

THE OTHER KINGDOM OF FOLKTALES

**The local community perspective
on folktale touristification
in the Belgian Ardennes**

MA THESIS

**BY SARAH-MARIA GERADIN
548757**

The other kingdom of folktales

The local community perspective on the touristification of folktale in the Belgian Ardennes

MA Thesis

By Sarah-Maria Geradin
548757

Supervisor: prof. dr. Stijn Reijnders

Place, Culture and Tourism Master Thesis

Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication

Erasmus University Rotterdam

May 2021

Cover image: Visit Ardenne (n.d.)

"In the Ardennes, you know, the marvellous is part of reality. It's our nature that wants it!
The forest is the legend of the Ardennes", Denis (2001, p.51-52).

Abstract

Traveling to visit places for their stories is not a recent phenomenon. Yet, the development of pop culture through media has pushed this phenomenon even further, forcing the tourism industry to consider the influence of pop culture on tourists. Compared to TV shows, movies and literature, folktales have received less attention from scholars. Yet, folktales and tourism can be combined to create an experience that blends reality and fantasy, that produces a more unique, original, and sometimes even more authentic experience for tourists. Consequently, a majority of tourism research focussed on the tourist perspective, leaving the local community perspective merely a side note. Therefore, this study looked at how locals evaluate and perceive the touristification of folktales. 16 Interviews were done in the Belgian Ardennes, a region still in the figuring things out when it comes to the touristification of folktales. Folktales and tourism are two important characteristics of the Belgian Ardennes. Tourism is one of the main economic sectors of the region, and folktales and traditions are what makes the region so rich and unique. The outcome of this study showed that the interviewed locals were supportive of the touristification of folktales as they perceived it to be a way to have a meaningful experience, to reconnect with their heritage, and to preserve and valorise it better. It is the impacts often associated with touristification of which the interviewees were more sceptical. Therefore, they perceive certain ways and places to touristify folktales to be more meaningful than others. However, the connections of interviewees to folktales and to tourism in the region influenced their answers, providing more nuanced outcomes. From a conceptual approach, the way locals perceive and evaluate the touristification of folktales also seems to be influenced by a more popular approach to folktales which tends to be static compared to the scholar approach that sees folktales as dynamic. This results in an interesting discussion on the conceptualisation of folktale touristification.

Keywords: folktales, touristification, locals, Belgian Ardennes.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	7
Introduction	8
Existing research	10
Folktales as cultural heritage.....	10
Touristification of folktales.....	12
Folktale touristification from the local perspective.....	14
Research questions	17
Main research question.....	17
Sub-research questions	17
Methodology	19
Type of research.....	19
Data collection	19
Stakeholders and Sample	22
Research location	23
Tourism in the region	23
Folktales in the region	24
Data analysis.....	25
Analysis	27
How does the local community evaluate tourism in the region?	28
The value of tourism.....	28
The value of cultural resources	30
How do locals relate to folktales in the Ardennes?	33
The personal relation to folktales.....	33
Transmission and maintenance of folktales	35
Current role of folktales.....	36
How does the local community evaluate folktale touristification?	39
The evaluation of current folktale touristification	40
The potential for folktale touristification	41
The perceived value of folktale touristification for tourism.....	44
The Value of folktale touristification for locals.....	45
Conclusion	50
Societal relevance	53
Limitations	54
Further research	55

References	56
Appendix	60
Interview questions – English	60
Questions about folktales	60
Folktale touristification	60
Data analysis	61

Acknowledgements

For those who know me, writing about the Ardennes has a special place in my heart. Each time I write about the region, I can't help but feel even more Ardennese. This passion for the region came from my father, Remi, who was just as passionate about it. So sometimes, we would just hop in the car and go visit something nearby. It is when writing a previous thesis that the idea of writing about folktales came to me. So together with my father we went to Piconrue in Bastogne and visited the House of legends (Maison des légendes). I am telling you this because my father passed away last year, and this visit was the last one we did together. Therefore, I would like to thank him for transmitting his passion for our region and its culture to me.

I would like to thank a few others who helped me write and finish this thesis. I would first like to thank my supervisor Stijn Reijnders for having been patient, understanding and supportive during this process. Also, his expertise and passion for the topic of popular media in tourism are inspiring and I am looking forward to reading more of his books and articles. I would also like to thank the interviewees who took part in this study. Their enthusiasm when talking about the region and its resources was invigorating. It was even more special when they would keep talking about it after the interviews were done because it showed that this study was meaningful not only to me, but to them as well.

I would also like to thank Ann-Kathrin Thesen who spent a lot of time re-reading my thesis and encouraging me with deadlines. Despite all the changes and continuous updates, she was always ready to help. For her patience as well, I would like to thank her. And finally, I would like to thank my mother, Wendy, for giving me the opportunity to keep studying and writing about the Ardennes.

For all your help and support, I would like to say thank you one more time.

Sarah-Maria Geradin

Introduction

In the summer, at around 10 in the evening, tourists gather eagerly to listen to the story of Berthe. They find seats on the terrace, the grass, or often even pause in the street to hear her story. Accompanied by a light show and sound effects, a narrator tells how young lady Berthe, who lived in the castle, died after being stabbed by a jealous rival and being pushed out of the window. As the narrator tells the story, visitors can catch a glimpse of a white figure walking on the ruins. It is Berthe's ghost still haunting the castle today.

La Roche-en-Ardenne is a small medieval town located in the Belgian Ardennes that attracts many tourists during the summer. The town's main attraction is the old castle ruins, and as in many places in the Ardennes, many folktales are attached to that castle. It is this tale of Berthe in particular that outstands all the others (Lardot, 2017). As Lardot (2017) writes, the castle and its story became a famous tourist attraction in the 1850 s' after being reported in travel books. The ghost show only became part of the tourist experience in the 1950 s'. Today, not only is Berthe's ghost the town icon used on many tourism and local products, but it is also shaping the town's character (Lardot, 2017).

Folktales and tourism are two important characteristics of the Belgian Ardennes. Tourism is one of the main economic sectors of the region for already several decades. Folktales and traditions are what make the region so rich and unique (Duvivier de Fortemps & Stassen, 2012). Sometimes, folktales and tourism are combined creating an experience blending reality and fantasy as is the case in La Roche-en-Ardenne. The case of Berthe inspired the tourism development organization of the region, namely the Fédération Touristique du Luxembourg Belge (FTLB), to want to develop more folktale-related experiences as a result of the increased interest of tourists in places with fictional stories (Rousseau, 2019). During an interview with the representative of the FTLB, the expert mentioned that support from the local community is needed to develop such projects, especially when it involves cultural resources. Unfortunately, support from the local community is expected to remain limited (Rousseau, 2019). Yet, it remains unclear why this is, as folktales are already used in other products such as comic books, movies, museums, exhibitions, local products, etc. that seem to receive attention (Duvivier de Fortemps & Stassen, 2012).

Traveling to visit places for their stories is not a recent phenomenon. Yet, the development of pop culture through media has pushed this phenomenon even further, forcing the tourism industry to consider the influence of pop culture on tourists (Reijnders, 2020). Much research focuses on the theming of places based on movies, TV shows, literature, etc. (Torchin, 2002; Connell, 2012; Van Es & Reijnders, 2018). Folktales, a more traditional aspect of pop culture, include "all

forms of prose narrative, written or oral, which have come to be handed down through the years” (Thompson, 1977 p.4). These narratives also have a strong influence on shaping local identities, heritage, traditions, and the tourism industry (Meder & Venbrux, 2000). Yet, the role of folktales in communities, although touched upon by Hemme (2005) and Reijnders (2020), has not been researched in-depth when associated with tourism. By combining their connection to specific places and groups of people with their imaginary character, folktales are perceived as contributing to tourism experiences by making them more unique, original, and sometimes even more authentic (Meder & Venbrux, 2000). These encounters provide ways of experiencing places through the expression of imagination in the physical world (Hughes, 1992).

Forms of tourism that focus on folktales already exist in countries such as Germany (Hemme, 2005), Denmark (Knudsen & Greer, 2011), Romania (Reijnders, 2016), the Netherlands (Meder, 2011), England (Holloway, 2010; Lovell, 2019), and Croatia (Krajnović, Rajko & Šišović, 2008) and have received scholarly attention. Although not previously used as a concept in research, folktale touristification refers to the process by which folktales are appropriated, marked, and commodified to become aesthetic tourism products. The focus of tourism research often seems to lay on the potential of folktales in destination development (Krajnović, Rajko & Šišović, 2008) or the tourist needs and behaviours when involved in folktale experiences (Holloway, 2010; Reijnders, 2011; Knudsen & Greer, 2011). In these research studies, the perspective of the local community is often discussed as a side note (in positive and negative ways) or as a homogenous group of stakeholders, which does not provide an in-depth understanding of how locals perceive the touristification of folktales. Yet, it is important to have these insights, as the touristification of folktales requires the support of the local community to be a successful project in the long term. To achieve this, the benefits need to represent and relate to the needs of the local community and not only to the economy (Muselaers, 2017).

Therefore, this study aims to answer the following research question: **How do the locals in the Belgian Ardennes perceive and evaluate folktale touristification?** By researching the attitudes of locals in the Ardennes regarding the touristification of folktales, this study will contribute to the already existing literature on the topic. Moreover, this study aims to provide a more in-depth approach to understanding the attitudes of locals by approaching this group as an amalgam of different stakeholders each with their backgrounds and experiences, and by taking this diversity into account. From a conceptual perspective, this study will also introduce folktale touristification as a new concept. It will also contribute to the scant amount of research on the attitudes of locals in the Belgian Ardennes towards tourism and provide suggestions for further touristification.

Existing research

The following chapter provides an overview of knowledge and research that has already been done on the topic of folktales as cultural heritage, the touristification of folktales, and the perspective of the local community on the touristification of folktales. While the first two topics have already received quite some attention, it is especially the perspective of the local community that will be addressed more in-depth. The aim is to identify knowledge gaps that remain unaddressed to set the research question of this study. Moreover, this chapter also defines important concepts, illustrates the relevance of this study, and supports the choice for in-depth interviews as a data collection method.

Folktales as cultural heritage

From a literary, folkloristic, and historical perspective, folktales have already received quite some attention from scholars (Propp, 1968; Thompson, 1977; Meder & Venbrux, 2000). The term folktale is rather broad as it refers to *varied forms of written and oral narratives which are characterized by their traditional nature of being passed down from generation to generation* (Thompson, 1977). The most common way to categorize folktales in literature is as follows: wonder tales (*Märchen*, novella, fairy tales, hero tales), the *Sage* (local legend, saint's legends, explanatory tales), the *myth* (origin myth), the *animal tale* (fables) and the *anecdote* (Thompson, 1977). The process of categorization is, however, limited by the rigidity that often stems from categorizing and the meanings of certain terms that differ from one language to the other. Therefore, some tales can fit in different categories or fit under a different term in a different language (Thompson, 1977).

As Meder and Venbrux (2000) discuss, folktales have existed for as long as people have been communicating with each other. The authors explain that the process to create stories is similar for all individuals, which makes it difficult to distinguish when, where and how tale-telling started. With people traveling, tales started to spread to other places, and this explains why there are similarities in features and characteristics in tales all over the world. However, as people are living in different cultural contexts, these tales are being differentiated through the cultural values incorporated in them. As will be discussed later on, this is how communities appropriate these folktales. This shows thus how difficult it is to find a clear place and time of origin for folktales as they tend to be migratory and adapted to specific contexts (Meder & Venbrux, 2000).

Thompson (1977) explains that tale-telling, as an old tradition, has persisted over time due to the need for people to be entertained and their interest in the *past*. Over time, narratives have been

adapted by the ones telling the tales and those listening, influenced as well by globalization. However, the way we know, and experience folktales today is a result of improved mobility, infrastructure, technology, and recollection methods from around the 18th and 19th centuries (Meder & Venbrux, 2000). Other scholars explain that other reasons tales and taletelling have persisted is because it is embedded in all aspects of communication and media (Coste, 1989), and are part of the process through which individuals make sense of the world around them (Stokowski, 2002).

Today, folktales and taletelling are still an important part of culture. It is an important aspect of tradition and folklore in certain countries and communities even to the extent that particular stories shape the heritage and identities of places (Reijnders, 2020). As Meder (2011) explains by using the case of the Netherlands, some places use folktales to project a specific cultural identity or image to the outside world. By appropriating and adapting folktales, they can make them their own to differentiate themselves and strengthen their individuality and uniqueness. The appropriation of folktales can also create solidarity within the community whether it is temporarily or in the long-term, which strengthens, even more, the idea that a folktale originates from one specific location. Interestingly, there is a complex dynamic between the flexible and adaptive nature of folktales, and the perceived static and rooted characteristic of heritage and local identity (which are also constantly re-negotiated). It is not uncommon for different villages, towns, or cities to claim stories or part of stories exclusively as their own which can result in conflictual situations as it is contested by others claiming the same story. Yet, more often than not, folktales are not appropriated or claimed. The ones that tend to be appropriated are often with a commercial or touristic goal in mind (Meder, 2011).

Reijnders (2020) introduces the concept of imaginative heritage as *“the multitude of popular, fictional narratives that have been projected upon or appropriated by specific sites throughout time and that together make up an important part of local place identity”* (Reijnders, 2020, p.3). He especially focuses on the dynamic nature of popular culture and stories to show how popular culture and tourism can both shape local identities. Folktales, being popular fictional narratives, can also be considered part of imaginative heritage and can also intersect with other types of popular narratives such as film and literacy heritage. The author further explains how imaginative heritage is being increasingly relevant in the field of tourism with the rising awareness of the relationship between places, heritage, and stories by tourism organizations, governments, and locals (Reijnders, 2020). It is especially this relationship between folktales as imaginative heritage, place, and tourism that will be discussed further.

Touristification of folktales

Some research has already focused on understanding how folktales are being used in tourism and how their use can create tourist experiences (Meder & Venbrux, 2000; Hemme, 2005; Krajnović & al., 2008; Holloway, 2010; Reijnders, 2011; Everett & Parakoottathil, 2018; Lovell, 2019; Reijnders, 2020). Lean & al. (2014) explain that there has always been a link between tourism, imagination, and storytelling and that this connection is found under the theme of '*imaginaries*'. Salazar (2012) conceptualizes imaginaries "as socially transmitted representational assemblages that interact with people's personal imaginings and are used as meaning-making and world-shaping devices" (Salazar, 2012, p.2). It is thus a way to understand what tourists expect, how it relates to what they have imagined, and how this relationship permits them to create meaning of people and places. These assemblages are socially constructed. Furthermore, these imaginaries are very powerful in helping tourists create meaning out of their experiences, which consequently shapes places and people in the name of tourism (Salzar, 2009).

Scholars such as Hughes (1992) and Reijnders (2011) note that tourism places have always both 'real' and 'imagined' components. People can experience a reality that is bound to time and place through their senses informing them of the present environment. Simultaneously, they also create meanings led by their imagination, and this imagination is socially constructed by the people and media around them. Stories from popular media are an integral part of this imagination. Furthermore, as stories are always linked to places, these stories help people make sense of and evaluate places, ultimately helping the visitor getting to know the place (Reijnders, 2011).

This is why folktales can stir up feelings of nostalgia, reality, fantasy, and magic without contradicting each other (Meder & Venbrux, 2000; Chronis, 2012). Due to their close connection to places or groups, folktales can contribute to making a tourist experience be perceived as more unique, original, and even more authentic in some cases (Meder & Venrbux, 2000; Meder, 2011). As imaginaries, and in this case, folktales are what attract tourists to visit places, these places and their narratives are turned into a tourism product or experience as a way to theme the destination (Chronis, 2012). For example, Holloway (2010) found that magic and enchantment are what motivate tourists to take part in legend-tripping, but Lovell (2019) adds that it is the combination of material (physical environment) and intangible (narratives) heritage that contributes to strengthening these imaginaries as *real*. Yet, this requires certain levels of touristification.

The process of touristification refers to the process by which cultural and heritage products are transformed to become aesthetic tourism products like artifacts or attractions that can be sold to tourists (Bhandari, 2008; Suzuki, 2010). The process of touristification is characterized by Gravari-

Barbas and Guinand (2017) as varying from one place to the other and as being a dynamic bottom-up process. Furthermore, it reflects the complex relationship between stakeholders and their setting which causes touristification to always being renegotiated. As touristification leads to the transformation of the economy, the socio-cultural, and the landscape of a place, it is important to take into account the context in which it is taking place (Gravari-Barbas and Guinand, 2017). Reijnders (2011) further approaches touristification as consisting of three steps. First, there is the process of appropriation, which refers to the linking of a fictional environment to a physical environment by those who will benefit from this linkage. This is followed by the process of marking, which refers to the linking of specific places to the fictional environment proving there is a concrete connection. The final step is that of commodifying, which refers to the link between the experience had at the site and the consumption of products linked to the story (Reijnders, 2011). **To introduce it as a concept, *folktale touristification* refers thus to the dynamic ongoing process by which folktales are appropriated, marked, and commodified to become aesthetic tourism products.** By combining definitions of touristification, this concept, which is specific to folktales, better represents the dynamic nature of touristification and the different stages touristification goes through.

Touristification is not only perceived as valuable for tourists and the tourism industry, but also heritage maintenance and valorisation. In their research about the touristification of a local folktale in Istria, Krajnović and al. (2008) discuss the potential of storytelling to develop experiences relating to folktales that promote local heritage. The local folktale in question became increasingly relevant as the local community started to touristify it through events and product branding. Later on, the folktale received international attention from the media which attracted even more visitors. The problem the destination faced was the lack of support for further touristification from public sectors. The article made suggestions to strengthen the destination image by improving cooperation between the locals, local and regional governments, and tourism organisations. The main expected outcome was the revalorisation and maintenance of folktales for tourists. However, no follow-up research has been done to confirm this. Furthermore, while this research considers the involvement of the local community, their opinion and attitude are only part of a wider discussion on folktales as cultural heritage. Another take on folktale valorisation through touristification is that of Meder and Venbrux (2000), who suggest that the touristification of folktales can be a way to maintain taletelling as a tradition and preserve folktales. By including them in tourist experiences such as thematic roads, trails, city tours, and attraction parks, maintenance becomes possible (Meder & Venbrux, 2000).

It seems thus that in the case of folktale touristification research, the locals are not as often at the centre of discussions as tourists. When they are mentioned, the discussion is limited by the

scope of the initial research, and an in-depth understanding of their attitude is not further investigated.

Folktale touristification from the local perspective

The definition of what a 'local' is can remain unclear and can vary depending on the context it is used in. As Sherlock (2001) shows, the term goes beyond referring to those who are residents at a tourism destination. The author explains in his conceptualization that being a local is indeed connected with the notion of residency, but also of belonging and commitment to the place and the community. Additionally, he explains that locals should not be approached as one homogeneous stakeholder group as has often been done in tourism research (Sherlock, 2001). Salazar and Graburn (2014) go on by explaining that 'locals' is a group that consists of a conglomerate of stakeholders such as *'owners and the propertyless, the workers and the uninvolved residents, proprietors, entertainers, suppliers and possibly agriculturalists and anglers'* (Salazar & Graburn, 2014, p.15). The reason there are fewer clear definitions for what a local is results from the lesser research on the local perspective in tourism studies overall compared to that of the tourist perspective (Cohen, 1995).

Muselaers (2017) explains that the process of touristification has impacts on the local community the further it develops and that it is important to take into consideration the opinions and attitudes of locals to ensure a successful touristification process. Touristification being an ongoing process that results in many changes in a place and a community, when locals renegotiate until they accept a tourism project, the project will be more likely to remain sustainable in the long term. Therefore, the touristification process and the benefits of it need to be in line with the needs of locals. Yet, Muselaers' study takes place in Lisbon, a city. Rasoolimanesh & al. (2015) explain that there is a difference between the way locals support tourism in urban areas and rural areas. They found that when the local community perceives the benefits to outweigh the disadvantages of tourism development, they will be more likely to converse positively with tourists and become more supportive of tourism development. When the benefits are not perceived to be outweighing the disadvantages anymore, support is more likely to stop (Rasoolimanesh & al., 2015). Interestingly, in rural areas, this is perceived to be more often the case as tourism is perceived there as a way to support development, not only from an economic perspective but also when it comes to putting their heritage and traditions forward. This is because tourism in rural areas is often used as an additional income to complement often decreasing traditional sectors, and as a way to make these decreasing sectors more relevant (Macdonald & Jolliffe, 2003). There is thus an increasing amount of

literature on the local community perspective. However, this remains limited when it comes to the evaluation of touristification by locals living in rural areas.

The research by Hemme (2005) considered this issue and focused on a rural region already associated with folktales for centuries: the *Fairy Tale Route* in Germany. The German Fairy Tale Route takes visitors to relevant places linked to folktales and authors associated with these folktales. Here again, Hemme (2005) points out that although research shows that folktales connected to particular places in Germany are migratory folktales, these folktales are perceived as originating from these places due to the already long ascribed connection. In her research, the author takes a closer look at the way folktales can be touristified through marketing in such a way that it appeals to tourists, but also to locals by not over-promoting and materialising them. This research especially focuses on the importance of offer presentation renewal. For tourists and locals, the touristification of a landscape or a place, or the renewal of the offer and its presentation, can invigorate places with more relevant narratives and provide a new experience. Furthermore, this research shows that for local communities, this route has provided the opportunity to claim tales and interest factors (house of the brother Grimms, for example) and touristify these in such a way that it creates or reinforces a local identity. When this is perceived to make sense to the community, meaning that it fits the local self-image, it is easily endorsed by the local actors. A cultural project should, therefore, come from inside the community and not only from external actors (Hemme, 2005).

While things have changed in tourism and heritage in 16 years, what makes Hemme's (2005) research especially relevant for the case of the Ardennes, besides being two similar forested and touristified regions with a rich number of folktales, is that it looks at the role of locals in the endorsement of the tourist experience that can lead to sustainable tourism development in the region. The author assesses that the success of certain tourism projects involving folktales depends greatly on the attitude and involvement of locals in the development of the tourism product. What differs Hemme's (2005) research from the case of the Ardennes, is that while both regions have a rich folktale repertory and that these have an important place in the cultural heritage, the region in which the Fairy Tale route goes through is already well-known internationally due to the famous Grimm brothers. Furthermore, folktales have already been touristified in this region for over 30 years. It is, therefore, interesting to find out whether such a development is as successful and accepted by local actors when the association of the region to its folktale heritage is lesser known on the international level, and when the efforts for touristification are more recent, still in the exploration phase and lacking further efforts. What the case of the Ardennes can further contribute to Hemme's research is the in-depth interviewing of various local actors (also those not involved in

tourism) to better understand why they are supportive or not of specific touristification processes and how their relation to these folktales and tourism influences their opinion.

In his research on Dracula, Reijnders (2020) takes the way locals relate to their folktales and the way these are touristified into consideration. The author shows a case in which the narratives used to represent the place and the community are contested by this same community. This is because it is perceived as being inaccurate, non-native, or contentious. The frustration for the locals is that they have to choose between economic benefits and pride as the touristification of Dracula affects their image on the global scale. While his study focuses on the tourist perspective, he also touches upon the attitude of the local community of Transylvania. Yet, they are not central to his research. Furthermore, Hughes (1992) discusses the process of touristification of places and their stories and he explains how the touristification of imaginaries can result in the loss of meaning of narratives for locals by being reconstructed for someone else. These studies are again interesting for the case of the Ardennes as they show that it is important to have an in-depth understanding of the attitude of the local community towards touristification by taking the context into account.

What this literature review reveals is that some research has been done on the touristification of folktales and the attitudes of the local community regarding the touristification of cultural products, but not from an in-depth perspective. It is especially when it comes to the in-depth understanding of the attitudes of locals regarding the touristification of folktales that a knowledge gap exists. As already discussed, the touristification process of folktales can have implications for locals, but it would be insightful to know how they perceive this to affect their everyday life, their relation to folktales, and their relation to tourism. Therefore, this research will attempt to understand how folktale touristification is evaluated by locals through the use of in-depth interviews and based on a relevant case study: the Belgian Ardennes.

Research questions

This brief chapter introduces the research question, as well as the sub-questions used to answer it. These are based on the concepts and knowledge gaps that have been identified throughout the literature review. The end of this chapter proposes a hypothesis that will be discussed later on in the concluding chapter.

Main research question

The main research question that will be answered in this study:

How do the locals in the Belgian Ardennes perceive and evaluate folktale touristification?

Sub-research questions

To answer the main research question, it will be divided into sub-questions. The sub-questions are:

1. How do locals relate to tourism in the Ardennes?
2. How do locals relate to folktales in the Ardennes?
3. How do locals perceive and evaluate folktale touristification?

The sub-questions are based on the main concepts which were identified throughout the literature review. The sub-questions permit understanding the relationship between the different concepts. By answering the first sub-question, the aim is to find out whether locals feel related to the tourism industry and if they do, in what ways. It looks closer at how tourism is perceived to affect the everyday life of locals and whether it is perceived to be a positive or negative activity. Furthermore, it looks at how locals perceive cultural resources to be relevant in tourism. By answering the second research question, the aim is to find out whether locals have a relationship to local and regional folktales and if they do, what kind of relation it is. It looks closely at how these folktales are perceived to affect the everyday life of locals. By answering the third sub-question, the aim is to find out how locals perceive and experience the process of touristification of folktales. It looks at how touristification affects the way locals relate to folktales and places, and what they

perceive the impacts to be on folktales, places, and actors. It further looks at the way folktale touristification is perceived to affect the cultural identity and dynamic of a community. Finally, this question also interrogates locals on how they would like folktales to be touristified or not, and by whom.

Based on the previous literature review, the hypothesis is that locals do not necessarily mind the use of folktales in tourism. It can boost the presence of folktales in the everyday setting and even strengthen their relationship to their folktales. However, with the use of folktales comes the touristification of it which will sometimes develop in such a way that it is not representative of the locals and will thus not be in line with the values, needs, or expectations of the locals.

Methodology

The following chapter first introduces the methodological approach used to find answers to the research questions. It further argues for the type of data collection method used, namely in-depth interviews, for the sample and research location choice, as well as for the data analysis procedure. Moreover, limitations are also identified throughout this chapter.

Type of research

This research is qualitative because it focuses on understanding and interpreting the attitudes, perceptions, opinions, and ideas of groups of individuals that are subjective and personal. More precisely, it aims at understanding the social world of these individuals and how they relate to and interpret it (Bryman, 2012). Qualitative research is also more fit for research about the understanding of cases in their own context. As this is the aim of this research, it is more precisely a case study design that will be used (Adler & Clark, 2011). To answer the 'how' and 'why' questions, the case study design uses a more holistic approach by approaching the case in its context and not only specific variables. Case studies do not aim at being generalizable to the wider population but contribute to having an in-depth understanding of one specific context, bound in time and place. Moreover, case studies can contribute to the production of knowledge regarding more general theories and categories of the social world (Adler & Clark, 2011). The case study design has thus the capacity to achieve a better understanding of the attitudes of locals towards folktale touristification in the Belgian Ardennes. To do so, it is important to use the adequate data collection methods, sampling methods, and data analysis methods discussed in the following sections.

Data collection

This study aimed to produce detailed and rich information regarding nuanced, subjective, and complex meanings produced by individuals while taking into account the differences between them. This could not be achieved by using surveys or questionnaires for example (Adler & Clark, 2011). By being in direct contact and having a dialogue, the researcher was not only able to control the interview but also to collect additional information valuable to understanding the interviewee's answers (face and body information, intonations, etc.) (Matthews & Ross, 2010). Therefore, this research used in-depth interviews to collect the data. The interviews aimed to construct and analyse knowledge together with the interviewee through the interpretation of the interviewer. This post-

modern constructive understanding uses a conversational approach as a way to conceptualize the knowledge gathered (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2008).

It was important to take into consideration the limitations of using interviews to collect data. First, it is a time-consuming task to do and transcribe an interview. It is also highly dependent on the interviewee's availability. Finally, due to the subjective nature of the data collected, it is difficult to generalize the findings to the rest of the population. Therefore, the sample was made as representative as possible as discussed in the 'Stakeholders and Sample' section, to ensure that it could be generalizable to the rest of the population. Furthermore, this research will not be replicable at other destinations. Yet, it provided a basis for other destinations to potentially use a similar research through the systematic use of coding. Finally, as this research used a case study, the outcomes were limited to a specific population and a specific research location. However, it also supported a better understanding of more generic categories of the social world contributing to theoretical knowledge (Adler & Clark, 2011).

The interviews were semi-structured to ensure that each topic was covered and that there was some degree of comparability possible between interviews. An interview guide was prepared beforehand that consisted of several questions relating to the three sub-questions stated in the 'research question' chapter. The fact that questions were prepared beforehand did not prevent interviewees from 'telling their stories' or prevent the interviewer from skipping or asking additional questions when judged necessary (Bryman, 2012). Furthermore, the interviewees were encouraged to deviate from the subject as it contributed to understanding how he or she makes sense of things and thus, better understand his or her answers (Adler & Clark, 2011). The interview started with a brief introduction with general information about the research, followed by biographical questions (age, job, residence time, etc.). The second part of the interview consisted of questions regarding the relation of the interviewee to tourism, the tourism industry, and tourists. The third part asked questions regarding their relation to folktales. The fourth part asked questions about their attitude and opinions regarding the use of folktales in the tourism setting. In this part, the interviewees were provided with different local or regional examples to help the discussion continue when they mentioned not knowing any relevant cases. The fifth and final part consisted of asking whether the interviewee had questions or remarks, assuring him or her that the interviews will remain anonymous, and thanking the interviewee for his or her time.

Before doing the interviews, the interview questionnaire was translated from English to French and Dutch as the researcher speaks these three languages fluently. This was done for two reasons. By translating the interview in both languages, it was possible to cover a more diverse and inclusive group of interviewees. Also, interviewing in the interviewee's preferred language ensures

that the interviewee could express him or herself without language limitations. Moreover, while French is the official language spoken in the region, the local community consists also of many Dutch-speaking locals who live and/or own a business (mostly in tourism) in the region (Schmitz, 2013). German is also an official language but was unfortunately not spoken by the researcher, nor by the interviewees. This is because German is mainly spoken in the area bordering Germany.

The aim was to collect between 12 and 15 in-depth interviews that last between 30 to 60 minutes. In total, 16 interviews were collected, out of which one was not recorded as requested by the interviewee and one interview was done with two interviewees (married couple). 13 Interviewees were interviewed as non-expert locals. This group was diverse, as it consisted of people of different ages, jobs, times of residency in the region, languages, etc. Four expert interviews were done with one folktale expert (not recorded), two folktale and tourism experts, and one expert in the field of sustainable tourism. The experts, also all locals, were approached because of their expertise in the field of tourism, in folktales, and some even in the touristification of folktales. These experts were knowledgeable on the current tourism trends and developments on the international, national and regional level, but also the attitudes and behaviours of the local community (Veal, 2017). In these interviews, the focus was put on understanding what the role of folktales is in the region and in tourism, as well as what the current situation is regarding folktale touristification and the reasoning behind it. These expert interviews were, therefore, more concrete compared to the non-expert interviews in which discussions were more abstract. One problem encountered is that it was expected that the expert interviews would provide more knowledge on the perspective of the local community, but this was not entirely the case. Ultimately, this also shows that despite representing the local community in tourism development, there are still gaps between what locals expect from tourism and what tourism representatives think the locals expect from tourism. When all interviews were collected, the data was starting to saturate and was important enough to identify patterns contributing to a deep understanding of the topic (Hennink, Kaiser & Marconi, 2017).

Before starting the interview, the participants were informed about the aim of the research, their rights to not participate, skip questions or terminate the interview at any time, that no harm would be done to them, that the research would remain anonymous and that the content recorded would only be accessible to the researcher and the thesis supervisor when they agree to be recorded (Matthews & Ross, 2010). Once the recording started, the interviewees were asked one more time whether they consented to participate and be recorded.

Stakeholders and Sample

The important stakeholder of this study is the local community. This broad stakeholder group is not homogenous and consists of individuals with many different layers and backgrounds as will be explained further in this chapter. Firstly, the stakeholder group is approached as consisting of two stakeholder types: those involved directly in the tourism industry and those not directly involved. Those who have a direct role in the tourism industry often are involved in the provision of tourism products to tourists such as accommodation (camping's, hotels, holiday houses, holiday villages), catering (bars/cafes, restaurants), retail (souvenir shops, shops visited by tourists), transportation, and attractions (culture, sports, entertainment) (CGT & OwT, 2019). Locals who are not involved in the tourism sector are those who do not provide services to tourists. They might get in contact with tourists, but this does not necessarily have to be the case. The difference between these two groups is relevant for this study because the involvement of a local in the tourism industry or not can influence its opinion, perception, and ideas regarding tourism development. It was expected that those involved in tourism will tend to be more positive towards tourism development than those with little involvement as reflected in a study made by Mansfeld & Ginosar (1994).

Although there were no requirements regarding an interviewee's characteristics to participate in this research other than to be a local living in the Belgian Ardennes, it was important to consider the diversity within the 'local' stakeholder group. As Salazar and Graburn (2014) explain, the 'locals' consist of a cluster of stakeholders. Locals have been living in the region for different periods of time, some are natives while some are recent residents, some locals live every day in the region and some are only there during the weekends, some locals deal with the impacts of tourism in their everyday life, while some never have to, etc. Moreover, many locals in the region work in the tourism industry to varying degrees of involvement, some don't work in tourism at all. There are also different languages spoken in the region as explained previously. This results from the complex national history and migrations. It was important to consider these different layers and characteristics to better contextualise opinions or perspectives given during the interviews.

The two main sampling methods used for this research were convenience sampling and snowball sampling. As explained by Adler and Clark (2011), convenience sampling permits the use of subjects already available to the researcher. Potential participants were first approached through the social media platform *Facebook*. Facebook is the main social network platform used in Belgium with the most spread age range (from 13 years to over 65+) (We Are Social, 2019). Therefore, using Facebook to target potential interviewees would permit the research to reach a larger population with a diversity of ages and backgrounds. Despite the multiple attempts on Facebook pages and

groups, only one interviewee agreed to do an interview via the platform. All the other interviewees were approached via telephone or by direct contact. Even the experts were contacted directly via email. At the end of the interviews, the interviewees were asked whether they knew others who would be willing to participate. Snowball sampling was especially relevant to find tourism and folktale experts, as well as people who were over a certain age range (Adler & Clark, 2011).

The downside of non-random sampling is the involvement of possible bias and unrepresentativeness and how this can compromise the generalizability of the data to the wider population (Adler & Clark, 2011). Therefore, the aim during the composing of the sample was to have a variety of people from different age ranges, different residence periods in the region, different jobs, different degrees of involvement in tourism, different cultural backgrounds, etc.

Research location

Tourism in the region

The case for this study is the Belgian Ardennes region, a well-known tourism destination located in the south of Belgium. The Ardennes is the main touristic region of Wallonia and it attracts the highest number of tourists (29% of all visitors in Wallonia) (CGT & OwT, 2019). Yet, despite the importance of the industry in the region, it has received little attention from tourism research. Some studies were done in the region, but these did not contribute to this topic as they either focused on marketing (CoManaging, 2010), statistics (CGT & OwT, 2019), the process of tourism development (CGT & OwT, 2019), or the relation between folktales and geoheritage (Goemaere & al., 2021). During an interview with a tourism expert of the region, it was mentioned that the potential of folktales for tourism in the region is acknowledged and even promoted, but that these are not yet well touristified to create a concrete product. To be a well-developed tourism product, the representative explains that folktales should be better touristified and that the support of the local community in this process is important. By receiving the support of the locals, he explained that it would be a more representative and coordinated product ideally resulting in a strong cultural image to the rest of the world. As no research has been done yet on this specific issue, this thesis contributes by collecting the locals' opinions, ideas, and perspectives on folktale touristification, as well as their suggestions on how to touristify them in such a way that it receives the support of the local community.

Image 1: Map of the Belgian Ardennes and its areas, as well as its neighbouring countries (Je réussis, n.d.).



Folktales in the region

Like many other forested areas, the Belgian Ardennes is a region rich in folktales. The expert Duvivier de Fortemp (2013) explains that the name of the region is already a story in itself. It was named “Ar den” by the Celts to reflect the depth of the forest and its valleys. Its name is further also related to the goddess Arduinna said to be protecting the region’s fauna and flora. Since then, the region has been inhabited by both real and fictional characters such as the *Nutons*, *Sottais* and *Massotais* (dwarfs), fairies, the devil, witches, werewolves, spirits, saints, criminals, etc. The genres of folktales vary from religious legends, to local legends (Sage), historical legends, and explanatory tales, often blending reality and fiction. Yet, what makes Ardennese folktales interesting is their originality due to a mix of Latin and Germanic influences, the relatively lesser romanticization of tales, and the abundance of locations associated with tales (Duvivier de Fortemp, 2013).

Folktales already have a certain role in the Ardennese tourism setting. There are several folktale-related routes consisting of walking and cycling trails, and driving routes, and other initiatives such as exhibitions, houses of legends, branding in local products, and festivities (not all originally developed for tourism) (Goemaere & al., 2021). In 2010, a territorial identity research identified *enchantment* as an important aspect of the Ardennese identity. This research aimed to identify the strongest themes characterizing the region and its people so that it could be used as an

operational tourism tool. Folktales, through *imagination*, were one of the underlying themes associated with enchantment (image 2) (Laëtis, 2018). However, Goemaere & al. (2021) suggest that there is still a lack of consistency within the tourism offer relating to folktales. By strengthening the use of folktales in tourism, the authors advocate for a more holistic experience, and thus, a stronger quality brand for the destination. It can therefore be concluded that although folktales have already been somewhat touristified in the region, and even set as a strategy to promote it, folktale touristification is still developing but is also lacking the renegotiation of stakeholders (CoManaging, 2010, Muselaers, 2017).

Image 2: The four values of the Ardenne brand, of which enchantment represents the elements of imagination and creativity that have been linked to folktales (Laëtis, 2018).



Data analysis

The step following the interviews was the transcription process done through intelligent verbatim and edited transcription. As Streefkerk (2019) clarifies, intelligent verbatim requires the transcriber to write the entire conversation except for fillers such as 'hum', 'oh', and hesitations or pauses. Edited transcription was also used to remove parts of the interviews that did not contribute to the conversation. This was done to reduce the amount of data and ease the coding process. Furthermore, it also permitted the transcriber to add notes or clarify passages when needed by using square brackets ([...]). For example, one interview was difficult to transcribe due to a recording problem. This was reported in the transcripts. Finally, the fact that the interviews were done in different languages did not influence the transcription process.

Once all interviews were transcribed, the thematic analysis process became more prominent to further reduce the data available. While data reduction can provide a clearer view of the relevant data, it can affect the analysis and the discussion. It should, therefore, be done carefully. Thematic analysis is the process of identifying, examining, and recording patterns from the qualitative data in relation to the research questions and the phenomenon in question (Adler & Clark, 2011). The process was thus to organize the relevant data into themes by first associating labels with passages in the transcripts and then collecting these passages into each theme. The themes were based on

the three research questions that were simplified to 'relation to tourism', 'relation to folktales', and 'folktale touristification'. To code further, an index (table 2, appendix) was created permitting to summarize the data in such a way that it was possible to look at the different themes across all cases. The process of interpretation already took place while theming and categorizing the data and it went further on when relating the different themes to one another. During this process, it was also important to look at what differentiates these relationships from one case to the other (Matthews & Ross, 2010). Finally, these themes were continually reassessed to find whether they were relevant and consistent across the different transcripts. Finally, quotes were used to support the data. Once the tables were filled, the codes were adapted when needed to best represent the data at hand.

The first theme brought together codes that touched upon the way the local community relates to tourism in the Belgian Ardennes. Codes identified were the personal relation of the interviewee with tourism, the importance of tourism for the region, what they perceived tourism to consist of, and the perceived impacts of tourism. The second theme brought together codes that referred to their relation to folktales. Codes identified were their relation to folktales, the way these are maintained or not, their current role in the community, and how the interviewees characterized folktales. The third theme brought together codes that contributed to the evaluation of folktale touristification. Codes identified were the perceived current touristification of folktales, the evaluation of touristification as a process, the perceived impacts of touristification on the locals, the tourists, places and folktales, what an ideal touristification would involve, and finally, the involvement of the local community in the touristification of folktales. An additional table was made for the way the interviewees related to their region, which was perceived to be a relevant theme that could not efficiently be added to one of the other themes.

While the coding process was mostly systematic and based on the interview questions or the word and expression use of the interviewees, not all interviewees contributed to filling each cell of the table (or codes). Furthermore, data that could not be put in the table but did contribute to the main research question was later added to the result section. As the expert interviews provided more in-depth and analytical data on the different themes and less from a personal perspective, the codes remained similar, but the interpretation was more nuanced to show the expert perspective. Therefore, codes directly discussing the topic at hand in the table were filled with in-depth data whereas codes about personal evaluation and reflection remained empty for the expert interviews.

Analysis

This chapter discusses the findings from the data reduction and thematic analysis executed as described in the ‘data analysis’ section in the methodology. This chapter consists of three sections which are based on the sub-questions set in the research question chapter. Accordingly, the first section focuses on the way locals in the Belgian Ardennes relate to tourism on a personal and general level. This topic is discussed first because it informs us about what locals perceive to be important resources in tourism and whether folktales are part of these. Moreover, it was suggested that the way locals perceive tourism influences the way they perceive the use of cultural resources in it. It sets thus a base to understand the way locals talk about their relationship to folktales which is discussed in the second section of this chapter. The final section focuses on how locals perceive and evaluate the process of touristification of folktales.

Each section starts with a brief introduction and ends with a conclusion answer the sub-questions. The results per sub-question are further divided into different themes that resulted from the coding process. Additionally, to facilitate the contextualization of the quotes and the reading process, the table below presents each interviewee with a fictional name as well as characteristics such as age, gender, time of residency in the Ardennes, role in the community, and how that relates to tourism.

Table 1: List of interviewees, with pseudonyms and main characteristics.

Interviewee	Gender	Age	Role	Profession
Adam	Male	19	Local	Student and student job in tourism
Christine	Female	33	Tourism expert/Folktale expert/local	Works in tourism development
Eve	Female	75	Local	Retired, but owned a catering business
Juliette	Female	62	Local	Retired, but worked in administration
David	Male	65	Local	Retired, but worked as accountant and lumberjack
Jean	Male	49	Tourism expert/Folktale expert/local	Works in tourism development
Eric	Male	67	Folktale expert/local	Retired, but involved in tourism projects and folktale books author
Louis	Male	42	Local	Construction worker
Maria	Female	19	Local	Student and student job in tourism
Nicole	Female	55	Local	Owns a tourist accommodation and catering business
Luc	Male	25	Student living abroad	Student, but used to have student jobs in tourism
Paula	Female	65	Local	Owns a farm and a tourist accommodation
Olivia	Female	51	Local	Owns a tourist accommodation
Victor	Male	44	Local	Local product merchant and owns a tourist accommodation
Jo	Male	29	Tourism expert/local	Works in regional development and president of a tourism information office
Rita	Female	24	Local	Teacher, but used to have a student job in tourism
Ella	Female	55	Local	Marketing assistant and owns a tourist accommodation

How does the local community evaluate tourism in the region?

By answering the first sub-research question, the aim was to find out whether, and if so, in what ways, locals in the Belgian Ardennes relate to tourism. Moreover, it aimed at identifying the perceived value of cultural resources in tourism. From the coding process, two codes were identified and set the structure of this section: *the value of tourism* and *the value of cultural resources*.

The value of tourism

“... Tourism in our region certainly is, as I said at the beginning of the conversation, transversal. Everybody does it.”, Jo, 29 years old tourism expert. Here, Jo pointed out that all locals benefit from tourism in some way in their life. It is true that all interviewees engaged with tourism in the region at some point, and in most cases even daily, through where they live and where they work. However, as will be discussed in the following section, not every interviewee perceived tourism to be beneficial, their opinion is mainly based on the way they are in contact with tourism.

Out of the seventeen interviewees, a majority was directly working in the tourism sector. The tourism experts developed tourism in the region and the eight other interviewees either owned a tourism business (mainly holiday houses) or worked in tourism as students during the summer. The six remaining interviewees did not work in tourism at the moment, but three of them used to. Furthermore, tourism is perceived as transversal by many, it has become so important for the region that a portion of the interviewees perceived tourism to be a way to also characterize the region. However, this role remained perceived as mostly economic rather than emotional or personal. Almost all interviewees mentioned that tourism was one of the main economic sectors of the region, providing many jobs and income for the community. This was also made clear by the number of interviewees that were, directly and indirectly, involved in tourism. A tourism expert, Jo, supported this through the following statement:

I think that tourism is the second economic sector, so it's very important. It's huge, it's a lot of jobs. I was talking about it recently, there are cafés, restaurants in [name of towns], although other places to a lesser extent, that live only thanks to that. (Jo, 29 years old tourism expert)

However, as Jo pointed out, this economic benefit has also resulted in economic dependence on tourism for certain places. While he discussed the transversality of tourism and the dependence on

tourism as being mostly beneficial for the community, this was not perceived to be the case by other interviewees. The ones who disagreed with the tourism expert were mainly locals who were not involved or that did not benefit from tourism.

While a majority stated that they had a good relationship with tourism, some interviewees were more sceptical of it. These interviewees did also mostly not work in the industry. They agreed that everyone engages in tourism and that tourism is important, but they did not perceive tourism to benefit everyone. Moreover, they perceived those not involved in tourism and non-tourism-related businesses as not benefiting from tourism in any way but still having to deal with its negative effects, such as issues regarding dependency on tourism, seasonality, and community resilience. They did not necessarily perceive tourism as needing to stop, but they would have preferred tourism to slow down so the negative impacts of tourism could also slow down. Yet, Adam, a 19-year-old student renting sporting material to tourists during the summer, who also perceives tourism as being transversal in the region, counter-argued: “I think you have to love it and learn to live with it if you want to live in this region. You have to understand why tourism is so important”. For him, there are negative impacts from tourism, but tourism is too important for the region. However, his opinion might be influenced by his reliance on tourism for income. **It could thus be concluded that a person who benefits from tourism more than he or she loses seems to be more accepting of tourism and its impacts than a person who does not benefit from tourism, losing more than he or she gains.**

Whether supportive or not of tourism development, it is especially the aspect of a hinder on the everyday life that locals perceived as being the problem, and not tourism itself. Although they did not perceive it to be everywhere, most interviewees perceived tourism as creating masses of people at hotspots, congestion problems, pollution, and noise pollution. One interviewee referred to tourism as being violent on nature and locals living near hotspots. These problems were also perceived by the interviewees as being a more important burden for locals dealing with these on a day-to-day basis despite not being involved or benefiting from tourism. Additionally, those who perceived these problems as being present and yet remained enthusiastic about tourism were mostly locals living outside these hotspots and benefiting from tourism. Yet, one interviewee also mentioned that tourism, despite causing problems, also permitted to improve the infrastructure and the aesthetics of towns and villages, from which locals can also benefit.

To deal with difficulties of depending on tourism, several locals and the tourism experts perceived it as important to further develop tourism in the region as long as it remains in line with the needs and values of the local community. They perceived it as necessary to also professionalize locals working in tourism. The problem seemed to be the slow change due to the lack of motivation and cooperation from locals owning a tourism-related business. Christine, a 33-year-old tourism

expert focussing on the development of folktales in the region, explained that tourism has been so ordinary for the region, that businesses do not see the need to keep developing it. Christine added that:

Perhaps the older local population is not ready for this more consequent development in the local area. [...] But I think this may change over time, with new generations that love to live in our region, that even want to stay in our region but also need to be able to live and pay the bills. And I think that with this change, the field of culture and tourism will have no choice but to develop. (Christine, 33 years old, folktale and tourism expert)

She suggested that for now, not all locals would perceive tourism development as necessary, but that this would change in the future as she perceived tourism to be a way to develop the region and prevent the emptying of it in the long term. The expert perceives here tourism to be a solution, while certain locals perceived tourism as the problem. Louis, a 42-year-old construction worker, explained that despite being supportive of tourism as it has such an important impact on the region and his income, he would prefer tourism development to slow down so the region could maintain its rural and local atmosphere as he perceives tourism as causing disruptions.

The value of cultural resources

Locals interviewed did not only have different affinities with tourism but also with tourism resources in the region. There were similarities between what locals liked about the region and what they perceived tourists to be attracted to in the region. The majority of interviewees perceived nature and nature-related activities to be the main attraction. Nature and the possibility to relax were also what locals liked about the region and how they felt connected to it (other than through family and community).

However, culture was perceived as less interesting than nature for tourism. At the same time, culture was mentioned considerably less often by the interviewees as a way for locals to connect to the region. In most cases, the interviewees started discussing culture only when they were asked about it. Regardless, they perceived culture to be important for the community, but it was more difficult to describe it and even more difficult to discuss how cultural resources were perceived as relevant either in their everyday life or in tourism. Even if this topic remained rather vague throughout conversations, interviewees stated that the community is connected to culture

especially through nature, traditions, and customs. A perceived reason for the difficulty to discuss culture was that it is not as strong in the Ardennese community as it is in other regions. Yet, Nicole (55 years old, owns a tourist accommodation and catering business), added that “[...] there are more and more cultural things going on here”. She is referring to the recent increase in efforts to promote and develop cultural activities in the region for locals. This suggests that she perceives culture to not have been put forward well enough in the past, but that it is improving. Therefore, it can be said that it is not necessarily a lack of interest from locals in culture that makes it difficult for the interviewees to discuss it. It could also be either the abstract nature of ‘culture’ that made it more complicated to visualise and discuss it or the lack of direct contact with its valorisation distancing them from it.

This could be caused by a stronger valorisation of natural resources over the decades due to their value in tourism compared to cultural resources. One tourism expert explained that this was the decision taken by local governments, who invested more money and time in valorising and promoting nature than culture. The expected reason for this was the difficulty and the costs of touristifying culture compared to nature (which is already an attraction in itself). As a result, local governments mostly valorised culture through projects targeting locals, which seemed to have a limited impact on the community.

The tourism expert Jo pointed out that: “tourists are interested [in cultural resources] because it's intangible heritage and locals learn more about their territory”. Jo perceived the use of cultural resources in tourism to be a way for locals to learn about their region and their culture. The interviewees who agreed, who tended to be positive about tourism, perceived it as important to develop cultural resources more in tourism, they also perceived many cultural resources to remain unused. Certain interviewees disagreed with Jo due to the perceived limited impact of using cultural resources in tourism. While they perceived certain tourists to be interested in this, it was not perceived to apply to the majority of them. Furthermore, the interviewees who did not perceive it as interesting explained that culture is something for the locals because only locals can relate to it.

They argued thus that valorising cultural resources through tourism only impacts tourists in limited ways, and they did not perceive it as an adequate setting to reach locals.

On a cultural level? Honestly... Museums like the museum in Bastogne, I've never been there. Who goes there? It's the tourists. So, yes, they value them. In any case, when you live somewhere, you don't go to discover your region, the museums and so on. (Rita, 24 years old, teacher who used to work in tourism as a student)

Although admitting that culture is promoted in tourism, Rita perceived the tourism setting to be for tourists but not for locals. Therefore, she did not perceive the tourism setting to be the right place to valorise something for locals. She further suggested that locals are not interested in learning about their region, or at least not in a way that makes them feel like tourists in their region. From the interviewees, it also seemed that despite the efforts made by local governments and tourism organisations, locals did not seem to be taking part in cultural projects that target locals either. Jo further explained that:

We don't remind people often enough of our history, of our past, of our heritage. We are surrounded by heritage [...] and people don't ask themselves the question because they've been passing by for 20 years, so there's no reason for them to think about it. (Jo, 29 years old and tourism expert)

For the tourism expert, the lack of attention from locals is caused by two things; the lack of heritage valorisation initiatives in the region and the embeddedness of heritage in the environment that makes people incurious about it. As discussed previously, this was the case for cultural resources in general and not only for folktales. The consequence of this is that locals are not frequently enough in contact with cultural resources which causes the gap to become too important.

To conclude, this section has shown that tourism is perceived by locals and experts to be very important for the region, especially from an economic perspective. While a majority of locals work directly or indirectly in tourism, not all interviewees agreed on the need to keep developing tourism as they perceive the negative impacts on places and people to outweigh the benefits. The affinity of a person with tourism influences their opinions regarding tourism, as tourism experts and locals living of tourism were more optimistic than other locals, despite recognizing the importance of the sector for the region. Furthermore, while the interviewees perceive culture to be important, it was not always clear to the interviewees how it would benefit tourism like nature can. Culture and cultural resources are so embedded in the community that it has become an abstract topic that makes it difficult for them to discuss or visualise. Moreover, they seem to perceive it as more relevant to valorise culture in a setting that reaches locals rather than in a tourism setting that mainly attracts tourists. Before taking a closer look at what this entails for the touristification of folktales, the following section will first look at the relationship of locals with their folktales.

How do locals relate to folktales in the Ardennes?

The second sub-research question aimed at understanding whether, and if so how, locals of the Belgian Ardennes relate to their folktales. It took a closer look at how these are valued from a personal level to a societal level. The codes identified, that set the structure of this section, are *the personal relation to folktales, the transmission and maintenance of folktales, and the current role of folktales*.

The personal relation to folktales

"Well, if we talk about it, it's all coming back to me, but if we don't, it's all forgotten", David (65 years retired accountant and lumberjack). What David showed is that there is a disconnection between the local community and its folktales. Due to this disconnection, it was difficult for the interviewee to discuss folktales because he believed that he had forgotten them. However, as the conversation continued, he started to remember more folktales as well as ways in which folktales are used today. While this disconnection might have caused him to be less proficient on the subject, it was still present in his subconscious; he just had to be reminded of them. This difficulty to remember folktales and their details was valid for all interviewees; age did not seem to influence whether one remembered better folktales or not. Even experts needed a bit of time to remember the details of stories.

Out of all the interviewees, only one interviewee mentioned not being familiar with folktales at all. The other interviewees perceived themselves as being familiar with a few folktales from the region to different degrees. For interviewees that did not engage with folktales daily, it was at first difficult to find ways in which these are still relevant. The folktales remembered throughout the conversation did not end up being numerous and their knowledge of these remained often limited to the general storyline or the main character of the story. This demonstrates that the interviewees assumed that relating to folktales implied knowing many of them and in great detail. Additionally, it was not always clear to the interviewees what was considered a folktale and what wasn't. Two of them looked up the meaning of the word *folktale*, but most of them included any stories that made up the region. **This demonstrates that the disconnection discussed earlier resulted in a more superficial knowledge of folktales, even from a conceptual perspective.**

Five of the interviewees had at the time of the interviews a stronger connection to folktales than other interviewees. For four of these interviewees, this was through their work, such as one interviewee starting a new student job at a folktale-related attraction, and the three others through

their expertise in folktales and tourism. The last interviewee, recently engaging with folktales, explained how becoming more familiar with folktales has helped her learn more about the region she just moved to and integrate within the community by interacting on the topic. For these interviewees, it was easier to relate to the topic and to visualise these folktales, their role, and their impact on the region. For other interviewees, the topic was less clear, sometimes even bordering the confusion of why it was even interesting to discuss. Being in direct and frequent contact with folktales helped thus the interviewees to be more proficient. Only for Paula (65 years old and renting tourist accommodation) did folktales have an emotional value due to their role in certain traditions to which she was strongly connected. Despite this, she did not necessarily remember more folktales or more details because for her it was more about the tradition than the folktale itself. **This shows to some extent that it is the frequency or the recent contact with folktales that influences one's proficiency rather than the emotional value of a folktale. Furthermore, it also indicates that having lived in the region for an extensive period of time does not ensure better knowledge of folktales.**

As mentioned previously, age did not influence whether one remembers folktales better or not. However, by comparing the statements of older and younger interviewees, it became clear that age influenced the type of folktales remembered. For older interviewees, the folktales remembered were the ones from their own or neighbouring villages, famous regional folktales often used in folklore, and religion-related folktales. This was different for younger interviewees who tended to refer mostly to folktales famous from folklore, tourism, and commodification, and sometimes to folktales from their village. As the famous and actively used folktales are more often used in the direct environment of locals, they were more likely to remember these. On the other hand, older interviewees tended to remember these commodified folktales as last or just when reminded of them.

Despite these differences, the interviewees had mostly similar ways to characterize folktales. The main way of describing them was by their abundance and their diversity. It was also this aspect that made it an important element of the regional heritage. Certain interviewees also characterized the stories as being bound to a specific village, town, or area. Another aspect cited by one-third of the interviewees was the variations within a village or town of the same story. Furthermore, one interviewee also stated that the type of folktales, as well as the content and the storylines, were similar in other regions and countries, but that there was still a specific aspect of the folktale that bounded it to the region. They further perceived folktales to be related to nature and/or religion, and despite mentioning several folktales in which magic and enchantment were important elements, only four interviewees characterized them as such. Therefore, while interviewees were aware of the

variations that exist between towns, villages, or even countries, they still perceived these folktales as being something typically local due to the link to place and the number of folktales out there.

Perceiving folktales as being authentic, unique, and static, or as having a *real* version, was further also mentioned by a few interviewees but mainly by the folktale expert. The 67 years old folktale expert, Eric, explained that folktales had been 'polluted' in the transmission process by being adapted, changed, and/or invented to become more interesting, sometimes also for tourism purposes. **This further supports the idea that folktales have a static nature, and that these need to be unmanipulated to be valuable or authentic.**

Transmission and maintenance of folktales

Whether one is familiar with folktales or not was perceived by a majority of interviewees as depending on the transmission through the family setting.

Well, it's when my grandparents talked about folktales, but I never talked about them with my grandchildren because first I don't think about it, and yes, I don't know enough to tell them. I think we used to talk more about them in the old days anyway. (David, 65 years old, retired accountant and lumberjack)

David explained that he did not think about discussing folktales with his grandchildren because he did not perceive himself as being knowledgeable on the topic. This shows that if a family is more interested in folktales, it is more likely going to be transmitted to the next generation. Furthermore, if the older generation was not interested in folktales or in maintaining folktales, the younger generation would be less likely interested in them as well. Later on, David mentioned that he did not perceive his grandchildren, nor himself, to be interested in folktales. **This had also been mentioned by other older interviewees who projected their interests or assumptions onto the next generation, as younger interviewees found it interesting to valorising folktales.** This shows that this projection is not necessarily accurate.

Furthermore, it seems that David perceived folktales to have lost relevance today compared to the past which refers more to a community level. The community setting is the second main setting to transmit folktales. More precisely, it seemed that it is expected that the older locals are the ones that transmit these stories. However, as mentioned previously, older generations seem to think that younger generations are not interested in folktales anymore, resulting in a transmission

break. Furthermore, it is also through traditions and festivities shared by the community that folktales were perceived to be maintained. In this case, however, the interviewees pointed out that the folktale is only one of the aspects of the traditions or event which reduces its importance and valorisation. Finally, a portion of the interviewees also referred to other ways of transmitting folktales such as books, art, and museums. Yet, these were not perceived as being the most effective ways to do so as they were perceived to receive only limited interest from locals or even tourists. This indicates that the setting perceived as most efficient by the interviewees, being the family setting, is not strong enough to ensure the transmission of folktales.

Christine (33 years old, tourism and folktale expert) argued **that the efforts to maintain folktales are limited because there is not a good understanding of the value of folktales causing an overall disinterest in folktale maintenance.**

I think that there hasn't really been any valorisation for a long time of this heritage... [...] We have to talk about it, we have to transmit it so that it continues to live. And so, if at a given moment, we say to ourselves 'well no, it's not worth it' or 'it's just little stories like that' and we don't pay attention to it, well then it's true that it gets lost from generation to generation. (Christine, 33 years old, tourism and folktale expert)

What the expert did was to identify the possible causes for the poor transmission of folktales over decades. She mentioned multiple socio-cultural factors, such as the lack of attention and awareness to protect this cultural resource, to play a role. She did not address one stakeholder in particular as being at the root of the problem, as it is the disinterest of all of them that she perceived to be the most problematic. This disinterest seemed to stem from the lack of perceived functional value of folktales. She seemed to think that people do not perceive folktales to be important enough to invest in their maintenance. However, folktales are still perceived as being an important part of heritage as is proven by their presence in events and festivities.

Current role of folktales

Considering the current state of folktale maintenance, there was a consensus that folktales need to be maintained. It was perceived as an important aspect of the regional heritage despite not being a relevant aspect of the everyday life of people living in the region. It was difficult for the non-expert interviewees to explain why folktales are part of their heritage and why they have such an

important role. They mainly argued that folktales are an integral part of the community, of the regional culture, of traditions, and festivities, but it remained rather vague. Jean, a tourism and folktale expert provided a more concrete answer:

It's not a coincidence, it's because they were in an environment that was already legendary at the time. [...] There was probably already this ability to create worlds and even more here than anywhere else. But here... What a way to create that. In the valley of the Semois there is not a rock that does not have a name with a story, a fairy that was thrown down from there, or a devil that fell. (Jean, 49 years old, tourism and folktale expert)

According to the tourism and folktale expert, Jean, folktales are deeply rooted in the culture of the people living in the region. He also perceived it to be part of the way of thinking of these people which is reflected through the abundance of folktale-related objects, places, or stories. He explained that this is because it is a forested area and that the region has a rich folktale-related heritage due to influences of multiple worlds (Germanic, Latin, religious) often intersecting and the influence of multiple periods. All this combined created a legendary environment. While experts might be aware of this information, it is not the case for most interviewees. **This indicates that while interviewees perceive folktales to be an important heritage resource, their knowledge about it from a heritage perspective remains also rather superficial.** This might be caused by a lack of instances in which this information would be provided.

It was not always evident for the interviewees to find how folktales are still used or valorised in the region today. This can be related to the need to be reminded of folktales in the first place. The main way perceived by the interviewees to use them is through traditions that still take place and that are often linked to a story. Other ways identified were the naming of places, branding of local products, or anecdotes. Its current role remains, therefore, passive. Once she was reminded of the famous local folktale, one interviewee mentioned the following:

I reread [the story] not long ago. It was in the newspaper. Yes, it's true, it's used in La Roche. Yes, I hadn't thought of that. [...] We went to see it especially for the children. Yes... Maybe it's too close... (Juliette, 62 years, recently retired)

This suggests that the stronger the presence of certain folktales in the community, the more unconsciously embedded they can become. This shows that folktales can also be relevant in the everyday life by their presence and more active use, but that it has become so common that it is not as evident anymore for the locals. This reflects well the argument of the previous section regarding the embeddedness of cultural resources in the everyday life of locals which reduces the attention given to them. Yet, this is not the case for every folktale.

Although each town or village has its folktale(s), the ways, and extents to which they identify to their folktales vary. A stronger connection is often perceived as a stronger presence of the folktale in the everyday life of the community even if it tends to remain unconscious. Yet, this is not frequent; only certain towns or villages have this connection.

So yes, for some [villages/towns] it is a heritage, a legacy, something that we need to keep, to take care of, and to continue to share. And on the other hand, I think that for some towns it may be a heritage, but they don't perceive it as heritage at all. (Maria, 19 years old, a student working in tourism)

Maria perceived this connection to be depending on the relation between the community and the folktale itself from a heritage perspective. She suggests that there are local communities with stronger connections to their folktale. When the connection between the community and the folktale is less evident, it can be a result of a lack of opportunity to use or valorise it or due to a lack of connection from the community. Certain folktales can also be part of the image of a place. Jo, the 29-year-old tourism expert explains that this connection can also be stimulated by the local government by using the folktale to create or strengthen a specific image to outsiders and create an unconscious feeling of community for the locals. Yet, if imposed, it can change the identity of the place and distance the locals from identifying with it. **This implies that the relevance of a folktale today can depend on the benefits the use of it can provide.**

Although folktales are perceived to be representative of the region, the interviewees did not perceive their use to be contributing to strengthening the Ardennese identity (regional identity). Out of the 17 interviewees, a majority mentioned the Ardennese identity to be important to them or for the locals in general. Yet not all interviewees identified fully. Despite not perceiving folktales to be an integral part of cultural heritage, folktales were still connected to it in different ways. Jo said, “that the people of the Ardennes like to protect what is around them, that they like to keep things to themselves, they are proud of what is around them.” The oldest interviewee, Eve (75 years old who

used to own a bar in a touristic village) agreed, “I believe so because the people of the Ardennes fiercely defend their heritage. Well, most of them.” It can thus be said that although folktales are not the main aspect of cultural heritage, protectionism and pride are. Therefore, in their opinion, the pride and protection of folktales reflect well the cultural identity.

Answering the second sub-question, this section discussed the current relationship between locals and folktales in the Ardennes. It is mainly due to a disconnection that stems from a break in transmission from the family and community setting that locals have become less proficient in discussing folktales of the region. This break in transmission might have been caused by the devaluation of a folktale’s role in society and/or by the miscommunication between generations. Not only did it take interviewees more time to remember folktales, but their knowledge about them also tended to remain superficial. Even the role of folktales in the community or heritage remained a rather vague topic. What this disconnection has caused is less frequent contact between people and folktales. However, it seems that the more frequently interviewees were in contact with folktales, the better they remembered them or the better they could converse about the topic. Yet, a static view of folktales remained dominant, even by folktale experts. Despite this distance, the interviewees found it important to valorise more and maintain folktales before it is too late. Despite not being perceived as having an emotional or personal value by the majority of interviewees, folktales still have a heritage-related value. This is because of their abundance, diversity, and the influence they have had on the way of thinking in the past. Today, folktales are perceived to still have some value in events and traditions or branding. Because of this, certain folktales remain present in the everyday life of the community, but locals tend to take it for granted.

How does the local community evaluate folktale touristification?

The final sub-research question aimed at understanding how locals in the Belgian Ardennes perceive and evaluate the touristification of folktales. It focuses on how touristification is perceived to impact the everyday life of people, places, and folktales. It further also looks at the value of touristification in tourism and for the local community. The themes identified that will be discussed in this section are *the evaluation of current folktale touristification*, *the evaluation of ideal folktale touristification*, *the perceived value of folktale touristification for tourism*, and *the perceived value of folktale touristification for locals*.

The evaluation of current folktale touristification

The interviewees did not perceive folktales to be an important current aspect of tourism in the region.

Well, I think I would know more [folktales used in tourism] than that. As I told you earlier, I'm not a tourist here so. But if I went to the information office, I don't think they would tell me about the folktales, I don't think so. But I don't know. (David, 65 years old, retired accountant and lumberjack)

By suggesting that he would know or remember more folktales, David shows that he does not perceive them to be used much in tourism at the moment. It is not only the materialisation of folktales that he perceives to be lacking but also the promotion of them. However, like the majority of interviewees, David just needed more time to remember examples of touristified folktales.

Interestingly, it was easier for the interviewees to first think of folktales used in folklore, such as events and traditions (perceived to be for the locals), and then think of folktales used for tourism (perceived to be for the tourists). While most interviewees simply did not remember touristified folktales at first, Ella (55 years old, working in marketing and owning a holiday house) distanced herself intentionally from touristified instances. Three other interviewees explained that they did not think of touristified folktales because these are perceived to be only for tourists and not for locals.

The interviewees did not think that folktales are used a lot in tourism, but that what is done so far is already well developed. The most famous tourism experience referred to by the interviewees was the case of the ghost show in La Roche-en-Ardenne. It seemed that most of the interviewees had visited the show, especially with children or because they were in town when it was happening, but they had not visited the castle. While they were enthusiastic about the show in general as a tourism offer, they mentioned not wanting the same to be taking place in their neighbourhood. Another interesting case of folktale use often referred to during the interviews was that of an exhibition part of a museum. Despite being aware of the use of folktales there, none of the interviewees had visited the museum. So, locals did not actively seek to experience touristified folktales, as was already suggested earlier. **Furthermore, this shows that although certain interviewees perceived themselves as consciously distancing themselves from touristified folktales, they seemed to have accepted and appropriated one of the folktales invented for tourism which is somewhat contradictory.**

The interviewees also referred to other instances in which folktales still had an important role. These instances remain part of the regional or local folklore and are thus perceived to be for locals, not for tourists. Examples provided by the interviewees were yearly festivals such as witch trials re-enactments, carnivals, and religious processions but also in the naming of places called 'lieudit' stemming from tradition. The interviewees did not perceive these instances as targeting tourists, but they were fine with sharing the experience with them.

According to the tourism experts, despite the lack of current touristification of folktales, several initiatives were taken in the last decade. Unfortunately, not all projects attempted in tourism were successful. The ones that were perceived to remain successful today were mostly tourism activities using folktales in a passive way, such as trails, museums, and local product branding. Jean (49 years old tourism and folktale expert) added that folktales have a stronger role in marketing and branding than as attractions. This is because touristified folktales are not well connected to the rest of the tourism offer. **He perceived this to be resulting from the lack of endorsement of folktale-related tourism products by the community, and the lack of cooperation between stakeholders involved in tourism.** Finally, the tourism expert also explained that it is difficult to materialize folktales because it costs money, it requires product development, and it is often damaged by visitors.

The potential for folktale touristification

With a general awareness of the lack of folktale use in tourism and the potential it has to offer, all interviewees found it interesting to valorise folktales more. Out of the seventeen interviewees, eleven interviewees saw tourism being a way to do so. Overall, it seemed that these interviewees did not have a particularly negative opinion of the touristification process of cultural resources. For a majority of them, touristification was perceived as a normal process that results from tourism development, and to some extent, this has been accepted. However, there seemed to be certain conditions for folktale touristification to be acceptable. When respecting these suggestions, almost all interviewees perceived touristification as a positive development except for two interviewees who still preferred folktales to stay somewhat outside of tourism. This is because the two interviewees were not sure tourism could contribute positively to maintaining such cultural resources as much as local initiatives could. Yet, one of the two interviewees admitted that if there were more folktales in tourism, he would maybe know more of them. Despite this, he thought there are more important things to take care of.

Ideal touristification

The suggestions of the interviewees were to ensure that the touristification process is in line with the expectations, needs, and values of the local community. Ultimately, this also provided a picture of how locals would like to see folktales be touristified.

To be in line with the community's values and needs, folktale touristification should remain subtle. Interviewees did not see it as suitable that folktales become part of an attraction. Even if they accept the case of the ghost story in La Roche-en-Ardenne, they preferred not to have a similar attraction everywhere, especially not in their direct environment. They proposed walking trails that stir the imagination of people using maybe technology to increase interactivity. They suggested informational signs that could combine art, history, and folklore that valorise folktales and the 'lieu-dit'. These examples tended to be outside of towns or villages, in nature and requiring little materialisation. Therefore, it can be concluded that folktales should not be overly exploited or used for entertainment. **It should be educational and subtle.**

Although a majority of interviewees did not perceive over-exploitation to be possibly the case, Luc (25 years-old student living abroad) disagreed, "I think that people who work in tourism want to overdo everything because it gives them the feeling that they will attract more revenue, more customers". That the tourism sector has more developed ideas of how to touristify folktales was confirmed by one of the tourism experts.

So the world of folktales could also reappropriate a storyteller like that, but it could also be shopkeepers, artists, and actors who come to play. [...] A facility, museums, of course, storytellers/guides, but who have the ability to get a message across. [...] The agro-food industry which would reappropriate itself, like the beers, you see the world of the legend to bring out a beer, a dish to cook. (Jean, 49 years old tourism and folktale expert)

The expert focuses more on experiences actively using folktales rather than passive activities as suggested by locals. By comparing the ideas of folktale touristification of locals and tourism experts, there is a clear difference between what the tourism expert perceives to be successful touristification and what locals expect from touristification. However, this gap can result from the awareness of the tourism and folktale expert of what needs to be done for it to be interesting in tourism, but also maybe for locals who until now seem to be indifferent to folktales when used in their environment.

Touristification for valorisation

The second suggestion is that the touristification of folktales should be done for valorisation purposes. A majority of interviewees perceived touristification as being able to do so. They perceived touristification to ensure the continued use of folktales which consequently results in the maintenance of it. It was perceived to also further result in the revalorisation of well-known and lesser-known folktales by regaining a certain role in the community (which might not always be a conscious process). It was thus perceived, to some extent, as able to prevent cultural loss as pointed out by Adam (19 years old student working in tourism), "but to keep these folktales alive, to continue to tell them and above all to allow them to survive, especially the folktales that are perhaps less well known." One interviewee also added that this was also true for maintaining places to which folktales are associated. However, five interviewees also discussed the possibility of theft and damage at these locations, whether it is on the infrastructure put in place or the existing natural environment, which can result in the devaluation of the folktale. **The interviewees explained that it is this aspect of valorisation that makes the touristification of folktales interesting, not only for tourists but also for locals. Yet, it is important to consider how it is done and for what purpose, as the poor consideration of these aspects can have opposite effects on folktales and places.**

Moreover, the commodification of folktales was perceived as acceptable as well, as long as the main motivator was not profit-making. Although the majority of interviewees agreed to this, when asked about the benefits of folktale touristification, half of the interviewees mentioned economic profit which contradicts the previous statement. By being commodified, one interviewee explained that folktales become more concrete and easier to relate to. The interviewees preferred folktales not to be commercialized through ticketing or souvenirs for example and believed other locals would agree, especially in the case of religious folktales. However, due to the importance of tourism in the region, certain interviewees believed commodification could not always be avoided. The other side of the coin is that by being commodified, the folktale only becomes part of the product, the experience, or the place rather than be the central element. It would, therefore, only have a limited impact on its maintenance. Additionally, it was perceived that resulting from touristification, new folktales could be invented, and folktales could be associated with other places just for the sake of tourism or branding. The folktale expert added that touristification could also result in the adaptation of folktales to make them more interesting for tourists. **It is thus the impacts of touristification that were perceived to be problematic by the local community, especially when the conditions previously identified are not met. Despite possible negative consequences of touristification, certain interviewees perceived these impacts as being less harmful compared to not doing anything with folktales risking their loss.**

The perceived value of folktale touristification for tourism

For the interviewees who liked the idea of touristifying folktales more, they liked the added value it can bring to the tourist experience, but also that of locals. Due to the abundance and diversity of folktales, they perceived folktales to be an integral part of the region and found their use in tourism to be representative. It is not only the tourism experts that perceived there to be a lot of unused potentials when it comes to this cultural resource, the other interviewees also agreed. Yet, not all folktales were perceived to have the same potential. Well-known, romanticized, and exciting stories were perceived to be more likely to receive attention, whether it is from tourists or locals. Interviewees suggested that interesting folktales to be used are folktales with magic and enchanting elements that activate the imagination. These also need to be interesting enough to be able to compete with folktales from other regions which sometimes already have a larger reach (such as Merlin in Bretagne).

If folktales are touristified correctly, the locals believed tourists would have a deeper and more meaningful experience of the region, which can ultimately develop a stronger connection between the tourist and the region. For this connection to be able to take place, the experience was perceived to have to come over as unique, original, and authentic otherwise it might be perceived as commercialized which consequently can turn into disinterest and a poor representation of the region. For the locals, this was perceived as able to push tourists away. It should also be kept updated to prevent redundancy and therefore, boredom. To some extent, it was perceived as being able to increase a tourist's interest eventuating in a visitor increase. Yet, not all interviewees agreed that this would be the case as it was mentioned that such offer would mainly attract visitors once or twice, would remain limited to cultural tourists and it was perceived that it would most often be the same visitors that seek to experience these folktales. Olivia (51 years old tourist accommodation owner) perceived this also as an opportunity to keep attracting a better type of tourists, who are more interested and respectful of the region.

I don't know if it's really the case in La Roche, but if you try to interest people, to tease their curiosity about ancient folktales and trails, you will be able to make them more interested. I think you can attract another kind of tourism too. More respectful perhaps, more curious, and not only consumers and party tourists. (Olivia, 51 years old, recently owned a tourist accommodation)

For Olivia, using folktales in tourism is not only a way to valorise folktales more and to attract more tourists. She perceives folktales as having the capacity to attract tourists that are more interested in connecting with the region than the current groups of tourists with whom she associates negative impacts. It is for her a way to change, to some extent, the type of tourism to something of higher value.

Despite recognizing the value of folktales in tourism, Victor (44 years old, sells local products throughout the region and owns a tourist accommodation) stated that “[folktales would only be] one of the themes of the Ardennes. I don't see it replacing or overshadowing everything else. But in addition to the rest, yes”. By touristifying folktales, he perceived the theme of enchantment (image 2, research location) to gain a more prominent role than it does now. Improving the offer and experiences relating to folktales would strengthen the region as a place for enchantment. However, he did not perceive this theme to start replacing ‘nature’ and ‘history’, for example. Tourism experts suggested that media tourism would also be a valuable dynamic to cross with folktales. This was attempted in the past but did not receive all the support needed from the different actors. The tourism experts perceived crossing dynamics and branding as a good way to broaden the reach of folktales. This can be done with food, with history, with natural activities, etc. **Yet, certain experts and the locals agreed that nature and natural activities are the best way to put folktales into use, such as through themed trails and storytelling at folktale-related places.** It is again this subtlety that locals perceived as ideal for folktale touristification.

The Value of folktale touristification for locals

As cultural heritage

While there was a clear idea of what folktale touristification can contribute to tourism, the perceived value of it for the local community was more difficult for the interviewees to discuss. For the experts, the benefits of folktale touristification for the locals were evident. But the locals still perceived it as more beneficial for tourists than for themselves. It seemed to be confusing for them to reflect on how something that is used in tourism is supposed to affect them. As two interviewees pointed out earlier, what is done in tourism is for tourists, not for locals.

However, most interviewees, whether supportive or not of touristification perceived this as a way to maintain to some extent folktales which encourages better awareness of the possible cultural loss in the community. At the moment, folktales seem to be part of the everyday life of the community unconsciously and latently but using them in tourism was perceived to give them a more active role. Or as Jean (49 years old, tourism and folktale expert) puts it, “to create a world of folktales over a period of 4 to 5 years to help the Ardennes reappropriate its legends by structuring

them from a socio-economic point of view". For this expert, it is folktale touristification that will lead the community to reappropriate folktales, giving them a more important space in the community. Furthermore, Jean added that it will permit locals who know existing local products, walking trails, or lieu-dit to also know the story and the meaning of the story behind it, adding depth to their experience. However, to achieve this, it will require time and considerable efforts.

Contradicting this, three interviewees were sceptic regarding the maintenance and valorisation of folktales through touristification. Two perceived it as unlikely to ensure the maintenance of folktales because it would target tourists and not locals, while locals are the ones to whom maintenance would be meaningful. Both the interviewees were not involved in tourism and were the least enthusiastic about folktale touristification. Another issue discussed by Luc (25 years old, student living abroad) is the possibility for locals to distance themselves from folktales due to over-exploitation. The perceived impact of over-exploitation on locals was that it renders the folktale banal which results in locals being disinterested. It can also push locals to distance themselves from the folktale, the place, or the attraction. When asked about which folktales they remembered, two interviewees admitted having forgotten the most well-known and touristified folktale in their area. They assumed it was because they lived too close. It was further perceived to be because of annoyance from the impacts of tourism development that locals distance themselves consciously or not from the folktale. **The way certain locals perceive touristification to contribute to valorisation contradicts thus the expectation of tourism experts who assessed folktale touristification as only having positive effects on the locals.**

The individual and the regional culture

From an emotional perspective, it could not be assumed that touristifying folktales would trigger emotions within the individuals. This was because the interviewees did not discuss how it would make them feel due to the abstract nature of the topic. A majority of them were happy that folktales would be valorised more as it is still perceived as being part of their heritage. Only one interviewee perceived folktales to trigger emotions within her, but even she just mentioned being happy about crossing more folktales in her everyday life. **However, it can be assumed that the difficulty to imagine how they would be emotionally impacted by folktale touristification results from a weak connection between the locals and folktales.**

Furthermore, when asked whether touristifying folktales would affect their pride, the opinions were diverse. One interviewee explained that there is pride in being Ardennese and that they can be proud of their cultural resources. Yet, he was unable to explain in what ways pride would be impacted by folktale touristification, or vice versa. One of the tourism and folktale experts believed it could only increase the pride of locals because it is a way to protect their heritage, and

protectionism was an important aspect of the Ardennese culture. Yet, Adam was more nuanced in his explanation:

I think that pride comes into play, I think that the people of the Ardennes also like to protect what is around them. [...] That the Ardennese like to protect what is around them, that they like to keep things to themselves, they are proud of what is around them. They don't like change too much I think. (Adam, 19 years old, student working in tourism)

This younger interviewee perceived the Ardennese to be proud and conservationist regarding their resources, but that their dislike of change also influences the acceptance of folktale touristification. It also seems to be relating to modesty that locals did not want to touristify their folktales too much. Confirmed to some extent by David (65 years old, retired accountant and lumberjack), who strongly identified to being Ardennese but did not associate it with pride, "... it's rather that we're a bit withdrawn, I think. Anyway, we're not so open and all that. Maybe it's the older ones, I don't know". Jo, the tourism and folktale expert said that the Ardennese community is proud, and modesty might have had an influence in the past on how little folktales are touristified today. However, for him, the current none-use of folktales is because locals involved in tourism do not think of touristifying these thinking it would not interest tourists. It is thus a lack of entrepreneurship and awareness of tourism potential that folktales are not currently touristified much. This showed that emotional attachment to folktales or pride do not seem to be the most relevant explanation for the lack of touristification. What seems relevant, however, is the perceived character of the regional identity and how they evaluate touristification based on this. **It can also be added that this is a remaining stereotype that might not be of relevance today anymore, but that is still used by the locals to explain the lesser touristification of folktales, and maybe even other cultural resources.**

To strengthen the community

When it comes to the involvement of the local community in folktale touristification, the interviewees seemed to like the idea of including the local community in the decision-making process. They thought it is especially valuable for older people because they assumed older people are more connected to folktales and would like to talk about them. Yet, just like all the other interviewees, the older ones did not know more folktales or better remember the details. Moreover, except for the tourism and folktale experts, none of the other interviewees had been involved in the touristification of folktales. Some interviewees promoted touristified folktales in the past and some of them told stories and visited places associated with folktales, but only one person mentioned

wanting to valorise through her own actions this heritage. Other interviewees explained that the interviews helped them become aware and conscious of maintaining folktales. Yet, only little interest in taking initiatives was shown by the locals.

It is the tourism organisations and the municipalities that were perceived by the interviewees as the ones to have to initiate the touristification and valorisation of folktales, ideally for locals. However, as the tourism and folktale experts explained, they attempted folktale-related projects for locals in the past in which they tried to include all the local businesses and the local community, but it failed. The perceived reason was that the locals were not included in the first stages of the project. When they asked them to contribute, the businesses did not cooperate well and only a small portion of the locals participated. The perceived reason for this was that the local community experienced the project as being imposed on them. Therefore, the tourism and folktale experts suggest that locals should be involved from the start to ensure they feel included, and it should target locals that have lived in the region for an extensive period of time or who were born there. They argued that it would generate a more sustainable and representative project. To do so, it is not only important that locals see the benefits but also local and regional governments who have not shown much interest at this point either. Yet, it was expected by the locals and the tourism experts that locals would involve themselves only to a certain degree. **Moreover, they expected them to be more likely to get involved if it is a project for the locals, including traditions and festivities, and if it does not require too much of their time.**

This lack of interest and initiatives from the local community might once again be a result of the distancing of the community with its folktales. The abstractedness of the topic and the perceived value of valorising folktales limited their perceived need to involve themselves and contribute to the maintenance of this cultural heritage. As the tourism expert suggested, by being reminded and by raising awareness within the community, locals might become more involved and reappropriate this heritage. The problem remains to figure out how to get their attention and how to involve them in the longer term.

Answering the third and final sub-research question, this section has shown that at the moment, folktales are not perceived to be touristified much in tourism. While it might be the case that these actually are, locals perceived themselves as not visiting places that seemed to be for tourists and therefore, are not well informed of the use of folktales in tourism. Interviewees associated this current state of folktale touristification with pride, but it seems that this is merely an old stereotype used to hide the lack of entrepreneurship in the region. Although actively using folktales has been attempted more than once, due to a lack of endorsement and involvement of all the relevant stakeholders, it remained mostly used in passive activities. As locals were aware of the

disconnection between them and their folktales, they found it interesting to better valorise them to prevent their loss in the long run. Although not all interviewees agreed (mostly locals not benefiting from tourism), touristification was perceived as a possible solution despite the negative consequences this process can cause. They perceived these to be less harmful than the loss of folktales as a whole. To achieve this, interviewees suggested the ideal touristification of folktales to remain subtle and passive, educative and valorising. The tourism and folktale experts being a lot more optimistic about touristification and encouraging a more active form of folktale use, this is where the gap between both perspectives was most evident. Moreover, the perceived consequence of over-touristification is the conscious distancing of locals from their folktales due to a devaluation of the folktale. Furthermore, touristification should not just be done in a way that is only meaningful to tourists, but in a way that reaches locals as well. However, it seems that locals do not want this to be in a tourism setting. Yet, there are similarities in what it is about folktales that would attract tourists and locals. Moreover, certain interviewees also perceived this as an opportunity for innovation and cooperation with other sectors or simply to strengthen the region as an *enchanted* region. Despite this, locals would be more likely to get involved in the endorsement and support of folktale touristification if they were involved from the start in the decision-making process and if it is to be applied in instances reaching locals.

Conclusion

While much of the research done on the touristification of popular media focuses on literature, movies, and TV shows, folktales have also received some interest from tourism research. Berthe's story told at the beginning of this study proves that folktales have their place in tourism. While it is already evident what attracts tourists to folktales, the local community perspective has often been left aside in tourism research. Studies that considered their perspective either only did so in the side notes or are somewhat outdated. To fill the gap, this study looked at how locals evaluate and perceive the touristification of folktales. 16 Interviews were done in the Belgian Ardennes, a region still figuring out how to best touristify folktales. Remaining a case study, the outcomes cannot be generalized to the rest of the population. However, the outcomes of this study permit us to make certain conclusions regarding the local community perspective based on this sample of interviewees. These outcomes further help make recommendations for the tourism organisation in the region.

The outcomes of this study confirmed the hypothesis discussed in the research question chapter. Locals did indeed not mind the touristification of folktales as long as the goal remains the valorisation of it. The reason certain locals were more reluctant regarding folktale touristification was the perceived negative impacts tourism and touristification can cause and the perceived limited influence of tourists on the preservation of cultural resources. As the following conclusions will show, the outcomes are, however, more nuanced than initially set. What seems to nuance the outcomes is the way locals relate to their folktales which influences the way they evaluate and perceive the touristification of these. Furthermore, the way locals relate to tourism also influences the way they perceive the use of folktales in tourism.

A first conclusion is that the touristification of folktales is not only relevant and of interest to tourists. By touristifying folktales, locals mentioned expecting their experience with touristified folktales to be authentic, original, and magic, which is to some extent similar to the perceived experiences of tourists identified by Holloway (2010), Chronis (2012), and Meder and Venrbux (2000). Furthermore, as Lovell (2019) found that the presence of tangible heritage strengthens the imaginaries, this was perceived by the interviewees to also be relevant to them. Coinciding with Reijnders (2011), locals can also use these stories to (re)connect to places by learning about the narratives with which these are associated. Therefore, it can be concluded that locals and tourists can share similar ways of experiencing touristified folktales. It is suggested that the affinity between locals and their folktales influences the way they will experience the touristification of folktales in their environment. This could mean that the bigger the distance between locals and their folktales, the more they will experience them like tourists.

Locals perceived the touristification of folktales to be even more meaningful to them than to tourists. This is because folktales are an integral part of their heritage and it permits them to reconnect with it (Krajnovic & al., 2008). To add to Holloway (2010), while entertainment through magic and enchantment can motivate locals as much as tourists, it is heritage preservation and valorisation that seem to be the main motivators for locals to touristify folktales. However, to be meaningful for locals, folktales should be touristified in ways and places that reach them, and not through an attraction that is perceived to be focussing on tourists. Locals have thus an ideal when it comes to the touristification of folktales that is only perceived as meaningful when it meets their expectations and values (Muselaers, 2017).

The expected positive impact if locals are reached is the safeguarding of something that might otherwise disappear. This suggests that the capacity of touristification to protect folktales is perceived to be possible, but only to a certain degree. This finding not only confirms Meder and Venbrux's (2000) perspective on the capacity of touristification to maintain and valorise folktales, but it also extends it by adding that there are boundaries to the degree of touristification. As discussed by both Reijnders (2020) and Hugues (1992), the touristification of folktales was also perceived as causing certain problems if not done properly. To confirm Hughes (1992), the over-touristification of folktales in a setting or manner that is perceived to be for tourists can indeed cause locals to distance themselves from it. Whether this distancing is done intentionally or not, it results in a perceived lesser meaningful experience for locals. Furthermore, the way the folktale is touristified can also cause it to be perceived as less relevant. If the folktale is central to the experience, it is perceived to promote maintenance, whereas if the folktale is only one aspect of the experience, it will become less relevant in the experience. Furthermore, Reijnders (2020) found that the nature of the folktale can also cause the local community to contest it. In the case of Berthe's ghost in La Roche-en-Ardenne, an invented folktale for tourism purposes, locals have appropriated, marked, and commodified the folktale. That the folktale is non-native to the region, as stated by the folktale expert, only seemed to be contested by himself. Would this be a more important problem in a community that is more connected to its folktales? Or has it been accepted because of the perceived benefits?

That the success of folktale-related tourism projects coincides with the attitude and endorsement of the locals has become evident in this study and supports thus Hemme (2005). The degree to which folktales are touristified can influence whether locals accept and support touristification. If done in a way that reflects and reinforces the local identity, folktales are perceived to invigorate places and experiences and to strengthen the community. Yet, touristification needs to make sense. Hemme's (2005) research uses a case in which folktales are already appropriated,

marked, and commodified by the local community. In the case of the Ardennes, where locals are more distant from their folktales, it seems that the touristification of folktales does not entirely make sense. This makes it difficult for locals to appropriate folktales and for tourism organisations to mark and commodify them. Yet, if touristified correctly, some locals believe there is a chance that folktales are reappropriated and could contribute to strengthening an image. It seems thus that the overall question of whether folktales should be touristified or not depends on the perceived relevance and value of folktales in the community.

The distance between the local community and its folktales strongly influences the way they will perceive and evaluate their touristification. However, this study also contributes to the approach of the local community as an amalgam of stakeholders each with different needs, expectations, opinions, etc (Sherlock, 2001). The findings show that there is a difference between the perceived impacts and value of touristification based on whether one lives from tourism or not (Mansfeld & Ginosar, 1994). Those who earned a wage from tourism were more supportive and optimistic of tourism and touristifying folktales, believing that it can keep these alive. Those who mainly had to deal with the negative impacts of tourism were less likely to perceive folktale touristification as useful to preserve heritage. This nuances somewhat Sherlock (2001), Macdonald and Jolliffe (2003), and Rasoolimanesh & al. (2015)'s studies.

From a conceptual perspective, this study introduced the concept of folktale touristification which combines different definitions of touristification and applies it to folktales. This concept is more dynamic because it recognizes the different steps touristification takes. It also shows that there is not necessarily an end to this process as it is continually re-negotiated by involved stakeholders. This means that even if folktales or related places are marked and commodified, it does not necessarily entail that these have been appropriated, as is the case for most folktales in the Ardennes. This study also identified a gap between the theoretical approach to conceptualising folktales and the popular approach to understanding folktales. This means that while researchers aim to understand the nature and role of folktales in society, this knowledge is not often received by non-scholars who still have a very static understanding of folktales. A first example in which this became apparent, was in the categorisation of folktales. While a few experts (not the majority) were also aware of folktale categories such as the ones identified by Thompson (1977), what differentiates one type of tale from another was not evident to most interviewees, nor were these categories used to reflect on the subject. Discussions on the nature and characteristics of folktales also showed opposing views. Meder and Venbrux (2000), and Meder (2011) point out that folktales are dynamic, just like the communities in which they develop, and that this can be seen in the evolution of folktales over time. However, folktales are often perceived as long-standing local or

regional traditions by communities. This was also the case in the Ardennes, where locals, and even experts, perceived folktales as originating from specific places, as being typically local, and as being static despite the awareness of various versions all over the region. It can further also be related to Stokowski (2002), who stated that folktales are embedded in all aspects of communication, but for non-scholars in the Ardennes, folktales were perceived to be irrelevant from a functional perspective. It is perceived as something from the past, merely having a symbolic value. This shows that the popular approach from communities is less flexible and inclusive than the approach from scholars.

Societal relevance

This study was also relevant for the Ardennese local community as it provides suggestions for tourism experts to ensure a more sustainable, representative, and inclusive touristification of folktales (Muselaers, 2017).

First of all, folktales should be used in a simple and subtle way in tourism. This means that locals find it acceptable to develop products that combine folktales with nature, art, and history. This would mainly be in the form of physical activities or informational and educational infrastructure, especially on-site, but not as an attraction with excessive materialisation and promotion. A balance between the expectations of locals and the needs of tourists needs to be found because they share similar expectations to some extent.

The second suggestion for touristification is that it is motivated by valorisation rather than by profit. If it is motivated by profit, locals are worried that folktales will lose their symbolic meaning. This also applies to the commodification of folktales to use in branding or marketing. Furthermore, certain folktales were perceived as less harmful to touristify than others. However, even if folktales are touristified for profit, these efforts can also be perceived as more meaningful than not taking any actions at all.

The third suggestion is that the touristification of folktales targets locals rather than tourists. Ideally, it would not be a touristification of folktales, but a similar process that focuses on rendering folktales more approachable to the local community. It is also perceived as capable to strengthen the community, but only if the valorisation is done in a way that includes the local community in the decision-making process which is consistent with Muselaers' (2017) suggestions.

Furthermore, the interviewees perceive it as difficult to take part in the decision-making process of tourism organisations, and local or regional governments. If folktales are to be touristified, improved communication and coordination are essential to ensure that the needs and values of the locals are taken into consideration, and for local governments and tourism

organisations to not impose another tourist experience on the community that would only further distance them from their heritage. Yet, including them in the decision-making can also help locals understand the positive impacts touristification can have on the protection of folktales.

Limitations

Concerning the limitations encountered during this study, several of them were already dealt with in the methodology. The most important limitation was the lack of generalizability and representativeness as it is a case study with a limited sample size. This issue was mostly addressed by using semi-structured interviews and a varied interviewee sample. However, there were still issues to take into consideration regarding the use of semi-structured interviews and the limited sample size.

A first limitation related to the validity of using semi-structured interviews to collect the data. Although the interviews were insightful and answered the main and sub-research questions, it was not always as easy to talk about folktales due to the little connection that remains between locals and their folktales. This has caused difficulties in finding answers to certain questions because interviewees could not always reflect as deeply on the topic. This was especially relevant when discussing the role of folktales in the region as interviewees already had difficulties remembering them. This caused certain gaps in conversations. Unfortunately, in certain cases, it was once the interview was finished that interviewees would provide other interesting opinions as they started to remember more and more folktales. A possible way to deal with this issue would be to ask half of the interviewees to prepare beforehand and refresh their memory. By later comparing the outcomes of both groups, interesting conclusions could be made.

Furthermore, a bigger sample could help with strengthening conclusions, and using surveys would further also make this study more generalizable. The sample was interesting because it was an amalgam of different people, each with their own opinions, views, backgrounds, and experiences. While this diversity was interesting to better understand the context in which answers were given, the sample size was too small and too varied to make stronger conclusions. Moreover, the interviews were done during the pandemic which made it difficult to get in contact with people. The sample consisted mainly of experts and locals known by the researcher. First, this made it difficult to include locals from all over the region, limiting the scope of this study to a smaller area of the region. This has also possibly caused bias during the interviewing process, which was sometimes too familiar. The following suggestions for further research can help tackle these limitations further.

Further research

As stated at the beginning of this study, the local community still receives less attention than the tourist perspective and is mostly approached as a homogenous stakeholder group. By looking at how locals evaluate and perceive the touristification of folktales and by considering the diversity of this group, this gap has been slightly reduced. However, this study was limited in scope and opened the discussion for more questions.

First of all, this study was done in the Belgian Ardennes, which brings its specific characteristics. To better understand the way locals in general evaluate the touristification of folktales, it would be interesting to do similar studies in different regions with different communities. Krajnović et al. (2008) discuss a region of Istria where the locals themselves started to touristify folktales. This sets a different setting to understand the opinion of the local community as they were the ones to initiate the touristification. Therefore, replicating this study in other regions could provide a more inclusive and varied understanding of what influences the opinion of locals regarding the touristification of folktales.

As it was mentioned that folktales are not yet fully touristified in the Belgian Ardennes, it would be valuable to do follow-up research to see how the opinion of the local community might evolve as touristification further develops. At this point, the Ardennese local community seems to be accepting of the touristification of folktales as they perceive it to be a way to valorise and maintain their heritage that might otherwise disappear. However, as touristification evolves and the impacts on places, people and folktales might intensify, the opinion of the local community might change (Doxey, 1975). Furthermore, still considering touristification as an ongoing process, it would be relevant to see if perceived valorisation and maintenance perdure as touristification intensifies or diminishes.

Finally, while this study looked at how locals perceive folktales, a cultural resource that combines both real and imagined elements, this dichotomy was not further focused on or discussed. However, locals can also experience this link between fiction and reality at the destination. Therefore, to deal with this shortcoming, the last suggestion for further research would be to focus on how locals experience this dichotomy between reality and fiction in their environment, and how it influences the way they relate to their folktales. While this study attempted to implement this through the second sub-research question, the interview questions were not tailored to receive an in-depth and detailed understanding of how this complexity is perceived and how it influences them.

References

- Adler, E. S., & Clark, R. (2011). *An Invitation to Social Research: How It's Done* (4th ed.). Belmont, USA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
- Bhandari, K. (2008). Touristification of cultural resources: A case study of Robert Burns. *Turizam: međunarodni znanstveno-stručni časopis*, 56(3), 283-293.
- Bryman, A. (2012). *Social Research Methods, 4th Edition* (4th ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Chronis, A. (2012). Between place and story: Gettysburg as tourism imaginary. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 39(4), 1797-1816.
- Cohen, E. (1995) 'Contemporary Tourism – Trends and Challenges', pp. 12–29 in R. Butler and D. Pearce (eds) *Change in Tourism: People, Places, Processes*. London: Routledge.
- CoManaging. (2010). *Profil identitaire: l'Ardenne*. Paris: CoManaging. Retrieved from <http://pro.visitArdenne.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/profil-identitaire-comanaging.pdf>
- Commissariat général au Tourisme (CGT), & Observatoire wallon du Tourisme (OwT). (2019). *La Wallonie touristique en chiffres. Données 2018*. Retrieved from https://www.tourismewallonie.be/sites/default/files/media/OTW/wall_tour_en_chiffres_2018_-_chiffres_globaux.pdf
- Connell, J. (2012). Film tourism—Evolution, progress and prospects. *Tourism management* 33(5), 1007-1029.
- Coste, D., & Godzich, W. (1989). *Narrative as Communication*. University of Minnesota Press. Retrieved February 2, 2020, from www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/j.cttttv4f
- Doxey, G. V. (1975, September). A causation theory of visitor-resident irritants: Methodology and research inferences. In *Travel and tourism research associations sixth annual conference proceedings* (pp. 195-98).
- Duvivier de Fortemps, J., & Stassen, B. (2012). *L'Ardenne sacrée*. Neufchâteau: Weyrich Éditions.
- Everett, S., & John Parakoottathil, D. (2018). Transformation, meaning-making and identity creation through folklore tourism: the case of the Robin Hood Festival. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 13(1), 30-45.
- Fédération Touristique du Luxembourg belge (FTLB). (2019). Fédération Touristique du Luxembourg Belge. Retrieved December 27, 2019, from <http://pro.ftlb.be/>
- Fédération Touristique du Luxembourg belge (FTLB). (2020). L'Ardenne, l'autre royaume des contes et légendes. Retrieved February 3, 2020, from <https://www.luxembourg-belge.be/fr/decouvrir/traites-identitaires/contes-legendes.php>
- Goemaere, E., Millier, C., Declercq, P. Y., Fronteau, G., & Dreesen, R. (2021). Legends of the Ardennes Massif, a Cross-Border Intangible Geo-cultural Heritage (Belgium, Luxemburg, France, Germany). *Geoheritage*, 13(2), 1-36.

- Gravari-Barbas, M., & Guinand, S. (Eds.). (2017). *Tourism and gentrification in contemporary metropolises: International perspectives*. Taylor & Francis.
- Hemme, D. (2005). Landscape, fairies and identity: Experience on the backstage of the fairy tale route. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 3(2), 71-87.
- Hennink, M. M., Kaiser, B. N., & Marconi, V. C. (2017). Code saturation versus meaning saturation: how many interviews are enough?. *Qualitative health research*, 27(4), 591-608.
- Holloway, J. (2010). Legend-tripping in spooky spaces: ghost tourism and infrastructures of enchantment. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 28(4), 618-637.
- Hughes, G. (1992). Tourism and the geographical imagination. *Leisure studies*, 11(1), 31-42.
- Je réussis. (n.d.). *Map of the Belgian Ardenne and its areas, as well as its neighbouring countries* [Illustration]. L'Ardenne, Les Montagnes Belges. <https://jereussis.be/a-la-une-archives/lardenne-montagnes-belges/>
- Knudsen, D., & Greer, C. (2011). Tourism and nostalgia for the pastoral on the island of Fyn, Denmark. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 6(2), 87-98.
- Krajnović, A., Rajko, M., & Šišović, D. (2008). Fantastic Creatures and Their Valorisation in Tourism: Example of Istria. In *International Conference "An Enterprise Odyssey: Tourism-Governance and Entrepreneurship"* (4; 2008).
- Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2008). Epistemological Issues of Interviewing. In S. Kvale & S. Brinkmann (Eds.), *InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing* (2nd ed., pp. 47–60). Thousand Oaks, Canada: SAGE Publications.
- Lardot, F. (2017, March 24). La vraie histoire du fantôme de la Roche-en-Ardenne [Blog post]. Retrieved February 3, 2020, from <https://traces-memoire.luxembourg-belge.be/histoire-fantome-la-roche-en-ardenne/>
- Lean, G., Staiff, R., & Waterton, E. (2016). Reimagining travel and imagination. In *Travel and imagination* (pp. 27-40). Routledge.
- Lovell, J. (2019). Fairytale authenticity: historic city tourism, Harry Potter, medievalism and the magical gaze. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 1-18.
- MacDonald, R., & Jolliffe, L. (2003). Cultural rural tourism: Evidence from Canada. *Annals of tourism research*, 30(2), 307-322.
- Mansfeld, Y., & Ginosar, O. (1994). Determinants of locals' perceptions and attitudes towards tourism development in their locality. *Geoforum*, 25(2), 227-248. doi:10.1016/0016-7185(94)90018-3.
- Matthews, B., & Ross, L. (2010). *Research Methods: A Practical Guide for the Social Sciences*. Essex, England: Pearson Longman.

- Meder, T. (2011). In Search of the Dutch Lore of the Land: Old and New Legends throughout the Netherlands. *Folklore*, 122(2), 117-134.
- Meder, T., & Venbrux, E. (2000). Vertelcultuur. *Volkscultuur. Een inleiding in de Nederlandse etnologie*, 282-336.
- Muselaers, M. F. J. (2017). *Touristifying Mouraria - The impacts of touristification and responses of the local community, in Mouraria (Lisbon)* (Master's thesis).
- Propp, V. (1968). *Morphology of the Folktale* (2nd ed.). Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Rasoolimanesh, S. M., Jaafar, M., Kock, N., & Ramayah, T. (2015). A revised framework of social exchange theory to investigate the factors influencing residents' perceptions. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 16, 335-345.
- Reijnders, S. (2011). Stalking the count. In S. Reijnders (Ed.), *Places of the Imagination: Media, Tourism, Culture*(pp. 81–102). England: Ashgate.
- Reijnders, S. (exp. 2020). Imaginative heritage. Towards a holistic perspective on media, tourism and governmentality. In N. Van Es, S. Reijnders, L. Bolderman, & A. Waysdorf (Eds.), *Locating imagination in popular culture. Place, tourism & belonging*. (pp. 1–12). Oxfordshire: Routledge.
- Rousseau, F. (2019, May, 09). Personal interview with Geradin, S.
- Salazar, N. B. (2012). Tourism imaginaries: A conceptual approach. *Annals of Tourism research*, 39(2), 863-882.
- Salazar, N. B., & Graburn, N. H. H. (2014). Introduction: Toward an Anthropology of Tourism Imaginaries. In N. B. Salazar & N. H. H. Graburn (Eds.), *Tourism Imaginaries: Anthropological Approaches* (pp. 1–28). Oxford: Berghahn Books.
- Schmitz, S. (2013). A 'Dutch vision' of community based tourism: Dutch people in the Belgian Ardennes. *The sustainability of rural systems: Global and local challenges and opportunities*, 218-225.
- Sharpley, R. (2018). *Tourism, tourists and society*. Routledge.
- Sherlock, K. (2001). Revisiting the concept of hosts and guests. *Tourist Studies*, 1(3), 271-295.
- Stokowski, P. A. (2002). Languages of place and discourses of power: Constructing new senses of place. *Journal of leisure research*, 34(4), 368-382.
- Streefkerk, R. (2019, September 27). How to transcribe an interview. Retrieved January 30, 2020, from <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/transcribe-interview/>
- Suzuki, T. (2010). Touring Traumas: Touristification of an Okinawan Battlefield Memorial. *Anthropology News*, 51(8), 15-16.
- Thompson, S. (1977). Forms of the folktale. In S. Thompson (Ed.), *The folktale* (pp. 7–12). Berkeley: University of California.

Torchin, L. (2002). Location, location, location: The destination of the Manhattan TV Tour. *Tourist studies* 2(3), 247-266.

Van Es, N., & Reijnders, S. (2018). Making sense of capital crime cities: Getting underneath the urban facade on crime-detective fiction tours. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 21(4), 502-520.

Vareiro, L. M. D. C., Remoaldo, P. C., & Cadima Ribeiro, J. A. (2013). Residents' perceptions of tourism impacts in Guimarães (Portugal): a cluster analysis. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 16(6), 535-551.

Veal, A. J. (2017). *Research methods for leisure and tourism*. Pearson UK.

Visit Ardenne. (n.d.). [Les forêts d'Ardenne]. Les Forêts. <https://www.visitardenne.com/fr/forets>

We Are Social. (2019). *Digital 2019: Belgium*. Retrieved from <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2019-belgium?rq=belgium>

Appendix

Interview questions – English

The following questions were used to do the semi-structured interviews. While most of these questions have been asked, interviewees were free to tell their story and the researcher was free to ask additional questions when needed. The interviews were divided into four sections which were based on the sub-questions stated in the research question chapter.

Personal information

- How old are you?
- What is your occupation?
- How long have you lived here?
- How would you describe this region?
- How do you relate to it?

Questions about tourism

- Could you describe the relationship between this region and tourism?
- How do you relate to tourism?

Questions about folktales

- What can you tell me about folktales in the region?
- What do you associate with them?
- How are they relevant for you?
- How are they relevant for the region?

Folktale touristification

- Have you ever encountered legends in tourism here?
- And do you experience it?

- What role do you think folktales have in tourism?
- How would you like to see folktales being used in tourism?
- What are the impacts of touristifying folktales?
- Do you think that using them is representative of the region? Why do you think so?
- How do you think you and the locals contribute to the development of legends in tourism here?
- Do you have any questions?

Data analysis

The following table is an example of how the data was categorised into themes and further coded during the analysis. The codes were in the first column, and the second column had the explanation of the quotes added in the third column. Summaries and interpretations of the data were put in the last row. Later on, additional tables were made to compare the conclusions of each interviewee, for each theme.

Table 2: Index used to store the data as explained in the data analysis section.

Interviewee 1 -> 19 -> local working in tourism

Code	Explanation	Quote
Personal relation to folktales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At first, feels not connected to them but not many of them - Feels attached to one through his work - Locals are proud of their culture and their folktales 	<p>"Je suis un petit peu, pas beaucoup dans le sens que je n'ai pas de famille dans la région qui ont grandi ici."</p> <p>"J'en ai entendu des centaines et des centaines, ça oui, de personnes âgées dans le village. Mais je suis un peu plus familier avec les gens de La Roche, au niveau du château, de l'histoire féodale."</p> <p>"Je pense que comment on en avait parlé plutôt, que les gens sont très fiers en Ardennes, ils sont très attachés à leur patrimoine et à leur histoire."</p>
Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transmitted through family setting - Transmitted through the elderly in villages 	"C'est souvent, je pense, des anciens du village ou des oncles qui ont des histoires de la région."
Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is part of the regional culture 	"Oui, ça constitue une partie je dirais culturel de la région."
Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Diverse in and per locality 	"Je pense que les légendes, que chaque village a ces légendes et que utiliser ces légendes aux touristes représente chaque région. Je pense que chaque région a ces propres légendes et qu'en les exploitant dans le domaine culturel et en les racontant aux touristes, j'ai envie de dire que ça représente chaque coin ici en Ardennes. Donc oui, c'est représentatif en effet."
<p>Personally, the interviewee has heard many folktales over the years but relates mostly to the touristified folktale in the closest town. This is especially through his work as he will be working in the castle. Folktales are mainly transmitted through the family setting, which is his not, and through the community. In the community, it is mostly transmitted through older generations. Folktales a part of regional culture and more precisely, heritage. He perceives Ardennese people to be very proud of their folktales. What characterizes folktales is their diversity, being numerous, and being specific to villages and towns.</p>		