



**university of  
 groningen**

faculty of spatial sciences

## Church buildings as determinants for the Frisian landscape

Heritage and cultural landscapes analysed from a culture economy and  
common good perspective



University of Groningen

Faculty of Spatial Sciences, department of Cultural Geography

Track Tourism Geography and Planning

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Marijke Hoekstra S3862356

[m.hoekstra.36@student.rug.nl](mailto:m.hoekstra.36@student.rug.nl)

Supervised by: dr. P.D. Grootte

## Preface

In May 2018, I completed my first Eleven Cities Bicycle Tour, a 235-kilometer-long tour across the Province of Fryslân. If I was not seriously doubting my ability to make sensible decisions, I was appreciating the sight of the province in which I am born and raised. Whether I am on my racing bike, on the train, in the bus or in the car, I regularly find myself travelling across the Frisian landscape. History and geography were my favourite subjects in secondary school. I have always been interested in heritage and feel at home in the rural landscape of Fryslân. But just like many people, I used to disregard my daily living environment. It is self-evident. As Hans Koppen said during one of the interviews for this research, a fish is not aware of the fact that it swims in water. In September 2018, I started the master Cultural Geography. Being at the end of this study, I am now more conscious about the water in which I am swimming, the cultural context in which I am living. In the early morning on the first of June this year, 2020, I will (hopefully) step on my bike again to start my third Eleven Cities Tour. This time, I will most likely focus on the hundreds of churches we are passing that day.

Conducting this research was a long but overall enjoyable process in which I have learned a great deal about myself. Writing this thesis has made me realise even more how much I like doing empirical research and that it is something I want to continue doing in the future. I would be lying if I said it was all fun and pleasure. Several times I have felt that I was losing control over the great amount of work that was still laying ahead. At these moments my family and friends were there to help me through it. I want to express my special gratitude to Lennart and Janneke.

Furthermore, I would like to thank all the interviewees that contributed with great enthusiasm to my research. And lastly, I want to thank prof. dr. D. Strijker, who supervised my research until October 2019 and dr. P.D Groote who took over the last three months of supervision. Both supervisors have inspired me by their ideas, advices and critical but supportive feedback.

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## **Abstract**

Religious affiliation in the Netherlands has decreased enormously. This leaves an increasing amount of church buildings unused. In the conservation debate, church buildings are often labelled as landscape determinants and common goods. This thesis analyses the process behind and the purpose of this labelling in the case of Fryslân by means of expert interviews. The results show that the church building is most prominent in the coastal marsh landscape. The process of becoming a landscape determinant is dependent on the cultural context. In an attempt to define this context, a typology of the church building is created: the building is an object of heritage, a spatial element and a cultural phenomenon. In the present study, heritage and cultural landscapes are considered as tools for regional economic regeneration. The culture economy approach and the common good perspective are used to analyse the motives and interests of the stakeholders involved. This analysis showed that the complexity behind conservation of church buildings calls for an integrated approach. Collaborative governance is recommended in order to achieve broad and equitable collaboration that fosters internal and external socio-economic benefits.

*Keywords:* Heritage, Cultural Landscapes, Culture Economy Approach, Common Good Perspective, Collaborative Governance

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## 1. Introduction

The role of the church building as a religious object in Dutch society is declining. Religious affiliation and church attendance have both started reducing since the 1960's (Velthuis & Spennemann, 2007). More and more people see themselves as non-religious. This secularisation in the Netherlands causes more religious buildings to be defunct. The *Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed* (RCE), which is the Dutch Cultural Heritage Agency, states that there is a growing concern for the owners of churches and monasteries to conserve their buildings if they become out of use, as financial means are declining (RCE, 2018). The agency pleads for giving churches a future by means of re-use. This is supported by the ministry to which the agency is linked – the ministry of Education, Culture and Science – which has reserved a budget of 13,5 million euro for a national approach (*Kerkenvisie*) for the re-use of churches (RCE, 2018). This budget is not in proportion to the task that lies ahead. It will be enough to formulate a policy plan, but for structural implementation much more is needed. Therefore, even with the budget from the national government, it will remain challenging to maintain every church with the same intensity. Baer (1995) already feared the 'heritage time-bomb', referring to the ever-growing list of protected heritage sites that is bursting at its seams. Ashworth (2011:13) explains this as follows: the legal designation and thus the listing of heritage 'has the deceptive appearance of being almost free of cost'. That is why the list of protected heritage has been and still is expanding. But the commitment to maintain, repair and restore that is attached to the listing of a monument is an expensive undertaking.

Next to this practical question about the operationalisation of conserving church buildings, one might also pose the question why churches should be conserved. Surprisingly there is little discussion on whether churches should be conserved or not. As just stated, conservation is an expensive undertaking. Perhaps the easiest solution is to eliminate the problem entirely. However, demolition is not a popular solution. According to Beekers (2018), in recent years there has been less demolition of churches due to the monumental status of many churches. But in the first place, churches are often protected from the wrecking ball due to the efforts of local residents, politicians and organisations. People sometimes go great lengths to protect the churches in their surroundings. The case of Kiruna, a mining village in Sweden, proves this point. In the next 50 years, the entire village has to be moved two miles east, to prevent it from being swallowed by the state-owned underground mine. Kiruna's church will be entirely dismantled and reconstructed in the new location of the village. Sweden is a relatively secular country (Sutherland, 2019). So why bother? Because the hardest thing in Kiruna's case is to move people's hearts and minds (Ravenscroft, 2019).

To sum up, people feel less affiliated with religion and church year after year, and even though they go great lengths to conserve churches, it is still rather indefinite why this urge is so strongly felt.

The Province of Fryslân, *Provinsje Fryslân*, has a clear opinion about what should happen with the approximately 770 church buildings within its administrative boundaries. In the organisation's '*structuurvisie*', a vision statement on the spatial quality in the province, churches are part of the top ten of structures that are of provincial importance. The document states that churches are determinants for the silhouette of villages and that they play a unifying role in the landscape (Provinsje Fryslân, n.d.). Simply put, churches are said to be landscape determinants and should therefore be on the – possibly exploding – list of heritage that we want to conserve. A costly operation, but the reasoning behind it remains unexposed. As Betten (2013) states, the typical Frisian landscape is often described as cows, farms and church towers spread evenly over the endless green surroundings. Betten (2013) asks the question where this imagery comes from and who establishes this widely acknowledged image? In this thesis, a possible answer to this question can be derived from two theoretical approaches. Firstly the Culture Economy approach (Ray,1998). This concept will be elaborated further in the theoretical framework but in short, it means using cultural markers as a resource for regional development trajectories. Second, the church building is often treated as visual property owned by a community, including non-religious people (Doevendans et al., 2016). Therefore, the common good perspective is also used for the analysis.

The preceding introduction has led to the following problem statement. To date, the process of and the objectives behind church buildings becoming landscape determinants and consequently heritage is insufficiently known. By investigating the origins of the urge to conserve church buildings, in this case in the context of Fryslân, a more complete decision making process in terms of policy is to be expected. The following research questions are central in this thesis. The main research questions are: *What is the process behind and the purpose of labelling church buildings in Fryslân as determinants for the landscape?* In order to adequately answer the main questions, three sub-questions have been formulated: (1) What are the characteristics that make church buildings landscape determinants? (2) How and by whom are church buildings labelled as landscape determinants? (3) What are their objectives of labelling church buildings as landscape determinants?

This thesis is structured as follows. In the next chapter, existing literature on heritage, landscapes, the culture economy and the common good perspective is reviewed and connected to the empirical case at hand. The third chapter describes the current status of church in the Netherlands and Fryslân. This case description is a necessity for understanding the context in which this thesis is written and to clearly define the area under study. The methodology in chapter four, presents the research approach, the methods of data collection, how data is analysed and covers positionality and ethical considerations. In chapter five, research results are discussed and interpreted. After which, in the final chapter, conclusions can be drawn and recommendations are made.

## **2. Theoretical framework**

Our built environment is not a collection of individual buildings. Buildings relate to each other and to the rest of the cityscape, townscape or rural landscape. The church building – central to this research – is part of a landscape but it also defines the landscape of which it is a part. In other words, heritage and landscape are interconnected phenomena. With that in mind, this theoretical framework is structured as follows. In the first two sections the concept of heritage is defined and it is explored how and why heritage is conserved. Theories on landscapes are discussed in the third and fourth part of this literature review. In section 2.5 it is discussed that both heritage and landscape are used as social, economic and political tools. Then, a connection is made with the culture economy approach and the contemporary globalising context. Lastly, the common good perspective is explored in relation to heritage and cultural landscapes.

### **2.1 Defining heritage**

According to Harvey (2001:319) ‘there seem to be as many definitions of the heritage concept as there are heritage practitioners’. Important to keep in mind is that heritage is not a study about the past and that heritage does not have intrinsic value, because it is primarily concerned with meaning and less with material artefacts (Timothy & Boyd, 2003; Ashworth & Graham, 2005). Heritage can be defined as ‘that part of the past which we select in the present for contemporary purposes, whether they be economic or cultural (including political and social factors) and choose to bequeath to a future’ (Ashworth & Graham, 2005:7). This means that heritage is selective and subjective (Timothy & Boyd, 2003). In other words, with the knowledge, values, needs and demands of contemporary society it is deliberately chosen what parts of history are selected as resources for the present. In practice, this deliberate choice is made by a governmental body on the level at which the monument is nominated, national, provincial or municipal. So far, it is a top-down institutional process. However, there are more stakeholders within the process, such as local inhabitants or entrepreneurs that might issue bottom-up initiatives to protect heritage. In this thesis, the focus is on built heritage, specifically churches, therefore the process of listing a building as a protected monument is elucidated.

A substantial part of the selection process for buildings to become monuments is the valuation of the potential heritage site. The Dutch Cultural Heritage Agency developed a tool with five main criteria and several sub-criteria for valuing a building (RCE, 2019). The fields of art and history form a basis for the valuation tool. The five criteria are: cultural-historical values, architectural and art-historical values, situational and ensemble-values, flawlessness and recognisability, and scarcity. When reflecting upon this selection process, the valuation of heritage is entirely in the hands of the expert. Next to that, there is no criterion involving meaning creation. In the preceding attempt to define the



concept of heritage, it was stated that heritage is not about the intrinsic value of material artefacts but about the meaning that is attached to it. One might argue whether it would be possible to incorporate such a subjective criterion. According to Cameron (in Marchant, 2018) this is a consequence of the long separation of reason and emotion in Western academic study. Even though this is changing, Cameron (in Marchant, 2018:117) states that 'the identification and/or selection of things with "heritage value," therefore, have most often been made in a compulsory "emotion-free" zone; not only is emotional engagement unwelcome, but is seen as highly detrimental to the validity of the study'. This creates a certain ambiguity. On the one hand, heritage is a selection of antiquities that are meaningful enough to bequeath to the future and it is proposed that only this process of selecting adds a layer of meaning and value. On the other hand, heritage is selected by experts in the current institutional system in the Netherlands based upon criteria that measure only intrinsic values. This is one of the reasons for Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996, in Ashworth & Graham, 2005) to call heritage a contested concept. This means that there can be differing opinions about specific heritages or the meaning of heritage in general.

Above all, heritage and how it is understood is, according to Timothy and Boyd (2003:6), 'inextricably linked to the context in which it occurs'. To prevent misunderstanding, in this research the concept of heritage will be interpreted as described in the preceding section.

## **2.2 The rise of the conservation movement**

In order to understand why heritage plays an important role in contemporary cultural geography and why heritage is often treasured, it is necessary to go back in time. Ashworth (1991) describes the rise of the conservation movement. By that, it is meant that the systematic desire to preserve buildings and landscapes commenced in the nineteenth century. Before that, individuals or sometimes governments sporadically prevented valuable buildings from destruction. As Harvey (2001) states, it should not be forgotten that heritage has always been around and that every society has had a relationship with its past. But, because of nostalgic romanticism as a reaction to rapid urbanisation and industrialisation in the nineteenth century, the attempts to conserve heritage became more structured (Ashworth, 1991).

Lowenthal (2005) describes the same origin of the desire to preserve antiquity but also adds other reasons. For example the increasing importance of nationalism which 'fostered attachment to ancient monuments as symbols of collective identity' (Lowenthal, 2005:83). Next to that remnants of the past gained more credibility as a historical source. And lastly, painters and poets such as Rousseau or Wordsworth portrayed an idyllic scene of childhood and memory (Lowenthal, 2005) that was vanishing fast (Ashworth, 1991). By anticipating on nostalgia, the desire to protect or even recreate ancient buildings and landscapes grew (Ashworth, 1991; Lowenthal, 2005).

As stated above, from the nineteenth century onwards heritage conservation became more systematic and structured. Government involvement was at first about inventorying but later also the shaping of legislative frameworks. An example of such a legislation is the *Monumentenwet* (Ashworth, 1991). In the 1960's, heritage management started to emphasise on area conservation instead of individual buildings (Ashworth, 1991). In this way, buildings become of interest for heritage conservation because of their contribution to the wider context in which they exist. This is in line with the situational and ensemble-values as seen in the valuation tool of the Dutch Cultural Heritage Agency. But it also connects to the change in perception and usage of the concept of landscape. Due to this importance of the wider context of heritage, the next two sections of this theoretical framework will focus on defining landscapes and discussing ways to analyse a landscape.

### **2.3 Defining landscapes**

Establishing a definition for the concept of landscape has also proven to be a difficult task. The reason for this complexity is that the way in which different parties interpret the word landscape can diverge considerably. Also, differing interests can cause different interpretations. Elerie and Spek (2010:88) state that 'the significance that individuals and social groups attribute to the term landscape depends so strongly on their personal and collective background that any single definition of the term is an illusion'. Just as with heritage this results in pluralistic views on, and therefore also multiple definitions of, landscape as a concept.

Oakes and Price (2008) roughly divide the discussion on defining landscape in two. On the one hand, there is a group of academics that sees landscapes as a physical and literal phenomenon. Suitable to this more traditional approach is the definition of landscapes as 'parts of the earth surface with an uniform structure and functional pattern' (Volk & Steinhardt in Bastian & Steinhardt, 2002:4). On the other hand, there is a group of academics that emphasises the importance of meanings and perceptions of people. This is, for example, noticeable in the generally accepted definition stated in the European Landscape Convention; 'Landscape means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors' (Council of Europe, 2000, in Antrop, 2005:23).

The different approaches discussed above can be connected to what is called the cultural turn in the social sciences, or human geography in specific. The cultural turn describes the process of social scientists becoming highly reflexive towards 'the role of language, meaning, and representations in the constitution of "reality" and the knowledge of reality' (Barnett, 1998:380). Before the 1980's culture was merely studied by anthropologists. Over the course of the last two decades of the twentieth century, culture became an interdisciplinary field and has been integrated in, for example, political sciences, sociology and history (Oakes & Price, 2008). Definitions of landscapes post cultural

turn are therefore also more focused on culture. Daniels and Cosgrove (1988:1) describe landscape as 'a cultural image, a pictorial way of representing, structuring or symbolising surroundings'. One of the research questions of this thesis is how and by whom it is decided that churches are an important part of the Frisian landscape. This is in line with the subjectivity of landscapes as described by Daniels and Cosgrove (1988), which makes their definition most suitable to continue using in this research. Because in their view, landscapes are highly subjective and each time a particular landscape is researched and thus more endowed with meaning, another layer of cultural representation is added. Representation means 'the existence of a shared system of meaning which people draw upon in a variety of ways in order to communicate' (Holloway & Hubbard, 2001:145). The representation of place is connected to the meanings that individuals attach to a particular place. This emphasises that there are power relations encoded in landscapes. According to Oakes and Price (2008) the groups that are most dominant in society are the ones who are most influential. This discussion on place images or myths, representation and also symbolism will continue in the section on heritage and landscapes as tools.

## **2.4 Ways to analyse landscapes**

Now that the complexity behind the term landscape has been discussed, the analysis of landscape can be explored. In this respect, Renes (2015) describes historical landscape layering as a tool. The concept of layering can be seen as literally the 'sediments from different periods lying on top of each other' (Renes, 2015:404). However, often layers are also used as a metaphor to grasp the complexity of a landscape. That is what makes historical landscape layering a relevant concept for this research. There are five types of layering according to Renes (2015). To begin with, when making a cross-section of a landscape, different periods of time become visible. These layers of time on top of each other are called vertical layers. The second type of layering does not require 'digging' for cross-sections. Spatial developments over time are also visible next to each other, think of a building from the eighteenth century standing next to a modern building, this is called horizontal layering. Landscapes are continuously changing and sometimes old landscapes shine through current landscapes, this is called a palimpsest. Next are the intellectual layers, these are described as a result of reinterpretation of the past. These layers connect to the mental images surrounding the landscape. The last type of layering is about changing meanings that are attached to parts of the landscape. Objects can physically remain the same for centuries, but the way people use and see them could change. These processes of change are the layers of meaning. Think for example of the artificial dwelling mounds (or *terps*) in the province of Fryslân. In the coastal landscape, the first settlements had to adapt to the tidal floods of the Wadden Sea by building *terps* (Bazelmans et al., 2012). Nowadays, there are dykes protecting the inhabitants of Fryslân from the water. The dwelling mounds are still an element of the coastal landscape however their function has changed. They are now part

of our heritage and terps may have been excavated to discover more about the history of the area. To conclude, the fourth and fifth type of layering are the two types that focus most upon the subjectivity and meaning creation within landscapes. Which are useful concepts to keep in mind when researching the subjective nature of landscapes.

Another way of analysing a landscape is by making a biography. According to Kolen (in Elerie & Spek, 2010:90), the landscape biography is regarded as 'the progressive interplay of forces between the richly varied material landscape and the world of ideas, meanings, representations and memories'. The idea behind the biography of landscape is that there should be a holistic approach for looking at and dealing with landscapes and culture. One should treat them as interconnected phenomena. Renes (2015) also described the biography as an inspiring metaphor that should unify different fields of research that are in fact connected. This connection is also made visible by Antrop (2005), who discusses the values of the past within landscapes. For example, that each landscape has its own sense of place and that landscapes therefore help to define identity. Betten (2013) also discusses this in relation to the typical Frisian landscape. He states that in the minds of people the typical Frisian landscape is the type of landscape where the first Frisians lived, so where they think the Frisian history started. This 'typical' Frisian landscape is perceived as a concrete and visible cradle of 'the Frisians'. It does not matter whether this imagery is entirely correct, it matters that people perceive the landscape as a part of themselves. Therefore, it is a social construction. Betten (2013) speaks of identity-landscapes (*identiteitslandschappen*). According to Betten, these appear to be static and for that reason represent a strong continuity with the past. The aforementioned aspects are all potential elements of a landscape biography.

## **2.5 Heritage and landscapes as a tool**

Several questions arise from the previous sections. For example, who is identifying heritage and for what purpose, and who creates the place images connected to landscapes? At the core of these questions lies the presumption that heritage and landscapes are to be used as tools to achieve something. It is clear now that there is more to landscapes and heritage than meets the eye. According to Antrop (2005) landscapes are shaped by ideology and politics. Similarly, heritage has economic, social, political and scientific significance (Hall & McArthur 1993, in Timothy & Boyd, 2003). The ways in which both heritage and landscape can be used as a tool will be elaborated in the following paragraphs.

Focusing on heritage, Ashworth and Graham (2005) state that there are economic and cultural uses of heritage. In terms of economic significance, heritage offers great tourism potential and tourist expenditures generates income for heritage sites (Timothy & Boyd, 2005). Heritage can also be used as a political instrument. Timothy and Boyd (2003:257) even state that heritage, the designation of

heritage but also the conservation of heritage 'are inherently political concepts'. Due to the way in which the past is interpreted and used as a resource for the present, it is entirely based upon the ideological goals of those who select and interpret heritage. It seems however that the postmodern emphasis on heritages in plural changes the political framework of heritage (Smith, 2016). Instead of focusing on the 'grand narratives' there is increasing attention for heritage of minorities. An example of the way in which heritage is used as a tool, is the research of Scott (2013) on the Finnish-Russian cross border region Karelia. Within this case study, a struggle with regard to cross border cooperation was identified. As a remedy for the problem, politics of memory was embedded. This means that heritage was used as a tool to reframe history with the aim of creating an identity for the region. Creating a narrative of common cultural heritage became a political tool to strengthen regional development, but also a social tool to create social cohesion. The study of Gospodini (2004) also explains that built heritage is a generator for place identity in two ways. Firstly, it refers to a national identity and the traditions of the region, city or village. This 'invokes something common among individuals thereby providing all individuals with a kind of *'spatial membership'* (Gospodini, 2004:233, italics in original). Secondly, built heritage creates a distinctive landscape that supports urban development and a feeling of solidarity.

The connection between heritage and landscapes as a tool can be made as well. Ashworth and Graham (2005:9) state that heritage shows a certain timelessness of the past, and they provide the example of 'archetypal national landscapes, both urban and rural, which draw heavily on geographical imagery, memory and myth'. Cosgrove (1989) also states that every landscape is filled with symbolism because landscapes are environments that are transformed and appropriated by humans. As briefly touched upon in section 2.3, representation is the concept that explains how place images are created. Ashworth and Graham (2005) emphasise that if a place image is created, it is created by someone for a particular purpose. However, they also stress that 'place images are not generally explicable in terms of a single simple dominant ideology projected from definable dominant producers to subordinate passive consumers' (Ashworth & Graham, 2005:4). The creation of place images, a certain symbolic value connected to a landscape is, according to Cosgrove (1989) a complex matter. This is because 'the link between the symbol and what it stands for (its referent) may appear very tenuous' (Cosgrove, 1989:180). The purpose of representation in landscape is to reproduce the cultural norms and values of the dominant group in society for the entire society (Cosgrove, 1989; Holloway & Hubbard, 2001). This refers to the partial and selective nature of representation (Holloway & Hubbard, 2001). An important realisation is that representations are sometimes so dominant that they become common sense, which makes them almost impossible to refute. It forces one to be aware of the individual, group or institution that produces the representation. That is why Burden and Kohl (2006) state that it is impossible to distinct social reality or history from representation. 'Space, then, is no longer

understood as a void filled by an observation or a representation. It is always already a practice' (Burden & Kohl, 2006:18). In their study about the phenomenon of Englishness and its connection to a typical landscape and scenery, they see a place as a spatial practise that is 'encoded with aesthetic, cultural, and social relations – including those of class and power' (Burden & Kohl, 2006:18).

To conclude this section, in essence there is this societal process in which the importance, perception and usage of heritage and landscapes has changed over time. Heritage and landscape are now used as social, political and economic tools. This fits into a larger context: 'In the field of cultural geography it has been argued that the increased attention to heritage [and landscape] as a place-based characteristic in regional development is directly in line with the fact that we live in a globalised world' (Hoekstra, 2018:1). Even though heritage and landscapes are largely defined by national governments, implementation of policy and actual management is mostly conducted by the region. Ashworth and Graham (2005:6) also connect heritage to regional economic regeneration by saying that 'heritage is part of the wider debate about the ways in which regions are begin seen as the most vital sites within which to convene and capitalize on the flows of knowledge in contemporary globalization'. In the next section the connection between heritage, landscapes and regional regeneration in the context of globalisation will be deepened.

## **2.6 The culture economy perspective**

The above stated vision on heritage and landscapes as tools to reach regional regeneration can be connected to the context of the globalising society. According to Dickens (2000, in Jackson, 2004), globalisation means that consumption and culture become homogeneous because global corporations are producing standardised global products. According to Friedman (2005), the world has become flat. This would mean that the national, regional or local become less important economic entities (Dickens, 2000 in Jackson, 2004). There is also a counter movement, stating that the world is not flat but spiky (Florida, 2005). According to Hartman and De Roo (2013:556), 'the emergence of a global economy (Amin & Thrift, 1995) and network society (Castells, 1996) has meant that the processes that drive spatial and economic change are increasingly interconnected and interact between multiple levels of scale'. So global, national, regional and local levels should be more connected rather than becoming alienated from each other. Regionalism has even become a keyword in spatial sciences during the last few decades (Paasi, 2011). Additionally, Jackson (2004) explains that globalisation is slightly overrated when it comes to the impact on local (consumption) cultures and that local geography still matters. This is especially important for the more rural or peripheral areas (Ray, 1998). Rural areas are increasingly using cultural markers as a resource for regional development trajectories. This is what Ray (1998) describes as the 'culture economy approach'.

The culture economy approach is a four-mode-typology that contains strategies that may upgrade regions that are struggling to stay vibrant due to globalisation processes. Mode I focuses on the cultural resources that the territory already has. These cultural ‘products’ can be directly commodified for the purposes of marketing. Mode II emphasises on the creation of a new regional identity for external promotional reasons as well. Mode III is similar to the first and second mode but now development is focused on the inside of a community. This is especially important to create or maintain coherence in declining areas. Think of boosting local pride and the valorisation of local resources such as culture, histories and habits. The fourth mode can operate in each other mode because they are different reactions to or interpretations of the previous modes.

Arguably, the culture economy approach by Ray (1998) focuses on the usage of culture and history for promotional purposes both within a region and to its larger (inter)national networks. Thus, heritage and landscapes are implicitly mentioned as a source for regeneration on a regional level. Hidden in these modes of the culture economy are the social, political and economic processes that shape regions over time. For example, boosting local pride, identity, improvement of social cohesion or attracting tourism. According to Kneafsey (2000), many rural and peripheral areas seek salvation in tourism as development strategy. Stoffelen and Vanneste (2016:44) explain that ‘while direct economic gains of tourism largely drive regional governments and the tourism industry, tourism has more generally “been identified as a catalyst to stimulate economic growth, increase the viability of underdeveloped regions and improve the standard of living of local communities” (Brieden-hann & Wickens, 2004)’. So in conclusion, ‘the region product must be pervasive’ (Bowes 1989, in Timothy & Boyd, 2003:2). Heritage and landscape are interconnected phenomena that can be used as local resources – as described by Ray (1998) in the culture economy approach – to reach regional economic regeneration.

### **2.6.1. Application to church buildings in Fryslân**

The church building in Fryslân as a landscape determinant seems to fit into the operationalisation of the concepts heritage and landscapes as tools to reach regional regeneration. Antrop (2005:27) states that, ‘special places and monuments receive a symbolic value and act as landmarks that allow orientation in space and time’. In this thesis it is researched how, by whom and for what reasons churches gained enough symbolic value to become landmarks or landscape determinants.

According to *Provinsje Fryslân* (2018), their ambition is to create a vital, resilient, characteristic and healthy (*vital, veerkrachtig, karakteristiek en gezond*) living environment. In their strategy on spatial planning and the environment, landscape and cultural heritage are mentioned as assets for creating the desired healthy living environment. The diversity of landscapes with characteristic



buildings to which people feel connected, combined with a landscape's history of origin, creates identity and colour to the province. According to *Provinsje Fryslân*, this is part of the basis for a pleasant living and working environment. Moreover, it would contribute to an attractive business climate and stimulate tourism potential. Therefore, *Provinsje Fryslân* stimulates restoration, re-use and sustainability of heritage.

An example in which it becomes apparent that churches are landscape determinants is the case of Jabikswoude, a brand new township south of the city Leeuwarden (Figure 1). The design of the township is based upon the traditional Frisian dwelling mound village (*terpdorp*). In Figure 2, a modern also newly built construction in the form of a church can be seen. The building contains four four-storey houses. According to TWA Architecten (n.d.) the character of a village is determined by distinctive buildings. They are beacons in a landscape but also form the basis of the stories connected to the village. When designing a new village those types of buildings are of important. The architects of Jabikswoude also state that traditionally, a church belongs in the core of a village. In the case of the 'church' that was designed for Jabikswoude, it has not, and never had, a religious function but its meaning and value is within the structure of the building and its role in the environment. This is confirmed by Renes (2015:417) who states that 'in new town quarters, the integration of historical buildings, landscape structures and references to archaeological finds are used to invest in the rather placeless new town with stories to tell and sites to visit'. Jabikswoude is an example that proves how heritage and landscape can form a basis for social cohesion, which fits in the culture economy approach by Ray (1998).

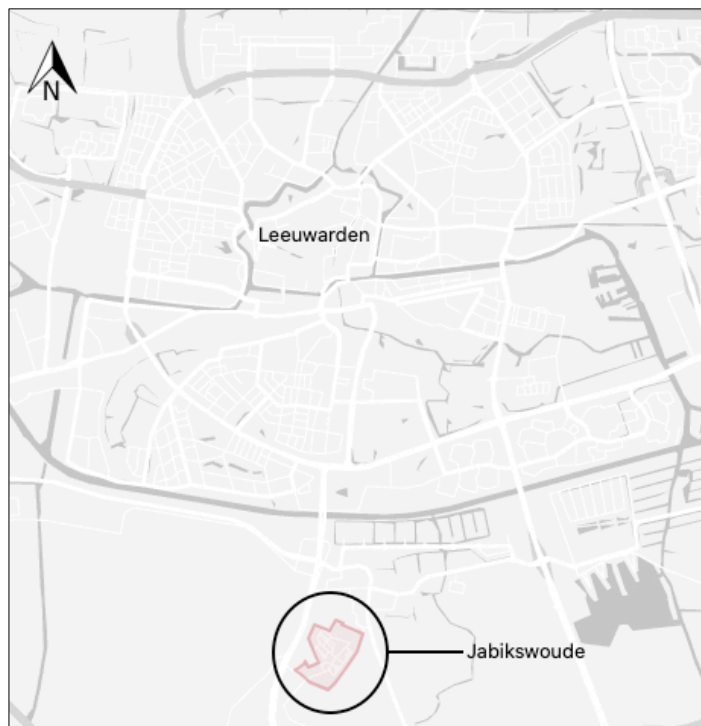


Figure 1. Position of Jabikswoude (Adapted from: Projectbureau de Zuidlanden, n.d.)





Figure 2. Church shaped structure in Jabikswoude (TWA architecten, 2019)

## 2.7 The common good perspective

The idea that the concepts of landscape and heritage are often used as tools, is reflected in the common good perspective. According to Rowe and Barnes (2013:14) the word common good implies that no one exclusively owns ‘the good’ but that it is inherited by all of us to ‘hold them in trust for those who come after us’. This is a statement that can be connected to how we bequeath heritage to the future according to Ashworth and Graham (2005). Hardin’s (1968) ‘tragedy of the commons’ is a classic source when talking about the common good perspective. To explain the problem, ecologist Hardin, referred to an openly accessible pasture for all farmer in the area. Every farmer wishes to benefit by trying to let as many cattle graze at the pasture as possible. The tragic consequence according to Hardin (1965:1244) is that ‘each man is locked into a system that compels him to increase his herd without limit – in a world that is limited’. A statement connecting Hardin’s theory to the cultural landscape is that ‘everyone can derive benefit from the high quality of cultural landscape without contributing to the preservation of this quality’ (Olson, 1965 in Röhring & Gailing, 2005:2).

A prerequisite of something being a common good is according to (Giordano, 2003:366) ‘the lack of well-defined property rights’ (Giordano, 2003:366). Earlier in this literature review, the landscape has been defined as a cultural image (Daniels & Cosgrove, 1988). Therefore, being an image it can never belong to a single owner. This is confirmed by Röhring and Gailing (2005:1), ‘due to its diverse elements cultural landscape is not a homogeneous good, but a heterogeneous regional common good. Consisting of a multiplicity of partly inconsistent components with socio-economic, ecological and aesthetic functions’.

Heritage is theoretically also a common good when defining it as a process of meaning creation rather than an intrinsically valuable object that is owned by someone. Arguably, the real 'tragedy' is that heritage is often treated as a common good due to the subjective nature of the concept and the ownership claimed by contemporary society, while in many cases there is an individual person or legal entity that holds the property rights. According to Doevendans et al. (2016), church buildings are also often seen as common good. In this light, they plead for creating an overview of all the parties that claim ownership and analyse their interests in order to assess whether their involvement is justified.

### 3. Current status of the church in the Netherlands

#### 3.1 Religious affiliation and church attendance

As mentioned in the introduction, the role of the church as a religious object is declining. According to Statistics Netherlands (CBS, 2019b), since 2017 the majority of the Dutch population aged 15 and over indicated to be non-religious. Figure 3 shows religious affiliation by denomination in 2017. With 51 percent, the share of non-religious people is the largest. In 2012, this was still 46 percent (CBS, 2019b). Church attendance has declined as well. In the period between 1971 and 2017, the share of the Dutch population who visited religious services at least once a month has more than halved, from 37 to 16 percent. According to CBS (2018), there is a difference in frequency of church visits between denominations. The Roman Catholic church is the largest denomination in the Netherlands, however their members visit religious services least often. Only 14 percent visits church at least once a month and less than 10 percent every week. A much smaller denomination, the Dutch Reformed church, has much higher church attendance. To illustrate, 70 percent of the members of the Dutch Reformed church visits a service at least once a month and 60 percent even visits church every week.

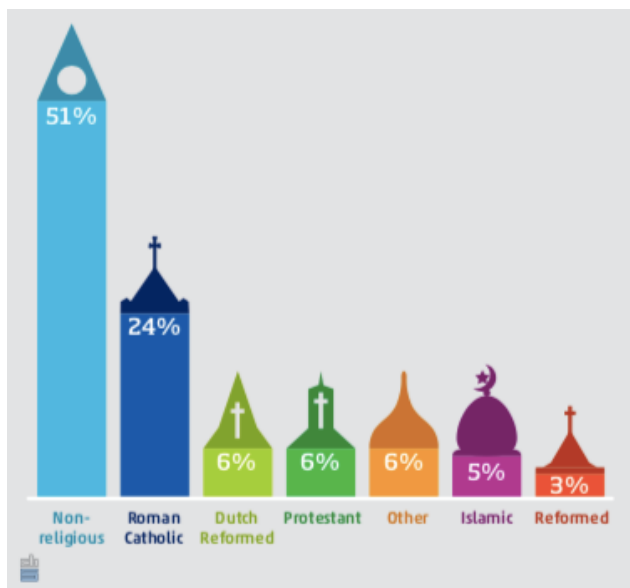


Figure 3. Religious affiliation in 2017 (CBS, 2019b)

According to CBS (2019), it must be noted that the larger share of people that identify as religious are elderly people. In Figure 4, it is visible that 66 percent of the Dutch population aged 75 and over is religious. The three age groups between 45 and 75 also show percentages above 50. This distribution shows that the older generations are currently more religious than the younger generations. Approximately the same age distribution counts for visits to religious services (CBS, 2018).

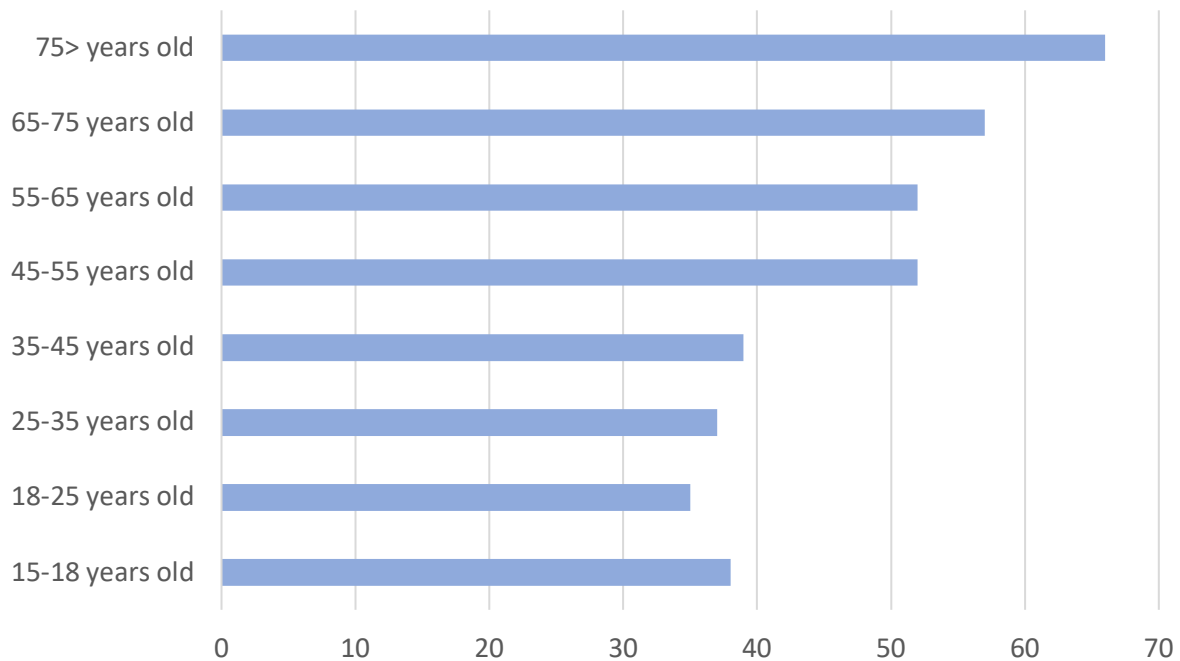


Figure 4. Religious affiliation in % of Dutch population per age group (Adapted from CBS, 2019a)

### 3.2 Reasons for decline in religious affiliation

According to Velthuis and Spennemann (2007), the decline of religious affiliation in the Netherlands can be explained mainly by societal changes. After the Second World War, (Powell & de la Hey, 1987 in Velthuis & Spennemann, 2007:48) there was ‘a new mood of rationalization and of hostility to established ways’. People became more individualistic and no longer based their choices upon religion, family or tradition (van Hemert, 1995 in Velthuis & Spennemann, 2007). According to Felling (2004), the 1960’s can be characterised by the decreasing self-evidence of attachment to traditional institutions, such as churches. Becker and de Wit (2000), named this the spirit of the age.

The ageing Dutch population is another reason for decline in religious affiliation. As discussed in the previous section, the church going population is also ageing. This, combined with the ‘reduction of young people turning to religion’ (Kregting et al., 2002 in Velthuis & Spennemann, 2007:49), causes the share of religious people to decrease. This is called generational succession and is described by Becker and de Wit (2000:77) as follows: ‘the younger the generation, the greater the number of people who are non-church members. (...) Since younger generations replace older ones, the overall picture for the future is clear: non-church affiliation will continue to increase for the time being’.

Stichting Alde Fryske Tsjerken (SAFT), connects decline in religious affiliation to regional population decline. This is a trend that is specific to the province of Fryslân, and other rural or peripheral provinces in the Netherlands. Figure 5 shows the expected regional population decline for the province of Fryslân compared to the population growth in the Netherlands. According to Statistics

Netherlands and the Environmental Assessment Agency (CBS & PBL, 2019), Fryslân is a declining region because especially young adults are moving to the Randstad and surrounding cities mainly for educational opportunities, employment perspectives and more cultural facilities. This selective migration results in further ageing of the population in Fryslân because there are less women of child-bearing age.

	2020	2030	2040	2050
<i>The Netherlands</i>	17.378.200	18.031.300	18.421.500	18.527.200
<i>Fryslân</i>	647.800	642.000	634.400	617.800

Figure 5. Prognosis population development (Adapted from CBS, 2019d).

**3.3 Conserving churches**

The trends discussed so far are not only having implications for the church as a social phenomenon but also for the physical church buildings. According to Velthuis and Spennemann (2007:50) the reduction of church attendance is only one of the reasons for the ‘ongoing redundancy of churches’. The increasing amount of defunct churches can also be attributed to financial difficulties. When a religious congregation reduces, the church’s income will also decrease. Combined with high ongoing costs, maintenance costs and incidental costs for renovations, large debts are not an exception (Velthuis & Spennemann, 2007; RCE, 2012). Lastly, the reorganisation of the religious environment in the Netherlands has also left churches unused. In 2004, three separate protestant denominations combined into the *Protestantse Kerk Nederland* (PKN), often reducing the need for three separate church buildings, to only one.

After redundancy, there are several options; leave the church unused, demolish, or find a new function (Velthuis & Spennemann, 2007). The latter is preferred by the Dutch Cultural Heritage Agency (RCE, 2012) and can occur in many forms. Velthuis and Spennemann (2007) have listed a few: religious re-use, community re-use, music, theatre, exhibition space, commercial re-use and residential re-use. The Dutch Cultural Heritage Agency has a subsidy programme for conservation of monuments (Subsidieregeling instandhouding monumenten, Sim). Figure 6 shows the amount of subsidy attributed to categories of monuments. Erfgoedmonitor (2019) states that since 2009, owners of church buildings can apply for this type of subsidy and since that time high amounts of subsidies have been granted, varying from 14 million and 55 million euros per year in the period 2009-2018. In the period 2006-2018, 44 percent of the total subsidy budget has been allocated to the owners of church buildings. In total this is around 268 million euros.

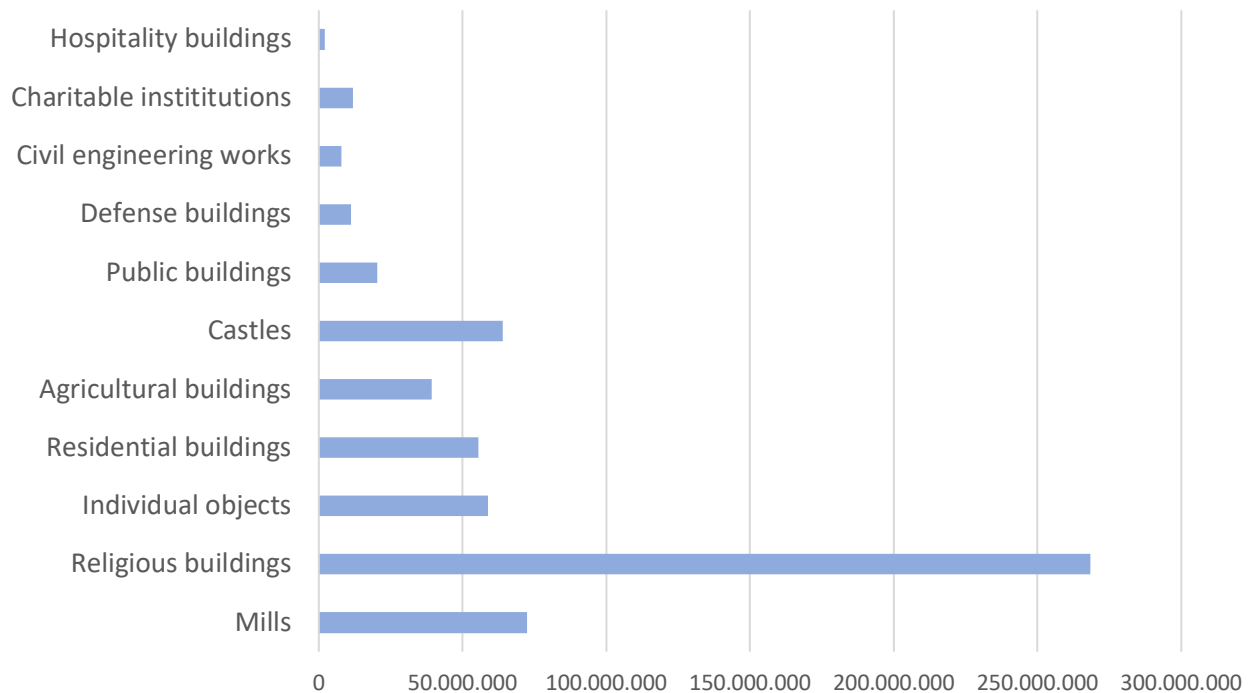


Figure 6. Amount of subsidy (in €) attributed to monuments (Sim) in the years 2006-2018 (adapted from Erfgoedmonitor, 2019)

### 3.4 Churches in the province of Fryslân

According to Stichting Alde Fryske Tsjerken (SAFT, 2008), the province of Fryslân counts 770 church buildings of which 461 are national monuments (CBS, 2019c). In the entire Netherlands, one in five churches has lost its religious function, which is around 1400 out of 6900 churches (van der Breggen & de Fijter, 2019b). In the province of Fryslân around 190 churches have been re-used for non-religious purposes. Figure 7 shows a map of all churches in the province of Fryslân (Provinsje Fryslân, n.d.). The map is a part of the *Cultuurhistorische Kaart Fryslân*, a digital map about cultural history of the province, including geology, archaeology, historical-geographical. The map shows churches from the beginning of the construction of stone churches up until 1960. Therefore not all 770 churches are visible on this map (Provinsje Fryslân, n.d.) but it is a good representation of the large number of churches in the province. The different colours that are distinguished on the map represent the age in which the church building is constructed. The church buildings coloured dark red, were constructed in or before the thirteenth century. The map illustrates a concentration of these eldest buildings in the north-west of the province. In Figure 8, a map of landscape types in the Netherlands is depicted. The two maps in Figure 7 and 8 show that there is an overlap between the concentration of eldest churches in the north-west and the type of landscape, the coastal marsh landscape.

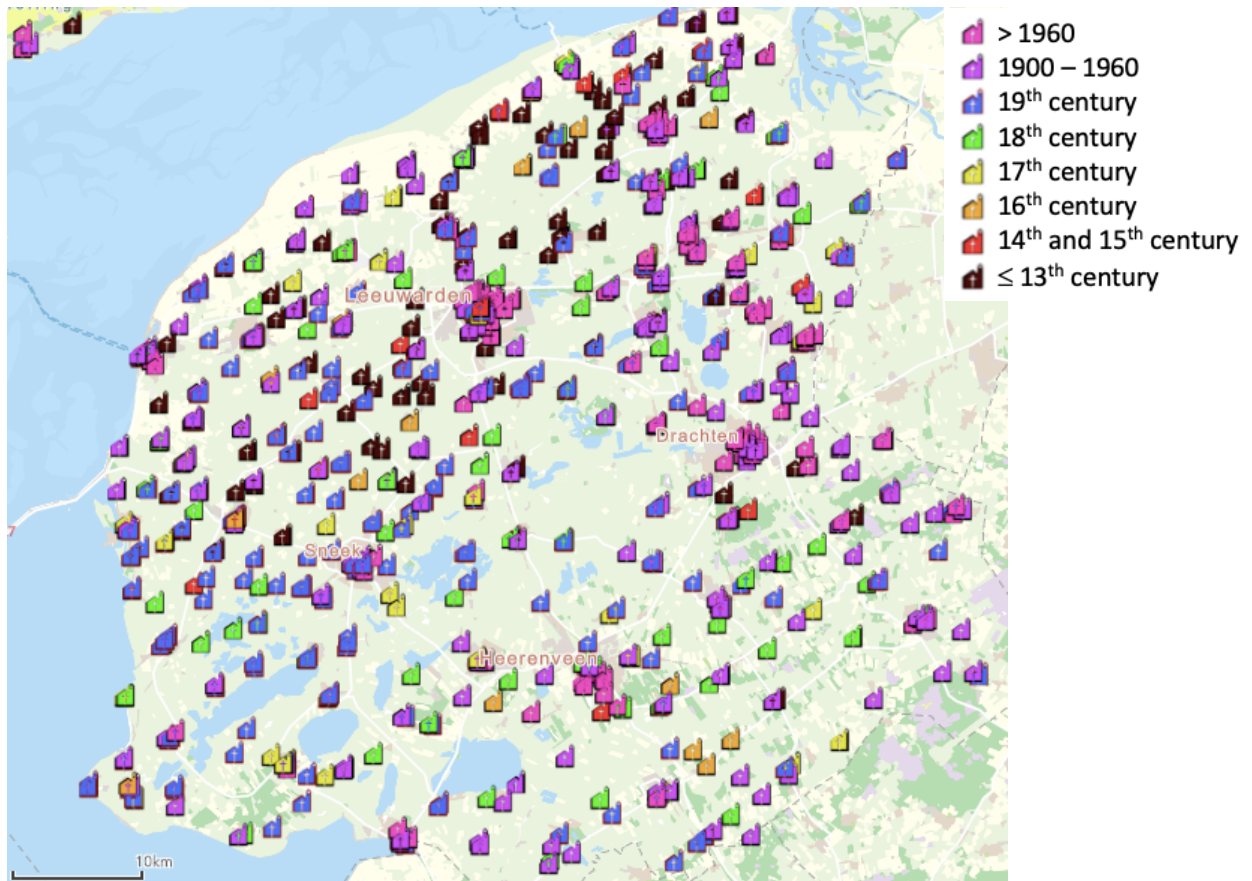


Figure 7. Map of churches in the province of Fryslân (Adapted from Provinsje Fryslân, n.d.)

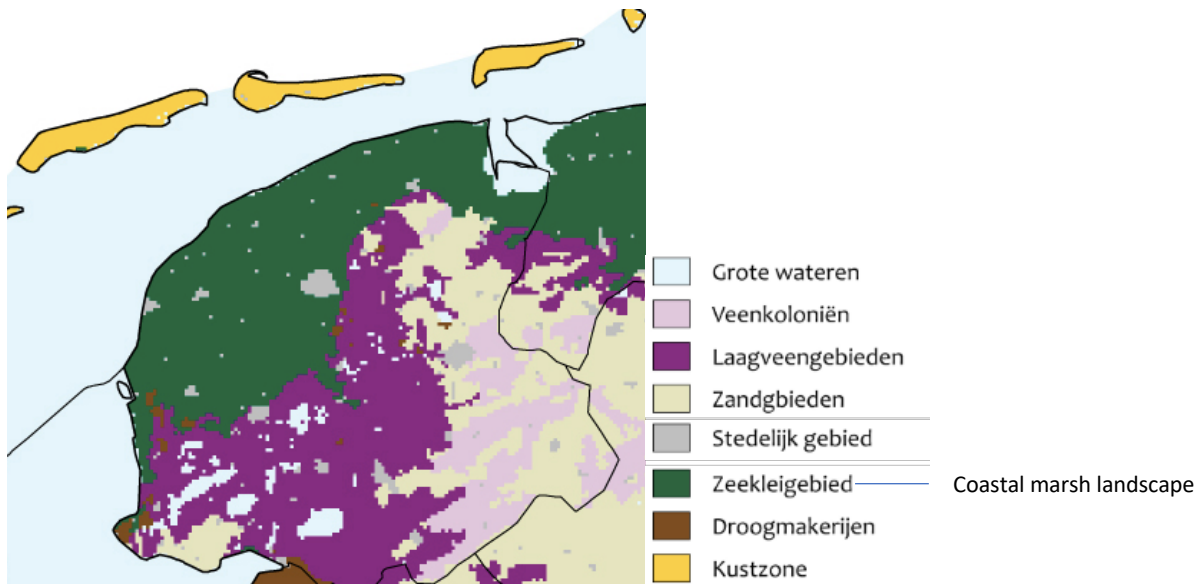


Figure 8. Types of landscapes in the province of Fryslân (Compendium voor de Leefomgeving, 2013)

Van der Breggen and de Fijter (2019a) state that Fryslân has the highest density of churches per inhabitant. As displayed in Figure 9, Fryslân counts one church per 1014 inhabitants and the province of Flevoland one church per 8866 inhabitants. The reason behind the high number of churches is that Fryslân is a highly protestant province with many small villages that all have at least one church (van der Breggen & de Fijter, 2019a).



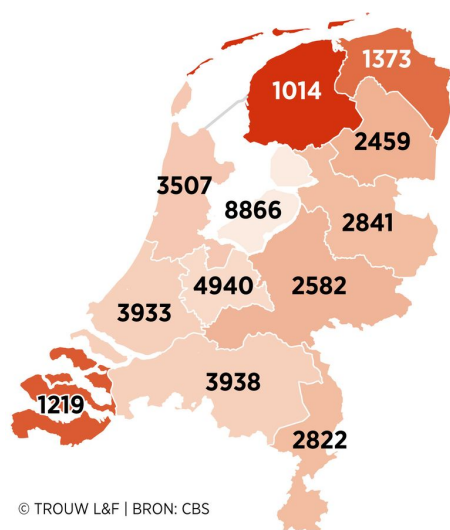


Figure 9. Church density (the number of inhabitants per church) based upon churches built before 1970 (Adapted from van der Breggen & de Fijter, 2019a).

*Provinsje Fryslân* mentions the conservation of churches in their policy regarding spatial quality. The organisation states that churches are determining elements in the Frisian landscape. Next to that, churches are also connecting and identity-creating factors in a local community (*Provinsje Fryslân*, 2014). Together with *Provinsje Fryslân*, Stichting Alde Fryske Tsjerken (SAFT) has written an inventory report about churches in the province of Fryslân. SAFT is a foundation that aims at restoration and conservation of church buildings in the province of Fryslân that are historically interesting. The foundation's second objective is to stimulate public awareness of such churches (SAFT, 2019). According to SAFT (2008), churches are of importance in Fryslân not only from a regional perspective, but also (inter)nationally. This is because firstly, there is a high church density and secondly, there are many medieval churches that still have their original form. For these reasons, SAFT and *Provinsje Fryslân* work at the conservation of the church buildings in Fryslân by 1) integrating it in the '*structuurvisie*', a vision statement on the spatial quality in the province. By 2) inventorying the state of all churches in the province. By 3) researching possibilities for re-use of defunct churches.

In short, the province of Fryslân has the highest church density in the Netherlands. *Provinsje Fryslân* is clear about the determinative nature of churches for the Frisian landscape. But because of decreasing church affiliation, a decline in visits to religious services, ageing population and regional decline, the financial support base for the conservation of churches has been decreasing for years now. More and more churches are losing their religious function. In this light, the province of Fryslân has been selected as a case to analyse.



## 4. Methodology

### 4.1 Research approach and design

The aim of this research is to explore the process of and the motives behind church buildings becoming landscape determinants in the case of the province of Fryslân. This objective was reached by means of a hybrid of desk and field research, approached from the interpretive paradigm. This paradigm 'recognizes that reality is *socially constructed* as people's experiences occur within social, cultural, historical or personal contexts' (Hennink et al., 2011:15, italics in original). This very much suits to the overarching themes of this research, heritage and landscapes. Both were identified as complex social constructs in the preceding literature review. In light of the interpretive paradigm, it is also acknowledged that the values and beliefs of the researcher always influence the research to some extent. The implications of this will be elaborated in paragraph 4.4. The previously described research objective and the paradigm in which this research was conducted, has led this thesis into the direction of a qualitative inquiry. According to Stratford and Bradshaw (in Hay, 2016:120), this type of intensive research 'requires that we ask *how* processes work or opinions are held or actions are taken in a particular case' (emphasis added).

As mentioned in the aim of the research, this thesis specifically focuses on case of churches in the province of Fryslân. According to Baxter (in Hay, 2016:130), 'case study research involves the study of a single instance or small number of instances of a phenomenon in order to explore in-depth nuances of the phenomenon and the contextual influences on and explanations of that phenomenon'. These in-depth nuances are exactly what was needed in order to find answers to the research questions. A case study is more an approach to research design rather than a method. Because the 'primary guiding philosophical assumption is that in-depth understanding about one manifestation of a phenomenon (a case) is valuable on its own without specific regard to how the phenomenon is manifest in cases that are not studied' (Baxter in Hay, 2016:131).

Regarding the performed case study, it was decided to carry out a cross-sectional case study instead of a comparative case study. In other words, only the province of Fryslân was researched. The reasoning behind this choice is that focusing on a single case forces a researcher to devote careful attention to the details of the case instead of deliberately searching for comparisons and contrasts (Yin, in Green et al., 2006). The case study of church buildings as landscape determinants in the province of Fryslân can be classified as theory-generating. This means that an inductive logic was followed, creating an idea from separate aspects of data. The next section will elaborate upon these aspects of data.

## 4.2 Methods of data collection

The case study methodology introduced above, was supported by interviews with experts on the topic. Interviews are powerful tools according to Dunn (in Hay, 2016:150) because they ‘investigate complex behaviours and motivations’ and ‘collect a diversity of meaning, opinion, and experiences’. This suits to the overarching goal of the interviews, which was to analyse the process of and the reasoning behind church buildings becoming landscape determinants in the province of Fryslân. The problem statement mentions that these complex processes are insufficiently known. While being aware of the often expert based valuation of heritage and cultural landscapes it was decided to conduct expert interview. The rationale behind this decision is that asking inhabitants of Fryslân how they experience processes that are yet to be researched and defined would not have sufficed.

The interviews were all in-depth and semi-structured, which means that the conversation can be steered without losing flexibility. In order to eliminate the risk of inadvertently neglecting important questions, an interview guide was used (appendix B). The interview guide is a list of general issues that needed to be covered during the interview (Dunn, in Hay, 2016). In order to create sufficient depth in the interviewees’ answers, mainly open-ended questions were asked. The topics discussed and the questions asked are according to the themes identified in the literature review: conservation of heritage, the relationship between heritage and landscape, and how heritage and landscapes function as tools within the culture economy approach. The questions were directed towards the case-specific elements. In other words, the context of church building in the province of Fryslân. Next to that, each interview led to slight alternations in the interview guide due to the different backgrounds of the interviewees.

The interviewees were selected based upon two types of recruitment. Most interviews were done by means of purposive recruitment, which means finding people who are ‘information-rich’ on the topic under study (Hennink et al., 2011). This is also called criterion sampling (Stratford & Bradshaw, in Hay, 2016). However, during the course of interviewing, several interviewees were attentive by suggesting experts from their networks. This is called snowball (or chain) sampling (Stratford & Bradshaw, in Hay, 2016). A total of eleven expert interviews were conducted in the months November and December of 2019. Figure 10 provides insight in the expertise of the interviewees. Subsequent to the interviews that were conducted last, it was considered whether the interview delivered a sufficient amount of new data or insights. It was determined to stop gathering new data at this point of ‘saturation’ (Cameron, in Hay, 2016). All interviews were conducted face-to-face, the preferred way of verbal interchange according to Dunn (in Hay, 2016). The duration of the interviews ranged from 35 minutes to one hour and 29 minutes. The interviews have been conducted in diverse locations but always in consultation with the participant. In five interviews the spoken language was Frisian, the remaining six interviews have been conducted in Dutch.

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Occupation / expertise</b>
K. van Stralen	Policy maker cultural history at Provinsje Fryslân
H. Koppen	Writer and researcher. Researched the phenomenon of the geographical experience at the Faculty of Spatial Sciences, department of Cultural Geography
D. Bloemhof	Managing director of Steunpunt Monumentenzorg Fryslân, a foundation that advices both governments and private owners on heritage conservation
E. Betten	Writer, journalist and historian. Researched the identity of the Frisian, also connected to landscape
D. Haagsma	Policy maker heritage at municipality Súdwest-Fryslân.
K. Doevendans	Researcher at Eindhoven University of Technology, Department of the Built Environment and Architectural History and Theory
J. Tuma	Ambassador of the village church at the PKN, Protestant Church in the Netherlands
J. de Jong	Founder of J.O.N.G Architecten, an architectural office experienced with heritage redevelopment
E. van der Veen	Cultural Geographer, researcher in cultural landscapes at Altenburg en Wymenga onderzoek- en adviesburo Feanwâlden.
T. van Popta	Member of the board of Stichting Alde Fryske Tsjerken, a foundation that works on the conservation of churches in Fryslân
T. Buma	Cultural geographer, policy maker cultural history and sustainability at the municipality of Leeuwarden.

*Figure 10.* List of interviewees

### **4.3 Data analysis**

Subsequent to the data gathering, the recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim. This type of transcribing affects the quality of data in positive manner because it also contains verbal clues such as tone, length of pauses or word emphasis (Hennink et al., 2011). During the transcription phase engagement with the data was already created (Dunn, in Hay, 2016), which enhances the quality of the data and the analysis of the data. The next step in the analysis of the interviews was processing the transcripts in ATLAS.ti and start exploring the data by means of coding in two phases. In the first phase of coding, codes were connected to the data deducted from a pre-defined list of themes based upon the literature review. This is called descriptive or deductive coding and ‘reflects themes or patterns that are obvious on the surface or are stated directly by research subjects’ (Cope, in Hay, 2016:378). This makes the first phase of coding a necessity to ‘facilitate familiarity, understanding, and analysis’ (Cope, in Hay, 2016:378). In the second phase of coding, inductive codes are attached to the data. This type of codes comes ‘directly from the data and are developed from reading the data and noting the issues raised by participants’ (Hennink et al., 2011:218). According to Hennink et al. (2011),

the analysis of transcripts should ideally be a mix of deductive and inductive coding because it combines those findings anticipated by the researcher to the issues that are of importance to the participants. The two phases of coding were followed by the process of making a thematic structure of the codes. These connections made between the data formed the basis for the results chapter. An overview of the coding process can be found in the codebook in appendix C. As mentioned, the interviews were conducted either in Dutch or in Frisian. This means that the illustrative quotations presented in the results section had to be translated from one of these two languages to English.

#### **4.4 Positionality and ethical considerations**

In the introduction of this methodology it has been briefly mentioned that this thesis has been produced from the interpretive paradigm. This means that it is believed that a researcher cannot be separated from their knowledge (Hennink et al., 2011). A positionality statement helps to be critically reflexive towards the position of the researcher in relation to their research (Waite, in Hay, 2016). Being born and raised and still living in the province of Fryslân I am, as a researcher, part of the context under study. Next to that I have been raised with the protestant faith and therefore, in the past, I visited religious services in church. It is important to be aware of the subjectivity this creates and the potential influence this has on the research process. According to Hennink et al. (2011:19), however, the interpretive paradigm 'acknowledges that the perspectives of the study participants reflect their subjective views of their social world, and that researchers also bring their subjective influences to the research process, particularly during data collection and interpretation'. Nevertheless, conscious self-reflection remains important.

Regarding ethical considerations, prior to the interviews both the researcher and the interviewees signed the informed consent form (Appendix A). This form was based upon the list of rights of informants by Dunn (in Hay, 2016:163) and includes the following matters: interviewees need to give permission to record the interview, informants are given the opportunity to remain anonymous, the transcribed interview is available for the informants who request them, informants have the right to change or delete answers at any time in the future, and lastly, informants can pause or terminate the interview at any time in the process.

## 5. Results and discussion

In this chapter, the results of the expert interviews are presented. Empirically collected data has been critically analysed and connected to the outcomes of the literature review. The chapter is structured as follows. First, a typology of the church building is developed. This is followed by an analysis of what makes church buildings landscape determinants and how and why this terminology came into existence. Lastly, the involved stakeholders, their interests and ownership are discussed.

### 5.1 A typology of the church building

#### 5.1.1 Church building as an object of heritage

In every interview, the heritage valuation of the church building has been discussed. Several interviewees have mentioned the importance of the traditional monumental values attributed to the building. Cultural-historical values and architectural values have been mentioned by the interviewees. This type of valuation can be connected to the tool for heritage valuation of the Dutch Cultural Heritage Agency as referred to in the theoretical framework (section 2.1). Two examples of values that have been mentioned by the interviewees are: the importance of church buildings as a historical source and the importance to maintain architectural diversity. The former is one of the reasons for the rise of the conservation movement as distinguished by Lowenthal (2005). Regarding the latter, the interviewees described church towers with gable roofs (*Zadeldaktoeren*) as typical for Fryslân. Some of the interviewees regarded the age of a church building as a valuable aspect. An interviewee elaborated on this as one of the reasons for the conservation of church buildings:

The church building is valuable in itself. Often they are the eldest buildings in the environment ... many villages originated in the Middle Ages and the only building from that time period is the church building, so that is remarkable. It is valuable because of its appearance. It is built in a certain architectural style, or by a well-known architect. So that is something we want to conserve. (*D. Haagsma, municipality of Súdwest-Fryslân*)

The age of the building as a basic quality to meet the requirements of becoming a monument was a recurring theme in the interviews. The generally accepted idea seems to be that the value of a church building increases as it gets older. However, many interviewees, including the respondent above, nuance this idea. One of the interviewees stated the following:

Within the entire range of churches there are differences in values. But those values are very subjective. Uhm.. You can look at it purely cultural-historical, but uhm well.. you can also look at it from a societal

perspective. Then maybe, the cultural-historical values can be moderate but societal.. for a village or for the neighbourhood.. it can be a very valuable building. (*K. van Stralen, Provinsje Fryslân*)

These findings display how the valuation of church buildings is on the one hand focused on assessing traditional monumental qualities but on the other hand also has a societal aspect. This connects to the dichotomy in heritage valuation. Heritage is a contested concept (Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996), which in this case leads to a mismatch between the experts' view and the emotional engagement within communities. Various interviewees mentioned the power relations that are involved in the valuation of heritage. In practice, the effect of this mismatch is that the meaning creation based upon emotions is hardly considered:

No, the monumental value is really described in the status that it has. It is a national monument, so then... actually everything is monumental. [...] Because how do you measure emotional value in a permit? But it is... something crucial. (*D. Bloemhof, Steunpunt Monumentenzorg Fryslân*)

However, the interviewee has stated that it is crucial to take into account the emotional value within a church building. Mainly because the owners of the church and the people that are somehow involved with the building are more focused on the emotional value than the monumental. While governmental institutions and heritage organisations are according to the interviewee (D. Bloemhof) in the 'heritage-mode'. Another respondent has explained this as well:

The approach to conservation of monuments as we know it today, stems from the nineteenth century. This Enlightenment thinking, so categorising everything, assigning styles or architects' oeuvre or something like that. It was focused on fixating, consolidation, freezing, those kinds of things. But you also have approaches to heritage, it is heritage because there is a great involvement of people. [...] But it does not have to mean that it should stay as it is. Change is also possible. (*K. Doevendans, university researcher*)

The statement above shows that the way of viewing the reality surrounding the way heritage is cared for has been changing. This development has been issued in the literature review as well but requires an addition. A paradigm shift often goes from one paradigm to another. However, Ashworth (1994) describes a development of concern, namely an incomplete paradigm shift resulting in the coexistence of multiple paradigms. This idea of parallel paradigms as discussed by Ashworth (1994), contains the preservation, conservation and heritage planning paradigm. Preservation is essentially protection from harm and change; conservation considers that using heritage is inevitable and should be an integral part of the preservation; heritage planning views heritage not as an object but as a process focusing on the needs of contemporary society. Arguably, this also explains why the majority

of the interviewees stated that when a church building needs a new function it should preferably serve a public or community purpose. It is often suggested that an empty church becomes a community centre, or anything else that ensures that the building remains accessible for everyone.

This section is titled 'the church building as an object of heritage'. The fact that it is called an object of heritage is an intentional reference to the intersecting paradigms as explained above. When talking about the church building in itself, often the traditional monumental values are dominant. Which corresponds to the ideas within the preservation paradigm.

### ***5.1.2 Church building as a spatial element***

Next to the focus on the church building itself, another recurring theme in the interviews was its coherence with other elements in the environment. One of the interviewees, who has a background in spatial sciences, emphasised the approach of morphologies. The interviewee explained that there are certain objects, buildings that are primary objects in a city or village. Over time they remain valuable, possibly even gain value, due to their permanence. The interviewee pleads for an approach to church buildings in which it is seen less as a functional object and more as a spatial element:

You see, the twentieth century spatial planning was very functional. Everything that was built, was a result of a certain function. And then this idea [urban morphology] goes against it. You can assess everything in terms of function, which is happening now too, the church does not have its function, this religious function anymore but a ... an architectural or spatial element has more functions than merely utilitarian... *(K. Doevendans, university researcher)*

Other interviewees have mentioned this as well. Mainly by stating the importance of a church building for a village. For example:

I think that.. that a village and a church that this.. actually is intertwined somehow.. *(E. Betten, writer and researcher)*

According to the experts this importance can be explained by the idea that a church determines the silhouette of the villages but also has an influence on the rest of the village and its surroundings. One of the interviewees made connection with the first geometricians in the Middle Ages. They used high structures as orientation points for their measurements. The interviewee also assumes that roads, water ways or train tracks have been oriented towards church towers. While there is no clear scientific proof for these statements, it does imply how important a church building is as a spatial element, if only perceived. The member of the board of Stichting Alde Fryske Tsjerker

mentioned this as well. The interviewee is responsible for assessing whether a church is valuable enough to be taken over by the foundation when the community does not have the adequate resources to conserve the building anymore.

The entire development of an area can often be derived from that, the buildings surrounding a church. Small houses in a circle around it. The larger houses in the next circle. This, uhm, you often see this in the larger villages in the north of Fryslân. But it can also be a very empty artificial dwelling mound, where only the church is on and often it has been like that for a long time. [...] But it is a very important element in any case. When I look at the surroundings, not to just the building, but how it stands and functions in the environment. *(T. van Popta, Stichting Alde Fryske Tsjerken)*

The statement above shows that each object of heritage is part of an ensemble. In the literature review the term situational and ensemble values has been mentioned as one of the ways to measure monumental value. Furthermore, this is a reflection of the shift from individual buildings to ensembles and areas (Ashworth, 1991). The idea that church buildings can be seen as a spatial element can therefore be connected to the conservation paradigm. According to Ashworth (1994:18) in this paradigm, 'the individual monument became subsumed into ensembles of streets, areas, zones, or even whole cities which included both buildings and spaces as well as old and new structures'. In the case of the church building, the interviewees have identified the environment in which the building exists as an important element but also a reason to continue conservation.

### ***5.1.3 Church building as a cultural phenomenon***

The results presented above show that a church building is an object of heritage but simultaneously a spatial element that cannot be disengaged from the environment in which it exists. Additionally, all interviewees discussed and recognised the social aspect of the church building. One reaction on this social aspect was as follows:

Church used to be an important social power in society. No salvation outside church. I think that this allocation of meaning, then, also transmitted to the building and that there are still effects of this. *(H. Koppen, writer and researcher)*

The role of church in society has decreased. Some interviewees brought up that after the Second World War, with the new mood of rationalisation (Velthuis & Spennemann, 2007), the self-evidence of being religious declined (Felling, 2004). With that, religious affiliation declined. These developments mentioned by the interviewees have also been reviewed in the chapter on the current



status of church in the Netherlands. The interviews show that because of this effect the church building is shifting from a religious meeting space to a meeting space in general. Next to this social aspect, a deeper layer connected to the church building can be identified based upon the interviews with the experts. Several interviewees have mentioned that the church building in the landscape belongs to the story of Fryslân. For example:

It is an important part of the story of a village, a city, the story of Fryslân. You cannot imagine the story of Fryslân without those church buildings. (*K. van Stralen, Provinsje Fryslân*)

This story of Fryslân can be explained from a theoretical perspective as a symbol of collective identity (Lowenthal, 2005). Van der Veen (2004), one of the interviewees, has identified by means of a survey among members of *It Fryske Gea* (a provincial association for protection of nature) that the church building is one of the identity markers in the province of Fryslân. The relationship between church, identity and the Frisian landscape has been mentioned often during the interviews. One of the interviewees is a policy maker at the municipality of Leeuwarden and therefore also specifically speaks about the area within the administrative boundaries of the municipality. About the topic of identity this interviewee said:

When it has a central function in a village, uhm you notice that it does something to the identity of the village, and the typical church on the dwelling mound, to answer your question, yes that is in this part of Fryslân determining for the landscape and with that also the identity of the inhabitants. (*T. Buma, municipality of Leeuwarden*)

The interviews have shown that landscape is perceived as a part of people's identities, it is intertwined with our living environment and it provides a feeling of home. This can be connected to the concept of spatial membership (Gospodini, 2004). Additionally, the strong regional identity of Fryslân was mentioned, which can be connected by the imagery surrounding the Frisian landscape. Namely, connected to this discussion about the church building in relation to the landscape and identity, is that the church building might be part of the mental image one has when thinking of the landscape in Fryslân. This can be seen as the intellectual layers in landscapes, as described in the historical landscape layering concept of Renes (2015). The mental image has been described by one of the interviewees as follows:

Grasslands rich of herbs and birds, with meandering waterways and at the horizon a small village with a church tower. [...] I think that it [a church building] is indispensable in the mental image of the small Frisian

village at the horizon. It... would be strange if there was no church tower with gable roof. (*E. Betten, writer and researcher*)

The above mentioned statement can be called a place image (Cosgrove, 1989) because several interviewees also mentioned that the image has been romanticised. Most of the interviewees agreed upon the fact that this image of the Frisian landscape is not a realistic representation for the entire province as there is no typical Frisian landscape. The province has numerous different types of landscapes and all those landscapes also exist elsewhere. In relation to the above mentioned place image, the coastal marsh landscape (*Zeekleilandschap or Klaaistreek*) was often mentioned. The research on identity landscapes by Van der Veen (2014) also concluded that this type of landscape is perceived as most characteristic for Fryslân. During the interview he stated the following:

Well, I have discussed it in my thesis as well, I think that the (emphasis) typical Frisian landscape does not exist because this is personal. [...] But the coastal marsh landscape is most determining for Fryslân, you also see this image returning with indeed the churches and the farms, the grasslands, the vastness and the openness. (*E. van der Veen, cultural geographer and landscape researcher*)

What has also been mentioned with regard to this returning image, is the relation to Frisian poetry, books and songs. These findings could indicate that the above mentioned image is a place myth, referring to the partial and selective nature of representation (Holloway & Hubbard, 2001). According to Cosgrove (1989), this can be explained as reproduction of the dominant norms and values of a society.

Once again, coming back to the earlier mentioned coexisting paradigms (Ashworth, 1994) the heritage planning paradigm can be connected to the preceding section about the church building as a cultural phenomenon. The interviews have established a connection between the building and its establishment in society, regional identity and the representation and place myth surrounding the Frisian landscape.

In the preceding section, the typology of the church building has been explained. Figure 11 illustrates the typology that can be explained as follows. The inner circle represents the physical building as an object of heritage, focusing on the traditional monumental values but also on the emotional values. The layer surrounding the church building as an object is the spatial element connected to the building, showing that the object of heritage is intertwined with the environment in which it exists. The outer layer shows that both of the previous layers are existing because of and dependent on the cultural context in which this entire research finds itself in. The church building is

therefore a cultural phenomenon, defining the place myth surrounding the Frisian landscape and being a symbol of collective identity.

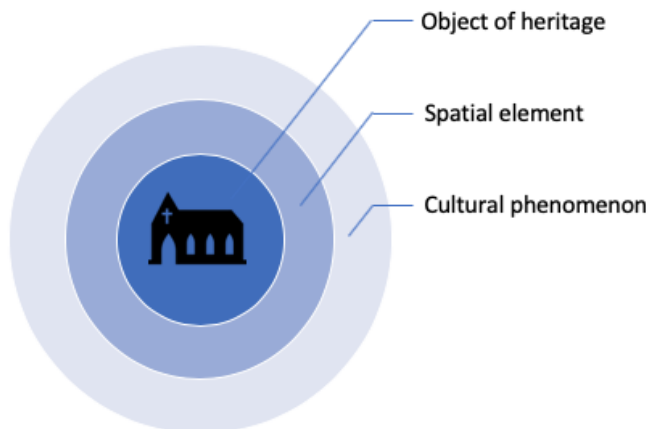


Figure 11. Typology of the church building

## 5.2 Landscape determinants

All of the interviewees have stated that there is something about the church building that makes it a determining element in the Frisian landscape. The following two sections explore what characteristics of the church building make the building a landscape determinant, and how this came into existence.

### 5.2.1 Characteristics of the building

One of the most mentioned characteristic of the building has been the visibility of the church building in the landscape, making it a point of orientation. One of the interviewees explained:

The village church is very (emphasis) visible. If you are cycling through the landscape you will see towers. You can recognise villages looking at their churches. So this church is not only important for the religious community but important for the entire village. (*J. Tuma, ambassador of village churches PKN*)

This statement shows that there is a connection between visibility and the type of landscape by which the church building is surrounded. The interviewees often mentioned the openness and the artificial dwelling mounds in the coastal marsh landscape. This connection was also shown by means of the maps in Figure 7 and 8 in the case description in chapter 3. Those characteristics of the landscape make the church building much more visible. Furthermore, some of the interviewees mentioned the height and volume of the building as an influential factor. Also the influence of the church building on the rest of the village has been mentioned by the interviewees as a characteristic that makes it landscape determining. This connects to the previous section that distinguishes the church building as

an important spatial element. In this regard, several interviewees mentioned the how central the church building often is in the village. One of the interviewees described church as:

The centre, focal point. Of course churches are not always exactly in the middle, but you do know: well this is where it all revolves around. (*E. Betten, writer and researcher*)

The statement above shows how the church building is connected to the village, previously described as the spatial element of the building. One interviewee mentioned that Fryslân has a high density of villages. Arguably this is also related to the fact that Fryslân has the highest number of churches per inhabitant (Van der Breggen and de Fijter, 2019a). This high density of churches has been mentioned by the interviewees as well. The density of churches and villages are also a part of the historical background which links to the process of becoming landscape determinants and is therefore elaborated in the next section.

### ***5.2.2 Process of becoming landscape determinant***

According to the interviewees, the process of the church building having become a landscape determinant needs to be placed into a historical context. Three aspects in terms of this historical perspective have been mentioned by the interviewees. It all starts with the importance of religion in the past. This has been the first and foremost reason of the existence of church buildings in the Frisian landscape. The second aspect that was mentioned by the experts during the interviewees, is the pursuit to create vertical structures. Lastly, it was mentioned that church buildings today constitute a physical representation of historical continuity. This is also related to the spatiality of the building, being a primary object that is valuable due to its permanence. Regarding the first aspect of this historical perspective one interviewee said:

Initially it is because of the arrival of Christianity in Fryslân. So then churches were built everywhere, where people lived, churches were built. So that is how the landscape has been shaped. But if you go back in time 1500 years, there was no church in the entire province of Fryslân. So it was really because of religion, the Christian faith that was brought here. (*J. de Jong, architect*)

While this historical perspective, as illustrated in the quotation above, explains the origin, it does not explain the reason for allocation of meaning in contemporary society. As one of the interviewees mentioned, the value was assigned later and is therefore not intrinsic to the building. This idea suits to the heritage definitions that were reviewed in section 2.1. Concluding that heritage is not a study of the past and meaning creation is, rather than the object itself, central to the concept

(Timothy & Boyd, 2003; Ashworth & Graham, 2005). One of the interviewees mentioned the importance of:

Taking into account the reasoning, the cultural context behind it. And that this can also change. That it is a thin line, not all hard, hard rocks that need to be conserved from now to infinity. But that you take into account that our contemporary society values these kinds of things as important. But for all we know it might change. *(H. Koppen, writer and researcher)*

The underlying thought of this statement is that often, the valuation of the church building as an essential part of the Frisian landscape is an unconscious process. Various interviewees mentioned that because the building is always present, few people are consciously experiencing it as an indispensable element. The interviews also show that the moment the existence of the building is questioned, for example by the threat of demolition, people realise how much they value it. In line with this is that some interviewees have questioned whether the valuation of the church building is learnt behaviour or whether it is imposed upon people. A discussion on nature versus nurture. As Antrop (2005) state, landscapes are shaped by ideology and politics. Also, Timothy and Boyd (2003) defined heritage as an inherently political concept. On this matter one of the interviewees commented:

It is too imposed, too much you have to find these churches beautiful; you have to be emotionally involved et cetera. I do wonder. [...] Things are easily placed up a pedestal, unassailable, perceived as the one valid thing. And then I think to myself, is that true? *(H. Koppen, writer and researcher)*

In this statement, it becomes visible that power relations are involved in the process of becoming landscape determinants. As stated by Ashworth and Graham (2005), place images are always created by someone, for a particular purpose. Several interviewees acknowledged the power relations, but simultaneously had difficulties answering the question who had produced the place image surrounding the church building and the Frisian landscape. As discussed in the literature review (section 2.5), according to Cosgrove (1989), the symbolism in landscapes is very complex. Which can be explained by the dominance of the place image, making it impossible to refute (Holloway & Hubbard, 2001). On this matter, the interviewees noticed little discussion and substantiating whether church buildings should be conserved or not and whether the its role in the landscape is justified. This shows that it can be confirmed that social reality is indeed not to be separated from representation (Burden & Kohl, 2006).

As discussed in the literature review, landscape and heritage are often used as tools. The previous results have shown that power relations are involved in the process of church buildings becoming landscape determinants. The interviews have also confirmed that, because of these power relations, it is necessary to know which stakeholders are involved and particularly what their interests are in labelling the church building as landscape determinants. This is explored in the next sections.

### **5.3 Stakeholders, interests and ownership**

During the interviews a variety of stakeholders that are involved in the conservation of the church building have been mentioned. The interviewees mentioned: the national government (Dutch Cultural Heritage Agency), *Provinsje Fryslân*, municipalities, church owners, members of the religious community, villagers, people living close to the church, local community interest groups (*dorpsbelang*) heritage organisations, architects and *It Fryske Gea*. It is not suggested that this is a complete list of stakeholders, merely a reflection of what the interviewees have mentioned during the interviews. What is already visible is that the stakeholders are multi-scalar but also multi-sectoral. Milne and Ateljevic (2001), have discussed this in relation to the tourism industry and processes of economic development. The concept of the global-local nexus embraces the complexity that comes along with the situation in which different types of actors on different levels (in this case national, regional and local) are involved (Hartman, 2016). The outcomes of the interviews have shown that this tourism-oriented concept also applies to heritage and cultural landscapes.

Several interviewees have raised the importance of cooperation and communication between stakeholders. Keyim (2018) has discussed this as well in the collaborative governance approach. This means that instead of focusing on formal organisations and structures of the state, a dialogue between state and nonstate actors is facilitated. Multiple interviewees mentioned the need for an overarching platform that integrates all stakeholders involved. One of the main determinants that facilitates fair and effective collaborative governance is the presence of a legitimate platform ('a skilled convener') that brings stakeholders together. Secondly, according to Keyim (2018:485): 'broad and equitable collaboration among the various state and nonstate actors is needed to combine and utilize each actor's resources (e.g., knowledge, expertise, and capital)'. The '*kerkenvisie*', a program initiated by the Dutch Cultural Heritage Agency, has often been mentioned by the interviewees as the catalyst for communication between stakeholders. Based upon the interviews it is not possible to state if the '*kerkenvisie*' is a skilled convener. However, the interviews have shown that the local government is the initiator of the project and according to Keyim (2018:485), 'this can result in the local authorities' supremacy in convening and controlling development processes and contradicts the ideal collaborative governance model, which attempts to distribute power between the various state and nonstate actors equally'.

### **5.3.1 The common good perspective**

As discussed in the literature review, the cultural landscape and heritage can be approached from the common good perspective. The results of the interview show that the church building is indeed part of a collective place image, previously also described as the story of Fryslân. An important part of this discussion is the matter of ownership (Giordano, 2003; Rowe & Barnes, 2013). Regarding this in relation to the church building, one of the interviewees said:

I think that the village sees it as something that belongs to them. (*E. van der Veen, cultural geographer and landscape researcher*)

Another interviewee discussed and possibly justifies this ownership by stating that this church building, being part of a collective place image, is an identity marker:

The identity of people derives from it and for villages it is actually what the structure of the village has created and it is very recognisable from the landscape. So maybe that is something everyone is allowed to have an opinion on because it is of course more than just a building. [...] But it does complicate the process. (*T. Buma, municipality of Leeuwarden*)

The complication of the process has been mentioned by several other interviewees. Some of them mentioned the disadvantage of the real economic owner losing power. But most of the interviewees referred to the ownership claims in relation to financial contribution to the conservation. Visually everyone owns the church building because it is part of their collective place image and an identity marker, but in reality there is often a party that actually holds the property rights of the building. Olson (1965, in Röhring & Gailing, 2005) has mentioned this free-rider aspect as well. This means that everyone benefits from the building (for example because it is a symbol of collective identity) but not everyone pays. An example given by some of the interviewees is that villagers are hesitant in contributing to the conservation of the buildings. The interviews have shown that these villagers can be divided into two groups, namely the religious and the non-religious community. If the church building is still in use for religious services, members of the religious community usually do contribute financially to the conservation of the church, unlike the non-religious community. However, according to some of the interviewees this division is fading due to the decrease in religious affiliation. This is due to the fact that the religious community is getting smaller so their means to conserve the building are decreasing, which makes the social support base for conservation of the building bigger. Next to that, one of the interviewees mentioned that the religious community is more open towards the non-religious community and seeks more cooperation. In this light, the following quotation

illustrates that the common good perspective can also have positive effects on the conservation of the building:

Well you don't have to belong. Because that is often the case now, people who are not connected to the village church are willing to contribute to the conservation. Only because it is such an important, central element in the community. People who do not belong to the church community would not like to see the building demolished. *(T. van Popta, Stichting Alde Fryske Tsjerken)*

Two of the interviewees clearly mentioned, regarding the common good perspective, that it is important to analyse the stakeholders that are involved and their interests (see also Doevendans et al., 2016). The interviewees mentioned numerous interests of different stakeholders, which will be discussed in the next section. This is due to the fact that there is a large overlap between the stakeholder interests and the culture economy perspective.

### **5.3.2 The culture economy perspective**

Several interviewees have stated that the church building has a large potential for cultural activities. The reason for this is that it is an attractive building, considering that it is a source for storytelling. Ray (1998) described in the culture economy approach strategies for using cultural markers, such as the church building, as resources for regional development trajectories. The interviewees have also referred to the economic value of heritage and its ability to contribute to economic development. One of the interviewees stated:

What is actually most important, is that you think of an instrument that is viable and has economic legitimacy. *(J. de Jong, architect)*

If the 'instrument' as stated above is indeed implemented correctly, there are also great benefits for church owners. The interviews have shown that it facilitates conservation because of growing financial means. Because of this high potential, cultural tourism is often mentioned by the interviewees. One of the experts particularly mentioned contemplative tourism:

Particularly the contemplative tourist that wants peace and quiet, to walk, to cycle and so on. Take the church tower of Schettens. There is a bed and breakfast. [...] people would like to spend the night in a unique way, experience something unique. Uhm, it is not that you will attract loads of tourists with it. But, in the area of contemplative tourism, yes I think so. *(D. Bloemhof, Steunpunt Monumentenzorg Fryslân)*



## Schettens – Bed and Breakfast



Figure 12. Church in Schettens (Origineel overnachten, 2019)

Schettens is a small village (less than 300 inhabitants) in the province of Fryslân, municipality Súdwest-Fryslân (figure 13). The village used to be built on an artificial dwelling mound, which has been excavated in the nineteenth century. The medieval church was due to its weak condition replaced in 1877 by the current building. Since 2017, the church tower is in use as a bed and breakfast that is completely supported by volunteers living in the villages. At least once a month there is still a religious service. Church commissioner André Buwalda explains:

‘We own three churches [Schettens, Schraard and Longerhouw]. Churches in which people have gotten married, where the deceased have been buried, and children were baptised. Ten years ago, a commission was formed to think about the future of those buildings. Eventually we came to the idea to realise a bed and breakfast, the perfect opportunity to attract new people. Fortunately we got enough social support base. Our community has always been positive. They also realised: we have to do something to the buildings in order to compensate decreasing religious use, or that will fully replace it in the future. All the revenue of the B&B flows back directly into the church. We are a non-profit organisation. It is entirely meant for the conservation and maintenance of the church’ (Origineel overnachten, 2019)

The touristic product is advertised by means of three keywords: *rust, bezinning en omgeving* (Kerkovernachting, n.d.). Which translates to peace (or quiet), contemplation and surroundings. This shows that the B&B aims to create the unique experience of sleeping in a monumental church building. The serenity of the place is connected to the Frisian landscape, perfect for the contemplative tourist. The region is presented as an attractive place for walking, cycling, boat trips and a visit to the Wadden Sea region.



Figure 13. Location of Schettens (Google Maps, 2020)

### Box 1. Example Schettens

The quotation and the example of Schettens shows that churches may contribute to the touristic attractiveness of the province. This links to the theory on tourism as a source of regional economic regeneration (Kneafsey, 2000; Stoffelen & Vanneste, 2016). Furthermore, it can be connected to the first mode of the culture economy approach by Ray (1998). It proves that church buildings are cultural resources that are already present in the territory and therefore these products are commodified for external purposes. However, the example of Schettens shows that the economic value and the external focus in mode I (Ray, 1998) are not the only important factors. Often the culture economy approach shows a hybrid of internal and external benefits created for the region. In the case of Schettens it creates social cohesion as well because of the large social support base for the concept. The interviewees also mentioned that initiatives such as the example of Schettens, create regional pride for local inhabitants. This has been mentioned by Ray (1998) as well in the third mode of the culture economy approach. As discussed in the literature review, a connection to regional decline can be made. The interviews have shown that in areas where amenities are disappearing due to regional decline, people are more likely to fight for the remaining facilities.

The interviewees have also mentioned the concept of broad prosperity (*brede welvaart*). Which includes for example preventing dilapidation and impoverishment of the building and its environment. One of the interviewees mentioned:

As a municipality, the most important thing we want to prevent actually... the most important is not the conservation of religious heritage [...] our most important motive is to prevent dilapidation and impoverishment of those building on the long term. Because if that happens, it drags along numerous aspects. Liveability decreases, real estate value of the direct surroundings decreases, it might become a breeding ground for activities you maybe would not like to see. But also the heritage values. (*D. Haagsma, municipality of Súdwest-Fryslân*)

Connected to this statement are two aspects that also show a hybrid between internal and external purposes. Firstly, the goal of heritage conservation is partly to maintain the image of taking care of your heritage. Secondly, that heritage management contributes to maintaining liveability. One of the interviewees described that liveability and social cohesion can be improved by the role of church and religion in a community:

Pastoral care is how you could call it, look after each other. The church does not do that alone. Of course there are also other groups in the village that are working on that, so try to find a way to cooperate. [...] So that you can also contribute to the liveability of the society. (*J. Tuma, ambassador of village churches PKN*)

This section was introduced by an overview of the variety of stakeholders that is involved in conservation of church buildings. The importance of collaborative governance (Keyim, 2018) was recognised by the interviewees. The culture economy perspective and the common good perspective have shown the divergent interests mentioned by the interviewees.

## 6. Conclusion and recommendations

This thesis aimed to answer the main questions: *What is the process behind and the purpose of labelling church buildings in Fryslân as determinants for the landscape?* These main questions can only be partly answered. The constructed typology of the church building shows that the building should not only be viewed as an object of heritage, but also as a spatial element and a cultural phenomenon. Viewing church buildings from this perspective means that the process of and the reasons for church buildings becoming landscape determinants are socially constructed and therefore no singular or right answer can be given. Reasoning from the interpretive paradigm, it is believed that people's experiences are shaped by social, personal, historical and cultural contexts. However, steps towards explaining and understanding these contexts have been taken in this research.

One of the research questions revolved around the characteristics of the church building that makes it a landscape determinant for the Frisian landscape. According to the interviewees an important aspect is the high density of churches in Fryslân. Additionally, there is a co-dependency between the church building and the type of landscape. The building is influenced by its environment and vice versa. It can be concluded that the vastness and openness of the coastal marsh landscape are characteristics that promote the visibility of the church building. High visibility is, next to height and volume, one of the most important characteristics that makes church buildings determining for the Frisian landscape. The long sightlines in the coastal marsh landscape make the (high amount of) church buildings particularly visible and therefore often points of orientation.

The second research question focused on the process behind the creation of a landscape determinant. It can be concluded that the meaning allocated to the church building by contemporary society depends on the cultural context. The interviews have shown the importance of power relations. This is in line with the literature in which heritage and landscapes have been identified as political concepts filled with ideology and symbolism. Next to that, the way in which people experience place and therefore also the place image of the church building in the Frisian landscape is hard to put into words. The interviews have shown that there are subliminal elements to the process behind the creation of a landscape determinant. As Koppen (2012) describes, the geographical experience has a subjective character. The way in which people experience place is a phenomenon that is hard to be worded or captured in other forms of representation.

The third research question intended to explain the motives and objectives behind the labelling of church buildings as landscape determinants. Two approaches have been applied. Firstly, the culture economy approach by Ray (1998) shows that landscape and heritage are often used as tools for regional economic regeneration. From the results of the interviews it can be concluded that church buildings in the Frisian landscape are used as cultural resources to promote both internal and

external regional development. With external it is meant that church buildings are in some cases commodified for cultural tourism, in particular contemplative tourism. The attractiveness of the region to the outside is therefore enhanced. However, it was also found that these effects also produce synergistic effects for internal regional development. In the case of church buildings in Fryslân, these effects are: increased social cohesion, strengthened collective identity, and improved liveability. These effects can be summarised by the term broad prosperity, *brede welvaart*, which is also mentioned in provincial policy. The second approach for finding an explanation for motives and reasons is the common good perspective. This is seen as a fundamental idea for the analysis of stakeholders and their interests. It can be derived from the results of the research that the church building is seen as something that is owned by everyone, while the property rights are actually held by an individual person or legal entity. This perceived common good aspect of the church building has positive and negative effects. The advantages are a broadened social support base and increased government support. However, it consequently further complexifies the road to integrated policy because everyone feels that the feeling of ownership and shared responsibility is justified.

Policy recommendations can be made based upon the conclusions presented above and the earlier mentioned typology of the church building, which has provided insight in the complexity behind the building. Part of this complexity is the multi-level and multi-actor nature of the involved stakeholders (Milne & Ateljevic, 2001). This interpretation means that an integrated approach to heritage conservation is needed. Collaborative governance (Keyim, 2018) has been identified as a tool that promotes cooperation between stakeholders and is therefore recommended to implement in policy making and heritage conservation. This type of governance is specifically suitable to heritage conservation due to the parallel paradigms (Ashworth, 1994) from which the multi-level and multi-actor stakeholders are acting in practice. Regarding this incomplete paradigm shift, Ashworth describes it as a development of concern. The empirical data has shown that it will remain an element of concern as long as the stakeholders involved are unaware of the paradigms or are consciously avoiding to speak each other's languages. This is another reason that makes the collaborative governance approach suitable in this situation. Two determinants of this approach, broad and equitable collaboration and a skilled convener, were both identified by some of the interviewees as desired in practice. This integrated approach can ensure cooperation between the different parties, even when thinking in different paradigms.

In this research it was not intended to use stakeholder analysis as a complementary method to the expert interviews. The interviews have revealed the importance of a stakeholder analysis which means it could not be ignored in the results section. However, it does mean that the interview guide based upon the theoretical framework was not geared towards a stakeholder analysis. As a result, there is a possibility that the overview of stakeholders and their interests is not complete. In terms of

future research, it is therefore suggested that the stakeholder analysis is elaborated further. This can be done by including the perspective of the inhabitants of the province of Fryslân. This addition may deepen the understanding of the church building, or built heritage in general, becoming a landscape determinant. Next to that, it can be discovered whether it is indeed felt by the people that there is a mismatch between their view on landscape determining buildings and the experts' views.

This research has added to the debate on integrated heritage conservation in two ways. First, it has expanded the theoretical notions of the culture economy approach and the common good perspective by connecting it to heritage in relation to cultural landscapes. Second, through the case study of church buildings in the province of Fryslân, this research contributes to the practice of integrated heritage conservation by means of policy recommendations on collaborative governance.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A. Informed consent

#### **TOESTEMMINGSFORMULIER (informed consent)**

*Betreft:* deelname aan interview over het kerkgebouw in het Friese Landschap

*Doel onderzoek:* Begrijpen door wie en waarom het kerkgebouw is bestempeld als een beeldbepalende factor in het Friese landschap.

Dit formulier is ondertekend in tweevoud voor de start van het interview. De deelnemer van het interview heeft een kopie van dit formulier ontvangen.

---

**Naam deelnemer:** \_\_\_\_\_

Ik ben op voor mij duidelijke wijze ingelicht over de aard en doel van het onderzoek en ik verklaar hierbij dat:

- mijn deelname vrijwillig is. Ik heb het recht om me op elk gewenst moment terug te trekken zonder opgave van reden. Daarnaast heb ik het recht om vragen onbeantwoord te laten en gegeven antwoorden op elk gewenst moment te veranderen.
- de uitkomsten van dit interview verwerkt mogen worden in een verslag of wetenschappelijke publicatie.
- mijn deelname vertrouwelijk is. Zonder mijn toestemming mogen gewonnen informatie en persoonsgegevens in geen enkele vorm worden verspreid.
- het interview opgenomen mag worden en alleen gebruikt mag worden voor het verwerken van het interview. Ik heb het recht om de opname op te vragen.
- het opgenomen interview getranscribeerd mag worden. Ik heb het recht om het transcript op te vragen voor inzage.

Omcirkel uw antwoord:

Mijn naam mag genoemd worden in het onderzoeksverslag JA / NEE\*  
\*In geval van nee wordt er een pseudoniem gebruikt

Handtekening deelnemer:

Datum:

---

**Naam onderzoeker: Marijke Hoekstra**

Ik verklaar:

- dat ik me zal houden aan de in dit formulier bevestigde afspraken.
- mij bereid nog opkomende vragen over het onderzoek naar vermogen te beantwoorden.

Handtekening onderzoeker:

Datum:

---

Contactgegevens:

e-mailadres: [m.hoekstra.36@student.rug.nl](mailto:m.hoekstra.36@student.rug.nl)

tel. 06 830 520 46



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## Appendix B. Interview Guide

### Introductie:

- Doel onderzoek
- Kort over informed consent

### Openingsvraag:

Kunt u vertellen over het werk wat u doet?

### Vragen over het behoud van kerken:

Fryslân heeft zo'n 770 kerken, kunnen dat er niet een paar minder zijn?

Kunt u vertellen waarom kerken in Fryslân behouden moeten worden?

Denkt u dat iedere kerk met dezelfde intensiteit moet worden behouden?

- ➔ Zit er verschil tussen monumentale / niet-monumentale kerken?

### Vragen over kerk en landschap algemeen:

Wat maakt de kerk als gebouw (d.w.z. puur het exterieur) landschappelijk bepalend?

- ➔ Is het de kerk in zijn geheel? Of alleen de kerktoren?

Kerken zijn niet alleen een baken in het landschap maar hebben of hadden ook een religieuze functie. Speelt volgens u het religieuze aspect ook een rol in het landschappelijk bepalend worden van het kerkgebouw?

Daarnaast heeft de kerk ook een sociaal verbindende functie. Speelt dat ook een rol in het landschappelijk bepalend worden van het kerkgebouw?

### Vragen over kerk en landschap in Fryslân:

Bestaat er volgens u iets als het typisch Friese landschap?

- ➔ Zo ja, hoe ziet dat eruit?

Wat is volgens u het verband tussen de kerk en het Friese landschap?

Wat is volgens u de relatie tussen landschap en identiteit?

- ➔ En speelt het kerkgebouw daar een rol in?

### Vragen over kerk en landschap als tool:

Wat is volgens u de reden dat we kerken bestempelen als landschappelijk bepalend?

Het kerkgebouw was ook een onderdeel van het programma van Culturele Hoofdstad (Under de Toer). Er zit blijkbaar potentie in het kerkgebouw. Hoe denkt u daarover?

- ➔ Aspecten regionale ontwikkeling: toerisme, sociale samenhang, lokale trots, identiteit, vestigingsklimaat voor bedrijven etc.

### Afsluitende vraag:

Hoe ziet u de toekomst van het kerkgebouw in Fryslân?

## Appendix C. Code Book

### Analytic code scheme

Concept	Sub-concept	Description	Code label
Importance of heritage conservation	Historical source	Using heritage as a source of information	IMPH
	Symbol of collective identity	Using heritage to create a collective identity	IMPS
Heritage valuation	Cultural-historical values	Intrinsic values	HVC
	Architectural and art-historical values	Intrinsic values	HVA
	Situation and ensemble values	Context of the building	HVSIT
	Expert-based	Experts versus societal engagement	HVEB
Meaning creation	Emotions		MCE
Stakeholders	Type of stakeholder		ST
Representation	Art	Media through which place image is created or confirmed	RART
	Symbolism	Symbolic aspects of a place image	RSYMB
Landscape	Intellectual layers	Subjective nature of landscape	LLAY
	Identity landscapes	<i>Identiteitslandschappen</i>	LIDEN
Church buildings	Religious aspect		CBRELIGIOUS
	Social aspect		CBSOCIAL
	Future developments		CBFUTURE
Church buildings as landscape determinants	Indicator		LDIND
	Characteristics		LDCHAR
	Typical Frisian landscape	The relation between the church building and a possible typical Frisian landscape	LDTYPICAL
	Reason	Motives behind labelling churches as landscape determinants	LDREASON
	Process	The process of becoming landscape determinant	LDPROCESS
Common good	Ownership	The feeling of ownership, who owns the church building / cultural landscape	CGOWNERSHIP
	Interests	The interests of people who feel ownership	CGINTERESTS
Culture economy approach	Landscape and heritage as tools	Commodification of landscape and heritage for regional development	CETOOLS

	Selling externally	Targeting larger (inter)national networks for i.e. tourism	CEEXT
	Selling internally	Benefits within the region such as local pride, identity, social cohesion, liveability	CEINT
	Regional economic regeneration	Focusing on enhancing the economic benefits within a region	CEREG

Additional codes, added in second round of coding

Concept	Sub-concept	Description	Code label
Heritage conservation	Financial means	Anything about the financing of conservation of church buildings.	HCFM
Stakeholders	Communication between stakeholders		SCOMM
Common good	Disadvantages	The disadvantages of the feeling of ownership	CSDISADVANTAGE
	Aesthetics	The role of aesthetics in the creation of ownership	CGAESTHETICS
Church building	Reuse		CBREUSE
	Policy		CBPOLICY