, related for instance to the Frisian language, but there is a large diversity when it comes to tourism and leisure products. Although water is a dominant factor in much of the province, the southeastern part of the province is more wooded and offers more cycling and hiking related activities. As such, there is a multitude of images that could be conveyed in marketing, and each will have the support from a different set of actors.

An owner of a bed and breakfast in the south east of the province said of the provincial marketing: *"[It] really only had water; the eleven cities, the Wadden Sea and the lakes. And we always said: yes, but Fryslân is more than just water. It's the woods and bocage that you have here. That's a pearl which is almost undiscovered but which should become discovered"* (Interview, 18-2-2016). The small scale of most entrepreneurs leads to constantly varying choices in marketing output, where actors create their own storylines on Fryslân that best fit their own product. The variety of discourses on leisure in Fryslân affects the strength of marketing communications. A more clear-cut, widely supported marketing message is missing, even though it is deemed important by actors in the province.

A potential focal point for a more uniform marketing strategy could have been the title of European Capital of Culture that the province's capital of Leeuwarden had obtained for 2018. The fact that the city won this title was almost unanimously considered positive in the leisure and tourism sector. From a complexity perspective, such an event could have functioned as an attractor for complex development. However, few actors saw an active role for themselves in this process. There was a largely passive attitude towards the event, reflected by an expectation of an increased number of visitors but little initiative to contribute to the event or to use it as a basis for marketing and development. One hotel owner said about Leeuwarden 2018: *"We do brainstorm a bit here, but well, we'll have to wait and see what happens in the end, and how we can deal with that, but I do think that 2018 should be a very good year for us"* (Interview, 31-5-2016). Based on these perspectives and attitudes, it seems unlikely that Leeuwarden 2018 will have brought the various forms of regional branding and marketing in the province more in line (Meekes, Buda, & De Roo, 2017b).

Inhibiting factors

A final issue in which discourses influence leisure-led regional development is the perception of inhibiting factors for development. In general, the development of leisure and tourism in Fryslân is perceived to be quite stable. Numerous inhibiting factors are identified, but in most cases these are quite easily overcome. Although some physical issues like wind turbines are thought to have a negative influence on leisure, more pressing obstacles seem to exist in the attitudes of actors. Multiple actors identify personality traits that are said to be typical of the region and can negatively influence development of the leisure sector. For instance, Frisians are anecdotally considered to have a wait-and-see attitude, leading to fewer initiatives for new developments. Younger entrepreneurs as well as 'outsiders' (people from different regions starting businesses in Fryslân) are thought to be more initiating.

One entrepreneur says: *"I notice that the older generation thinks: 'it's okay this way, this is my thing and I protect that.' There's a number of young entrepreneurs we cooperate with very well, but there are some where I don't have to knock on their door, they don't want anything"*

(Interview, 15-8-2014). 'Outsiders' are met with skepticism, as individualism and a 'big mouth' are not appreciated in the historically Calvinist province of Fryslân. The owner of a campsite, originally from Amsterdam, describes this skepticism: "*You see, the first attitude of Frisians is usually: there come the Hollanders and you see, they do it again. They buy up all the nicest spots here ... But through the years we did get lots of respect from the Frisians for what we set up here*" (Interview, 27-11-2015). Additionally, the so-called 'law of the braking lead' is mentioned as a reason for limited initiative among mainly the senior local entrepreneurs; because tourists have always come to their businesses, they never felt the necessity to innovate, cooperate or adapt, leading to a laxer attitude towards development. The originally leading position now forms an obstacle for further progress.

The attitudes of actors in leisure and tourism are an example of how discourses can impact leisure-led regional development through affecting the interactions between actors. As such, these discourses create a path-dependence. One of the reasons that is given for a passive attitude among some entrepreneurs in Fryslân is linked to this path-dependence. For years tourists would come to the area without much investment in cooperation or marketing by local entrepreneurs. With travel costs and times decreasing, global competition in the tourism market has increased, requiring adaptation on the local level in Fryslân. However, without views and values changing among actors, this caused a path-dependence leading to a lower flexibility and a more passive attitude. A similar phenomenon can be observed when it comes to cooperation between actors. Entrepreneurs who have experienced a lack of results from multiple initiatives to increase cooperation are more skeptical towards new initiatives. Successful cooperation can break this skepticism, but failure strengthens it further.

Conclusion

Combining, exploring and expanding socio-spatial complexity perspectives with Foucauldian discourse analysis, we contribute novel conceptualizations of leisure-led regional development. In this first effort to connect socio-spatial complexity with Foucauldian discourses drawing on the *Archaeology of Knowledge*, we showed how discourses structure socio-spatial complexity and influence power relations in leisure and tourism. Expanding debates on socio-spatial complexity theories with Foucauldian discourse analysis in the context of leisure-led regional development, we have conceptualized interactions among actors in leisure and tourism as the driving forces of complexity in this sector. These interactions behind socio-spatial complexity are concerned with *characteristics and meanings of leisure; planning, predictability and organization; cooperation and competition; identity and marketing; and inhibiting factors* within leisure-led regional development, which builds upon a large number of different actors that together create one regional product. It is through these interactions, among actors and between actors and places, that the socio-spatial complexity of leisure-led regional development in Fryslân enfolds.

Furthering understandings of socio-spatial complexity perspectives in relation to Foucauldian discourse analysis implies conceptualizing structural changes in society as based on shifts in the relative influence of different discourses. This implies examining how values and meanings structure non-linear tourism and leisure development. The case of Fryslân shows a strong preference of a discourse stressing the economic meaning of leisure and tourism, but also the subordinate acknowledgment of other values related to aspects as well-being, nature, culture and identity. Although, currently, there seems little indication that the hegemony of the economic discourse will disappear, the existence of an alternative evaluation of leisure-led regional development contains the possibility for a future bifurcation of the current order in socio-spatial complexity. This is an example of how the power relations reflected by the prominence of discourses affect the direction of leisure-led regional development.

Similarly, the competing discourses on the responsibility for regional branding and marketing, lying either with governments or with entrepreneurs, create room for new initiatives in marketing. This has played a role in establishing new forms of institutions that form a middle ground within a contingency between market and government forces. Foucauldian discourse analysis combined with complexity theories shows how discourses on the meaning of leisure, cooperation in the sector and the division of responsibilities among actors condition leisure-led regional development. These discourses both enable and constrain the emergence and self-organization of existing processes and new initiatives.

We maintain that this paper shows that the value of combining, exploring and expanding Foucauldian discourses with a socio-spatial complexity perspective lies not only in the way in which discourse influences complex processes, but also in applying aspects of complexity to the shaping of discourses. This paper has therefore examined the way in which discourses are structured through processes of socio-spatial complexity. New discourses can emerge from the individual level and eventually self-organize to a level of dominance or hegemony. Co-evolution between discourses can be observed, for instance in the way in which economic centrality is a recurring theme in discourses on a variety of issues. The power relations between discourses structure these non-linear processes. This perspective on discourses and discourse analysis, therefore, provides in-depth understandings of the way in which meaning and values are attributed to the non-discursive and the manner in which these meanings and values can become a shared consensus among a larger number of actors. Additionally, a complexity perspective stresses the temporality of any discursive practice, highlighting the fact that hegemony of discourses is constantly developing. Discourses can be viewed as a reduction of an observed complexity, based on the perceptions those shaping such a discourse in a specific time and place. This links to the Foucauldian view of historical embeddedness of discourses and methods of genealogy.

Further research could investigate processes of co-evolution, emergence and self-organization in the formation and development of discourses. This also requires a more thorough analysis of the way in which discourses change over time. Developments can be judged a failure at one point in time, but later prove to be crucial for changes that are deemed desirable (Little, 2012). The concept of power is tangentially discussed in this paper, further explorations of this concept connected to discourses could provide better understandings of how actors un/consciously affect which discourses are reproduced. Additionally, in this research, discourses were analyzed as they were portrayed in in-depth interviews. Comparing this type of discourse with official documents and publications as

well as marketing output and images can provide more understanding on the production and reproduction of discourses.

Declaration of competing interest

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