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## Master's thesis

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Tourism as an answer to regional social and economic challenges in the Netherlands – a closer look at the intentions and complementarity of national and regional tourism strategies through a complex systems approach

Martine Mollema

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Master's programme in tourism  
Aalborg University, Copenhagen

## **Abstract**

This research combines the different fields of research on tourism's regional benefits, social complex systems and the integration between governments possibly leading to complementary strategies and improvement of efficiency and effectivity. The aim is to explore how national and regional tourism strategies are intended to contribute to addressing regional social and economic challenges in the Netherlands and to explore the complementarity between these tourism strategies or strategies of other policy sectors. Through a pragmatic approach is contextual understanding gained of the participants' understandings of the strategy making process. The qualitative exploration through in-depth interviews and conceptual mapping shows that tourism is by governments of the case study mainly seen as jobs and facilities provider and as a chance to maintain or strengthen the regional economic and social situation. Integration between governments is mainly dependent of practical considerations such as financing, but mostly on people's mentality towards it. When integration leads to mutual engagement and the creation of mutual recognized values and objectives, this can result in the creation of complementary strategies. Complementary strategies have the potential of being more effective and efficient, leading to desired outcomes. Even though it is impossible to predict the future, desired outcomes may be better reachable through understanding the dynamics of strategy making by approaching it as a social complex system.

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# 1. Introduction

Strengthening the economic structure of a region and alongside ensuring the social services? It is supposed to be possible through development of the touristic sector according to the policies and strategies of governments. Especially for peripheral regions, tourism can be seen as a beneficial contributor to economic and social challenges within that region.

Tourism is considered as being an industry and often has an economic focus due to its possibility to generate income and employment. Being an industry, tourism development and policy are also being approached as such. This industrial policy approach generally used to be a silo approach. The global financial crisis however has highlighted the degree of global integration and this turned out to be a turning point in policy thinking. It raised the need to better understand the interconnectedness not only between countries, but also between policy sectors (Haxton, 2015). This interconnectedness and its effects used to be underestimated, resulting in slow economic growth and slow adjustment to the new global financial situation. Furthermore, the focus used to be more on realising economic growth itself, instead of considering how it could contribute to the quality of life (Haxton, 2015). With this purely economic focus, other policy objectives were ignored. This explains the response of Europe to deal with the effects of the economic recession, which is a new industrial policy approach focussing on collaboration and cross-sectoral integration (Ulmann, 2014). Moving beyond sectoral boundaries seems to be more effective to stimulate innovation and thus increasing competitiveness.

Since tourism development cannot be seen loose from economic but also social, cultural and environmental affairs and the new focus on integrated policies, it is interesting to see how governments cope with tourism policy. This research explores if integration occurs between governmental levels and between policy sectors within governmental levels and if this integration leads to tourism strategies that are complementary to other strategies. With complementary strategies there are no conflicting goals between the strategies, which should be more efficient and effective as opposed to strategies being made from a silo approach with individual policy sectors focusing on their own values and objectives.

The aim of this thesis is to critically explore how an integrated approach to tourism strategies can contribute to addressing social and economic challenges in the Netherlands. By using conceptual mapping and in-depth interviews with people working with tourism strategies and with people working

with strategies of other policy sectors, it is analysed to what extent governments use an integrated approach and if this leads to complementary strategies. A social complex systems approach is used in order to gain understanding of the nature of governmental integration by focussing on the relationships and the dynamics that occur with tourism strategy making.

This leads to the following problem formulation:

*How is national and regional tourism strategy intended to contribute to addressing regional social and economic challenges in the Netherlands and how complementary are these strategies to each other or to strategies of other policy sectors?*

In order to explore the above problem formulation, the following sub-research questions are formulated:

- 1.) Is tourism considered by governments in general and by national and regional tourism strategies in the Netherlands in specific, as beneficial to addressing regional social and economic challenges and if yes, how?
- 2.) How do governmental institutions develop and execute complementary strategies and to what extent is this happening between and within governments in the Netherlands?
- 3.) Can tourism strategy making be approached as social complex system and if yes, how can this approach contribute to creating complementary tourism strategies?
- 4.) To what extent are the national and regional tourism strategies in the Netherlands complementary to each other or to other policy sectors?

The next chapter will first provide the context on the governmental organisation of the Netherlands and defines the key terms of this research. Chapter 3 provides a theoretic framework and chapter 4 the methodology. Regional and governmental contexts are discussed in chapter 5. The collected data is analysed and discussed in chapter 6, followed by the conclusion in chapter 7.



## **2. Definitions and general context**

This chapter provides context on how the government is organised in the Netherlands. It discusses the different levels of government, their formal responsibilities and ties and gives a general overview of their responsibilities towards tourism. Furthermore, the key terms of this research are defined, which are policy, strategy and complementary strategies.

### **2.1 Governmental organisation in the Netherlands**

The governmental structure in the Netherlands exists of four levels. Each level has specific spatial boundaries and formal responsibilities. First of all, there is a central government situated in The Hague, called 'De Rijksoverheid'. The central government is responsible for the whole country but delegates, if possible and relevant, tasks to lower governmental levels (Rijksoverheid, n.d.a). These tasks can be both the development and execution of policy by lower governmental levels themselves, or only the actual execution of laws and policies decided upon by central government.

With regard to tourism concerns the central government itself mainly with the national and international promotion of the Netherlands as destination for leisure and business tourism (Government of the Netherlands, n.d.). This task is placed under the responsibility of the National Tourism Organisation (NTO) called the Netherlands Board for Tourism and Conventions (NBTC) Holland Marketing. See chapter 5.1 for a detailed description of tourism policy by the central government.

One level below the central government is the provinces ('provincies') of which there are twelve in total, see figure 1. The provinces are responsible for the spatial planning of rural areas, the region's accessibility and regional economic policy (Rijksoverheid, n.d.a). Also, the provinces monitor the lowest governmental scale, the municipalities ('gemeenten'). The provinces are responsible for tourism infrastructure (walking, cycling and recreational water routes) and they concern themselves with regional promotion. Such regional promotion can be done by Regional Tourism Organisations (RTO's).

RTO's can be appointed to promote the entire province or to promote a specific region. See chapter 5.2 for more details about the tourism policies of this research's case study, the province of Gelderland.



**Figure 1: The twelve provinces and provincial capitals (Scipius, n.d.)**

Municipalities are responsible for the implementation and execution of tasks directly concerning their citizens such as citizen registration, the issuing of passports, monitoring housing, construction and maintenance of roads and paths and designing zoning plans (Rijksoverheid, n.d.b). The municipalities need each year to get their financial situation and plans approved by their province. The central government monitors the provinces and also municipalities in case of specific policy areas of which they have no responsibility, such as education and social affairs (Rijksoverheid, n.d.a).

The municipalities monitor national, provincial and municipal monuments and are responsible to maintain protected townscapes (Rijksoverheid, n.d.e). National monuments and protected townscapes are appointed by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. Provinces and municipalities can select monuments that are not yet national monuments but which they consider to be of local historical

relevance. Chapter 5.3 discusses more specifically the tourism policy of this research's case study, the municipality of Epe, located within the province of Gelderland.

The fourth governmental level is the water authorities. The water authorities control the water system and water quality and purification, each authority within a specific region (Rijksoverheid, n.d.d). The boundaries of these water regions differ from the provincial boundaries. The water authorities implement central government's policies on these topics. Even though water can be part of tourism and tourism products, this fourth governmental level is not considered within this research because of the water authorities' function, which mainly concerns national safety.

## **2.2 Defining policy, strategy and complementary strategies**

Policy and strategy are commonly used terms. The chosen definition of these terms however, determines the approach that is used within a research. It is therefore important to define what exactly is meant with these terms.

Policy is a set of actions concerning an issue or a target group and it often has a complicated character because of the involvement of for example several objectives, resources, agreements between actors, instruments and preconditions (Voogd, 2006). This implies that policy does not get suddenly created, but that it is the result of a process influenced by time and space and involves multiple actors and several contexts such as economy, culture and environment. Furthermore, each actor carries its own context such as ideas, values and goals. Policy is therefore socially constructed and cannot be seen apart from context, including the institutional context and the nature of the involved actors and networks (Dredge & Jenkins, 2007). With these considerations in mind, the policy definition of Dredge and Jenkins is chosen for this research: *"a position, strategy or product adopted by government and derived from a contestation involving diverse values, interests and ideas"* (Dredge & Jenkins, 2007, p.7).

This definition also illustrates how strategy relates to policy. Strategy is seen as a tool or instrument to achieve the desired outcome of policy. In practice takes strategy often shape in the form of official documents which can obtain for example some kind of action plan.

A strategy is in this research considered to be complementary when it is in line with strategies of other policy sectors or governmental levels. When strategies of sectors or governmental levels are in line with

each other, there are between them no conflicting goals or instruments to reach these goals. In other words, *"there is a genuine sharing of knowledge, objectives and priorities across policy areas"* (Haxton, 2015, p.9). Complementary strategies have therefore the potential to be more efficient. This may mean that trade-offs have to be made but the result is a more holistic policy approach. Such a holistic approach offers the possibility to go beyond merely one focus and instead address multiple policy objectives (Haxton, 2015).

### 3. Theoretic framework

This chapter firstly explores how tourism can contribute to a region in economic and social sense, followed by a discussion on the formal and informal policy space which affect strategy making. The remaining part of the chapter introduces the complex systems approach as tool to research the policy making process.

#### 3.1 The economic and social benefits of tourism for a region

Tourism development is often regarded as some kind of cure for regional economic and social challenges. The possible benefits of tourism for regional development vary from revitalizing and reorganizing economies, to improving the quality of life (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004; Roberts & Hall, 2001). The thought is that through tourism, unused resources as labour force, culture and space can become of economic value (Roberts & Hall, 2001). Especially peripheral regions have adapted alternative tourism, such as ecotourism and culture tourism, as a strategy for economic development (Knox & Marston, 2010). Alternative tourism *“emphasizes self-determination, authenticity, (...) preservation of the existing environment, small-scale development and greater use of the local techniques, materials and architectural styles”* (Knox & Marston, 2010, p.290). Governments in the Netherlands are no exception on this beneficial thinking of what tourism can do for their regions, as the following two examples show.

According to the economic vision 2012-2016 of the province of Gelderland is *“the tourism and leisure sector co-producer of spatial (environmental) quality and contributes to the quality of life. Facilities such as shops, hotel and catering industry, and sports can be established or remain to be established in the small hearts (of local towns and villages) because of tourism”* (Provincie Gelderland, 2011, p.10 [translated]). In addition, it is mentioned that the tourism and leisure sector generates through the above, a lot of local employment. Also the province of Groningen considers that tourism has both economic and social benefits in the form of employment and facilities as they state that: *“A strong tourism and leisure sector contributes to employment and the amount of facilities in the province’s capital city and its rural surroundings. In addition, those facilities contribute to the improvement of the establishment climate: businesses and employees will establish themselves sooner in an attractive region”* (Provincie Groningen, 2016, p.30 [translated]).

On a more critical note, Fayos-Solà, Alvarez and Cooper (2014) mention that the regional development coming from tourism is often overestimated. Regional development coming from tourism strategies is not a sure thing and they state that there is a gap between this overestimation and the reality of the potentials of using tourism for development. In addition, the objective of some tourism strategies is to redistribute economic benefits to peripheral regions. The focus of economic development however seems to remain on destinations with existing development (Williams, 2009). The following paragraphs discuss if the above suggested benefits of tourism are solid assumptions or if the effects of tourism are indeed maybe overestimated by policy and strategy makers.

### **3.1.1 Tourism and its economic and social benefits**

Tourism is considered to generate economic growth, mostly as stimulator of direct and indirect economic benefits such as labour, income, investment attraction and other economic activity (Briassoulis & Van der Straaten, 2000; Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004; Williams, 2009). The development of the tourism industry can for example create new jobs which can lead to new or supplementary incomes (Britton, 1991; Fayos-Solà, Alvarez & Cooper, 2014). This is often one of the goals of tourism strategies as the above examples of the provinces of Groningen and Gelderland have shown (Provincie Gelderland, 2011; Provincie Groningen, 2016).

Suppose that a growth in the number of tourists is established. Their spending and undertaken activities contribute to the local economy. This might have as effect that local facilities such as stores and public transportation are able to remain established in the region. It can be argued that this has a positive effect on the environmental quality of life of the residents (Haxton, 2015; Voogd, 2006). Suppose that to fulfil the tourist demand, new jobs within the region are created. The question however is to what extent a region actually benefits. One of the questions one should ask is where the people come from, who take on the new jobs. Economic benefits can leak from a region when people from outside the region are employed at these new jobs (Fayos-Solà, Alvarez & Cooper, 2014; Roberts & Hall, 2001). This has even further implications when at the same time jobs within the region's traditional sectors disappear due to a shift from production to service or consumption oriented land uses (Woods, 2005). Also, jobs within the tourism industry are often seasonal, part-time and low-paid (Knox & Marston, 2010; Williams, 2009). The people who are employed within these jobs are often women, low-educated and members from minority groups (Cukier-Snow & Wall, 1993; Williams, 2009). However, the benefits

for these employees can go beyond the economic function and can also be a way to better integrate and participate within the community (Cukier-Snow & Wall, 1993; Woods, 2005). Furthermore, seasonality can cause economic stagnation outside the tourism season and low return on investment when facilities are only used during the tourism season (Logar, 2010). Finally, a regional economy which is highly dependent on tourism can be a vulnerable economy because destinations can for example become outdated or old fashioned (Knox & Marston, 2010).

So far is discussed that the regional economic benefits of new jobs and incomes by tourism development are not always as straight forward and that the outcome, be it positive or negative, is dependent on the complex environmental and social context of the region. For example, even though Roberts and Hall (2001) regard tourism as mostly an economic activity, they address the importance of tourism to be part of a wider set of development strategies in order to be successful for rural development. This wider set of strategies refers to other sectors such as infrastructure and culture and heritage, and it implies that tourism can contribute to rural development, but that it is not the one cure for all regional challenges. Furthermore, other policy sectors such as economy, social affairs, culture and environment are not only part of the regional context besides tourism, but are as well overlapping with the tourism sector. Briassoulis and Van der Straaten (2000) illustrate this by their phrasing of tourism being a multifaceted economic activity which is specifically interrelated with its environment.

### **3.1.2 Tourism and the environment**

Tourism and the environment can be considered as a two directional relationship (Briassoulis & Van der Straaten, 2000). The environment provides the resources for tourism and tourism products, while tourism in return affects the environment. The latter however are not always desired effects. For example, with increasing tourism, environmental issues ask for consideration such as congestion, pollution and habitat destruction (Knox & Marston, 2010). On the other hand, the fact that these issues need to be addressed can contribute to the conservation and protection of the environment of the region.

Tourism is dependent on environmental resources, just as many other (economic) activities within a region (Hannam & Knox, 2010; Woods, 2005). This can lead to conflicting ideas and priorities of the usage of the environment by different stakeholders among different sectors. Tourism strategy makers need to understand and know the interrelationships of tourism with other sectors in order to be able to

make good development strategies. Or as Briassoulis and Van der Straaten say: “*tourism development must be embedded in a comprehensive planning framework for a given region*” (2000, p.5). This in order to avoid conflicting land uses, something which can diminish the quality of the touristic environment.

Spatial planning is key in the land use of a region. With integrated or complementary spatial planning and tourism policies, certain benefits for the region can be obtained. It is for example possible to overcome the economic lock-in of land and structures by recognizing the situation and the opportunities, reduce overregulation and increase economic diversification by combining land uses such as agriculture and tourism (Haxton, 2015).

However, the experienced benefits from tourism development and factors that make the development successful differ per region (Roberts & Hall, 2001). After all, every region has its specific context of economic, social, cultural, environmental and also political processes. The stances and interests of different governmental levels may not only differ but can be conflicting (Haxton, 2015; Roberts & Hall, 2001). But also within a certain level can varying priorities and interests within both the public and private sector lead to the over- or underestimation of what tourism development can do for a region.

### **3.2 Multi-level and multi-sectoral policy making**

This research looks at different levels of government involved with tourism strategy making, and thus has a multi-level approach. It also has a multi-sectoral approach since it looks within a certain governmental level at several sectors involved with tourism strategy.

When different levels of government and several sectors within a certain level, are involved in the making of policy, it is wise to have some integration or aligning going on, possibly leading to complementary strategies and reaching both effective and efficient outcomes (Fayos-Solà, Alvarez & Cooper, 2014; Howlett, 2009). As discussed in chapter 3.1, this is especially the case for tourism because of its interrelated nature (Briassoulis & Van der Straaten, 2000; Haxton, 2015; Roberts & Hall, 2001). Two types of integration can be distinguished, horizontal and vertical integration (Roberts & Hall, 2001; Voogd, 2006). Vertical integration refers to the several levels of government, for example national, regional and local. Horizontal integration refers to the several sectors within a governmental level. That means for example that with horizontal integration, a region’s tourism policy is embedded



within the regional development strategy. Reality however is that even though horizontal integration may be pursued, policy sectors have often conflicting interests or are in competition, especially in regard to finance (Haxton, 2015). These conflicts of interests and competition can cause a less efficient outcome. That policy sectors within a governmental layer should cooperate but are also in competition with each other is quite a contradiction, presenting a challenge for improving the effectiveness of the organisation's work. That is why it is useful to look at the workings of informal policy space as well.

### **3.2.1 Informal policy space**

The organisational structure can be characterised as the formal policy space. Besides this formal policy space, there exists an informal policy space. The effects of this informal policy space on horizontal and vertical integration should not be underestimated. For example, the way different policy sectors are located within the office building, can or cannot stimulate inter-sectoral interactions. Physical boundaries such as walls can become mental boundaries (Myerson, Bichard & Erlich, 2010). The design of workspace can positively contribute for people to move out of their normal behaviour or comfort zone, which can ultimately lead to the stimulation of co-creation (Brennan, Chugh & Kline, 2002). A shared workspace enables people to be aware of each other and each other's interactions. This awareness is what Gutwin and Greenberg call "the glue that allows groups to collaborate effectively" (1996, p.208). By being aware of others, people can assist and contribute to each other's tasks. Even though the positive influence of shared workspace might not be evident immediately, it can have great effect on the collaborations and effectiveness of a group of people sharing that workspace (Gutwin & Greenberg, 1996). This focus on cooperation and effectiveness has caused that many organisations consider how workspace can contribute to being an appropriate environment for enabling cooperation (Gibson, 2003; Myerson, Bichard & Erlich, 2010). The traditional layout of office space with individual work spaces along a corridor and a few shared meeting rooms is not considered to be an environment that encourages communication between workers (Gibson, 2003; Brennan, Chugh & Kline, 2002). Instead are considerations recommended such as increasing the mobility of workers by providing multiple work areas, increase the number of shared common areas and the mixing of neighbourhoods so workers from different disciplines share an area (Gibson, 2003). The underlying argument of designing office space as such is that the flexible nature encourages workers to find a working place and environment that fits best with the work that has to be done. However, just designing all office space as open space is not considered to be

effective as this overlooks the needs of the workers about the role and function the office has to support (Brennan, Chugh & Kline, 2002; Gibson, 2003; Myerson, Bichard & Erlich, 2010).

The challenge for collaborative and cooperative working is the possible existence of imaginary boundaries between several units within an organisation or between several levels of government. Imaginary boundaries may arise from the formal policy space with its divisions in for example policy sectors and responsibilities. Such imagined boundaries can cause separation, fragmentation and misunderstanding (Wenger, 2000). Within a level of government are for example several policy sectors at work, each sector having its own organisational structure, history, budget, office space, language, values and culture (Blackwell et al., 2009; Dawes, Cresswell & Pardo, 2009). Especially differences in background training and jargon are often identified as the core challenge for cross-sectoral cooperation because it makes it more difficult to communicate and share knowledge (Dawes, Cresswell & Pardo, 2009). On the other hand it is argued that differences in existing objectives and core values make cooperation challenging (Blackwell et al., 2009; Dawes, Cresswell & Pardo, 2009; Wenger, 2000). In that case is the creation of shared values and objectives important in order to create mutual engagement, but this can take a lot of time especially when it is not recognised as being an issue by all actors. Social inter-sectoral interactions can contribute to the breakdown of boundaries and stimulate cooperative relationships and formation of common interests (Tsai, 2002; Tsai & Ghoshal, 1998). As discussed in the previous paragraph, the design of office space can influence such social interactions. Amin and Roberts (2008) argue however that in the end not physical proximity but relational ties determine the degree and quality of cooperation and knowledge sharing. Even though for example the office space, quality of virtual space and organisational structuring can contribute to the improvement of cooperation, they are not all decisive. Previous successful cooperation can for example strengthen a relationship which can be beneficial for future cooperation (Dawes, Cresswell & Pardo, 2009). The next chapter explores in more detail the role of interactions and relationships by using a social complex system approach.

### **3.3 Tourism strategy making as a complex system**

Chapter 3.1 shows that tourism strategy making is a complex phenomenon, interrelated with its environmental, economic, social and political context. Adding to the complexity is the fact that tourism

strategy making is interrelated with other policy sectors. In order to gain understanding of the interactions and network that these actors form and thus of the strategy making process, several approaches have been used, such as a reductionist approach and linear models. However, it is commonly accepted among scholars that tourism strategy making is not a linear process and cannot be described as such (Baggio, 2008; Farsari, Butler & Szivas, 2011; Fayos-Solà, Alvarez & Cooper, 2014). Linear models are simply unable to gain full understanding of the complex relationships between the large number of interacting actors (Baggio, 2008; Roe, 1998) and are unable to predict the outcomes adequately (Mysiak, Giupponi & Rosato, 2005). The danger of simplifying the in- and outputs and their interrelations, is that changing relationships between elements of the system are ignored (Baggio, 2008; Manson, 2001). As these approaches do not seem to fully grasp the system at hand, an approach that acknowledges that that what happens is apparently more than just the workings of individual elements, seems to be necessary to gain better insight. Such an approach is the 'complex systems' approach (Baggio, 2008; Farsari, Butler & Szivas, 2011; Fayos-Solà, Alvarez & Cooper, 2014).

### **3.3.1 Complexity**

The 'complex systems' approach is a field of research embedded within 'complexity theory'. It is difficult to define exactly what complexity theory comprises because what it is depends on which of the three fields of research that can be distinguished, is chosen: 'algorithmic complexity', 'deterministic complexity' and 'aggregate complexity' (Manson, 2001). 'Algorithmic complexity' is related to mathematical complexity theory and information theory (Farsari, Butler & Szivas, 2011; Manson, 2001). Algorithmic complexity argues that the complexity of a system depends on the difficulty of describing the characteristics of a system due its complexity or specificity (Manson, 2001). A point of concern with algorithmic complexity is that data is not always the same as knowledge. Especially when a subject concerns meaning, as in case with for example experiences, no algorithm is capable of covering the subject completely. 'Deterministic complexity' is related to chaos theory and catastrophe theory (Farsari, Butler & Szivas, 2011; Manson, 2001). Deterministic complexity states that the interaction of a couple of key variables can actually create largely stable systems (Manson, 2001). However, the requirement to distinguish only two or three key variables can work limiting and simplifying when explaining something seemingly complex. And finally, 'aggregate complexity' is related to 'complex systems theory' (Farsari, Butler & Szivas, 2011; Manson, 2001). Aggregate complexity focuses on how individual

elements work together and create a system with complex behaviour (Manson, 2001). It differs from algorithmic and deterministic complexity in trying to address the holistic outcome and synergy resulting from the interactions of the entities within the system, instead of using mathematics equations and assumptions on how complex systems work (Farsari, Butler & Szivas, 2011; Manson, 2001).

### 3.3.2 Complex systems

Mitchell defines a complex system as *"a system in which large networks of components with no central control and simple rules of operation give rise to complex collective behavior, sophisticated information processing, and adaptation via learning or evolution"* (Mitchell, 2009, p.13). Examples of complex systems are ant colonies, immune systems and economies. Even though these examples seem at first glance to vary widely from each other, they share six common characteristics making them complex systems: a large number of relationships, internal structure, interaction with the environment and the capacities of learning, change and emergence (Farsari, Butler & Szivas, 2011; Manson, 2001). The remaining of this paragraph discusses these six characteristics of complex systems in more detail.

a.) Relationships: a system contains a large number of entities and there is a large number of non-linear relationships between those entities (Baggio, 2008; Farsari, Butler & Szivas, 2011; Mitchell, 2009). Within the system of tourism strategy making are the entities for example national and regional government and their policy areas, policy officers, etcetera. All these entities exchange and redistribute information (Farsari, Butler & Szivas, 2011). All the relationships between entities are more defining a complex system, than individual entities themselves (Manson, 2001). That also means that even though each entity has its own function and goals, the complexity of all relationships causes that a unified purpose of the whole system is not possible. It is also impossible that all entities within the system know from each other what they do (Baggio, 2008; Manson, 2001). Relationships exist mostly between entities that are in close reach of each other (Davis & Sumara, 2006; Farsari, Butler & Szivas, 2011). These local interactions cause a lack of overarching control and common purpose.

b.) Internal structure: the system does not only consist of entities and their relationships, it has an internal structure. Relationships can vary in strength (Manson, 2001). The strength of a relationship can for example depend on the closeness of entities, being both spatial closeness and the degree of familiarity (Farsari, Butler & Szivas, 2011; Manson, 2001). Entities can form sub-systems, especially

when the relationships are tight (Manson, 2001). This also means that even though there are homogenous entities within a system, it is possible that they form sub-systems that are not identical due to the specific relationships of the entities.

c.) Open system: the system does not only interact internally, but interacts as well with its environment (Baggio, 2008; Davis & Sumara, 2006; Farsari, Butler & Szivas, 2011). For tourism strategy making can the environment for example be the trends in tourists' desires and the world economy. These external interactions make that the system is an open system (Baggio, 2008; Farsari, Butler & Szivas, 2011). The environment can deliver information to entities within the system and the system can create output for the environment (Manson, 2001). However, the boundaries of where the systems stops and the environment starts are not always sharp.

d.) Learning and memory: information can be stored as experience, which takes the form of relationships (Farsari, Butler & Szivas, 2011). The entities and sub-systems that are capable of handling the information from the environment will grow (Manson, 2001). When certain relationships and interactions occur on a regular base, similar sets of entities and sub-systems will be formed. The system is able to react and anticipate to the environment because of these internal processes (Farsari, Butler & Szivas, 2011; Mitchell, 2009). Diversity plays also an important role in the surviving of a system. The more diverse a system is, the better it will be able to react on changes in the environment (Farsari, Butler & Szivas, 2011).

e.) Change and evolution: complex systems are constantly changing (Manson, 2001). Through self-organisation is the system capable to adjust the internal structure in order to better respond to and interact with the environment (Davis & Sumara, 2006; Farsari, Butler & Szivas, 2011). This self-organisation depends on the abilities for learning and memory. Big changes, or tipping points, in the environment occur sometimes, causing the system to be in an unorganised state, right before the system suddenly obtains a higher form of organisation than before (Manson, 2001). Technological developments for example are able to change internal structure in a radical way.

f.) Emergence: a system is capable of more than what its components are capable of or in other words, the sum is greater than its parts (Davis & Sumara, 2006; Farsari, Butler & Szivas, 2011). This synergism enables emergence, deriving from the interactions and relationships of the components

(Manson, 2001). It is because of this phenomenon of emergence that it is difficult to predict or control complex systems. Actually, interventions can have far-reaching effects due to not understanding the emergence from complexity (Lansing and Kremer, 1993 in Manson, 2001).

### **3.3.3 Networks**

As discussed in the previous paragraph, the focus of complex system theory is more on the relationships between entities than on the entities themselves (Manson, 2001). This focussing on the relationships rather than the individual entities is called 'network thinking' (Mitchell, 2009). It is not the entities that make a system complex, it is the interactions of the entities. Complex systems are in fact large networks (University of Groningen, 2014). Gaining understanding on what networks are and how they work is important when one wants to gain understanding of complex systems.

Mitchell defines a network as "a collection of *nodes* connected by *links*" (2009, p.234, original italics). 'Nodes' are the individual entities within in a network such as people and institutions, and 'links' are the relationships or connections between entities. Links can transmit information, knowledge, values etcetera (University of Groningen, 2014). Links between nodes can be unidirectional, bidirectional or without direction. Sometimes a group of entities are forming a clique; the entities are close and tight connected and kind of separate from other entities, this is called 'clustering' (Réka & Barabási, 2002). Every node has a number of links, which is called the 'degree' of that node. Networks have a low number of high-degree nodes and a large number of small-degree nodes (Réka & Barabási, 2002). Preferential attachment causes that a node has a higher probability to attach to a node which is already having a higher number of links (University of Groningen, 2014). The high-degree nodes play an important role in the flow of information within the networks and are called 'hubs' (Mitchell, 2009).

The structure of social networks is dynamic and constantly evolving since nodes and links can appear, change and disappear (University of Groningen, 2014). Growth and development are there for inevitable characteristics of social networks.

### **3.3.4 Social complex systems**

When a complex system consists of people, organisations or institutions, the system is a social complex system (University of Groningen, 2014). According to University of Groningen (2014) are social complex

systems a subclass of complex systems, with specific characteristics. University of Groningen (2014) defines a social system in their free online course as complex *"if the amount of data/information that is needed to fully describe the system is so dispersed that it cannot at any moment be collected at one central point."* University of Groningen is with this approach inspired by the work of the economist and philosopher Friedrich Hayek (1899-1992). Hayek argues that a free market approach is superior to a planned market approach, because it has the ability to use both information of time and place, which change constantly, and tacit knowledge (Hayek, 1964 in University of Groningen, 2014). Tacit knowledge is non-communicable knowledge of individuals such as skills and know-how. The interactions in social complex systems are exchanges of information and the constant adapting to new information (University of Groningen, 2014). The specific characteristics of social complex systems are that they are open-ended and the role of science. It is uncertain what happens in the future, but what happens will lead to change and adaption. Therefore no end point or stage of equilibrium will be reached, making the system open-ended. The most effective way to deal with uncertainty is having the capacity to adapt. So far has this discussion not shown that social complex systems are distinctly different from complex systems as discussed in chapter 3.3.2. However, a valuable addition to the discussion of complex systems is the second characteristic of social complex systems as proposed by the University of Groningen (2014), the role of science. They argue that by studying the social complex system, the functioning of the system is being influenced. Because humans use the findings brought through science, new patterns emerge. In fact, science in itself is a social complex system because it constantly changes and adapts.

### **3.3.5 The relevance of a social complex systems approach**

The relevance of looking at the tourism strategy making process as a social complex system lies in the need to understand the dynamics of the system, in order to reach a desired outcome. As mentioned before, interventions can have far-reaching negative effects due to not understanding the emergence and adaptations from complexity (Lansing and Kremer, 1993 in Manson, 2001). Another possible situation is that the system is in a lock-in state. This is a state in which people are stuck with a sub-optimal outcome that has emerged, but of which they are often not aware (University of Groningen, 2014). Only by understanding the dynamics of complex systems can such a state be recognized and

overcome. For example by generating a flow of communication because this can start an emergent process.

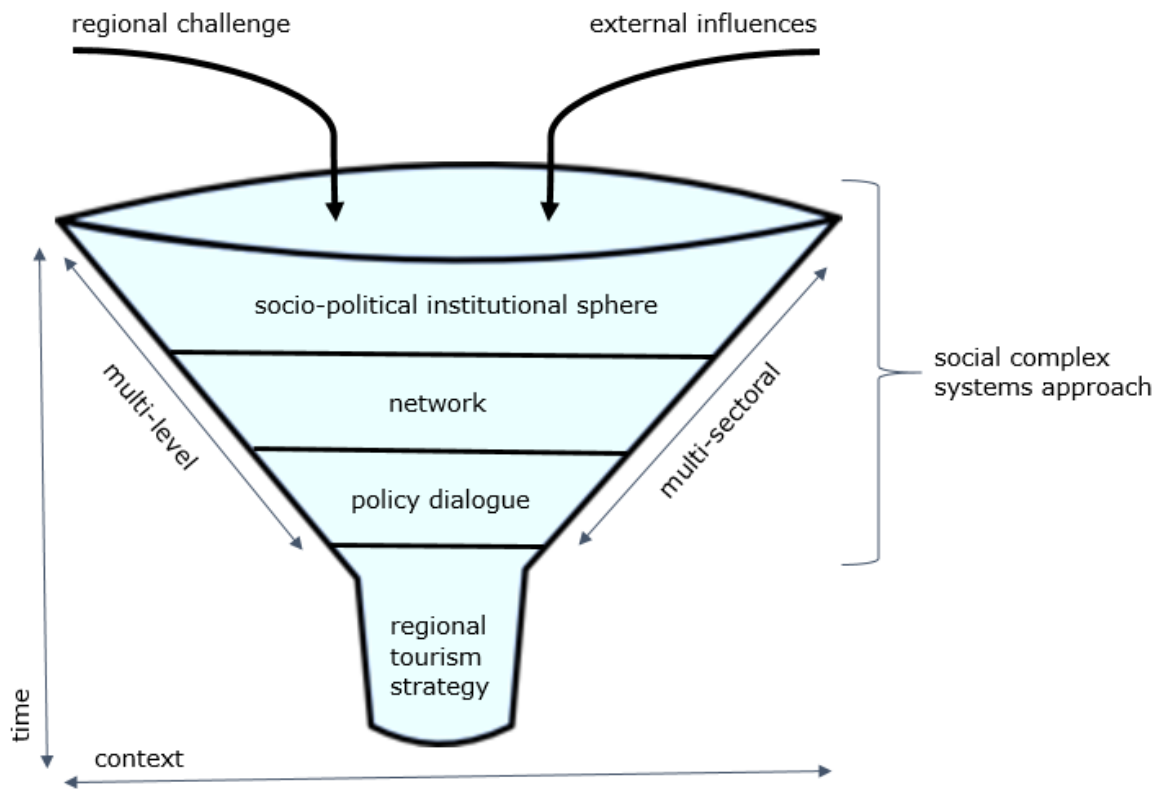
Fayos-Solà, Alvarez and Cooper (2014) argue that through the complex systems approach, strategy making processes can be diagnosed, which is important in order to achieve the aimed regional development. Since predicting the outcome of tourism strategy is impossible due to the complex and unpredictable nature of it, this cannot be the basis for the making of and deciding upon strategy (Baggio, 2008; Fayos-Solà, Alvarez & Cooper, 2014). By acknowledging this, more realistic tourism strategies for regional development can be developed. Fayos-Solà, Alvarez and Cooper (2014, p.xiii) argue therefor for a more pragmatic approach in strategy making, for example aiming for good enough vision instead of pretending to have control over the outcomes, proactive experimentation and knowledge management.

### **3.4 Conceptual framework**

The conceptual framework in figure 2 illustrates how the discussed theories in this chapter come together in this research. It summarizes the identified key elements of the strategy making process in order to provide an overview of the links between the discussed theories and the aim of this research.

Figure 2 provides a general illustration from the process of going from a regional challenge at the start towards a regional tourism strategy at the finish. In practice is a regional challenge of course not always the real starting point of a strategy making process or is combined within other challenges, but since this research takes departure from tourism strategy as contributory to regional challenges it is chosen to illustrate it as such. This conceptual framework is inspired by the framework for the study of tourism planning and policy by Dredge and Jenkins (2007, p.16).





**Figure 2: Conceptual framework**

The socio-political institutional sphere of figure 2 represents both the formal and informal policy space in which is being operated. The formal policy space is the organisational structure, or in other words how the central, provincial and municipal governments are organised, what their formal responsibilities are and in which political context they operate. The informal policy space represents the social relations between actors, the culture, values and beliefs of a governmental level or policy sector within a governmental level, et cetera. See chapter 3.2.1 for a full discussion on informal policy space. This informal policy space influences cooperation between actors and thus the strategy making process.

Within this institutional sphere, several actors are involved by the formulating of appropriate policy on the regional challenge. All involved actors form with their relationships and knowledge exchanges a network. This research uses a social complex systems approach in order to gain understanding of the nature and working of this network. See chapter 3.3 for the discussion on this complex systems approach.

The next phase in the funnel of figure 2 is the policy dialogue. Within this phase, the policy and the policy objectives are discussed, negotiated and eventually formulated. All previous phases in the funnel are of course affecting the policy dialogue. For example, the informal policy space can affect relationships between actors and these relationships within the network can in turn affect the policy dialogue. During the policy dialogue is decided upon the regional tourism strategy that will be implemented and is the finish of this framework.

Several factors are of influence on the above described process. To start with, the external influences are at the top of the conceptual framework in figure 2. Examples of such external influences are tourists' desires, the global economic situation, but also external actors such as local businesses and interest groups. At the bottom of the framework are two arrows drawn which represent time and context. The time arrow does not only represent the fact that the strategy formation process takes time but it also indicates that previous events and learnings from these influence the process. For example, previous collaboration can affect the current relationships between actors. The context arrow represents that all elements of the framework are context dependent. Policies have a history (Dredge & Jenkins, 2007). Policies may have developed over years of time and have involved a large number of actors. This historical context can affect the current policy dialogue.

The two diagonal arrows of the conceptual framework in figure 2 represent the multi-level and multi-sectoral relationships that exist between actors. These relationships influence the degree of vertical and horizontal integration of governments. These degrees of integration play a role in the complementarity of policies and strategies.

After this overview on how the discussed theories and the aim of the research come together in one conceptual framework, the next chapter continues with the methodology of this research.

## **4. Methodology**

This methodology chapter starts with an exploration on the chosen scientific approaches on doing research. It introduces the pragmatic approach and the phronetic approach by Flyvbjerg (2001). What follows in chapter 4.2 is a discussion on the chosen qualitative research methods and their execution. The used qualitative research methods are in-depth interviewing and conceptual mapping. The chapter ends with a discussion on how the collected data is processed and analysed.

### **4.1 Scientific approach**

This sub-chapter explains the chosen scientific approaches on this research. It embeds a short exploration of the approaches within the broader context of this research in order to illustrate their relevance. First is the pragmatic approach discussed followed by the phronetic approach by Flyvbjerg (2001).

#### **4.1.1 Pragmatic approach**

This research is fundamentally based on a pragmatic approach. The pragmatic paradigm concerns itself with taking action and contributing to real world problems (Pansiri, 2005; 2006; Powell, 2001). In fact, the word 'practical' derives from the Greek 'pragma' and means action (Pansiri, 2005). Pragmatists are not necessarily looking for the truth or reality, the role of science lies in researching how to contribute to the solution of problems (Powell, 2001). Although it sounds negative, an approach that is not in search for truth or reality, it can be argued that rather it is practical since the debate on what exactly is true or real and if such actually exists is on-going and controversial. Instead of focusing on trying to find the 'truth' and arguing why it in fact is the 'truth', it is according to pragmatists more fruitful to gain understanding of people's practical judgements and behaviour in order to deal with problems (Dewey, 1988 in Powell, 2001). With this in mind, it is not surprising that according to pragmatists ideas are socially constructed and created (Menand, 2001 in Snarey & Olson, 2003). In order to be able to understand and to deal with problems in our physical and social environment, it is necessary to gain relevant insight into the involved ideas (Pansiri, 2006). With applying such an approach, the context of the actors and the problems is essential. Because of the practical nature of pragmatism, research methods are chosen according to what would best produce the relevant knowledge needed for the researched problem (Pansiri, 2005). This means in practice that a mixed method approach is often used

for the gathering of relevant data, since the pragmatic approach encourages to combine the strengths and opportunities that different research methods offer. A discussion on which research methods are chosen for this research is provided in chapter 4.2.

#### **4.1.2 Phronetic approach**

In the past some scientists have tried to make social science more 'scientific' through using for example models and formalizing data collection (Ritchie et al., 2013). Around the 1970s however scientist more and more argued that studying humans and human behaviour through leaving out context and variables, is not a proper way in order to really gain insight and understanding (Ritchie et al., 2013). Where some scientists tried to create stable and predictive theory within social science, Flyvbjerg (2001) argues that this is impossible because of a fundamental contradiction. This paradox is that it is not possible to create such theory since people's behaviour and skills depend on context and cannot be reduced to simple rules, while theory must have rules and be independent from context. Chapter 4.1.1 addressed in the discussion on the pragmatic approach also the essential role of including context in the research. Instead of looking for stable and predictive theory in order to make social sciences relevant and useful, Flyvbjerg (2001) proposes a phronetic approach. His argument derives from Aristotle's definitions on 'episteme', 'techne' and 'phronesis'. Flyvbjerg (2001) summarises episteme as being scientific knowledge, universal and independent from context, and techne as craft or art, pragmatic, context-dependent and production-oriented (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p.57). His summary on phronesis is that it is about ethics and: "*Deliberation about values with reference to praxis. Pragmatic, variable, context-dependent. Oriented towards action. Based on practical value-rationality*" (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p.57). As phronetic approach, he suggest three value-rational questions: where are we going; is this desirable; what should be done? (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p.60). These questions derive from his look on what a phronetic approach should be, that is gaining understanding and interpretations of social values and interests in order to contribute to social debate and social action.

The aim of this research is to explore the usage of tourism strategies for positive regional economic and social contributions. The theoretic framework in chapter 3 has shown the interrelatedness of tourism with other sectors and the opportunities of horizontal and vertical integration within tourism strategy making. It has shown that tourism strategy making is not a linear process and that a lot of actors and interactions at different scales and across sectors are involved. Such interactions spread information,

ideas, values, knowledge and tacit knowledge through the network, but knowledge is sometimes only released when there is an opportunity for it. It is argued in chapter 3 that through a social complex systems approach, understanding can be gained of the workings of the system or network. Such knowledge is important when wanting to improve the efficiency of the strategy making process and the outcomes of the strategies. This arguing is a pragmatic arguing. It acknowledges the context, the social shaping role of actors and their interactions, and that gaining understanding of these is necessary in order to deal with the problems or challenges at hand. In fact, gaining this understanding can answer the value-rational questions Flyvbjerg (2001, p.60) proposes with his phronetic approach: where are we going; is this desirable; what should be done? In order to collect relevant data that contributes to such understanding, a qualitative data collection approach is chosen.

## **4.2 Qualitative research methods**

A qualitative research approach is helpful in gathering contextual and in-depth data (Altinay & Paraskevas, 2008). Qualitative research is considered to be an interpretive approach as it allows participants to construct their own reality (Flowerdew & Martin, 2005). When participants explain this reality, they use their own words and examples which can represent their views, values and beliefs. Qualitative research is contextual because it explores the experiences and circumstances, both social and material, of participants (Ritchie et al., 2013). The use of a qualitative approach is therefore suitable in order to explore the context and goals of tourism strategy and strategy making. In addition, according to Ritchie et al. (2013) are qualitative research methods very useful and suitable for exploring complex issues.

As discussed in chapter 4.1.1, a pragmatic approach often involves mixed research methods. Usually a mixed methods approach is used as a combination between quantitative and qualitative research methods. The benefit from using such a combination is that each method contributes in its own way to gaining knowledge and understanding (Creswell, 2009). This same argument goes for using two qualitative methods when both provide relevant insights. This latter is the case for the chosen research methods for this research.

In order to collect data that is both relevant and useful to provide the necessary insights, two qualitative research methods are selected. The first research method is in-depth interviews and the second is

conceptual mapping. The two methods are used as complementary to each other. The following two sub-chapters describe the two used methods and their execution in more detail.

#### **4.2.1 In-depth interviews**

In-depth interviews provide the possibility to collect in a structured way detailed data about the processes and contexts in which tourism strategies are used and constructed. All interviews but one were individual interviews, so with one interviewer and one interviewee. According to Ritchie et al. (2013) are individual interviews suitable for gaining understanding of complex systems and processes because it is possible to really go into depth to get that kind of understanding. One interview was initially planned as another individual interview, but the participant arranged on own initiative the presence of another participant because (s)he felt that the both of them could best explain the concerning topic together.

An interview guide was made beforehand, based on the theoretic framework as discussed in chapter 3. See appendix 1 for the interview guide. The interview guide gives a structured overview of which questions are asked about which topics and for which research objectives. The interviews were semi-structured in nature. The benefits of a semi-structure interview are that the interviewer has the freedom to explore more deeply topics addressed by the interviewee, even if these topics were unforeseen but still relevant for the research (Flowerdew & Martin, 2005). It also gives the interviewer the freedom to ask the questions from the interview guide in an order that makes sense within the whole conversation. At the same time provides the interview guide a solid support for the interviewer to not lose control of the direction of the interview. The usage of the interview guide enables a structured data collection, which contributes to the liability of the research (Altinay & Paraskevas, 2008).

The participants are anonymously presented, no names are written down in this research and its appendixes. This is done in order to protect the privacy of the participants. Only the job functions of the participants are mentioned in order to improve the understanding of the reader about their role and relevance for the research. After the conduction of the interviews, the participants were asked if they are interested in receiving the results of the research. This question offered the participants the opportunity to find out about the final results of the research and to think about the option if they wanted to see and check the transcript or results prior to the final version. This research is not marked

as confidential, but the version that will be send to the participants will be treated as such. Since participants will probably be able to figure out the person behind the function description, only information about which level of government is represented by participants is provided in this participants version. No participants declared to be concerned about the confidentiality of their words. However, the researcher does not want to intervene in the relationships that can exist between participants. Reading about the statements of a colleague can possibly affect these relationships.

#### **4.2.1.1 Sampling**

A total of 8 interviews and 9 participants were used for this research. Interviews were arranged at a time and place suitable for the participant. Participants were able to withdraw from participation at any time. Each governmental level is covered with these interviews and every interview contributes to a deeper understanding of the tourism strategy contexts and system. Table 1 provides an overview of all participants, their job functions, the governmental level they represent and in which appendixes their transcripts and conceptual maps can be found.

For the representation of national tourism strategy is one interview conducted. This interview took place at a time and purpose separate from the other interviews. It was conducted about four months prior to the other interviews and for the purpose of another project of the researcher. This project was based on the seven months internship the researcher had at the National Tourism Organisation of the Netherlands, NBTC (Netherlands Board for Tourism and Conventions) Holland Marketing. The interview with the marketing manager of NBTC, participant 1, touched upon their strategies to spread tourism through space. Their intention was that through this spreading pressure can be relieved from the popular destination Amsterdam and other regions have also the chance to benefit in regard to the regional economy and quality of life.

<b>participant number</b>	<b>level of government</b>	<b>job function</b>	<b>appendix transcript</b>	<b>appendix conc. map</b>
participant 1	central	marketing manager at NTO	3	
participant 2	provincial	project leader recreation and tourism Veluwe	4	11
participant 3	provincial	program coordinator heritage and landscape	5	12
participant 4	provincial	process manager regional task Veluwe	6	13
participant 5	provincial	account manager routes and marketing and promotion – tourism & recreation	7	
participant 6	provincial	account manager routes - sports	7	
participant 7	municipal	policy officer tourism and recreation	8	14
participant 8	municipal	policy officer art and culture	9	15
participant 9	municipal	policy officer cultural historical and spatial planning	10	16

**Table 1: Overview participants**

This interview with participant 1 was, like the other interviews, a semi-structured in-depth interview. The participant was selected based on his/her knowledge that was relevant for the internship project, so through purpose sampling (Altinay & Paraskevas, 2008). As demonstrated above, the interview provides relevant data on national tourism strategy, which is the reason that the interview is again used for this research. See appendix 3 for the transcript of this interview. A disadvantage of using this interview is that the asked questions were based on research topics and objectives other than this research, and that the conceptual mapping research method (see chapter 4.2.2) is not used in addition to the interview. The first disadvantage is of less concern because a substantial part of the interview proved to be about topics relevant to this research. This relevance is made visual in appendix 2, which shows in addition to the original research topics and objectives, the topics and objectives that are relevant for this research. The second disadvantage however can be regarded as a 'missed chance' to let the interviewee map the complexity of the strategy making. The researcher weighed carefully this



concern but argues that in order to conduct a similar interview but this time including the conceptual mapping, would produce data similar to the already present data. Conducting a similar interview would therefore ask for a lot of time from both the interviewee and the interviewer, in regard to what additional knowledge it would produce. Besides, the other interviews at the provincial and municipal levels provide enough detailed data to assess the question whether tourism strategy can be regarded as a complex system and the level of vertical and horizontal integration.

To represent the second governmental level, the provinces, 4 interviews were conducted with 5 participants. All interviews were conducted at the same province, Gelderland, in order to be able to explore the horizontal integration. Chapter 5.2 provides a contextual description of Gelderland.

The first interview at the province of Gelderland was with the project leader recreation and tourism Veluwe, participant 2. See appendix 4 for the transcript of this interview. This participant was chosen through calling the general number of the province and asking to speak with somebody who works with tourism policy within the province. The researcher was then referred to participant 2. After hearing about his work function, the researcher judged this participant to be relevant for the research. During this interview were a couple of other functions within the province mentioned by the participant. The researcher used these references for the further selection of participants, also known as snowball sampling (Altinay & Paraskevas, 2008).

The following interviews were conducted with the program coordinator heritage and landscape (participant 3) and the process manager of the regional task Veluwe (participant 4), see the transcripts in appendixes 5 and 6. The last interview was conducted with both the account manager routes and marketing and promotion from the sector tourism and recreation (participant 5) and the account manager routes from the sector sports (participant 6), see transcript in appendix 7.

To represent the third governmental level, the municipalities, 3 interviews were conducted. These interviews were conducted within the same municipality, the municipality of Epe, to enable the exploration of the horizontal integration. The chosen municipality is located within the province of Gelderland, in order to explore the vertical integration. See Chapter 5.3 for a contextual description of Epe.

The first interview at the municipality of Epe was conducted with the policy officer for tourism and recreation, participant 7. See appendix 8 for the transcript of this interview. This participant was selected through calling the general number of the municipality and asking to speak with somebody who works with tourism policy within the municipality. The researcher was then referred to participant 7. After hearing about the job function, the researcher judged this participant to be relevant for the research. During this interview were a couple of other functions within the municipality mentioned by the participant. Again were these references used as snowball sampling for the further selection of participants (Altinay & Paraskevas, 2008).

The following interviews were conducted with the policy officer art and culture (participant 8) and a policy officer working with both cultural historical and spatial planning (participant 9), the transcripts can be found in appendixes 9 and 10 respectively.

The planning of the interviews was a slow and challenging process due to the several public holidays during the research period, which are free days for public officers, and that several participants or approached people were on holiday. What also added to the challenge was that the researcher was critical on what kind of policy officers to approach and not just took any available policy officer to take part in the research. For example, once the project manager of heritage and landscape from the province participated, the researcher wanted a participant from the municipality that also deals with this sector to increase the possibility to analyse vertical integration.

#### **4.2.1.2 Conduction of the interviews**

Both the interviewees and the interviewer have the Dutch nationality. Even though the research and thus the analysis is in English, the interviews were done in Dutch. Disadvantages of this choice are that with translating the Dutch interviews into an English transcript, meaning can be changed or lost in translation. However, the researcher is aware of both the context of the words, because she conducted the interviews, and the meaning behind the words, because of her knowledge of the Dutch language. By transcribing the interviews and thus translating the spoken Dutch sentences into English sentences, the researcher tried to capture the meaning of the words to her best ability and provided additional context phrased as researcher notes in italics when necessary. Decisive for the researcher to conduct the interviews in Dutch was to make participation as easy and attractive as possible. Even though the

interviewees were possibly all able to do the interview in English, it is much easier to speak the native language. Also, by doing the interviews in the native language, the interviewees were able to express their ideas and thoughts as pure and genuine as possible.

All interviews were recorded and within 24 hours transcribed so as to enhance memory recall. All interviewees were asked if they had any objections against recording, none of them objected or hesitated to object. A possible disadvantage of recording is that an interviewee may not feel free to fully speak his or her mind. There was no sign of this during any of the interviews. Even though recorded words are unchangeable and possibly eternal, the research topics are not of such delicate nature that the researcher worries about withholding thoughts or too careful formulations. One participant asked to see the transcript to check his/her words, (s)he made no changes or comments.

The interviews lasted about thirty to forty minutes on average. The duration and location of each interview are listed on the transcripts. Based on the experience with interviews conducted at an earlier stage of the research, question formulation and the addressing of topics were refined and improved where necessary for following interviews. For example, in the interview with participant 2 the interviewer asked about the cooperation among governmental levels, but with all levels in one question. In order not to confuse participants and end up with only half of the question answered, the interviewer asked in later interviews about the cooperation among governmental levels separately. This also made it easier to ask follow up questions if relevant, in order to fully explore the topic. The necessary adjustments were small changes to make the questioning more clear and to the point. The intent of the questions was not necessary to change, which is positive for making comparisons during the analysis.

The next section explains the second research method that was used, conceptual mapping.

#### **4.2.2 Conceptual mapping**

The participants were asked to draw a conceptual map of their policy making network. A conceptual map is a diagram illustrating the (causal) relationships between variables (Artinian, 1982). Participants were asked to draw and link the entities of tourism policy that they are involved with. Such a map gives insight into how participants perceive and make sense of their networks (Eden, 2004 in Farsari, Butler & Szivas, 2011) and it places them in the social construction of that network. Conceptual mapping enables an understanding that goes beyond merely describing the system, which makes it a useful tool

for research (Artinian, 1982). Conceptual mapping can show the interlinkages that exist between policy sectors, actors and organisations (Haxton, 2015) and using it as a tool provides a holistic overview which can be useful in analysing complex systems (Farsari, Butler & Szivas, 2011).

There is a total of 6 conceptual maps, see appendix 11 to 16. As explained in chapter 4.2.1.1 there is no conceptual map of participant 1 because this interview took place for another purpose as the other interviews. The interviewer did not ask during the combined interview with participants 5 and 6 to draw a conceptual map due to the presented time constraints by two participants giving input at the same time. Figure 3 provides an example of a conceptual map.

**Figure 3: Conceptual map participant 4**

### **4.3 Analysing the collected data**

The first step in the processing and analysing of the collected data was transcribing the interviews. See appendixes 3 to 10 for all transcripts. All interviews were transcribed within 24 hours after the interview took place. The translation from Dutch interviews into English transcripts was done directly during transcribing. See chapter 4.2.1.2 for a detailed discussion of the considerations for not doing the interviews in English and the translating. The 'ums', 'uhs' and 'ahs' were removed from the transcripts in order to improve the readability.

The conceptual maps were scanned and inserted in the appendixes 11 to 16. The maps are not translated so the original layout and structuring done by the participants would not get lost. Instead is in the transcripts the process of writing reflected, giving translations from the writings on the conceptual maps.

After this documenting of the collected data, the next step was to code the data from the transcripts. First, master categories were made, based on the theoretic framework as discussed in chapter 3. Master categories are quite broad and represent most directly the research topics (Kitchin & Tate, 2013). After this, sub-categories were defined to move from generic towards specific categories, based on the transcripts. The sub-categories are used as codes during the coding process. By first defining the master categories and then sub-categories, it is ensured that both the research objectives and gathered contextual data, are represented through the coding. In other words, the categories are conceptually and empirically grounded (Kitchin & Tate, 2013). Also, by following such a category development, the researcher became thoroughly familiar with the data.

The coding is done through colour coding. See appendix 17 for the master sheet containing all categories and codes. An example sheet of the colour coded transcripts is provided in appendix 18. All colour coded transcripts are available on request.

## **5. Regional and governmental contexts**

One of the aims of this research is to explore the complementarity of tourism strategies by looking at vertical and horizontal integration of governments. This chapter provides therefore governmental and tourism strategy contexts of central government, the province of Gelderland and the municipality of Epe, the provincial and municipal case studies. Another aim of this research is to explore if and how tourism strategies are used to address regional economic and social challenges. Therefore provide chapters 5.2.1 and 5.3.1 some regional contexts for Gelderland and Epe to give insight in the economic and social condition of the region and to identify possible regional challenges.

### **5.1 National tourism policy**

The tourism and recreation sector is based within the Ministry of Economic Affairs. According to the Ministry is this sector vital for the Dutch economy due to the annual turnover and number of jobs it generates (Government of the Netherlands, n.d.). According to the numbers provided by the central government is the annual turnover over 68 billion euros and the employment consists of about 600,000 jobs, accounting for six per cent of the total employment. A total of nearly 14 million international tourists, including business tourists, visited the Netherlands in 2014 (NBTC, n.d.).

The Ministry formulated three strategies in order to boost tourism. The first strategy focusses on entrepreneurship and the aim is to stimulate entrepreneurial initiative by simplifying or eliminating unnecessary regulations (Government of the Netherlands, n.d.). The second focus lies on sustainability with the tourism industry investing in nature. The provinces are responsible for the implementation of this policy. A combination between economic activities and investing in nature and cooperation among residents, the public and private sectors, are being stimulated by central government (Ministry of Economic Affairs, 2014). The third strategy is to attract more tourists from abroad and consists of the promotion of the Netherlands and to create an offer of a wide variety of experiences (Government of the Netherlands, n.d.). The NTO NBTC Holland Marketing is responsible for the marketing and promotion of the Netherlands.

NBTC uses a public-private model to fund their organisation and marketing activities. The Ministry of Economic Affairs invests nearly 8.5 million euros in NBTC on condition that NBTC succeeds to reach a couple of predetermined targets (Kamp, 2015). Among these targets are a certain number of tourists

that has to be reached by marketing activities, a certain amount of expenditures by international tourists, a certain economic value through international conference bids and co-financing of at least 50 per cent by other parties.

NBTC expects that by the year 2020, 16 million international tourists will visit the Netherlands (NBTC, 2015). In order to generate and give direction to such growth, a strategy is formulated called Holland Branding & Marketing Strategy 2020, or in short HBMS 2020. Part of the HBMS 2020 is the sub-strategy HollandCity (NBTC, 2015). The idea behind HollandCity is that distances between cities within the Netherlands are so small that it can be compared to a greater metropolitan area such as can be found in the USA and China. A metro map is designed for (potential) stakeholders to kick off the strategy. This metro map contains several story lines, see appendix 19. These story lines connect cities throughout the country based on a certain passion or interest. The idea is that tourists are attracted to visit the Netherlands because of the well-known places such as Amsterdam, but can explore and discover more of the country by following their own interests. Or in other words, 'supporting the known – introducing the new': the slogan of HBMS 2020 (NBTC, 2015). The intention is that HollandCity contributes to spreading tourism through the country, hereby relieving pressure from Amsterdam and other major attractions in the core area and giving the other regions a chance to benefit as well from increasing tourism (NBTC, 2015).

Since one of the aims of this research is to explore the complementarity of tourism strategies at different governmental levels, it is interesting to see if the provinces are familiar with this national tourism strategy and if they recognize regional potentials. It is required of the provinces that they financially contribute to the story lines if they want to be part of the strategy. All provinces have agreed to invest and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and NBTC name that provinces play a key role in making this strategy a success (Kamp, 2015). The participation of all provinces shows that they are familiar with this national tourism strategy and their agreement on investment is an indication that they recognize potential regional benefits. Chapter 6 returns to this topic and discusses further the level of complementarity. Now the tourism strategies of central government are discussed, continues the next chapter with a contextual description of the province of Gelderland, the provincial case study.

## 5.2 Contextual description of the province of Gelderland

This sub-chapter provides context on the position of the province of Gelderland within the Netherlands and the regional structuring. Furthermore, the governmental and tourism contexts of Gelderland are discussed.

### 5.2.1 Regional description of the province of Gelderland

Gelderland is one of the twelve provinces in the Netherlands. It is located in the east of the country and borders with Germany as illustrated in figure 4. Size wise it is the largest of all provinces. The population counts over two million inhabitants (Statistics Netherlands, 2016a). Graph 1 shows the population development of Gelderland, which shows an upward trend. Population wise is Gelderland the fourth largest of all provinces. The province of Gelderland counts 54 municipalities.

For tourism purposes is the province divided into four regions: Veluwe, Arnhem-Nijmegen area, Achterhoek and Rivierenland. These regions and the largest cities within Gelderland are illustrated in figure 5.

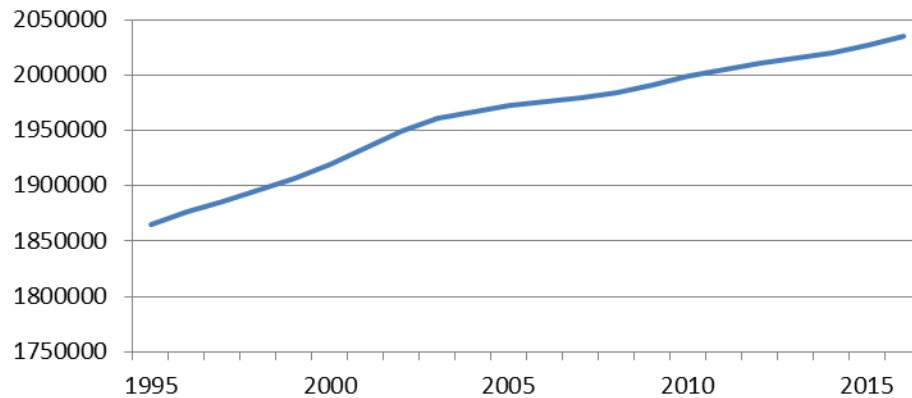


Figure 4: Location of Gelderland (Tubs, 2011)



Figure 5: Regions and cities in Gelderland (Toerisme, 2006)





**Graph 1: Population development of the province of Gelderland (Statistics Netherlands, 2016a)**

The Veluwe is located in the north-western part of the province. Two national parks are located within this region, High Veluwe National Park and National Park Veluwezoom. The first is one of the largest national parks in the Netherlands and the second is the oldest (Holland.com, n.d.). The landscape of the Veluwe can be described as consisting of sand dunes, forest and heathlands where wild animals such as swines, deers and mouflons live. Both national parks offer a wide variety of cycle and walking routes.

The Achterhoek is located in the eastern part of the province, bordering with Germany. It is one of the least dense populated areas of the Netherlands and faces a decline in population and business activity (Rijksoverheid, n.d.c). The Achterhoek is a rural region and has villages dating from the Middle Ages, castles and estates (Holland.com, n.d.).

The Rivierenland is located in the south of the province. This region contains the 'large rivers' of the country and the landscape contains because of these rivers fortifications for defence but also orchards with fruit trees (Holland.com, n.d.).

The Arnhem-Nijmegen area is an urban region, consisting of the cities Arnhem and Nijmegen and surrounding municipalities. Arnhem is the capital of the province and home of the provincial government. Nijmegen is the oldest city in the Netherlands and was founded by the Romans (Holland.com, n.d.). During the Second World War when the allied forces liberated Europe, Arnhem and Nijmegen played an important role in one of the biggest air force operations, called 'Market Garden' (Fielder, 2011). At the bridge at Arnhem however went the operation dramatically wrong. The events from this historic time are commemorated in museums and the liberation route.

### **5.2.2 Provincial government of Gelderland**

The provincial governmental organisation consists of two elements, a political board and an official organisation. The political board exists of a general board called Provincial Council ('Provinciale Staten') and a daily board called Provincial Executive ('Gedeputeerde Staten'). Every four years are the 55 members of the Provincial Council elected by the residents of Gelderland (Provincie Gelderland, n.d.a). The Provincial Council chooses the six member of the Provincial Executive after the provincial election.

The Provincial Council meets once a month and decides upon topics within the province's responsibilities. See chapter 2.1. for a summary of these responsibilities. The decisions of the Provincial Council give direction to the Provincial Executive. All six members of the Provincial Executive make policy for their assigned sectors (Provincie Gelderland, n.d.a). Besides making policy, the Provincial Executive also executes decisions of central government and supervises municipalities. The official organisation exists of civil servants. They advise the Provincial Executive and implement the policies.

Tourism and leisure is defined as a policy theme within the province and is assigned to the Provincial Executive who is responsible for vital rural regions. Participants 2 and 5 explained in the interviews that within the official organisation, tourism and leisure is part of the economy program, but that they work for the Provincial Executive of vital rural regions (Participant 2 and 5, 2016).

### **5.2.3 Tourism in the province of Gelderland**

According to their economic vision was Gelderland the most popular province destination for domestic tourism in 2010 (Provincie Gelderland, 2011). A market share of almost 17% is claimed, with as follow uppers the provinces of Limburg and Noord-Brabant with over 12%. However, the province calls for action since the number of domestic tourists decreases. The source of these numbers is not mentioned in the economic vision document. When looking in the database of Statistics Netherlands, a slightly different image appears.

Statistics Netherlands provides numbers on guests with at least one overnight stay and numbers on leisure trips. Table 2 shows that the number one province destination where domestic tourists stay for at least one night, is Noord-Holland, followed by Gelderland (Statistics Netherlands, 2016b). Where Noord-Holland shows growth over the whole period, Gelderland shows a more stable number of guests

or even a slight decrease. When looking at the number of nights spend, Gelderland is the number one destination. However, Noord-Holland seems to be catching up to this number while Gelderland again shows more stable numbers.

Year		Total country	Noord- Holland	Gelderland	Limburg	Noord- Brabant	Zuid- Holland
2012	guests	21,147	3,380	<b>3,026</b>	2,684	2,633	2,229
	nights	63,341	8,168	<b>9,432</b>	8,217	8,239	5,049
2013	guests	21,267	3,747	<b>2,859</b>	2,697	2,528	2,279
	nights	64,304	8,718	<b>9,464</b>	8,400	8,217	5,054
2014	guests	21,931	3,965	<b>2,960</b>	2,640	2,501	2,430
	nights	65,328	9,216	<b>9,516</b>	8,155	7,704	5,315

**Table 2: Number of domestic guests and spent nights in total Netherlands and top 5 province destinations (x1,000) (Statistics Netherlands, 2016b)**

Table 3 provides the numbers of domestic day trips during two periods (Statistics Netherlands 2008). Unfortunately Statistics Netherlands does not provide more recent numbers and the two periods differ from each other. However, the numbers can still be used to illustrate the division of daytrips among the provinces. A daytrips is defined as an activity that takes at least two hours outside of the house, excluding overnight stays and visits to friends and relatives (Statistics Netherlands, 2008). Gelderland is ranked as fourth of the top province destinations with over 100 million daytrips in 2006-2007. Of this number is almost 80 million made by residents of Gelderland within their own province (Statistics Netherlands, 2008).

Period	Total country	Zuid Holland	Noord Holland	Noord Brabant	Gelder land	Utrecht
<b>Dec 2001 - Nov 2002</b>	981,624	215,191	172,439	142,168	<b>113,113</b>	70,131
<b>Oct 2006 - Sep 2007</b>	906,642	185,198	155,329	133,979	<b>100,161</b>	69,727

**Table 3: Number of domestic daytrips in total Netherlands and top 5 province destinations (x1,000) (Statistics Netherlands, 2008)**

Gelderland is for international guests a less popular destination than for domestic tourism. Of the twelve provinces takes Gelderland the sixth place as destination, with 408,000 international guests spending 1,017,000 nights in Gelderland in 2014 (Statistics Netherlands, 2016b).

Although not all above discussed numbers are most recent and not all periods and sources can be compared to each other, the numbers have illustrated the position of Gelderland against other provinces. If Gelderland is indeed the number one province destination for domestic tourism and leisure trips can be contested as the above discussion shows. However, Gelderland is one of the main destination provinces, but the number of guests and nights show indeed rather stabilisation or decrease, instead of growth. This presents a possible regional challenge.

According to the economic vision of the province of Gelderland, the tourism and leisure sector accounts for six per cent of all employment within the province (Provincie Gelderland, 2011). An important economic role of tourism is described by the province and also the positive effects tourism can have on being an attractive place to work and live and the quality of life of citizens. However, tourism numbers are dropping and the province wants to develop tourism. Main strategies for this are supporting quality improvement of tourism accommodations and a wide variety of tourism products, further improvement of cycle and walking infrastructure and investing in broad marketing of the province through the four touristic regions in order to be able to compete with other destinations, both domestic and abroad (Provincie Gelderland, 2011). The province formulates in their tourism action plan that it expects from the municipalities that they do not invest in local marketing and promotion but work and invest together in regional marketing (Provincie Gelderland, 2012). It is argued that combining budgets for regional marketing has more effect than investing in local marketing. The province also expects municipalities to work along with the other strategies, such as to contribute financially to the cycle and walking infrastructure. The province formulated what they want to achieve, but the challenge is to get their objectives to be shared by municipalities. In other words, vertical integration is necessary in order to reach the desired outcomes.

The tourism action plan describes what the province expects from municipalities and the private sector in their cooperation, in order to reach the goals of the several tourism strategies. The action plan also names the interrelatedness of tourism with other sectors such as nature, culture, landscape, cultural

history and sports and that additional opportunities can be created by using an integrated approach (Provincie Gelderland, 2012). This integrated approach consists of cooperating with other policy sectors, municipalities and the private sector. Even though the province pursues an integrated approach, the question is to what extent integration actually occurs. Such horizontal integration is discussed in the interviews and analysed in chapter 6.2.

This discussion based on online documentation from the provincial website, does not show direct signs of complementarity with central government's policies and strategies. The reason for this is, in case of the story lines strategy, that the province of Gelderland is still working on how to use it in their own regional tourism strategy (Participant 2, 2016). This topic is further discussed in chapter 6.2. The next sub-chapter continues with the contextual description of Epe, the municipal case study of this research.

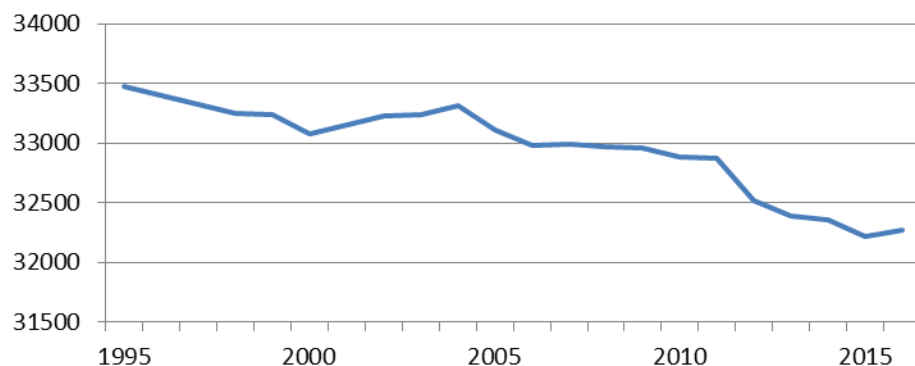
### **5.3 Contextual description of Epe**

This sub-chapter provides context on the position of the municipality of Epe within the province of Gelderland in order to show what potential local challenges are. One of the aims of this research is to explore if tourism strategies are being used to contribute to these challenges. In addition are the touristic and governmental contexts of Epe shortly discussed to see if there is a connection between Epe's tourism strategies and their local challenges.

#### **5.3.1 Regional description of the municipality of Epe**

Epe is a municipality located in the north of the province of Gelderland, see figure 5 on page 40 and is part of the tourism region Veluwe. The municipality consists of four villages and five hamlets. The municipality is called after one of the villages. The term Epe refers within this research always to the municipality and not to the village.

The population development of Epe is illustrated in graph 2. This graph shows an overall a declining trend. Epe is dealing with a high share of the population segment 65 years and older. Table 4 shows that Epe experiences a much higher grey pressure than the average in the Netherlands (Statistics Netherlands, 2016a). Grey pressure is the share of people aged 65 years and older in comparison with the age group 20 to 65 years.



**Graph 2: Population development of the municipality of Epe (Statistics Netherlands, 2016a)**

		total	green	grey
		pressure %	pressure %	pressure %
2010	Netherlands	64	38.9	25.1
	Gelderland	66.8	40.7	26.1
	<b>Epe</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>39.6</b>	<b>34.4</b>
2015	Netherlands	67.9	38	29.9
	Gelderland	71.1	39.6	31.5
	<b>Epe</b>	<b>81.7</b>	<b>39.1</b>	<b>42.6</b>

**Table 4: Total, green and grey pressure on population for the Netherlands, Gelderland and Epe (Statistics Netherlands, 2016a)**

In the spatial development strategy of which Epe is among six other municipalities part, are two of the four villages within Epe categorized as 'dynamic villages' based on having an autonomic economic dynamic and facilities that serve beyond the local sphere (Stedendriehoek, 2009, p.32). The other two villages are categorized as 'lively villages' with declining population and local operating businesses and facilities. This decline in population, business and facilities and the aging population, present local economic and social challenges for the municipality.

### 5.3.2 Municipal government of Epe

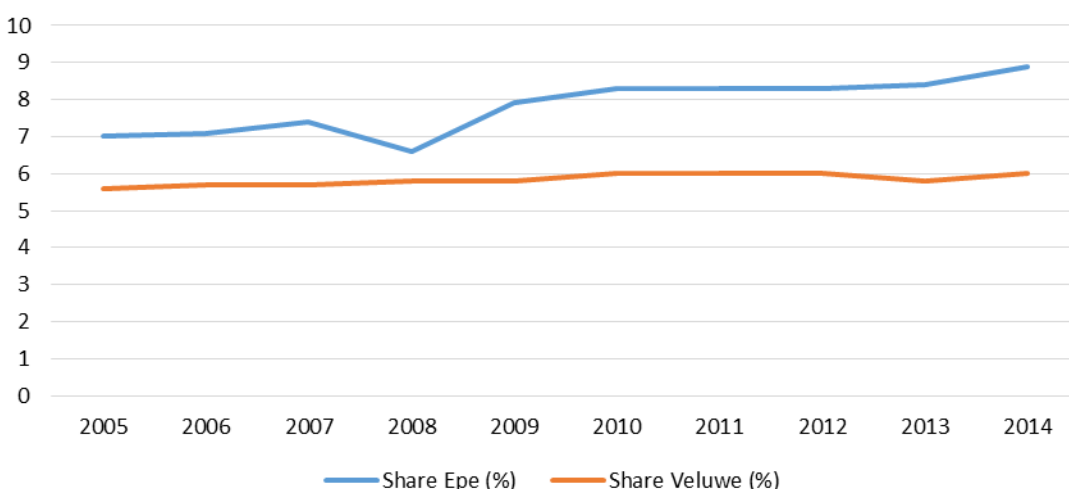
Through municipal elections are every four years the 23 members of the Municipal Council ('Gemeenteraad') chosen (Gemeente Epe, n.d.). The Municipal Council appoints the five aldermen

('Wethouders'). The aldermen form together with the mayor the Municipal Executive ('College van B & W'). The Municipal Executive is responsible for the daily administration of the municipality. Every alderman has a couple of sectors he or she is responsible for and makes policy for.

The official organisation of the municipality is made up by civil servants and divided into three departments: community, space and support (Gemeente Epe, n.d.). The department community focuses on contact with citizens and making and implementing policy for the safety and wellbeing of the community. The department space is responsible for making, supervising and maintaining policy on environment, economy, housing, and tourism. The department support supports the organisation in for example juridical, financial or technological sense.

### 5.3.3 Tourism in the municipality of Epe

According to participant 7 (2016) is the share of jobs of the tourism and recreation sector about six per cent. Graph 3 provides an overview of the job share of the tourism and recreation sector for the municipality of Epe and the region Veluwe (Provincie Gelderland, n.d.b). The job share is for the region Veluwe indeed about six per cent, for Epe is the number actually higher, almost nine per cent in 2014. This shows that the tourism and recreation sector plays a substantial role in the local and regional economy.



**Graph 3: Job share of tourism and recreation sector for Epe and the Veluwe, 2005-2014 (Provincie Gelderland, n.d.b)**

The website of the municipality of Epe provides a tourism strategy called 'tourism profile 2013 – Epe, complete different' (Gemeente Epe, 2013). This strategy is a bit outdated as follows from the interview with participant 7. This participant talks about the updated strategy called 'Naturally Different'. However, the goal of the two tourism strategies is quite the same and can be summarised as a focus on the target group of people between middle and senior age groups and to stimulate a high quality supply of tourism accommodation and products (Gemeente Epe, 2013; Participant 7, 2016). Epe wants to position itself as part of the Veluwe, also through regional promotion, but tries to differentiate itself from other municipalities within the region of the Veluwe through local promotion. Chapter 5.2.3 discussed that Gelderland expects from municipalities to invest in regional promotion. Epe complies to this but continues local promotion.

The contexts of this chapter 5 contribute to the understanding of the discussion on the collected data that follows in the next chapter. The next chapter continues with the analysis of the collected data in order to answer the research questions.



## 6. Analysis and discussion

This chapter discusses the analysis of the collected data in the light of the regional and governmental contexts of chapter 5, supported by the theoretic framework from chapter 3 and by using the pragmatic and phronetic approaches as explained in chapter 4.

Chapter 1 introduced the aims of this research by formulating a problem formulation and accordingly four sub-research questions. The problem formulation is:

*How is national and regional tourism strategy intended to contribute to addressing regional social and economic challenges in the Netherlands and how complementary are these strategies to each other or to strategies of other policy sectors?*

The next sub-chapters are all devoted to the answering of one of the four sub-research questions, formulated in findings. These findings lead to the answering of the problem formulation in chapter 7, the conclusion. The analysis uses the qualitative data collected from participants. Table 1 on page 32 provides a summary of the participants, their job function and governmental level.

### 6.1 Tourism as regional social and economic contributor

This sub-chapter answers the first sub-research question:

*Is tourism considered by governments in general and by national and regional tourism strategies in the Netherlands in specific, as beneficial to addressing regional social and economic challenges and if yes, how?*

The characteristics of the 'regional challenge' and 'regional tourism strategy' from the conceptual framework in figure 2, chapter 3.4 are being explored. Chapter 3.1 discussed that tourism can contribute socially and economically to regional challenges. Tourism has the ability to stimulate and generate economic benefits such as labour, income and attraction of investment (Briassoulis & Van der Straaten, 2000; Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004; Williams, 2009). This can have a positive effect on local facilities such as stores and public transportation, which in turn has a positive effect on the quality of life of citizens (Haxton, 2015; Voogd, 2006). These are interesting opportunities for regions that want to improve their economic and social situation. The creation and implementation of tourism strategies can

contribute to this, but what chapter 3.1 also has shown is that the success of the use of tourism strategies depends on the context, the level of integration with other policy sectors and that it varies in each region (Briassoulis & Van der Straaten, 2000; Haxton, 2015; Roberts & Hall, 2001).

After this answer on how tourism by governments in general is considered to contribute to regional challenges, this sub-chapter continues with discussing how economic and social challenges are addressed by tourism strategies of governments in the Netherlands, starting on national level.

### **6.1.1 Story lines as national distributor of tourism benefits**

On national level is the Holland Branding and Marketing Strategy, or HBMS 2020 of the NTO NBTC Holland Marketing an example of a national tourism strategy. See chapter 5.1 for more background on this. The marketing manager of NBTC (participant 1), explains the objectives of the strategy as:

*"First is to keep the Netherlands liveable. On the one hand the balance discussion in Amsterdam, but on the other hand also liveable so that municipalities facing shrinking of population, can also profit from tourism so certain facilities and services can continue to exist. (...) spreading is also important if we want to be a beloved destination, so that we have a positive image with the international visitor and if you have them all in a bunch at the same place, you get, 'yeah, well, it's so busy there, I don't have a positive experience' and that idea they bring back home. And a third is also good and efficient handling the capacity we have in the Netherlands, the profitability. And therefor is spreading also important, to protect the profitability of the touristic sector" (Participant 1, 2015).*

Participant 1 beliefs that the national tourism strategy of HBMS 2020 contributes to the quality of life of Dutch citizens. Spreading tourism through the country can on the one hand relieve pressure from busy tourism locations located in the core area of the country and on the other hand contribute to the level and supply of facilities within peripheral areas. (S)he supports this in the interview with an example of a regional bus line that can continue to exist due to tourists. In addition, the spreading of tourism is intended to contribute to the profitability of the touristic sector which, as participant 1 understands it, positively affects the quality and supply of tourism products, economic viability and employment within regions. The third objective of HBMS 2020 is to be a beloved destination which can contribute to a positive image of the Netherlands, as participant 1 explained in the above quote. A positive image of

the Netherlands should have a positive effect on destination choice by potential visitors is the idea. In the end of the interview summarizes participant 1: *"Well I think that if we establish a liveable, beloved and profitable Holland as destination, we have covered quite a lot"* (Participant 1, 2015). The Minister of Economic Affairs speaks positively about the strategy and supports it. In fact, in a letter to the House of Representatives the minister writes about the potential to spread tourism so other regions can benefit (more) from tourism as well, and he writes as last sentence in the conclusion: *"That's how we work together towards a (more) profitable, beloved and liveable Netherlands"* (Kamp, 2015, p.5 [translated]). Furthermore, the minister has personally helped NBTC to present the strategy of the story lines to the provinces and to convince them to participate. This resulted in participation of all twelve provinces as discussed in chapter 5.1. So the objectives of the national tourism strategy by NBTC are considered to be potentially important contributors to regional social and economic challenges, by both the Minister of Economic Affairs and the provinces.

The above discussion illustrates how the marketing manager of the NTO formulates the intentions of this national strategy and how it is supported or recognised by the minister and provinces. It does not become clear from the interview if there is actual evidence that supports the expressed statements, or if the intended benefits are based on assumptions or experiences hold by participant 1 or on the general discourse on tourism benefits within the organisation. Here comes the warning from chapter 3.1 to mind, that the effects of tourism on regional development are often overestimated due to general hold and social created assumptions (Fayos-Solà, Alvarez & Cooper, 2014). The interview with participant 1 however does give insight in how tourism is considered to contribute to addressing regional challenges by this particular tourism strategy, which is part of the first sub-research question.

### **6.1.2 Provincial tourism strategies to reinforce the Veluwe as tourism region**

For the analysis of provincial tourism strategy is the province of Gelderland used as case study. The project leader recreation and tourism Veluwe (participant 2) describes his/her task as following:

*"I was hired to get 'Veluwe at one', as we call it. The Veluwe as region, as holiday region, goes a bit downhill. (...) The Veluwe is of course a holiday region for a long time already (...) But.. yeah.. not everywhere is being invested as much as should be done in facilities and accommodations. That is where we go downhill a bit. We formulated as our ambition that the*

*Veluwe should again get to number 'one'. Well not exactly at number one, but at least to indicate 'well guys, come on, we need to get moving into the right direction again'" (Participant 2, 2016).*

From this quote follows that the province formulated a regional challenge that is to re-establish the Veluwe as a strong tourism region. The context on the province of Gelderland showed in chapter 5.2.3 that they face declining visitor numbers. Graph 3 in chapter 5.3.3 shows that the job share of the tourism and recreation sector is about six per cent in the region Veluwe. Participant 5 understands the significance of tourism for the regional economy as: *"Tourism and recreation, that's six per cent of Gelderland's economy, so everything you invest in that brings and money and employment"* (Participant 5, 2016). It can be contested if the return on investment is as this participant tells it, but the quote shows how tourism is being considered to be beneficial to the regional economy.

There are three tourism strategies that are being used to address the regional challenge to get 'Veluwe at 1' according to participant 2. The first is promotion and marketing:

*"I'm currently located at the program economy, we are part of that. We try to improve the world in fact by giving financial stimulus, to invest in something, or not. And because you invest money in something, you are allowed to have a say in the matter. (...) We do that, with promotion and marketing, a specific organisation is established, called VisitVeluwe"* (Participant 2, 2016).

So a Regional Tourism Organisation called VisitVeluwe is responsible for the tourism and marketing and as participant 2 understands it, the province tries to improve the regional situation of the Veluwe by investing in this tourism organisation.

The second strategy is to improve the quality of cycling and walking routes. Participant 2 beliefs that this can contribute to the strengthening of the tourism region Veluwe. Participants 5 and 6, the account managers for routes from the sectors tourism and sports respectively, explained in their interview that this is actually a strategy for entire Gelderland:

*"the primary goal is to get more people to visit Gelderland so more money is being spend"; "So those routes is an instrument to show those beautiful sides of Gelderland. In a beautiful, easy and sportive way. And with that to attract more tourists. We say at the moment 'walking and cycling, we have so much routes of that, that's actually very good developed'. In fact, it can be*

*so much that you don't see the wood for the trees. And that's also why (...) we need to have a bit more control and direction on that"* (Participant 5, 2016).

By improving the quality of the routes for cycling, walking and also for equestrian sports, it is believed by these participants that more tourist can be attracted to visit Gelderland, increasing expenditures.

The third tourism strategy that is used for the regional challenge to get 'Veluwe at 1' is about accommodations:

*"We also have holiday parks, and that causes some trouble. That is where the out datedness exists"; "The consumer says, 'well, we want a bit more comfort and luxury' you know, and well.. like that, everything went a bit downhill. And then you start noticing that holiday parks start being used for entirely different purposes"* (Participant 2, 2016).

In the interview is mentioned that part of those 'different purposes' are the housing of migrant workers, asylum seekers, ex-convicts who do not immediately have a place to stay, molested women who want to hide, criminals and prostitutes. Participant 2 mentions that one of the problems this presents for the region is that *"it also harms a bit the image of the region"*. The tourism strategy to deal with this regional challenge is called 'vital holiday parks' and is a cooperation between the province and municipalities from the region North-Veluwe. The policy officer tourism and recreation at the municipality of Epe (participant 7), one of the participating municipalities, understands the goal of 'vital holiday parks' as following:

*"And vital holiday parks is about.. well, to return to the recreational function of the holiday parks, it's about having and maintaining vital holiday parks"; "there are three tracks within this program. An economic track where, you can almost call it touristic or anyway, and then you have the spatial planning track and a public order and safety track. (...) In practice is the last program mainly preventing and return to the recreational use"* (Participant 7, 2016).

The project leader recreation and tourism Veluwe (participant 2) beliefs that these three tourism strategies for promotion and marketing, walking and cycling routes and accommodation contribute to the regional challenge to get 'Veluwe at 1'.

### 6.1.3 Local significance of tourism for municipality

For the analysis of municipal tourism strategy is the municipality of Epe, located in the province of Gelderland, used as case study. A decline in population in some areas of the municipality and an aging population present local economic and social challenges for Epe according to the regional context from chapter 5.3.1. However, these challenges show no direct cause for tourism policy, at least according to the limited information the interview with participant 7 provides about this subject. The policy officer tourism and recreation at the municipality of Epe (participant 7), tells about the focus of Epe's tourism strategy:

*"It's recognized that Epe's town centre wouldn't have such a complete and diverse supply of shops without tourism during the summer season for example. And the same goes for the smaller hamlets as Vaassen and Emst. (...) That's about quality of life within the centres. In the rural surroundings is the effect less, I suppose there's an effect there as well, but it will be less. (...) we're currently working on an Economic Vision, and within that vision it's said that the share is about six per cent. So quite a substantial economic value. Hence the importance of a good and strong recreational sector"* (Participant 7, 2016).

In fact, graph 3 in chapter 5.3.3 shows that the job share of tourism and recreation is a bit higher, about nine per cent. This quote shows that the focus of Epe is comparable with the provincial and national focus of tourism strategies, that is the focus on the contributory nature of tourism on local economy and liveability. A local challenge that potentially is being addressed by tourism strategy can, according to the interview with participant 7, at least be described as trying to enhance and maintain the economic significance in job share of the tourism sector and the level of facilities for the quality of life within the municipality. About the tourism strategy that is used to address this local challenge, says the tourism policy officer of Epe:

*"And then we have a strategic document called 'Epe naturally different' and within that document is the mission described and that is about.. let me think.. within a natural setting with as target group between medior and senior and a high quality of recreation"* (Participant 7, 2016).

So according to this participant is Epe's tourism strategy focused on a middle to senior aged target group, is nature for Epe an important component for being an attractive destination and should tourism products and accommodations be of high quality.

#### **6.1.4 Finding 1: tourism as jobs and facilities provider**

When looking at the tourism strategies of the three levels of government, tourism is mainly seen by the participants as a maintainer and provider of job and facilities, both contributing to the regional economy and quality of life. Their ideas are in line with what generally are considered to be the main contributory aspects that follow from this research's theoretic framework in chapter 3.1, as discussed at the start of this sub-chapter. It does not become clear from the interviews if the participants have evidence for their statements from for example research or monitoring, or if they base their statements on their own experiences and assumptions or on existing discourses on effects and values within the organisation. Fayos-Solà, Alvarez and Cooper (2014) state that the regional development coming from tourism is often overestimated due to constructed discourses and assumptions from policy makers on the potentials of tourism for regional development. It is therefore recommendable that those who are involved in tourism strategy making are aware of the leading influences of discourses and general beliefs that exist within themselves, their policy sector and organisation. However, the answers of the participants give insight into how tourism is seen as contributory for the economic and social situation in the region by tourism strategy makers on national level, at the province of Gelderland and the municipality of Epe.

### **6.2 Creating complementary strategies between and within governmental levels**

This sub-chapter answers the second sub-research question:

*How do governmental institutions develop and execute complementary strategies and to what extent is this happening between and within governments in the Netherlands?*

This sub-chapter explores the characteristics of the 'socio political institutional sphere' and 'policy dialogue' from the conceptual framework in figure 2.

Policies and strategies are made and implemented by several governments and several policy sectors within governments. Chapter 3.2 discussed that it is therefore wise to have some integration or aligning

going on in order to get complementary strategies and to reach more effective and efficient outcomes (Fayos-Solà, Alvarez & Cooper, 2014; Howlett, 2009). Especially for tourism policy and strategy this is important because of the interrelated nature of the tourism sector with other sectors as chapter 3.1 showed (Briassoulis & Van der Straaten, 2000; Haxton, 2015; Roberts & Hall, 2001). Complementary tourism strategies can be examined by looking at the levels of vertical and horizontal integration, that is between governmental levels and between sectors within a governmental level respectively (Roberts & Hall, 2001; Voogd, 2006). The level of vertical and horizontal integration is influenced by the formal and informal policy space as discussed in chapter 3.2. The formal policy space refers to the organisational structures, for example the way in which departments and sectors are organised and the existence of structural inter-departmental meetings. The informal policy space is about office design and how to overcome possible imaginary boundaries in order to stimulate cooperation between governmental levels and sectors. Stimulation of social interactions can contribute to the breakdown of boundaries and stimulate cooperative relationships and formation of common interests (Tsai, 2002; Tsai & Ghoshal, 1998).

This summary of chapter 3.2 shows how governmental institutions can develop and execute complementary tourism strategies, which answers the first part of the second sub-research question. This sub-chapter first continues with an analysis on vertical integration followed by an analysis on horizontal integration, in order to see to what extent complementary strategies are being made within the context of the case studies of this research, the province of Gelderland and the municipality of Epe.

### **6.2.1 Creating complementary strategies: vertical integration**

The following discussion starts with looking at the nature of vertical integration and how lower levels of government are informed about what happens at higher levels, followed by an example of how regional bonding can stimulate integration.

#### **6.2.1.1 Shifting down responsibilities**

The following quote is an example of a reason for vertical integration from provincial to municipal level. When the interviewer asked why the program coordinator heritage and landscape from the province was reading and thinking along with the creation of Epe's cultural historical policy, the responsible policy officer answered:



*"Because they also have provincial ambitions. In this case very practical, they gave a subsidy for the making of the map, the cultural historical value map. Because there was from the province at a certain point also policy on to increase the awareness on heritage and the history of Gelderland. So they provided stimulation contributions, subsidies for municipalities who were going to do something with that. But then they also want to know what happens"* (Participant 9, 2016).

As participant 9 understands it, the province uses subsidies to municipalities in order to enhance their own policy objectives. When a municipality sees a benefit in this, they can use the subsidy as the above quote shows. Participant 6, account manager routes for Gelderland, beliefs that integration can be necessary in order to reach objectives: *"And we also need the municipalities to eventually reach our objectives. So in that sense you need to cooperate with them"* (Participant 6, 2016). Another example of a reason for vertical integration is when a governmental level shifts responsibility down to a lower level:

*"Well cooperation.. it's more that central government puts things away to lower levels. And in the culture report that I've written, I write about national policy. I used the things that have national attention, that's just logical I think, because to just think of something completely new.. And the central government puts away some things into a financial line towards the provinces, and the province has a program on culture and heritage and that's for me very interesting because you can get co-financing (...) so you can do things"* (Participant 8, 2016).

This quote tells how the policy officer art and culture at Epe (participant 8) perceives that governmental tasks are shifted down to lower levels. (S)he calls it logical to proceed on national policy. This is an opinion which is possibly not shared by all policy officers, or what all policy officers act on in practice. That is unless it is (legally) necessary to proceed on policy of higher governmental levels as participant 9 points out: *"And you're also of course partly obliged to follow it. You can't make policy that opposes it, then it goes wrong at a certain moment"* (Participant 9, 2016).

The above quote of participant 8 also shows again how the execution of policies are shifted to a lower level by providing financing. Participant 8 saw in this case a reason to participate in a provincial program so (s)he could execute own strategies or plans. These examples show that such cooperation based on

financing, can be beneficial in its own way for each level of government. For higher levels of government so they can delegate the responsibilities to a more appropriate level, while still able to pursue their agenda by offering financing, and for lower levels so they have money to execute their plans which is from political stance attractive because it can enhance their image of being active and progressive. When responsibilities are delegated to lower governmental levels, this can have a link with financial support but also by knowledge support:

*"Personally I have contact with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, because they're responsible for the monuments and that connection I work on. With them I have some kind of exchange relationship, what are they doing, what are we doing, and sometimes I ask them, because they have experts, 'help us with a specific question', and this works quite good"* (Participant 3, 2016).

The program coordinator heritage and landscape at Gelderland (participant 3) can in this example even be some kind of middleman between municipalities that cooperate with the province and face a specific question and central government which facilitates expert knowledge.

#### **6.2.1.2 Following upper levels of government**

After answering why vertical integration happens, the discussion continues with how it happens. An example on what vertical integration can look like in practice is:

*"Well, you also see it happening with cultural historical policy. Central government once formulated to have more attention for heritage, the province embraced that with some policy reports. There you saw that culture had to be embedded more in the whole line, in spatial policy and then you see that that comes back in our policies as well, that we give the twist that we focus even a bit more on that visibility and experienceability, Epe's twist"* (Participant 9, 2016).

The above quote is according to participant 9 an example of how national policy moves down through provincial to municipal policy, each level giving its own 'twist' or interpretation of how it should be implemented. The question is though how Gelderland and Epe knew about the policies of the upper levels of government. Participant 8 from the municipality of Epe gives examples on this:

*"We get weekly informed by the VNG [Association Dutch Municipalities, researcher note], with a newsletter you are informed per policy sector what's up in central government. So you are informed, but it's not really cooperation. What you do have with the province is that they facilitate for example seminars and we also have a contact person with the province. (...) Regularly you get invited to participate in a brainstorm session, or for a presentation or something. It's not cooperating but it is the flow of information you get. And you have to follow that" (Participant 8, 2016).*

(S)he states that it is necessary to follow the stream of information from upper governmental levels. However, even though (s)he is apparently reading the newsletter of the Association for Dutch Municipalities, this does not mean that every policy officer is dedicated or interested in doing the same, due to for example feeling in control about one's knowledge or time constraints. The province organises things like seminars and invites municipalities and other actors to give input on strategies or to inform them about it.

Participant 8 points out that the whole track from upper to lower governmental levels, is not always working synchronous:

*"Sometimes I think.. a whole ministry is working on it and well.. they probably do a lot [laughter]. But they are also making policy and are putting that away to lower levels. They are probably working already on new programs and by the time it gets to us, then they are already working on a next program" (Participant 8, 2016).*

So even if policy officers are well informed and actively following what happens at upper governmental levels, there is the chance according to participant 8, that what currently happens at municipal level is behind on what central government intends to achieve on national level.

### **6.2.1.3 Regional bonding to enhance knowledge sharing**

The case studies of this research show that vertical integration can also happen within a specific region:

*"Well, for the regional task Veluwe is now being asked at the region, 'okay, please define what is in your eyes that regional task Veluwe. What's going on, what do we need to do'. So that's how we try together with municipalities but also with entrepreneurs, parties within the region,*

*we try to formulate that. And by that to also make an agenda and linked to that a program”*  
(Participant 2, 2016).

The regional task Veluwe is an example of how province and municipalities work together towards formulation of agendas, objectives and strategies. Such formulation of shared objectives is important in creating mutual engagement and thus reaching vertical integration (Blackwell et al., 2009). The process manager of the regional task Veluwe (participant 4) tells about how knowledge is being shared among municipalities within the region:

*“And we have some very successful sub-processes where municipalities are being asked ‘what can you, with your own authenticity, contribute to the entire Veluwe? (...) Can you use your strength to help your neighbour and so be stronger than you would be individually?’ (...) And that seems to work, that municipalities more and more realise that it works. And what I like is that when I talk with people that they say ‘the Veluwe is what binds us, I’m also part of the Veluwe, and they actually have to deal with the same search as me, so how can we help each other’. So the Veluwe is what people binds, but ‘I want to work in my own way’, and that’s okay ‘it only would be such a shame if you miss out on the knowledge someone else already gained for your problem”* (Participant 4, 2016).

This participant believes that the regional bond between municipalities can contribute to thinking and sharing knowledge beyond the municipal boundaries, stimulated by a regional process coordinated by the province.

## **6.2.2 Creating complementary strategies: horizontal integration on provincial level**

The horizontal integration is first discussed by analysing the integrated approach pursued by the province of Gelderland, followed by the influence of office design on integration.

### **6.2.2.1 Towards an integrated approach**

Chapter 5.2.3 discussed that the province of Gelderland tries to have an integrated approach so additional opportunities can be created. Participant 6 believes that the integrated approach is *“at the base of our organisation”* and participant 5 understands it as:

*"when you're together in a rowing boat, with six, eight people, and then does that one does something, and then that one, and then that one, that doesn't work. If you want a top performance, you have to synchronise. That's the idea, that you stimulate each other's strengths and then you're able to achieve more"* (Participant 5, 2016).

How the integrated approach works in practice is discussed in the interviews. Participants 5 and 6 explain that the strategy on the quality improvement of routes is mainly a cooperation between the sectors tourism and recreation and sports. When the interviewer asked how they came to cooperate, they agreed that this was in the context of the economy program of which both sectors are part. Participant 5 understands this integration as:

*"Employment and.. well that's of course the main aspect of our economy program. And from there you are going to look at which aspects play a role in being able to stimulate employment in Gelderland. Every discipline has a share in that. (...) And from that level you peel layer for layer, what do you do for it, which factors do you want to stimulate. (...) Those are important aspects in order to reach your objective. Well, and that is of course in line with some other points, with other disciplines, what resulted in the cooperation, mainly with sports"* (Participant 5, 2016).

Participant 5 believes that this cooperation within the economy program comes from looking at other sectors' objectives and tools and see where they are in line with each other. (S)he adds to this: *"and you try from different objectives, you try to use those routes.. it's an instrument in order to reach your objectives"* (Participant 5, 2016). In chapter 6.1.2 was mentioned that for tourism and recreation the primary objective of this strategy was to attract more visitors and receive more visitors' expenditures. Participant 6 from sports, adds to this: *"we add to this exercise, the health perspective"* (Participant 6, 2016). The idea of participant 6 is that:

*"if those routes are well organised, then people will use them more after a while, they are sooner going to exercise. So in that sense it fits very well in our program. That's the societal side of it, it's of course about health. And the economic side is that people are going to use it more and thus also are going to spend more. That's also an important part of it. So it just fits very well within our objectives"* (Participant 6, 2016).

Participant 5 and 6 understand this strategy on routes as being an integrated strategy, combining the objectives of their own sectors into one strategy which considers and reinforces these objectives through using routes as an instrument. This example is only about integration within a program, integration between programs is also necessary for a truly integrated approach. Participant 2 tells about this with regard to the formulated regional tasks:

*"Well, especially with that regional task we try to break with own agendas. We had in 2014 or 2013, well a couple of years ago, we formulated an environment vision. We used to have an environmental plan, a region plan, a water plan, a mobility plan.. well, we integrated those plans and now we have one environment vision containing policy. It was discussed if we also needed to make an environment agenda in addition. Then our program managers over here said 'why, an environment agenda? We have our programs right? We carry those out. That is good enough right?'. Okay. But well, 'there are a couple of issues that are so integral, that doesn't end well if you all just keep working in programs'. For that reason are six regional tasks formulated"* (Participant 2, 2016).

Chapter 3.2 discusses that even though horizontal integration may be pursued, conflicting interests or competition between sectors, mainly financial competition, can cause inefficiency (Haxton, 2015). The participants did not mention conflicting interests as an obstacle to horizontal integration but more the lack of mutual understanding and shared values, resulting in the existence of 'own agendas' and 'silo thinking', for example:

*"So the siloing we have within the province, we try to break through that. There are two sides to this, because I see for example sometimes that some programs are very successful because they protect themselves from the wild inside world at the province, and with that they do very well with their own financing, rules and stuff. So that is a big advantage. But I'm, and that's also because I'm with heritage, but we need the connections with other things"* (Participant 3, 2016).

Participant 3 believes that some departments can be successful in achieving their goals because of an internal approach. If this is indeed happening then that could be an obstacle to inter-sectoral cooperation. According to the theory in chapter 3.2.1 can each sector have its own organisational structure, history, budget, office space, language, values and culture which can hinder inter-sector

cooperation, and especially differences in existing objectives and core values make cooperation challenging (Blackwell et al., 2009; Dawes, Cresswell & Pardo, 2009; Wenger, 2000). Participant 2 tells that (s)he experiences a change towards that sectors try more to integrate with other sectors by inviting them to think along:

*"Every program has of course its own agenda. But it is a fact that, and you see that more and more often, when a program says 'okay we are going to formulate or program plan' that they often, prior to the formulation, organise some kind of meeting where they ask of other partners, you invite them, we also did that with recreation and tourism. You invite them, 'come think along with us about this or that'" (Participant 2, 2016).*

However, even though all participants from the provincial level mention in their interviews that there is more focus on trying to work integrated, they vary in opinion to what extent this actually happens. When dealing with seemingly daily tasks for example, an integrated approach is not something that always happens automatically according to participant 4:

*"But what I also see is that a lot of colleagues are working within their policy sector for years and years and not naturally think 'if I'm dealing with a cycle path and that goes through this nature area and there is a little castle over there, maybe I can combine some things so we can gain more by cooperating'. That obviously and naturally thinking of looking beyond your policy sector is not present, or not strongly present" (Participant 4, 2016).*

This is an example of how those additional opportunities the province tries to achieve by an integrated approach, may not be reached because not everybody thinks always automatically beyond their policy sector. Participant 3 thinks that such an attitude can also be a strategic choice in some cases:

*"Look, it's often that the program manager at the top of such a program and objectives tree, they are being assessed in their own performance. That applies of course to everybody, but the accomplishment of achievement between programs so to say, that's what I think, (...) that is being less appreciated in my opinion, than achievements within programs" (Participant 3, 2016).*

Generally speaking, people are being assessed on the work they deliver and the goals they reach within their jobs. What participant 3 beliefs however is that in that assessment, one can get more credits for

achieving things within the own sector than for what is being achieved between sectors. If this is indeed the case then that would mean that even though the province pursues an integrated approach, not all organisational processes are approached and designed as such, which hinders actual integration.

As mentioned above can financial competition also cause inefficient outcomes. When asked if there exists financial competition, participant 2 answers:

*"Yeah.. you always have that of course. But that is often a political competition. Which Executive hands out the money. That is a bit politics. I think that it's less sharp than it used to be. It used to be much more sectorial. But there is more realization that it is needed to work together, to make integral policy. Sometimes of course is blood thicker than water, but it is much better than it used to be"* (Participant 2, 2016).

Participant 9, a policy officer at the municipality of Epe, also believes that the financial competition at the province is mainly something political between Executives. When the interviewer asked if that affects the integrated approach, the answer was: *"It doesn't go that far. Or at least, I don't see that happening in practice. It could happen, but.."* (Participant 9, 2016). Participants 2 and 8 believe that the financial competition that exist within the province is mainly politically and does not affect so much the creation of policies. Participant 6 tells about finances and integration: *"But for resources, that's more of a search, how to get those together.. you can strengthen objectives coming from different programs.. that's a bit more complicated"* (Participant 6, 2016). In his/her experience can bringing financial resources from different programs together when opportunities for integration are recognised, be complicated.

#### **6.2.2.2 Flexible working space versus people's mentality**

The division of the provincial organisation into programs with each having certain responsibilities, is within the institutional sphere the formal policy space. The informal policy space is for example about social interactions or sectors having their own culture and values. Chapter 3.2.1 shows that social interactions can break down imaginary boundaries and stimulate inter-sectoral cooperation (Tsai, 2002; Tsai & Ghoshal, 1998). This focus on cooperation caused that many organisations consider how workspace can contribute to being an appropriate environment for enabling cooperation (Gibson, 2003; Myerson, Bichard & Erlich, 2010). The office space at the House of the Province of Gelderland is designed as a flexible working space as participant 2 explains:



*"It used to be just a hallway with on the left and right sights small rooms (...) Well those days are over. We all have flexible work places, we also all have laptops. So when you enter in the morning, than you're looking for a free spot. And if you have a meeting, than you can use a kind of living room basically, like this. But we also have meeting rooms. It is.. they say that you need to find a place that fits with the kind of work you have to do at that moment. So in that sense is everything flexible. But it's a fact that most programs (...) are seated in a particular corner"* (Participant 2, 2016).

Flexible working spaces as opposed to traditional designed offices, are meant to increase the mobility of workers by providing multiple work areas, increase the number of shared common areas and the mixing of neighbourhoods so workers from different disciplines share an area (Gibson, 2003). According to the above quote of participant 2 however, clustering of policy sectors is still happening. Participant 3 tells about how (s)he perceives the flexible working space:

*"We also have flexible working spaces. I work for forty per cent of the time for another program and then it helps to understand other programs, but it doesn't make it per se easier. (...) My opinion is that when you have a good and clear home base, that that helps as well"* (Participant 3, 2016).

A flexible working space can contribute to some extent in the view of participant 3, but is not necessarily creating a perfect situation. Participant 2 is also sceptical about the influence of office space:

*"I think that the space is not all decisive. They often use that as argument, also to get more cooperation, but that actually has more to do with mentality and if we actually need each other. Look, if you work together on a project, you get to know each other and then the next time, you can find each other a bit more easy because you have cooperated within that project once. I think that is more of a condition than how the space is set up"* (Participant 2, 2016).

In fact, all participants from the provincial and municipal levels have said that cooperation among colleagues is dependent on people. For example: *"We used to have more fixed structures, but those are let go off. And with that it depends, according to me, more on people"* (Participant 3, 2016). The fixed structures this participant talks about is a weekly meeting, a moment for synchronisation, of all policy

sectors that were involved in a specific topic. This structural meeting does not exist anymore. Based on the perceptions of the participants, office space is not alone a deterrent for horizontal integration but rather people's mentality and if you know colleagues through previous collaboration or structured inter-sectoral meetings. This perception is in line with the discussed theory in chapter 3.2.1 that in practice the design of office space, physical proximity and organisational structuring can contribute, but are not all decisive. It is rather that relational ties determine the degree and quality of cooperation and knowledge sharing (Amin & Roberts, 2008), such as previous cooperation that can strengthen a relationship and can be beneficial for future cooperation (Dawes, Cresswell & Pardo, 2009).

### **6.2.3 Creating complementary strategies: horizontal integration on municipal level**

The horizontal integration is first discussed by analysing the role of people's mentality on integration at the municipality of Epe, followed by to what extent social interactions can help to overcome sectoral or departmental boundaries.

#### **6.2.3.1 People's mentality determining integration**

Epe tries to have an integrated approach on policy according to participant 9: *"As much as possible integrated yes. Because then you get the best plans and the best policy, when you have an integral approach"* (Participant 9, 2016). About the quality of the integrated approach at Epe (s)he says:

*"Here also, you notice sometimes the little islands. It's difficult to leave your island and to go to others and to involve others, but it happens more and more. And you see indeed an improvement of the quality of the plans to my idea"* (Participant 9, 2016).

This participant believes that by using an integrated approach, policies and strategies can become of a higher quality. Participant 9 also mentions that it is not always easy for policy officers to leave 'the island' of their own policy sector and to integrate with other sectors. When the interviewer asked participant 8 how (s)he values inter-sectoral cooperation, the answer was:

*"I think that's very important. But also difficult. For example here at city hall, you see that a lot of people are just dealing with the present moment, to get everything all done within their own sector. But if you want to achieve something which involves all policy sectors, that's very difficult";*

*"And that very much depends on.. that's just the way it is, at any level, it depends very often on the person. How do you say it.. some people work very introvert on an action list and do that perfectly, but you have to work broader than that as policy advisor, you have to go to people from other policy sectors. And I notice that that's very difficult, I notice that there aren't a lot of people who do that very actively. It's more by coincidence that it happens"* (Participant 8, 2016).

These quotes show that participant 8 perceives as well the existence of an inward focus of policy sectors and tells that his/her experience is that it is difficult to go beyond sectoral boundaries and that the extent in which that happens depends on people. So according to the perceptions of participants 7 and 8, is that what hinders horizontal integration at the municipality of Epe similar to what hinders integration at the province of Gelderland: it seems that horizontal integration can be hindered by not looking and thinking beyond sectoral boundaries and that this is to a certain extent dependent on people's mentality. The participants did not mention to have difficulties with conflicting interests and financial competition, two causes of inefficient integration (Haxton, 2015). According to participant 9 is this because of the size of the municipality: *"Within Epe I don't really see competition between the sectors.. no.. I think that we're too small for that"* (Participant 9, 2016).

#### **6.2.3.2 Social interaction to overcome boundaries**

Epe's city hall is not designed as a flexible working space. The municipality is organisationally divided into different departments. Participant 9 tells about these different departments and their cooperation:

*"There is cooperation on policy. You actually have two fields, you have the physical policies and the more social policies. And between those exists sometimes a gap I notice. Sometimes it works better than other times, but there just is a difference between the two. In people who work there, in ways of thinking. But then within that physical track, the policy sectors cooperate well. And within the social domain everything works well as well"* (Participant 9, 2016).

Participant 9 beliefs that the departments have their own internal culture and values. It is possible that this contributes to the existence of imaginary boundaries between the departments, hindering horizontal integration (Wenger, 2000). The following quote tells about structural departmental meetings and other interactions:

*"With the entire department we have a meeting every two or three months. And further, the synchronization takes place on project level or ad hoc. In practice, the team development is located within one wing of the building. And those little rooms, yeah you can easily walk in. The city hall is not such a big building, so you can walk through the building within no time. My culture colleague is here above us but even her I meet regularly"* (Participant 7, 2016).

So within the department is a structural moment to exchange knowledge, but inter-departmental interactions need to happen on people's initiative. It is considered to be easy to walk in to the rooms of colleagues to discuss something according to participant 7 and also 8:

*"It's a lot of informal contact around here. This organisation is very accessible, you easily walk into the rooms of people and thus you see that a lot of ad hoc talks are happening. If you need something, you just walk in and you discuss it quickly"* (Participant 9, 2016).

However, these are just two policy officers speaking. The actual level of social interaction at Epe can be different from their descriptions because not all people feel the same easiness to walk in, know or think about the person or room where to go to, or say that they feel comfortable to interact with colleagues while they do not really feel like this towards all colleagues. The role of social interaction on integration is with that again dependent on people's mentality, but also on people's personal relationships with and preferences towards colleagues.

#### **6.2.4 Finding 2: practical considerations and people's mentality as main factors for integration**

By optimizing the formal and informal policy space can cooperation, exchange of knowledge and creation of mutual objectives be stimulated, which eventually can result in integration and complementary strategies. Vertical integration can happen when governmental tasks are delegated to lower levels of government, through financial or knowledge support, of which both providing and receiving government can benefit. According to some participants it is logical or even a legal necessity to follow policies of upper levels of government. It seems that vertical integration has a degree of offering practical opportunities or necessities. It seems that the integration in the case of the regional task Veluwe goes beyond such practical considerations. At this regional development of the Veluwe work province and

municipalities together towards the formulation of mutual recognised and supported objectives and strategies and the sharing of knowledge and experiences. Such a process is in literature recognised as a process of creating mutual engagement which contributes to integration.

The analysis based on the beliefs of the participants shows that the degree of horizontal integration at both provincial and municipal level in Gelderland and Epe is dependent on people. People's attitude towards cooperation and thinking beyond sectoral boundaries can differ because of for example personality, personal relationships and preferences, the way in which achievements are assessed or the internal focus, culture and objectives of a sector in which a person works. This can make horizontal integration less efficient and governments can try to positively influence this through the formal and informal policy spaces. However, according to the participants is office design and organisational structuring only to a certain extent influencing cooperation and interaction between people. It is rather, again, people's mentality and also if you know colleagues through previous collaboration or what is being shared at structural inter-sectoral meetings, that can create the chance to reach those desired additional opportunities of integration. The participants perceive that even though cooperation and integration does not always come naturally and can be difficult, it is being done and used more and more, especially when people start to see the benefits of it or feel a mutual bond as for example happens with the regional task Veluwe.

### **6.3 Tourism strategy making approached as a social complex system**

In order to gain understanding of the strategy making process, this research uses a social complex systems approach as explained in chapter 3.3.5. The focus of this sub-chapter is therefore answering the third sub-research question:

*Can tourism strategy making be approached as social complex system and if yes, how can this approach contribute to creating complementary tourism strategies?*

This sub-chapter explores the aspect 'network' from the conceptual framework in figure 2, chapter 3.4. A social complex systems approach focusses on relationships, this focus is called network thinking (Mitchell, 2009), in fact a social complex system is a large network (University of Groningen, 2014). So within the case study of this research are the central government, to province of Gelderland and municipality of Epe together forming a large network in which tourism strategy making takes place,

which is being analysed by using a social complex systems approach. This large network in which tourism strategy making takes place, is from this point on simply called 'strategy making system' in order to avoid overly long sentences. The analysis starts with discussing if the 'strategy making system' can indeed be characterised as a complex system according to the determined characteristics in chapter 3.3.2. and continues with how this approach can contribute to the creation of complementary strategies.

### **6.3.1 Characteristics of a social complex system**

The social complex systems approach acknowledges that that what happens is apparently more than just the workings of individual elements and therefore seems to be better able to give insight in the tourism strategy making process than for example approaches that use linear models (Baggio, 2008; Farsari, Butler & Szivas, 2011; Fayos-Solà, Alvarez & Cooper, 2014). Chapter 3.3.2 discussed the six characteristics that complex systems have in common: a large number of relationships, internal structure, interaction with the environment and the capacities of learning, change and emergence (Farsari, Butler & Szivas, 2011; Manson, 2001). The following analysis discusses each of these characteristics under separate headings in order to see to what extent they are applicable to the 'strategy making system'. Each characteristic is shortly summarized in the discussion, see for a full explanation of each characteristic chapter 3.3.2.

#### **a.) Relationships:**

A complex system contains a large number of entities and there is a large number of non-linear relationships between those entities, exchanging and redistributing information (Baggio, 2008; Farsari, Butler & Szivas, 2011; Mitchell, 2009). An entity can be all sort of actors such as policy officers, policy sectors or governmental levels. A quick look at the conceptual maps in appendixes 11 to 16 shows that the personal networks have a large number of entities involved. The relationships between these entities seem to be linear at first sight due to the linear drawn arrows. However, the conceptual maps mainly show policy sectors or organisations as an entity, while in a complex system each actor within a sector or organisation is also considered an entity. That means that even though a participant may seemingly have a linear relationship with a sector, it could be that a request or question enters a sector via one person and returns through another person. This is for example experienced by participant 9:

*"But I also did a project with a new estate with new nature and the province is also responsible for the Ecological Head Structures [EHS, nature protection law, researcher note]. So they had to look into the types of natures and if it connects. Those people were harder to reach, I didn't have a direct contact person, it went through the department and then it goes into the merry-go-round and then it takes longer"* (Participant 9, 2016).

Because of the large number of involved entities, it is impossible that everybody knows from each other what they do (Baggio, 2008; Manson, 2001). Participant 6 experiences this as:

*"it's not always as easy, because you don't always know exactly.. yeah then you have to be very well informed on all programs and what all those sections are dealing with.. And that's complicated because it's so much"* (Participant 6, 2016).

Finding 2 discussed that it is easier to have relationships with people close by, in one's own policy sector or in one's own department. Relationships exist mostly between entities that are close to each other and such local interactions cause a lack of overarching control and common purpose (Davis & Sumara, 2006; Farsari, Butler & Szivas, 2011). Participant 4 understands this feeling of lack of control and common purpose as:

*"What we often hear is that there is too little overview on what actually happens at the Veluwe, not only at the province but at all parties, sometimes by being in the way of each other, or missing out on opportunities or not learning from each other"* (Participant 4, 2016).

The above discussion shows that the 'strategy making system' seems to fulfil this first characteristic of being a complex system.

b.) Internal structure:

Relationships between entities can differ in strength, for example depending on the closeness of entities in space or familiarity (Farsari, Butler & Szivas, 2011; Manson, 2001). Internal structure refers to when entities form sub-systems, which happens especially when relationships are tight. As the previous sub-chapter has shown are policy sectors not only an organisational structure, they have a own culture, agenda, own understandings, knowledge and objectives. Policy sectors are there for an example of sub-

systems, formed by close, strong relationships between entities or relationships that seem to be loose but are resilient over time.

c.) Open system:

In a complex system are the interactions not only happening internally but also externally with the environment, this makes it an open system (Baggio, 2008; Farsari, Butler & Szivas, 2011). The environment can deliver information to entities within the system and the system can create output for the environment (Manson, 2001). That this happens at the 'strategy making system' is for example illustrated by the interview and the conceptual map of participant 4 in appendix 13. The regional development of the Veluwe involves besides internal interactions within the province and municipalities, also external relationships and interactions with entrepreneurs, area management, private owners of estates, cable installers, educational institutions, interests groups, cultural institutions, volunteer organisations and a marketing organisation.

d.) Learning and memory:

Information and experiences can take the form of relationships (Farsari, Butler & Szivas, 2011). Those entities and sub-systems that are capable of handling the information from the environment, will grow (Manson, 2001). Furthermore, the more diverse a system is, the better it will be able to react to changes in the environment (Farsari, Butler & Szivas, 2011). These internal processes make that the system is able to react and anticipate to the environment (Farsari, Butler & Szivas, 2011; Mitchell, 2009). For the 'strategy making system' lies such diversity for example in all those individuals (entities) and sectors (sub-systems) with their own knowledge, experiences and own understandings of what should be achieved, in what way and with what kind of entities. All these personal conceptions combined can contribute to the creation of policies and strategies that include as much as possible that what is needed to address challenges. Chapter 6.2 showed that it occurs within the province of Gelderland that people of other policy sectors, governmental levels but also external parties as entrepreneurs, are invited when policy is being made. All these involved entities can contribute to a more integrated and a more diverse policy result.

e.) Change and evolution:



Dynamic and constant change are characteristic for complex systems. The system can adjust its internal structure through self-organisation so it is better able to respond and interact to challenges and the environment (Davis & Sumara, 2006; Farsari, Butler & Szivas, 2011). This self-organisation depends on the abilities for learning and memory. It is difficult to analyse this evolution characteristic because of the used research setup. Data was collected at only one point in time due to the limited time period of this research. It is therefore unfortunately not possible to analyse this characteristic justly.

f.) Emergence:

A complex system can do more than what its components are capable of: the sum is greater than its parts (Davis & Sumara, 2006; Farsari, Butler & Szivas, 2011). This synergism enables emergence which derives from all the interactions and relationships within the system (Manson, 2001). It is difficult to control or predict the precise outcome of complex systems because of this emergence and interventions can have far-reaching effects due to not understanding this phenomenon (Lansing and Kremer, 1993 in Manson, 2001). Because emergence is also a process over time, it is again difficult to fully analyse this characteristic, because the collected data only present some kind of 'snap shot' of the network as at that moment perceived by the participants. However, synergism seems to exist in the 'strategy making system'. Participant 3 for example tells about why (s)he tries to make a connection with the process manager of the regional task Veluwe:

*"There I cooperate with our process manager in order to.. I show 'look, we have important collections, heritage, we can mean something for the main objectives of the regional task Veluwe'. And then we don't only have overlapping objectives, I also have maintenance and a little network, a coalition which is active within this and which is interesting for the regional task. So it try to build a bridge, because the result of that coalition is eventually programs and practical projects" (Participant 3, 2016).*

According to this participant can the relationship between him/her and the process manager of the regional task Veluwe, mean something for both their objectives but can also mean something extra for the objectives of the regional task because of the network (s)he has. This network is then brought into the relationship and because of this it is possible that something may be achieved that otherwise would not have been possible. Participant 9 gives another example:

*"It's not just.. 'you have a large factory complex and there has to come a new factory hall besides it', but then we look immediately at how we going to do that traffic engineering wise, how are we going to integrate green, how are we also going to set up a walking path so factory workers can walk a bit. People from nature are involved to see how we can do the nature compensation so it also contributes to the recovery works on the creeks there (...) And from the initial plan, 'there has to be added a factory hall over there', you get an integral plan that offers more quality" (Participant 9, 2016).*

This participant beliefs that more can be achieved, more quality, more objectives from several policy sectors, by the interactions and relationships between people that were brought together on this project. These two examples provide an insight in how synergism can exist in the 'strategy making system' and how this emerges from interactions and relationships.

These are the six characteristics of a complex system. A social complex system is a complex system that consists of people, organisations or institutions (University of Groningen, 2014) such as the 'strategy making system'. Social complex systems have two specific characteristics, they are open-ended and the role of science (University of Groningen, 2014). It is not possible to predict the future, but that what happens will lead to change and adaption. This makes the system open-ended, because no end point or stage of equilibrium will be reached. The second characteristic, the role of science, is that new patterns emerge because people use the finding brought by science. This also means that by studying a social complex system, you change a social complex system.

### **6.3.2 Finding 3: reaching desired outcomes in terms of policy and integration by understanding the dynamics from complexity**

The above analysis shows that the 'strategy making system' does show characteristics of being a complex system. The characteristics of change and evolution and also partly emergence, cannot be discussed fully because the collected data does not provide insight into the changes and dynamics over time. This researcher argues however that the overall presence of the six characteristics is strong enough to continue the discussion with how a social complex systems approach can contribute to the creation of complementary strategies.

Chapter 3.3.5 discussed why a social complex systems approach is relevant in the studying of strategy making processes. The future cannot be predicted and the same goes for the outcomes of policies and strategies. A lot of factors can be taken into account, possible scenarios can be written, strategies can be readjusted during the implementation, but nothing is certain. Interventions can have negative and far-reaching effects due to not understanding the emergence and adaptations coming from complexity (Lansing and Kremer, 1993 in Manson, 2001). When the dynamics of the system are understood, this can contribute to the reaching of desired outcomes. Such desired outcomes can be about outcomes of policy as discussed in chapter 3, but the researcher argues that desired outcomes can also be about governmental integration and complementary strategies.

Because the outcomes of policies and strategies are complex and unpredictable, this cannot be the basis for the making of and deciding upon strategy (Baggio, 2008; Fayos-Solà, Alvarez & Cooper, 2014). A more pragmatic approach can create more realistic strategies. Experimentation, knowledge management and good vision instead of pretending to have control over the outcomes are examples of such a pragmatic approach (Fayos-Solà, Alvarez & Cooper, 2014).

Furthermore, when the dynamics of the strategy making system are understood, better interventions in the formal and informal policy space can be planned to improve social interactions, knowledge sharing and creation of shared values and objectives, or in other words integration which can lead to complementary strategies.

## **6.4 Complementary tourism strategies between and within governments**

This sub-chapter answers the fourth and last sub-research question:

*To what extent are the national and regional tourism strategies in the Netherlands complementary to each other or to other policy sectors?*

This sub-chapter explores the aspects 'policy dialogue' and 'regional tourism strategy' from the conceptual framework in figure 2. First is vertical complementarity discussed, followed by horizontal complementarity on provincial and municipal levels. Complementarity, as explained in chapter 2.2, occurs when strategies are in line with each other, meaning that there are no conflicting goals or

ways/instruments to reach these goals. That means that “there is a genuine sharing of knowledge, objectives and priorities across policy areas” (Haxton, 2015, p.9).

#### **6.4.1 Vertical: complementarity of three national tourism strategies**

Chapter 5.1 discussed three national tourism strategies, simplifying or eliminating unnecessary regulations to stimulate entrepreneurship, sustainability through investing in nature by the tourism industry and to attract more tourists from abroad.

The first national tourism strategy, simplifying or eliminating unnecessary regulations to stimulate entrepreneurship was shortly addressed at some interviews. Participant 4, process manager regional task Veluwe at Gelderland, gives an example of complicated regulation:

*“At the Veluwe is the regulation very complicated. Well juridical its complicated, but it’s also complicated for entrepreneurs. As entrepreneur you always need a permit for this or for that. That goes for heritage, it’s Natura 2000, nature protection law, you need permits. That doesn’t make it easy. But as a government you can have a facilitating role in this”* (Participant 4, 2016).

Natura 2000 is a national nature protection law. The following quote of participant 7 illustrates the practical meaning of the complicatedness of getting permits for an entrepreneur:

*“We now have a concrete example of an entrepreneur located within the EHS and I think also partly in the Natura 2000, and he wants to expand. (...) He has to compensate for his expansion and that means that you have to make trade-offs, the land you remove from the EHS has to be returned somewhere else. And well, if you see how much hustle and bustle that gives, to find compensation ground and now, I coincidentally talked with him yesterday, now they want, now there is a lot of discussion on what kind of nature there has to be created”* (Participant 7, 2016).

Simplifying national regulations to simulate entrepreneurship is considered to be relevant as well by these participants of other governmental levels. About the execution of this national strategy says participant 7: *“I don’t have a clear image of how the national government is actually simplifying regulation. It’s just very complex in practice. That’s the only thing I can say about it”* (Participant 7, 2016).

The above quote of participant 4 mentions in the last sentence the facilitating role the provincial government can have. The province of Gelderland tries to be facilitating by making it possible for entrepreneurs that they only have to go to one place at the province for all their permits and then the province deals with it, instead of that they have to go to different departments for all the needed permits as participant 3 explains in his/her interview. This is a provincial answer to what participant 4 describes as: *"entrepreneurs say, 'well just give us the space, make sure you can keep up with us on product development with your permit processes and then we're happy'"* (Participant 4, 2016).

That the central government intends to simplify regulations and that the province of Gelderland intends to simplify regulations by facilitating a more accessible permit handling can be considered as strategies that are in line with each other. However, the provincial strategy is in practice more an answer to what regional entrepreneurs struggle with and demand because regulation is (still) complicated.

The second national tourism strategy, sustainability through investing in nature by the tourism industry, involves cooperation within the region and is therefore delegated to the provinces who deal with regional topics. Participant 5 understands this as: *"The assignment from central government is 'province go and coordinate' but initiatives need to come from the outside, they need to be active and then we can facilitate that"* (Participant 5, 2016). This strategy is not really a case of possible complementarity between strategies since the province is mainly implementer. The way in which the province deals with this within regions is based on co-creation and cooperation between public and private sectors. Although these are very interesting topics, they are not part of this research's topics.

The third national tourism strategy, attracting more international tourists, is one of the responsibilities of the NTO NBTC Holland Marketing. NBTC has formulated a strategy in order to reach this goal. Part of this strategy are the story lines, see for a full description of this strategy chapter 5.1. The province of Gelderland is working on their interpretation of this strategy. Chapter 6.4.2 discusses this in more detail.

#### **6.4.2 Horizontal: complementarity through integration at provincial government**

The complementarity between tourism strategies and strategies of other policy sectors can only be analysed to a limited extent since only a limited number of policy sectors are represented by the participants.

The conceptual map of participant 2 in appendix 11 shows tourism strategies of the province of Gelderland: 'Veluwe to 1', commemoration tourism ('herdenkingstoerisme') and promotion and marketing. The interviews with the other participants discussed 'Veluwe to 1' and the story lines of NBTC ('metrolijnen'). The conceptual map of participant 2 shows a strong link between the tourism strategy 'Veluwe to 1' and the regional task Veluwe ('gebiedsopgave'), illustrated by a thick bidirectional arrow. (S)he says about this relationship: "*We formulated as our ambition that the Veluwe should again get to 'one' (...) I'm not alone at this task. We also have a regional task Veluwe. That's very closely connected to that in fact*" (Participant 2, 2016). Participant 4 is the process manager of the regional development of the Veluwe, called regional task within the provincial organisation. The first of the five strategies to get 'Veluwe to 1' (s)he mentions, is the role of nature, heritage and landscape within the tourism sector:

*"The most important realization and therefor number one is, of the elements of the regional development, is the protecting and strengthening of the vulnerable qualities of nature, heritage and landscape. In the knowing that that has intrinsic value for society but also that that's the base for recreational and touristic development of the Veluwe. Without nature, landscape and heritage, or if it's in bad condition, is nobody visiting. But if it's in a good shape, if you can enjoy it, if it's well accessible, that's why there are people on the Veluwe"* (Participant 4, 2016).

According to participants 2 and 4 there is a strong link between tourism strategy to get 'Veluwe to 1' and the regional task Veluwe. Their explanations do not show the existence of conflicting goals or ways to reach these goals, but rather mutual recognition of the role of tourism in the region. It seems therefore that participants 2 and 4 experience this is an example of complementary strategies.

Participant 3 tells in his/her interview about the things (s)he works on, among which heritage:

*"The second is that I look at heritage, in different shapes, how that can contribute to provincial tasks for nature, water and leisure sectors. What's possible to achieve with that. And then we use heritage as building block. And we do a wide variety of things but we have to be really selective because our resources, time and money are really limited. But that's the challenge"* (Participant 3, 2016).

This statement is supported by his/her conceptual map in appendix 12. On this map is heritage written in the middle, surrounded by five policy sectors among which tourism (written as 'T+R' under 'EZ', meaning economic affairs) and the regional task Veluwe ('GO Veluwe'). Chapter 6.3.1 discussed a quote of participant 3, that (s)he cooperates with the process manager of the regional task Veluwe and that (s)he thinks that his/her network can contribute to the regional task. Participant 3 tells further:

*"So I try to build a bridge, because the result of that coalition is eventually programs and practical projects. So I made a schema, what are our objectives, what are overlapping objectives, what are the coalitions and which projects are ready to participate in, or at least to know about"* (Participant 3, 2016).

The quote in the previous paragraph of participant 4, the process manager of the regional task, shows that one of the strategies of the regional task is to maintain and strengthen heritage for the touristic development of the region. Both participants 3 and 4 recognize the cooperation between the culture and heritage policy sector and the regional task Veluwe, including a link with tourism. Between the heritage strategies of participant 3, the regional task of participant 4 and the tourism strategies of participant 2, seems to exist complementarity according to the explanations and maps of these participants, because it seems that there are no conflicting goals and that for example participant 3 genuinely shares knowledge and objectives with other policy sectors.

About the implementation of the story lines in tourism strategy, says participant 2:

*"A lot with culture and heritage. If you think about NBTC, we are currently working on some kind of castles and estates line, together with the provinces Utrecht and Overijssel. Because on the Utrechtse Heuvelrug, you have those beautiful castles and estates, you also have those here along the ridge of the Veluwe. But the Hanze cities, another line, is also cultural history of course. So there are some strong connections"* (Participant 2, 2016).

Participant 2 talks about 'strong connections' with culture and heritage. The story lines are a returning topic in the interview with participant 3, program coordinator heritage and landscape. That means that there is indeed a connection between the tourism and the heritage policy sectors on this story lines

strategy. The way in which participant 3 talks about the story lines, caused that the interviewer asked if (s)he was the one who pulls the project within the province. The answer was:

*"Yes, informally I am. But that responsibility has to move over to economy. That's also what they want, I've had some really good conversations about that with them. And they say that it's their purpose also, that promoting of Gelderland, so it's being placed on the agenda and policy is being written of which this will be part. But for me it's also.. I feel really connected because I've been working for three years with those parties, you know. I have all the contacts with municipalities and estates. So I feel, well not so much responsible for the entire project because that's impossible, but I do feel responsible for the attempt to create here some sort of national touristic opening" (Participant 3, 2016).*

Participant 3 tells also about his/her strategy to create a national castles and estates story line and along that line some kind of regional sub-tacks with a coalition of estates closely located to each other. That would mean that there is a heritage strategy on this and that there is also a tourism strategy, part of the economic department, being formulated. Since both participants mention that they have a connection between them and that knowledge and networks are being shared, this seems to be another example of complementary strategies between policy sectors.

This analysis discussed only three strategies and fully relies on participants' perceptions. Interviews with other people or with other policy sectors might give examples of non-complementary strategies. After all, in chapter 6.2 is discussed that not in all cases a mutual understanding of values and objectives exists among policy sectors and chapter 6.3 discussed that it is impossible to know about all existing policies and strategies. What these three examples mainly have shown, is that complementarity can occur when policy sectors interact and when cooperation and integration occurs.

#### **6.4.3 Horizontal: search for complementarity at municipal level**

The complementarity between tourism strategies and strategies of other policy sectors can only be analysed to a limited extent since only a limited number of policy sectors are represented by the participants. Unfortunately is this analysis even further limited by a couple of other reasons. During the interview with the policy officer tourism and recreation, participant 7, the interviewer made the decision not to spend further time on asking about Epe's tourism strategy because this document was available



online and a lot of questions were planned within a limited amount of time. This has proven to have been an unwise and limiting decision, especially since Epe launched a new website short after the interview, on which the tourism strategy is not available anymore as online document, nor are any other relevant documents. The participant was asked to send the tourism strategy document by email, but (s)he did not answer to this request.

The following quote of participant 7's interview implies that complementarity should exist between tourism strategies and other policy sectors' strategies: *"We have a strategic vision Epe 2030, that is a general vision of the entire municipality, of all policy sectors. Within that is tourism and recreation one of the two spearheads"* (Participant 7, 2016). If tourism and recreation is one of the two main focuses of Epe's vision, it is not logical that other sector's strategies are not in line with tourism strategies. The analysis now continues to see if this assumption can be supported by participants' indications.

Participant 9 works with policy on creating new estates, (s)he explains this as:

*"When people want to build a new house, it's not allowed to just do that, but it could be possible in the form of an estate. That means that you have to transform 10 hectares, that's quite a large piece of ground, into nature. (...) And a very important aspect of that is that the landscape is also made accessible for tourists and recreationists. So it always needs to be public, at least by walking paths, possible also a cycle path, but at least that nature and landscape can be experienced"* (Participant 9, 2016).

This policy on new estates is created by central government and Epe gave it its own interpretation:

*"At national level they said 5 hectares, the province says also 5 hectares, we as municipality said, well.. make it 10 because you can't do much with 5. And we also added the requirement to open it for public. Central government said 'we appreciate open', you can also regain some money through taxes, but it's not a requirement. We put that down as a clear requirement here"* (Participant 9, 2016).

When the interviewer asked why the requirement of making that nature public was added, participant 9 answers:

*"We support nature development, but we want to offer just a bit more. We actually don't want that nature is hidden behind fences, but that people can enjoy it. And we are a touristic municipality, so that played a role in this"* (Participant 9, 2016).

The interviewer continues with asking about how the link with tourism came into the formulation of this policy, on which participant 9 answers:

*"That link is quite automatically.. yeah.. before I came working here it is formulated 'we are a touristic municipality'. So that's a given for a long time already. That's also logical, it brings a lot of resources in, also here in the community. (...) And then you think about.. [tourism] during the creation of policy, that's quite logical as well. And there is the awareness of the people who are involved, to do that in a particular way and that's also being politically supported"* (Participant 9, 2016).

So according to participant 9 is from national policy on new estates, through province interpretation on it, eventually at Epe the link with tourism added in their interpretation. That the link with tourism and recreation was made by Epe's interpretation, came according to him/her as quite natural since Epe is a touristic municipality. The municipality has formulated this itself but participant 9 beliefs that it is recognized and politically supported and logically integrated in other policies. It is possible though, that this participant overestimates the integration of tourism with other policy sectors based on his/her own experience and understanding. Chapter 6.1.3 discussed that 'a natural setting' is one of the main objectives of the overall mission of Epe's tourism strategy according to participant 7. Based on the statements of participants 7 and 9, it does seem that the strategic mission of 'tourism within a natural setting' and the new estates policy as interpreted by Epe, is an example of complementary strategies since there do not seem to be conflicting goals.

Since no primary nor secondary data is available on the exact tourism strategy of Epe, it is difficult to make further comparisons between strategies in order to see if they are complementary. It seems that the other policy sectors that are covered by the participants of this research, see connections between their sectors and the tourism sector. Examples are the above discussion on new estates policy by participant 9 and what participant 8 tells about a policy track within his/her cultural policy: *"And then is here for example policy line 2, being an attractive municipality, also thanks to art and culture and then*

*you also get to tourism and recreation"* (Participant 8, 2016). Participant 8 however mentions that the other way around, that culture is considered in tourism strategy, was not something natural:

*"They're building a touristic profile and I had read the first report and I missed all sorts of things about culture. It was all about nature and entrepreneurs and well.. I gave [participant 7] feedback on that";*

*"And then I said to [participant 7], because in [his/her] report on that touristic profile, it said that Epe doesn't have anything that stands out in comparison with.. and then I said that this could be something that could become much larger"* (Participant 8, 2016).

According to participant 8 did the touristic profile not recognize that the municipality had something specific to offer in comparison with the other municipalities in the region Veluwe, a region that is characterized by its nature. The thing that 'could become much larger' of which participant 8 talks, is an event organized at the cultural heritage site of Cannenburch castle of which *"the goal had a touristic and economic background"* (Participant 8, 2016). Participant 8 recognizes in this event, that last year was organized for the first time and this year is planned to be much larger, an opportunity to strengthen Epe's touristic identity. In fact, participants 7 and 8 cooperate on this event:

*"My colleague from culture for example had last year, when I just started, defined the new Culture Document and we regularly have contact with each other, also in order to adjust or tune to one another, about what she's doing and what I'm doing. And in order to integrate that as good as possible. We deal with for example event on the Cannenburch with external parties and that needs of course promotion, so I need to deal with that"* (Participant 7, 2016).

Participant 9 tells also about an opportunity for Epe to 'shine' and which is relevant with regard to tourism:

*"And then you get to something like we can be proud of Epe, we even said at a certain point that we could call ourselves the cultural historical pearl of the Veluwe. And we came to that just by sitting with people around the table and looking at what we actually have, and then you think 'gosh, we actually have a lot of quality here and we need to do something with that'"* (Participant 9, 2016).

It seems that there is a gap between 'Epe as a cultural historical pearl' and 'Epe does not have something that stands out' and it seems that this comes from the focus on nature, one of the missions of Epe's tourism strategy. However, all these participants mention that they interact. For example participant 8: *"That's also what I talked about with [participant 7], 'you really shouldn't underestimate the role of culture'"*, participant 7 in the quote above mentions cooperation between him/her and participant 8, and participant 9 about his/her formulation of the cultural historical policy: *"Yes, the predecessor of [participant 7] was involved"*. It could be that in the meantime, the touristic profile is adjusted so the recognized opportunities by the participants are integrated. However, the analysis does seem to show that even though people know each other and interactions are happening, that this does not automatically mean that objectives and values are shared or become mutual, leading to complementary strategies.

#### **6.4.4 Finding 4: creation of mutual values and objectives key to complementarity**

The objectives for the national tourism strategies of simplifying regulation and the story lines, seem to be shared among the governmental levels. Both provinces and municipalities recognize the relevance of simplifying regulation. It seems that this strategy is not hindering other strategies, so it is in potential complementary. The same goes for the storylines. The province recognizes the opportunities and municipalities are interested in cooperating with the province on this. The vertical analysis has not identified tensions between policies or strategies but that does not mean that this does not occur. After all, only a limited number of policies within a limited number of policy sectors are available for analysis. Other policy sectors such as mobility and spatial planning may be included in further analyses.

The horizontal analysis did also not show strategies hindering each other and again, this does not mean that this does not happen or that all strategies are complementary. The analysis at provincial level has shown that tourism strategies and strategies as the regional task, culture and heritage and story lines, indeed seem to be complementary. Not only are strategies in line with each other and not hindering each other's goals, there seems to be some genuine sharing of knowledge and objectives between the participants. It seems that when policy sectors interact and horizontal cooperation and integration occurs, complementary strategies can follow. This could enable the possibility of more efficient and effective outcomes of strategy. The analysis at the municipal level shows however that even though

interactions happen and cooperation takes place, it does not automatically mean that objectives and values are being shared or become mutual, resulting in complementary strategies.

The next chapter answers the problem formulation and is the conclusion of this research.

## 7. Summary and conclusion

The aim of this research is to explore how an integrated approach to tourism strategies can contribute to addressing regional social and economic challenges in the Netherlands. Through qualitative data it is analysed to what extent governments use an integrated approach and if this leads to complementary strategies. A social complex systems approach is used in order to gain understanding of how the dynamics that occur within tourism strategy making can affect the creation of complementary strategies. This led to the following problem formulation:

*How is national and regional tourism strategy intended to contribute to addressing regional social and economic challenges in the Netherlands and how complementary are these strategies to each other or to strategies of other policy sectors?*

This research has a pragmatic approach guided by complex strategy making system outlined in figure 2, chapter 3.4. Furthermore, the research was inspired by the phronetic approach in engaging with participants through for example drawing and reflecting on the conceptual maps. In a truly phronetic approach a researcher engages with actors and they work towards knowledge co-creation so future action can be taken based on that. This 'social action' requires a longer term engagement than was available for this research. The combination of these approaches enabled that the contexts and the social shaping role of actors and their interactions are considered and are an integral part of the research. Fitting along these approaches and the aims of this research are the used qualitative data collection methods, in-depth interviewing and conceptual mapping. Both methods contributed in their own way to the gaining of understanding of the context and the roles of actors and their relationships. Data is collected on national governmental level at the NTO, at the provincial level in the province of Gelderland and at the municipal level in the municipality of Epe, located in Gelderland.

The analysis and discussion of chapter 6 answered the four sub-research questions, resulting in four findings. These findings are discussed below in order to reach an answer to the problem formulation. The last sentence of each of the four findings includes a recommendation regarding tourism strategy making. The conceptual framework in figure 2 visualised the tourism strategy making process and the factors that are of influence on it. Figure 6, inserted below the findings on page 90, presents an updated version of this framework reflecting the findings from the analysis. The added characteristics are marked

in blue writing. The following description of the findings includes the characteristics of this updated framework, mentioned in brackets.

#### Finding 1: tourism as jobs and facilities provider

The first finding is about regional social and economic challenges and how tourism is used in tourism strategies to address these challenges. In the case study are a couple of regional challenges identified by the participants: maintaining and strengthening of tourism region Veluwe, securing and strengthening of regional economy, employment and facilities ('regional challenge'). It appears that the way in which tourism can contribute to these regional challenges is approached quite general and similar by the discussed tourism strategies of central government, province of Gelderland and municipality of Epe, that is as jobs and facilities provider. This answers the first part of the problem formulation. The expected regional development coming from tourism is however often overestimated due to constructed discourses and assumptions from policy makers on the potentials of tourism for regional development (Fayos-Solà, Alvarez and Cooper, 2014). It is therefore recommendable that those who are involved in tourism strategy making are aware of the leading influences of discourses and general beliefs that exist within themselves, their policy sector and organisation.

#### Finding 2: practical considerations and people's mentality as main factors for integration

The second finding concerns how governments can create complementary strategies, analysed by looking at the vertical ('multi-level') and horizontal ('multi-sectoral') integration that is present in the case study. Such integration represents the extents in which cooperation, exchange of knowledge and the creation of mutual objectives and values occur ('integration'). These inter-level and inter-sectoral interactions can be stimulated by facilitating an optimal formal policy space in the form of for example organisational structuring and structural inter-level and inter-sectoral meetings, and by optimising informal policy space through office design and enabling social interaction, helping breaking down possible imaginary boundaries ('socio-political institutional sphere'). When integration occurs and mutual objectives and values are acknowledged and created during the formulation of strategy ('policy dialogue'), this can lead to complementary strategies.

The descriptions of the participants on vertical integration are examples of practical considerations for cooperation, such as financial or knowledge support coming along with the delegation of tasks, the necessity to cooperate with other levels in order to reach own objectives, or a (legal) necessity to follow policies of upper levels of government. For horizontal integration is office design and organisational structuring according to the participants only to a certain extent influencing cooperation and interaction. It is rather people's mentality and previous collaborations that influence cooperation. People's attitude towards cooperation and thinking beyond sectoral boundaries can differ because of for example personality or the internal focus, culture and objectives of a sector in which the person works ('people's mentality'). It is therefore recommendable for those who are pursuing an integrated approach to not only look at the formal and informal policy spaces, but to invest in creating mutual engagement by formulating mutual recognised and supported objectives and strategies.

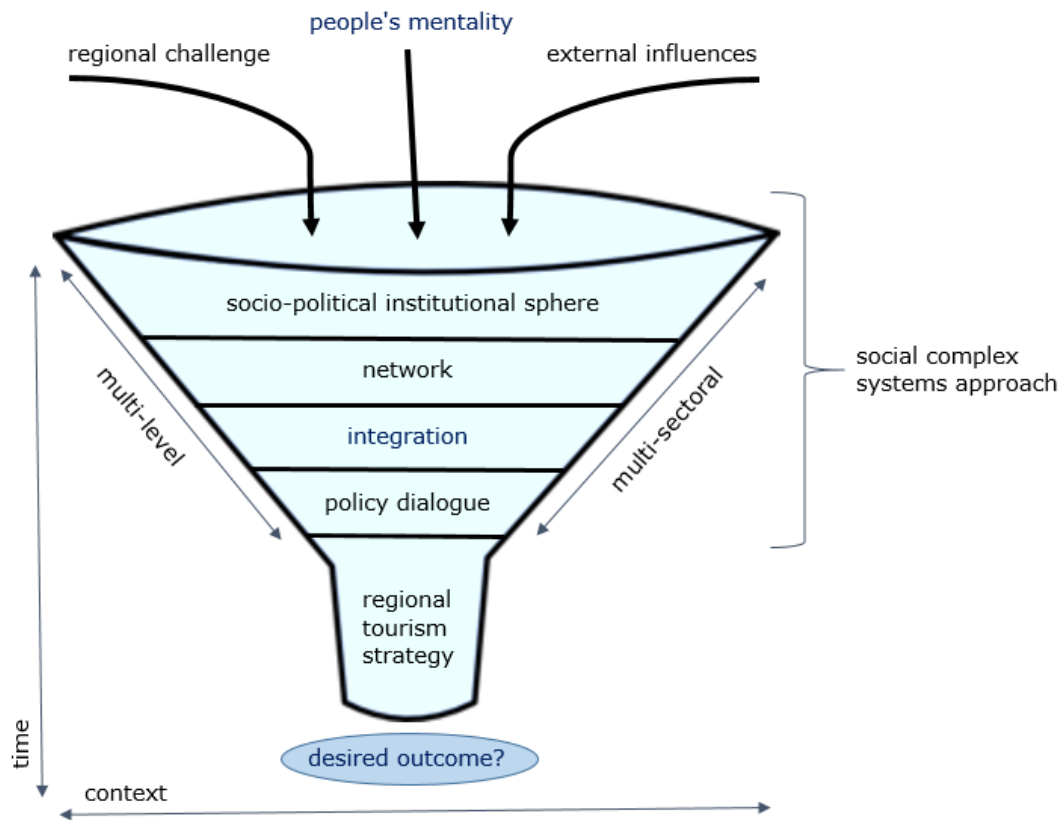
Finding 3: reaching desired outcomes in terms of policy and integration by understanding the dynamics from complexity

The third finding is about the social complex systems approach which focusses on the relationships and dynamics that exist within tourism strategy making ('network'). It was found that tourism strategy making shows characteristics of a complex system. This entails that synergism occurs at strategy making, the whole is bigger than the sum of its parts, and that it is impossible to predict the future and thus the outcomes of strategies. Interventions can have negative and far-reaching effects due to not understanding the emergence and adaptations coming from complexity (Lansing & Kremer, 1993 in Manson, 2001). When the dynamics of a system are understood, this can contribute to the reaching of desired outcomes ('desired outcome?'). Such desired outcomes can be about both outcomes of policy such as more realistic strategies through experimentation and knowledge management (Fayos-Solà, Alvarez & Cooper, 2014) and vertical and horizontal integration through improving the formal and informal policy space so social interactions, knowledge sharing and creation of shared values and objectives can be stimulated. It is therefore recommendable for those who are involved in policy making or in the shaping of formal and informal policy space, to have some understanding of the dynamics of a social complex system, in order to be better able to understand what kind of intervention is useful in the quest for a desirable outcome.



#### Finding 4: creation of mutual values and objectives key to complementarity

The fourth finding is about the complementarity of tourism strategies with strategies of other policy sectors or governments. Complementary strategies can enable the possibility of more efficient and effective outcomes of strategy ('desired outcome?'). The vertical and horizontal analyses have not identified tensions between policies or strategies. However, this does not mean that such tensions do not occur at all since only a limited number of strategies within a limited number of policy sectors were available for analyses. Within the analyses that were possible, it seems that there are indeed tourism strategies complementary to other strategies at the province of Gelderland. It seems that when policy sectors interact and horizontal integration occurs, complementary strategies can follow. This can happen both planned, for example with the regional task Veluwe which exists to obtain integration, and unplanned, for example with the initiative of the policy officer of culture and heritage to create a regional strategy on the story lines which now results in a regional tourism strategy. The analysis at the municipal level in Epe shows however that even though interactions happen and cooperation takes place, it does not automatically mean that objectives and values are being shared or become mutual, resulting in complementary strategies. This answers the second part of the problem formulation. It is recommendable for those who are involved in the creation of tourism strategies ('regional tourism strategy'), to invest time in creating mutual acknowledged and supported values and objectives among policy sectors during the policy dialogue in order to reach a true integrated policy approach and complementary strategies ('policy dialogue').



**Figure 6: Updated conceptual framework**

The interrelated nature of tourism with other policy sectors calls for an integrated approach, plus there is a growing awareness that the efficiency and effectivity of policy can be improved by using an integrated approach. Even though it is impossible to predict the future, desired outcomes can be reached when tourism strategy makers are aware of the leading influences that discourses and general beliefs that exist within themselves, their policy sector and organisation, have on the values and objectives they apply in order to address regional challenges. It is therefore recommendable to those who are pursuing an integrated approach, to go beyond the design of the formal and informal policy space, and to invest as well in the creation of mutual values and understandings between policy actors and sectors or even governmental levels. By investing time in formulating mutual recognised and supported values and objectives and by sharing knowledge and experiences, policy makers can get to a truly integrated policy approach which enables the creation of complementary strategies. Since the level of integration depends to a large extent on peoples' mentality, it is useful to consider the implementation of measurements that firstly make people aware of the benefits of integration and complementary

strategies, such as presenting them inspirational best practices, and that secondly motivate people to pursue integration, such as professional evaluations on their achievements towards integration. Furthermore, by being aware of the dynamics of social complex systems such as the occurrence of adaptation and emergence, evaluations on the policy making process can become more realistic and inclusive. By acknowledging that the outcomes of the strategy making process or of strategies themselves, cannot be predicted or controlled due to system's dynamics, strategy makers can adapt a more pragmatic approach towards integration and complementary strategy making, so the outcome is a more efficient, effective and higher quality regional tourism strategy.

A limiting factor in the research is that data could only be collected at one point in time, therefore not fully representing the dynamics of time in the strategy making process. Another limiting factor is that only a limited number of participants could be approached in the limited time frame of this research, resulting in a limited number of represented policy sectors. Further research that includes more policy sectors and is done over a longer time frame, would enable a wider analysis on horizontal and vertical integration and complementarity between tourism strategies and other strategies. Furthermore, it would enable a more extensive research on the nature, dynamics and effects of tourism strategy making through a social complex systems approach. Further research that includes cooperation between the public and private sectors would enable a broader consideration of regional integration on tourism strategies and strategy making.

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