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# Vulnerability of Frisian Media Services in Times of Change

Analysis of non-regulation and self-sustainability of public media for a people in the Netherlands

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Services in Times of Change

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# Abstract

This thesis presents the regulation of public media services in the Frisian language and for individuals that identify themselves as a Frisian. It offers an analysis of how this regulation may be viewed in relation to undertakings for media in two instruments of the *Council of Europe* that are signed and ratified by the State of the Netherlands. Frisians are included as a national minority in the *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities* and Frisian is included as a territorial minority language in Part III of the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*. The thesis addresses the influence of media on language vitality and the need of minority language media for public support and public policy to have this influence. The regional media service for Fryslân (*Omrop Fryslân*) is the only outlet programming daily in Frisian. Central government efforts to reorganize regional services and decrease its financing uncovered the dependence of media services in Frisian on actors from Fryslân which are not supported by regulations, budgets and support from national actors and the central government.

**Key terms:** European Charter, Framework Convention, Friesland, Frisian, Fryslân, minority language media, Netherlands, public media service, broadcasting

## Abstrákta davvisámegillii

Dát dutkkus ovdanbuktá almmolaš mediabálvalusaid ásehalla friisagielas ja sidjiide geat gehččet iežaset Friisa álbmogin. Dát buktá analyisa movt ásehallaan sáhtá gehččet media relevántta geatnegasvuodaid ektui guovtti *Eurohpárádi* dokumeanttain, dehe instrumeanttain, mat leat vuolláičállon ja ratifiserejuvvon Nederlánda stádas. Friisa álbmot leat našuvnnalaš unnitlogu álbmot mii fátmmastuvvo *Našuvnnalaš Unnitlogu Suodjaleami Rámmasoaħpamušas* ja Friisagiella fátmmastuvvo báikkálaš unnitlogugiellan *Eurohpá Vuodđogirjji Guovlo- dahje unnitlogu gielaide váras* goalmát oasis. Dát dutkkus gieđahallá media váikkuhanfámu giellaealáskahttimii ja unnitlogugiela mediaid dárbbu oažžundihte almmolaš doarjaga ja almmolaš doaibmavugiid. Regionála mediabálvalus Fryslânas (*Omrop Fryslân*) lea dat áidna bálvalus mas almmuhuvvo beaivválaččat friisagillii. Guovddášhálldahas rahččá odđasis organiseret regionálabálvalusaid ja unnidit daid goluid, go seammás čájeha njuolga váikkuhusaid Friisa mediabálvalusaide mat heangájit Fryslâna váikkuheaddjiid duohken, geat eai oažžo doarjja láhkaásahusaide, bušehtii, eaige našuvnnalaš váikkuheaddjiin ja guovddášhálldahas.

# Abstrakt yn it Frysk

Dizze skripsje beskôget de beregeling fan publike media yn it Frysk en foar minsken dy't har identifisearje as Fries. It analysearret hoe't dy beregeling sjoen wurde kin yn relaasje ta bepalings foar media yn twa ynstruminten fan de *Rie fan Europa* dy't tekene en ratifisearre binne troch de Nederlânske steat. Friezen binne opnommen as in nasjonale minderheid yn it *Ramtfedrach foar de Beskerming fan Nasjonale Minderheden* en it Frysk is opnommen as in territoriale minderheidstaal yn Diel III fan it *Europeesk Hânfest foar Regionale of Minderheidstalen*. De skripsje giet yn op de ynfloed fan media op taalfitaliteit en it ferlet dat minderheidstalige media ha fan oerheidsstipe en -belied om dy ynfloed hawwe te kinnen. De regionale omrop foar Fryslân (*Omrop Fryslân*) is de iennichste stjoerder mei in deistige programmearring yn it Frysk. Ynspannings fan de sintrale oerheid om regionale omroppen te reorganisearjen en har finansjearring te ferminderjen, hawwe sjen litten hoe't Frysktalige media ôfhinklik binne fan aktoaren yn Fryslân dy't net stipe wurde troch regels en budzjetten fan nasjonale spilers en de sintrale oerheid.

# Acknowledgments

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Meeting and listening to (stories of) Sámi and Indigenous peoples from Brazil, Canada, USA, Aoteoroa, Russia, Kenya, Kalaallit Nunaat and Australia were an inspiration for this thesis about the Frisians. The lecturers, classmates and other individuals that I met in Guovdageaidnu contributed extensively to my understanding of society, identity and media, all in relation to (Indigenous) minorities. I was never told about, nor thought about, the role and influence of Frisian media on society, and I did not approach it as if it is part of minority language media. Radio and television programming in Frisian was never mentioned in my previous journalism studies, and I came to realize while in Sápmi that Frisianness is not just part of my private life.

My weeks at the *Fryske Akademy/Mercator Research Centre* and discussions with Cor van der Meer, Edwin Klinkenberg and Goffe Jensma were important to identify and understand the actors and mechanisms in Fryslân, and to construct my developing thoughts about the societal position of Frisian and Frisians as a people. I thank the interviewees for sharing their visions, experiences and knowledge. I am especially grateful to my contact persons at the Province and Omrop for taking their time to help me with my research. Thanks to Joret, Aslat, Livis and Jan for the abstracts in Northern Sámi and Frisian are included, and Ellen Marie Jensen contributed to the proofreading of this thesis. Hopefully, my efforts will contribute to an increasing awareness of Frisian media services, and that it can be of use for others with a different shared identity and mother tongue than the majority population or establishment of their nation state.

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*Lieuwe Jan Hetteema*

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Case and Setting

Cutbacks and a legislative proposal for the modernization of regional media services uncovered the non-regulation of a public media offer in Frisian<sup>1</sup> and its dependence on a self-sustaining mechanism of actors from Fryslân. This mechanism has led to the dominant use of Frisian by *Omrop Fryslân*<sup>2</sup> on radio, television and online media.<sup>3</sup> The Omrop is by the *Commissariaat voor de Media* (Media Authority: independent body overseeing compliance of the *Mediawet 2008*: Media Act) assigned as the regional media service for Fryslân until 2018. It received for this function around €11.2 million from the *Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap* (Ministry of OCW: Education, Culture and Science) in 2015 (Omrop Fryslân, 2016a). It is the only daily cultural and media platform in Frisian. It is therefore regarded as a main actor in strengthening, promoting and keeping Frisian a part of daily life within Fryslân (ETS 148, 2015). Regional newspapers write due to attitudes and the poor reading skills hardly in Frisian. National public and commercial outlets are not expected to – and seem unable to make – content in Frisian (Provinsje Fryslân, 2012). Thus, the Omrop is presented as a stronghold for Frisian.

Omrop Fryslân is by the Ministry of OCW and the *Nederlandse Omroep Stichting* (NOS: Dutch Broadcasting Foundation) additionally financed with respectively €50,000 and €1.8 million to produce documentaries and online school programming in Frisian.<sup>4</sup> This budget is also used to make drama series in Frisian for television once every few years. The school programming and documentaries (*FryslânDok*) can also be noted as national Frisian language programming: the first one is shared via online services of the NOS, the latter one is televised via governing body *Nederlandse Publieke Omroep* (NPO: Dutch Public Broadcaster). Numbers of the NPO show that the first national broadcasts of FryslânDok had an average audience of 43,558 in 2015.

### *The Territory of Fryslân*

The Netherlands has seventeen million inhabitants. Less than four percent (646.040) live in the geographic and administrative area Fryslân (CBS, 2016). The majority in Fryslân identifies as

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<sup>1</sup> It concerns the West Lauwers Frisian language and not the two Frisian languages spoken in Germany. Frisian language proficiency, and attitudes towards the language, are discussed in chapter two (page 18).

<sup>2</sup> A list of important terms and abbreviations that are used throughout the thesis can be consulted on page 81.

<sup>3</sup> A daily coverage on radio and a production of ninety minutes of television per day (Omrop Fryslân, 2016a).

<sup>4</sup> Annually twenty-one hours of television documentaries and sixteen hours of online school programming.

Frisian (Betten, 2013).<sup>5</sup> More than half of the people have Frisian as a mother tongue, which is for most of them an oral language (Gorter, 2005). UNESCO has included Frisian as vulnerable on their list of endangered languages (Moseley, 2010). This means that the use is restricted to some social domains and that there is a risk of it vanishing within one or two generations (Thomason, 2015). Frisian is an official state language<sup>6</sup> and with Dutch legislated as the official language of the regional governance layer *Provinsje Fryslân* (Province of Fryslân) in the *Act on the use of the Frisian language* of 2014. This act does not concern articles about media.

The Province is one of the governance layers of the decentralized unitary state that functions in a relation based on autonomy, supervision and joint administration (Breeman et al., 2008). States-Provincial is the provincial parliament with legislative powers and which sets the budget. The college of Provincial-Executives coordinate, prepare and execute legislation and policies. The Province and central government make agreements about their responsibilities towards the Frisian language and culture in several social domains in the *Bestjoersôfpraak Fryske Taal en Kultuer* (BFTK: Administrative Agreement on Frisian Language and Culture).<sup>7</sup> The Province regulates the Frisian grammar and is the leading actor in the policy-making process for Frisian, together with the agenda-setter *Fryske Beweging* (Frisian Movement). MP's from Fryslân play as bridgeheads, a decisive role in this political process, since it is argued that there is little awareness for Frisian in the state's centre of power in The Hague (Hemminga, 2000).

The State of the Netherlands selected forty-eight articles of Part III of the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* (the Charter) for Frisian in 1996 to contribute to cultural diversity and to provide a legal basis for the Frisian language in Fryslân (Van der Goot, 1999). Frisian is a territorial minority language in respect to the Charter. The term minority refers explicitly to the domination of a surrounding language (Cormack, 2007a). It is especially because of Frisian that the Frisians are included as the only national minority of the Netherlands in the by the state signed and ratified *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities* (Framework Convention) in 2005. The instruments of the *Council of Europe* (COE) include several undertakings that apply to public media and media in general. The Committee of Experts of the COE monitor the compliance of the state to those undertakings periodically.

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<sup>5</sup> Frisians differ mainly in a linguistic sense from traditional residents, as is discussed in chapter two (page 13).

<sup>6</sup> This state policy can be found in article 55 (2) of the *Treaty of the European Union* (TEU) and article 358 of the *Treaty on the functioning of the European Union* (TFEU). These treaties were not consulted for this thesis.

<sup>7</sup> The BFTK is safeguarded in article 2a in the *Act on the use of the Frisian language*. The agreement is a result of the shared responsibility for policy on Frisian of the Province of Fryslân and central government from 1970.

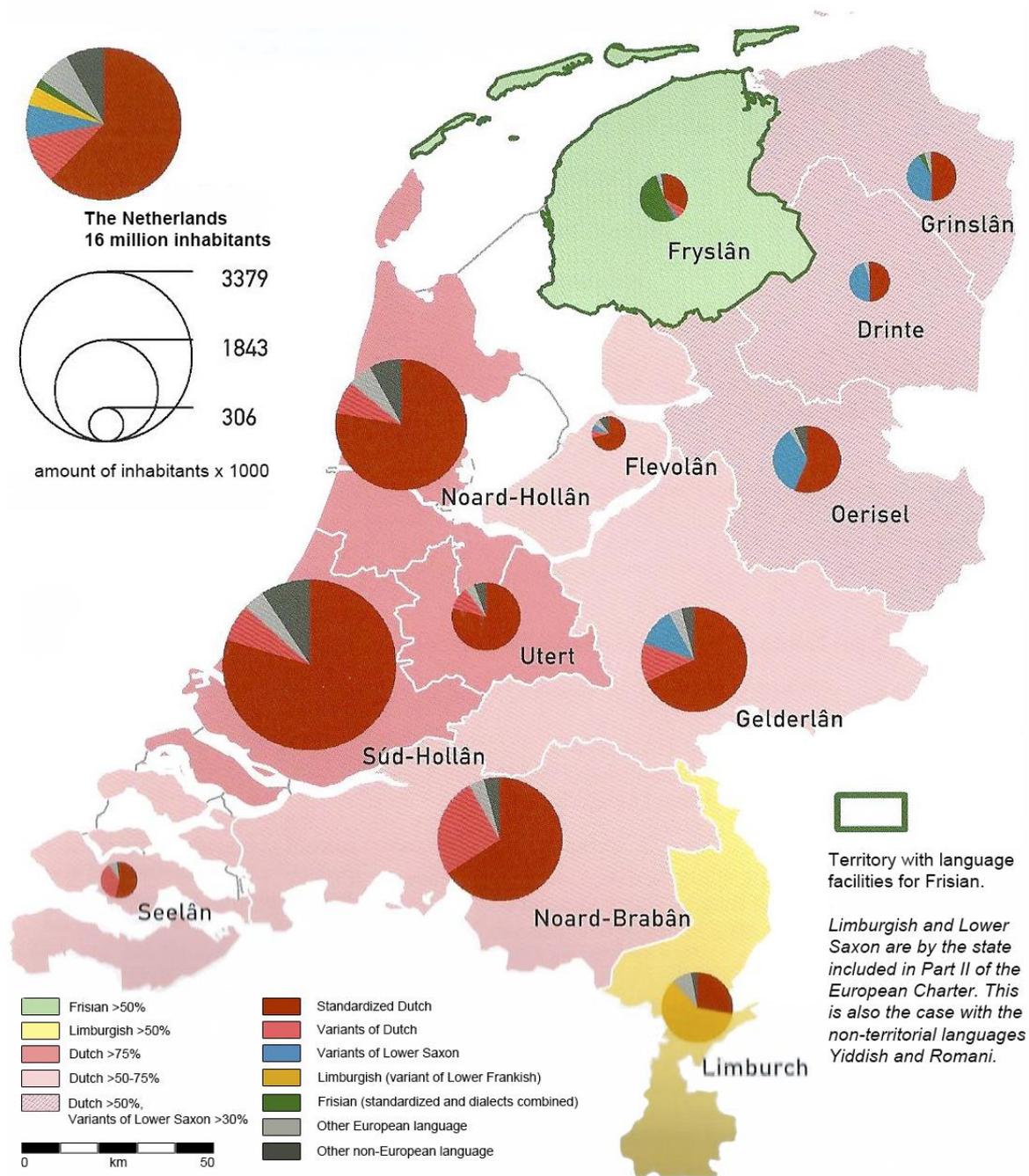


Figure 1: The country and an impression of people's mother tongues. An edited graphic of Jonkman and Versloot (2016, p. 141) with the names of the twelve provinces in the Frisian language.

### Minority Language Media

The preservation of a language is part of the in theory fostered cultural diversity in European liberal democracies. This approach is constructed on the understanding that language rights are integral to human rights (De Varennes, 2001). Individuals of small linguistic groups have the same needs for complete and diverse media offerings in their language as dominant language groups (Moring and Godenhjelm, 2011). Minority language media, such as Omrop Fryslân, has

challenges and issues that often concern cultural and political self-representation and language preservation (Cormack, 2007a). The preservation of a language and related culture relies, in general, on two influenceable and interrelating actors: the willingness of people to participate in the language preservation and the effectiveness of institutional support (Blommaert et al., 2009). Institutional support is necessary since modern states created a need for this: Frisian speakers do not have, to some extent, the same linguistic rights as Dutch speaking citizens, or there are challenges to make use of their rights. One has, for example, the right to use Frisian in communication with authorities in Fryslân, but attitudes make one decide to speak Dutch.

Non-discrimination and equal rights to participate in society are the basis of policies and instruments designed for minority languages and cultures. Thus, that ‘only’ two percent of the population of the Netherlands has Frisian as a mother tongue is not an argument that media in Frisian would be irrelevant. There is perhaps more need for media in Frisian since the media supply in international languages and the state’s dominant language undermine, in general, the position of minority languages. Several scholars state that this situation has contributed to an accelerated language shift and assimilation of minority communities (see: Moring, 2007). The Charter acknowledges this and states that minority language media needs compensation if ‘their’ regional or minority language was or is damaged by mass media (Dunbar and Moring, 2012). This results in the ‘restitutive argument’ for specific support for minority language media: outlets must restore the damage to their language and culture in media, and compensate the representation of their language in today’s media sector (Moring and Godenhjelm, 2011).

The *Raad voor Cultuur* (Council for Culture: advisory body of the central government for arts, culture and media) provides advice to the central government that gives the impression that there is no interest for Frisianness in media on a national level. It was not mentioned in its report on policy-making for the public media service (Raad voor Cultuur, 2014) and neither in a letter to State Secretary Sander Dekker (liberal party VVD) of the Ministry of OCW concerning the future of the regional public media services (Daalmeijer and Bartelse, 2015). Chapter 2.3 and the analyses of this thesis presents that media services in Frisian and for individual Frisians are part of an unpredictable context wherein essential values, such as cultural diversity, are at stake.

### *Media Policy*

The Province facilitates, coordinates and directs policies to strengthen, guard and visualize multilingualism (Provinsje Fryslân, 2012). It creates opportunities to use Frisian and to develop writing skills, and the language transfer and visibility of Frisian. The college of Provincial-

Executives aims to assist the development of media, stimulate the use of written Frisian in press, to have an independent media service, and to safeguard a media offer in Frisian and financing of media for Fryslân in the existing legislation (Provinsje Fryslân, 2015b). The Province had a media fund to promote innovation and investigative journalism, and finances a media centre for Omrop Fryslân and two newspapers to stimulate media and journalism (ETS 148, 2015). The centre touches upon challenges of using Frisian in media, financial struggles of media and the endeavour to secure qualitative journalism within Fryslân. Omrop Fryslân is criticized by some for not using perfect standardized Frisian (Dykstra, 1994; Hemminga, 2015) and two-thirds of the employees failed a Frisian language test (Santema, 2015). Written skills are a concern because online services will develop into the main medium in the future (Newman et al., 2015).

Audio-visual media has still a major role in people's daily lives (Wennekers et al., 2016). It is argued that people in Fryslân are less informed about events in their area compared to other provinces, despite having the most media outlets per municipality (Kik and Landman, 2013). The quality of journalism of the main outlets in Fryslân is in the interview analysis questioned. A study on the television news program of a national public and commercial network showed that around seventy percent of their items came from the *Randstad* (Van Loon, 2012).<sup>8</sup> Omrop Fryslân is the radio market leader in Fryslân<sup>9</sup> and strives to be the leading information platform for discussions and to offer a variety of programs for Fryslân and Frisians (Omrop Fryslân, 2016a). The interests and needs of society are reflected in a programming body and a fan club made up of citizens. Omrop Fryslân states that editorial independence is necessary to guarantee an offer of qualitative content for Fryslân and in the Frisian language (Omrop Fryslân, 2016a).

## 1.2 Empirical Approach

There are many single studies, often descriptive, of minority language media, and only some comparative studies that mainly chart the scene. This in-depth study of one particular case is intended to inform research in this field of the particular status of media in Frisian in Fryslân. As in many other cases (for example Sámi, Welsh, Scottish Gaelic and Retorumansch) the media services are largely dependent on public service provisions; this concerns also media supply on the internet. This study focuses on the relevance of regulation and earmarked resources as a means to secure the language and related culture, as is prescribed in international

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<sup>8</sup> The term *Randstad* refers to the provinces *Noard-Hollân*, *Súd-Hollân*, *Utert* (in Frisian: see the map on page 3) and the main cities Rotterdam, The Hague (both in *Súd-Hollân*), Amsterdam (*Noard-Hollân*) and Utrecht (*Utert*).

<sup>9</sup> The daily reach of Omrop Fryslân radio is 15.4 percent, while its television channel has a reach of 14 percent.

instruments, such as the Charter and Framework Convention, that are in force in the regions where the main part of people that speak the languages mentioned above reside. This particular case discusses the vulnerability that arrives from lack of regulation and dependence on single political powerbrokers; a feature that is particular to the territory Fryslân, and ends up in some recommendations regarding the importance of securing a more solid base for minority language media in a time where the media market is in a flux that affects also public media services. This approach is unique: previous research focused on the use of Frisian by Omrop Fryslân (e.g. Dykstra, 1994) and the establishment of a public media service for television programming in Frisian was part of Hemminga's (2000) general policy analysis for the Frisian language.

**Chapter one** continues with discussing the empirical approach and qualitative semi-structured interviews and qualitative document analysis. **Chapter two** starts with discussing the relevant undertakings of the Charter and Framework Convention. It is followed by insights in the Frisian identity, the language situation and the context of Frisian media services. **Chapter three** concerns a theoretical background on minority language media. Selected data from four documents are examined and juxtaposed with undertakings of COE's instruments in **chapter four**. An analysis of the interviews with insiders and outsiders, in **chapter five**, add experiences and visions to the document analysis. The conclusion follows in **chapter six**. The thesis ends with references, an epilogue, and a list of figures, terms and an overview of the interviewees.

### *Case Study*

Contextual differences make a thesis focused on public media services in Frisian and for Frisians unique. The state included only Frisian in Part III of the Charter, and only Frisians as a national minority in the Framework Convention. There is only one regional media service for Fryslân, and only Omrop Fryslân receives additional financing for school programs in Frisian and programs about Frisian subjects. The regulatory aspects make this case peculiar. Despite the contextual differences between peoples and states, this thesis aspires to contribute to knowledge about European minority language media. It is a case study that touches upon shared challenges of minority peoples, including the indigenous Sámi. The domination of a majority language and people are a concern for all minorities, while a grounded epistemological cultural difference and issues of colonization and assimilation are a particularity of the Sámi peoples.

A case study is a perfect research method to examine single cases in a detailed way. It explains and presents a clear overview of complex and unique situations and issues in society, since the

different actors and mechanisms of a specific society are examined (Flyvbjerg, 2006). The method is useful to answer the research questions: the red threads throughout this case study.

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The research questions: [1] How are public media services in Frisian and for the Frisians regulated? [2] How may this regulation be viewed in relation to the relevant media undertakings in the Framework Convention and the European Charter? [3] To which extent is there a policy to use media as a tool to contribute to the maintenance of the Frisian language?

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Case studies have been criticized as a method with the argument that practical knowledge would be less valuable than theoretical knowledge, and a case would not contribute to scientific knowledge. Flyvbjerg (2006) counters that research has shown that case studies develop theories and learning by providing context-dependent knowledge. Also, theoretical knowledge is based on many single cases: scientific knowledge is constructed by case studies, which makes it a valuable method. Flyvbjerg admits the critique of being unable to generalize or summarize propositions and theories, but questions the necessity to do this. Many issues in social sciences can be too complicated to summarize, but they will give insights. Different opinions and perspectives can contribute to each other, presenting a comprehensive and multilateral view. A case study about public media in Frisian and for Frisians could, in this sense, contribute to knowledge about the use of COE's instruments and the regulation of minority language media.

The method of qualitative document analysis and qualitative semi-structured interview are combined to increase the credibility of the data and to decrease effects of subjectivity. In this triangulation of data, reality is approached as something fixed instead of taking different perspectives, and there is an aim to have no bias in a reflective study wherein specific data is analysed precisely. This methodological approach fits in "(...) the cultural studies tradition of studying the interplay between lived experience, discourses and texts and the historical, social and political context" (Saukko 2003, p. 23). The research needs to include a combination of theories, materials, and sources to establish a truthful or more accurate picture of the subject.

### *Document Analysis*

The purpose of the qualitative research method document analysis is to examine and interpret data with the aim to obtain meaning, gain understanding and discover insights (Bowen, 2009). Document analysis identifies actors and mechanisms relevant for the subject of research (the context), and can be used to examine the impact and e.g. objectives and enrolment of the studied documents by those actors and mechanisms. It is a method that perfectly fits for this case study,

in which the for public media in Frisian and for Frisians-relevant parts of the *Media Act 2008*, and two connected documents, and the *BFTK* are reviewed and evaluated. The Framework Convention and Charter are not analysed: literature is instead adopted to understand and be able to juxtapose the four documents with the media undertakings of the instruments of COE.

Chapter two of the *Media Act 2008* regulates public media. The selected data concerns the public media task (2.1), licensing criteria for national (2.24) and regional services (2.61, 2.62), specifications for the programme offer of regional media services (2.70), specifications for television productions in Dutch and Frisian (2.122), and specifications for the financing of regional media services (2.170) (Mediawet 2008, 2008). The data is analysed with data from the *Mediabesluit 2008* (Media Decree 2008), explaining the execution of articles 2.70 and 2.170 of the *Media Act 2008* (Mediabesluit 2008, 2008), and the *Beleidsregels programmaquota* (Policy Rules on Programme Quota) of the Media Authority, with specifications for article 2.122 of the *Media Act 2008* (Beleidsregels programmaquota, 2007). The last document is the *Bestjoersôfspraak Fryske Taal en Kultuer 2013-2018* (BFTK), in which the central government and Province of Fryslân made agreements about the Frisian culture and language in media in the fourth section (Administrative Agreement Frisian Language and Culture 2013-2018, 2013).

Selected documents	Analysed data
Media Act 2008	<u>Chapter 2. Public media service</u> ; article 2.1 of title 2.1; article 2.24 of section 2.2.2; articles 2.61 and 2.62 of title 2.3; article 2.70 of paragraph 2.3.2; article 2.122 of paragraph 2.5.4.2; and article 2.170 of section 2.6.5
Media Decree 2008	<u>Chapter 2. Public media service, section 2. Regional and local public media service</u> ; article 4 (1) of paragraph 1; article 4a of paragraph 2
Policy Rules on Programme Quota	<u>Part II. Dutch- or Frisian-language programme segments</u> ; articles 8, 9 and 10
BFTK	Section 4: the media

**Figure 2:** Systematic overview of the analysed documents.

### *The Semi-structured Interview*

A qualitative semi-structured interview is a comfortable conversation in which the interviewer uses certain techniques and a specific approach in its questioning to find out or to understand a discussed theme from the perspective of the interviewee (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015). A guide containing the sub-themes of the subject and some pre-formulated questions is used to keep the focus on a cognitive clarification of the interviewee's experiences. In combination with the document analysis, the interviews provide a wider understanding of the regulatory framework – how it operates and why it operates like this – and the practicalities of public media in Frisian

and for Frisians. Experiences and visions of the interviewees, and the data from the document analysis, contribute to develop an interpretation of the issue with an aim to approach the truth.

Individuals with different professional roles and positions must be selected to get meaningful outcomes and the selection criteria should be explained (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015). It must be taken into account that the selected individuals have all a personal connection to Fryslân. State Secretary Sander Dekker of OCW or an administrator of the Ministry of OCW was intended to be interviewed in the design of this study, but emails, phone-calls and intervention of the Province of Fryslân were fruitless. The spokesperson told that the State Secretary was too busy to cooperate, the Ministry of OCW never replied and the central communication office of the central government did not want to cooperate and said answers could perhaps be found on their website – which is not the case. Thus, the lack of interest of non-Frisians in Frisianness made it hard to select interviewees without private connections with the subject. This is an important aspect that strongly influences the interview analysis of this thesis. It contributed to the decision to not interview someone that would represent the more activist Frisian Movement.

Four individuals are selected because they are on positions that directly involve them with the regulation of public media. Three are in direct contact with the State Secretary of OCW and can thereby have direct influence. Insider **Sietske Poepjes** is as Provincial-Executive of the Province of Fryslân politically responsible for language and media since 2014. Her colleague **Tsjerk Bottema** works on the background as senior administrator with language, culture and media since 2009. **Jan Koster** is the director of Omrop Fryslân since 2009 and as vice-chairman a prominent voice in ROOS. He represents the Frisian interests and those of the regional media sector on a national level. Those insiders can give administrative and political insights. **Onno Falkena** has the perspective of an engaged journalist in Frisianness and language equality. He is a journalist of Omrop Fryslân since 1994 and member of their worker's council, the worker's council platform of ROOS and involved in an NGO for minority languages in the Netherlands.

Six interviewees are labelled as 'outsiders' since they are not directly involved in the regulation of public media in Frisian. They have additional types of knowledge, experiences and insights, and thereby contribute to the perceived triangulation: experiences from different perspectives and different fields of interest are needed to create a more truthful and credible depiction. Three of those outsiders are described as regional media experts. The academic perspective comes from journalism professor **Marcel Broersma** of the University of Groningen. He has a special interest in regional journalism and the development of this profession. Due to his research and

positions, he is familiar with the Frisian media landscape and society. This is the only interview conducted in Dutch. **Saskia van Westhreenen** (*Leeuwarder Courant*) and **Erik Betten** (*Friesch Dagblad*) contribute as journalists of the (commercial) newspapers of Fryslân with a practical perspective on Frisian media. Betten has written books about Frisian culture, society and identity; Van Westhreenen covers national politics and the *Media Act*-dossier intensively.

The last experts are selected because of their knowledge of policy-making for Frisian. **Richt Sterk** of the Mercator Research Centre was a policy expert at the former advisory body for Frisian, and was involved in projects at the COE and European Commission. **Alex Riemersma** was an expert for the COE, and is a language policy advisor of the Province of Fryslân. He is involved in the Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity, and is a Professor of Applied Sciences in Frisian education. **Auke van der Goot** wrote the state's monitoring reports of the Charter and Framework Convention for over a decade. He has not been directly involved with Frisian subjects for some years, but he is the only policy expert that worked on the Frisian and national side that is included. He could have different experiences and visions than the other policy experts. It must be clear that he is not interviewed because of his position as administrator at the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations: he does not speak on behalf of this ministry.

### 1.3 Methods

Document analysis is used to obtain meaning, gain understanding and discover insights in how the data of the selected documents relates to the selected undertakings of the Charter and Framework Convention (Bowen, 2009). Advantages of this method are its stability, exactness and wide coverage of documents. It can provide insights in the practical use of the documents and the relevant actors and their objectives. The original purpose of a document is a point of attention during the analysis, since it can show the context during its creation and presents its intended audience. It makes it possible to detect possible developments or changes by juxtaposing the contemporary with the original conditions. The analysis is focused on data selection, with as result that reflexivity – a process of self-monitoring – is often not an issue.

The analytical procedure should be transparent and detailed, to present a trustworthy analysis that can be checked by others (Bowen, 2009). The document's accessibility, completeness, authenticity and usefulness is analysed from the beginning. In case documents are not complete, or incomprehensive or unbalanced, it could show something about the issue and actors: data could be found that will cover or discuss elements and voices that might have received no or

little attention by the creators of the document. All relevant data is selected, interpreted and combined into one entity in the procedure. I should demonstrate a balance between objectivity and sensitivity in the process to produce empirical knowledge and understanding.

The analytical procedure contains elements of content and thematic analysis, since data is sorted out in themes, categories and case examples, and the combination with the interviews provides possibilities to identify overarching themes (Bowen, 2009). The focus in the evaluation is on establishing a document's meaning and contribution to the subject, instead of adopting words and passages. Documents are not created for research purposes and cannot give all necessary information and insights in the issue that is under research. This potential flaw can partly be taken away by creating interview questions that will cover what is lacking in the documents or unspecified matter. Derived data can help to create relevant questions for the interviews. The method makes data from interviews verifiable, credible and understandable: it is an effective method to collect data of event that cannot be observed and details forgotten by interviewees.

### *Semi-structured Interviews*

The interviewees get the time and space to describe their experiences and opinions as freely as possible. The interviewer does not influence this process and shares no personal experiences, but can verify his interpretations by summarizing descriptions, for example (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015). The interview questions should not be framed since words or formulations can push the interviewee into train of thoughts that are initiated by the interviewer, or have other undesirable effects. Taking the position of a listener is a helpful approach that also provides possibilities to converse with individuals with more experience and knowledge of the subjects. Discussions about Frisianess are often focused on linguistic issues. The interviews should not be hijacked by this, but concern societal issues wherein language has in respect to media a role.

Another aspect of validity is the possibility that interviewees misunderstand questions and give answers the interviewer can misinterpret. There could, in my case, be several reasons for those misunderstandings. I lived most of my life outside Fryslân and since I am not actively part of Frisian society, I could have another perception of the subjects under discussion. Also, I have studied Fryslân's actors and mechanisms and policies for the Frisian language and culture for a short time. It is at the same time unclear if the interviewees have the research-based knowledge of minority journalism that I have obtained. Another point of discussion could be the one-sided interview data, since all of the interviewees have a personal connection with Fryslân. However, the selection of informants have a general influence on the outcomes of the interview analysis.

### *Analysing the Interviews*

The interview analysis is based on meaning, which is a deep and critical interpretation: “The interpreter goes beyond what is directly said to work out structures and relations of meanings not immediately apparent in a [transcribed interview]” (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015, p. 235). Experiences of the interviewees contribute to developing an interpretation of the discussed matter, and can both present facts and hidden meanings. There are many ways to interpret descriptions, but any interpretation can be valid, useful and contain a truth. The interpretation is based on my presuppositions, constructed on my personal experiences and knowledge and perhaps with an unconscious aim to justify it with the intended conclusions.

This does not mean that qualitative interviews are not useful as a scientific method, because it certainly does add more understanding to the theoretical and regulatory framework, while this method is for triangulation purposes combined with document analysis. The subjectivity of the interpretation of the researcher is not a weakness when the adopted perspectives are clarified, but scientific results depend on the quality of the interview and the interrelationship between interviewer and interviewee. Hypotheses can be tested and new dimensions that will create new perspectives towards the subject are discovered in the best case. The interviews are built on categories, with a focus on the interviewee’s professional position. Categorization is used to condensate interviews with a focus on meaning. A clear overview simplifies results of extensive and complex interviews and makes one understand the analysis (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015).

The categories are developed by reading literature about minority language media, by following the news around the legislative proposal for regional media services, and by having discussions at the *Fryske Akademy/Mercator Research Centre on Language Learning and Multilingualism* about the Frisian actors and mechanisms and the role of Frisianness in the society of Fryslân. The categories discussed in the interviews were: [1] discussion on Frisianness, [2] the role of media in Frisian, [3] the position of Omrop Fryslân in the media system, [4] the visibility of Frisianness in public and media discourse, [5] policy-making for Frisian and Frisians in relation with public media and the undertakings in the Charter and Framework Convention, [6] the national interest in the Frisian language and culture, [7] the challenges of Omrop Fryslân and regional media, and [8] the changing *Media Act* and the influence of this on the other categories. It is in the interview aimed to discuss category one to seven in a general sense, while category eight can be used as a start for the discussion on those first seven categories. Thus, the answers do not rely completely on the legislative proposal for regional public media services.

## 2 Social and Regulatory Context

### 2.1 Charter and Framework Convention

The Charter affects individuals and communities since it concerns cultural dimensions and the language use in aspects of daily life (ETS 148, 1992b). It aims to contribute to a democratic and culturally diverse Europe, and to protect historical languages that are used by numerically smaller populations of a state. A state decides what level of protection a language receives. The Dutch state included Frisian in Part II and Part III of the instrument. Two elements of Part II are that Frisian should be taken into consideration in national policy-making and there should be no obstacles to promote Frisian in Fryslân (ETS 148, 1992a). Part III contains promotional measures for the language in social domains. The selected undertakings for Frisian confirmed the national regulations applying to Frisian, thereby stressing the importance for Frisian to be used daily to be preserved and developed in its historic and present territory (ETS 148, 1999).

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<b>First part of Article 1 – Definitions: regional or minority languages (ETS 148 1992b, p. 2-3)</b>	
a	“regional or minority languages” means languages that are:
i.	traditionally used within a given territory of a State by nationals of that State who form a group numerically smaller than the rest of the State’s population; and
ii.	different from the official language(s) of that State; it does not include either dialects of the official language(s) of the State or the languages of migrants;
b	“territory in which the regional or minority language is used” means the geographical area in which the said language is the mode of expression of a number of people justifying the adoption of the various protective and promotional measures provided for in this Charter;

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**Figure 3:** Definition of ‘regional or minority languages’ for the purpose of the European Charter.

The state selected for Frisian five undertakings of article 11 of Part III, which states its need to receive public support with regard to space and time in media (ETS 148, 1992b). Subparagraph 1.a.iii concerns adequate provisions for public radio and television outlets to offer programming in Frisian (ETS 148, 1992a). There should be a broad range of programmes wherein the interests and needs of Frisian-speakers are considered, and content about the language (users) should be modern instead of folkloristic and stereotypical (Dunbar and Moring, 2012). The number of programming hours in Frisian and its regularity, accessibility, predictability and financial support are decisive elements. Dunbar and Moring express that the Committee of Experts encouraged the Dutch state to increase and earmark financial support for programming in Frisian, since the production is costlier but receives the same funding as programming in Dutch.

Subparagraph 1.f.ii obliges the state to apply existing measures for financial assistance to audio-visual productions in Frisian, which includes radio, television, multimedia and online/digital

services (ETS 148, 1992a; Dunbar and Moring, 2012). The impact of the assistance is the most important aspect, which is not the case with the Dutch national fund for cultural broadcasting: Dunbar and Moring state it is hard for productions in Frisian to receive financial assistance from this fund. It is the only undertaking that can apply to digital media, which shows how the media environment changed since the creation of the Charter. Although it is mentioned that it is decisive for a language to have access to new forms of media, its outdated undertakings apply to a landscape with different kinds of ownership, structures, technology and regulations.

<b>Article 11 – Media: relevant undertakings of Part III of the Charter (ETS 148 1992a, p. 10-11)</b>	
1.	The Parties undertake, for the users of the regional or minority languages within the territories in which those languages are spoken, according to the situation of each language, to the extent that the public authorities, directly or indirectly, are competent, have power or play a role in this field, and respecting the principle of the independence and autonomy of the media:
a. iii.	to the extent that radio and television carry out a public service mission: to make adequate provision so that broadcasters offer programmes in the regional or minority languages;
f. ii.	to apply existing measures for financial assistance also to audiovisual productions in the regional or minority languages;

**Figure 4:** The for this thesis relevant for Frisian selected media undertakings of the Charter.

Subparagraphs 1.b.ii, c.ii and paragraph 2 (written media and expressions in other Frisian languages) are irrelevant for this thesis. Undertakings b.ii and c.ii address the encouragement and/or facilitation of radio and television programming in Frisian by outlets without a public mission (ETS 148, 1992a). Serious media in Frisian, without a public mission, does not exist, and the establishment of national commercial media in Frisian or the encouragement of existing networks to use Frisian is not relevant today. It is interesting to note that the Committee of Experts stated that with regard to 1.c.ii the Dutch state created formal equality between Dutch and Frisian does not actually lead to equality in practice: when a commercial outlet can choose between having a certain amount of their programming in Frisian or Dutch, the latter one will be adopted for marketing reasons and lower production costs (Dunbar and Moring, 2012).

### *Framework Convention*

The Framework Convention is a legally binding multilateral instrument. The main objective is to contribute to cultural diversity and anti-discrimination, and to stimulate individual members of a national minority in economic, cultural and social areas (ETS 157, 1995). The undertakings are designed abstractly to allow states to implement the objectives in a relevant way. States define national minorities. The Dutch central government designed their definition for the Framework Convention in such a way that it applies to traditional citizens of a territory of the state who want to sustain their culture. The Frisians are the only people that conform to the

definition. The definition is noted as discriminatory by the COE since the territorial approach and focus on citizenship excludes peoples with ‘foreign’ backgrounds (ETS 157, 2008). Individuals decide personally if they are a member of the national minority and do, in contrast to ‘the group’, not need to live in Fryslân. The language undertakings are limited to Fryslân, since this is noted as the Frisian language area and governance area for the main responsible party, which is the Province. Frisian is noted to outline a perceived difference between them and non-Frisians, but speaking Frisian is not an obligation for individuals to claim membership.

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**Article 3, paragraph 1: fragments of A3.3, which defines ‘national minority’ (ETS 157 2008, p. 21)**

A3.3 (...) national minorities are those groups of citizens who are traditionally resident within the territory of the State and who live in their traditional/ancestral settlement areas, but who differ from the majority population through their own language, culture and history – i.e. have an identity of their own and who wish to preserve that identity. The Framework Convention has been declared applicable to the Frisians in the Netherlands, as it is only the Frisians who fulfil these criteria (...)

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**Figure 5:** The Dutch definition of ‘national minorities’ for the purpose of the Framework Convention. Article 9 of section II of the Framework Convention aims to protect freedom of expression and opinion in media, and the ability to impart and receive this in a minority or majority language (ETS 157, 1995). Emphasis is put on non-discrimination and objective criteria in the license-process for radio and television outlets and the promotion of tolerance and cultural pluralism. A third aim is to adopt adequate measures to facilitate full access to media for members of a national minority. Those measures should achieve, in time or scope, full and effective equality by funding, for example, programmes that concern minority issues or create a dialogue between groups, or securing editorial independence of an outlet to encourage individuals’ access to their media (ETS 157, 1995). All undertakings of this convention apply to Frisian individuals.

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**Article 9: undertakings of the Framework Convention concerning media (ETS 157 1995, p. 4)**

The Parties undertake to recognise that the right to freedom of expression of every person belonging to a national minority includes freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas in the minority language, without interference by public authorities and regardless of frontiers. The Parties shall ensure, within the framework of their legal systems, that persons belonging to a national minority are not discriminated against in their access to the media.

1. Paragraph 1 shall not prevent Parties from requiring the licensing, without discrimination and based on objective criteria, of sound radio and television broadcasting, or cinema enterprises.
2. The Parties shall not hinder the creation and the use of printed media by persons belonging to national minorities. In the legal framework of sound radio and television broadcasting, they shall ensure, as far as possible, and taking into account the provisions of paragraph 1, that persons belonging to national minorities are granted the possibility of creating and using their own media.
3. In the framework of their legal systems, the Parties shall adopt adequate measures in order to facilitate access to the media for persons belonging to national minorities and in order to promote tolerance and permit cultural pluralism.
- 4.

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**Figure 6:** Article 9 of section II of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

## 2.2 Frisian Identity

Cultural markers of an identity are (re)produced in a social context, in an on-going process of identity-building influenced by many mechanisms and actors. Often a collective history unites and legitimates a people's existence, and interaction between groups reveal cultural similarities and differences. (Eriksen, 2001; Jenkins, 2008) Dutch society is often presented as containing people with a foreign background and culturally homogenous traditional residents (Penninx and Münstermann, 1998). Frisians differ from traditional residents due to historical and linguistic aspects, part of a rivalry between Fryslân and Holland (p. 81) from the 1100's (Breuker and Janse, 1997). Language is the basis for a cultural united society and a characteristic of a collective identity (Jensma, 1998). Thus, Frisian was the main marker during identity-building.

Frisian must maintain a practical function in an era of urbanization to sustain. Social and geographic mobility make it less obvious that people are part of a local society with its own expressions, collective identity and language (Jensma, 2010). People who become aware of the Frisian identity when confronted with its demise can be described as desired Frisians: they create, maintain and develop cultural markers based on a nostalgic rurality (Jensma, 1998). Their belief that the Frisian identity loses its uniqueness when it is adjusted to modernity results in a continuing awareness to maintain and develop it (Jensma, 2010). They differ from instinctive Frisians who just are Frisian and speak Frisian, and they get involved in identity issues when confronted with it in practice. The identity efforts of desired Frisians can be questioned: people can doubt their identity when using spoken instead of standardized Frisian, or when they lack interests in events that are represented as typical Frisian (Betten, 2013).

Jensma (2008; 2010) fears that the Frisian identity loses its relevance and that a process of museification replaces knowledge of the history and language. The rural landscape of Fryslân is romanticized and imaged as authentically Frisian, and with the stereotypical version of the culture cherished as Frisian and used as a tool to attract people. The concept of 'the changing same' could be adopted to avoid the construction of essentialist self-stereotypes: a meaningful group identity can be sustained if the dynamic nature of tradition is recognized (Gilroy, 1993). Historical awareness of the Frisian culture can enable Frisian individuals to negotiate linkages between their collective history and modern identities that can function in the society of today.

### *A Contribution to National Culture*

Kymlicka (2007) compares Frisians with sizeable national minorities in Western European liberal democracies and argues that the elite failed to achieve territorial autonomy or significant language rights. This could have been achieved if they had succeeded to mobilize Frisians for nationalistic political aims, since these kinds of claims can find support in a liberal-democratic state if it has genuine support of most individuals. The argument points to a lack of nationalist consciousness. This may sound conflicting with the idea that a robust sense of Frisian identity and a constituency of active identity politics is required to invoke and legitimize the regulatory measures and policy initiatives to protect an identity based on vestiges of a rural past. A brief story of the political actors that constructed Frisian identity could provide some understanding.

The Lordship of Friesland was a relatively rich and powerful autonomous area in the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands, which was governed by the bourgeoisie who lived mainly in the cities (Jensma, 1998). They spoke a Hollandic dialect since it had a higher social status than the Frisian spoken in rural areas (Jonkman and Versloot, 2016). The more centralized Kingdom of the Netherlands was founded after a revolutionary period in 1815, with Holland as its cultural and political centre and a non-autonomous Friesland (Breuker and Janse, 1997). The Frisian elite imaged Friesland in the first decades of the modern Dutch state as an authentic society and the Frisian culture as the roots of modern Europe, with its 'ancient' language and people (the lower classes) (Jensma, 1998). The elite located the purest Frisian culture in rural Friesland.

Historic elements were picked, defined and positioned in a rural society with communal origins: Frisian culture is their sedimented interpretation (Jensma, 1998). The Dutch cultural unification process had to include an authentic Frisian area, culture and people based on historic rights, in order to legitimize the elite's position and ambition between (inter)national powers in a modernizing society. The elite included people from the middle classes when the constitution democratized society in 1848. They started to spread the romanticized Frisian rural culture in social domains and distinguished it as much as possible from Holland. The bilingual character was ignored and a standardized Frisian was created, which contains words and grammar that are most distinct from Dutch. A national European culture became a regional Dutch culture.

### *Emancipation of Language*

Standardization and unification create minority issues (Eriksen, 2001). Awareness of a distinct Frisian culture increased in the nation-building process, since Holland became more visible due to education in Dutch, among others. Friesland had turned from a sovereign, rich and attractive

lordship into a poor, subservient province with a vulnerable economy focused on agriculture. Holland and Friesland became the centre and periphery (Breuker and Janse, 1997). People left to go to industrialized areas, while the pauperization mobilized social classes to develop a strategy to sustain the continuity of their culture (Jensma, 1998). This *Frisian Movement* was emancipatory and functioned as mediators between power and the people, in a society that was characterized by religious and ideological segmentation until the 1960's. Frisian was slowly accepted in the public domains of Friesland. National awareness for language equality increased after a demonstration in 1951, in an improved climate for regional wishes (Hemminga, 2000).

The Province of Fryslân and the agenda-setter Frisian Movement moved the central government to a shared policy that had responsibility for Frisian in 1970. It has been the province's legal and administrative language since 1995 (Hemminga, 2000). The name changed from *Friesland* to *Fryslân* in 1997. Administrative agreements between the Province and central government for the Frisian language and culture (the *BFTK*) have been made since 1989. The use of Frisian in administration and jurisdiction was regulated in the *Act on the use of the Frisian language* in 2014. Fryslân was, however, forced to remain bilingual by the Supreme Court, since one should be able to communicate in Dutch with authorities: the use of Frisian is a favour and not a right (Jonkman and Versloot, 2016). Thus, there is no (professional) urgency for Dutch-speakers to learn Frisian (Hemminga, 2000). Frisian at primary and secondary schools has been a mandatory course since the 1980's, when also Frisian kindergartens opened (Mercator, 2007).

### *Language Situation*

Dutch is the dominant language in society, while Frisian is mainly used as a spoken language in informal domains (family and community) in the rural areas of Fryslân. Research shows that around 74 percent of the population of Fryslân (approximately 480,000 people) can speak Frisian quite well: this number has been rather stable since the 1960's (Gorter, 2005; Provinsje Fryslân, 2015a). Twenty percent learned Frisian as a second language, while it is the mother tongue of approximately 320,000 people (55 percent of Fryslân's population). About six percent of the inhabitants of Fryslân do not understand Frisian, while all Frisian-speakers are fully proficient in Dutch. Around fifteen percent of the inhabitants can write in Frisian and about sixty percent can read it. The number of Frisian speakers is expected to decline, since sixty percent of the inhabitants born after 1990 have Dutch as a first language (Gorter, 2005).

Gorter states that the social pressure and contact with Dutch deteriorates peoples' proficiency in Frisian: Dutch has entered the private domains of individuals more than ever before. Rules

of politeness, attitudes and traditions restrict people’s use of the legal possibilities created for Frisian. “At the same time, Frisian makes efforts to conquer a small part of the higher domains of mass media, public administration, and education” (Gorter 2005, p. 60). Main challenges for the maintenance of Frisian are to activate passive goodwill and to breach ambivalent attitudes: the language is appreciated in a historic and private sense, but not seen as valuable for economic purposes, and not regarded as being endangered (Gorter, 2005; Fishman, 1991). Dutch and English are taken more seriously as languages to be taught in schools and that pupils learn well.

Research about the language behaviour of teenagers and adults on social media showed that, in general, personal messages are occasionally written in Frisian, while Dutch is preferably used when a larger group is addressed (Jongbloed-Faber, 2014; 2015). Attitudes towards Frisian and Dutch play an important role in the choice of language, and the will to address several people in one language – which is in most cases Dutch. The influence of famous Frisians (‘role-models’) and initiatives of language organizations and the Province of Fryslân is especially positive for the use of Frisian for youth. The lack of writing skills in Frisian is noted as the main reason for Frisian individuals to not communicate in their language on social media.



Thirty percent of Fryslân has Dutch as a mother tongue (Gorter, 2005). The dialects of *Wâldfrysk*, *Noardeasthoeksk*, *Klaaifrysk* and *Súdwesthoeksk* were used to construct standardized Frisian. The dialects of *Hylpen* and the islands are more distinct but can be understood by the other Frisian speakers. Variations of Lower Saxon are spoken in the language borders, and Dutch dialects in the historic centres of power and trade. *Biltsk* is a mix of Dutch and Frisian. The variations can be understandable for a Frisian speaker. (Jonkman and Versloot, 2016)

**Figure 7:** Languages in Fryslân. The island *Flylân* (Dutch: *Vlieland*), where Dutch is spoken, is located to the west of the map. Edited graphic of Jonkman and Versloot (2016, p. 96) in *Frisian*.

## 2.3 Frisian Media Services

The creation of a television network for Fryslân was a long political process. Frisian initiatives saw it as a contribution to their language and culture, while the central government and former coordinator, NOS, thought it did not contribute to the public task (Hemminga, 2000; Mulder, 2007). It is today affected by a struggle to justify and (re)define the position of public media in a commercial and digital media landscape (Bakker and Scholten, 2007) and a political climate opposed to state institutions. The latter one was vivid from 2010 to 2012, when the cabinet of the Christian-Democrats and Liberal Party was supported by a populist party who questioned the legitimization and pluralistic character of public media (Awad and Engelbert, 2014). Cutbacks of more than a quarter of the budget increased the homogenization of public media. The homogenization increased already with the establishment of governing body NPO in 2008.

Performing is the core of public media. It is used to be assessed as representing social groups. This reflected a society that was divided by religion and ideology. The four main social groups (Liberals, Protestants, Catholics and Socialists) created radio channels in the 1920's. These were organized as independent public media services in 1930 (Bakker and Scholten, 2007). It was expected that a democratic state regulated freedom of expression and the press and created a media system embodying a variety of opinions and beliefs (Hallin and Mancini, 2004). The outlets had, just as written media, a clear identity and strong societal position. People became less bounded to a network due to societal changes and the arrival of television and commercial media. Thus, discussions are in general focused on how to organize public media in a changing society and media landscape, and not on developing regional media or media services in Frisian.

Regional media services started for Frisians with a radio channel for the north and east in the late 1940's (Hemminga, 2000). The channel was part of a predecessor of the NPO and NOS. It was amateurish, marginal, and submissive to national radio. It produced one hour of radio in Frisian per week, and after 1968, one hour daily of radio in Frisian (De Groot, 2013). Regional television and programming in Frisian became a subject of interest from the 1950's (Hemminga, 2000). The first program in Frisian was televised in 1973. Organizations and the Province demanded fruitlessly more space for the Frisian language and culture on television. The creation of the NOS in 1969 and changes in 1976 heralded standardization and secularization (Hallin and Mancini, 2004). Provincial radio started in 1978. It was part of coordinator and newsmaker NOS. The winter conditions of 1979 connected people in Fryslân with the provincial radio channel and led to public support for more broadcast hours and a fan club (De Groot, 2013).

Public media continued to homogenize to protect their monopoly against illegal commercial outlets in the 1980's (Bakker and Scholten, 2007). The Province worked actively to convince the central government of the importance of media as a platform for the Frisian language and culture (Mulder, 2007). The *Media Act* allowed independent regional radio services in 1988. It led to *Omrop Fryslân*. A short television series in Frisian resulted in twenty hours of educational programs in Frisian, while the Province applied with a collective from Fryslân unsuccessfully for a media license. Commercial and regional television was legalized in 1992, but provinces would be financially and politically responsible (Hemminga, 2000). The success of regional radio made the Province decide to support the television experiment of Omrop Fryslân in 1994, its establishment in 1997 and investment in a building with media facilities (Mulder, 2007). Omrop Fryslân would develop from marginal radio to a professional multimedia outlet.

### *Cutbacks and Promises*

The Province failed to secure a media offer in Frisian when legislative changes and cutbacks for public media were expected (Leeuwarder Courant, 2011). Instead, the cabinet planned to move the responsibility over regional services from the provinces to the central government and realize cutbacks by integrating regional with national media. Omrop Fryslân and Frisian actors said that the future of a media offer in Frisian was at stake (Leeuwarder Courant, 2012). The Ministry of OCW and Province ordered a bureau to report on the execution of the media undertakings of the Charter for Frisian (Andersson Elffers Felix, n.d.). The Ministry of OCW did not accept the report since they did not agree with the findings. The report is not published.

In 2012, the central government and Province assigned the *Hoekstra Committee* by ministerial decision to advise how to safeguard the media undertakings of the Framework Convention, Charter and the *BFTK 2001* (in use until 2011). The committee recommended to promote and safeguard public media in Frisian and for Frisians: there should be a policy for the media offerings in Frisian, which include programs reflecting interests and needs of Frisians, and a multimedia outlet for Fryslân should be facilitated which would offer complete and diverse daily programming in Frisian (Tijdelijke commissie borging Friese Taal in de Media, 2013). It argued that it would be most practical to give the regional media service for Fryslân a central role in safeguarding a complete media offering in Frisian. Policies for programming in Frisian would be necessary if the regional media services would be integrated in the national network.

The Ministry of OCW became responsible for regional media in 2014. The integration of public media was cancelled and it was planned to realize cutbacks by merging the regional outlets

somehow with the governing body RPO<sup>10</sup>, which operates in practice as an intermediary between the Media Authority and regional media services since 2015. The state informed the Committee of Experts of the COE that the special position of Omrop Fryslân, as provider of Frisian language programming, “(...) is not up for discussion in this process, and it is clear that none of these developments will have any consequences for Omrop Fryslân” (ETS 148 2015, p. 9). It would receive a proportional budget to stay a designated outlet for Fryslân with editorial autonomy. The budget for national programming in Frisian would be untouched and the tasks and position of Omrop Fryslân would be explicitly legally safeguarded (ETS 157 2012, p. 33).

### *A Chaotic Process*

The legislative proposal for regional services, in 2015, did not consider the promises nor advice of the Hoekstra Committee. Omrop Fryslân would keep its programming body and editorial independence, but lose autonomy. The proposal also did not include the advice of the directors of the regional services, who operate together in the *Regionale Omroep Overleg en Samenwerking* (ROOS: Regional Broadcaster Counsel and Cooperation). Their plan to cope with the cutbacks focused on increasing cooperation on an interprovincial level: Omrop Fryslân would operate together with the services for *Grinslân* and *Drinte* (ROOS, 2015). The legislative proposal was supported in a chaotic political process, with adjustments for programming in Frisian: it would be safeguarded in the act and a media council for Frisian would be created (Bies, 2016). In July 2016, the Province of Fryslân and central government drafted additional responsibilities for media in Frisian in an additional covenant (Provinsje Fryslân, 2016).

However, the process around the legislative proposal was put on hold since eight of the thirteen services withdrew their support (Rijksoverheid, 2016). They did not accept that their editorial independence would not be legally secured. Thus, the additional agreements between the central government and Province were not signed. It is not completely sure if the cutbacks of €17 million will take place in 2017, but it seems that the State Secretary will make the same amount of money available to assist the regional services in their ‘voluntary’ cooperation (Omrop Fryslân, 2016c). Omrop Fryslân announced it would cooperate more closely with the regional services for *Grinslân*, *Drinte* and *Oerisel* (Omrop Fryslân, 2016b). It was told that the Province and Ministry of OCW were close to an agreement for Frisian in media: Omrop Fryslân would stay independent and the Province would give financial support (Leeuwarder Courant, 2016).<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *Regionale Publieke Omroep* (RPO: Regional Public Broadcaster)

<sup>11</sup> The agreement was not made official before the deadline of this thesis. The epilogue will discuss this element (page 72).

# 3 Theoretical Background

## 3.1 Minority Language Media

As addressed in chapter one, a Frisian person has the same rights as a Dutch-speaking person, and the same needs for a complete and diverse media offering in their language. This Frisian person can, for its daily demand in Frisian media, only make use of the radio, television and online services of Omrop Fryslân. This outlet needs, because of the by the state fostered cultural diversity and the restitutive argument, institutional support to create a complete and diverse programming in Frisian (page 3). Research in European minority language areas suggest that media can have a direct role in supporting and maintaining language vitality (e.g: Cormack and Hourigan, 2007; Markelin et al., 2013; Vincze and Moring, 2013). Those claims state that media has a significant role in shaping multi-ethnic societies and inter-ethnic relations. The design of the (public) media system and the programming of the outlet have a major influence.

The public media systems are based on the needs of individuals and society in a social and cultural sense, but despite this understanding, public media such as Omrop Fryslân and the NOS are governed, to a large extent, like business enterprises. They get public funding for political, societal, and cultural reasons, but also need to compete with other outlets for their market space to be relevant and interesting for advertisers (McQuail, 2010; Moring and Godenhjelm, 2011). International and national competition characterizes the media sector. In this competitive setting, the content and type of programming of a media outlet reflects the interests of those who own and control the outlet, since they are the financiers. Financial decisions also affect the content of public media, such as cutbacks, investments in new technologies, and mergers. A media organisation with an owner or with financiers that lack interest in or care for the existence of media in Frisian, which is a commercially less interesting language due to the smaller market, can make decisions that will not contribute to the position of Frisian in the media environment.

The understanding that mass media, in general, undermines minority languages, makes linguistic minorities who want media in their language dependent on the public service. In this situation, policy designed to support languages and to improve the linguistic environment are the most important factor in establishing 'competitive' minority language media: it depends on the activity and willingness of policy-makers (Moring and Godenhjelm, 2011). It is decisive to evaluate the relationship between the measures and outcomes of minority language media policy – and policy in general. The effectiveness of public policy for minority language media

can be evaluated with the causal chain model *policy-to-outcome path* (P-TOP: figure 8, p. 24), which is designed circularly: political debates lead to policy measures to develop (aspects of) language vitality, and receive input from the actual language vitality (Grin and Moring, 2002).

The model argues that the outcomes of public policy depend strongly on a changing behaviour of individuals, who have to meet a set of three ‘necessary and sufficient conditions’ to make public policy succeed. First of all, people need to have adequate language competences to use the language (*capacity*), they need to have the opportunity to use the language in several practical situations (*opportunity*), and they need to have the willingness to actually use the language when it is possible (*desire*). This Capacity-Opportunity-Desire (COD) model has a central role in analysing the outcomes of public policy, and Grin and Moring (2002) argue that policy-making should be focused on those three conditions to have the desired outcomes. The elements of the COD model are not independent, but have a direct influence on each other.

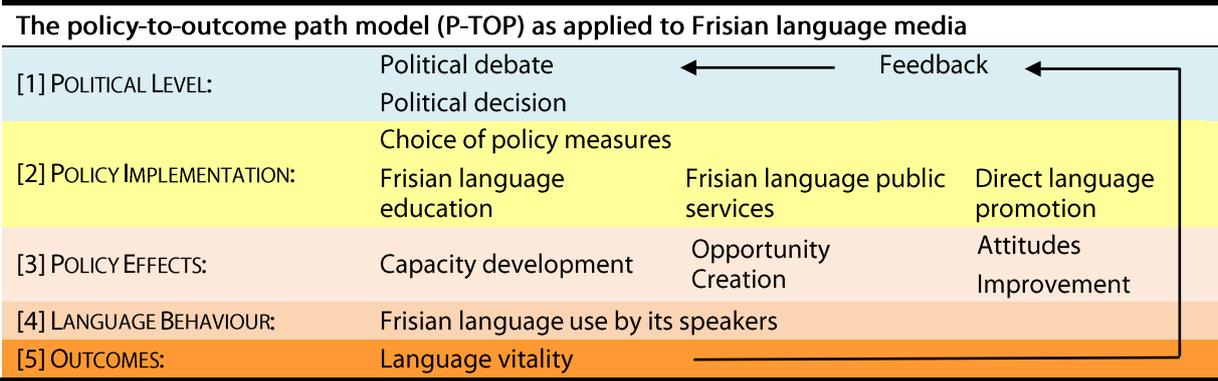


Figure 8: The P-TOP model applied to this thesis. Based on a figure of Grin and Moring (2002, p. 79).

### 3.2 Maintaining Language Use

The Frisian language competence of individuals can be maintained and developed by applying educational measures, but it can be questioned what role media could have to develop capacity. The ethnolinguistic identity theory (ELIT) provides more understanding about the identification and language behaviour of language users, especially in multilingual territories such as Fryslân, and thereby the role of media in maintaining and developing language use (Vincze, 2013). ELIT is based on the social identity theory, which addresses how actors, in a territory such as Fryslân, existing out of more than one social group, define and develop their group membership of a social identity. In this mental process, certain cultural markers of the ‘Frisian-speaking ingroup’ are differentiated and appraised to contrast it with rival ‘Dutch-speaking outgroups’, to establish a positive feeling of their shared social identity. The particularity of ELIT is that language is

the central cultural marker in this mental process and this makes the theory applicable to social identities such as the Frisian identity, which has language as a main marker of distinctiveness.

The ethnolinguistic vitality (EV) theory is linked with ELIT, and concerns the role of individual socio-structural factors that can increase the linguistic energy and survivability of a language community, and frame social identities and the presence of institutions (Giles et al., 1977). Those *status factors* (e.g. the recognition of a social group in the media environment), *demographic factors* (e.g. where do group members live, intermarriages, or group numbers), and *institutional factors* (e.g. a group's position in political systems) have objective and subjective forms. Objective vitality concerns the empirical socio-political realities of those three variables, while the personal perspective of actors constitutes subjective vitality – which can shape the group's behaviour. In other words: the factual dynamics of the media environment that determine EV (objective vitality) and actors' perception of those dynamics (subjective vitality), are in the EV theory brought together to measure the effects of media on EV. For example: the possibilities to use Frisian in communication with the authorities can be perceived as weak by individuals, while documents present a strong legal position for the use of Frisian. The stability of a social group influences the subjective vitality (Moring et al., 2011).

The stability of a linguistic community depends on a positive or negative understanding of their ethnolinguistic identity. A positive understanding can lead to the development of strategies to differentiate between the ingroup and outgroup, but different scenarios can occur when actors do not manage to establish a positive understanding (Vincze, 2013). In one scenario, actors move towards the outgroup; this is the case when there is a low self-identification, when the cultural boundaries between both groups are perceived as 'soft', and the ingroup vitality – the strength to unite against the outgroup – is low. In an opposing scenario, actor's perceptions (high self-identification and ingroup vitality, clear boundaries) make them challenge or confront the outgroup in an aim to change or reverse the negative perception. In the last strategy, the actors have a high self-identification and perceive 'hard' boundaries, but maintain their identity without challenging the outgroup. All scenarios can exist within a community. This knowledge is valuable to know, since it influences the effects of media on language vitality.

#### *Direct Influence of Media*

Scholars disagree on the direct role of media in maintaining the use and transfer of language. Fishman (1991; 2001) focuses on subjective EV and states that media does not have the direct influence to turn a language into the (co-)mother tongue of an individual or a generation. It is

not a tool to reverse language shift: media has no personal connection with an individual during its youth, as local social domains and spheres have. Media can present a virtual community, says Fishman; it is too impersonal to have a direct influence on identity-formation, language maintenance and communal organization. It could contribute to this if it is built on processes present in an individual's daily life. Thus, programming should include individuals directly and have a strong relation to the community. In Fishman's view, media does too little to contribute to the binding of society, focusses too little on children and includes too few ordinary people directly in their programming: media undermines the vitality of minority languages in general.

Other research does suggest that media has a direct influence on language vitality. Those scholars state that media offers a stage for the language users to meet and discuss (in) their language and ingroup, in their context: media carries language, operates through it and can develop it (Moring, 2007). Media can contribute to people's understanding of language, to shape the public sphere of a community, to the transfer and production of language and culture, to provide a reason to maintain and adjust to the self-identification of an ethnolinguistic group, and to enable diversified debates that can shape perceptions of language, culture and identity (Cormack, 2007b; Pietikäinen and Kelly-Holmes, 2011; Blommaert et al. 2009; Vincze, 2013).

The influence of media consumption and production on ethnolinguistic aspects are higher in multilingual territories than in monolingual areas, due to the central role of language (Vincze and Holley, 2013). Media can function in the relationship between ethnolinguistic outgroups since it can bring the groups in contact with each other – although the influence of this role depends on the language competences of both languages of a media user. In this sense, media can have a positive influence on the perceptions of the ingroup and outgroup concerning an ethnolinguistic identity, and thereby on the strategies of actors to deal with either positive or negative perceptions (Vincze and Holley, 2013). In this way, media can affect EV directly.

### 3.3 Opportunity and Normalisation

Thus, the structure of the media and the completeness of the media landscape has a decisive influence on the role of minority language media on language vitality (Markelin, 2003). A media landscape that can contribute to EV on the terms of objective vitality, should preferably be designed in a way that it secures *institutional and functional completeness* (Moring, 2007). This provides opportunities for an individual – the second element of the COD model – to be able to use the (minority) language in his or her private and public sphere, and contribute to

language normalisation – the third element of the COD model. Institutional completeness refers to control of administration and financing of a minority language media outlet by the members of this social group. Reaching institutional completeness is necessary for a social group since it shapes the media needs for their group members and (linguistic) community, and it prevents conflicts of interest that can occur when members of the linguistic majority finance and control the media outlet. As said before, ownership and control influence the content and programming.

Frisian is used on radio and television, and hardly in printed media. In this situation, Moring (2007) calls a language ‘less institutionally complete’. It would be preferable for a linguistic minority if they can make use of different types of media, since radio, television, press and online sources have different functions. Radio can build up a standard for Frisian, connections between community members, and offer news in Frisian. It is, unlike television, unable to reach non-Frisian speakers, since it does not combine visual, sound and subtitles. Television functions as a medium where common experiences are shared, and where the Frisian language and culture can be represented in its own ways. Practice shows that minority (language) programming is often scheduled in fringe hours with a small audience as a result, and it is part of a network that broadcasts mainly in the majority language. This is the case with the national documentaries about Frisian subjects (FryslânDok), but not with the regional programming of Omrop Fryslân.

### *Digital Challenges*

Online media combines the functions of radio and television with stimulating reading on a regular basis, and can have an organising role in Frisian society. This does not mean that users of minority languages can have only online platforms, since they have the same media behaviour as speakers of majority languages (Moring, 2007). If there would be an incomplete set of media outlets in their language, individuals can start to use media outlets that televise in the majority language – because of temptations to use this medium and lack of possibilities to watch television in their own language. People will use the type of medium they prefer and need, and they will not choose a medium because it offers programming in their language, especially when people are bilingual. Moring states that without a basic level of institutional completeness, speakers of a minority language are forced into media in the majority language.

Most international standards, policies of modern states, and international, national, or regional instruments addressed to minority language media, are developed in and for an outdated media environment. Thus, minority languages are not expressly supported in new media. Digital media can therefore be regarded as a threat for linguistic minorities, since their position can be

considered worse than their status in traditional media: there is a lack of supportive policy, and minorities are unable to compete without support in a growing market of media outlets, with some major media platforms with enormous resources (Moring, 2016). The internet is dominated by language users of eleven languages, including Dutch, and speakers of minority languages browse in those languages as well (Cunliffe, 2007). Minority languages fall behind in terms of infrastructure, economic power and the state's engagement for digital media. It is a challenge to design measures to strengthen a minority language (media) in a changing media landscape, as it is a challenge for traditional (majority) mass media to adapt to a digital future.

Frisian-speakers use, nevertheless, Frisian when communicating with other Frisian-speakers on social media, which shows it is a platform where a minority language can co-exist (Jongbloed-Faber, 2014; 2015). Members of a minority can use social media and other technologies to develop ingroup communication, with the benefit that it is easier and cheaper nowadays for individuals to make audio-visual content that can be shared with other language users and people with similar cultural expressions. Digital media provides the opportunity to organize as a minority as well, to address suppressive or discriminative situations to their own community, state, and rest of the world (Moring, 2016; Cunliffe, 2007). There is, however, no research available that has examined the online media use of Frisian-speaking individuals.

### *Strict Preference Condition*

Institutional completeness can provide an opportunity to develop functional completeness. This notion stresses the importance for individuals to have the opportunity to spend their daily life in the language of their choice, without needing to make use of other languages (Moring, 2007). Frisians and many other minority language speakers do not have this choice, since they can only make use of the radio, television and online services of Omrop Fryslân. For functional completeness, the level of quality of at least one media type should be in a similar state to an outlet in the majority language. Omrop Fryslân radio has perhaps developed this position for Frisian, noticing their daily activity and being the market leader in Fryslân. It is hard to say if the television service is with ninety minutes of new content per day similar to outlets in Dutch.

To be competitive with Dutch language media, Omrop Fryslân should have a wide media offering, including a variety of genres and programming; this could contribute to attracting different audiences, and the construction of youth and popular culture. It is necessary for the language transfer and maintenance of a minority language to include youth in the media, not only can a 'lost' generation return or a 'new' generation be included, it also provides ways to

expand the social domains wherein Frisian is a dominant language. Vincze (2013) stresses that the decisions of minority language-speakers in television viewing differs strongly on their biographic self, but also per ethnolinguistic group and specific context. In general, an individual decides to watch television programs in a language that support his or her self-identification with the ethnolinguistic identity. Vincze's research shows, however, that individuals with a stronger self-identification with a social group, have more interest in the language connected with this group, and therefore watch more television in this language. In this sense, Vincze suggests that those with a strong self-identification with an ethnolinguistic identity endeavour to strengthen this social identity – and minority language television could play a role in this.

### *Language Normalisation*

If there is a media offer in Frisian that includes informational, cultural, educational, and drama productions or other amusing programming, it is still not guaranteed that speakers of the language will make use of it (Moring, 2016). Especially in the case of Frisian-speakers, who all speak and understand Dutch perfectly and also make use of media offerings in international languages. However, the 'strict preference condition' argues that people prefer to make use of television and radio services in their mother tongue if this possibility exists, and if the media offer is diverse, full (quantity), and of quality (Moring and Godenhjelm, 2011). It is argued that a minority language media service is not relevant for the Frisian-speaking group when this condition is weakly met or not met at all, since the media supply in their language would be asymmetric. A complementary media supply in Frisian has as result that Frisian-speakers can only make use of Frisian language programming in fragmented ways. This does not contribute to the direct influence of media in the language behaviour and maintenance in society.

The previous paragraphs argued that media has the possibility to contribute to the normalisation of Frisian, which means that Frisians have the willingness to use their mother tongue (or second language) if the possibilities are there. Policies can mainly be effective when the environment of the language users accepts or encourages speakers to use the language. This deals with the language behaviour of individuals, the approaches of Frisian individuals towards their social group (ELIT), and the objective and subjective vitality of a group and language (EV). The influence of Omrop Frylân on language vitality depends mainly on objective factors (Moring et al., 2011). Thus, there should be a diverse, qualitative and quantitative media offering in Frisian that can compete with the Dutch media offering, that includes youth programming. The contribution of Omrop Fryslân to language vitality can be questioned without this offering.

# 4 Document Analysis

## 4.1 Description of Documents

The *Media Act 2008*, *Media Decree 2008* and *Policy Rules on Programme Quota* can be freely accessed in Dutch on a website of the authorities. The *Media Act 2008* regulates public and commercial media. Its prelude mentions that the act was modernized due to technological and media-related developments in 2008. The minister of OCW signed the act in December 2008. It became effective in January 2009. Chapter two concerns the public media service. The content is elaborated in *articles*, often part of a *title*. Title 2.1 *Public media mission* contains the analysed article 2.1, and title 2.3 *Regional and local public media service* articles 2.61 and 2.62. *Sections* and/or *paragraphs* can be part of a title. Section 2.2.2 *Broadcasting organisations* contains article 2.24, and article 2.170 is part of section 2.6.5 *Funding regional or local public media service*. Article 2.70 is part of paragraph 2.3.2 *Media offer of local or regional public media service*, and article 2.122 of paragraph 2.5.4.2 *Dutch and Frisian language productions*.

The *Media Decree 2008* became effective with the act and is signed by the same minister. This document tells media services how some articles of the act (the leading document) need to be understood and executed. The structure of the decree is similar, but less complicated than the act. The analysed articles are part of section 2. *Regional and local public media services* of chapter 2. *Public media service*. Article 4 (1) is part of paragraph 1. *Media offer*; article 4a of paragraph 2. *Budget allocation for regional public media; rules on the application for funding*. The articles refer respectively to article 2.70 and article 2.170 of the *Media Act 2008*.

The *Media Act 2008* is also the leading document for the *Policy Rules on Programme Quota*. This document explains how aspects of programme quota-articles of the act are defined and monitored. It is signed by the chairman and commissioner of the Media Authority and became effective about a year before the act. The analysed articles 8, 9 and 10 are part of II. *Dutch or Frisian language programme segments*. Each article is part of a section, namely *Original Dutch or Frisian programme segments*, *Calculation method* and *Exemptions*. The articles refer to the previous version of the *Media Act*, but it seems as if the content of the articles did not change. In my assessment, the articles refer to article 2.122 of the *Media Act 2008*. However, articles 8, 9 and 10 mention ‘programme segments’, while the act uses ‘programme productions’: the latter terminology is used in this analysis, since the *Media Act 2008* is the leading document.

### *Administrative Agreement (BFTK)*

The *BFTK* is published on the website of the Government of the Netherlands and Province of Fryslân in Frisian, Dutch and English. The later one is analysed. This document of the central government and the Province of Fryslân is signed by the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations and Deputy Commissioner for the Queen for the Province of Fryslân on the day when it became effective: 22<sup>nd</sup> of April, 2013. It includes agreements for their responsibility and duty of care in terms of funding and promises for the Frisian culture and language in a series of social domains, which are in use until 2018. The preamble mentions that this is a result of the shared policy responsibility and the obligation of the central government to protect this language and culture by signing and ratifying the Charter and Framework Convention. Additional agreements can be made for the several sections, whose design is based on the undertakings of Part III of the Charter. The influence of the Framework Convention on the *BFTK* is, at first sight, unclear.

The fourth section concerns media. Its introduction states that the central government and Province want to give Frisian a suitable and stronger position in new media, and the Province aims to make this position in new media at least equal to what it has on radio and television in Fryslân. It is an aspiration, not a commitment. The introduction includes the amount and genres of programming of Omrop Fryslân during the creation of the *BFTK*. It gives the impression that it will be elaborated in the seven agreements part of paragraph: *4.1 Media agreements*. The Province and central government share responsibility for the agreements about: *Promotion of Frisian language and culture*, *Standard funding*, and *Funding on a project basis*. The central government is responsible for: *Commission for Safeguarding Frisian in the Media*, *Promotion fund*, *Subsidy for television drama productions* and *Frisian language and culture expertise*.

## 4.2 Frisian Programming

In this thesis, a document is complete when it includes and elaborates on the state's obligations for programming in Frisian and for individual members of the Frisian national minority, as it is addressed in the selected undertakings of the Framework Convention and Part III of the Charter.

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#### **Article 11 – Media: undertakings of Part III of the Charter for Frisian (ETS 148 1992a, p. 10)**

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1. The Parties undertake, for the users of the regional or minority languages within the territories in which those languages are spoken, according to the situation of each language, to the extent that the public authorities, directly or indirectly, are competent, have power or play a role in this field, and respecting the principle of the independence and autonomy of the media:
    - a. to the extent that radio and television carry out a public service mission:
-

Undertakings part of 1.a. apply to radio and television outlets with a public service mission. The *BFTK* addresses media from a general perspective, but the *Media Act* distinguishes media with public service mission in chapter two. This mission is elaborated in article 2.1 and applies to national, regional and local services. An additional public mission for regional and local services is described in article 2.70. Undertaking 1.a. applies to the users of Frisian within the territory of Fryslân, who deal with regulation of the central government for media. 1.a. is relevant when authorities have direct or indirect power on public media. Three documents are a direct result of political decisions, while the *Policy Rules on Programme Quota* are based on and refer to the *Media Act 2008*. It is not analysed if the authorities respect the principle of the independence and autonomy of the media, but it is assumed that this is respected. Thus, subparagraph 1.a. of article 11 of Part III of the Charter is relevant for the selected articles.

### *Adequate provisions*

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**Article 11 – Media: undertakings of Part III of the Charter for Frisian (ETS 148 1992a, p. 10)**

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- iii. to make adequate provision so that broadcasters offer programmes in the regional or minority languages;
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Radio and television outlets with a public mission should make adequate provisions to offer programmes in Frisian for its users in Fryslân: this concerns the national services and regional service for Fryslân (Omrop Fryslân). Attention is given to the number of programming hours in Frisian and its regularity, accessibility and financial support to juxtapose the documents with undertaking 1.a.iii. Other focus points are the type of content about Frisian and its users and a wide range of interests and needs that must be part of the Frisian language programming. The elements are based on the analysis of the monitoring cycles by Dunbar and Moring (2012). The introduction of the media section of the *BFTK* lists the characteristics of Omrop Fryslân and the kind of Frisian language programming. It does not include obligations. The first article gives no details when stating that the central government and Province pursue a policy of maintaining and actively promoting the Frisian language and culture by using the media. This suggests that it is pursued to maintain the Frisian language programming as mentioned in the introduction.

This is my interpretation, since it does not refer to the list used in the section's introduction, nor does it include explanations. Thus, it could be understood that Frisian language programming includes the following: the NOS offers of at least ten hours of online television for primary schools that is produced by the national television department of Omrop Fryslân annually; and six hours of television for secondary schools annually; and twenty-one hours of documentaries (FryslânDok) are produced by an unmentioned department of Omrop Fryslân and televised via

the NOS. There is no relation made between the regional media service of Omrop Fryslân and Frisian language programming, although the ten hours of primary school programs are televised on their regional channels. Those ten hours should be added to the minimum annual number of hours of Frisian language programming, although those ten hours are not unique programming.

### *FryslânDok and School Television*

The second article of the *BFTK* notes full and multifaceted programming in Frisian for radio, television and the internet. The meaning of ‘full and multifaceted’ is not elaborated. The article does not match the description of Frisian language programming since the medium of radio is not part of this. Annually, sixteen hours of school television and twenty-one hours of documentaries via national services, and ten hours of school television via the regional service, are perhaps in the *BFTK* regarded as full and multifaceted programming in Frisian. However, the media section is confusing since it mixes the regional services with the Frisian language programming. *BFTK*’s media section does not include a clear separation between the services.

The second article explains perhaps why the media section of this document is confusing and incomplete. It states that the central government and Province will examine, in a later stage, how the media undertakings of COE’s instruments will be respected, due to the expected changes in the *Media Act 2008*. The fourth article adds that the central government ensures that the advice of the Hoekstra Committee is considered in the process. In this article, the central government states that Omrop Fryslân has a special role in terms of preserving, promoting, and using the second state language on a daily basis. This article gives the impression that the regional services for Fryslân could be Frisian language programming. Since the *BFTK* does not give clarification on this aspect, the articles in the *Media Act 2008* will be decisive on this point.

### *Financing of Programming in Frisian*

The *Media Act 2008* does not include specific financing for Frisian language programming. Article 4a of the *Media Decree 2008* does state that maximal 7.11 percent of the total budget for regional media services can go to Omrop Fryslân. The article does not explain what this percentage is based on. The total budget for the regional services is annually announced by the Minister of OCW. This is financial support for being a regional service: article 2.170(7) of the *Media Act 2008* only states that regional services should spend this budget on providing media services in the region. Thus, the financing of Frisian language programming is not regulated and the regional services of Omrop Fryslân are not noted as Frisian language programming.

The media section of the *BFTK* is not clear in how Frisian language programming is financed, already since it is mixed up with the regional services of Omrop Fryslân. The second article mentions that the central government makes ‘sufficient’ resources available for the unspecified full and multifaceted programming on radio, television, and the internet. This should refer to the documentaries and school television, since the next sentence states that Omrop Fryslân has the task to produce Frisian language programming. The article also mentioned that, due to the opted changes in the act, the central government and Province will discuss the financing of the programming of the regional service for Fryslân with respect to the undertakings of the Charter in a later stage. It is not clear if this applies to the Frisian language programming or the regional services, or to both. The article is titled with ‘standard funding’, which suggests that the article would concern the funding for the standard duties of a regional media service.

The third article does not make it clearer. Next to the standard funding, programs that are part of the regional service of Omrop Fryslân and that strengthen Frisian ‘as a minority language’ can receive funding on a project basis from the central government and Province. No details about those resources are mentioned, but both parties create the possibility to support regional programming in Frisian financially, although only Omrop Fryslân can make use of it. This gives the impression that it has a monopoly position for programming in Frisian. Perhaps the programs need a minority aspect, but the choice of words is not further explained.

### *Programme quotas*

Only article 2.122 (1) of the *Media Act 2008* mentions Frisian specifically. The article does not meet the aspects of ‘adequate provisions’, but addresses that half of the programme offerings of national and regional services must be original productions in Dutch or Frisian. Article 8 of the *Policy Rules on Programme Quota* explains that original productions can be programs that are dubbed into Dutch or Frisian, or non-Dutch and non-Frisian programs introduced by a host speaking Frisian or Dutch. Article 9 addresses that repeating broadcasts are included in this minimum. Article 10 allows some type of broadcasts an exemption for this quota, and parties can ask for an exemption. This is also addressed in 2.122 (2 and 3) of the *Media Act 2008*. The minimum percentage does not count for programs of religious or political parties, for example.

An important word of article 2.122 is ‘or’: services can choose if they want to have at least half of their television programming in the majority (Dutch) or minority (Frisian) language. The notion that programming in Frisian is not mentioned as a duty of either national or regional

services makes it unlikely that media companies with a public media mission and without a linkage with Frisian or with Fryslân as a territory, will decide to produce programmes in Frisian.

### *Genres of Programming*

Article 2.1 and 2.70(a) of the *Media Act 2008* address the public media mission and media offer of regional or local media services. Those articles can be read as if they address inexplicitly the content of programming in Frisian and for Fryslân and Frisians. Article 2.1 (1a, 2a-c) mentions that the media offer includes informative, cultural, educational and programs of entertainment. This offer should be pluriform and varied, with a balanced programming that depicts a multiform of societal and cultural interests. The target audience of this offer is wide and general, but also directed at social groups of different sizes, ages and composition, and with attention to the smaller audiences. ‘Frisian programming’ could be included in this kind of programming, just as programming about Sápmi, the Inuit and the Inca culture. It is stated that the media offer should meet the democratic, social and cultural needs of Dutch society, but not that it should be about aspects of Dutch society. I cannot estimate the impact of this article on assuring the existence of a public media offering in and about Frisian, and the society and culture in Fryslân.

It is different in article 2.70(a), which includes the programme offer of the regional service. At least fifty percent of the radio, television and online offer should be of an informative, cultural and educative nature, with a specific relation to the region. It could, with article 2.70(b), be an assurance for the existence of a media offer for people in Fryslân: 2.70(b) and 4(1) of the *Media Decree 2008* state that half of the type of programming mentioned in 2.70(a) should be produced or commissioned by the regional service. Programming in Frisian could be included in this part of the regional services of Omrop Fryslân, since it is an aspect of the region’s culture.

### 4.3 Licensing and Access

The last element is the accessibility of Frisian language programming. It is necessary to return to the public service mission of article 2.1 of the *Media Act 2008*. This article states that the mentioned ‘variety of programming’ should be made available for everybody (2f) through all available media types (1a). The media offer must be sent to all households of the allocated area of a broadcaster and they do not need to pay for the reception (3), and it is stimulated to use new technologies for distributing this offer (1c). No individual is excluded from receiving the national services and regional service for the area of residence. If the regional service of Omrop

Fryslân would be regarded as Frisian language programming, Frisian speakers outside Fryslân – the allocated Frisian language territory – do not have standard access to this programming.

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**Article 9: undertakings of the Framework Convention concerning media (ETS 157 1995, p. 4)**

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- The Parties undertake to recognise that the right to freedom of expression of every person belonging to a national minority includes freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas in the minority language, without interference by public authorities and regardless of frontiers. The Parties shall ensure, within the framework of their legal systems, that persons belonging to a national minority are not discriminated against in their access to the media.
- 1.
  4. In the framework of their legal systems, the Parties shall adopt adequate measures in order to facilitate access to the media for persons belonging to national minorities and in order to promote tolerance and permit cultural pluralism.
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Thus, undertaking 1 and 4 of article 9 of the Framework Convention are practically met. Frisian individuals are not discriminated in their access to media services. They can impart and receive opinions and information in Frisian. Regarding article 4, the documents present that no adequate measures are designed to facilitate *specifically* access to media for Frisian individuals and to promote tolerance and permit cultural pluralism regarding the state's only national minority. However, cultural pluralism is addressed in general in the discussion of the public service mission. The promotion of tolerance, cultural pluralism, and receiving and imparting opinions and ideas in Frisian, could be adopted in the Frisian language programming. No document provides the possibility to discuss the effects of school television and documentaries in Frisian.

The documents do not give the indication that Frisian individuals are encouraged in their access to their media and there is no specified funding regulated for programs concerning Frisianness. The *BFTK* does address the possibility to receive funding for media projects that strengthen Frisian as a minority language. The existence of a regional media service for Fryslân is guaranteed in article 2.62 of the *Media Act 2008*, which states that a province should have at least one regional public media service. It can be argued that, in practice, a regional service for Fryslân concerns Frisians and Frisian, but this is not as such regulated. It depends on individuals or groups that have influence on the regional media service for Fryslân, if this will be the case.

### *Licensing Process*

Citizens of the Netherlands can create and use 'their own' radio and television, as mentioned in the third undertaking of the Framework Convention. It is addressed in article 2.24 of the *Media Act 2008* that a national public service should carry out the public media mission on a national level. Thus, it could be argued that this is in line with the requirements of the second undertaking of the article of the Framework Convention: in the licensing procedures and in the

criteria to require licensing for radio and television service, it is required that no discrimination is involved. Frisian citizens are also not excluded in the licensing criteria for regional and local public media services, as elaborated in article 2.61 of the *Media Act 2008*. A regional service must carry out the public service mission in its allocated area, and must satisfy societal needs in this area and execute article 2.70 as mentioned in the regional public service mission.

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**Article 9: undertakings of the Framework Convention concerning media (ETS 157 1995, p. 4)**

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2. Paragraph 1 shall not prevent Parties from requiring the licensing, without discrimination and based on objective criteria, of sound radio and television broadcasting, or cinema enterprises.
  3. The Parties shall not hinder the creation and the use of printed media by persons belonging to national minorities. In the legal framework of sound radio and television broadcasting, they shall ensure, as far as possible, and taking into account the provisions of paragraph 1, that persons belonging to national minorities are granted the possibility of creating and using their own media.
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One element in the licensing process is the creation of a programming body for the regional service. This body must be representative for the most important societal, cultural, religious and spiritual movements in the area. The States-Provincial (provincial parliament) must advise the Media Authority if the media organisation meets the requirements before an organization can be appointed as the regional service. It is an important detail for Frisian and Frisian individuals in the licensing process for a regional service for Fryslân, with the understanding that the Province is the leading actor in policy-making for the Frisian language and culture. The article uses, however, the term ‘advise’: it is not noted what the Media Authority does with advice.

### *Audiovisual Productions*

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**Article 11 – Media: undertakings of Part III of the Charter for Frisian (ETS 148 1992a, p. 11)**

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- f. ii. to apply existing measures for financial assistance also to audiovisual productions in the regional or minority languages;
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It is noted in the fifth article of the media section of the *BFTK* that the *Mediafonds* (Fund for the Promotion of Dutch Cultural Broadcasting Productions) will be practically defunct in 2017. This would be the only public fund relevant for undertaking 1.f.ii of Part III of the Charter. Instead, the NPO will make programs that could have been supported by the fund. The fifth article notes the importance that the NPO will promote and finance cultural media productions of national and regional services. The seventh article notes that expertise on Frisianness is guaranteed in the composition of the general and media production boards of the NPO, and external expertise in Frisianness can be engaged if needed. It can be argued that it is possible that the NPO will make audiovisual productions in Frisian, but they are not obligated to do so.

## 4.4 Summary

Annually, a minimum of thirty-seven hours of Frisian language programming is regulated for the national services until 2018. It concerns twenty-one hours of television documentaries in Frisian, six hours of secondary school television in Frisian, and ten hours of online programs in Frisian for primary schools. The regional service for Fryslân creates this for the NOS. This programming is regulated in the *BFTK* and could contribute to the promotion of tolerance towards the national minority and cultural pluralism, which is not safeguarded, as such, in the *Media Act 2018*. The act does not guarantee programming in Frisian via the national and regional services. There is no specific regulation for a media offer in Frisian and about Frisians.

The ten hours of online primary school programs are televised by the regional service Omrop Fryslân. The *BFTK* gives the impression that that is their only programming in Frisian. The regional services of Omrop Fryslân are not regulated as Frisian language programming in the *BFTK* and the *Media Act 2008* and its related documents. Half of the regional services of Omrop Fryslân must be in Dutch or Frisian: national and regional services have no obligation to offer programs in Frisian. Omrop Fryslân receives standard funding for its regional services, which at max is 7.11 percent of the total budget for regional services. The outlet gets ‘sufficient resources’ for Frisian language programming: a term that is not further explained.

Omrop Fryslân is obligated to include half of its regional service with programs of an informative, cultural, and educational nature. This offering needs to have a specific connection with Fryslân. It is likely that the Frisian language and culture will get attention in this kind of programming, but the documents do not explicitly mention that it should include those aspects of Fryslân’s society. Thus, programming in and about the Frisian language and culture could be part of the media mission of the regional service for Fryslân. The Province of Fryslân and central government can finance regional programs of Omrop Fryslân that strengthen Frisian as a minority language on a project basis, but the budget and aim is not clear. Cultural programs in Frisian cannot get funds from the Media Fund anymore, since it is defunct in 2017. The NPO will continue to make cultural productions, but nothing is secured for productions in Frisian.

Frisians have access to the Frisian language programming on at least the national channel, since only citizens of Fryslân are guaranteed access to Omrop Fryslân. Citizens have the right to use and create their own national or regional media service, with a focus on either the national or regional societal and cultural interest. A regional service needs a programming body that depicts

a variety of interests in Fryslân. The States-Provincial (provincial parliament) advises the Media Authority in the licensing process and composition of the programming body. Thus, the regional service and provincial parliament are responsible for the Frisian language and culture in the regional media offering. It is not clear what the Media Authority does with the advice.

**Figure 9:** An overview of the matches and mismatches of the media section of the BFTK and Media Act 2008, and related documents, with the undertakings of the Charter and Framework Convention.

Elements	Media Act 2008 and related documents	Media section of the BFTK 2013-2018
<p><b>Red</b> articles do not match with the undertakings of COE's instruments.    <b>Orange</b> articles could match with the undertakings of COE's instruments.    <b>Green</b> articles match with the undertakings of COE's instruments</p>		
- Adequate provisions for Frisian language programming (1.a.iii of article 11 of Part III of the Charter):		
Public service mission	General and regional public media mission.	Media is approached in general.
Programming hours	Half of the television programming (incl. repeats, dubbed programs and programs introduced by Dutch or Frisian speaking presenter) must be original productions in the Dutch or Frisian language.	Annually 27 hours on national channels: 21h. documentaries and 6h. secondary school television. 10 h. primary school programs online that are also offered via regional TV service (Omrop Fryslân).
Regularity	Not mentioned.	Not mentioned.
Accessibility	Services on all media types must be available for households with free reception.	Not mentioned.
Financial support	Omrop Fryslân receives annually max. 7.11% of the regional media budget to carry out the regional media service. No specific support for programming in Frisian.	Resources of Frisian language programming are not defined. Central government and Province can finance separate programs that strengthen Frisian.
Type of content about language and its users	National services offer informative, cultural and educational programming for general, diverse and the smaller audiences. Half of regional offer concerns the region with an informative, cultural & educational nature.	'Full and multifaceted' Frisian programming is not specified. Confusing that that 'radio' is mentioned, since Frisian language programming includes only a television and online offer.
Wide range of interests & needs	Pluriform and varied media offer with a multiform of cultural and societal interests. Regional services must cover societal and cultural interests of their area. Regional politics influences programming body.	The content of the documentaries is not explicitly discussed, although it should concern the Frisian language and Fryslân. This is a very broad 'definition'.
- Article 1.f.ii of article 11 of part III of the European Charter (audiovisual productions in Frisian):		
Financial assistance	Not mentioned.	The media fund is defunct in 2017. The NPO will make programs that could have been financed by this fund.
- Undertakings 1 and 4 of article 9 of the Framework Convention:		
No discrimination in access to media	Households have standard access to national and 'their' regional services.	Not mentioned.
Possibility to impart and receive ideas and information	This could in general be possible via the national and regional services. No specific measures designed for Frisian and Frisians.	Not mentioned.
Promoting cultural pluralism/tolerance	Part of the public service mission. No specific measures for Frisian and Frisians.	Not mentioned.
- Undertakings 2 and 3 of article 9 of the Framework Convention:		
Non-discrimination in licensing process, and use of media	Citizens are free to use media and start a licensing process for a media service. An area must at least have one regional service.	Not mentioned.

# 5 Interview Analysis

The eight main themes discussed with insiders and outsiders are collected in five subchapters. The insiders work for the Province of Fryslân (Poepjes and Bottema) and Omrop Fryslân (Koster and Falkena). Three outsiders are noted as policy experts (Riemersma, Van der Goot and Sterk) and three as regional media experts in an academic (Broersma) and practical sense (Van Westhreenen and Betten). Chapter 1.3 includes a motivation for the themes and selection of interviewees. An overview with short biographies can be consulted on page 80.

## 5.1 Approaches to Frisianness

Insiders and outsiders perceive Frisianness and Fryslân as intertwined phenomena that unify a people and area, and differentiate it from other native peoples and areas. “Our own language, history and relation with the world make Fryslân and Frisians special, but being different is different from being a separate part within our country,” says Provincial-Executive Poepjes. “I prefer to phrase Fryslân as an area with its own language and culture,” says administrator Bottema. It gives an impression of a desire to approach it as integral and serious elements of the country, that are unique in the state. “There should be political awareness that Frisians are a national minority and have their own language area,” says policy expert Sterk. “Citizens should be aware that Frisian in the European context is a unique and historical language. I think that Frisians, in general, do not see the advantage of their language.” She notes that awareness could increase if the objectives of COE – anti-discrimination and cultural diversity – are known.

In the interviews emphasis is put on calling Frisian an official state language of one part of the Netherlands. Policy expert Van der Goot notes that this perception is reflected in central government policy as well and refers to the official Frisian-language translation of European Union treaties. Moreover, in the interviews, Frisians are mainly discussed as a people with a strong collective identity and understanding of Frisian. No one disagrees with the recognition of Frisian and Frisians in COE’s instruments, which are results of the shared responsibility for policy. The insiders and policy experts use *minority or minority language* as political terms and relate it to COE’s instruments. “It was clear from the very start of the official ratification process that in the Netherlands the Frisians would be noted as a national minority within the meaning of the Convention”, recalls Van der Goot while referring to the (initial) government papers<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> Van der Goot has send, in a later stage, the government papers were he refers to: Kamerstuk 26389, no. 3 of 1999.

### *Downgrading Importance*

The interviews identify the perception that people outside Fryslân have an overall lack of knowledge of Fryslân and Frisian. One part of the Frisian society can play a role in this: journalist Van Westhreenen notices that the increased awareness in regional politics is not visible in all parts of society. “The Frisian language and culture, and Omrop Fryslân, are serious subjects and there are many who work hard for it,” says Van Westhreenen. “But, they have to deal with the Frisians who lower it to a superficial and folkloristic level.” She says this does not contribute to more awareness of the uniqueness and role of Frisianness for Fryslân and individuals. Van Westhreenen describes how her municipality hardly promotes Frisian, that her children get folkloristic theme weeks at school instead of Frisian language teaching, and that she met just a handful of people demanding attention for media services in Frisian and for Fryslân in The Hague. “You can scream *bloody murder* about the supposed lack of awareness of the central government in Frisianness, but if you really think it is important, you should show it by taking initiative. The responsibility should not only come from the central government.”

Policy expert Riemersma says that Fryslân and Frisian are often falsely interpreted as small and inferior: Frisian has many mother-tongue speakers for a European minority language. “People use a national reference frame or compare it with big minority languages such as Catalan,” says Riemersma. He says that the vitality of Frisian will not benefit when this perspective is adopted. Fryslân should instead be used as the reference frame, since Frisian is the majority language here. The insiders have similar impressions. “I still see the sentiments among parents that the Frisian language has no future, despite scientific research supporting multilingualism in general and during the growing years of a child,” says Koster, director of Omrop Fryslân. “Regional politics adopted research about multilingualism, but they have not succeeded in bringing this knowledge to all the people,” says journalist Falkena. He says this also occurs with the efficacy of the regulatory framework for the Frisian language and culture. “The lack of knowledge can be a result of a lack of information, but also people’s underestimation of its importance.”

### *Social Cohesion*

Bottema and Poepjes see Fryslân as a natural multilingual area. This is also noted in the policy of the province. “We should look from this perspective at how the languages of Fryslân meet, and what you can do to let children grow up as multilingual and European citizens,” says Bottema. “We have to think about how we can make people more tolerant of other languages and cultures, and make them understand that languages can function next to each other.” Frisian

as a language has an important role in this since it is part of Fryslân's society. "We should really be aware that it will not disappear," says Poepjes. She stresses the importance of people to be aware of the unique language situation in Fryslân. However: "After visiting Basque Country, I am glad that we approach multilingualism in a pleasant and unconstrained way. Some say we should be more normative with Frisian, but I do not want this aggressive language situation."

Several interviewees mention the generally positive atmosphere around the Frisian language and culture within Fryslân. "The inclusive element, that the language and culture belongs to everybody, is much more developed in Fryslân than in other minority areas," says Riemersma. "While the language transfer between generations declines, we succeed to make non-Frisian speakers learn Frisian." He stresses that the language is not performing badly, but identifies the phenomena that one must speak 'perfect' Frisian to be regarded as a Frisian-speaker. This can discourage people. The addressed experiences give the impression as if it is hard to find the right tone to create awareness: people should take it more serious, but not in a way that it will scare people off. Riemersma says that the ambition level of Frisians and the functioning of the Frisian language and culture in society, also for those who added Frisianness to their identity at a later age, does contribute to the social cohesion of the people of Fryslân as a collective society.

Social cohesion is noted as a distinctive feature of Fryslân, and seen as one of the reasons why the Frisian identity exists. "It is most common in the Netherlands to have a regional and national identity," says journalist and author Betten. "But I think we have a level between those identities in Fryslân, which is the Frisian identity." The strong emotional binding of the people with Fryslân connects them to some extent with the regional governance layer of this region. "The Province is as an 'in-between-governance layer' more important than in the west<sup>13</sup>," says insider Bottema. Others repeat this statement. "In Amsterdam, they have more affinity with the city council and its executive board than with the provincial parliament," adds Bottema. Others express their impression that especially people in the Randstad have not a 'provincially' shared identity, since the society in this area does not have the extensive social cohesion of Fryslân.

## 5.2 Frisianness in Public Media

Insiders and outsiders say that Frisian is invisible in national media discourse, and happenings in Fryslân are said to be hardly covered. FryslânDok is noted as an exception. Omrop Fryslân

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<sup>13</sup> In general, the terms 'Randstad', 'Holland' and 'the west' mean basically the same and are used to juxtapose with Fryslân.

uses in general Frisian in a casual and positive way, but it is said that FryslânDok is a niche. “With those broadcasts, people are potentially brought into contact with the Frisian language and culture, and attention can be called for political subjects in Fryslân,” says professor Broersma. “I think that the viewer ratings show that not that many people watch in practice.” Broersma says that you cannot expect people from outside Fryslân to pay attention to the Frisian language. “They will not talk Frisian, so you can wonder if the national invisibility of the language matters.” Riemersma says that media attention for the language and Frisians matters when it is focused on its positive effect on diversity. “We live in a separated society with groups living on their own islands and *terpen*<sup>14</sup>,” says Riemersma. He notes that FryslânDok is televised between programs of spiritual and religious nature. “This programming is not regarded as being part of the general intercultural discourse. Frisian must be taken seriously to be part of public discourse: people should know what they are dealing with.”

“I hardly watch those documentaries on national television,” says administrator Bottema. “They are televised at times when I do not watch television.” Poepjes does think that FryslânDok increases the national visibility of Frisianness, but its influence should not be overestimated because of the time of televising. “I would really like a more prominent position of Frisian in national public media, but I do not think we should demand or regulate this,” says Poepjes. She expresses a concern that there is a folkloristic depiction of Frisianness when national media services must conform to a quota for Frisian programming. “We should gain attention by organizing interesting events,” says Poepjes. “For example, by televising the opening of *Leeuwarden - Fryslân Cultural Capital of Europe 2018* live on national television. This event will have a great Frisian character, and it will be interesting for a wide audience.”

Poepjes wants to bring Frisianness into public discourse in a natural and qualitative way, instead of being loudly present and claiming broadcast time for their interests. “I think people outside Fryslân have interests in the Frisian language, but we should not force it on them,” says Poepjes. She says Frisian drama productions have an important role. “The movie *De Hel van '63* was televised on a national public channel this winter, accidentally without Dutch subtitles. I could see on Twitter that people liked the linguistic diversity in our country that they just discovered,” says Poepjes. “It is similar when there are rumours about the possibility of an *Alvestêdetocht*<sup>15</sup>: then commercials in national media can be in Frisian.” Falkena emphasizes the importance of

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<sup>14</sup> *Terpen* are ‘ancient’ artificial hills that can be found in Fryslân, although most are excavated. Pictured as typical Frisian.

<sup>15</sup> The legendary ice-skating ‘Eleven-cities-tour’ almost never takes place since the temperatures are often not low enough to provide the almost two-hundred-kilometre-long route of channels and rivers with ice thick enough to hold thousands of people.

film, and identifies developments in the Frisian film scene. “Minorities start often with viewing important stories and themes from their history, but we have passed that phase,” says Falkena. “Film is an important medium to develop since there will always be demand for interesting stories, while we notice that television is becoming less important – or consumed differently.”

### *Framing of Frisianness*

Betten thinks regional aspects are missing in the content of national media, and says it does not contribute to more tolerance for Frisian. He identifies a separation between Dutch and Frisian: national media does, e.g., not discuss Frisian literature and music. “When Frisianness is on national television, it is often made ridiculous,” says Betten. “This is the case for the entire periphery: when *Randstedelijke media* write or film something that belongs to the *province*, they use stereotypes to express this.”<sup>16</sup> An idea of the FNP<sup>17</sup> to get more autonomy on certain domains as a province, was framed in national media as ‘Frisian nationalists want separation’. “When *EenVandaag*<sup>18</sup> came to interview the FNP politician, they made random shots of farms and cows and left out modern images,” says Betten. “In a subtle way, they construct an image of Fryslân matching with the stereotypes they have in the Randstad.” Falkena says that Omrop Fryslân does perhaps the opposite: they might use stereotypes about the Randstad and cities.

The framing of Frisianness is also mentioned by insider Bottema. He noticed subjects connected with Fryslân are brought with a Holland-perspective. “Perhaps they have never been here and do not know what happens here, but they have a certain image and try to colour it in the way they think it is,” says Bottema. He uses an item of *Netwerk* as an example: videos were edited to make it look as if Frisian separatist feelings were uprising, while this is not a serious subject in Fryslân at all. Another example is an item of *Nieuwsuur*: the program used research that was criticized by Frisians to frame as if Frisians ignore that their language is dying – in a period when the province’s budget for Frisian was presented. “We gave the journalist all the possible information to make a good story, but instead he put this research on a stage and did not question the researcher about his methods,” says Bottema. The journalist came from the Randstad and lacked understanding of Fryslân and Frisian society. The critique on the research – not representative and incomparable data – was not mentioned by the journalist, who only described the critique of Frisian scholars as having “hostile feelings from an obstinate province.”

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<sup>16</sup> National media is based in the Randstad or Holland. ‘Province’ or ‘region’ refers to everything outside the Randstad.

<sup>17</sup> *Fryske Nasjonale Partij* (FNP: Frisian National Party). Represented in Senate, States-Provincial and municipality councils.

<sup>18</sup> *EenVandaag*, *Netwerk* and *Nieuwsuur* are journalistic television programs part of the national public service.

### *Lack of Coverage*

Fryslân and Frisian subjects are, like other subjects and areas outside the Randstad, mostly ignored by national media. “There is no equal coverage in the country, everything outside the dominant provinces gets way less attention,” says professor Broersma. “Practical accessibility plays a role, since national media is based in the Randstad, but there is also a kind of bias in news organizations; what happens in the Randstad is considered more important for society than what happens in the rest of the country.” Broersma thinks it is fair to say the NOS should diversify its news coverage to all regions, by either implementing regional news in their news program or by creating a carousel model, that is, by televising the important items from regional media services on a national public news program. He wonders if there is interest in the current pilot during the afternoon news. “What happens in *Limburg* is primarily interesting for *Limburgers*, although programs like *Hart van Nederland*<sup>19</sup> fulfil a need for light news from all over the country,” says Broersma. “Perhaps a more serious version of this can be a success.”

“You can wonder if the ‘centre of gravity’ should always be with the seven million people living in the Randstad, while there are ten million people living somewhere else,” says Bottema. He is, as the other insiders, aware of the domination of the Randstad. Insider Koster says that the national public channels should implement more news from the ‘provinces’. “It is a good sign that the NOS, NPO and regional media services started the pilot with the carousel models together,” says Koster. “Perhaps it would be good if the regional news could also be broadcasted after the main news program, but so far the NOS has prevented this since they are afraid the advertising income will decline.” He knows there is political support for this option, but explains it is hard to change the habits. Koster states that the visibility of ‘provinces’ could also increase when the regional media services take the place of the third national public channel. “It is a challenge to create a bond between the audience and regional television,” says Koster. “We are currently in an in-between phase, because eventually online will take over.”

### 5.3 Media in Fryslân

Broersma and Riemersma state that regional media services stand much closer to people than national outlets, and therefore function next to giving information in the social binding of an area. Participation is, according to Riemersma, an important aspect in this relation. “The radio quiz of Omrop Fryslân attracts ordinary people who participate in the program while talking

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<sup>19</sup> A program of the Dutch commercial broadcaster *SBS6* with a highly doubtful newsworthy and journalistic value.

Frisian. This creates awareness that the language is normal and good enough to be used,” says Riemersma. “The step to higher participation in media will lead to cultural development: it shows people are part of it, and it shows their social cohesion and culture.” The lack of Frisian language and subjects in national media discourse, and lack of knowledge about those issues when discussed, are seen as some of the main reasons why Omrop Fryslân is important, and why the impression is given that it is naturally ‘the Frisian broadcaster’. Riemersma sees the creation of Omrop Fryslân television in 1994 as an event that, together with the moment when Frisian became obligatory in primary education in 1980, increased awareness for Frisian as something serious. “Frisian came via sound and images into the living room, increasing the notion that this language belongs to us all and to our shared culture,” says Riemersma.

The insiders state that Omrop Fryslân is one of the most important carriers of the Frisian language, also in a passive and subconscious way, which makes it something that one does not only hear in private situations. “It is good for the language use when you can hear news of the world, the region and the town, in Frisian,” says Bottema. Poepjes thinks it is good how Omrop Fryslân combines the language with different programs for different ages, and connects this with regional issues. “It is also good for children and young adults to see that Frisian can be a majority language,” says Poepjes. “They can see it as a norm people can conform themselves to.” The role of language is something that makes Omrop Fryslân explicitly different from other outlets. “And as long as I sit here, Frisian is very important and a language change is not a subject of discussion,” says Omrop-director Koster. “It is the language of our broadcasts, meetings and administration: Frisian is not something folkloristic, but a language that is in our heart and the starting point in policy-making,” says Koster. “Language is a great culture carrier, and I would posit that Omrop Fryslân is the most important culture carrier for the maintenance of Frisian, even though we are a multimedia organisation and not a language institution.”

### *Multilingual Interviews*

Outsiders say that it is logical that Omrop Fryslân broadcasts in Frisian, even though they are not obligated to do this. “Frisian is an official and administrative language in Fryslân, and when you finance with public money as a public media service for this area, it makes sense to pay attention to this language,” says Broersma. “I think Omrop Fryslân is the only tool for Frisians to test if their Frisian is still similar to ‘official’ Frisian,” adds Betten. “But I do think they have more of a role of language disseminator than innovator.” He says it should be taken into account that there are, traditionally, more languages spoken in Fryslân. He does think Omrop Fryslân

does a good job for this aspect with their multilingual interviews and talk shows, and by having no idealistic vision: they ‘just’ portray the area with all its languages and expressions.

Insider Falkena says that Omrop Fryslân is certainly unique in having multilingual interviews: “Our journalists use standardized Frisian whenever possible, while interviewees can respond in Bildtsk, and variations of Frisian, Dutch and Lower Saxon.” Societal developments have a major influence in continuing with multilingual interviews. “When court and police were still provincially organized, we could always interview someone who spoke Frisian,” says Falkena. “Since the court and police are organized as ‘North Netherlands’ it is not guaranteed that we can interview someone who speaks or understands Frisian, especially when the headquarters are located outside Fryslân.” Scaling-up and centralization to a national or inter-provincial level make the percentage of Dutch interviews increase, since it is hard to find people outside Fryslân who even understand the language. This is not a problem in Fryslân, explains Falkena.

### *Regional or Language Medium*

Insiders and outsiders refer occasionally with *de Fryske stjoerder* (the Frisian broadcaster) to Omrop Fryslân. It raises the question if the outlet belongs to the regional media service sector. Journalist Falkena says it is an unusual combination to be organized as a minority language medium and a regional media service. “Minority languages and national minorities in other countries have their own media or the national outlet takes care of their programming,” says Falkena. He explains that Omrop Fryslân and its predecessors were founded as regional media services, but received the ‘minority duties’ throughout the years. The outlet would not fit in any national organisation (ROOS or the RPO) with no affinity for Frisian and interest in the special position of Omrop Fryslân. “It was, for example, calculated how many journalists a regional media service needs for a good news service,” says Falkena. “But they did not think about my colleagues that make FryslânDok and school and children television.” He thinks that Omrop Fryslân does not benefit in a sector that has no awareness for Frisian programming.

“Omrop Fryslân differs from other regional public media services, because of their language use, but I think it is not logical to split the outlet into a regional and language broadcaster,” says outsider Broersma. “The language and regional duties are intertwined and they know how to handle both tasks.” Policy expert Sterk points out that Frisian language programming affects the entire organization. “Journalists who speak good Frisian need to be hired, or they have to follow courses to learn, so this makes Omrop Fryslân have higher expenses than other media services,” says Sterk. “Programming in Frisian is more expensive in general and takes more

time.” The fact that most information comes in Dutch or English contributes to this notion. “Our journalists are also translators, which is something they are not trained for when they enter the newsroom,” says Falkena. He expresses that nothing is offered for future Frisian journalists at universities: there are no courses for this type of journalism and it is not part of the curriculum. It makes it hard to find journalists with good language capacities. Insiders and outsiders imply that Omrop Fryslân should use perfect Frisian, considering their function and role in society.

### *Influence of Language*

Omrop Fryslân should continue having Frisian as the main language in case the use of Frisian or the amount of mother tongue speakers declines, say insiders Poepjes, Bottema and Koster. “I would say there is even more importance for Frisian programming if the language use would decline,” says Poepjes. This is also something Bottema mentions, although he imagines that the approach of Omrop Fryslân could change if the language ratio changes radically; at this moment nine in ten inhabitants understand Frisian, while half of the population has Frisian as its mother tongue. “On the other hand, it is likely that the use of Frisian will decline when individuals do not hear this language,” says Bottema. “And when you hear Frisian, it seems important enough and people will speak or use it in a passive way. This is why Omrop Fryslân is so important.”

Riemersma says that Frisian words should be implemented in television items to develop the low reading skills in Frisian. “People will start to recognize the language when they see words as *hjoed* [today] and *it waar* [the weather] on the screen,” says Riemersma. He says the online content develops the understanding of written Frisian, since text is combined with audio and video. Omrop Fryslân decided recently to make people choose to read the text in Frisian or Dutch. “People have to put effort into reading Frisian while they do not want to make efforts,” says Koster. “Also, *online* attracts an audience that is not constrained to Fryslân.” Newspapers deal with the poor reading skills in Frisian as well. “We write less in Frisian as in the past,” says Van Westhreenen. “Journalists want their stories read and there are only a few that will read entire Frisian articles.” It is also a dilemma for the other newspaper. “As a commercial party, we are in a difficult situation: we want to play a role in society but we also want to make a product for our readers,” says Betten. “Our reader inquiries show people prefer to read Dutch, while others want more Frisian articles. We do have those, but all important news is in Dutch.”

### *Focus on Fryslân*

The by research created impression that no national public and commercial media outlet covers Fryslân, is another reason why Omrop Fryslân is seen as important. “If we have no media in

Fryslân, who would inform the people then about what happens in the province, and who will cover our politics?” says insider Bottema. Outsiders state that the Province has self-interest in media in Fryslân. “There is a major importance of regional media in Fryslân in maintaining the existence of the Frisian identity,” says journalist Betten. “Media plays a role in the construction and negotiations of identity markers.” He argues that when this identity becomes less strong, the official recognition of Frisian and Frisians will lose its legitimation. Betten says that the Province of Fryslân and Omrop Fryslân have, from the perspective of securing and legitimizing their existence and position, an interest in maintaining the Frisian identity. The Frisian language is the most distinctive cultural marker and plays a central role in this identity.

“The social cohesion connects society with the region’s main outlets, since they focus on the province,” says Betten of the *Friesch Dagblad*. “They attend all meetings of States-Provincial and cover cultural and societal Frisian features, thereby contributing to the Frisian identity and society.” It is, just as for provincial politics, an advantage for the media outlets to have such a demarcated work field to focus on, adds *Leeuwarder Courant* journalist Van Westhreenen. Riemersma says that Frisian politics are aware of the importance of good functioning media. “They want good PR for themselves, but also for the subject they deal with,” says Riemersma. “Media is not just about telling information, but also about creating commitment. It is important for politicians to create public support for their interests, and to make people participate in this.”

The perspective of the insiders is similar: Koster recognizes the experiences in his contact with provinces and regional media services. “The provinces put a lot of emphasis on the connection between province and regional media service, also for their own existence,” says Koster. The relation between province and regional media service plays a major role in the decision-making. He refers to the opted plans of the central government to merge provinces. In Koster’s view, he says the provinces outside the Randstad think similarly, the regional services can potentially connect people and legitimize the existence of a province. “Most of the regional media services are focused on provincial borders, which are not natural for all the provinces. I think it would make sense to organize public media services with a focus on areas with a shared identity,” says Koster. “But, that is easy for me to say since Fryslân has natural borders, a strong collective identity, and our governance layer will most likely not merge with those of other provinces.”

### *Regional Cooperation*

The regional public media service for Fryslân is the only major outlet offering daily content in Frisian. The fact that Omrop Fryslân covers mainly events taking place in, or connected with,

Fryslân makes the feeling that the language only belongs to this area increase. “People are not willing to see the national and international news when they watch or listen to us,” says Koster. “We can distinguish ourselves with news from a very local to provincial level, and by bringing the story behind the news.” One idea is to build up a network of local correspondents, which connects with Riemersma’s idea to increase the relation with local media. “The relation between local and regional media is important in relation to the social cohesion, and the use and transfer of language,” says Riemersma. Cooperation could take place in the regional media centre, founded by the Province of Fryslân in 2014. “This centre does not work since it is ruled by two big players who do not want to give each other responsibility; Omrop Fryslân and the NDC Mediagroep, the owner of the newspapers,” says Van Westhreenen. “Smaller and new online parties should be included if you want to develop Frisian journalism through cooperation.”

The Province of Fryslân evaluates this media centre soon, says Bottema. The project shows the intentions of the Province to support media in Fryslân, which is having hard times. Journalist and insider Falkena says that Omrop Fryslân deals with lower television ratings – the media use is changing and popular programs had to be cancelled in the first round of cutbacks – and both newspapers deal with fewer readers and lower income via advertisements, which is also the case for Omrop Fryslân. “Until recently, the regional newspapers were the most read newspapers,” says Broersma. “Journalism and the media industry is changing, which erodes and affects the former business.” Broersma says that regional newspapers are important for regional services such as Omrop Fryslân, since it is mainly the newspapers who take care of the news provision. “The regional services often base their items on the newspapers, since radio and television is more expensive with less money for journalism as a result,” says Broersma. Omrop Fryslân loses manpower because of cutbacks and is affected by the loss of manpower at newspapers. Broersma thinks authorities should step in to support regional journalism, since new players from the digital scene do not have the power to offer news on a structural basis – and it can be wondered if commercial regional digital outlets will ever manage to get power.

### *Changing Media*

“When the old players are having trouble and the new ones do not have the strength to take over, then the public duty to finance broadcasters or other forms of journalism becomes more important,” says Broersma. A media fund, like the Province had, could be an option. “We really think it is important to have a plurality of media in Fryslân and we do want to keep the newspapers,” says Bottema. “We created a media fund to safeguard quality journalism, make

investigative journalism possible and to search for new business and earning models.” The fund does not exist anymore since there was mostly interest in documentary projects and hardly any in searching for new business models – what Bottema calls “the important part”. “Subsidizing is perhaps not the best way to stimulate regional journalism,” says Bottema. The difficulty is that commercial outlets cannot receive direct state support like that given to Omrop Fryslân. Van Westhreenen identifies a certain despondency: people have no idea how to continue with regional media in Fryslân, and there are also no media start-ups that she knows of. “Now *Leeuwarder Courant* makes online videos instead of cooperating with Omrop Fryslân,” says Van Westhreenen. “It costs a lot of money and it does not bring us anything.”

Koster describes how their recently started online activities have increased their audience. The radio channel is popular and Koster feels it will still be used in the future. The decreasing television ratings made Omrop Fryslân decide to develop new journalistic products, which are created and tested online by trainees who just finished journalism education. “One of the videos they made, about the metal-music festival in the city centre of Ljouwert, was seen by 1.8 million people from all over Europe,” says Koster. “Our most popular item, with 2.8 million unique views, was made by our journalist who captured cows running into the field with his phone.” These examples describe how Omrop Fryslân tries to develop itself in a media landscape that turns into an online scene with interest in live and on-demand content, says its director. “Our most popular online content has nothing to do with journalism, but with happiness and solidarity. We occasionally broadcast events live on television, with this year *de Slachte*<sup>20</sup> as a highlight. It is an event that is perhaps not exciting to watch, but it has a high recognition-factor and can contribute to social cohesion. Typical Frisian events like this score very well,” says Koster. “Almost one in three Frisians watched parts of our live coverage of *de Slachte*, which is extremely high considering all the media alternatives an individual has.”

### *Lack of Journalism*

Falkena and Betten say that the Frisian media landscape is, with one media service and two daily newspapers, quite developed and complementary when compared with other peripheral areas. The lack of ‘heavy journalistic items’ is a problem, says Van Westhreenen. She identifies the shift to content that should be “cosy and funny.” “Frisian journalism looks good at first, but I do not think it is well developed and I think it is only going backwards,” says Van Westhreenen. “Critical journalism – investigating – it hardly happens in Fryslân. I cannot name

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<sup>20</sup> *De Slachte* is a marathon (running and walking) on an old dyke in Fryslân. The marathon is organized every four years.

one big scoop Omrop Fryslân and Leeuwarder Courant have brought last year,” says Van Westhreenen. She says regional outlets have the possibility do this and refers to Limburch, where media unmasked corrupt politicians. “Nobody associates Omrop Fryslân with great journalism. They are not the guard dog of democracy, but take care of the language and creating cosiness.” She says this approach does not contribute to awareness for Frisianness: “I think you make yourself folklore if you lack serious journalism and only focus on culture and language.”

Koster says journalism is still an important task for Omrop Fryslân, but he does not want to ignore people who lack interest in this. “People have different expectations, especially for our online platforms,” says Koster. “We have to join in this development, because we lose our audience if we do not follow. Now we rely on a fifty-plus audience, but those who are now between thirty and fifty will not watch an outdated Omrop Fryslân when they are fifty and older.” Van Westhreenen realizes that the majority of people want fun and cosy items, but she wants more attention for the minority who want to get “good journalism.” “There was not a single journalist in Fryslân who knew about the coalition crisis in *Achtkarspelen*,” says Van Westhreenen. “I had to find out about it some days later. We should be ashamed of it, because this is the current state of Frisian journalism – a lot happens that nobody knows about.” Betten worries about another issue of Frisian journalism: the expectation not to criticize Frisian cultural projects. “There is an assumption that we are part of the Frisian society and identity, so we should stick together and not *wash our dirty linen in public*,” says Betten. “On the one side this makes us strong as a collective, but it also makes it much harder to cover negative developments. We also do not get responses when we, as the smallest of the main outlets, cover negative developments; either it is not read, or people do not want to read and know about it.”

#### 5.4 Regulatory Framework

Insider Falkena says that Frisians need to move in creative ways to address their linguistic and cultural interests, and claim the rights that derive from the Charter and Framework Convention. Outsider Riemersma discusses this aspect as well, and points to the important role of national politicians from Fryslân. “Breakthroughs for the Frisian language are not created by the policy-making of the central government, but by MP’s with a Frisian background,” says Riemersma. Insiders and outsiders paint the image that Frisian interests find little response on a national level. Sterk states that especially the status of national minority is ignored, with little attention for the undertakings of the Framework Convention as a result. She says that the central

government does acknowledge Frisian, but describes their perception of actual policy-making for Frisian, and demands from Frisian parties, as ‘a burden’ and not as an added value to society.

Journalist Van Westhreenen notices little pride for Frisian in The Hague. “Responses to Frisian interests are usually like, ‘Ah, there you have them again’,” says Van Westhreenen. “It is only out of decency that they mention the importance of the language.” The three journalists recall how the current Minister of the Interior (Ronald Plasterk) said, in a previous occupation on national public television, that Frisian is a fairy tale language. Insider Koster mentions how, this year, State Secretary Sander Dekker of OCW compared Frisian in importance with carnival. This certainly contributes to the perception of both insiders and outsiders that the national government has a reluctance toward Frisian as a language. But: “*The Hague* does not care about the regions outside the Randstad in general,” says Provincial-Executive Poepjes. “Fryslân is only considered when there might be an *Alvestêdetocht* – then suddenly everybody has a grandmother from Fryslân – but besides this, they have no interest in Fryslân at all.”

### *Lack of Knowledge*

Van Westhreenen states that Fryslân must *bang the drum* to get attention for their interests, also in public discourse, and Falkena says individuals need to be assertive and strong-headed to make use of the rights to, e.g., communicate in Frisian with (semi-)national public institutions and organizations. But, there is, according to journalist Betten, little attention for differences among the traditional residents in general. He discovered in an interview with a researcher that traditional residents with ‘peripheral’ collective identities are, in contrast with those with a foreign background, hardly subjects of social studies: there is no national interest and subsidies to study such subjects. The lack of attention for cultural diversity, combined with the notion of downgrading its importance by some parts of the Frisian population, is perhaps why a general lack of knowledge about Fryslân, and the role of Frisiannes, is experienced outside Fryslân.

Riemersma says the general knowledge about the Frisian language and the experiences with multilingualism in Fryslân are not commonplace and fragmented. In his experience, the lack of basic knowledge makes debates about Frisian often superficial. Insider Falkena recalls how national journalists, administrators and politicians (with entourage) question him about the role of Frisian in society and politics. “Many people have no idea that Frisian is actively used in the administrative layers and by a majority of our population,” says Falkena. People outside Fryslân do know a different language is spoken in this area and know the people there are proud of their language and identity, but that is it. The interviewed insiders and outsiders state that they do

not identify any stimulation for more awareness for Frisian from the national governance level. One reason seems to be the different perspectives of the state's political centre and periphery.

Interviewees see a difference between the Netherlands of the Randstad, known for its economic activity and high population, and one outside this cultural and political centre of power, imagined as rural and empty. The impression exists that most agree with Poepjes and Betten that the little interest in Frisianness has not much to do with Fryslân, but with a mental and physical gap and lack of interest of Holland in the 'peripheral' provinces and their issues. "State Secretary Dekker wanted to close schools with fewer than a hundred children," recalls Falkena. "It shows the perspective of *The Hague*, since this would mean one in four schools in Fryslân would close." He sees this as a striking example of the government's singular perspective on Holland. Bottema says there is a *monolingual habitus* mentality – there is the belief that languages somehow cannot function alongside one another. "I do identify a positive change in the approach towards Frisian and other languages," says Bottema, "also at the ministries."

#### *Focus on Charter*

Similar experiences are visible in how the central government and ministries treat, say insider Falkena and several outsiders, the *BFTK*, Framework Convention and Charter. The impression is that they do not take the initiative to meet their responsibilities. It is noted that in new or changing policies or legislation, the instruments of COE are forgotten and the undertakings are thereby ignored. "The Charter is more used in the Frisian lobby than by national administrators, who often do not think about the Charter and Framework Convention in decision-making," says policy expert Sterk. The central government, says Riemersma, regards the instruments as bothersome, while the Province uses them in their negotiations as a 'bottom-line' to secure Frisian interests. He questions the approach of the state towards Frisian. "They selected those articles in the Charter that were a confirmation of existing policies," says the policy expert. "Instead of a developing approach, like Germany, they choose to do as little as possible."

The experiences of administrator and insider Bottema nuance this: "The state is on certain levels and domains obligated to do what they ratified and they have this intention most of the time, but you have to remind them about this." Policy expert Van der Goot, who worked for both sides, has some sympathy for this view. But, he stresses that the Province of Fryslân, in close consultation with the central government, House of Representatives, and Senate, are jointly responsible to make sure that policies are Charter-proof – although the state at the end of the day holds full responsibility for the level of implementing policies regarding Frisian in Fryslân

in line with Part III of this instrument. “The state has not handed over or even delegated responsibility to the Province with the message that they have to deal with it, but the geographic marking is their responsibility,” says Van der Goot. “And within this territorial area you deal with certain governance layers, such as the Province, but also municipalities, as well as with other stakeholders, including the cultural sector, schools and the judiciary.” Sterk points to the provincial focus: “At the former consultative organ for Frisian<sup>21</sup> we arranged things for Fryslân, and the Province of Fryslân is of course the main governance layer of this territory.”

### *Understanding the Covenants*

The way in which the Province and the provincial parliament publicly interpret the undertakings of the Charter cannot be underestimated, says Van der Goot. “It is key that the Province of Fryslân and Frisian Movement, or Frisian society, are sufficiently able to articulate what the undertakings in the Charter mean, in their opinion, and how this should be put into place,” says Van der Goot. He says nothing will change in *The Hague* when the Province of Fryslân, as the primary authority responsible for Frisian language policy interests, is unable to do this. The focus of the interviewees gives the impression as if the Framework Convention is not taken into account too often. According to Sterk, this instrument is used less in the Netherlands, and as a result, has a weaker status than the Charter. “The Framework Convention is relatively unknown in our country, perhaps since the Charter was signed and ratified earlier,” says Sterk. “Institutions such as *Konsultatyf Orgaan Frysk* were created in response to the Charter. But, it would be good if the Framework Convention is taken into account more often,” says Sterk.

The Charter-focus is visible in the *BFTK*, which has been based on Part III of this instrument since 1994, on the advice of Riemersma. “The relation with the *BFTK* makes it possible for the Committee of Experts to follow developments,” says Riemersma. “Strong and weak points are easily identified.” The *BFTK* should also have this relation with the Framework Convention, says Van der Goot, because some provisions in the Framework Convention, in particular with broadcasting, are more demanding. He says that the debates in Fryslân show that it is a typical Charter-land. Texts from both treaty instruments are, according to the policy expert, applicable to media, which is why the media section of the *BFTK* should also conform to the Framework Convention. “It is interesting to see that the public opinion in Fryslân takes the Charter as a starting point for their discussions on the position of Omrop Fryslân and seems to underestimate or even forget the Framework Convention in this context.” It would be interesting to see if a

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<sup>21</sup> *Konsultatyf Orgaan Frysk* and *Berie foar it Frysk* are since the *Act on the use of the Frisian language* replaced by Dingtiid.

new agreement between central government and Province of Fryslân on Omrop Fryslân is in line both with the Charter provisions and with Article 9 of the Framework Convention. “That’s up to the monitoring committees of both treaties, of course,” Van der Goot says.

### *Independent Frisian Media Service*

Omrop-director Koster and administrator Bottema both say that they base their arguments, in the negotiations for the safeguarding of Frisian language programming and public media services for Fryslân, on the Charter and the official status of Frisian. “In a media-technical sense, the Framework Convention is not of much use to me,” says Koster. “A term such as ‘own media’ can be understood in many ways, and I think this undertaking can be met when we have editorial independency and remain the designated public media service for Fryslân – instead of merging with Drinte and Grins into a northern service, the way it was in the past.” Koster does not think that article 9.3 necessarily means that Omrop Fryslân should have its own board of directors, and is therefore not sure if the article can be used as an argument. Bottema is not sure about the meaning of ‘own media’ in article 9.3 either, but says it could be an interesting article. However, he notes that: “The Charter is much more specific, and the state has picked those undertakings they agree with,” says Bottema. “This allows us to make stronger arguments.”

Omrop Fryslân is financed for its regional media services in the same way as other regional media services. The budget is based on population, with the idea that more happens in more populated areas, and what happens is more important since it has an impact on more people. “You can say this is valid reasoning, but it is also in the interest of people in less populated provinces to be informed about what happens in their region,” says Broersma. “We think from a national perspective that what happens in Amsterdam is more important, but all people have the same rights as those in Amsterdam. Financing can never completely depend on population numbers.” Thus, the regional service for Drinte receives little income and can only make thirty minutes of television, which is the absolute minimum according to Broersma. The sentiment that public media services do not cover the entire country is justified and a valid argument, says Broersma: “You can say that the public duty of media service is not carried out equally.” He notes that it is a public duty to inform inhabitants in an adequate way and to offer them a stage for debate, among other things, and it should not matter where they are from. “It will be very hard to carry out a public duty when you reduce the funding of regional media services.”

Insiders Bottema and Koster explain that the budget of Omrop Fryslân is not completely based on the size of population, which is also the case with three other less populated provinces –

including Drinte. “Our regular contribution is based on 2004,” says Omrop-director Koster. He explains that the contribution used to be based on the population of an area, until it was agreed that the budget of media services of less populated provinces was too low to produce qualitative programming. “Fryslân was one of the provinces where the regional media service received an extra contribution,” confirms administrator Bottema. This extra contribution and the financing based on the population size, were mixed together in 2005. This total budget was about seven percent of the total budget for regional media services in the Netherlands, according to the new contribution system. “Today, this contribution for less populated areas makes it so that we do not go below the lowest limit of what is necessary to produce qualitative content,” says Koster.

### *Extra Contributions*

“We are organized as a regional media service, but also get €1.8 million from the NOS to make Frisian language programming,” says Koster. Forty-three documentaries and school television is made from this budget. The documentaries are broadcast on national public television and on Omrop Fryslân. The school television is broadcast on Omrop Fryslân and on an online channel of the NOS. “We also use this money to make a drama series once every few years,” says Koster. “The Frisian language programming is mentioned in the *BFTK*, but its existence and budget are not regulated in a document; it is based on an agreement with the NOS from the early 1990’s.” He states that he has put effort into safeguarding this programming and financing. “The agreement with NOS was tacitly renewed most years, but the money for Frisian language programming is not earmarked, as such, in the budget of the NOS,” says Koster. “The continuation of this programming was at stake some five years ago, due to the cutbacks at the NPO. We were able to continue with the programming after discussions, but the Ministry of OCW made it clear that we could only use the money for these specific programs.”

Koster wants the budget and programming to be concretized and safeguarded in the *BFTK*. “The media section of the *BFTK* is the only section that lacks agreements,” says Koster. “We have always succeeded in keep this programming without having it safeguarded in the *Media Act*, and somehow the budget increased during the years,” says provincial administrator Bottema. “It would be better if it was legislated, because it could in theory be gone after 2018. There is nothing safeguarding Frisian programming in the *Media Act* either, so Omrop Fryslân would, in principle, be able to decide to change its programming tomorrow into Dutch.” It is his aim to get it legislated and safeguarded in a new agreement between the central government and Province of Fryslân for Frisian in media. Bottema regards those agreements as a lower

version of legislation, whose status increased due to its safeguarding in the *Act on the use of Frisian language* of 2014. “It is the strongest to arrange as much as possible in legislation, but not all specific agreements can be arranged in legislation,” says Bottema. The situation of 2012, when there was no *BFTK* in use, will be unlikely to happen again. “The *BFTK* has a legal base now, as a result the state has to make agreements on the domains of the Charter.”

Bottema and Koster both mention that the Dutch Cultural Media Fund will become practically defunct in 2017. “This will hurt all regional and national public media services,” says Bottema. “Nothing will replace this fund.” Omrop Fryslân made use of this fund in the past, and Koster says that the NPO said that they can use parts of their budget to take over the responsibility for cultural productions. “My big fear is that the NPO has less of a drive to make policy for this kind of financing,” says Koster. “It is questionable if the NPO will use their money to finance cultural productions, and if they are enthusiastic to finance productions in the Frisian language.” Bottema mentions that Omrop Fryslân still has the possibility to get incidental money from the Province of Fryslân and central government. “Especially the Province has financed productions on a project basis, since they are interested in contributing to certain programs or themes,” says Omrop-director Koster. “In practice, the state never finances Frisian language productions.”

## 5.5 Changing Media Act

Some days before the first interview, the Province of Fryslân announced that they had made additional covenant agreements for Frisian in media with the Ministry of OCW. It was thought that those agreements would enter into force in September 2016. This never happened, since the legislative proposal for regional public media was put on hold, as discussed in the first chapter. Since the interviews were conducted in ‘a different reality’, this interview analysis has been constructed in such a way that the content of subchapter one to four was influenced as little as possible by the expected content of the *Media Act* and *BFTK*. This subchapter will go into the discussions of July 2016. However, the next paragraph concerns mid-November 2016.

Omrop Fryslân director Koster and provincial administrator Bottema commented briefly about the developments in the *Media Act 2008* and *BFTK*-dossier. “The additional agreements of last summer had the changes in the *Media Act* as a motive,” says Bottema. “They did not go through since they referred to a situation that does not exist.” There have been rumours that new agreements can be expected in December, but he says it is too early to say something about it. Although, he emphasizes the importance of official agreements for media services for Fryslân

and Frisian language programming. “It is interesting what the new cabinet and State Secretary will do with the *Media Act*,” says Bottema. He refers to the elections of March 2017. For Koster, it also is unclear what the cabinet will do with regional media services. “We are currently in a special situation,” says Koster. “The changes in the *Media Act* are put on hold and the dossier will be handed over to the new cabinet, but the cutbacks will continue.” He says it is uncertain if the cutbacks of €17 million for regional public media services – Omrop Fryslân’s share is around €1.3 million – are executed in January 2017, or divided over 2017 and 2018; the State Secretary wants the first option, while the regional public media services prefer the latter one. The interview analysis continues in the following paragraph to the interviews from July 2016.

### *Summer 2016*

Insiders and outsiders mention how the only attention in the House of Representatives for the future of media services in Frisian was raised by two MP’s with a background in Fryslân. The Frisian lobby started to operate in the Senate, where the Frisian senators Atsma (Christian-Democrats: CDA) and Ten Hoeve (FNP, part of Independent Senate Group: OSF) stood up for Omrop Fryslân’s ‘special language role’ and the state’s responsibilities. It would eventually influence the content of legislative proposal, including articles for media services in Frisian and for Fryslân. Some outsiders question if the Province was able to arrange something for Frisian, in a setting where the Charter, Framework Convention and Frisian interests have little priority. “In *The Hague*, you arrange things in back offices,” says Van Westhreenen. “You can expect a response like ‘there you have the Frisians again, who always want something’ if you do not address your interests in a good way.” She thinks the Province failed to address this in the first stage, but could make a ‘comeback’ via the Senate thanks to the senators Atsma and Ten Hoeve.

Bottema emphasizes that the Province has been involved in the political process around the modernization of the *Media Act* since the cabinet’s announcement in 2012. “We tried to keep our regional media service independent to secure qualitative Frisian language programming,” says the Provincial-Executive Poepjes as well. “The State Secretary would, under no conditions, cooperate in keeping an independent media service for Fryslân. We decided to focus less on independency, and to make the safeguarding of qualitative programming in Frisian our ultimate goal.” This goal was achieved during one of the final moments of the political process, in a Senate that had many remarks about legislative proposal. “The State Secretary needed senator Ten Hoeve’s vote to get a majority in favour of his proposal, and we have made use of this optimally,” says Poepjes. She was in daily contact with Ten Hoeve and State Secretary Dekker

to secure the Frisian interests. It resulted in a supported motion that would lead to a Frisian Media Council and the regulation of an adequate media offer in Frisian secured in legislation. As a result, Ten Hoeve did as promised: he voted in favour of Dekker's legislative proposal.

“My conclusion is that when there is no ‘pressing instrument’ to arrange this kind of issues for Frisian, nothing will happen,” says Poepjes. “If you want to arrange something, you should go after it yourself and not count on what is arranged on paper.” She thinks the dossier shows the important role of the Province of Fryslân and Frisian senators, who can pay a lot of attention to Frisian issues and are able to negotiate this on a national political level. The Province would, as part of the deal, contribute €655,800 annually to Omrop Fryslân for its programming. “I am glad that the Province combines beautiful words about the importance of Omrop Fryslân with a financial contribution,” says Koster. Bottema, Koster and Poepjes expressed that the Media Council would get important and far-reaching tasks, and could seriously influence decision making of the RPO – which would become the central governing body for regional media services. “Frisian programming will for the first time safeguarded in legislation,” says Bottema. “But it is yet unclear how the new organizational structures will influence the Omrop.”

### *Lonely Lobby*

The creation of a Frisian Media Council could, according to professor Broersma, be a way of safeguarding the position and editorial autonomy of Omrop Fryslân in the RPO, but it would strongly depend on its powers. Journalist Van Westhreenen questions if the States-Provincial of Fryslân would agree with the annual contribution. “This is a lot of money for a media council for the programming of a formerly independent broadcaster,” says Van Westhreenen. The loss of independency was feared by outsiders and insider Falkena, being aware of the lack of interest for Frisian and Fryslân by non-Frisians. Another fear are the cutbacks. “The financial situation was secure when we still had a media service tax, which came via the Province of Fryslân to Omrop Fryslân and could not be touched by politicians,” says Falkena. The Frisian interests were in safe hands, says Falkena, when the Province of Fryslân was responsible. “The economic crisis of 2008 resulted in less income and the first cutbacks, but what really made us vulnerable, was when the Province of Fryslân lost their responsibility for the media service in 2014.”

“We were against this and tried to stop the process, but we lost,” says Bottema. “We are also unhappy about the new cutbacks, which is a process that, from our perspective, did not have to start, and something the state could only realize after they took away our responsibility over regional media.” The interviewees – both insiders and outsiders – identify a clear difference

among the interests of provinces in regional media services, which is in line with the shared provincial identity that does not exist in the western provinces. “We could not start a lobby in the IPO<sup>22</sup> since the interests of the provinces are so different,” says administrator Bottema. “The provinces Noard Hollân, Súd Hollân, Utert and Flevolân have no interest in regional media services.” The other provinces with interest in regional media have no responsibility for Frisian.

Koster’s experiences support the impression of Frisian parties standing alone in their lobby for Frisian language programming: Omrop Fryslân cannot really count on the twelve other regional media services. “Our Frisian language programming is legitimized by the European covenants and the status of Frisian as an official state language, but my colleagues in ROOS do not like the consequences of this,” says Koster. Omrop Fryslân is recognized by ROOS as *special* because of the language use, but Koster feels his colleagues do not see it as a benefit for the sector. Falkena says Koster’s position as vice-chairman of ROOS is why the sector recognized the special status of Omrop Fryslân: he has pushed it through. “It gave him difficulties,” says Falkena, since his fellow directors criticize him for doing too little for the sector and focusing too much on Frisian, while his employees thought he did not do enough for the Frisian interests. “It has been a search for balance,” says Koster. “My only goal is to get Omrop Fryslân in the best possible position and I do not want to frustrate the sector, because we are also part of it.”

### *Regional Preferences*

The lack of legislation for programming in Frisian was the main concern of Koster during the process. To a lesser extend the financing, since this is a direct result of legislation. “It is important to safeguard Frisian language programming in the sense that the media service for Fryslân can never merge on an editorial level with other regional media services,” says Koster. “Our journalists and producers know the language, culture and society. I am against homogenizing programming – people in Fryslân have other expectations and wishes than people in Súd-Hollân.” Koster does not stand alone in his decentralized wishes; only the regional media services from the Randstad, and the one of Grinslân, are in favour of a centralized approach. Koster says that facilities must be nearby subjects as it would be wrong when people in Holland need to give permission to send a camera crew to cover a subject in Fryslân. Journalist Falkena has no problem with practical cooperation between outlets, which

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<sup>22</sup> *Interprovinciaal Overleg* (Inter-provincial Counsel) is an organization advocating shared interests of the twelve provinces.

is already taking place, but is against centralization: “How much is left for our own programming and our own identity when you share an editor-in-chief with others?”

“When the P.C.<sup>23</sup> or other typical Frisian events take place, it is useful to identify with it; journalism is not just a technical trick,” says Koster. Professor Broersma emphasizes this as well. “Regional journalism will not work well when you create big regional media services, because they do not have a clear identity and no connection with the region,” says Broersma. A regional media service has to stand close to the people to function, he says. The binding with society, and participation of people in programs, is also something Riemersma mentioned. Poepjes sees identity and language as the main possible victims of centralization. “The Frisian language and culture are entrusted to us,” says Poepjes, who refers to ‘typical’ Frisian events, but also to mechanisms and structures in society. “Scaling-up should also not lead to the *horror scenario* of only Dutch programming, with some generic northern news and a few things for the young children and old people in Frisian.” Bottema thinks that the main question should be what the audience will notice when the structures of the public media services changes. They will not notice anything in 2017, expects Koster, but it is hard to predict it for the next years.

### *Scaling-up and Centralization*

Koster does not see scaling-up of his organization as a problem when extra constructions that safeguard Frisian programming are arranged, but also stresses that the legislative proposal for the *Media Act 2008* and an additional *BFTK* for media would create a legal framework that can be executed in either a centralized or decentralized way. “In the centralized way, shared-service centres that can take care of the entire country will be created,” says Koster. “I am really against this, since in my experience it will create organizational chaos and have more expenses, the distances become too big, which eventually could all go at the expense of programming.” He thinks regional thinking is left behind when you are centralized, resulting in a loss of audience. “As long as I am here and I can influence the processes, I will do everything to get the more decentral model into the RPO,” says Koster. In his opinion, the proposed governing body should be small and function as administrator of the sector, while media services should cooperate closely in clusters to deal with cutbacks in, for example, human resources and technique.

Scaling-up and centralization played a major role in the discussions around the changes in the public media system. All interviewees noted from experience, with e.g. the police and court

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<sup>23</sup> The sport *keatsen* (Frisian handball) is presented as typical Frisian. The P.C. in Frjentsjer is the most prestigious tournament.

system, that scaling-up is disadvantageous for Fryslân and regulations concerning Frisian. “What needs to be done, as a consequence of treaty obligations, is that the commitments originating from the Charter and the Framework Convention should continue to be guaranteed,” says Van der Goot. He notes that the central government is fully aware of this. “Solutions to remedy possible shortcomings, for instance through additional safeguards – Media Council for Fryslân, for instance – could well be in line with commitments under both Charter and Framework Convention.” He explains that, already in the 1990’s, several national boards were organized in a similar way, without any problems; scaling-up or centralisation is, in itself, not harmful when, as a minimum, treaty commitments are fully respected. New legislation and new policy developments – or financial cutbacks or even restructurings and scaling-up – can create a new situation in which it needs to be appreciated how new policies and regulations still conform to the initial level of ratification of COE’s instruments in such a way that linguistic or minority rights are fully maintained. He says it is a common understanding that a country deals with its treaty commitments in any situation. This is relevant with respect to public services in Frisian when it is facing major financial cutbacks and becomes part of a national organization, or when the system of regional services is fundamentally restructured on the national level.

#### *Lack of Vision on Journalism*

Omrop Fryslân is, according to the interviewees, of added value to national public media, but there are concerns about the effects of cutbacks and possible scaling-up and centralization. “For a regional media service, they make a lot of television with more than one hour of new content a day,” says outsider Broersma. “It could always be more, but that is not realistic if you look at the way the regional service is financed and how it is viewed politically”. He sees thirty minutes of television a day under the critical lowest point as medium: “Then you are just irrelevant, you can also just close the place.” Insider Falkena says that the cutbacks can endanger the old ideal of a media service with a diverse programming in Frisian. “I think the cutbacks will increase the pressure on us to lower the broadcasting time,” says Falkena. Broersma questions what remains of the tasks and necessity of regional journalism, such as informing the people, offering a stage for debates, and fulfilling democracy, when the state cuts more and more in the budget.

“The authorities police in speech that regional journalism and media are important, but you do not recognize those beliefs in their wallet and policies,” says Broersma. He thinks that the initiated proposal for the *Media Act 2008* is focused on the public duty for media services, but steered by the economic situation, with centralization and extra regulations as an effect. “The

authorities want to get more of a grip on media services, while decreasing funding: the pressure of regulations increases, while the manpower decreases.” He says that when authorities and society think journalism is important, and when they see commercial parties cannot fulfil this, it is a public duty to realize this. “If we want this, then we should accept that we spend money on public media services, just as we do for roads and for fast internet,” says Broersma.

Omrop-director Koster has not identified a vision on media development in the last years, not from the provinces and not from the government. “It sounds very posh as if we discuss media, but instead it is more a battle of power with media as a motive,” says Koster. The non-Randstad provinces, in general, want to maintain the current structure, since the regional outlets legitimate their area – which is useful in the identity and social cohesion-issues of regional media services that were discussed. The lack of vision about media development is, says Koster, also present in national policy-making. “I have never discovered the State Secretary to have a vision.”

Journalist Van Westhreenen also noticed that journalism did not play a role in the debates about the legislative proposal. “Politicians should see the journalistic element as an important aspect,” says Van Westhreenen. “Why would they otherwise spend so much public money on regional media?” Koster says that journalism was part of ROOS’ plan, which contained, from his perspective, more vision than the plans of the State Secretary. “Our plan discussed the way a journalist should operate in his discipline, how to deal with the cutbacks and how to organize the new structure” says Koster. “The State Secretary talks only about this last governance part. He says a restructuring is necessary because it is more efficient, which is nonsense because we are just dealing with a cutback.” More interviewees express this: there was no need to reorganize the regional media services, but it is a cutback and aims to realize the dream of the Liberal Party to have one general national public media service.

## 6 Conclusion

The Frisian language and culture are invisible in national media discourse and not safeguarded in a regulatory sense. The analysed documents present that the central government and Province of Fryslân pursue the maintenance and promotion of Omrop Fryslân's production of school programming and documentaries in Frisian until the agreements for media in the *BFTK* end in 2018.<sup>24</sup> The regulatory framework is not discriminative towards Frisian individuals and the Frisian culture and language, but it does not stimulate the use of Frisian in the media services nor the creation of a media offering about the Frisian language, culture and identity. The 'regulated' thirty-seven hours of national school television and documentaries in Frisian could, in theory, raise awareness or bring people in contact with Frisianness, but it can be doubted if this programming is in practice part of the discourse. The regional service of Omrop Fryslân is in Frisian, but this is part of the regional discourse in the Frisian language area. Omrop Fryslân radio is the market leader in Fryslân, but national outlets dominate the television landscape.

The cutbacks and legislative proposal for the modernization of regional media make the existence of services in Frisian vulnerable. The commercialization and digitalization of the media landscape made the context wherein it exists volatile, and values such as cultural diversity are at stake – or get at least less attention in a sector that is, to a great extent, run like a business enterprise. This unpredictable character is one important reason why there should be a policy for media services in Frisian and for individual Frisians, and further, why it should be safeguarded in regulations. The national media offering in Frisian and the national contribution for Omrop Fryslân to produce Frisian language programming could end after 2018, and Omrop Fryslân would follow legislation if it changes its regional services into Dutch today. The developments in the media sector and the lack of national awareness for Frisianness is why it is critical for the sustainability of Frisian in media to be secured in a legislative sense.

In the interviews, it was stated that the national cabinet is mainly interested in decreasing the costs of media, and the central government – despite its shared policy responsibility with the Province – does not generally take the initiative in policy-making for the Frisian language and culture. It was not taken into account in the legislative processes for regional media. However, the central government has a cooperative relationship with actors from Fryslân if those actors

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<sup>24</sup> The epilogue on page 72 discusses an expected additional administrative agreement of the Province of Fryslân and central government about the Frisian language in media. This document would affect the document analysis of this thesis. However, the agreement discussed in the epilogue is not permanent and will be in use until 2018.

address specific demands for the Frisian language and culture. In the interviews, it was argued that no other national actors have interest in the Frisian language and that they do not see its contribution to public media, such as the organisation of regional services ROOS, the organization advocating shared interests of the provinces (Inter-provincial Counsel) and the advisory body of the central government for media (Council for Culture). Other provinces and media services have no responsibility for the Frisian language and culture, but the Council for Culture should address the cultural aspects of Fryslân. Thus, Frisian actors must be pro-active and address their interests strategically to the central government and other national actors.

### *Province and Omrop*

The existence of Frisian language programming and a regional service in Frisian is a result of a self-sustaining mechanism of actors from Fryslân that is not supported by regulations or earmarked budgets. The first detected actor in this mechanism is the Province of Fryslân, which has manoeuvred itself into the shared policy responsibility for the Frisian language and culture in the twentieth century. Their efforts, and those of the agenda-setter, the Frisian Movement – which is not analysed as an actor – led to a regulatory framework for the Frisian language and culture in a broad sense. In terms of public media, their efforts indirectly led to the creation of the second detected actor of the mechanism: Omrop Fryslân. Thus, that the regional media service for Fryslân uses Frisian dominantly in its media offering is a result of the provincial policy responsibility for the Frisian language and culture and the self-interests of the two actors.

Their self-interests concern caring about Frisianness and for their power position. The Frisian language and culture contribute to the sustainability of the Frisian identity, and this package of Frisianness legitimizes a uniqueness that led to the specific regulatory framework that applies to the Province of Fryslân and Omrop Fryslân today. The Frisian identity is in terms of power important for the legitimization of both actors. Historically, the elite of Fryslân have constructed and used the Frisian identity to claim power since the area lost its autonomy when the modern state was created. The Province of Fryslân could, potentially, see its powers as governance layer decrease if the central government continues with its plans to merge provinces. The independent Omrop Fryslân is ‘endangered’ due to the restructuring plans by the central government as an autonomous media organization. There is an awareness that media for Fryslân, and preferably in Frisian, can contribute to the social cohesion of the territory and thereby to language vitality and the preservation of the Frisian identity. The social cohesion, identity and language are decisive characteristics that legitimize the uniqueness of Fryslân and the two discussed actors.

Fryslân is a special case because of the Frisian language and cannot be regarded like any other region in the Netherlands. Still, the province and media service are part of national structures, that have parties that have no interest in the Frisian language and culture and that do not have or take responsibility. The national and regional authorities, which certainly have responsibility, are in a power game and do not necessarily understand the broader value of the Frisian language and culture for Dutch society; the central government does not take it into account in their national policy-making and the Province of Fryslân situates Frisianness as a regional issue where only they can properly take care of. This approach is visible in the way how the Charter and Framework Convention are signed and ratified by the state: the language specific provisions apply to Frisians in Fryslân. It is presented as if Frisianness is irrelevant outside Fryslân, thus, Frisians in other areas do not have the same rights. This may become counterproductive as the position of the language that gives the territory Fryslân its character is not properly protected.

However, this analysis of the interests of the two actors for media in Frisian cannot be phrased this bluntly. The use or support of media in Frisian to legitimize the existence of a governance layer and media organization has not just the perspective of ‘keeping the existing structures’, but also deals with the belief that cultural diversity is a valuable aspect of a liberal democratic state such as the Netherlands. The state’s obligation to participate in the protection of the Frisian language and the Frisian people, as a national minority, is something that is part of the international instruments (the Charter and Framework Convention) that the Netherlands has signed and ratified. And this is in line with international principles that are broadly accepted among states that share the same undertakings that the Netherlands have chosen to also adhere. As a conclusion; the interest of the Province and Omrop Fryslân for media in Frisian is a mix of a self-interest to remain autonomous and ideals for cultural diversity and equality.

### *Minority Language Media*

The central government, the Province of Fryslân and Omrop Fryslân have a moral duty to make the offer of publicly financed media in a language that is the mother tongue of the population of the nation-state possible. The Province and central government have a legislative duty to contribute to the cultural diversity and tolerance in the country, more specifically to the Frisian language and culture. There is a full body of research about the importance of media for the vitality of minority languages, which for a minority like the Frisians, is an important cultural marker of their collective identity. An explicit policy to use media as a tool for language vitality is not identified. Omrop Fryslân is organized as any regional public media service, among other

regional media services, and the interviewees regarded the outlet in this way. It is stated that the regional service of Omrop Fryslân plays a role in the normalisation of Frisian, and the participation of ‘ordinary people’ in their programming and connection with Frisian society are seen as features that contribute to positive attitudes towards the Frisian language. Visions about Omrop Fryslân as a minority language media outlet are lacking. This has to do with the regional service-function; Frisian is an official state language, but media services in Frisian do not enjoy protection from this structure since it is part of a sector with no affinity and interest in Frisian.

With its regional media budget, Omrop Fryslân tries to offer a variety of programming for different age groups and interests in Fryslân, while the school programming and documentaries are perhaps too fragmented to have influence on language use in daily life. The organizational structure of the outlet makes it so that there is not a sufficient budget to create programming in Frisian that can find its proper place within the media offering of a media service in Dutch. The announced cutbacks will at least not contribute to this situation, while the outlet receives no extra budget for its (voluntary) decision to carry out its regional media mission in Frisian – with the awareness that programming in Frisian is costlier to produce. The restitutive argument is, in this sense, not acknowledged by the central government. Minorities need to be able to provide ‘full media service’: regional services, online school programs, a drama series every few years and documentaries at fringe hours on national television are not sufficient. In practice, it appears to have lessened the probability of individual choice among Frisian speakers to use Omrop Fryslân instead of media in Dutch that does offer full programming of a high quality.

The Omrop’s multilingual interviews<sup>25</sup> offer a possibility to connect Frisian-speakers with ethnolinguistic outgroups such as Dutch and Lower Saxon speakers. This is possible in Fryslân because only six percent of the population does not understand Frisian. This aspect would be something interesting for further research, since this thesis did not examine the influences of Omrop Fryslân on language. It is positive that Omrop Fryslân is an independent organization and not controlled by a national organization, since theories show that ownership and control influences the content and programming of a media outlet. It can be stated that media in Frisian language suffers loss in institutional completeness due to its dependence on self-regulation of Omrop Fryslân only and the awareness of the Province. As has been noted above, institutional completeness provides the opportunity for the strict preference condition to be fulfilled.

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<sup>25</sup> As addressed in the interview analysis (page 46), the journalist speaks Frisian and the interviewee can respond in any mutual understandable language. Scaling-up has made it harder to find interlocutors with some understanding of the Frisian language.

Omrop Fryslân gives Frisian individuals the opportunity to listen to radio in Frisian, watch television in Frisian, and to read Frisian on their online platforms on a daily basis. However, offering media contents in a language is not in itself necessarily a sufficient measure to support the use of the language in practice. Thus, that Omrop Fryslân is the only outlet producing and distributing various media contents in Frisian is not alone a sufficient enhancement if the state or province wishes to affect the choices of individual users; they can choose between this media service or a media outlet in Dutch or a foreign language. Still, research elsewhere indicates that the strict preference condition holds, individuals prefer to make use of television and radio services in their mother tongue if the possibility exists, and if the media offering is diverse and of quality. In the case of the Frisians, it is in this sense a difficulty that the Frisians are bilingual and not used to media in their mother tongue. However, the theory states that youth programmes are important to make the new generation understand that they can make use of media in their mother tongue. In this sense, future generations can grow up with a desire to use media in Frisian. This is another aspect that is interesting for future research. What seems to be necessary in the first place, is an explicit policy of the central government and Province of Fryslân to use media to contribute to the maintenance and development of the Frisian language, in accordance with the ethos of the international instruments that the state of the Netherlands is a signatory.

Some personal reflections that I like to add concern the media landscape in Fryslân, with a particular focus on the journalistic value of the media offering in Frisian and for Fryslân. It was not the main subject of research, but an element that returned numerous times in the interviews. The services of Omrop Fryslân have more to do with the representation of the Frisian identity and language than with journalism. In general, journalism is not the main subject of interest, since the three main outlets of Fryslân have other worries: surviving in a commercializing and digitalizing media environment. The lack of journalism and decision to focus on ‘fun’ items to connect with the audiences or attract new audiences, could lead to a folkloristic imagining of the Frisian identity. With the awareness that the Frisian society is changing and that new ways have to be discovered to make the Frisian identity practically useful in modern times, serious journalism is necessary to offer a stage to negotiate the identity and society. Newspapers are an important news supplier for Omrop Fryslân, and those commercial outlets have in this sense a great influence on the media offer. The Province of Fryslân tries to stimulate journalism but has not found a successful way yet, while Omrop Fryslân increases its focus on ‘fun-items’. I would take the proposition that the development of regional journalism is just as important as securing a media offering in Frisian, keeping the elements of the strict preference condition in mind.

### *Discussion on Validity*

It should be taken into account that the perspectives of the State Secretary and administrators of the Ministry of OCW are not part of the interview analysis, for the reasons explained in chapter one. Thus, the claims of interviewees about the interest of the central government for the Frisian language and culture cannot be verified, although the developments around the legislative proposal for regional media underwrite the claims of the interviewees. It would have been better if the opinion of the State Secretary or an administrator was included. Their view on the regulation of Frisian language programming and regional media could have been a contribution to the discussion in this thesis. Readers should be aware that this thesis only includes experiences, visions and opinions of people with a personal connection to Fryslân.

Another aspect is the for Frisian-specific consulted literature, which has only ‘Frisian authors’ and could perhaps lack the perspective of non-Frisians. There is a good reason why I have made use of this literature: I did not find literature of non-Frisians about the elements discussed in this thesis. The Dutch literature of non-Frisians that is used, did not include anything about Fryslân or the Frisian language and culture: literature about ethnic minorities, the multicultural society, communication in the Netherlands, the political structure of the state, pluriform and diversity at the national public broadcaster, and reports of the Council for Culture. It gives the impression that an author needs to have a personal relationship with Fryslân or Frisian(s) to mention Frisianness. It could also be a failure of mine to not detect literature by authors without personal relation to Fryslân, but it can also be questioned whether the background of an author is important. Another difficulty was the lack of literature about Frisian media, which is perhaps a result of the main interest of Frisian academics in history, the Frisian language and education.

It was during the creation of this thesis a difficulty that the political processes around the opted changes in the *Media Act* and additional agreements for the *BFTK* kept changing. It asked adaptability to adjust the thesis to ‘new realities’, to discover which perspective would be the most interesting. This was also a difficulty in the preparation process for the interviews and the selection of the interviewees. To give an example: in the week of the first interviewees, the Province of Fryslân announced that pre-agreements had been made for the media section of the *BFTK*, after it had also become clear that the *Media Act* would change. This forced me to change my interview guide, since I thought I had to pay attention to the ‘new reality’ that the additions to the *BFTK* and changes in the *Media Act* would create. However, those processes were put on hold one month after the interviews. I still used the answers about the ‘new reality’, but decided

to give it a less prominent position in the interview analysis. I also tried to make sure to take a perspective in the analysis that would make the answers still valuable.

I tried to discuss the Frisian language not too early in the interviews, since the thesis focuses on society, with language as an element. Despite this focus, the interviewees automatically started to talk about language issues, making discussions around the Framework Convention go into the direction of language instead of individual members of the Frisian national minority. I sometimes saw no other way out than framing questions into a minority and societal perspective, which can have influenced the interviewees in their thinking process. Something else that could have influenced the outcomes of the interviews, are the different understandings and knowledge of the interviewees and me. I noticed that almost no interviewee approached Frisian media as something distinct from other media services in the Netherlands, again, despite the language. I realized too late that the interviewees have not the educational-based knowledge about the role of media for a minority language and national minority. Next to this, I am new in the subject of policy-making for Frisianness; this could have influenced the answers of the interviewees, at least if they believed I lack knowledge in a policy sense.

Another difference between the interviewees and me, is our experiences with Frisianness. I have lived most of my life as a Frisian outside Fryslân. Being a Frisian is for me like being practically in a minority position, while – the impression was given that – the interviewees are part of Frisian society and we do not have shared experiences in this sense. It was hard for me to understand that Frisianness was seen as something that ends at the borders of Fryslân. My understanding that the Frisian language and culture is something for the entire country was not shared, thereby at least excluding me as an individual. It made it hard to follow my interview guide and the focus of my interviews, since I had not had the previous awareness that Frisian society is solely focused on ‘their’ territory. In my way to understand this, I perhaps framed questions in some interviews by drawing the situation as if Frisians are discriminated against, which in my experience is the case. In defence of this framing, I can state that I had the impression that in none of those cases my train of thoughts was followed, giving me therefore the impression that it did not influence the answers. It became, however, clear that I learned a lot about the Frisian society, media and policy-making for the Frisian language and culture. Someone who already had this knowledge would perhaps ask different questions. My approach as an outside-Frisian can perhaps add interesting insights to Frisianness for those in Fryslân.

# Epilogue

The thesis concerns the regulatory framework for Frisian media services in use on the 13<sup>th</sup> of December 2016. It is expected that the *Bestjoersôfspraken Frysk yn de Media 2016* (Administrative Agreements Frisian in the Media 2016) is signed by State Secretary Sander Dekker of the Ministry of OCW and Provincial-Executive Sietske Poepjes of the Province of Fryslân on the next day. As a result, this document could not be analysed. The state will soon officially announce this agreement, that is, an addition to other documents. A selection of the agreements is briefly mentioned since it would have influenced the analysis of this thesis:

- Omrop Fryslân is the regional media service for Fryslân and producer of Frisian language programming until 2018. The provincial assembly of Fryslân checks if the programming body includes at least one member with affinity of the Frisian language and culture.
- A contribution of €1.815 million via the governing body of public media NPO, €50,000 via the Ministry of OCW and €655,800 via the Province of Fryslân for Omrop Fryslân to produce youth and children programming in Frisian, online school television in Frisian and documentaries in Frisian. The documentaries are televised by Omrop Fryslân and on national public television.
- The adaptation of the motion of senator Hindrik ten Hoeve – member of Frisian National Party (FNP), in senate for Independent Senate Group (OSF) – to create, among others, a media council for Fryslân to safeguard the position of the Frisian language, culture and identity and Omrop Fryslân within the RPO. The adaptation depends on developments around the legislative proposal to modernize regional public media services, which is put on hold, and the designed role of the RPO within the public media system.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of December, 2016, the provincial assembly of Fryslân decides if it agrees with the text of this administrative agreement, which upon being signed, will be in use until 2018. It is expected that the provincial assembly will vote in favour of the text and the contribution of the Province of Fryslân. This contribution would be in effect for the period between 2017 and 2020.

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## List of Interviewees

The insiders (red) and outsiders, differentiated in policy (blue) and media (green) experts.

Interviewees	Relevance to the subject
Sietske Poepjes 6 <sup>th</sup> of July 2016	Provincial-Executive of the Province of Fryslân. She is politically responsible for language, media, art and culture, among others, in the territory of Fryslân.
Tsjerk Bottema 11 <sup>th</sup> of July 2016	Senior administrator language and education at the department culture and society of the Province of Fryslân. Handles the media dossier as well.
Jan Koster 12 <sup>th</sup> of July 2016	Director of Omrop Fryslân and vice-chairman of ROOS, the organization wherein the directors of the regional public media services cooperate.
Onno Falkena 8 <sup>th</sup> of July 2016	Journalist of Omrop Fryslân and representing his colleagues in the worker's council and in the worker's council platform of ROOS. Involved in an NGO for minority languages in the Netherlands ( <i>Europeesk Buro foar Lytse Talen</i> ).
Alex Riemersma 4 <sup>th</sup> of July 2016	Expert in the Charter. Advisor language planning for the Province of Fryslân and involved in the <i>Network to Promote Linguistic Diversity</i> (NPLD). He is a Professor of Applied Sciences in Frisian education at <i>NHL University of Applied Sciences</i> and <i>Stenden University of Applied Science</i> in Ljouwert.
Auke van der Goot 31 <sup>st</sup> of July 2016	European, national and regional policy expert. The state's rapporteur in the monitoring cycles of the Charter and Framework Convention between 1999 and 2012. Today not directly involved with policies for the Frisian language and culture, but operates as administrator for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
Richt Sterk 20 <sup>th</sup> of July 2016	Expert in COE's instruments of <i>Mercator Research Centre for Multilingualism and Language Learning</i> . Before operative at the former advisory body for Frisian language policy for the central government and respectively the Province of Fryslân ( <i>Konsultatyf Orgaan Fryske Taal</i> and <i>Berie foar it Frysk</i> ).
Marcel Broersma 5 <sup>th</sup> of July 2016	Professor Journalism Studies and Media at the <i>University of Groningen</i> with a special interest in media developments and regional journalism. A former board member of the defunct Frisian Media Fund of the Province of Fryslân.
Saskia van Westhreenen 19 <sup>th</sup> of July 2016	Journalist of the regional commercial newspaper <i>Leeuwarder Courant</i> . She covers national politics and the developments in the Media Act-dossier.
Erik Betten 14 <sup>th</sup> of July 2016	Journalist of the regional commercial newspaper <i>Friesch Dagblad</i> . He is also and author of books about the Frisian identity, culture and aspects of society.

## List of (the Most Important) Terms

Term		Explanation
BFTK	p. 31	Administrative Agreement between the central government and Province of Fryslân about the Frisian language and culture in several social domains.
Hoekstra Committee	p. 21	Temporarily committee safeguarding Frisian Language in the Media: advised on the expected changes in the Media Act 2008 and media section of the BFTK in 2013.
COE		Council of Europe: organization focused on democracy and human rights, with instruments such as the Charter and Framework Convention.
(European) Charter	p. 13	European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. Main objective: protection of historical languages of numerically smaller people in certain territories of a state.
Framework Convention	p. 14	Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities: stimulation of individuals of a national minority, cultural diversity and anti-discrimination.
Frisianness		In thesis used as a collective term for the Frisian language, culture and identity. Based on the Frisian term <i>Frysk</i> , which is also the Frisian word for the language.
Frisian Movement		The main agenda-setter for Frisian interests and with Province of Fryslân the leading actor for language equality. Exists out of a series of organizations and individuals.
Fryslân		A multilingual area in Dutch known as Friesland, and the centre of historic Frisia.
FryslânDok		Documentaries in Frisian, part of the national and regional public television service.
Holland		A geographic area comparable with the provinces Utert, Súd-Hollân and Noard-Hollân, and perhaps parts of Flevolân. Used as a synonym for the centre of power.
The Hague		Used as a synonym for the state's political centre, since the central government and most of the ministries are located in this town in the Province of Súd-Hollân.
Media Act (2008)	p. 30	Act regulating public and commercial media since 2008. Media Decree and Policy Rules on Programme Quota are directly connected with the Media Act.
Media Authority		Independent body overseeing compliance of the Media Act 2008.
Ministry of OCW		Ministry responsible for the regional public media service since 2014.
NOS		National public media service for news and sports. Was coordinator of public media services between 1968-2008 (until 1988 also for regional public media services).
NPO		Established as governing body for the national public media service in 2008.
Omrop Fryslân		Regional public radio service for Fryslân since 1988, adding regional public television service to their duties in 1994 and starting with online services in 2000.
Province (of Fryslân)		Regional governance layer of Fryslân existing out of several bodies. With the Frisian Movement leading actor for (policy making for) the Frisian language and culture.
Randstad		Literally <i>Ring City</i> : the most populated area of the country, including the cities of Utrecht, The Hague, Rotterdam and Amsterdam. Comparable with 'Holland'.
ROOS		Joint organization for the regional public media service sector, wherein the directors of regional media operate together on a national and interregional level.
RPO		Initiated governing body for the regional public media service. Practically operating as an intermediary between Media Authority and regional services since 2015.