Rural Tourism as Holy Grail for Rural Communities

A Twente case study

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11-06-2021

Illustration   Behoud Twents Landschap (2021)

Summary

This research aims to explore how the rural landscape impacts rural tourism in the region of Twente. Furthermore, it was examined how different actors in rural tourism governance in the region of Twente interact. Lastly, it was analyzed whether the presence of Twente in marketing videos matches the perspective on Twente of the actors involved in rural tourism in Twente. Interviews were conducted and three marketing movies were analyzed. Interviewees include marketing organizations, policymakers, and entrepreneurs. Agriculture is becoming less significant in providing economic activity in rural economies. It was found that tourism can be a useful tool to diversify economies in rural communities, to make sure that a basic infrastructure of amenities remains. Rural communities in Twente can commodify physical and cultural features of the landscape to attract tourists including nature reserves, hamlets, bocage landscape. It was further shown that actors in Twente are creating a joint brand, attempting to further establish identity and image based on rural resources, influencing the behavior of the potential tourist.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

Agriculture is becoming less significant in providing economic welfare for rural communities, the modernization of agriculture has led to a loss of jobs (Lane & Kastenholtz, 2015). Therefore, current rural development plans have encouraged multi-functional use of the rural space (Markantoni et al., 2013). Simultaneously, there is increasing demand from inhabitants of urban centers seeking quiet in rural areas full of nature (Missler, 2020). Tourists are searching for an authentic experience of the rural, the rural idyll, a romantic portrayal of the rural and its peace and tranquillity (Frivoll, 2014). Thus, one of the tools in diversifying the economies of rural areas is to introduce tourism (Lane & Kastenholtz, 2015). In the region of Twente, policymakers, tourism entrepreneurs and other stakeholders are trying to take advantage of this increased demand in rural tourism. In a local newspaper, tourism entrepreneurs from Twente mention that rest in a rural landscape is popular amongst tourists. (te Bogt, 2019). Moreover, 7.2% of jobs in Twente are in the tourism and recreation sector (MarketingOost, 2018). Lane & Kastenholz (2015) argue that few studies look into rural tourism governance at the local and regional levels. Therefore, this study aims to address this knowledge gap, providing a case study of rural tourism in the region of Twente, the Netherlands. Moreover, research into rural tourism could give further insight for policymakers and others involved in rural tourism governance, to attract tourists.

1.2 Research problem

The research aims to investigate how the image of the rural landscape impacts rural tourism in the region of Twente. Exploring the representation of the region of Twente in marketing videos. Moreover, examining how actors within rural tourism interact. To study the subject, the following research question is proposed:

''How does the rural landscape impact rural tourism in the region of Twente?''

The questions that follow from the main research question are:

1. How do the resources of the rural landscape relate to tourism in the region of Twente?
2. To what extent does the perspective of the actors of rural tourism in Twente match the portrayal of Twente in marketing videos?
3. How do the various actors in rural tourism in Twente interact?

The first and third subquestion is going to be answered by semi-structured interviews. The second subquestion is going to be answered through a combination of interviews and content analysis.

1.3 Structure of the thesis

Chapter 2 contains literature on rural tourism, the rural landscape, governance, and place branding. Next, in chapter 3, the research methods will be justified and explored. Then, in chapter 4, the results are presented. Finally, in chapter 5, the results are followed by the conclusion, which includes answering the research questions and giving suggestions for further research.

Chapter 2: Theoretical framework

2.1 Rurality

As the Netherlands is densely populated, there are no rural areas in the country, according to OECD standards (OECD, 2011). The OECD uses numerical standards, classifying rural areas based on population density. Consequently, the Netherlands is qualified by the OECD as urban or intermediate urban (OECD, 2011).

Opposing the OECD standards, Haartsen et al. (2003) argue that parts of the Netherlands are still perceived as rural by the Dutch population. The Dutch countryside was found to be associated with space, quietness, farms, cows, meadows, nature, green, villages, and agriculture. Rather than numerical classification, the classification of the rural was based on images and land use. Furthermore, the eastern parts of Overijssel, which includes Twente, were classified as rural areas (Haartsen et al., 2003).

Thus, whilst the Netherlands is densely populated and urban, there are still parts of the Netherlands, including Twente, which are perceived as rural.

2.2 Landscapes

Vroom & Ettema (2010) argue that the landscape consists of various elements: soil, water, vegetation, and buildings. The landscape is also culture, nature is forced to take a certain configuration. Furthermore, everyone perceives the landscape differently. Perception of the landscape is influenced by our everyday life, stories from the past, expectations, and emotions (Vroom & Ettema, 2010).

Similarly, it is argued by Antrop & van Eetvelde (2017) that the landscape is a natural spatial entity that is affected by culture. The landscape reflects the identity, culture, and history of those inhabiting the land. The landscape changes through time, adapting to the new social needs and technology, the landscape is dynamic. Moreover, the landscape is perceived and experienced by humans differently.

Hence, the landscape is a spatial entity consisting of various elements: soil, water, vegetation, and buildings. The landscape is dynamic and influenced by culture. How people perceive the landscape is colored by everyday life, stories from the past, expectations, and emotions.

2.3 Rural tourism

Whilst defining rural tourism, some definitions focus on the wishes and needs of tourist, other definitions focus on the features of the rural landscape (Ayazlar & Ayazlar, 2015). Lane (1994) focused on the features of the rural. Lane (1994) argued that rural tourism is located in rural areas; is built upon the special features of the rural (heritage, nature, tradition, space); on a smaller scale; grows organically and slowly, whilst connected to local families and reflects the complex pattern of the rural environment, history, economy, and location. Moreover, Reichel et al. (2000) argue that rural tourism consists of small tourism businesses that make use of features of rurality.

On the other hand, some definitions focus more on the experience for the tourist. Rural tourism gives visitors the chance to experience the physical and human environment of the rural and allows them to participate in the traditions and lifestyles of the local population (Aref & Gill, 2009). Chambers (2009) argues that relaxation and proximity to nature are the main motivations for rural tourism.

Thus, rural tourism is a form of tourism where there is a focus on the attributes of the rural: nature, space, traditions, and local communities. Moreover, visitors of the rural want to experience and participate in the lifestyles of the local communities.

2.4 Tourists and the rural landscape

Understanding how the landscape is perceived by tourists is a helpful tool for communities that profit from rural tourism. Tourists see only certain parts of the landscape, whilst overlooking the parts that oftentimes are part of the day-to-day life of rural communities. The historical shaping of nature, into a cultural landscape, is hidden from the tourists (Vinge & Egil Flø, 2015).

Various researchers identify physical characteristics to explore whether or not the rural landscape is perceived as a positive experience for visitors and tourists.
Carneiro et al. (2015) created a framework to assess the physical features of the rural landscape. Vegetation, slope, water attractions, and traditional buildings were found to be the most important physical features of the rural landscape as marked by tourists. Moreover, landscapes that offer diversity, a combination of forest and agriculture, were perceived as most positive by tourists (Hunziker, 1995).
Another framework to examine the resources within a rural landscape based on physical characteristics is the Countryside Capital model (Countryside Agency, 2003). The model helps outline the fabric of the countryside, arguing that the fabric of the area is a resource for rural communities to take advantage of (Garrod et al., 2006; McClinchey & Carmichael, 2010). The Countryside Capital model analyses the physical characteristics of a rural community.

Constituent elements of countryside capital

Landscape, including seascape
Wildlife, both fauna and flora
Biodiversity
Geology and soils
Air and air quality
Hedgerows and field boundaries
Agricultural buildings
Rural settlements, from isolated dwellings to market towns
Historical features, such as historic buildings, industrial remnants
Tracks, trails, bridleways, lanes and roads
Streams, rivers, ponds and lakes
Water and water quality
Woods, forests and plantations
Distinctive local customs, languages, costumes, foods, crafts, festivals, traditions, ways of life

FIGURE 1- ELEMENTS COUNTRYSIDE CAPITAL   SOURCE: GARROD ET AL. (2006)

However, in opposition to Carneiro et al. (2015), the Countryside Capital model makes an effort to incorporate cultural characteristics of rural communities as well, such as lifestyle and language. The elements of countryside capital can be found in figure 1.
Consequently, a model that illustrates the resources of the rural landscapes has to incorporate the physical features of the landscape and distinctive cultural features of the community.

2.5 Place branding

Bose et al. (2021) claim that the bond between residents and the way of life of residents creates an identity for that place. Consequently, this identity creates an image for a place. Bose et al. (2021) further argue that image and reputation can bring in inwards investment, for example through tourism.
The image that tourists have of a region is formed through external and internal information (Lennon et al., 2000). External information is composed of marketing material, literature, photographs. Internal information consists of previous experience. In uncertainty, with regards to making a decision, people use external information. Furthermore, perception influences behavioral intentions, this is then further reflected in the intent to go to a certain place (Lennon et al, 2000).

Ashworth (2009) also argues that people perceive space through previous experiences and place representation. However, spatial planning and urban design interventions influence how space is perceived (Ashworth, 2009). There are various instruments to influence the perception tourists to have of a place: personality association, hallmarking events, and signature buildings and designs (table 1).

TABLE 1- INFLUENCING PERCEPTION   SOURCE: ASHWORTH, 2009 (ADAPTED BY AUTHOR)

Personality Association	Hallmarking Events	Signature Buildings and Designs
Places associate themselves with a well-known individual from that place	Obtaining more attention through hoisting events	Distinctive features of the physical environment of a region that make the place a distinctive product.

Creating a successful joint brand for a rural area works by bringing different stakeholders together, communicating, and integrating their ideas (Vos & Vuorinen, 2013). Stakeholders identified by Vos & Vuorinen (2013) are businesses, government, marketing & communication agencies, residents & visitors.

Hence, tourists' perceptions are affected through external information (such as promotional material), internal information (personal experiences). Moreover, these perceptions can be further influenced through spatial planning and design interventions. These factors that influence the perception of tourists can be influenced by various stakeholders, such as marketing agencies, government, and businesses, using various instruments. How different stakeholders work together is explored in the next paragraph.

2.6 Implications for Rural Governance

During the 1960s and 1970s, the problems of society were solved through a top-down technocratic approach (Caalders, 2002). Caalders (2002) argues that in the Netherlands the hierarchical top-down approach failed to meet policy goals. Consequently, governments adopted a governance strategy, with more focus on interaction, networks, and local strengths (Caalders, 2002).
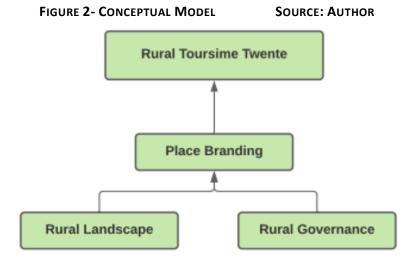
Similarly, Keyim (2018) argues that in the past decades, there has been a shift from government to governance, with an increased focus on cooperation between the state and non-state actors. Keyim (2018) argues that the involvement of non-governmental actors in policy-making from within the community leads to more effective and sustainable policies. Torfing (2010) characterizes governance as the collective action of various actors from the state, economy, and civil society. Civil society and community participation have become increasingly important in tourism development planning (Panyik, 2015; McGehee et al, 2015). The various stakeholders, civil society, the economy, and the state all take part in policymaking. Governance is needed to address the challenges of rural tourism development (McGehee, et al., 2015). McGehee et al. (2015) proposed a model for successful governance of rural tourism development focussing on social capital. Social capital enhances rural tourism development when within a strong community (civic organizations, religious groups, marketing cooperatives) actors reach out to other institutions and groups (local government, investors, academics) (McGehee et al., 2015). Thus, emphasis on relationships within the community and bottom-up development. Nevertheless, there is a need for a convener to identify and facilitate stakeholders within a community, to achieve effective collaboration between actors (Jamal & Getz, 1995).

Keyim (2018) stated too that having a convener to facilitate interaction between government, economy, and civil society is important. In a formulated model he adds that broad collaboration

and adequate resources are also determinants for effective tourism collaborative governance (Keyim, 2018). Collaboration entails utilizing each other's resources, such as knowledge or capital, to maximize the contribution of tourism to rural communities (Keyim, 2018). Moreover, adequate resources (time, leadership, infrastructure) are needed to facilitate and fund a convener for effective collaboration (Keyim, 2018).

Therefore, in the past decades, there has been a shift from government to governance. With governance, effective collaboration between the economy, state, and civil society is needed (McGehee et al., 2015; Caalders, 2002; Keyim, 2018). However, it is argued that a convener with adequate resources is required to facilitate effective collaboration in policymaking (Jamal & Getz, 1995; Keyim, 2018).

2.7 Expectations & conceptual model

The study has an exploratory nature, therefore no hypothesis is formulated. Nevertheless, based on the literature, there are some expectations. It is expected that both physical and cultural characteristics of the rural landscape in Twente can be commodified by the rural community. Moreover, it is expected that the various actors in rural tourism (policymakers, marketing organizations, and entrepreneurs) collaborate, partaking in rural tourism governance. Through the collaboration of these actors, a joint brand of the region of Twente can be established. Thus, it is expected that the main elements of the rural landscape mentioned in the interviews will also be reflected in the marketing communications of the joint brand, as the joint brand is created by the various stakeholders involved in rural tourism. Consequently, a joint brand can influence potential tourists to come to Twente. This process is visualized in figure 2.

FIGURE 2- CONCEPTUAL MODEL   **SOURCE: AUTHOR**

2.8 Case study area

The case study area is Twente (figure 4), a map of where Twente is located in the Netherlands can be found in figure 3.
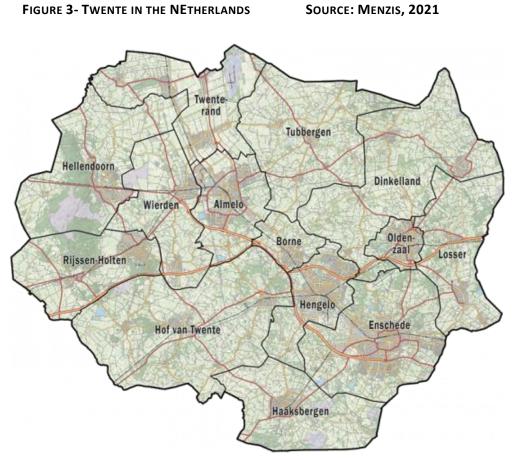

FIGURE 3- TWENTE IN THE NETHERLANDS   **SOURCE: MENZIS, 2021**

FIGURE 4- TWENTE MUNICIPALITIES   **SOURCE: ZV TWENTE, 2021**

Tourists visit Twente to enjoy the landscape, composed of farms and meadows, estates surrounded by parks, and nature reserves (Visit Twente, 2021). Twente is known for the bocage landscape and remnants from the ice ages (Keuning, 1979). The bocage landscape consists of small streams in valleys, meadows surrounded by wooded banks, Essen (figure 5) and no straight lines (Bijhouwer, 1977). Cover sands were deposited in the last ice age. Moreover, in higher areas, there is peat and heather. The available resources have positively impacted the inflow of tourists, which is reflected in statistics about tourism in Twente over the years. Tourism is becoming increasingly important for the economy in Twente, 7.2% of jobs in Twente are in the tourism and recreation sector, opposing 6,28% in 2017 (MarketingOost, 2018). In the document ''We are Twente!'', the 14 municipalities in Twente, entrepreneurs and Twente Tourist Information's, advocated that regional cooperation is needed to market Twente touristically (Wij zijn Twente, 2015).

FIGURE 5- PICTURE OF AN ''ES'' (DELDEN, TWENTE); A SLOPING MEADOW   SOURCE: WIKIPEDIA, 2021

Chapter 3: Methodology

The researcher set out to do an individual case study, attempting to understand rural tourism at the regional level in Twente. For this research, 12 interviews were conducted and three marketing videos were analyzed.

3.1 Interviews

To explore how rural tourism has influenced governance in the region of Twente, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted. Furthermore, interviews were conducted to explore which resources of the rural landscape are used to attract tourists. This study made use of semi-structured in-depth interviews because interviews are a powerful way of exploring the behavior of people and their interpretations and meanings of events and situations (Punch, 2014). Semi-structured interviews allowed for flexibility. Interviewees could elaborate. Moreover, semi-structured interviews can be coded more easily than unstructured interviews, this saves time since 12 interviews were conducted. The interview guide can be found in appendix A.

The study aimed to include people involved in rural tourism in Twente in the interviews. Stakeholders involved in rural tourism governance (policymakers, tourism entrepreneurs, marketing cooperatives) were approached. It is not possible to include all actors in the sample, therefore sampling decisions were made (Punch, 2014). Due to time and access constraints, 3 to 4 people were interviewed out of every category (policymakers, tourism entrepreneurs, and marketing cooperatives). In table 2 the professions of interviewees and the date on which they were interviewed can be found.

TABLE 2- LIST OF INTERVIEWEES   **SOURCE: AUTHOR**

Interviewee	Date	Profession	Code
Interviewee 1	24-03-2021	Policymaker province	P1
Interviewee 2	29-03-2021	Policymaker municipality	P2
Interviewee 3	30-03-2021	Policymaker municipality	P3
Interviewee 4	01-04-2021	Policymaker municipality	P4
Interviewee 5	14-04-2021	Policy maker municipality	P5
Interviewee 6	06-04-2021	Hotelier	E1
Interviewee 7	13-04-2021	Day time recreation	E2
Interviewee 8	14-04-2021	Recreational apartments	E3
Interviewee 9	25-03-2021	Marketing employee	M1
Interviewee 10	30-03-2021	Marketing employee	M2
Interviewee 11	14-04-2021	Marketing employee	M3
Interviewee 12	14-04-2021	Marketing employee	M4

For this case study, only interviewees were approached in municipalities that did not include larger urban areas. Therefore, municipalities that are most densely populated in Twente, Hengelo, Almelo, and Enschede are excluded (figure 6). Thus, making use of the urban landscape rather than the rural landscape to attract tourists. Rural tourism only focuses on the features of the rural landscape (Reichel et al., 2000; Lane, 1994), therefore these areas were excluded.

FIGURE 6- POPULATION DENSITY TWENTE   **SOURCE: CBS WIJK EN BUURT KAART (GEMEENTEN) (2019), ADAPTED BY AUTHOR IN QGIS**

The interviewees were approached via e-mails that were found on the website of the organizations that employ the interviewees. Through e-mailing, appointments were made to conduct interviews. Two interviewees, with a marketing and communications employee and an entrepreneur, were found through the network of another interviewee. The interviews were held when the participants had sufficient time to participate, to prevent them from rushing through. Interviews were conducted through online video calls. Thereafter, the interviews were transcribed by the author. Transcribed interviews were imported into Atlas.TI, where transcriptions were further analyzed and coded. The transcriptions can be found in Appendix E. Codes are based on the theoretical framework. Furthermore, the open code ''Place Branding'' was added during the analysis process. The pre-defined code tree can be found in figure 7.
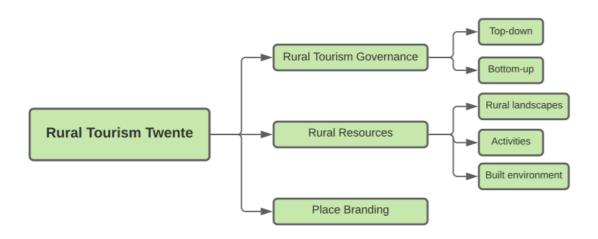

FIGURE 7- PRE-DEFINED CODE TREE INTERVIEWS   **SOURCE: AUTHOR**

3.2 Content analysis

Content analysis is a useful tool to explore which messages are attempted to be conveyed by marketing videos. The actors of rural tourism in Twente were asked which features of the physical landscape and way of life of the Twentenaren contributed to the inflow of tourists. The content analysis is performed to explore whether the features mentioned by the interviewees are also depicted in the marketing videos.

Videos were chosen, as it is argued that videos are the most appropriate to influence the behavior of the tourist (Tiago et al. 2019). Moreover, Losada and Mota (2019) argue that video content is one of the most common tools used in the promotion of destinations. A representative sample is needed, as it is attempted to explore the extent to which the marketing videos match the perspectives of the interviewees on the resources of the rural landscape. The videos were found through YouTube since it is a big social network site with a significant amount of videos, YouTube is one of the four most used social media sites in the Netherlands, along with Instagram, Facebook, and Whatsapp (Lauf et al., 2020). YouTube is most suitable for sharing videos, therefore promotional videos are oftentimes uploaded to YouTube. The search terms were ''Twente'' and ''toerisme'' (tourism in Dutch), to focus on tourism and filter out the irrelevant videos of FC Twente (football club). Moreover, the Dutch term of tourism was used, as tourism in Twente mainly targets Dutch visitors. 91,1% in 2020 of booked stays in the province of Overijssel, were from Dutch visitors (KennisplatformOost, 2020). The videos had to be under 3 minutes. The short duration of the videos only leaves time to get the most important message across to the potential tourists. Furthermore, the videos had to cover the whole of Twente, not certain parts of Twente, for the reason that this study focuses on rural tourism in the whole of Twente. Using these criteria, three marketing videos were found, which can be found in table 3.

TABLE 3- MARKETING VIDEOS ANALYZED   **SOURCE: AUTHOR**

Title	Background	Link	Year	Code
Discover Twente: what is there to do? On the road with Voordeeluitjes.nl	Produced by www.voordeeluitjes.nl. A website that sells hotel arrangements in the Netherlands and other European countries.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vBrDEKH-pa8&ab_channel=Voordeeluitjes.nl	2017	V1
Episode 1. Country of... Twente. Thuiskomenintwente.nl	In the RTL 4 television program 'Het land van...', attention is drawn to fun activities to do in the Netherlands.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F1sGz8fqTFM&ab_channel=CBOTTwente	2015	V2
Time Enough in Twente	An advertisement was produced by VisitTwente. An initiative of MarketingOost, a marketing cooperative for regions and cities in the east of the Netherlands.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U8jnOEk3O1I&t=11s&ab_channel=VisitTwente	2017	V3

The marketing videos were transcribed by the author. Advertisements were coded, with the help of Atlas.TI. The code tree for the data analysis can be found in figure 8. Codes are derived from the theoretical framework. Furthermore, how much time is spend on different characteristics of the landscape of the region Twente is analyzed. Categories of characteristics are based on the Countryside Capital (2003) model of the rural landscape. The category activities were found after watching the videos. Further description of the categories can be found in Appendix C.
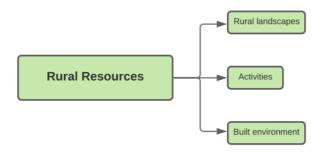

FIGURE 8- PRE-DEFINED CODE TREE CONTENT ANALYSIS   **SOURCE: AUTHOR**

3.3 Ethics

Interviewees signed a consent form, agreeing to participate. By signing this document they were declared to be aware of their rights and allowing the researcher to record the interviews. The interviewee is allowed to withdraw from the study and exclude the interview from the project at any moment in time. Moreover, identity of the interviewees will not be disclosed due to privacy reasons. Data that reveals the identity of the interviewee is anonymized. The data gathered during the interviews are confidential. Due to covid-19, the participants were approached online and the interviews were conducted online. This study is executed by a long-term resident of the region of Twente, it is important for the researcher to be reflexive about the positionality, to reduce bias (Holmes, 2020).

Chapter 4: Results

4.1 Interviews

In this chapter, the results of the interviews will be explored. The themes that were identified were: resources of the rural landscape, tourism as a holy grail for the economy, place branding, and tourism governance.

4.1.1 Resources of the rural landscape

Physical features

Nature, tranquillity, and space were mentioned as the main feature that attracted tourists (P3, P2, M1). M1 and P2 further add that the walking and cycling infrastructure is also of importance to the tourists. M4 argued that cycling and walking through the rural landscape is the main reason tourists visit Twente. Moreover, the bocage landscape was oftentimes mentioned as a unique feature of Twente (P4 & P5). The variation of hamlets, meadows, forests, ''Essen'' and other greenery. Hunziker (1995) also found that landscapes that offer diversity, a combination of forest and agriculture, were perceived most positively by tourists. E2 also mentioned visitors were surprised by the sloping parts of the landscapes. Moreover, the importance of physical features of the landscape is reflected in the Countryside Capital model and the framework of Carneiro et al. (2015), wherein it is argued that the physical features of the landscape, such as forestry or meadows, attract tourists.

Nevertheless, E1 discussed that tourists falsely perceive the landscape as nature. E1 argued that tourists perceive intensive agriculture as nature. This mirrors literature, wherein Vinge & Egil Flø (2015) argue that tourists oftentimes do not recognize that the landscape is influenced by humans and culture. The landscapes in Twente were not designed with the tourists in mind. P5 acknowledged the role of society in shaping the popular bocage landscape. P5 expressed concern, that through a changing society, wherein farmers have to disappear, the condition of the landscape might also change.

However, as the Countryside Capital model (2003) argues, the rural landscape does not only consists of physical features. The customs, languages, and ways of life of rural communities are also part of, and influence, the rural landscape. This will be explored in the following paragraph.

Cultural features

P1 and P3 mentioned that events attract tourists when asked about cultural features as resources of Twente. A local glass fair and top sports events were mentioned as visitor attractions. Hallmarking events to acquire more awareness for a region is one of the ways mentioned by Ashworth (2009) in which actors in rural tourism can influence the perception of the region.

Moreover, interviewees mentioned that the character and way of life of the Twentenaren were also distinctive (P2, M1, M3, E1). A popular phrase in the region is ''Doe 't heanig an!'' (translation: ''Don't worry, stay cool!'') . Interviewees further argue that Twentenaren are less rushed and friendly. This mirrors the study of Chambers (2009) which found that a more relaxed pace of life is one of the main reasons for rural tourism.

Interviewee M2 was aware that the lifestyle of the countryside is commodified to attract tourists:

> ''They have a meadow there, with 25 places for campers, then there is still a small spot left. She [entrepreneur] said: ''We'll put goats there, people from the west of the Netherlands like that. That's the countryside''. Sometimes I have the feeling that we go a little overboard if you know what I mean.'' **[M2]**

In contrast to the earlier mentioned interviewees and literature, E2 and E3 addressed that a distinctive way of life is not necessarily important when attracting tourists. People do not come into contact with locals that often (E2). Furthermore, people have little sense of where they are visiting (E3). This is in contrast with the Countryside Capital model, wherein the distinctive features of the rural communities are also presented as resources to attract tourists.

A combination of cultural and physical features of the rural landscape forms the resources for the rural community and tourism. The following paragraph will elaborate on the importance of tourism for rural economies.

4.1.2 The holy grail for the economy

One of the tools for diversifying the economies of rural areas is to introduce tourism (Lane & Kastenholtz, 2015). In rural parts of Twente, interviewees argued that tourism has become a focus of policy for municipalities, to generate employment and economic activity (P3, E1, E2). E2 even mentioned that tourism was seen as a holy grail for the economy. Moreover, tourism can enable small towns to maintain basic infrastructures, such as an ATM or supermarket (M4).

Lane & Kastenholtz (2015) further argued that agriculture is becoming less significant in providing economic welfare for rural communities, the modernization of agriculture has led to a loss of jobs. Besides modernization in agriculture, in some places of Twente, agriculture had to make way for nature. Municipalities stimulate tourism, recognizing that the number of farmers in the agricultural sector is in decline (E2 & E3).

For tourism to be an economic pillar in the region of Twente or an alternative for farmers, tourists have to be drawn into the region. How the potential visitor of Twente is targeted through place branding will be further examined in the following paragraph.

4.1.3 Place branding

Image and branding can bring inwards investment, through tourism (Bose et al., 2021). M2 mentioned that over the past years, the marketing organizations have taken a more proactive approach with regards to attracting tourists to the region of Twente, marketing organizations are attempting to seduce the tourist to come to Twente. Previously there was a waiting approach, only offering information when approached by tourists.

Ashworth (2009) argued that there are various ways in which perception of a place is formed. One of the ways is through external information (Lennon et al., 2000), which included all information available to the public. Marketing organizations in Twente are distributing information through various ways: newsletters, visiting fairs, radio, and tv campaigns (M1). M4 mentioned that a lot of the budget in Twente is spent online, creating social media content and blog posts, attempting to reach a wide audience with little budget.

Moreover, in Twente, marketing organizations on regional and local scales work together to create a coherent campaign for the region. It is deemed important to market the 14 municipalities in Twente as one brand and coherently (M4). What the local marketing organizations do, must be in line with what the regional marketing organization does, to keep a coherent brand of the region Twente (M3). Vos & Vuorinen (2013) also found that a successful joint brand for rural areas is created through working together with different actors in rural tourism and integrating their ideas into a coherent campaign.

It is further argued by Lennon et al. (2000) that the combination of external and internal information can positively impact the behavior of the tourists, influencing the intent to visit a certain place. The information is distributed to influence the behavior of the potential tourists, attempting to attract the tourists to the region of Twente. However, marketing campaigns of the

marketing organizations are the result of considering the interests of various actors in rural tourism (entrepreneurs, municipalities, local marketing organizations). E1 discussed that because of weighing the interests of a lot of actors, the marketing campaigns lacked distinction. This contrasts earlier mentioned Vos & Vuorinen (2013) who argue that a successful brand for rural areas is established through bringing together various stakeholders. Moreover, a collaboration between actors, local government, businesses is required for sustainable rural tourism development (McGehee et al., 2015). How these different actors work together is discussed in the following sections.

4.1.4 Rural Tourism Governance
The interviews were held with various actors in rural tourism. In Twente there has been a shift in the relationships between actors in rural tourism, there was little involvement of non-state actors in the decision-making processes in the past (P1 &P5). P1 mentioned that in the past a top-down approach was taken to solve solutions in tourism development. The results are consistent with the findings of Caalders (2002), who found that problems in society in the past were solved through a top-down technocratic approach, with little involvement of non-state actors. P1 argues that there is now a lot more collaboration between the marketing organizations, policymakers, and entrepreneurs. The entrepreneurs are currently in the lead (P2 & M3 &P5). The data mirrors the literature, wherein it is argued that there is a shift towards the involvement of more non-state actors (McGehee et al., 2015; Keyim, 2018). A shift from government to governance. As earlier mentioned, collaboration between various actors is needed for continuity in rural tourism management. Furthermore, the collaboration between state and non-state actors lead to more effective policies on rural tourism.

Keyim (2018) argued that in continuity in rural tourism governance, a convener with adequate resources is needed to facilitate the collaboration between the different actors in rural tourism. The role of the government has shifted towards facilitating the actors in rural tourism (P2 & P5), consequently taking up the facilitating role that is mentioned in the literature. The role of the government is to facilitate and connect, balancing the interests of various actors (P2 & P5).

Interviewees mentioned that the cooperation between the various actors in rural tourism is characterized as chain cooperation in the region of Twente, wherein the entrepreneurs are in the lead (M4). M4 further argued that the actors in the chain cooperation see each other as colleagues. With the chain cooperation, it is further stressed that the actors within rural tourism governance work together. The municipality stimulates the chain cooperation, wherein the regional marketing organization brings the tourists to Twente (P2). The local marketing organization has to make sure that the tourists visit the municipality (P2). McGehee et al.'s (2015) model found that social capital and relationships, institutions and organizations reaching out to each other, is important for the development of successful rural tourism governance.

4.2 Content analysis
In this chapter, the results of the content analysis will be explored.

Figure 9 shows the percentage of time spend on each category in the videos. A table with the exact amount of seconds spent on each category per marketing video can be found in appendix D. Most of the time is spent on rural landscapes, including scenes from natural uncrowded areas and agriculture. The second most time is spent on activities. The least amount of time is spent on the urban landscape, which includes scenes from towns and cities.
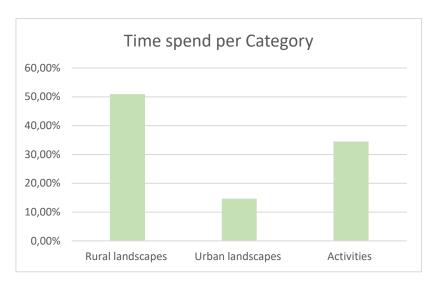
FIGURE 9- TIME SPEND PER CATEGORY   **SOURCE: AUTHOR**

Most time is spent on the rural landscape. Shots of farms or other build heritage are also included in the category rural landscape when surrounded by greenery. Examples of this can be found in figure 10 and figure 11, wherein a watermill and church are both shown surrounded by greenery. The second most time is spent on activities, namely 34,46%. Activities shown in the movies include mountain biking, cycling, walking. Moreover, the marketing videos showed a museum, villages and restaurants. The least time spent on urban landscapes, 14,62%.

The voice-overs were also coded, various themes were found: activities, rural landscapes, built

FIGURE 10- FRAME MARKETING MOVIE   **SOURCE:**
CBOTTWENTE, 2015

FIGURE 11- FRAME MARKETING MOVIE   **SOURCE:**
VOORDEELUITJES, 2017

environment, and cultural features. Transcriptions can be found in Appendix F.

4.2.1 Activities
With regards to activities, mountain biking, walking, and visiting a farm (V2) were mentioned by the voice-overs (V1, V2, V3).
This corresponds with the activities mentioned by M4, who argued that the primary reason that tourist comes to Twente is to cycle and walk in nature. By visiting a farm, the two protagonists in the promotional video of CBOT Twente take part in the rural lifestyle. Furthermore, M2 mentioned that regional products from local farms are becoming more popular.

4.2.2 Rural landscapes
Various components were mentioned by the voice-overs in the videos: a village, meadows, castles and estates, forests, and a watermill (V1, V2, V3). Furthermore, tranquillity is mentioned by the voice-over, tranquillity and space in the landscape are also mentioned by various interviewees (P3, P2, M1, P5).

4.2.3 Cultural features

Furthermore, the marketing of the landscape does not only consists of the physical features but also the cultural features. Voice-overs mentioned the dialect of the Twentenaren and the less rushed way of life of the Twentenaren (V1, V2 &V3).

This mirrors the interviewees (P2, M1, M3, E1), who mentioned the more relaxed pace of life in the region of Twente and the friendliness and hospitality of the Twentenaren. The dialect was not mentioned by any of the interviewees.

Thus, apart from the dialect, the perspective on Twente of the actors in rural tourism matches what is portrayed in marketing videos. Mirroring the results of Vos & Vuorinen, who argue that cooperation between various actors in rural tourism (entrepreneurs, marketing agencies, and government) can lead to creating a successful coherent joint brand.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

5.1 Conclusions

This chapter will explore the main points that were found during the research project, answering the research question: ''How does the rural landscape impact rural tourism in the region of Twente?''. The interviewees indicated how tourism can be seen by governments in Twente as a means to maintain supermarkets, schools, ATMs, in small rural villages. Farmers are forced to downsize and make way for nature, therefore tourism offers a way to generate economic activity and keep the countryside liveable. Lane & Kastenholtz (2015) also found that introducing tourism in rural areas is a tool for diversifying the economy.

The interviews show that the main reason people come to Twente is to walk and cycle through the landscape. This is reflected in literature, which states that the physical characteristics of the landscape can be commodified by rural communities. The bocage landscape, the ''Essen'', space, hamlets, are the physical features of the landscape that were appreciated by tourists, mentioned by the interviewees. However, interviewees also expressed concern about the continuity of the landscape. The number of farms is in decline in Twente, this might also result in a change in the current landscape which is appreciated by tourists. A big part of the bocage landscape is open fields and meadows. Nevertheless, the tourists are not aware that intensive agriculture and practices of the rural communities are part of the creation of the landscape. This is also depicted by Vinge & Egil Flø (2015) who found that tourists have little knowledge about the historical shaping of the landscape.
Similar to the findings of the Countryside Agency (2003), cultural or non-physical parts of the rural landscape is also used to commodify the rural. Some of the interviewees argue that a less hurried way of life is advertised. However, other interviewees noted that most tourists are not actively involved with the local population or are interested in their lifestyle, which contrasts what was found by the earlier mentioned authors.

The physical and non-physical properties of the rural landscape are used in marketing videos to convince the tourist to come to the region of Twente. Most time is spent in the videos on scenes wherein visitors cycle or walk through nature reserves, agricultural areas, or small hamlets. Moreover, in the videos, there is also a focus on the dialect and the less rushed way of life and friendliness of the Twentenaren. Consequently, the marketing videos mirror the earlier mentioned physical and cultural characteristics of the rural landscape mentioned by the actors in rural tourism in Twente.

In Twente, the actors in rural tourism include policymakers, entrepreneurs, and marketing organizations. The actors work together in chain cooperation, each doing their job, but interviewees argued that the actors see each other as colleagues. Mirroring the findings of McGehee et al. (2015) who found that social capital and relationships between actors in rural tourism are needed for successful rural tourism governance. Moreover, interviewees mentioned that in the past, there was little cooperation between the various actors in rural tourism. The government took a top-down approach wherein it had little interest in the opinions of entrepreneurs and marketing organizations. A shift has been established in the past few years, entrepreneurs are now in the lead of rural tourism. The ideas come from bottom-up, policymakers and marketing organizations facilitate and execute these ideas. This is in line with Keyim (2018) who found that there has been an increase in cooperation between state and non-state actors in rural tourism.

Together the actors work to form a joint brand Twente. Interviewees argued that the marketing organizations are in charge of the marketing campaigns, however, the campaigns are in line with the ideas of various actors, such as policymakers, entrepreneurs, and the regional marketing

organization. The campaigns are a result of integrating the ideas of the various actors in rural tourism in Twente. Vos & Vuorinen (2013) found that integrating all these ideas into a coherent campaign is essential for creating a successful joint brand of a region. However, in contrast to Vos & Vuorinens' findings, several interviewees argued that by incorporating all the ideas of all actors the campaign results in something that lacks distinction. Consequently, the lack of distinction would result in decreased ability to influence the tourist to come to Twente.

5.2 Reflection

The study had various limitations. Time constraints meant that not all actors that are involved in rural tourism governance in Twente could be interviewed. The author found it hard to shape the content analysis, as this is the first time the author performed a content analysis. This could be solved through gaining more experience and more attention to the research design in an earlier stage of the research project. Even though there were limitations, the author still conducted interviews with 12 actors in rural tourism in Twente. This gave the author a good idea of how the various actors in rural tourism in Twente worked together. The interviewees gave honest insight.

This study focused on the supply-side of rural tourism, conducting interviews with policymakers, marketing organizations, and entrepreneurs. Further research could focus on the perception of the tourists and how the tourists experience the landscape, further researching what triggered the tourist to come to the region of Twente from the perspective of the tourist.

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Appendices
Appendix A

<u>Interview guide (English)</u>

Welcome ____,

I am a Human Geography and Planning at the Rijksuniversity of Groningen. As part of the bachelor project, I am currently researching Rural Tourism in Twente. The aim of this research is to investigate how the image of the rural idyll impacts rural tourism in the region of Twente. The rural idyll is an idealized, romanticized version of the countryside, which represents the rural as happier, healthier and with fewer problems than cities (Rogers et al., 2013). Beautiful landscapes and neighbourly communities are good examples of this idealized version. Furthermore, I aim to explore the representation of the region in the media and examine how policy accommodates the stream of tourists.

I want to highlight that this is a confidential conversation and that all information will be anonymous. No names or company names will be provided within the report. I have sent a consent form. The consent form spells out that you have the right to drawback from the research project at any time. Furthermore, it allows me to record the conversation, if that is okay with you.

Are there any questions left? I appreciate that you have found time to talk to me. We will now move on to the questions.

Let's start with an introductory question:

1. What is your role in rural tourism in Twente?
    a. Follow up question for entrepreneurs: why did you start a tourism enterprise in the region of Twente?
    b. Question for those previous in the agriculture sector: were there any initiatives that stimulated the transition into agriculture?
    c. Follow up question for marketing cooperatives: how did this initiative come about? What was the starting point?
    d. Follow up question for policy-makers: have you had any previous experience with working on tourism policy in rural landscapes?

Now I would like to move on to the more in-depth questions:

Place Branding & Representation

2. How does your role contribute to the ''branding'' or ''place-making'' of the region?
    a. Do you feel like you contribute to increasing the attractiveness of the region for people outside of Twente?

Resources for the rural

3. Which characteristics and parts of the physical environment are often used to ''sell'' the rural landscape of Twente?
4. To what extend do you think that the rural way of life (the customs, languages, traditions) contribute to the inflow of tourists?
    a. Follow up question for marketing cooperatives: how are these characteristics portrayed and highlighted in marketing campaigns?

     b. Follow up question for entrepreneurs: how do you try to play into these characteristics?

     c. Follow up question for policy-makers: how do you try to play into these characteristics?

5. How do the physical attributes of the landscape of Twente contribute to the inflow of tourist?
     a. Follow up question for marketing cooperatives: how are these characteristics portrayed and highlighted in marketing campaigns?
     b. Follow up question for entrepreneurs: how do you try to play into these characteristics?
     c. Follow up question for policy-makers: how do you try to play into these characteristics?

Governance

This question needs a little introduction. There are various people involved in rural tourism in Twente. All these people together push the tourism in a certain direction. Policy makers, marketing agencies, entrepreneurs. With governance I mean how they interact and work with each other.

6. Has there been a shift in rural tourism governance over time?
     a. How is working together with different stakeholders in the rural tourism roam facilitated in the region of Twente?
     b. Follow up question for entrepreneur: do you feel like the government has an important role in attracting tourist to the region of Twente?
     c. Follow up question for entrepreneurs and policy-makers: have you seen a change in the role of the government over time?

This was the interview. Thank you for your time. A summary of the interview will be send your way within a weeks' time. I would also like to highlight that you can always answer your answers then and send them my way!

<u>Interview guide (Nederlands)</u>

Welkom____,

Ik zou mij eerst willen voorstellen. Ik ben een student Sociale Geografie & Planologie aan de Rijksuniversiteit in Groningen. Voor mijn scriptie ben ik plattelandstoerisme in Twente aan het onderzoeken. Het doel van het onderzoek is om te onderzoeken of het idyllische plaatje van het platteland impact heeft op het toerisme in regio Twente. Met het idyllische plaatje van het platteland bedoel ik het ideale, geromantiseerde plaatje van het platteland dat wordt geschetst. Hierin wordt het platteland als een gelukkiger, gezonder en met minder problemen dat de stad geschetst. Mooie landschappen en 'noaberschap' zijn hier bijvoorbeeld onderdeel van. Verder probeer ik te onderzoeken hoe de regio in de media gerepresenteerd wordt en hoe beleid de inkomende stroom toeristen faciliteert.

Ik wil graag benadrukken dat dit een vertrouwelijk gesprek is en dat alle informatie anoniem zal zijn. Geen namen of bedrijfsnamen zullen genoemd worden in het rapport. Ik heb u een toestemmingsformulier gestuurd. Het toestemmingsformulier geeft aan dat u het recht heeft om op elk u op elk moment terug te trekken uit het onderzoeksproject. Hierop staat ook dat u het oké vindt om het gesprek op te laten nemen. Ik zal deze gespreksopname alleen zelf gebruiken, tijdens het uit typen van het gesprek.

Ik waardeer dat u tijd heeft gevonden om met mij te praten!

Zijn er nog vragen? Dan gaan we nu verder met de vragen.

Allereerst een inleidende vraag:

1. Wat is uw rol in het plattelandstoerisme in Twente?
    a. Vervolgvraag voor ondernemers: waarom bent u een toeristisch bedrijf gestart in de regio Twente?
    b. Vraag voor degenen die eerder in de landbouwsector actief waren: waren er initiatieven die de overgang van de landbouw naar de toeristische sector hebben gestimuleerd?
    c. Vervolgvraag voor marketing coöperatieven: hoe is dit initiatief tot stand gekomen? Wat was het uitgangspunt?
    d. Vervolgvraag voor beleidsmakers: heeft u eerdere ervaring met het werken aan toerismebeleid in rurale landschappen?

Nu zou ik verder willen gaan met de iets meer diepgaande vragen:

'Place Branding' & representatie

2. Hoe draagt uw rol bij aan de 'branding' van de regio?
    a. Heeft u het gevoeld dat u bijdraagt aan het vergroten van de aantrekkelijkheid van de regio voor mensen buiten Twente?

Middelen van het platteland

3. Welke karakteristieken en onderdelen van de fysieke omgeving worden veelal gebruikt om de omgeving Twente te ''verkopen''?
4. In hoeverre denkt u dat de manier van leven op het platteland (gebruiken, talen, tradities) bijdragen aan de toestroom van toeristen?
    a. Vervolgvraag voor marketingcoöperatieven: hoe worden deze kenmerken geportretteerd en benadrukt in marketingcampagnes?
    b. Vervolgvraag voor ondernemers: hoe probeert u gebruik te maken van deze kenmerken?
    c. Vervolgvraag voor beleidsmakers: hoe probeert u gebruik te maken van deze kenmerken?
5. Hoe dragen de fysieke kenmerken van het Twentse landschap bij aan de instroom van toeristen?
    a. Vervolgvraag voor marketingcoöperatieven: hoe worden deze kenmerken geportretteerd en benadrukt in marketingcampagnes?
    b. Vervolgvraag voor ondernemers: hoe probeert u gebruik te maken van deze kenmerken?
    c. Vervolgvraag voor beleidsmakers: hoe probeert u gebruik te maken van deze kenmerken?

Bestuur

Deze vraag heeft een kleine introductie nodig. Bij het plattelandstoerisme in Twente zijn verschillende mensen betrokken. Al deze mensen samen duwen het toerisme in een bepaalde richting. Beleidsmakers, marketingbureaus, ondernemers. Met 'bestuur' bedoel ik hoe ze met elkaar omgaan en samenwerken.

6. Is er in de loop van de tijd een verschuiving opgetreden in het bestuur van het plattelandstoerisme?

a. Hoe wordt de samenwerking met verschillende stakeholders op het gebied van plattelandstoerisme in de regio Twente gefaciliteerd?
b. Vervolgvraag voor ondernemer: heeft u het gevoel dat de overheid een belangrijke rol speelt bij het aantrekken van toeristen naar de regio Twente?
c. Vervolgvraag voor ondernemers en beleidsmakers: heeft u in de loop van de tijd een verandering in de rol van de overheid gezien?

Dit was het interview. Bedankt voor uw tijd. Een samenvatting van het interview krijgt u binnen een week toegestuurd. Ik zou ook willen benadrukken uw antwoorden kunnen worden aangepast door u, mocht u dit willen.

Appendix B

Toestemmingsformulier (Nederlands)

Toestemmingsformulier onderzoeksproject: ''Plattelandstoerisme in Twente'' voor de geïnterviewde.

Ik heb informatie over het onderzoeksproject gelezen. Ik heb de kans gehad om vragen te stellen en mijn vragen zijn op juiste wijze behandeld. Ik heb genoeg tijd gehad om te beslissen of ik mee wou werken aan het onderzoeksproject. Mijn betrokkenheid is volledig op vrijwillige basis. Ik kan mij op welk gewenst moment terugtrekken uit het onderzoeksproject, zonder hiervoor een reden te geven.

(De geluidsopname wordt alleen gebruikt door de onderzoeker, om het interview terug te kunnen luisteren. De geluidsopname wordt verder nergens gepubliceerd en na de verwerking van de inhoud vernietigd. Tevens zal de naam van de organisatie van de geïnterviewde niet in het verslag worden benoemd, maar worden gecodeerd)

o Ik ga akkoord met deelname aan het onderzoeksproject
o Ik ga er mee akkoord dat de interview gegevens voor educatieve doeleinden worden gebruikt
o Ik ga er mee akkoord dat er een opname (geluidsopname) van het interview wordt gemaakt

Naam geïnterviewde:

Datum:

Consent form (English)

Consent form research project: ''Rural tourism in Twente'' for the interviewee.

I have read the information about the research project. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered adequately. I had enough time to decide if I wanted to participate in the research project. My involvement is entirely voluntary. I can withdraw from the research project at any time, without giving any reason.

(The sound recording will only be used by the researcher, to be able to listen back to the interview. The sound recording will not be published anywhere else and will be destroyed after the content has been processed. Also the name of the interviewee or the organization of the interviewee will not be included in the report, but coded).

o I agree to participate in the research project
o I agree that the interview data is used for educative purposes
o I agree that the interview will be recorded (voice-recorded)

Name interviewee:

Date:

Appendix C

Category	Description
Rural landscape	Include built heritage in the rural, estates, churches, watermills, farms. Small towns and villages, such as Ootmarsum. Also includes meadows, nature reserves, cycle and walking paths.
Urban landscape	Include urban built-up areas, such as the city of Enschede.
Activities	Include walking, cycling, visiting museums, going out to eat, doing things in the rural landscape.

Appendix D

Video	Rural landscapes	Activities	Urban landscapes	Total
Voordeeltuitjes.nl	3	8	3	
	24		17	
	11		3	
	2			
	22			
	3			
	17			
	82 seconds	**8 seconds**	**23 seconds**	**113 seconds**
Twente Marketing	23	3	33	
	14	18		
	37 seconds	**21 second**	**33 seconds**	**91 seconds**
Land of… Twente	3	11	-	
	11	4		
	22	5		
	4	71		
	2	12		
	3			
	21			
	10			
	76 second	**103 seconds**		**179 seconds**
Total	**195 seconds**	**132 seconds**	**56 seconds**	**383 seconds**
Percentage	50,91%	34,46%	14,62%	