

Cultural Identity in the Wadden Sea Region of Denmark, Germany and The Netherlands

Results from the online survey of July 2012 to December 2012



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Foundation WaddenArt · Netherlands
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Foreword

The Wadden Sea Forum (WSF), an international stakeholder platform of information and knowledge exchange for the sustainable development of the Wadden Sea Region (WSR), has over time, placed increasing emphasis on the cultural identity of the region. The integration of the traditional way of life, regional identity, perceptions of the coastal area and the development of cultural landscapes in the socio-economic development of the WSR was and still is of crucial importance. This integrative approach takes the inhabitants seriously and helps to reach acceptance for development measures. Consequently, the WSF has initiated the implementation of a survey on cultural identity in the Wadden Sea Region. The survey is of particular interest due to its transnational focus to identifying commonalities and differences in perceiving the coast with its challenges and threats as well as the cultural history of the region.

The online survey “Cultural Identity in the Wadden Sea Region” is based on a former survey along the German North Sea coast in 2009 undertaken by the Institute of Coastal Research, Helmholtz-Zentrum Geesthacht (see: www.hzg.de/nordseestudie). Most of the questions in the online survey were taken from that original study. Additional questions allow for a more detailed focus on the Wadden Sea area as one region as well as on the importance of art in cultural identity.

The online survey itself was organized by Stan Coenders who as well provided the following report. Stan is an artist, freelance designer, curator and organizer of Foundation WaddenArt events. He was born in the Netherlands, has lived in Belgium and is currently living in the Czech Republic, investigating in rural culture through MeetingInZdonov - Stan can be considered a multifaceted European, but in his heart he is at home in the Wadden Sea area which you can easily recognize in some of the interpretations and reflections included in this report.

We are thoroughly grateful to Stan Coenders and Suzanne Vanden Schrieck for their dedication and efforts in undertaking this study. We appreciate their enthusiasm and commitment, which made the survey and its impressive outcome possible. It is a clear enrichment of an academic endeavour.

The cooperation between science and art, between the Institute of Coastal Research and Foundation WaddenArt was an adventure and fruitful experience. The WSF very much appreciated the implementation of the online survey "Cultural Identity in the Wadden Sea Region" by Stan Coenders and his team. The results of the survey provide a valuable insight into the mentality of the coastal inhabitants in Denmark, Germany and The Netherlands.

This report is a first step for the identification of the "littoral society", the commonalities of Wadden Sea communities across national boundaries. The first steps towards a bridge between science and art have been put in place and we look forward to further cooperation in the WSF culture group in the future.

In this respect we would like to thank everybody who participated in the online survey.

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Preface

The online survey “Cultural Identity in the Wadden Sea Region” was held in the three Wadden Sea Regions in Denmark, Germany and The Netherlands, between July and December 2012. Our aim was to find out if there are commonalities in the awareness and expressions of Cultural Identity in the hearts and heads of the inhabitants in the Trilateral Wadden Sea Region. With the 21 questions we addressed the feeling of ‘Heimat’, which can be described approximately in English as *homescape*. The translation of *Heimat* is difficult, *Heimat* may be known as a feeling all over the world, but it does not mean the same to all.

In the preface of the study “Heimat, Umwelt und Risiko an der Deutschen Nordseeküste“ (Ratter et al. GKSS 2009/10) Beate Ratter writes: “...*Gerade in Zeiten der Globalisierung ist Heimat etwas Wichtiges für die persönliche Verankerung der Menschen in ihrer Lebenswelt. Heimat bezeichnet für die meisten Menschen den Ort, an dem sie sich wohl fühlen, ein Ort der Besinnung und der Selbstversicherung. Aber Heimat ist widerständig, sie ist auch nicht planbar. Sie konstruiert sich aus inneren Bildern, die aus der Kindheit stammen und die im Laufe des Lebens immer wieder durch neue ersetzt oder ergänzt werden...*” (Especially in times of globalisation *Heimat* is important for the personal bonding between people and the place where they are at home. *Heimat* for most people is the place where they feel well, a place of reflection and reassurance. But *Heimat* is stubborn, it cannot be planned. *Heimat* is constructed through mental images that stem from the childhood, images which are continuously completed or replaced during a life time).

With the survey we asked the participants to reflect on their ideas about their home and the nature, and about possible resources and possible threats to the Wadden Sea Region in the future. We are searching for a common understanding of this special coastal fringe along the European North Sea which became UNESCO World Heritage in 2007 and which is home to millions of people.

We want to express gratitude to all who made the survey possible, especially to all the inhabitants of the Wadden Sea Region who took the time to answer the 21 questions.

November 2013

Stan Coenders

Foundation WaddenArt

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of Denmark, Germany and The Netherlands
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Brief Summary

The online survey “Cultural Identity in the Wadden Sea Region” researched commonalities in the relationship between inhabitants of the German, Dutch and Danish Wadden Sea Region and their environment. The analysis focused on the relationship between typical qualities of region and the inhabitant's awareness of ‘Heimat – Thuis – Hjemsted’ as well as the participant's views on potential resources and threats in future development of the region.

The research shows that the participating inhabitants in all three countries have a strong connection with their region, expressed both emotionally and spatially. The participants mention the typical nature, shaped by the sea, as an important part of their 'Heimat – Thuis - Hjemsted'. The nature shapes their lives as well, in many ways. With their answers to the questions about potential risks they express worries about the changes through politics and nature protection, about growing tourism and its influence on their culture, landscape planning, monoculture, industrialisation and power plants. The participating inhabitants of the German Wadden Sea Region especially express their worries about ecological disasters, for instance through CO₂ storage and power plants in the Dutch Wadden Sea Region.

The results of the survey may help to understand the relationships of the inhabitants with their region and their vision for a future in the Wadden Sea Region.

Contents

Foreword	III
Preface	V
Brief Summary	VII
Contents	IX
List of Figures	X
List of Tables	X
1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
2 METHOD.....	3
3 A SENSE OF Heimat – Thuis – Hjemsted.....	7
3.1 What is Heimat – Thuis – Hjemsted for you?	7
3.2 Where is your Heimat – Thuis – Hjemsted?	9
3.3 How big is the area that you count as your Heimat – Thuis – Hjemsted?	9
3.4 What do you do to maintain the feeling of Heimat – Thuis – Hjemsted?	10
4 THE REGION WHERE YOU LIVE	13
4.1 How do you describe the region in which you live, to a friend or a visitor?	13
4.2 What have the people who live in the Wadden Sea Region especially in common?.....	15
4.3 Which saga or story do you connect with your region?	15
4.4 Which painter/writer do you connect with your region?	16
4.5 Which cultural institutions or events did you visit in the past year?	17
4.6 Do you find that modern art or modern artists are part of the Wadden Sea Culture?.....	18
4.7 Which historical event(s) do you connect with your region?.....	18
4.8 Is there a typical dish, smell, taste in the region in which you live?.....	19
5 NATURE, RESOURCES AND THREATS	23
5.1 What is nature to you?	23
5.2 What – in your opinion – are the natural resources of your region?.....	25
5.3 What are – in your opinion – the possible dangers for your region?	27
6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.....	31
7 Literature	37

List of Figures

Figure 2.1 Survey area	5
Figure 3.1: How big is the area that you count as your Heimat – Thuis – Hjemsted?	10
Figure 3.2: What do you do to maintain the feeling of Heimat – Thuis – Hjemsted?	11
Figure 4.1: Which cultural institutions or events did you visit in the past year?	17
Figure 4.2: Which historical event(s) do you connect with your region?	19
Figure 4.3: Is there a typical dish, smell, taste in the region in which you live?	20
Figure 5.1: What is nature to you?	24
Figure 5.2: What is nature to you? Dutch, German and Danish answers	25

List of Tables

Table 3.1: Categories in the answers to the question ‘What is Heimat, Thuis, Hjemsted for you?’	8
Table 3.2: Categories for the question: What do you do to maintain the feeling of Heimat – Thuis – Hjemsted?	10

1 INTRODUCTION

The Wadden Sea Region is a coastal area along the southern fringe of the North Sea. Where people previously feared the water and the pirates, and later on mostly only the water, they now fear industries, climate changes, politicians and nature protection. The coastline of the Wadden Sea stretches over hundreds of kilometres from Esbjerg in Denmark to Den Helder in the Netherlands. The flat coastal area allows the tidal waters deep into the land. The effect on the flatland, being flooded for thousands of years two times per 24 hours, is impressive: sand banks, shallow water streams, never ending sand plates and steep dunes, islands and deep dangerous water basins created a unique habitat for a rich diversity of species. One of the species is mankind, not outnumbering but outdoing the others. "To dyke or to die, that's the answer", could be considered the motto here for hundreds of years. This has changed in the last decades. Fear for floods has a different origin than 100 years ago. Although modern techniques enable better protection against floods, the limits to this protection are now mostly a matter of politics and the amount of money available.

The Wadden Sea Region is a harbour for those who chose to live near the sea, to feel the strong nature every day and to live with that nature. Over the past decades this has also changed: The houses have a better quality now, navigation cannot be compared with navigation 25 years ago and harbours offer much better protection. The rough life near the sea became more comfortable than ever before. But the identification with the pioneering inhabitants of the Wadden Sea Region stayed and is cultivated.

That cultivation is under pressure. The Wadden Sea Region became easily accessible from the land side and from the waterside. Influences came rapidly, along with mechanisation and electrification: Drilling, dredging, fishing, boating, ferrying, tourists and power plants invaded lives of people who rather embrace nature. Nowadays visitors and solicitors to the Wadden Sea Region know exactly where they will land and what they will find. The secret bearing roughness of the Wadden became relatively safe to experience. The Wadden became an accessible delicate ecosystem with an intense human influence.

The pioneers created societies. They developed cultures. Outstanding creations in dykes, dams, sluices, pumps, buildings, in ships, in farmsteads with beautiful gardens, in churches and organs, in music and in food preparation, bear witness of a *mastership* that

has been growing over the centuries. This *mastership* is in danger. The products of this *mastership*, rooted in, connected with and functioning in their society became objects which have a different function now. The objects became mere static ambassadors which are used to show off the cultural roots. Their cultivated appearance does not mean that the culture is still the same as in the founding days of these monuments. But the inhabitants' awareness of the sea, of a power and a force larger than they can ever master, still remains visible through a special kind of modesty in all those masterpieces. It colours the culture in the Wadden Sea Region.

For decades it was not only one expression of culture, it was the dynamics of culture in an area dominated by the sea. This has changed with the increase of accessibility. The cultural identity rapidly changes from a dynamic and interactive process into a more static show off, utilised in events. Vanishing with their outstanding results is the *mastership*, and more important the sharp eye for nature's behaviour, the intuition which created the brilliant translations that bridge the provisions of an overwhelming big nature and the needs of small human beings.

How do the present inhabitants of the Wadden Sea Region in Denmark, Germany and The Netherlands experience their home 'Heimat – Thuis – Hjemsted'? What do they have in common? What is a resource to them and what do they call a threat for the future?

The survey comprises 21 questions. The aim is to gather the views of the Wadden Sea Region inhabitants on their 'Heimat-Thuis-Hjemsted'. Which picture do they have in mind about their homescape and what kind of resources do they comprehend? Which threats do they expect for the future? Their answers will help to understand more about the character in the Wadden Sea Region of Denmark, Germany and The Netherlands.

2 METHOD

The basis for the research was an online survey. Inhabitants of the Wadden Sea Region in Denmark, Germany and The Netherlands were informed via numerous websites of local and regional newspapers, websites of communal, cultural and tourist organisations, through online user groups and through individual contacts.

The survey was semi-standardized and composed of 21 partly open and partly closed questions. Questions were taken mainly from an earlier study in the German Wadden Sea region (comp. Ratter et al., 2009). The questionnaire was placed in the internet in all three languages of the Wadden Sea region.

The first question was an inclusion/exclusion question: **Do you live in the Wadden Sea Region?**

People who are not living in the Wadden Sea Region were excluded from the survey. The other 20 questions could be divided in four groups.

The first four questions dealt with the topic homescape or as we put it in all three languages: Heimat – Thuis – Hjemsted. As an explanation to the participant of the survey we added short a description of the question's intention.

'From your answers we hope to learn what Heimat-Thuis-Hjemsted means to you.'

What is Heimat, Thuis, Hjemsted for you?

Where is your Heimat, Thuis, Hjemsted?

How much do you count as the region where you feel your Heimat, Thuis, Hjemsted?

What do you do to maintain the feeling of Heimat, Thuis, Hjemsted?

Through **the second set with 8 questions**, we ask to describe qualities of the region.

'With the answers to the following eight questions you describe where you live.'

How would you describe the region in which you live to a friend or a visitor?

What do the people who live in the Wadden Sea Region have especially in common?

Is there a special dish, a special smell, a special taste in the region in which you live?

Which story or saga do you connect with your region?

Which painter/writer do you connect with your region?

Which cultural events did you visit in your region in the past year?

Do you find that modern art or modern artists are part of the culture in the Wadden Sea Region?

Which historical events do you connect with your region?

With **the third set of 3 questions** we ask for the perception of nature, possible resources and threats.

'The following three questions are about your environment.'

What is nature for you?

What is your opinion about possible resources in your region?

What are for you possible threats for your region?

The fourth set comprises 5 questions for the statistics.

'A few questions for the statistics to end with.'

Are you man or woman?

Where were born?

How old are you?

What is the zipcode of the place where you live?

How long have you been living here?

The answers to the open questions were categorised for further analysis. The responses to the questions were collected and evaluated in percentages per country. The evaluation for each group was similar and the three evaluations were compared. The aim of the survey is twofold: To learn about the culture in the Wadden Sea Region in each country and to learn about commonalities between the Wadden areas in the three countries.

The survey was announced in the Wadden regions of Ribe, Sønderjylland, Schleswig-Holstein, Hamburg, Niedersachsen, Groningen, Frislan and Noord-Holland including all the islands (see Figure 2.1).

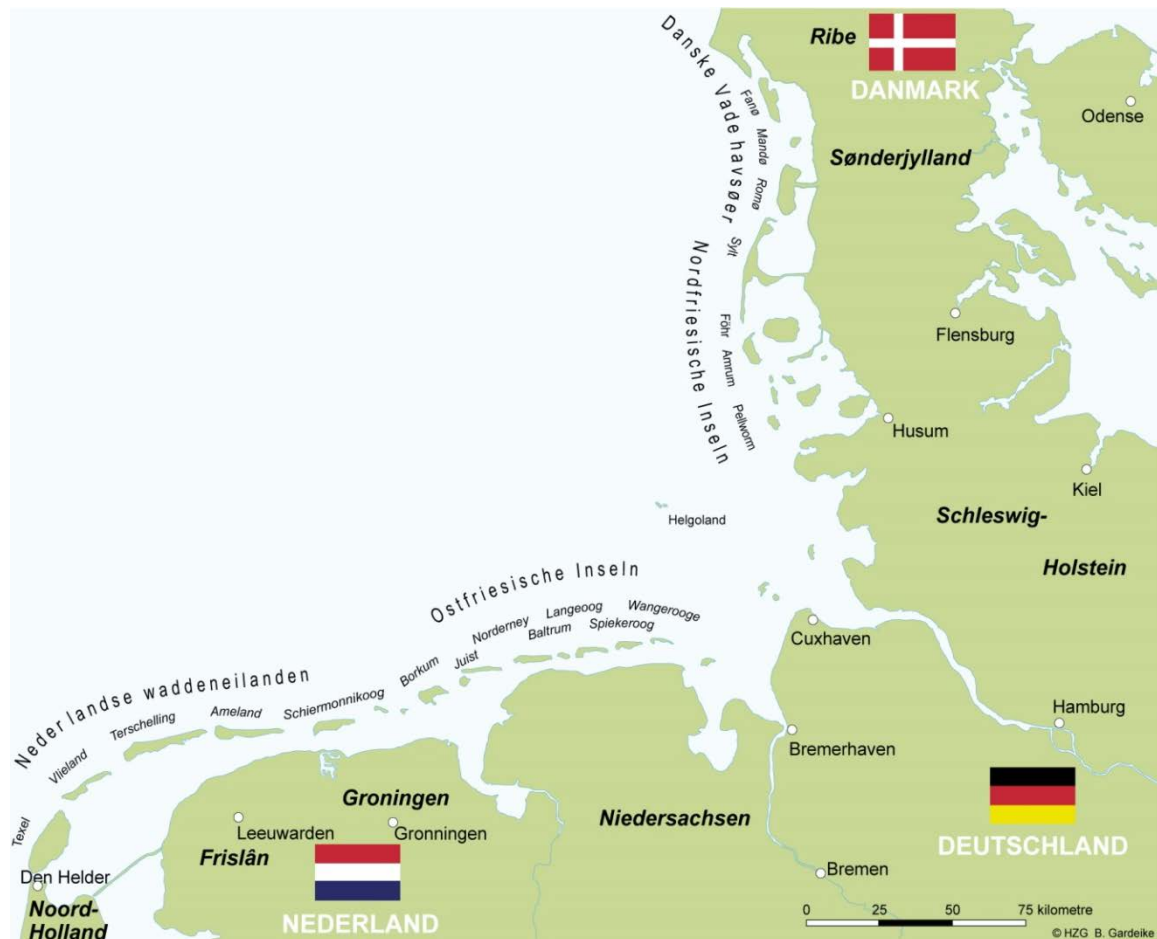


Figure 2.1 Survey area

The survey was available online from July 2012 until December 2012. At the end of this period 540 people had opened the survey. 407 participated and answered one or more of the questions. 238 participants answered all the questions (69 Danish, 103 German and 66 Dutch people in the age of 16-93, mean: 50 years, gender: slightly more women than men). These 238 responses were used for the evaluation. The participants in this survey are from all parts of the Wadden Sea Region, though inhabitants of the islands of Texel and Fanø made up an important part of the contributors.

Following the themes in the survey the results are presented in this report in the same order: first the answers about the awareness of Heimat – Thuis – Hjemsted, then the answers to the questions about cultural qualities, followed by the opinions about ecological themes. The inferences are brought together in the conclusion (chapter 6)

which will discuss commonalities and differences in the awareness about 'Heimat – Thuis – Hjemsted' as well as the perception of resources and possible threats for the Trilateral Wadden Sea Region in Denmark, Germany and The Netherlands.

The response rate was low. We had expected a larger number of participants. Unfortunately, several advertisement rounds did not motivate more people to take part. As a consequence, the analysis cannot be based on statistical methods. In the following report, we abstain from providing the results of the survey in the form of numerical data. Nevertheless, the inhabitants who answered all questions can be regarded as a group of people who are fully dedicated to communicate their opinion about the region, independent of age. The results we present in this report reflect their opinion. The answers provided in Figures 3.1 to 5.2 are sorted according to relevance and frequency of mention in the survey.

3 A SENSE OF HEIMAT – THUIS – HJEMSTED

*'From your answers we hope to learn what you mean with the word Heimat-
Thuis- Hjemsted'*

The German word *Heimat* is difficult to translate into Dutch or Danish. In both languages the word *Heimat* is well understood but strongly related to specific German characteristics. A close translation for Denmark is *Hjemsted* or *Hvjemstavn*. After further enquiry the word *Hjemsted* was chosen. For The Netherlands the word *Thuis* expresses in the best way the meaning of *Heimat*. The enquiry questions commonalities between inhabitants in the Wadden Sea Region of the three countries. The three words *Heimat*, *Thuis* and *Hjemsted* were brought together in the second question - **What is Heimat, Thuis, Hjemsted for you?** with the aim that possible slight differences in the meaning of each word would be levelled by the other two. In all the following questions the translation was used: *Heimat* for the German, *Thuis* for the Dutch and *Hjemsted* for the Danish Wadden Sea Region.

What is 'Heimat – Thuis – Hjemsted' for the participants? The awareness of 'Heimat – Thuis – Hjemsted' relates to emotional, social and spatial components. Compared to the opposite, expressed in the words feeling alienated, it becomes clearer: 'Heimat – Thuis – Hjemsted', in English home, homescape or homestead, is the place to relate to in times of feeling alienated. 'Heimat – Thuis – Hjemsted' is about a feeling, an emotion, a connection with both a time and a place in the same moment. Such a strong combination holds also a capacity, in this case a potential to shelter and nourish body and mind, to which one relates when describing 'Heimat – Thuis – Hjemsted'.

3.1 What is Heimat – Thuis – Hjemsted for you?

The participants described their idea of 'Heimat – Thuis – Hjemsted' from an individual point of view. They answered the open question with descriptions which have been divided into seven groups: ROOTS, FEELING AT HOME, FEELING WELL, FAMILY, NATURE, HOMESICKNESS and VAGUE DESCRIPTION/DON'T KNOW.

ROOTS can be understood as a part of a plant that typically lies below the surface of the soil. The major functions of roots are absorption of nutrients, anchoring of the plant, supporting it, storage of nutrients and vegetative reproduction. The participants in this study clearly mention such aspects as an important part of their awareness of 'Heimat –

Thuis – Hjemsted’: Their answers show that they are anchored in their region through various bonds, that they take nutrition from it and that they expect that their roots will be visible in their offspring.

Table 3.1: Categories in the answers to the question ‘What is Heimat, Thuis, Hjemsted for you?’

Roots	<i>being from there, have roots there, born there, childhood/youth/lived there forever, cultural identification</i>
Feeling at Home	<i>feeling at home, the place I feel connected with, house, live, work, or the name of the village/city</i>
Homesickness	<i>connected through the feeling of homesickness</i>
Feeling well	<i>feeling well, feeling safe, feeling nested, feeling good, feeling at peace</i>
Family	<i>family, friends, acquaintances, people, feeling connected socially</i>
Nature	<i>descriptions of nature</i>
Don't know	<i>do not know, do not understand, difficult to answer, ??</i>

The categories ROOTS, FEELING WELL, FEELING AT HOME and NATURE are mentioned the most in connection with the descriptions of ‘Heimat – Thuis – Hjemsted’.

Remarkable is that:

- Not one of the Dutch participants connects 'Thuis' with ROOTS, whereas the Germans and the Danish participants express a strong connection with ‘Heimat – Thuis – Hjemsted’ through their ROOTS.
- For about one third of the Dutch and the Danish participants FEELING AT HOME is connected with ‘Heimat – Thuis – Hjemsted’. For the Germans these are less (roughly one fifth).
- FEELING WELL does not count heavily for the Danish, but it does for the German and for the Dutch participants.
- Only some of the Danish participants mention NATURE in their descriptions of ‘Hjemsted’.
- FAMILY gets a relatively smaller score in all three groups.
- A few per cent of the participants answer with a VAGUE DESCRIPTION or I DON'T KNOW. A connection with ‘Heimat – Thuis – Hjemsted’ through homesickness as an expected feeling when not at home is also negligible.

The participants of all three groups mention the importance of FEELING AT HOME and FEELING WELL in their awareness of 'Heimat – Thuis – Hjemsted'. FAMILY gets a relatively lower score for all three. The German and Danish participants share the awareness of ROOTS. The German and Dutch participants share the importance of NATURE.

3.2 Where is your Heimat – Thuis – Hjemsted?

The largest part of all three groups mentions literally the place where they live. About three quarter locate their 'Heimat – Thuis – Hjemsted' in the Wadden Sea Region.

Some German participants have several 'Heimaten' including the Wadden Sea Region and some locate their 'Heimat' outside the Wadden Sea Region. None of the Dutch and Danish participants mentions that they have more than one 'Thuis' or 'Hjemsted'. A small number of the Dutch participants and some of the Danish participants locate their 'Thuis' or 'Hjemsted' outside the Wadden Sea Region.

3.3 How big is the area that you count as your Heimat – Thuis – Hjemsted?

This question was closed with a range of possible answers to tick. In all three groups ca. one quarter of the participants consider also THE WADDEN SEA REGION as 'Heimat – Thuis – Hjemsted'. The largest group in the count are the German participants with more than half mentioning THE REGION IN WHICH I LIVE, together with one third of the Danish and a little less than one third of the Dutch participants.

THE PLACE WHERE I LIVE AND SURROUNDINGS scores lower for the Germans, higher for the Dutch and even higher for the Danish participants. The categories THE PLACE WHERE I LIVE and NONE attracted hardly any of the participants.

A larger part of the Dutch participants gave a comment in the category OTHERS and stated that they consider the entire island as their 'Thuis'. When added to the category THE REGION IN WHICH I LIVE, the outcome is the same as in Germany, more than half of the participants. But the score may not count for the entire Dutch Wadden Sea region, because a large part of the Dutch participants is living on the island Texel.

The answers to this question show that there is a strong connection with the Wadden Sea Region in general, but also that the participants' feeling of 'Heimat-Thuis-Hjemsted' spreads over a larger area than the actual place where they live (see Figure 3.1).

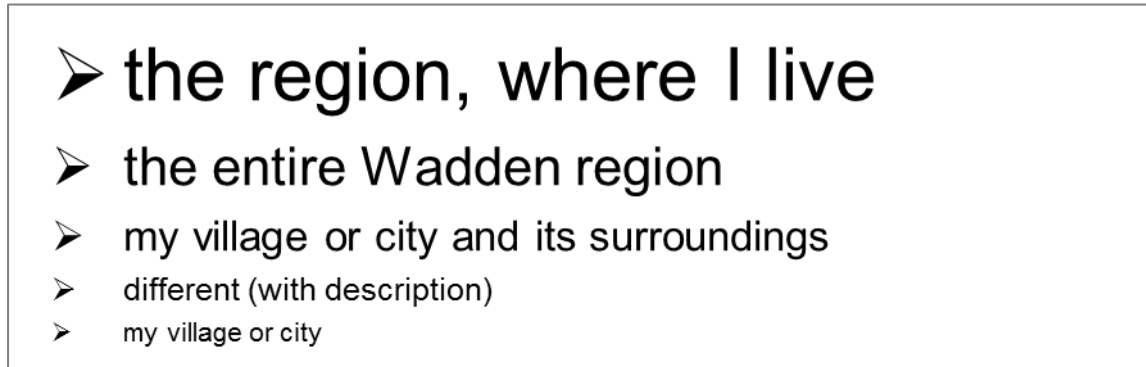


Figure 3.1: How big is the area that you count as your Heimat – Thuis – Hjemsted? Answers sorted according to their relevance in the survey. The larger part of the participants connects their feeling of 'Heimat-Thuis-Hjemsted' with the region in which they live and/or the entire Wadden Sea Region.

3.4 What do you do to maintain the feeling of Heimat – Thuis – Hjemsted?

How do the participants care for their 'Heimat – Thuis – Hjemsted'? The answers to this open question have again been divided into groups.

Table 3.2: Categories for the question: What do you do to maintain the feeling of Heimat – Thuis – Hjemsted?

<i>Environment/ecology</i>	<i>concerns about wastes, prefer public transport</i>
<i>Active participation</i>	<i>participate in all kinds of ways, pay taxes, keep clean, organisation work, spread information about the region</i>
<i>Nature</i>	<i>participation in NGO's etc for nature care</i>
<i>Care for own house and garden</i>	<i>answers in which the own garden and house are being cared for</i>
<i>Engage politically and to be critical</i>	<i>people who organise in action groups and engage in political agendas</i>
<i>Show enthusiasm for the topic</i>	
<i>Little or nothing</i>	
<i>Don't know</i>	

The answers show that most of the German and Danish participants are active to keep their 'Heimat – Thuis – Hjemsted' sound. They prefer public transport, are careful with their wastes, pay attention to avoid pollution, pay their taxes, participate in organisations and show enthusiasm about their region. The German participants seem to be engaged in all possible levels including politics. The Danish are active in a more individual way, including politics, as where the Dutch participants engage mostly in politics. There is a group of participants in all three groups who report to do little or nothing. Being active in NGO's for nature is an important value for one quarter of the German participants, but it seems much less so for the Dutch and Danish participants, even though they describe nature in very different ways as we will see further on in this report.



Figure 3.2: What do you do to maintain the feeling of Heimat – Thuis – Hjemsted? The responses, divided in the categories and sorted according to their relevance in the survey. It shows that a large group participates actively.

Predominantly, the participating inhabitants love their region. They decidedly live there and care for their 'Heimat – Thuis – Hjemsted'. They all do that in their own specific way. One group shows a larger interest to care for the Wadden Sea Region through politics and the other groups engage more through individual contributions to networks and organisations. Bonds through participation in organisations are an important part of the social structures in the German and Danish Wadden Sea Region. One other important fact is that they share a common goal: the joy of being in the Wadden Sea Region as an outstanding area with specific characteristics in terms of climate, nature, inhabitants and habits, expressed in many forms.

4 THE REGION WHERE YOU LIVE

'With the answers to the following eight questions you describe where you live'

With the answers to this block of eight questions the participants describe the region where they live and some of the characteristic cultural aspects which are, according to them, strongly connected with their region.

4.1 How do you describe the region in which you live, to a friend or a visitor?

This was the introductory question. All the participants described the region in qualities which come in large quantities and volumes. They mention the always changing horizons, the skies, the clouds, the marshes, the sand plates and dunes, the water in the sea and in the Wadden reservoirs, the tides, the air and the quietness. Almost all the participants describe what they visualise when they explain the Wadden to an outsider. And they all use the same words to describe the nature that strikes them each day again.

None of the German participants expresses negative determinants in this question. Although, they see threats to the Wadden Sea region, e. g. industry, ecological problems or the windmills, according to the question concerning possible threats for the region (see section 5.3). For the Dutch and Danish participants this is different: They combine their praise for the Wadden with their critiques about the developments. See the following examples:

Two Dutch answers to this question:

Heerlijk landelijk en aan de Waddenzee waar ecologie en economie moeten samenwerken aan een gezond leven - Lovely rural and close to the Wadden Sea, where ecology and economy must collaborate for a healthy life.

Als een prachtig ruim gebied waar ik me erg gelukkig voel, maar wel met af en toe kritiek op de manier waarop ermee wordt omgesprongen. - A beautiful spacious area where I feel very happy, but with some critique on the way it is being treated.

Two Danish answers to this question:

Vi har en pragtfuld natur som vi har passat på i århundreder. Vi benytter den ved jagt og fiskeri som vore forældre. Desværre har overordnede myndigheder frataget os en del af vor kulturelle arv ved at forbyde en del lokale aktiviteter vedr. fiskeri og jagt. Af samme

grund kan jeg ikke anbefale at vi undertegner 'Verdens Naturarv'. - We have a wonderful nature that we trade for centuries. We use it for hunting and fishing as our 'forældre'. But authorities deprived us of a part of our cultural heritage by banning some local activities concerning fishing and hunting. Because of the same reason I cannot recommend that we sign the 'World Natural Heritage'.

Mennesker har plads og viser meget hensyn til hinanden. Det er billigt at bo her. Der mangler kulturelle tilbud til alle aldersgrupper. Jeg vil ikke bo her når jeg bliver gammel. - People have space and show much respect to each other. It is cheap to stay here. There is no cultural offer for all age groups. I will not stay here when I get old.

Fantastisk natur, frisk luft og et skønt vadehav med mulighed for at sejle og opleve dyrelivet på nært hold - Great scenery, but there is pressure underway to being completely ruined by industrial agriculture.

Almost all of the participants welcome and invite visitors to their place, maybe like anyone in the world likes to do so. But there is a difference. Wadden Sea Region inhabitants describe in a modest way their place as a region with outstanding qualities in quantities that stretch over hundreds of square kilometres. They are well aware that there is more of the same beyond the horizon. Quite a place to be invited to. At the same time they want to give a warning that the qualities of the region are in danger.



4.2 What have the people who live in the Wadden Sea Region especially in common?

This was the consecutive question which targeted at the self-description and self-awareness of the people in the Wadden Sea Region. They live with the nature around them and they share that way of living with the others in their region. The friendly character of the people is often mentioned, the artistry and the craftsmanship in the region as well. They call themselves a bit stubborn, inward, yet welcoming to “people from the main land”. But they seek their own solutions and are more likely to accept help from fellow Wadden Sea Region inhabitants than from the “main land” or from government in town. They say about that they are calmer and that the sea and the air are important for their health. They communicate “We can manage ourselves alright. – Nature did and so did we over the ages”. And exactly that image is important for the inhabitants of the Wadden Sea Region.

4.3 Which saga or story do you connect with your region?

The German participants give predominantly two stories. “Der Schimmelreiter” (Schleswig-Holstein) and Störtebeker (Niedersachsen). One other story mentioned more than once is the story of Rungholt, a city in North Friesland that was washed away in the sea in the 14th century. Almost three quarters of the German participants answer with these story titles and a few others. One fifth of the answers relate to stories about historical events that shaped their area.

Half of the Dutch participants answer the question with a list of titles: Rixt van het Oerd, Syl de Strandjutter, De Strooppot and many other titles. There is no title that really stands out. A good quarter of the answers mention a story about a historical event that was important for the Wadden Sea Region and almost one fifth has no answer.

Two thirds of the Danish participants mention stories or texts about historical events which were important for their Wadden. Others mention “Der Schimmelreiter” but there is also a list of other titles and some sagas in the answers.

4.4 Which painter/writer do you connect with your region?

The participants in the German Wadden Sea Region mention especially two artists who are, to their opinion, connected with the Wadden Sea Region: The writer Theodor Storm and the painter Emil Nolde. Both artists lived and worked in North Friesland. This is now part of Schleswig-Holstein, Germany, but in earlier times it was part of Denmark. Being so close to Denmark, both artists are well known in the Danish Wadden Sea Region as well. Their works express a deep love for nature, the character of strong people, the wrestling with the sea and the nature. In the Dutch Wadden Sea Region the writer Jan Wolkers is mentioned as the best known artist. Jan Wolkers was not born on Texel, but came to live there from the year 1980. Blok van de Velde, a painter, is mentioned in connection with the identity of the Wadden.

All participants in the three groups make clear that art is important for the Wadden Sea Region. Interesting is that the three groups provide a long list of artists:

In the Dutch Wadden Sea Region: Jan Wolkers, Henk Schoorl, Godfried Bomans, Eddy Roos, Kees Kikkert, Ja. P. Thijsen, Geurt Buscher, Toon de Haas, Voskuil, Reinier Sybrand Bakels, Betzy Akersloot, Erik van Ommen en Harry Tielemans, Souwtje de Wijn, Nico Dros, Ad van der Vlis, Souwtje de Wijn, H.N. Boer, Werkman, Martin van Waning, Pieter Wilkens, T. Oud, Rink, Van der Velde, Ellen Davidzon, Heuf, Toon de Haas, Gert Roos, Teun de Winter, Francine Schrikkema, Cor Bruin, Henk Helmantel, Siert Bos, Betsy Berg, Boudewijn Büch, Aafke Steenhuis, Kunny Luchtenberg, Feitse, Gerard Toonder, Erskin Childres, Geurt Busser, Fritz Harmsen, Van der Beek, C.O. Jellema, Marjolein Bastin, Lettinga, Durk v/d Ploeg, Benny Sievertsen, Niek Welboren, Nico Dros, Toon Fey, Pieter de Vries, Salko de Wolf, Ilse Brul, Glas, Ede Staal.

In the German Wadden Sea Region: Emil Nolde, Theodor Storm, Klaus Groth, Günter Grass, Peter Maler, Ole West, Rotermund, Friedrich Hebbel, Mommsen, Erskine Childers, Hein Hoop, Hannes Wader, Albert Johannsen, Jacob Alberts, Thomas Fontane, Gustav Frenssen, Jessen, Oluf Braren, Jan Franzen, Manuel Knortz, Ratzwill, Arthur Eden-Sillenstede, Sandra Lüpkes, Berend de Vries, Werner Buß, Hermann Allmers, Heinrich Heine, Willi Bredel, Peter Rühmkorf, Jansen, Santiano, Margret Stadeler, Thadäus Troll, Eugen Roth, Ubbo Emmius, Mann, Carl Ludwig Jessen, Alf Depser, Alex Eckener, Poppe Folkerts, Lessing, Hermann Löns, Bakhuizen, Wilhelmine Siefkes, Rudolf Eucken, Hans Trimborn, Waldemar Krause.

And in the Danish Wadden Sea Region: Emil Nolde, Theodor Storm, Dan Thuesen, Peter Nicolaisen, Petersen Røm, Tønder, Ernst Tranekær, Poul Ørum, Marco Brodde, Dykke Johansen, Stefan Zweig, Erling Jepsen, Jens Rosendahl, Rosenberg, Petersen, Erik Schultz, Johnny Madsen, Hans Edward Nørregard-Nielsen, Jens Henrik Jensen, Lars Waldemar, Marie-Louise Exner, Johan Julius Exner, Henrik Holger Drachmann, Johan Rohde, Niels Holbak, Jacob Agersnap, Erwin Nøbbe, Egon Svarrer, Ortvin Nøbbe, Finn Hjortskov, Jens Henrik Jensen, Lars Waldemar, Ørum, Frello, H E Sørensen, Christen Lyngbo, Robert Jacobsen, Erling Jepsen, Jens Rosendal, Hans Vadehavssange, Bert Kelm, H.E.Sørensen, Fritz Joachim Falk, A. Petersen-Røm, Heinemann, Leif Panduro, Kristian Købke, Else Pia Martinsen Erz, Lauritzen, Fanømalerne.

4.5 Which cultural institutions or events did you visit in the past year?

The attention for culture and art is visible in the visits the participating inhabitants pay to museums, events and exhibitions. Exhibitions about nature and culture in the Wadden Sea Region get a high score. The difference in attention for history related exhibitions or events and modern art related exhibitions and events is not very big. Modern art related events get a relatively high score.

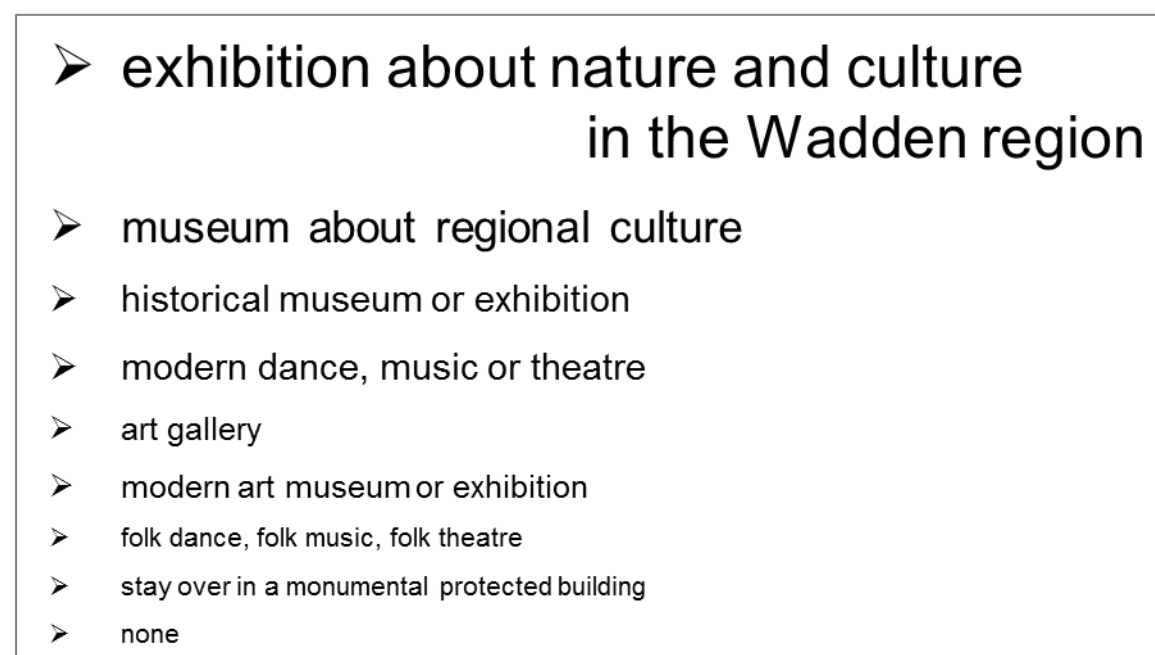


Figure 4.1: Which cultural institutions or events did you visit in the past year? Answers sorted according to their relevance in the survey.

If they spend a night out then the Dutch participants seem to prefer a historical building more than the Danish participants and the German participants.

A careful remark is in its place here: The survey did not research the availability of facilities, nor the average travel distance to such locations.

4.6 Do you find that modern art or modern artists are part of the Wadden Sea Culture?

More than two thirds of all the participants agree that modern art has a place in the culture of the region. Modern art is welcome in the Wadden. The Dutch participants are a bit more conservative, and the German and Danish are more open to modern art. Added comments to some of the answers are both positive and negative. The positive group argues that the Wadden Sea Region has always been open to new influences and the equally large negative group states that the modern art is either not welcome or “it must fit here”.

The answers to the questions about art and artists show that the participants cannot be persuaded to vote for one or two artists. They vote for the entire artistic climate in the Wadden Sea Region, it adds to the identity of which they are part.

4.7 Which historical event(s) do you connect with your region?

When the participants are asked which special events they connect with their regions, the answers go mainly in three different directions: war, floods/natural disasters and events in history. The German participants focus on different events than the Dutch and Danish participants do. More than half the German participants connect water disasters (storm surges, floods, etc.) with their region and one fifth connect the region with warfare (over the centuries and all kinds of wars), but none of them relates to general history. The Dutch participants mention the floods less frequent and almost a third mention warfare. They mainly relate to general history such as the events that shaped the Wadden area as a landscape and as a culture. They mention for instance the Ice Age, how the islands came to be, events with ships, economic developments, socialism, etc. The Danish relate to floods and to general history in a comparable way. They mention warfare the least often of the three groups.

- catastrophes with water
(flooding, drowning etc.)
- history in general
- war over the centuries
- various events / personal events
- ? / no idea / vague answer

Figure 4.2: Which historical event(s) do you connect with your region? Answers sorted according to their relevance in the survey.

There are memorials for both the storm surges and the warfare all along the Wadden Sea region. Such disasters have been equally impressive and important in The Netherlands, Germany and in Denmark. Therefore, it is remarkable that the German participants mention water disasters in a much larger number. The German participants seem to perceive their region from a different point of view which is also reflected in the answers to the question about possible threats to their region (chapter 5.3, page 27).

4.8 Is there a typical dish, smell, taste in the region in which you live?

Are there commonalities in the Danish, German, Dutch dishes, tastes, in the smells they perceive? Almost every participant writes about the SALTY SMELL in the air, the FRESHNESS OF THE WINDS, the EFFECTS ON HEALTH. The taste that is strongest is a SALTY taste.

The dishes they all mention as connected with their 'Heimat – Thuis – Hjemsted' contain seafood: FISH and SHRIMP. Some mention sea weeds. CABBAGE is mentioned in the Danish and German Wadden Sea Region. In the Dutch Wadden Sea Region you will find FISH, LAMB meat (Texel) and (cran-)BERRIES, a few mention dishes with PEAS AND BEANS and one third of the Dutch participants mention a dish called I DON'T KNOW.

There is a remarkable difference between the groups: almost one third of the Dutch participants and half as much of the Danish can not give a typical dish (answering I DON'T KNOW). All the German participants do give a typical dish. And where many German and Danish participants add an extra comment with names of specific delicious dishes, the

Dutch participants add none. So what do they eat? Where do they get their food? Is the conclusion that German and Danish participants make an effort to obtain fresh food and create special dishes more than the Dutch do? The idea about a Dutch Kitchen (hardly existing and with little fame) gets fresh fuel here. *“Suppose Danish, German and Dutch inhabitants would share a walk along the Wadden Sea. They would love and enjoy the land and sea scape just as much. But then imagine they would prepare a normal average lunch ... What is normal for a Dane or a German, would probably appear as a feast for a Dutch person.”*

A very special place in the answers about 'a typical dish, a typical smell and a typical taste' is taken by a smell that conquers every smell, taste and dish: Pommes, Patatje or Fritten. Many participants mention them as a pest, a terror, a plague and as a part of the growing problem (or blessing for others) of tourism which spoils their environment in many ways, including the visual. But snacks have a special quality, developed over decades through natural selection: the capability to block all impulses except the feeling of being hungry. And the sea air makes one hungry. Bingo! One more example of how the Wadden Sea Region came to serve the economy! (See 'resources' section 5.2).



Figure 4.3: Is there a typical dish, smell, taste in the region in which you live? Dutch, German and Danish answers sorted according to their relevance in the survey. Sea food is mentioned most often by the participants, followed by cabbage and lamb.

The German participants mention under OTHERS: *meine selbstgemachte Marmelade, Mehlbüttel, Fliederbeersuppe, Salzwiesenlamm, Schafskäse, Würstchen mit Kartoffelsalat, Sanddornmarmelade, Sauerfleisch, rote Grütze.*

The Danish mention under OTHERS: *riskage, surre - stuvet strandvejbred, brød, kager, slagter varer og om sommeren friske bær og grøntsager, dabs, solæg, sønderjysk kaffebord, sønderjyske frikadeller, surrib, sønderjysk hvidkål, fanø smørrebrød.*

The Dutch mention under OTHERS: ...

5 NATURE, RESOURCES AND THREATS

With the next section of questions we inquired for the mental picture of the surrounding countryside, of the nature and of possible threats which could happen to the Wadden Sea Region – in the opinion of the participants. What is nature for you? This was the introducing open question, in which the participants were asked to describe what nature means for them. We find a typical way of answering the question among the Dutch participants. Most of them answer with abstractions: *fantastisch, vrijheid, inspiratie* (*fantastic, freedom, inspiration*). The German and Danish participants are more down to earth in their answers. They mention a typical form or appearance of the landscape, like *die gewachsene Landschaft aus Meer, Watt und Strand, Wald und Feld, einheimische Flora und Fauna, Licht, Luft und Stille/Naturgeräusche* (*the naturally grown landscape from the sea, the Wadden, beaches, forests and fields, local flora and fauna, light, air and silence or natural sounds*) or for the landscape *utæmmet, vildt, storslået* (*untamed, wild, magnificent*).

5.1 What is nature to you?

The answers to the open question 'What is nature for you?' were divided in five categories: NATURE UNTOUCHED BY MANKIND, NATURE AS IT IS NOW, TOUCHED OR UNTOUCHED, ABSTRACT DESCRIPTIONS, NATURE AND MAN-MADE NATURE TOGETHER and VAGUE/NO ANSWER.

NATURE UNTOUCHED is a category defining a nature that is left to itself, that there is no influence from the side of mankind. It may make wonder who of both is either imprisoned or excluded, but it simply means that mankind is not drilling, dredging, touring, eating, rubbishing around in such areas, or in other words that man does not behave different from the other animals in that nature.

NATURE AS IT IS NOW, TOUCHED OR UNTOUCHED means the actual state of the nature at the moment.

NATURE AND MAN-MADE NATURE TOGETHER is a different category from the previous one since it points to a nature that can still be influenced, nature as a partaker in a dynamic process.

- nature as it is now
- nature untouched by mankind
- abstract descriptions
- nature and man-made nature together
- vague / no answer

Figure 5.1: What is nature to you? Categories of answers sorted according to their relevance in the survey.

ABSTRACT DESCRIPTIONS such as *peacefulness* or *life quality*, describe nature in relation to the own experience. These descriptions don't really give a physical qualification. One may obtain peacefulness in the water and another may obtain it in a harbour.

For the German participants NATURE UNTOUCHED and NATURE AS IT IS NOW score high, followed immediately by NATURE AND MAN-MADE NATURE TOGETHER. They don't go into ABSTRACTIONS like many of the Dutch. The Danish participants also don't go into ABSTRACTIONS. A higher percentage seems to accept man-made nature when compared to German participants.

There is a contrast: almost half the Dutch participants describe nature in abstractions but only a smaller fraction of the Germans and the Danish participants use abstractions. What are such abstractions? Examples from the answers in the three groups: *Lebensqualität, meine Suche nach Gott, Entspannung, Ruhe, Inspiration, Rijkdom, adem, Vrijheid – kostbaar, Gods geschenk, fritidsliv, frihed, stilhed - åbne vidder*. A nature described in such abstractions is even more vulnerable to external influences. Every change will affect the value of these abstractions which are part of one's life.

There is another contrast in the answers: the Danish participants tend to describe the nature as it is right now. The Germans and the Dutch participants do so to less extend. Participants in all three groups describe a nature that is untouched by mankind. The German participants especially favour this kind of nature more than the Dutch and Danish. But in reality there are no more untouched parts of nature. Maybe NATURE UNTOUCHED should be regarded as a wish, as a scream for help.

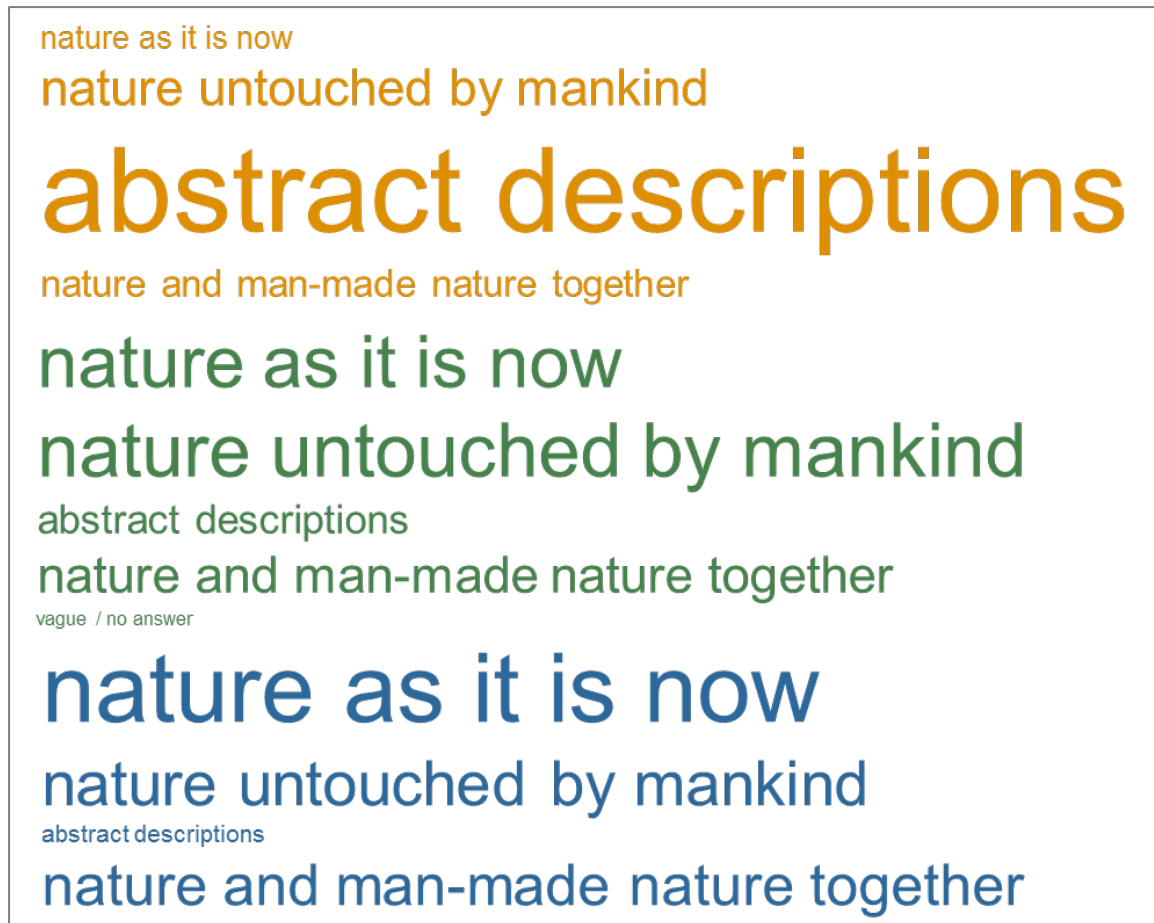


Figure 5.2: What is nature to you? Categories of Dutch, German and Danish answers sorted according to their relevance in the survey.

NATURE AS IT IS NOW has been made by mankind. If we combine it with NATURE AND MAN-MADE ENVIRONMENT TOGETHER then we get a score which expresses the need for consideration and deliberation. But in the answers describing future threats to the region it is exactly the deliberation with governments and nature protection that is regarded as a major threat to the nature in the Wadden Sea Region.

It looks like the Dutch participants would oppose any attack on their landscape more than the Danish participants would. With this in mind we go to the next question and answers, where people are asked to name the positive possibilities in the Wadden.

5.2 What – in your opinion – are the natural resources of your region?

Posed as an open question, we received answers which point out an almost unlimited number of potential resources. The category LANDSCAPE in all its variations gets the

highest rating in all three groups. The subcategories are general, economical, islands, beaches, marshes, rivers, beauty, views, biodiversity, protected landscape, and land without buildings. Many participants mention the landscape as a resource, but they all use a different quality of the landscape as a resource. LANDSCAPE covers almost half of all the suggested resources in the Dutch answers. For the German and for the Danish participants this is about one fifth. Another remarkable score is that ATMOSPHERE lists up to about one tenth of the Dutch answers. For the German participants it is much less. We may conclude that there are great differences among the participants concerning the value of the landscape as a resource. It seems that more Dutch than Danish participants vote for the landscape as a resource that provides nature. The Danish participants seem to vote for a landscape that provides economical possibilities.

TOURISM gets low scores amongst the Dutch, the German and Danish participants' remarks. We will see that tourism is also regarded as a threat (comp. section 5.3). All groups regard THE WADDEN as a resource, as well as THE SEA. The German participants regard WIND, WATER, AIR and SUN as resources of the area, next they mention ENERGY and FISH. For the Dutch and Danish participants this is almost the same but the SUN is almost completely left out. No participant mentions clouds as a resource. That is strange for two reasons; the clouds cool the air, bring rain or shelter, and the clouds are a very important part of the Wadden skies.



There is something with the list of mentioned resources: They are all large scale resources. No participant explains how, for example, a moor can be a resource. Or if wind is regarded as a resource for energy or as breeze when walking along the beach. Almost no resources are mentioned which are on an individual level. Do the participants make themselves dependent on macro-economic forces? At the same time they protest against that, as we will see in the answers to the next question:

5.3 What are – in your opinion – the possible dangers for your region?

A resource can be a threat as well. A simple example for this: French fries, or for the same instance tourism and power plants also are regarded as threats and resources at the same time. There are many examples. Regarding the answers to the next question, 'What do you consider a threat to your region?' we will find that the threats can be quite similar to the resources.

A big difference between threats and resources is that the mentioned threats are almost always far above the individual level as where the mentioned resources which can also be on the individual level. Therefore, it is strange that most of the mentioned resources are also beyond the individual level. The answers to the question about threats unveil an interesting point: threats from the ecology front are regarded larger as from industry. THREATS FROM THE WATER score relatively low in the German Wadden Sea, for The Netherlands and Denmark. The water is not the biggest worry at the moment, even though most of the German participants mention disasters with water as the historical event connected with their Wadden.

Highest scores (from higher to lower score): POLITICS, LANDSCAPING, TOURISM, ECOLOGY, ECONOMY etc. The Danish and Dutch participants are most worried about their politicians. The Dutch participants are also worried about TOURISM (but please remind that many of the respondents in The Netherlands come from Texel island). For the German participants, ECOLOGY related topics are a great concern. Most of the threats are related to the larger political and economical issues, which are believed to affect the quality of life of individuals.

Let's have a look at the answers of the Dutch participants. They describe themselves as independent, they love the abstract, atmospherically and natural character of their environment, they do not like tourism and they fear the influence of outsiders such as politicians and mono culture farmers. What feeds their worries for the future? Most mentioned are POLITICIANS, next is TOURISM, then LANDSCAPE PLANNING, ECONOMICAL FORCES, ECOLOGY and AGRICULTURE as the important threats. Their enemies are the people who plan for them, a danger of loss of independence and individuality, which results in landscape make-overs.

Then let's look at the German participants. They are all living east of Delfzijl and Eemshaven, where the power plants and harbours were sown and grow. Threats to these participants of the survey have an ecological character in the first place, for example related to water quality. But their biggest worry concern DRILLING, DREDGING AND INDUSTRY, CO₂ STORAGE, LANDSCAPE PLANNING and TOURISM, POLITICS and FISHERY. Many mention in an additional remark the POWER PLANTS and the industrial activities in Eemshaven and in Delfzijl.



For the Danish participants it is different: the ranking of the perceived threats in the region is POLITICIANS, LANDSCAPE PLANNING, TOURISM and ECOLOGY.

They all more or less give the same picture, except that the German participants seem not to be so worried about the influence of their politicians, but they are very worried about the Dutch decisions and policy, regarding the ecological disasters they expect from that side. So maybe, indirectly, they express a worry about their own politicians as well. The resources mentioned by the German participants are based upon good ecology management and the threats they mention will spoil that ecology. The Dutch participants see nature, sea, wind and water likewise as a resource and politicians and tourists (both come from the main land or from the centre of the main land) as a threat.

If one looks at the mentioned threats and resources, one cannot avoid the impression that participants feel that their 'Heimat – Thuis – Hjemsted', their nature and horizon are under pressure of great changes and that they have the right to be worried. They fear the industrialisation, the drilling and dredging, the Europeanization and the globalisation that disturbs the nature in the Wadden.

6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The aim of the survey was to find out if there are commonalities between the inhabitants of the Danish, German and Dutch Wadden Sea Region. One commonality was there long before the inhabitants: the sea. With the sea came the variations in coastlines through the tide. The inhabitants of this coastal region, when it still was one region – before the times when the borders between countries divided the inhabitants, had probably more in common than the inhabitants of the Danish, German and Dutch Wadden Sea Region have now. For centuries they shared a similar effort to survive a commonly understood threat which was at the same time an important source for their lives. Their lives and culture were dominated by the sea and the weather. This struggle for survival and at the same time the respect for and the joy from a nature stronger than mankind created a culture that managed to gain a living without losing that enormous respect for nature. It shaped their modesty, respect, pride and self-awareness.

Sea, nature and man are probably more in balance after centuries of landscape planning and modification, but these characteristics are still important for the inhabitants.

A large number of people found their 'Heimat – Thuis – Hjemsted' in the Wadden Sea region. Over the ages these people became categorised as citizens of either Denmark, Germany or The Netherlands. What is that place, where they live, to them? The three groups share that they feel at home and they feel well in their 'Heimat – Thuis – Hjemsted'. The fact that their family lives there gets a relatively lower score.

The inhabitants feel at home and they feel well in a place where the powers of nature are always near. These powers play a part in FEELING WELL and FEELING AT HOME. A large group of German and Danish participants mention the ROOTS as an important factor in the awareness of 'Heimat' and 'Hjemsted'. For the Dutch participants it is no point of interest whether their roots were there or not. A large group of German and Dutch participants mentions NATURE as an important part of their 'Heimat' and 'Thuis'.

Most of the participants, who share that they are living in the right place, do this because of different reasons. They feel that they are connected with the whole region, not only with their village or city. If they describe their region to a friend, they will talk about the entire Wadden area, the tidal waters and all that is there to enjoy at different times of the days, months and year. They relate to the horizon dividing the picture in sea and sky. But

the German participants are very hesitant to mention their worries or fears about the future of the Wadden. The Danish and the Dutch participants are more reluctant at that point: they communicate their worries or griefs along with their admiration for their Wadden.

Half the participants have been living there for more than 21 years. What the Danish and Dutch participants do not share, is the valuation of roots and nature. If we add that the family lives here, and that having ROOTS plays a role in their awareness of Hjemsted, then we find that the Danish participants want to relate to a culture, in which their family has been living, where they know everyone and everything, where social connections are important.

The larger part of the Dutch participants has been born in the Wadden Sea Region and lives there longer than 13 years, but none of them sees ROOTS as an important part in their 'Thuis'. They value nature instead as an important reason for their choice to live in the Wadden Sea Region.

Newcomers (living 1 to 8 years in their present stead) form a larger group among the German participants, twice as much when compared to the others. In this regard it is interesting that the German newcomers of the participants are equally divided between 1 to 3 years and 3 to 8 years. In the Danish Wadden Sea Region the group who lives there between 3 and 8 years is 2,5 times larger than the group who lives there between 1 and 3 years. Of the Dutch participants both groups are equally divided but way smaller. It would be interesting to find the reason for the difference. What attracts Germans to the Wadden Sea Region?

If they feel so much at home, be it for various reasons, and being clear that they want to care for that feeling, then they certainly want to make an effort to maintain that feeling. The inhabitants gather in interest groups. If these interest groups' aim is to care for the environment, for the nature, to spread enthusiasm about their region, to live in harmony with the region both environmentally and socially and/or to participate in politics, then this participation shows the care for their 'Heimat – Thuis – Hjemsted'.

The number of German participants is very well spread over various interests, they care for nature, environment, participate in politics and maintain a standard of engagement as a citizen. Relatively few stick only to their house and garden. That is also proven by their answers in which they regard the region or the Wadden Sea Region as their 'Heimat'.

For the Dutch participants it is a bit different. They enjoy their Wadden as much as others. They ventilate their enthusiasm and they care to participate as a correct inhabitant of the Wadden Sea Region, they share in local organisations to maintain standards of living and they fight mostly for their 'Thuis' through political discussions.

Just like, but less than the German participants, the Danish participants care to share in various organisations, to keep in line with activities that care for their environment. They communicate their enthusiasm. In their responses to other questions they showed that they do not care as much for nature, at least not in the same active way as the German or Dutch participants.

The use of the landscape is different in the three regions. The results of this survey makes you wonder what happens if the three groups would meet in one event in nature. They would probably react totally different to the use of that environment for that event. It would be a great chance to have their reactions on protection, for a try to balance a difference, since originally they were all inhabitants of the same coastal area.

The sea provides food, sea food, not only fish but also seaweeds for instance. Next to the sea are the meadows where livestock is kept for meat, milk, cheese and wool for instance. Vegetables flourish well in the area. The menu can be expected to be rich in variety and nutrition in all three Wadden areas. The Danish and the German participants know their large number of typical dishes very well but the Dutch participants hardly know what kind of typical dish they should serve.

All participants mention seafood, but the Dutch participants stay way behind when it comes to dishes which are based on regional production. It is heard that food in the Dutch area is supposed to be functional. But if it would be really functional it would have a great variety in all kind of ways. Maybe it is more correct to say that the joy of having a meal should be functional. The German and Danish participants seem to have more in common when it comes to the joy of preparing and enjoying food. In the survey, they provided more recipes with more variation in nutritional values.

Stories about the region, especially the myths and sagas, tell us a lot about values which have a special and typical meaning for a large part of the population when they characterise their region. The German participants answer with mainly two titles: "Der Schimmelreiter" and Störtebeker. In both stories the water, the sea, dangers from that

side, the never ending struggle and the way it shapes the inhabitants' lives, play an important role, but both the stories are also just as much about politics and habits. The Dutch and Danish participants do not mention one or two such 'heroes' under their stories. Next to these two stories, and for all three groups, come a number of myths, fairy tales, fantasies and other stories in which specific regional characteristics in the landscape as well as in the human behaviour play an important role. Some of these stories have a strong mythical content, like Guldhornene. A larger part of the Dutch and Danish participants mention that they favour stories about the history of their region, with all kinds of social, technical and economical subjects.

When it comes to art the participants mention a lot of different artists. In the German Wadden Sea Region Emil Nolde and Theodor Storm are the best known as important for the region, for different reasons. Storm is a writer who constructed "Der Schimmelreiter", the myth about the Wadden Sea Region that has been embraced in Schleswig-Holstein. Nolde was a painter, born in the Wadden Sea Region of Schleswig, who became very famous with his expressive work about all kinds of topics, not especially about the Wadden Sea Region. The Danish participants share the opinion that these two artists are most connected with their region. Within the German Wadden Sea Region these two are mentioned the most, then followed by Radziwill in Germany and Exner in the Danish Wadden Sea Region. Through the Dutch Wadden Sea Region the writer Jan Wolkers and the painter Ad Blok van der Velde are known as representative. But Wolkers was already famous before he moved to the Wadden Sea Region. For Ad Blok van der Velden the Wadden were a constant inspiration.

The participants of the survey make very clear that there are a large number of appreciated artists living in the entire Wadden Sea Region and that they play an important role in the culture. More than two thirds state that modern art and its creators are part of the culture in the Wadden Sea Region. Some make a remark: The Wadden Sea Region has always been open to new ideas. A minor part makes a restriction: the modern must fit in the culture that is already there.

What is there to visit in free time? The participants visit exhibitions, museums and events about the Wadden Sea Region and about regional history, as well as modern art related venues. Maybe because these events are simply available within a reasonable distance? The Wadden Sea Region offers a certain kind of possibilities for free time: nature, history and art.

When this offer is related to the events which are connected with the region we see that

they go well together: the disasters with water, storm surges, floods, ships, are important in the memory of the inhabitants. They are actually saying that nature is stronger than mankind. War is another category. War is not related to nature, but with politics. It is a manmade disaster. And there is a third important category: historical events of all kinds. In these events the regions are influenced through political choices, economical situations elsewhere, social circumstances, on a larger scale than the region. Any event that relates to these categories will have a good number of visitors, since the inhabitants are interested in their region and in the forces that shaped it. The German participants see the storm surges as the most important events, the Dutch and Danish participants mention historical events in a large variation.

Then what is nature for the inhabitants? A fair number of the participants considers nature as something untouched. Whether it means that they do not allow themselves to walk there is unknown from the answers. One stated that if you are not allowed to go into nature, it may just as well become a building site, what use would it have otherwise? But that was only one remark. The participants love their nature in the Wadden Sea Region. Some want it to be untouched which may be interpreted as a pledge for protection. Others see the impact on nature as a part of that same nature and allows for a compromise. Most of the participants take nature for what it is now. Taking into account the enormous changes in the landscape and the seascape over the past decades it becomes clear that this group simply chooses the least disturbed places which are getting smaller in size and number. 'What is nature for you?' should be related to 'What are possible threats for your region?'. The combined outcome shows a growing fear for politics and socio-economic decisions which decrease the accessible untouched nature. It may also partly explain the growing need for massive information campaigns from both sides.

The participants mention various resources without saying whether they favour a specific resource or not. Where they mention the Wadden, the sea, the beach, the marshes, it is clear that they are not against such resources. Where it comes to tourism it is different, many complain about growing influence of tourists even though tourism is regarded as a resource for all inhabitants. Maybe it is not tourism but the behaviour of tourists along with the adaptive behaviour of entrepreneurs. It results in tourist areas with a typical visual communication and smells which form a sharp contrast with the originally modest appearances in the Wadden Sea Region.

There is a common fear among the participating inhabitants. They will lose territory. More of the Wadden Sea region will be occupied by various organisations, "all for the best of everyone". The Wadden Sea region is getting smaller, literally more shallow too. Nature protection organisations plans are accused in the survey to deny the inhabitants. Politicians are regarded as a threat because of the decisions they may take and the unforeseen consequences. Industrialization, power plants and CO₂ storage are now big themes because they are currently being planned or built, changing the horizon for decades. Many respondents call tourism a threat to the region and many others, except not even one Dutch participant, call it a resource. Tourism creates different worlds with their own visuals, sounds and smells, which are far from the Wadden character. Patat, Fritten, Pommies are the thrill that should be researched because of its capability to block any decent reasoning. Where ever you visit, whatever the standard of the public event, there is always that smell. No such smell without a tourist. Worse than that: French fries are served as (part of) a local dish. What if we picture this typical hero of the snack culture, because of the effects on the senses and brains, as a metaphor for the influence from activities which are maximizing the financial profits from the Wadden?

In the past centuries the inhabitants created a defence against visible dangers as storm and flood, because they lived and decided as a community. The response to the survey shows that the inhabitants are now left way behind in development planning which is based on national, European or global interests. The inhabitants of the Wadden Sea region, divided in politically different regions, feel that they are even as a group too small or too poor to act. Once they defined their lives imbued with nature. Now their lives are defined by academic standards.

Life in the Wadden was always imbued with and defined by nature. This has changed rapidly over the last decades, defended with a zeal that even changes the individual appreciation of nature. Entire horizons are being changed and the inhabitants express clearly that they don't stand a chance to influence this process, that they are only allowed to a minimal expression of their worries. This survey shows that the inhabitants of the Wadden are keen and alert to defend their Wadden Sea region whenever necessary. It is their dedication to a natural environment as the basis for sound social conditions that keeps the Wadden Sea region alive, not only as a historical and ecological important area, but even more as the region where giving and taking should remain defined by nature and much less by industries.



With special thanks to all the people who responded to the survey and took the effort to answer all 21 questions. Maybe it was a small group, but their answers show dedication.

7 LITERATURE

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