The Orange Wave
How the practice of place marketing is utilized by the rural municipality of Hagfors in order to attract new inhabitants from the Netherlands

Den Orangea Vågen
Hur landsbygdskommunen Hagfors använder platsmarknadsföring för att attrahera nya invånare från Nederländerna

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THE ORANGE WAVE
They leave everything behind in the Netherlands; friends, family, jobs and careers in order to start a new life in what they call the land of opportunities, namely Sweden. Here, in the county of Värmland in a little, rural town named Hagfors they see a chance to a brighter future and the possibility of accomplishing a better quality of life. They want to buy houses, start companies and explore a new way of life in this land of promises. While people are migrating from the Netherlands, inhabitants of Hagfors are moving out to big, urban cities that can offer more possibilities. This is the reality for many rural areas like Hagfors, they lose population through out-migration. Despite the negative population trend, the municipality regains some of its lost inhabitants through the international migration from large Dutch cities. The purpose of this thesis is to examine how the practice of place marketing has been used by Hagfors municipality in order to attract new inhabitants from the Netherlands. Which place marketing strategies have been utilized by Hagfors, how can the effect of these approaches be measured and how is the Hagfors brand perceived by the Dutch immigrants? These are the research questions that have been answered through qualitative interviews with municipal employees and Dutch immigrants. The results imply that Hagfors have marketed themselves through the internet and the Emigration Expo in Utrecht but these strategies have not had any effect on the immigrants’ motives for moving to the area. Instead of actively trying to receive more immigrants to the area Hagfors municipality should invest time and money on the Dutchmen who are already living in the area. The conclusion that Hagfors has not developed a brand platform has prevented the Dutch immigrants from creating a uniform image of the brand.

Keywords: rural place marketing, migration, rural municipalities, rural idyll, the Netherlands

ABSTRACT

They leave everything behind in the Netherlands; friends, family, jobs and careers in order to start a new life in what they call the land of opportunities, namely Sweden. Here, in the county of Värmland in a little, rural town named Hagfors they see a chance to a brighter future and the possibility of accomplishing a better quality of life. They want to buy houses, start companies and explore a new way of life in this land of promises. While people are migrating from the Netherlands, inhabitants of Hagfors are moving out to big, urban cities that can offer more possibilities. This is the reality for many rural areas like Hagfors, they lose population through out-migration. Despite the negative population trend, the municipality regains some of its lost inhabitants through the international migration from large Dutch cities. The purpose of this thesis is to examine how the practice of place marketing has been used by Hagfors municipality in order to attract new inhabitants from the Netherlands. Which place marketing strategies have been utilized by Hagfors, how can the effect of these approaches be measured and how is the Hagfors brand perceived by the Dutch immigrants? These are the research questions that have been answered through qualitative interviews with municipal employees and Dutch immigrants. The results imply that Hagfors have marketed themselves through the internet and the Emigration Expo in Utrecht but these strategies have not had any effect on the immigrants’ motives for moving to the area. Instead of actively trying to receive more immigrants to the area Hagfors municipality should invest time and money on the Dutchmen who are already living in the area. The conclusion that Hagfors has not developed a brand platform has prevented the Dutch immigrants from creating a uniform image of the brand.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the introduction chapter is to discuss the problem area of this thesis. This section will firstly provide necessary background information about the subject and why the topic is especially relevant in a contemporary context. Secondly, the background is followed by the purpose and research questions that together formulate the main problem of this thesis. Thirdly, the chapter will discuss the previous research in order to establish what has been done before and what knowledge gaps the study is supposed to fill. Finally, the chapter will end with a short presentation of the two objects of study, namely Hagfors and the Netherlands.

1.1 BACKGROUND

"The labor market in Hagfors is ranked low (Kaldal, 2013)", "Traffic school may be forced to shut down (Nilsson, 2013)", "Changes made by the postal service upset (Liljemark, 2013)." These are three headlines taken from Nya Wermlandstidningen and Värmlands Folkblad which are the two largest local newspapers in the county of Värmland. All of the aforementioned articles were written about Hagfors municipality in one single week and they all describe the powerlessness that many places on the countryside are experiencing in today’s increasingly globalised world. The first article discusses how Hagfors has the second worst local labor market in the entire country regarding demographics and new business creation (Kaldal, 2013). The second article is concerned with a driving school in the municipality and how it may be forced to shut down due to few enrolled students. Instead of taking driving lessons in the municipality, local inhabitants choose to participate in intensive courses in other municipalities since this is a service that is not offered in Hagfors. New rules from The National Board of Student Aid (CSN) do not allow high school students to take driving lessons during school hours which is another important reason why the amount of learner drivers has declined (Nilsson, 2013). The third article is concerned with the changes within the postal service in Hagfors. In order to carry out simple postal services like retrieving a driving license for example, local inhabitants are forced to drive sixty kilometres to Torsby municipality in order to receive it (Liljemark, 2013). Headlines regarding cuts, savings and threats regarding shut downs are not uncommon about places on the countryside like Hagfors. Issues regarding population are currently very high on Swedish policymakers’ agenda, especially those regarding rural municipalities. Not only do these municipalities face the challenge of rapid
population decline, they have also had to manage an increasingly ageing population that is affecting the tax-base of these areas (Stockdale, 2004).

The loss of population implies that more people are actually dying than being born in rural municipalities while the ones moving out are young and the ones moving in are old (Hjort, 2009, p. 8). Recent population projections indicate that this situation is about to get much worse, especially in peripheral rural areas (Niedomysl & Amcoff 2010, p. 3). According to the latest population prognosis from Statistics Sweden, an ageing population implies that those who work need to support more people. A solution to this particular problem would be if the ageing population of Sweden and foreign-born individuals would work more than they do today since this would have an effect on the future welfare of Sweden (Statistics Sweden, 2012). Another way of solving the decline in population is through in-migration (Niedomysl & Amcoff, 2010, p. 3). Even though policymakers have expressed their concerns regarding this particular issue and voiced the need for an increase in the birth rate that will help to rejuvenate the age structure in rural areas, their main priority has been to alter migration flows. Rural municipalities have therefore increasingly begun to conduct place marketing campaigns in order to attract new inhabitants to their specific area (Niedomysl, 2007, p. 698) and Hagfors is one of them.

The title of this thesis “The Orange Wave” refers to the fact that there are so many Dutch people both living and visiting the municipality of Hagfors that license plates with the colour orange are a very common sight when driving on streets and roads in the municipality. Orange is also the Dutch national color and it is related to the Royal house in the Netherlands. Everyday local inhabitants in Hagfors are reminded that a new era has begun, namely the time when people are moving in instead of out of the municipality. Dutch people are moving from large metropolitan cities in the Netherlands in order to live in a small, rural town in the middle of Sweden. This is something that is quite difficult for the local inhabitants to understand. Why would people who have everything accessible in a city want to move to a small municipality were some parts of the area do not even have access to a bank office? In May 2013, Hagfors was appointed to one of the top ten worst municipalities to live in according to the independent Swedish journal Focus. Despite an eight place on the journal’s annual ranking of Swedish municipalities (Fokus, 2013), Hagfors has still managed to attract over 250 Dutch migrants to their area during the last ten years. This thesis explores a municipality that has successfully managed to challenge the traditional negative perceptions about rural areas. Hagfors has shown that it is possible to revive the rural in a time where urbanisation is a dominant feature in society.
1.2 PURPOSE

The purpose of this thesis is to examine place marketing from a migration perspective. In order to fulfil this objective, two groups of informants constitute the main sources of information. Firstly, the primary goal has been to put emphasis upon the life stories of the Dutch immigrants who are currently living permanently in Hagfors municipality in order to be able to determine what their motives were for leaving the Netherlands, how they became aware of Hagfors and finally what attracted them to the area. This work will also focus on how the rural municipality of Hagfors and its employees have applied the practice of place marketing and promotion in order to attract these inhabitants from the Netherlands. This thesis is thereby going to study the relationship between these two groups in order to be able to determine if the promotional efforts made by Hagfors have caused this international migration.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Three research questions are addressed in this thesis:

- How has place marketing been used by Hagfors municipality in order to attract Dutch migrants from the Netherlands?

Since over 250 Dutch inhabitants have moved to Hagfors during the last ten years, one would think that the municipality has performed extensive and expensive place marketing campaigns towards the Netherlands in order to be able to attract new inhabitants to their area. How else would individuals in another country know that this little, rural municipality even existed in the middle of Sweden? There are a lot of rural municipalities like Hagfors in Sweden and very often they share common problems like de-population, high unemployment and low birth rates. Not only do they face the same difficulties, they also share the same positive qualities such as beautiful nature, space and serenity. It is therefore very important to establish how Hagfors has managed to stand out from other rural municipalities in Värmland and the rest of Sweden. Through this research question, this thesis will therefore be able to examine the ideas, values and goals that together have permeated the place marketing strategies performed by Hagfors municipality. What are the primary place marketing strategies that have been used by Hagfors and why have they been chosen? When answering this question it is also just as important to focus on the
target groups of these promotional efforts and how the strategies have been adopted in order to attract Dutch immigrants.

- How is the Hagfors brand perceived by the Dutch population living in the municipality and how well do their interpretation of the brand correspond to the image that is communicated by Hagfors?

The main purpose of this research question is to determine whether the perceptions of the Dutch immigrants regarding Hagfors correspond to the image that is being communicated by the municipality. What do the Dutch immigrants associate with the Hagfors brand and what are their attitudes towards it? This research question will therefore allow the thesis to establish whether the communicative goal of the municipality is being fulfilled or not.

- To what extent can the effectiveness of the place marketing strategies performed by Hagfors municipality be measured?

The main purpose of this research question is to determine whether the place marketing efforts made by Hagfors municipality have had any effect on the Dutch immigrants’ motives for moving to Hagfors. Through this question is also possible to examine how the Dutch immigrants became aware of Hagfors municipality from the very beginning. Was their notion about Sweden, Värmland or Hagfors perhaps influenced by their own experiences of the area, through word of mouth, through mass media, emigration fairs, popular culture or the web sites of real estate agents? Through this research question it is therefore possible to determine which perceptions the Dutch immigrants had about Hagfors before they actually moved to the area, how they created these opinions and if they moved to the municipality as a result of these perceptions. This research question is highly relevant since only a few studies have examined marketing and migration in a comprehensive way. More importantly, the effects of place marketing are practically unknown (Niedomysl, 2007, p. 698). Marco Eimermann (2013) argues that more qualitative data are needed in order to be able to determine whether migrants have moved as a direct result of international place marketing campaigns performed by rural municipalities. He argues that such qualitative data are best gathered by performing in-

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1 This thesis is based on The American Marketing Associations definition of a brand: "a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competition" (Kotler & Gertner, 2002, p. 249).
depth interviews with migrants after their migration. Combining stakeholder’s claims on success with statistical indication of increased in-migration is not enough for measuring the effectiveness of campaigns (p. 22). By answering this research question, new knowledge about the effects of rural place marketing campaigns may emerge through this thesis.

1.4 PREVIOUS RESEARCH

In his book “Selling Places: The Marketing and Promotion of Towns and Cities, 1850-2000,” Stephen V. Ward explores the development of place marketing and promotion over the last 150 years by drawing on examples from two continents, North America and Europe. His work clearly shows that attracting migrants is not a new phenomenon and that the practice of place marketing and place promotion has been used by local authorities for quite some time in order to receive new inhabitants (Ward, 1998, p. 1). The focus of scientific research however has so far mainly been on how the process of place marketing can be used in attracting traditional target groups like industries, businesses and tourists. Today, there are only a handful of studies available that have examined marketing and migration in a comprehensive way (Niedomysl, 2007, p. 698). The extent to which attracting migrants constitutes an aim within place marketing and promotion is therefore largely unknown today (Niedomysl, 2006, p. 13). Texts concerning the promotion of rural areas in order to attract new inhabitants are very limited, but the interest for rural place marketing has begun to increase (Eimermann, 2013, p. 6). Even though current research indicates that Swedish municipalities use the practice of place marketing, very little is known about these attempts in terms of the number of municipalities involved, the money that has been spent on place marketing campaigns and the target groups of such promotional efforts (Niedomysl, 2004, p. 1991). Most studies within Europe also tend to focus primarily on rural-to-urban flows which indicate that the migration from urban cities to the countryside has not been observed to the same extent (Eimermann, Lundmark & Müller, 2012, p. 330).

A vast majority of the scholarly research regarding place marketing has only studied the marketing of larger conurbations (with exception of Gibson & Davidson, 2004). Göran Greider (2001) discusses the existence of a powerful metropolitan norm in Sweden in his book Fucking Sweden where he argues that rural and provincial areas have not been properly described in the existing literature. When they are described however, they are often considered to be problem areas, something that needs to be dealt with and addressed (Greider, 2001, p. 10). Susanne Hjort agrees
with Greider by stating that economic prosperity is only thought to occur in urban cities. The rural and urban are often classified as two opposing parts, where the urban places often have the upper hand (Hjort, 2009, p. 9). When discussing counterurbanisation it is very important to address that rural areas are not just passive receivers of migrants, on the contrary they play a very important role in today’s society (Enyedi, 1988, p. 15). Previous research has primarily focused on counterurbanisation that occurs within countries, for example when individuals migrate from urban Stockholm to rural municipalities in Sweden. Keith Halfacree argues that the research regarding domestic population distribution may be understood as a quite exhausted research topic (Halfacree, 2008, p. 481). Adding an international dimension to work regarding counterurbanisation would therefore enable current research to investigate how well counterurbanisation can travel across countries (Halfacree, 2008 p. 485) and this is the main intention of this thesis. International counterurbanisation is similar to counterurbanisation that occurs in one country. The main aspect that set them apart is that the first mentioned concept can be applicable over a greater extent and a variety of geographical areas (Eimermann et al., 2012, p. 333).

The international migration from the Netherlands to Sweden is not an unexplored topic; on the contrary, the trend regarding Dutch in-migration to sparsely populated areas like Hagfors has been the subject to academic debate for several years. A range of papers and dissertations have been published about the migration and a majority of these publications have focused especially on the Dutch migration to municipalities in Värmland, Dalarna and Bergslagen (e.g. Eriksson Robertsson 2010; Andersen & Engström 2005; Wangenfors 2011). One explanation as to why central Sweden has been the dominating object of study so far could derive from the fact that these areas in particular have the highest number of Dutch residents compared to other parts of the country. The variety of scholarly research regarding this phenomenon indicates that this subject has been examined by several researchers from different disciplines during the last five years. A majority of them are written from a social scientific or human geographic perspective which indicates that they are mainly focusing on the economic prosperity that has occurred in Swedish rural areas in times of depopulation and decreasing employment opportunities. The purpose and research questions in these various publications mainly tend to put emphasis on why Dutchmen move from the Netherlands to Sweden and the possible effects that the in-migration might have had on rural areas.
The Swedish researchers Marco Eimermann and Thomas Niedomysl have written extensively about how rural municipalities in Sweden can use the practice of place marketing and promotion in order to attract new residents. The main aspect that distinguishes their work from the aforementioned publications is that they have managed to combine migration research with the practice of place marketing and promotion which rarely has been done so far within the world of academia. Eimermann has especially devoted his research to the Dutch migration to rural Swedish municipalities and how place marketing has encouraged and enabled these areas to attract new residents. Since place marketing rarely has been examined from a migration perspective, the main goal of this thesis is therefore to help fill the existing gap within this field of research in order to be able to provide it with new knowledge.

1.5 EMPIRICAL BACKGROUND

1.5.1 HAGFORS MUNICIPALITY

Hagfors is a conurbation in the county of Värmland and functions as the main center for Hagfors municipality. In December 2012, Statistics Sweden estimated that 12,170 inhabitants were living in Hagfors (Statistics Sweden, 2013A) on a surface of 1,834 square kilometres which is less than seven inhabitants per square kilometre (Hagfors municipality, 2009). At the beginning of 2011, 812 Dutch inhabitants were registered in Värmland, a quarter of them live in Hagfors which means that they are the largest minority today of the municipality (Hermansson, 2011). The main characteristics that can be used to describe the area are wilderness, nature, wild animals, large and deep forests.

Like many rural municipalities in Sweden, Hagfors has encountered
several problems regarding rural de-population during the last ten years. Since the year of 2003 (Hagfors municipality, 2009), the municipality has lost almost 1500 inhabitants which implies that 150 individuals chose to leave the area every year. The locals who are moving out are primarily young people who leave the area in order to receive a higher education and better work opportunities. According to Hagfors municipality, it is quite difficult to prevent the out-migration. For many young people it is very important to move to big, urban cities in order to receive a higher education and thereby develop themselves. When leaving the area it is therefore very unlikely that these individuals will move back home once they have retrieved their education due to the high unemployment rates of Hagfors (Rathsman & Mårtensson, 2000). In February 2012, 30 per cent of the young people living in Hagfors municipality were unemployed which implies that one third of the population did not have a job (Sveriges Radio, 2012). The same month this year, Hagfors municipality has successfully managed to prevent the situation from getting worse by reducing the high youth unemployment rates with 7.6 per cent (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2013).

With a strong belief in the future, the possibility of attracting in-migrants and people who could consider re-moving to the area is quite high according to Hagfors municipality. This goal can be achieved by marketing a good living environment, maintaining a good school and high quality education, developing a rich cultural life and tourism industry and provide good access to different essential services. If kids and young people in the municipality create positive images and feelings for their home town, the conditions are created for them to keep in touch. Eventually they will come back. Not only does Hagfors lose inhabitants due to rural de-population, the age-structure in the municipality is also currently very high (Rathsman & Mårtensson, 2000) which implies that more people are dying than being born. In 2012, Statistics Sweden estimated that 90 men and women were born (Statistics Sweden, 2013B) while 226 men and women died in Hagfors (Statistics Sweden, 2013C).

The main private employer in Hagfors municipality is Uddeholms AB, a world-leading supplier and manufacturer of tool steel (Uddeholms AB, 2008A) with approximately 900 employees (Uddeholms AB, 2008B). The company is therefore very important for the local employment in the area. The middle age within Uddeholms AB is currently high which implies that the company will need a significant addition of staff in a near future. From an international perspective, Hagfors is especially well-known for being one of the municipalities in Värmland to host Rally Sweden which is the largest motor sport competition in the country. During the second week of
February every year, Hagfors becomes the focus for everybody who loves motor sport. During this event the airport in Hagfors functions as a service site for the international press and competing teams. The silence and tranquility that normally characterize the forests of Hagfors are then replaced by cheering, enthusiastic supporters and festivities. Over 200 000 supporters from the world visit the event every year and one billion people follow the rally through television or the Internet (Rally Sweden, 2013). Uddeholms AB was name sponsor of the rally between 2001 and 2008 (Uddeholms AB, 2012).

1.5.2 THE NETHERLANDS

The Netherlands is a small, very densely-populated country in Western Europe with 16 696 000 million people (Landguiden, 2012A) living on 41 526 square kilometres (Landguiden, 2012B) which is 492 inhabitants per square kilometre. Almost half of the Dutch population lives on one fifth of the countries surface in an area called Randstad Holland (Landguiden, 2012A). Having too many residents for the space available has resulted in a great number of rules and regulations regarding pollution and traffic jams during rush hours. The size of the country and the amount of people living there imply that there are very few places in the Netherlands where you cannot hear a car going by (Janin, 1998, pp. 9-10).

Dutch families moving to the Swedish countryside are a phenomenon that has received considerable attention during recent years. The group of Dutchmen who moved to Sweden in the beginning of the 21st century could have been the beginning of an orange wave which is described as being a version of the green wave (Eimermann, 2009, pp. 97-98) that occurred in Sweden during the 1970s. During this period, young people and their children moved from urban
cities to the countryside where they could live close to nature without modern conveniences (Nationalencyklopedin, 2013). The colour orange in the term “the orange wave” is a Dutch national symbol that is frequently used during certain ceremonies in the Netherlands, for example during large sporting events or when celebrating the Queen’s birthday (Eimermann, 2009, p. 98).

The Dutch population has a positive image of Sweden, often associating the country with nature and welfare (Swedish Department of Foreign Affairs, 2005). A harmony between people and nature, space and tranquility is therefore highly coveted by the Dutch (Eimermann et al., 2012, p. 342). This may be an important explanation of why the Dutch migration is mainly directed towards rural areas like Hagfors in the middle parts of Sweden (Eimermann et al., 2012, p. 334). These areas are usually sparsely populated and they can offer their inhabitants closeness to nature, forests, lakes and wild animals for example. Home owners in the densely populated areas in the Netherlands can sell their houses for several million Euros and then purchase a cheaper and much larger house in a rural area in Sweden. The profit they make by selling their house provides the Dutch immigrants with a starting capital that will enable them to start their own business in Sweden. The geographical distance between the Netherlands and Sweden is rather small (Eimermann et al., 2012, p. 334) which implies that it is possible to drive to Hagfors in less than a day when going by car. Dutch and Swedish culture are quite similar which also could be an important reason why Dutchmen choose to settle down and start a new life in a rural municipality like Hagfors (Eimermann et al., 2012, p. 333).
2. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON MIGRATION

The theoretical framework is divided into two separate parts. This chapter is only going to focus on theoretical perspectives regarding migration while the second is focused on the place marketing and how this practice can be used in order to attract new inhabitants to a rural municipality like Hagfors. This chapter about migration will begin with a discussion regarding mobility and how this has become an important key-word when describing the extensive movement of people across the world. This concept is then followed by two subheadings where the terms migration and international counterurbanisation are defined in order to describe the movement of Dutch migrants from urban cities in Netherlands to rural Hagfors. Finally, the chapter ends with a description regarding the negative attributes of a country that cause people to move from an area and the positive factors that attract them to a certain place.

2.1 THE NEW MOBILITIES PARADIGM

A fundamental geographical fact of life is the act of moving (Cresswell, 2006). Mobility has therefore become an important key-word when describing the twenty-first century. The concept of mobilities represents the extensive movement of objects, capital, information and people across the world. On a daily basis, the global order is criss-crossed by numerous tourists, workers, migrants, family members and guest workers. Issues regarding movement, whether these questions concern too little movement or perhaps too much of the wrong sort at the wrong time are therefore central priorities in many lives, organizations and governments (Hannam, Sheller & Urry, 2006, p. 1). A form of mobility that is of great importance for this thesis in particular is the legal system that gives all EU citizens the same rights to move and live freely within the European Economic Area. This freedom facilitates the international migration within the member states of the European Union. Deregulation of the housing market for example facilitates the process of purchasing a property in another EU member state (European Union, 2004). Moss (2006) argues that access-facilitating technology such as ICT and the availability of cheap means of long distance transport cases contacts (pp. 12-13). Since Sweden joined the EU in 1995, it has been both legally possible and economically affordable for citizens in other
member states to purchase a property, to settle or work in Sweden (Eimermann, 2012 et al., p. 333).

Mobilities are involved in reorganizing institutions, altering travel, tourism and migration patterns, creating a distant family life, transforming the social and educational life of young people. The human body and the home have therefore transformed significantly. Being close together and connected to each other is imagined in new ways in today’s society. Communication is often enhanced by different devices which allow individuals to be constantly on the move (Hannam, et al., 2006, p. 2). The dream of achieving instantaneous communication is what drives contemporary business strategies, governmental policy and marketing (Hannam et al., 2006, p. 1). A new mobilities paradigm or mobility turn have been declared and recommended by Hannam, Sheller and Urry (2006). In their article, “Editorial: Mobilities, Immobilities and Moorings” they provide several emerging agendas within migration research; namely tourism, travel, virtual and informational mobilities.

The relationship between migration and tourism is crucial to mobilities research. Travel is a form of movement that is necessary for social life since it enables complex connections to be made between people (Hannam et al., 2006, p. 10). Empirical findings by Thomas Niedomysl (2006) indicate that tourism has a positive influence on migration. Places with a successful tourist industry are also considered to be successful when it comes to attracting another target group, namely migrants. Migrants seldom move to places that they have no prior knowledge about. Tourists automatically improve their knowledge about the places they visit during vacations. When doing so, they are more likely to create a positive impression of a place since they have more time for enjoyment (p. 31). When leaving a certain place, migrants often tend to carry parts of it with them, for example souvenirs, textures, food and colours to the area of destination (Hannam et al., 2006, p. 10). Just like people and places, images and communications are also constantly on the move. Research regarding mobilities also includes the movements of images and information on local, national and international media. The concept includes one-to-one communications such as the telephone, fax and mobile as well as many-to-many communications like networked computers for example. Mobility examines how the transporting of individuals and the communication of messages, information and images increasingly converge through digitalization and the expansion of wireless infrastructures, which are themselves promoted through images of movement (Hannam et al., 2006, p. 11).
The new mobilities paradigm pays attention to physical, virtual and social mobility. The forms of mobility that are especially significant for this thesis is international counterurbanisation which is the movement of migrants from the Netherlands to Sweden, tourism which is referred by Hannam, Sheller and Urry (2006) as virtual mobility (p. 11) and second home ownership which is "occasional residence of a household that usually lives elsewhere and which is primarily used for recreation purposes" (Shucksmith, 1983, p. 174). Through these aforementioned mobilities, this thesis discusses how important it is to think transnational by problematizing national categorizations which are a central aspect of the new mobilities paradigm. Changes within mobility are affecting both the scale and temporalities of families, local communities and the commitments individuals might have towards the nation. The nation itself is therefore being transformed by these mobilities (Hannam, et al., 2006, p. 2). This thesis is therefore positioned within the new mobilities paradigm.

2.1.1 INTERNATIONAL COUNTERURBANISATION

It is not an easy task to define the term counterurbanisation. In the literature study that has been conducted before writing this thesis, the concept is described in many different ways by several authors. It is therefore crucial to begin the theoretical part with a definition of the term and what it stands for in this particular thesis. The counterurbanisation phenomenon was first witnessed in the United States (Beale, 1975) when non-metropolitan counties in the 1960s and 1970s began to notice an increase in population while metropolitan areas experienced the complete opposite, namely population declines (Boyle, Halfacree & Robinson, 1998, p. 13). The “rural renaissance” as it was called (Morrison & Wheeler, 1976) was proved to be much more common in remote rural areas than in rural areas neighboring metropolitan counties (Sternlieb & Hughes, 1997).

The most frequently used definition of counterurbanisation in the literature is the one used by Brian Berry (1976): “Counterurbanisation is a process of population deconcentration; it implies a movement from a state of more concentration to a state of less concentration” (p. 17). This quote is considered to be a good starting point because it strongly shaped the way in which research on this topic developed. This
definition however has a central weakness that needs to be addressed; it provides no guidance regarding how concentration and deconcentration are to be recognised (Boyle & Halfacree, 1998, p. 25). It does not give any clear indication of how many inhabitants an area should have in order to receive the label “a state of more concentration or a state of less concentration?” This thesis is based on a definition that has been adopted by several researchers (see e.g. Mitchell 2004; Champion 2000, Boyle & Halfacree 1998): “Counterurbanization is a demographic movement that sees residents of larger population concentrations relocate to smaller municipalities either within, or beyond, a political border.” The main reason why this particular meaning has been attached to counterurbanisation in this thesis is due to the international perspective that it offers. The Dutch migration from the Netherlands to rural municipalities in Sweden infers that counterurbanisation is occurring over national borders between two countries. This interpretation of the term counterurbanisation also offers a much clearer understanding of the migrant movement by stating that it concerns individuals who move from larger areas with more concentration to smaller municipalities. Migrants are leaving their homes in overpopulated cities in the Netherlands in order to move to rural municipalities in Sweden.

The motives for counterurbanisation can be production-led or consumption-led. Production-led motives are frequently of an economic character, related to both labor and entrepreneurial migration (Hall & Williams, 2002). Migrants may support themselves economically in several ways when moving from one place to another: commuting on a daily basis to jobs in urban cities, teleworking or by engaging in the local economy as either employees or business owners (Hall & Williams, 2002). Motives that are consumption-led are often associated with non-economic factors (Eimermann et al., 2012, p. 331) such as favorable climate conditions and beautiful nature in the destination area for example (Eimermann et al., 2012, p. 332). The non-economic motives of the migrants can also be influenced by quality of life factors. A move to a more pleasant area where it is possible for the migrants to obtain a different lifestyle may contribute to a perceived higher quality of life (O’Reilly & Benson, 2009, p. 2). Research made by Eimermann et al., (2012) indicates that specific characteristics of the migrants can be closely related with their motives from moving from the Netherlands to the central counties of Sweden. For example, after migrating to Sweden it is very likely that the Dutch immigrants become self-employed in the destination area (p. 332).
2.1.2 DEFINING MIGRATION

This subheading aims to discuss and explain the term migration and what this particular definition represents in this thesis. The term migration is used to describe the movement of a person, also known as a migrant between two places for a certain period of time (Boyle et al., 1998, p. 34). Migration is a key component of counterurbanisation and it is therefore mostly defined as the movement of urban residents from large, metropolitan to small, non-metropolitan places (Mitchell, 2004, p. 17). Studies within migration research are also crucial to the field of mobilities research (Hannam et al., 2006, p. 10) that was discussed in the previous subheading.

Migration in this thesis refers to the flow of people across national borders (Boyle et al., 1998, p. 35), in this case migration between the Netherlands and Sweden, or even more specific Hagfors municipality. This particular flow can be described as international migration and the Dutch inhabitants who are moving into Sweden are called immigrants (Boyle et al., 1998, p. 35). International migration is therefore referred to as long distance migration in this thesis which implies that the Dutch migrants cross national boarders in order to start a new life in Sweden.

It is also very important, however, to emphasize that there is a clear distinction between forced and voluntary migration. Forced migrants, such as refugees are forced to leave their homes due to persecution or war while voluntary migrants are individuals who choose to move to another location (Boyle et al., 1998, 37-38). The empirical data in this thesis will only focus on Dutch immigrants who have moved to Sweden voluntarily. These two motives for migration should however be used with caution according to Boyle et al., (1998) since few people move purely as a result of their own deliberations. The main aspect that set these two terms apart are the levels of freedom, that is, how much power the migrants have had in making their choice of leaving their home country. One example of the problem that Boyle et al., (1998) describe regarding the two terms can be applied on the Dutch migration to Hagfors. It is not unusual that the grandparents of a Dutch family living in Hagfors have moved to the area in order to be able to retain contact with their grandchildren. In this particular case, the grandparents might not have had the ambition or the desire to move to Sweden from the very beginning but due to their childrens’ decision to move they might be under the impression that it is necessary for them to move in order to create a close relationship with their children and grandchildren. One migrant stream may therefore have an effect on another, second stream. Migrants who move to other places can encourage the migration of a second group, namely family and friends. This process is called chain migration which means that the Dutch immigrants may be followed by their loved ones, not necessarily at once but at a different time (Boyle et al., 1998, p. 36).
2.2 PUSH AND PULL THEORY

Why do people stay or why do they move? Which factors are influencing the decision to stay or migrate to another location (Hjort, 2009, pp. 18-19)? This subtitle aims to discuss the push and pull theory which is one of the most frequently used theories within the field of migration research. This specific theory is an important resource in describing why people from large, urban cities in the Netherlands are moving to small, rural municipalities like Hagfors. Push factors can be described as negative attributes of the area of origin; they can be both general and specific and they are often the main reason why people move from an area. Pull factors on the other hand are positive features that are linked to the destination area (Boyle et al., 1998, p. 43). Through his research, Bogue (1969) has identified and summarized the following push and pull factors influencing migration:

**Push factors**
- The area of origin is either experiencing a decline in a natural resource, a decreased demand for a specific product or service and exhaustion of mines, timber or agricultural resources.
- Loss of job opportunities due to incompetence, changing employers’ needs or when production is automatised.
- Cultural alienation from a society.
- Poor marriage or employment opportunities.
- The area of origin is experiencing a natural or humanly created catastrophe.
- The migrants are being discriminated due to their political, cultural and religious affiliation.

**Pull factors**
- Improved job opportunities.
- The opportunity of receiving a superior salary increases.
- Specialized training or education possibilities.
- The environment and general living conditions are preferred.
- A new, rich or varied cultural, intellectual or recreational environment.
- When migration is caused by someone else’s decision to move, a spouse for example.

Today, these factors are often considered to be far too simplistic when describing why migrants leave one place for another. Firstly, push and pull factors can be recognised in both origin and
destination and secondly, it is important to pay attention to so called *intervening obstacles* that may prevent migration from occurring. These obstacles can be family obligations in the area of origin, the costs of moving, legal constraints and the anxiety of moving that might have an impact on the emotional state of the migrant. Despite the simplicity that this theory is said to offer, it is still going to serve as an essential component in this thesis. It is crucial to determine why Dutch people are leaving the Netherlands in order to move to the Swedish countryside since the push factors influencing this migration are frequently being used in the place marketing efforts made by the municipality. By identifying the negative aspects of the Netherlands, rural municipalities like Hagfors are therefore able to provide solutions to the problems that Dutch individuals are experiencing in their own country of origin. An example of a problem that often is countered and addressed is how the Netherlands is a very crowded and densely populated country. It is therefore not unusual that rural municipalities promote the countryside as being more sparsely populated.

In the year of 1979, Williams and Sofranko (1979) investigated why migrants specifically move to rural areas. In order to be able to answer this question they performed surveys in 708 households in the Midwest United States by asking the informants why they moved from their former residence and why they chose their current residence. These various reasons were then later placed into one of six categories; employment related, eventual ties to the destination area, environmental push and pull factors, retirement and other reasons like health, divorce, education and restlessness. Through these surveys, Williams and Sofranko managed to conclude that quality of life factors were more important in causing migration, especially for those individuals who originally came from urban cities (Williams & Sofranko, 1979).

### 2.3 THE MYTH AND LURE OF THE COUNTRYSIDE

Several studies within the field of counterurbanisation are trying to examine the myth of the rural areas. When individuals come to the decision to leave large, urban cities for smaller, rural places on the countryside they seem to be searching for some kind of rural idyll (Hosszú, 2009, p. 41). The countryside is often seen as a place away from problems that exist in urban cities and it is portrayed as a problem-free realm that consists of both peace and serenity (Cresswell, 2004, p. 113). When thinking about the countryside, we often imagine a little red cottage that is beautifully surrounded by meadows and lilac-bushes (Andersson & Jansson, 2012, p. 29). The rural idyll can be described as a concept or a collection of concepts (Little & Austin, 1996) which are mainly
living in the heads of the urban population. The rural idyll is a myth that “presents happy, healthy and problem-free images of rural life safely nestling with both a close social community and a contiguous natural environment” (Van Dam, Heins, Elbersen, 2002, p. 462). It is the myth and lure of the countryside that seem to drive much counterurbanisation, but it is important however to stress that this particular migrant option is highly dependent upon a secure, regular and a relatively well-paid job (Boyle et al. 1998, p. 143). The rural idyll can be seen as an urban perspective on the countryside. This view is then reflected through various forms of media and not based on direct experience but still it can be a very strong force guiding migration (Halfacree, 1997).

An image of the rural idyll can be created through a childhood memory, from holiday narratives told by friends or even through the media (Hosszú, 2009, p. 42). It is therefore very likely that individuals who move to rural areas may already be familiar with the location. It is possible that they have either lived or spent their holiday there before. All of the aforementioned relationships can have a great influence on the decision-making process, especially when these individuals are choosing their destination (Laoire, 2007, p. 333). It is just as important to emphasize that sometimes, individuals do not really know where they have bought their future home since their choice of destination area has only been based on the contact with real estate agents or through representations in the media. In western societies, the rural is frequently associated with nature, serenity, calmness and safety. There are two main reasons why the countryside has been allocated these qualities. Firstly, the modern urban population of today is more than two generations away from the countryside which implies that they do not have a specific bond to it. Secondly, the position of the rural has changed. Today, the countryside is not only perceived as a space for agriculture, but also as a recreational field (Stockdale, 2006).

Michael Bunce argues that the countryside is a space of community that provides a retreat from tensions that tend to exist in urban cities. The countryside reaches a pastoral status of a rural idyll and, as a critique of the hectic pace that occurs in modern, urban life (Bunce, 1994). As a contemporary myth, the countryside is described as a less hurried lifestyle where people follow the seasons rather than the stock market. In this way of living, people have more time for one another and they live in a more organic community where they have a certain place and a genuine role. More or less, the countryside has become a safe haven from modernity (Short, 1991, p. 34).
Research made by authors Fuguitt and Zuiches (1975) shows that associations can be made between the countryside and various high quality of life indicators, for example; the rural idyll can offer environmental quality, absence of both crime and criminality, sense of community, cheap living and a suitable setting for raising children. Residential preferences are also something that is reflected in counterurbanisation moves. These options have been outlined through surveys made by Keith Halfacree (1994) on British migrants. The study shows that perceptions of higher environmental quality in the countryside can be seen as important pull factors. The environmental reasons for why the English migrants chose to move from urban to rural places were then later divided into physical and social features. The main physical features that were distinguished were:

- More open and less crowded and the migrants did not feel surrounded by houses.
- More quiet with less traffic noise surrounding the area. Less hustle and stress.
- Cleaner, with fresh air and absence of both traffic pollution and smog.
- Possessed a higher esthetic, such as views, green fields and beauty.
- Was more natural with plenty of flora and fauna.

The social features that were outlined in the study made by Halfacree were as follows;

- The area allowed the migrants to escape from the routines in the urban area and society in general.
- There was a slower pace in the rural area which gave the migrants more time for people. They felt less pressured and trapped, crowded and they could breathe.
- The area had more community and identity.
- The area was better for the upbringing of children.
- It was an area of less crime and vandalism, it felt safer.

(Halfacree, 1994)

Popular culture and the media are two important aspects of counterurbanisation that are frequently mediating images of the rural idyll (Boyle et al., 1998). Several examples can therefore be gathered through various forms of media formats. Television programs depicting couples (who in general are heterosexual, white and from a middleclass background) who are renovating holiday houses or are in the search for their dream house are a common sight in Swedish, British and Dutch reality TV shows. Inserts in the daily press are depicting the self-lived stories of
individuals who “dared to take the step” by moving from the city to the countryside. The search word “rural life” receives a significant amount of hits in the blogosphere and in glossy magazines, we are often encouraged to take part of the kind of aesthetics that the countryside is associated with (Andersson & Jansson, 2012, p. 122).
3. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON PLACE MARKETING

This is the second part of the theoretical framework. The main purpose of this chapter is to examine the theoretical perspectives regarding place marketing and how this practice can be used by a rural municipality like Hagfors in order to attract tourists and new residents. The chapter begins with a short introduction about why this form of marketing has become an important tool when marketing rural areas. This section is later followed by subheadings regarding the image creation of a place, the target groups of rural place marketing campaigns and the communication strategies that are utilized in order to reach this targeted audience. The encoding, decoding model, together with image-setting agents are used in order to provide the chapter with models that can be used when describing how campaigns are received by the target group. The chapter ends with a discussion about media’s impact on place marketing and whether place marketing campaigns have any effect.

3.1 LOOK AT US!

Every country, region, city and town are currently competing for a share of the world’s tourists, investors, consumers and residents more than ever before. During the last 25 years there has been a massive worldwide growth in the practice of place marketing (Ward, 1998, p. 1) which is the conscious use of publicity and marketing in order to communicate selective images of specific geographical areas to a target audience (Gold & Ward, 1994, p. 2). Rural areas with a low population development and a negative economic growth in Sweden, are especially investing in place marketing campaigns with the purpose to attract new inhabitants and tourists (Helt Cassel, 2011, p. 151). However, it is not easy for small cities and towns to attract positive attention from the outside world. Every year, some of these places appear in the national media for only a few seconds and then disappear just as quickly from our radar again. We do not spend a lot of time thinking about cities other than those who appear on a daily basis in the media, those where we live, do business in, visit and where friends and family live. When we do hear of them however it is often for the wrong reasons such as bad weather, crime and accidents occurring in these particular places (Baker, 2007, p. 1).
Several small municipalities in Sweden are currently experiencing very difficult times. Their population is rapidly decreasing and companies are having a difficult time recruiting manpower. Despite this negative development, these municipalities have managed to take place marketing to new heights by engaging in campaigns and projects with the goal to attract new inhabitants. The main goal of these promotional efforts is to attract new residents among inhabitants living in Stockholm, Russia and the Netherlands. Places on the Swedish countryside, especially in the northern parts of the country have therefore begun to market themselves in order to attract new inhabitants (Eriksson, 2011, p. 63). Rural areas have a lot to offer. The arguments that are used in the marketing of these places are beautiful nature, outdoor life and interesting cultural sites. The problem with these arguments however is that they are not unique; they are used by almost every rural municipality today. Municipalities with a unique attraction or environment have a great advantage over other areas that do not have a lot of special features to offer (Helt Cassel, 2011, p. 151). Places on the countryside need to establish what it is that makes their respective area attractive and special since it can be quite difficult for them to compete with metropolitan cities that can offer new residents, luxurious neighborhoods, big industries and operas (Eriksson, 2011, p. 64).

In today’s globalized world it has become increasingly important to mediate the unique qualities of places and regions in order to create development and growth. The promotion of places has therefore become a necessity since an area with a strong profile and image will automatically receive a lot of free attention. For example; the self-esteem of the inhabitants will improve, the local businesses will become more willing to take more risks, young people will remain in the area, out-migrants will return and the number of new establishments will grow. It is not uncommon for companies and creative individuals to seek-out the places and environments that are experiencing a positive development (Regionförbundet i Kalmar län, 2003, p. 14).

3.2 IMAGE

An important concept within place marketing is image. An image is the overall picture of a specific place that is constructed and mediated by a number of associations that are linked to different landscapes and traditions that are unique for that particular place. The image of a place can be created through the knowledge and experiences of people but also by creating and constructing positive images in a marketing purpose. Opinions about what a place represents are created through the visitors’ prior experience of the area, relatives and friends who have told them about the area and through the media (Helt Cassel, 2011, p. 149). A place that has a well-established
image is often associated with different products. If a visitor expects to see red cottages and an old-fashioned idyll then it can be quite difficult for a place to create experiences around a metropolis pulse for example. The entertainment industry and the media play a significant role in shaping people’s perceptions about a place, especially those that are viewed in a negative matter (Kotler & Gertner, 2002, p. 251). The conceptualizations that are mediated through the media and advertising are therefore influencing how people define places and what qualities they have or do not have (Helt Cassel, 2011, p. 159). During the colonial expansion, west European and east coast newspapers were filled with advertisements in order to tempt and encourage migrants to take a chance and venture the unknown. The main purpose of these promotional efforts was to create an attractive image by constantly emphasizing the wonderful climate, how the land was unsurpassed and not affected by temporary shortages of rainfall and the unlimited access of salmon (Gold & Ward, 1994, p. 2).

When selecting the qualities that are going to represent a certain geographical area, the negative aspects are automatically eliminated in order to be able to mediate only positive and attractive images to the potential target group. Places that are associated to negative stereotypes or which do not have a well-known identity are faced with the challenge to try and change these negative perceptions and replace them with positive images. When marketing a certain place it is therefore crucial that a municipality, region or city create an attractive image that will replace vague or negative images that are established in the minds of potential inhabitants, investors or visitors (Hall, 2005, p. 102). It is also important to emphasize that the local inhabitants of a place are just as important as the scenery and attractions for example. Their main role is basically to fulfil the image that is created by a municipality through a place marketing campaign. If the highlighted image of a place is proven to be way too far from the everyday experience of the local inhabitants there is a risk that it will be perceived as superficial and untrue by potential visitors or migrants (Helt Cassel, 2011, p. 151). It is therefore possible that the place product as consumed may not correspond at all to the place product that has been promoted (Gold & Ward, 1994, p. 43).

3.3 TARGET GROUPS

The main target groups of place marketing can be divided into three broad categories. The first category is the commercial and industrial sector, i.e. companies that want to establish a business in a certain place. The second category constitutes tourists and visitors while the third and final category is potential inhabitants, primarily those who have a stable income (Kearns & Philo,
Place marketing is often directed towards individuals who are living outside a certain geographical area (Ek & Hultman, 2007, p. 28). This thesis is studying the promotional efforts made by a rural municipality in Sweden in order to attract new inhabitants from another country, namely the Netherlands. It is important however to emphasize that place marketing can also be used towards the people who are already living in a certain area (Ek & Hultman, 2007, p. 28). In order for a place to create positive images and eliminate negative representations it is crucial that an area has good ambassadors who are proud of living in the area and who thereby can help to mediate positive stories about the place to other people. It is therefore important to include the local inhabitants and the local business life in the marketing of a place (Kotler, Donald & Irving, 1993).

Place marketing is applied both by big, metropolitan municipalities that are already experiencing a positive economic development and peripheral municipalities with structural problems and low tax revenues. It is important to emphasize that even though metropolitan and rural municipalities can apply place marketing strategies they are focusing on completely different target groups by using diverse arguments (Gold & Ward, 1994). If the goal is to attract new companies, a municipality may use arguments like competent labor force, cheap venues and a good entrepreneurial climate. If the target group is new inhabitants the main arguments would then be an attractive living environment and good access to service and recreational activities (Helt Cassel, 2011, p. 150). Through place marketing, growing cities may depict some residents as attractive and others as undesirable according to Eriksson (2011). Specific groups such as workers and racialized immigrants are less attractive than, for example highly educated young people from Western nations. In the locations with less in-migration and an ageing population, even immigrants may be a desired target group. Instead of describing rural areas as locations with beautiful nature and scenery, they should be marketed as meeting-places that are longing for new inhabitants to move in (Eriksson, 2011, p. 65).

The increasing demand for municipalities to attract new inhabitants, production and investments increases the competition between these places. In order to stand out from the crowd, research indicates that places should first and foremost try to attract individuals with a significant amount of human resources, namely knowledge and skills. These individuals in particular are assumed to be able to contribute with creative, innovative and entrepreneurial qualities (Eriksson, 2011, p. 63). Niedomysl (2004) has statistically examined the efforts made by Swedish municipalities in order to attract new inhabitants through the practice of place marketing. In the year of 2002, a
survey was distributed to every Swedish municipality with the purpose to provide an overview and evaluate the effects of place marketing (p. 1991). The most attractive category of in-migrants according to the municipalities were families with children, highly educated and qualified labor, potential return migrants who have lived in the area once before, students, entrepreneurs, low educated caring labor, individuals who are retired or about to become retired and second home owners (p. 2000). Eimermann et al., (2012) found similar characteristics within the Dutch population living in the rural areas of Bergslagen. The immigrants were mainly adults between 26 and 45 years old and families with children under 18 who were still living at home (p. 343).

Hjort (2009) also discusses how important it is for a municipality to attract the right group of migrants while at the same time trying to keep the decrease in population under control. The real challenge for municipalities is to keep the local economy in balance without making too many cutbacks on services that have the potential to attract in-migrants. A municipality that is closing down village schools for example would experience difficulties in attracting in-migrants to the area, especially families with children (p. 8).

3.4 COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Can place marketing and promotion really influence people’s behavior to the extent that they choose to migrate from one place to another? The occurrence of place marketing campaigns with the purpose of attracting new inhabitants to a rural area suggests that Swedish rural municipalities strongly believe in the possibility of success, why would they otherwise even bother to carry out place marketing campaigns (Niedomysl, 2007, p. 707)? The selection of a destination for a weekend holiday is quite different from migration. There is a huge difference between going away on a trip for a few days and actually moving from one place to another since migration demands more effort and planning (Niedomysl, 2007, p. 699).

In today’s society, regions and municipalities are competing with each other about resources in a globalised economy. Almost every region or municipality have a marketing strategy that is directed towards the surrounding world (Helt Cassel, 2011, p. 150) but overall they tend to use similar strategies when promoting their attractions, for example good communication possibilities, low house prices, good quality of schools and services and a natural and cultural environment (Helt Cassel, 2008, p. 111). These strategies are developed in order to be able to compete with other regions or municipalities about tourists, company establishments and new inhabitants (Hall, 2005). Regions, municipalities and cities are trying to raise attention and portray
themselves in a better light by marketing themselves through homepages on the Internet (Gold & Ward, 1994), through emigration fairs in the Netherlands (Eimermann, 2013, p. 16) in brochures and through different campaigns and events (Gold & Ward, 1994). The images that are mediated through the place marketing campaigns (Niedomysl, 2007, p. 705) are very similar to those in magazines representing the rural idyll (Baylina & Berg, 2010, p. 277). Their main purpose is therefore to sell the countryside which is represented as a space where good life and rural lifestyle can be achieved (Baylina & Berg, 2010, p. 287).

Research by Eimermann et al.,(2012) implies that Dutchmen prefer to live in rural, sparsely populated areas over urban cities (p. 343). This trend has encouraged Swedish, rural municipalities in the Nordic countries to engage in marketing efforts towards prospective migrants in the Netherlands but also other wealthy European member states (Eimermann, 2013, p. 13). Out of 290 municipalities in Sweden, a total of 164 have engaged actively in place marketing efforts in the Netherlands since the beginning of the 21st century (Eimermann, 2013, p. 14). The most widely used communication strategies are: Emigration Expos, information meetings and the Internet (Eimermann, 2013, p. 16).

3.4.1 EMIGRATION EXPO

Since the year of 1994, the Emigration Expo is arranged as a private service sector initiative (Eimermann, 2013, p. 16) in the Dutch city Utrecht. With over 11 000 visitors per year the Emigration Expo is Europe's largest event for emigrants, jobseekers, entrepreneurs and anyone else who would like to move to another country. Information, orientation and doing business are the three main key words that together describe the main purpose of the event. The venue in which the expo is held consists of three different event halls with an area of 12 000 m² in which 150 exhibitors from 24 countries are contained (Emigration Expo, 2013). Exhibitors from similar parts of the world are often gathered in separate halls, for example around a Mediterranean terrace. Since the interest for Swedish destinations among the Dutch population has significantly increased, a particular part of the Emigration Expo is therefore dedicated to Sweden and other Nordic countries (Eimermann, 2013, p. 16). Rural and peripheral areas are overrepresented during the emigration fairs while big, urban cities like Gothenburg and Stockholm are not represented. A clear majority of the municipalities that are represented at the emigration fairs in the Netherlands are located in regions with either less favorable or unfavorable geographic conditions. These areas also suffer from population decrease, an old age structure but also high unemployment rates that exceeds Sweden's average (Eimermann, 2013, p. 14). During the
Emigration Expo, Swedish municipalities decorate their stands with wild animals such as reindeer, white hare as well as moose in order to mediate the Nordic rural idyll. Wildlife, nature and climate are widely utilized when presenting the positive aspects of a rural area. Real trees and sounds of birds are added in order to provide the visitors with a sense of what it is like to walk in a Nordic forest. Movies and images are also used frequently in order to show the beautiful landscape and beautiful nature that Sweden has to offer (Eimermann, 2013, p. 17).

3.4.2 INFORMATION MEETINGS

Nordic municipalities are engaging in marketing efforts by being visible during a Scandinavia day that is organized by Placement, a Norwegian private cooperation that specializes in recruiting migrants from Europe to Scandinavia. The company has contacts with business owners and job-seekers in several countries, especially in the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany (Placement, 2013A). Placement has more than 20 in-migration projects in Sweden, Norway and Denmark and during the last five years the company has helped over 400 families to move to the Nordic countries (Placement, 2013B). The Scandinavia day shares many similarities with the Emigration Expo in Utrecht (Eimermann, 2013, p. 17). On this particular day, municipalities are given the opportunity to represent their area through their own showcase. Through their website, Placement reports that approximately 2500 people visit their information meetings every year. Besides arranging a Scandinavia Day, Placement also offers Nordic municipalities to promote their area through their website that has over 75,000 unique visitors per month. It is also possible for the clients of Placement to gain visibility in several social media channels. All information is translated by the company into Dutch (Placement, 2013C).

3.4.3 INTERNET

The Internet has become an important source in searching for information about different places (Kuttainen, 2011, p. 311). There are three main aspects that separate www-marketing from other forms of advertising. Firstly, the consumer is actively searching for information (Gretzel, Yu-Lan & Fesenmeier, 2000). Tourists or individuals who are considering moving from one place to another for example can easily search on the web for information on their own in order to receive more knowledge of a country, region or city (Kuttainen, 2011, p. 319). Secondly, the Internet enables interactivity between the producer and consumer. Compared to a brochure, information on the web can be presented in a more advanced matter through both sound and moving images (Kuttainen, 2011, p. 320). Thirdly, it is possible to establish a dialogue between
the producer and consumer. The electronic medium creates opportunities for relationship building and communication in a way that other media forms are not able to do (Gretzel et al., 2000). A reoccurring thesis is that the Internet opens the doors to the big world. This statement is based on the fact that the publication of a homepage is a cheap marketing strategy when comparing it to what it might cost when creating and distributing a brochure for example (Kuttainen, 2011, p. 319). The Internet enables marketing and sales to be made directly between the producer and consumer. It is therefore possible for potential tourists to experience a destination area before actually visiting the location through panorama pictures, interactive images and animations (Chio, Wan & Lee, 2007). A unique situation emerges when a place is marketed through the Internet. The place becomes potentially available on all of the places that have terminals that are connected to the Internet. When a place becomes available on another place in the world, a global market emerges which also implies that the competition between these locations increases (Hultman, 2011, p. 153).

3.5 ENCODING/DECODING

In his essay: "Encoding/decoding" cultural researcher Stuart Hall provides a theoretical description of how messages are produced and disseminated through the model encoding/decoding which considers the effects that negotiations between texts and interpreters potentially can have in cultural settings (Falkheimer & Thelander, 2007, p. 133). Encoding occurs when a producer gives meaning to a text or message while decoding is how this meaning is decoded and interpreted by potential receivers (Hall, 2009). It is important to emphasize that the coding of encoding and decoding may not be perfectly symmetrical. The degrees of symmetry, namely the degrees of understanding and misunderstanding that are achieved in the communicative exchange depend on the symmetry and asymmetry that have been established between the encoder-producer and decoder-receiver. This implies that the coding of a message does not necessarily control how it is received and decoded by the receiver (Hall, 2009, p. 31).

In his essay, Hall (2009) also identifies three hypothetical positions from which decoding may be constructed, in other words, different ways in which a text can be interpreted. Firstly, an interpretation of a text can be made through a dominant reading. This is when the viewer of a television show for example takes the connoted meaning full and straight, accepts it and thereby decodes the message in the exact way as the producer originally has intended (p. 36). The second position is an oppositional reading which implies that the interpreter does not accept and turns
completely against the intended intention (Hall, 2009, p. 38). The third and final position is *negotiated reading* which basically is a negotiation between the two aforementioned positions. This is when a viewer makes a negotiated reading of a media text which implies that the interpreter embraces certain aspects of the text and chooses to ignore other aspects (Hall, 2009, p. 37).

### 3.5.1 IMAGE-MAKING AGENTS

The mediation of a place occurs under similar conditions as Hall (2009) describes in his article, but with different outcomes according to Falkheimer and Thelander (2007). Places are highly dependent on the images that are mediated by the media since they can help to improve the knowledge and create awareness of places that are both geographically and culturally far away (p. 133). The media is often merged into one uniform category, but there is a clear difference between different forms of media such as the daily press and evening press, TV-news and reality shows for example. All of these productions have different conditions that need to be fulfilled but also diverse intentions (Falkheimer & Thelander, 2007, p. 134). MacKay and Fesenmaier (1997) have developed a typology of different image-making agents in order to describe the level of control that the sender can have over the final text, namely how it is going to be interpreted by the receiver (p. 539). See figure one below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image-making agent</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open persuasion</td>
<td>Advertising for a destination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- first degree</td>
<td>- traditional consumer advertising made by destinations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- second degree</td>
<td>- when the senders are hotels, restaurants or travelling guides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidden persuasion</td>
<td>- marketing for destination with communicator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- first degree</td>
<td>- inviting journalists on trips where all expenses are paid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- second degree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent material</td>
<td>News and popular culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Produced mediated material</td>
<td>Travel guide books and travel magazines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Produced organic material</td>
<td>The stories told by acquaintances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organic material</td>
<td>Own experience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 1: Image-making agents (based on MacKay & Fesenmaier 1997:539).*

The image-making agents in the first column are the senders that have the overall responsibility for the implemented place marketing efforts. *Open persuasion of the first degree* is defined as traditional marketing where the sender has total control over the content while the credibility is minimal. When producing a brochure for a specific municipality for example the producers have
total power over the content but the receiver, however, can be quite skeptic and aware of how the material may contain idealistic representations. The risk that the receiver will not accept the message is therefore quite high. A text can receive higher credibility by the receiver if another client has expressed their trust for the sender. This is referred to as open persuasion of the second degree (Falkheimer & Thelander, 2007, p. 136). Hidden persuasion of the first degree is when communicators, spokesmen or celebrities with no particular connection to an organization are used in order to provide the text with a higher credibility (Gartner, 1993). Hidden persuasion of the second degree is when tourist organisations invite journalists on a trip in order for them to create an image of the destination area. Texts that are written by journalists are often considered to be more credible by the receivers since these messages are not supposed to be objective and not favorable to certain interests (Falkheimer & Thelander, 2007, p. 136). Independent material includes texts that are not directly influenced by the promoters of destinations, for example news in the mass media, fictional literature and popular culture like movies (Falkheimer & Thelander, 2007, p. 136). The positive aspect with movies for example is that they mediate both rich and detailed descriptions of a place. Newer so called hybrid programs like reality shows or documentaries can also help to put a place on a map. Another image-making agent is produced mediated material which is information about a destination that is communicated by objective sources such as travel books (Falkheimer & Thelander, 2007, p. 137). The two remaining agents are considered to be the most credible ones, namely produced organic material (stories that are told by acquaintances of the receiver) and organic material (the receivers own, personal experience) (Falkheimer & Thelander, 2007, p. 138).

3.6 MEDIA’S IMPACT ON PLACE MARKETING

Most trips begin long before the traveler has left the home. Thinking of a place or just hearing the name of a specific location in the world is usually enough in order for our conceptions to take shape in our minds. News images depicting armed demonstrations in La Paz, the main capital of Bolivia, may have a significant effect on our conceptions of South America for example (Falkheimer & Thelander, 2007, p. 129). When hearing the name Sweden, some people might think about IKEA, meatballs or blond women. Even our own experiences of a place can be affected by the media images that we have been exposed to, for example when the ocean is not as blue and clean as in the travel catalogue or even worse, when people through representations in the media have created a biased and simplified opinion about another culture (Falkheimer & Thelander, 2007, p. 129). Places are therefore highly dependent on the images that are mediated
by the media (Falkheimer & Thelander, 2007, p. 133). It is not unusual that members of the audience tend to primarily think about topics or issues that are receiving extensive media coverage at any given moment. The more, or the more prominent, the media coverage of an issue is, the more people will be informed and aware of this particular subject. The best way of increasing the public’s attention about an issue is therefore to maximize the media coverage. This goal can be realized in several ways; through newspapers, news conferences, media events, advertising or flooding the blogosphere for example (Manheim, 2007, p. 58). A campaign often relies on the mass media to legitimize its objective, to spread its messages or to generate visibility. To have the support of professional editors or journalists is considered to be an advantage in any campaign (Manheim, 2011, p. 28). The media can also help to improve the knowledge and create awareness of places that are both geographically and culturally far away (Falkheimer & Thelander, 2007, p. 133).

Advertising does rarely reach the goals of its initiators. In today’s society, the overflow of information and the increasing competition for human attention have caused a crisis for traditional advertising. This does not indicate that big, successful and expensive campaigns will disappear in the future but they are now being more and more challenged by other methods and techniques (Falkheimer & Thelander, 2007, p. 130). Today, marketing trends tend to be more focused on customer relationships (Vargo & Lusch, 2004) that put more emphasis on direct client meetings (Falkheimer & Thelander, 2007, p. 130). Another form of marketing that has expanded is news management which is the techniques and strategies that are being used in order to try to influence what becomes news and how these texts are created and designed (Palm, 2002, p. 83). The key word within this form of marketing is visibility and this is a strategy that the communication’s company Visit Sweden has applied when marketing Sweden abroad (Falkheimer & Thelander, 2007, p. 130). Their main priority is to market the Swedish trademark and Swedish destinations (Visit Sweden, 2013) by creating visibility in the international press (Falkheimer & Thelander, 2007, p. 130). If an article about Sweden is published in the Spanish newspaper _El Pais_ or the American _USA Today_ there is a possibility that such exposure in two highly credible newspapers will be much more efficient than distributing a colourful brochure to potential tourist or in-migrants. One important reason why the strategy of news management is administered to such a degree today within place marketing may be related to the direct and measurable effects that publicity might provide. There is however also an ethical problem attached to this particular marketing method. News management is often described as being contrary to transparency which is a certain quality that media consumers of today demand in a
democratic society. Journalism should provide the general public with information that is credible and independent in relation to the material or sources of journalists (Falkheimer & Thelander, 2007, p. 131).

3.7 THE EFFECTS OF PLACE MARKETING

The effects of place marketing in Sweden are virtually unknown (Niedomysl, 2007, p. 698). His research indicates that municipalities do indeed perform place marketing campaigns in order to attract new inhabitants but the effects of these promotional efforts are rarely measured after a campaign has been realized. In his paper “Promoting rural municipalities to attract new residents: An evaluation of the effects,” Niedomysl (2007) examines the campaign efforts performed by Swedish municipalities in order to determine whether these have been successful in attracting migration flows to rural areas (p. 700). His results suggested that marketing campaigns did not have a positive effect on in-migration, but in a few cases a positive impact could not be ruled out (p. 698). It is only when the effects of a campaign have been measured that we can say with certainty what a campaign has accomplished (Pamment, 2013, p. 1). Even though Niedomysl (2007) could not find any evidence that these municipalities had benefitted from their efforts to market their respective area, it was possible however to determine that rural areas were of special interest to research in a marketing and migration context. During the year of 2002, local authorities spent approximately €5,000,000 on place marketing in order to attract new residents and almost half of Sweden’s 290 municipalities were engaged in this activity. The rural municipalities were identified as having been very ambitious when it came to carrying out marketing campaigns, an activity that 78 per cent of the rural municipalities were engaged in compared to 69 per cent of urban municipalities (p. 699-700). These statistics indicate that even though Niedomysl did not find any evidence of success, it was possible to establish that if any municipalities had been successful it was definitely the rural ones (Niedomysl, 2004). Eimermann (2013) argues that more qualitative data is needed in order to be able to determine whether migrants have moved as a direct result of international rural place marketing campaign. He suggests that this form of data can preferable be gathered by conducting in-depth interviews with migrants after they have migrated from their native country (p. 22).
4. METHOD

The method chapter will present, discuss and motivate why the purpose and research questions in this thesis have been answered by utilizing a qualitative approach. The entire process, from data gathering to the interpretation of results will therefore be described. This chapter will begin with a justification of the research method where it will be discussed why this particular approach is superior to others. This subheading will be followed by the sampling process, the interview guide that was used during the interviews and how the study was implemented. The method chapter will end with a discussion regarding the validity and reliability of the study and how the results can be generalized.

4.1 JUSTIFICATION OF RESEARCH METHOD

Qualitative methods are frequently being used within media and communication studies in order to analyse the production and reception of media texts, the activities of media actors and their strategies (Østbye, Knapskog, Helland & Larsen, 2008, p. 100). The empirical material in this thesis is based upon 16 semi-structured interviews with two municipal officers employed by Hagfors municipality, one real-estate agent and 20 Dutch immigrants who live permanently in the area. It is important to emphasize that seven of the interviews with the Dutch informants were conducted in pairs.

The main priority throughout the data-gathering process has firstly been to examine how the rural municipality of Hagfors has used place marketing in order to attract new inhabitants from the Netherlands. Secondly, it has also been important to determine how these efforts have been received by the Dutch immigrants and if they have had any effect on their decision to migrate. In their article “The challenge facing migration research: the case for a biographical approach”, Halfacree and Boyle (1993) argue that it is necessary to perform in-depth investigations of the biographies of migrants in order to be able to create a better understanding of the intentions that together have affected their decision to migrate. This form of methodological approach and analysis is therefore perceived as being very time consuming, but at the same time it helps to create a deeper understanding of the life stories and motives of the migrants (p. 343). It is quite apparent that several interview questions in the elaborated interview guide could indeed have
been presented to the informants in a questionnaire form rather than through a personal conversation (Murray Thomas & Brubaker, 2008, p. 174). Since the Dutch population living in Hagfors is considered to be a minority, it would have been easy and efficient to distribute questionnaires to this group in order to be able to draw conclusions about the entire population. Qualitative data are often met with certain suspicion since they often consist of small samples and cannot therefore be considered representative for the population (Trost, 2005, p. 16). However, using a quantitative approach may provide the study with a large sample of ordinary people and a small number of the more unusual people (Trost, 2005, p. 117).

Not only would a quantitative method allow a larger number of participants, it would also have saved the researcher a significant amount of time (Murray Thomas & Brubaker, 2008, p. 174). Migration research is currently facing several problems according to Pooley and Wiley (1991). They are especially drawing attention to how quantitative methods tend to provide a bias image which generates “an impersonal, dehumanized approach in which flows replace people and the motives for migration are assumed rather than proven” (p. 4) and where “individuals…become lost” (p. 5). Interviews are going to provide this thesis with an in-depth understanding of the Dutch immigrants’ motives for moving, pattern of reasoning and eventual emotional reactions that would not be possible to establish through questionnaires (Murray Thomas & Brubaker, 2008, p. 174). Taking the time and trouble to conduct personal interviews rather than simply distributing an impersonal questionnaire through mail might also suggest to the informants that the researcher genuinely values their opinion (Murray Thomas & Brubaker, 2008, p. 174). In his article “Evaluating the effects of place-marketing campaigns on interregional migration in Sweden,” Niedomysl (2004) discusses how there is a knowledge gap within research regarding how place marketing can be used in order to attract new inhabitants and therefore provide two suggestions for further research. Firstly, it is important to perform interviews with in-migrants in order to be able to determine if their choice of destination area was influenced by marketing campaigns. Secondly, it is also just as important to do in-depth studies of the actors responsible for the place marketing efforts (p. 2007). Eimermann (2013) also argues that further qualitative data are needed in order to be able to determine if migrants move as a direct result of marketing campaigns initiated by rural municipalities (p. 23).

4.2 SAMPLING PROCESS

Two groups of informants pose the main source of information in this work; Dutch people who have migrated from the Netherlands to Hagfors who now live permanently in the municipality
and individuals who are employed by the municipality who work on a daily basis with the Dutch in-migration and place marketing of Hagfors. The main reason why the empirical material is based on the knowledge and values among these two groups is to be able to present and provide two different perspectives on the place marketing efforts made by Hagfors in order to determine whether these views coincide or not. The second group of informants consists of Dutch individuals who have migrated from the Netherlands and who now live permanently in Hagfors. It was of great importance that the Dutch informants live in the municipality all year round since this thesis is only going to focus on individuals who have left their home country in order to start a completely new life in another country. Several of the Dutch inhabitants living in Hagfors municipality are classified as seasonal migrants who only stay in the area for a certain amount of time each year due to work related causes. It is also very common for Dutchmen to own holiday houses in Hagfors. The interviews with the Dutch immigrants will provide information about how Hagfors could become a centre for counterurbanisation and what attracted them to this particular area. The individuals who are employed by the municipality will provide information about why this phenomenon is occurring but also which methods have been used by Hagfors to attract Dutch migrants to the area and how their promotional efforts are perceived by the Dutch in-migrants.

The original idea was to use systematic sampling in order to ensure that every member of the Dutch population in Hagfors would have an equal chance of being chosen and represented (Murray Thomas & Brubaker, 2008, p. 130) in the empirical section of the thesis. This way of sampling is suitable when studying relatively small populations (Murray Thomas & Brubaker, 2008, p. 131) like the Dutch minority living in Hagfors municipality for example. This idea was however quickly replaced when the Business Developer of Hagfors municipality, Anders Bäcker informed me about how it would not be possible to receive any statistical information over the number of Dutch immigrants living permanently in the area. Even though the exact number is unknown, he estimates that the municipality has between 250 and 300 Dutch inhabitants. The absence of a population register prevented me from using a systematic sample since I would not be able to achieve the main prerequisite of this particular method, namely to include every single Dutch inhabitant in Hagfors municipality when making the selection. The other problem with using a systematic sample was that I would not be able to achieve enough variation in the sample. The risk of the informants sharing the same gender, age and other qualities would have significantly increased if I would have randomly selected them from a list. Since this study is
based on the opinions and values of a Dutch population living in Hagfors it is therefore possible that the selected informants would not even speak Swedish or English.

Purposive sampling has been used in this study when making the selection of informants. This method implies that the units were chosen, using the judgement of the investigator in order to be able to represent important characteristics (O’Muircheartaigh, 2008, p. 296) of the Dutch population living in Hagfors. Purposive sampling in qualitative research is therefore considered to be the deliberate seeking out of informants with particular characteristics. There are several reasons why this method has been chosen when conducting this study. Firstly, this strategy is useful when trying to locate participants who otherwise would be difficult to locate (Morse, 2004, p. 885-886). Since there are no statistical records available regarding the number of Dutch immigrants living permanently in Hagfors I quickly realized that it was necessary for me to both locate and select the informants single-handedly. Secondly, this sampling method allowed me to use a so called snowball sample in which participants are referred and recommended by members of the same group who already have participated in an interview. After locating a “good” informant in a snowball sample I asked the participant if he or she could refer me to another person who might be interested in taking part in an interview (Morse, 2004, p. 885-886). The negative aspect of using these key-figures or gate-keepers of information is that they are allowed to control the sample in order to provide the study with interesting individuals (Trost, 2005, p. 119).

Receiving recommendations regarding potential informants did not necessarily have to imply that they were automatically included in the study. When selecting the participants, it was of great importance that a certain variation was achieved in the sample, especially within the group of Dutch informants in order for the empirical data to be able to draw conclusions about the entire population. The main purpose of this thesis is to examine place marketing from a migration perspective. Several Dutch television shows have been produced about Dutch people (mostly entrepreneurs) who have immigrated to Hagfors in order to start a new life in the area. Establishing a contact with these individuals was therefore a priority since they would be able to contribute with information regarding what role the Dutch media has played in the mediation of the Hagfors brand. If systematic sampling would have been used instead of a purposive sampling, these individuals would perhaps not even have been a part of the sample at all which would imply that valuable information related to the subject of the thesis could potentially have been lost. The goal however was not to base the whole empirical work on entrepreneurs only.
It was of great importance to achieve a variation regarding the age, gender and occupation of the informants. The participants in the study are between 21 and 59 years old which implies that the empirical data represent the opinions of individuals from different generations. Dutch informants from several professions are included in the study, for example; bus driver, economic advisor, truck driver, business owner and teacher. One of the informants was currently unemployed at the moment when the interview was conducted while two were retired. It is also important to emphasize that I have tried to achieve variation in the sample depending on how long they have actually lived permanently in Hagfors municipality in order to be able to determine whether this variable had any impact on how they answered the interview questions. The experiences and opinions of a Dutch family that has lived in the area for two years may significantly differ from the experiences and opinions of a family that has lived in Hagfors for ten years. In this study, the informants have lived in the municipality between one and a half to eight years.

There are only two individuals within Hagfors municipality who are knowledgeable about the Dutch in-migration. When writing previous papers within this subject, I always contacted several employees at Hagfors municipality but all of these potential informants referred me to Business Developer Anders Bäcker, stating that they were not informed about the subject enough to be able to participate in an interview. Bäcker is the only employee within the municipality who works with questions regarding the Dutch migration on a daily basis. The second informant from the municipality to be interviewed in this thesis is the Tourist Manager of Hagfors, Madelene Andersson. She is very knowledgeable about the Dutch migration and how place marketing is used by the municipality in order to attract tourists and new inhabitants to the area.

An important milestone in the counterurbanisation of Hagfors community took place over ten years ago in the Dutch city Utrecht when a local real estate agent in Hagfors, Bengt Pettersson started to promote the municipality by visiting a migration exhibition in the city. He started this place marketing in the year of 2000 and at this time he was the only estate agent from the hole of Scandinavia. No other real estate agency or estate agent in the Nordic countries had tried this new way of marketing which made Pettersson an innovator within his field. Little did he know that these annual visits to Dutch exhibitions would lead to the Dutch migration that Hagfors municipality is experiencing today. Besides the municipal employees, I have chosen to include Bengt Pettersson in the empirical section of the thesis since he is the main reason why Hagfors is experiencing international migration from the Netherlands. In an early stage, Pettersson saw the
potential in the Dutch market. He anticipated that what people found to be dissatisfying with the Netherlands could be turned into something positive in Sweden through place marketing.

How many informants do I need in order to be able to answer the purpose and research questions stated in this thesis? This was a question that kept on recurring when designing and planning the interview study. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) argue that the number of interviews within interview studies should be around 15 +/-10 (p. 130). The original goal was to follow this recommendation by including 25 interviews in the study. After performing 20 interviews I quickly came to the conclusion that I had reached saturation in my work. This implied that the amount of new information had significantly decreased since the Dutch informants answered the questions in a very similar matter. My instinct told me that I had reached sufficient material when it was possible to actually predict the answers of the informants in advance.

4.3 INTERVIEW GUIDE

The empirical material in this thesis is based on 16 semi-structured interviews which imply that both themes and questions were already strictly predefined before the interviews with the Dutch immigrants were conducted. This procedure gives the researcher great flexibility since it is both possible and natural to ask follow-up questions (Østbye et al., 2008, p. 103). A review of both Swedish and international literature together with a well-defined purpose allowed the guide to include relevant themes and questions that were related to the fields of migration and place marketing research. The main priority as an interviewer was therefore to be well prepared since this preparation would allow me to ask questions more spontaneously during the interviews with the Dutch informants. Two interview guides were constructed, one for each group of informants. This thesis examines place marketing and migration from two, completely different perspectives which implies that two interview guides were indeed necessary in order to be able to provide the empirical section with information regarding the protagonist and its interests (Hagfors municipality) and the perceptions, wants and needs of the target group (the Dutch in-migrants). The interview guides were also written in Swedish and English since all of the Dutch informants had been given the opportunity to perform the interview in these two languages.

The first questions that are asked may have an effect on the entire interview. To begin an interview with a question that might be perceived as inappropriate by the informant could potentially prevent him or her from feeling comfortable during the conversation (Trost, 2005, p. 64). The initial questions of the interview guide were therefore of a general character, such as age,
occupation and how long the Dutch immigrants have lived in Hagfors for example. The following structure of the guide was designed in a way that would allow the immigrants to tell their life stories, by including questions that would allow them to speak about their past, their current life in Hagfors and their future. The general questions were followed by retrospective questions regarding why they moved from the Netherlands, how and why they chose Hagfors as their destination area. The main problem with retrospective questions is that they do not provide any answers about how something was at a specific time. They only tend to answer how the interviewee now sees how it was back then (Trost, 2005, p. 80). These questions were in turn followed by questions regarding their current lives in Hagfors. The interview guide was then finally completed with questions regarding the future, for example if they ever would consider moving back to the Netherlands.

4.4 IMPLEMENTATION

The initial contact with the informants was established by email or by phone, except for one of the participants who was contacted through the social networking site Facebook. Regardless of the means of communication used in order to find potential informants, they always received the same information about the researcher, her academic affiliation, the main purpose of the study, why they specifically had been chosen to take part in it and the estimated time that an eventual interview would take. The primary goal with the initial contact with the informants was to avoid long explanations that would cause them to lose interest in the study (Trost, 2005, p. 61).

All of the interviews with the Dutch immigrants were conducted in their homes or at their work place, except for one interview which was performed at a local café in Hagfors. When asking the informants if they had the time and desire to participate in an interview they were always offered to choose the location. This approach would enable them to choose an environment where they would feel most comfortable. Conducting an interview in the home of the informant can therefore be perceived as a cofactor of safety (Trost, 2005, p. 44). The main priority was therefore to ensure that every informant was relaxed in order for them to be able to open up and share their inner thoughts and opinions. The negative aspect of performing interviews in the comfort of the informants’ own homes or job sites increases the risk of distractions such as children coming home from school or that the interview is interrupted by a telephone call. The risk of disturbance is also quite high when performing interviews at a café. Not only does this particular environment increase the risk of disturbance from other visitors, it may also cause
these guests to listen in on the conversation between the interviewer and the informant (Trost, 2005, p. 44). It is therefore possible that the informant, despite being given the opportunity to choose the café as location for the interview, might have been under the impressions that he or she could not answer the questions truthfully in case there was someone listening to the dialogue.

After deciding upon when and where a conversation should take place it was time to conduct the actual interviews. Seven of the 23 interviews with the Dutch immigrants were conducted in pairs. It is important to emphasize that these informants were either married or in a relationship which implies that they were not strangers to each other. Interviewing multiple individuals at once is an approach that should be avoided according to Trost (2005) since such interviews tend to become quite complicated. There is a risk that the silent informants will not be able to express themselves properly if their counterpart is much more talkative (p. 46). It is also possible that the informants affect each other which could cause the interviewer to receive majority viewpoints (Trost, 2005, p. 47). Despite these negative aspects I decided to allow the informants to perform the interviews with their significant other for several reasons. Firstly, allowing the Dutch immigrants to perform the interviews in pairs would hopefully enable them to feel more comfortable during the interview. Since both Swedish and English are their second languages they might become more confident if they had someone they knew and trusted by their side that could help them to translate their Dutch statements when necessary. During the interviews, several of the informants had a difficult time trying to express certain words, expressions or even sentences in English or Swedish. There were several occasions during the interviews when they only knew how to express themselves in their native language. In many cases, the presence of their partner enabled the informants to work actively together in order to be able to make a correct statement. Secondly, even though the initial contact was established with only one informant it was not unusual that their partner wanted to participate as well when I arrived to the location. The overall interest for this study has been high among the Dutch population living in Hagfors. It has already been stated that it is not unusual for the immigrants to know each other since they constitute a small minority in the municipality. Through word of mouth, several Dutch immigrants became aware of the study and wanted to participate as well. Even though there were individuals who wanted to participate, the main priority was always to maintain variation in the sample.

Every informant was notified about several practical details before the interview was performed. It was important to make sure that every participant received a more detailed description about the interview in order to make sure that he or she was very well aware of the main purpose and
topic of the study. This precaution is considered to be unnecessary according to Trost (2005) who argues that an interviewer does not have to inform the informant about the purpose of the study or for whom it is made (p. 107). In this case however it was important that every informant was well aware of what the interview was going to be about since the Dutch immigrants have Swedish and English as their second language which may increase the risk of misconceptions. After conducting the first five interviews with Dutch immigrants it became quite apparent that they had misunderstood the purpose of the interview. Several of the informants, especially the self-employed originally thought that the study was only going to focus on Dutch companies and the entrepreneurial climate in the municipality and therefore spoke significantly about their businesses. The informants were also given the opportunity to choose if they wanted to carry out the interview in Swedish or English. The possibility of choosing between these two languages may also be viewed as a cofactor of safety that would enable the participants to open up and feel more comfortable in the situation.

Every interview was recorded with a mobile phone which implies that every informant gave their permission to be recorded. The decision to use this particular equipment in order to document the interviews was carefully considered before the data gathering process was initiated. It was very important to take into account that several of the informants have not lived in Sweden for a longer period of time which may indicate that they might not be completely comfortable in speaking Swedish or English for that matter. Just because the Dutch immigrants have lived in the area for five years does not necessarily have to imply that they feel more comfortable in speaking Swedish either. If the informants feel restricted in the way they express themselves due to language differences they might feel even more uncomfortable to speak when knowing that everything they say is being recorded and played over and over again. The informants were therefore encouraged to ask questions if they found something to be unclear at any given moment during the interview. It was not uncommon for the immigrants to ask whether they used the right word or pronunciation when answering a question. Even though the conversations with the informants could be affected by using a recording device, the benefits with using this form of equipment were estimated to exceed the negative aspects. Firstly, it is possible to print out every interview in order to be able to read what the informants literally said (Trost, 2005, p. 53). Secondly, I did not have to make any notes during the conversations which allowed me to fully concentrate on the questions and answers (Trost, 2005, p. 54).
One final practical detail that was discussed and explained before the interviews were conducted was how the informants were guaranteed strict confidentiality when participating in the study. What was said during the interviews would therefore not be passed on to others. It is therefore crucial that no one finds out who said or who did what during the interviews (Trost, 2005, p. 41). It is therefore important to emphasize that all of the informants have been assigned fictive Dutch names in this thesis in order for them to remain anonymous. See appendix 8.2 to receive further information about the participants in this study. It has already been stated that this thesis is examining a minority group in Hagfors municipality which implies that there is a high risk that the informants know each other, especially the Dutch entrepreneurs. During the interviews it was very common for the informants to talk about other Dutch inhabitants living in Hagfors municipality. Preserving the identity of the informants has therefore been a main priority. Anonymity on the other hand could not be given since I, the interviewer already knew the names and other character features of the Dutch informants (Trost, 2005, p. 41).

The length of the interviews varied between 30 and 90 minutes depending on the length of the answers. When contacting the informants they were told that the interview would take approximately 45 minutes. It was possible to aftertreat the interviews in several different ways since they were documented with a recording device (Østbye et al., 2008, p. 106). Every interview was transcribed immediately after every encounter with a new informant. This was perhaps the most time consuming process during the entire project since 16 interviews, all in the range between 30-60 minutes easily comprised over 400 pages of printouts. This is a great deal of material to keep track of. Jan Trost (2005) argues that the printouts do not necessarily have to be complete (p. 55). When transcribing the interviews I made the decision to leave out information that would not have any effect on the overall results, such as the Dutch informants speaking their native language with each other, children interrupting the interview or small talk about the weather for example. Confidential information was also removed from the finished transcripts in order to be able to eliminate the risk of anyone recognizing the participants. Quotes have been reproduced as closely to the original source as possible. However, there is hardly any informant that speaks concise and cohesive during an entire interview. The statements made by informants can appear as unconcentrated if the participants are quoted in a very exact manner. There is a risk that the informants become ridiculed. It is therefore very important to emphasize that the quotes have been edited very carefully and adaptable in order to avoid this particular problem (Ekström & Larsson, 2010, p. 72).
4.5 VALIDITY, RELIABILITY AND GENERALISATION

4.5.1 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

The interviewer affects the respondents to different degrees during an interview which implies that there is always a potential risk that the respondents answer according to what they think the interviewer wants them to say (Østbye et al., 2008, p. 153). It is therefore quite possible that the informants’ answers are affected by the context in which they are stated (Østbye et al., 2008, p. 121). This is a problem that I encountered, especially when gathering the empirical data in the municipality where I grew up, namely Hagfors. To perform fieldwork in an environment that is familiar to the researcher is an important aspect that needs to be discussed since I personally originate from Hagfors municipality. Since the year of 2008 I have worked at the Tourist Information in Hagfors as a hostess during the summerset which implies that I have had regular contact with several Dutch immigrants living in the municipality, especially the entrepreneurs. This contact does not imply that I have established a close relationship with the individuals in this study but it is still important to emphasize that I have met four of the informants through my work as a tourist office hostess. In semi-structured interviews, the interviewer constitutes the main condition for what is discovered during a conversation with an informant (Østbye et al., 2008, p. 124). It is therefore possible that the Dutch informants who I have met before were under the impression that they could not answer the questions truthfully because of the fear that the truth would affect their continued relationship with the Tourist Information in Hagfors. This problem regarding validity was hopefully countered by informing every participant that what was said during the interview was strictly confidential, indicating that the information would not be passed on to others. It was also important for me to explain the reason for my presence; I was there as a student, not as a representative from the Tourist Office. There is a risk that the researcher disregards certain results or emphasizes others if he or she has a specific bond to the informants. The interviewer may therefore identify so strongly that it is impossible for him or her to maintain a professional distance (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 91). By recording every interview instead of performing notes by hand I automatically strengthened the methodological reliability in my work. Giving potential readers the opportunity to read through the transcribed interviews would provide transparency to the study. Allowing the readers to take part in the material, word by word will therefore help to strengthen the validity of the data as well (Østbye et al., 2008, p. 120-121).
To be familiar with the informants does not necessarily need to imply that they would have a problem with answering the questions in a truthful matter. Knowing the interviewer could also make the informants feel more comfortable and relaxed during the conversation which could enable them to feel encouraged to open up even more to the interviewer. My previous knowledge about the Dutch population in Hagfors enabled me to handpick the individuals who I believed would provide the study with valuable information. For example, through my work as a hostess at the Tourist office I have managed to develop a strong notion about which immigrants have participated in Dutch televisions shows and who have used the media in order to promote their business and therefore automatically promoted Hagfors municipality as well.

Tina Wangenfors (2011) encountered the same problem as I did when conducting interviews with Dutch immigrants in her own municipality of residence. The purpose of her study was to examine why Skinnskattebergs municipality chose to recruit Dutchmen and how it had gone for the immigrants who moved to the area (p. 5). She discusses that her personal attachment to the area should not have any effect on the end result since the purpose of her work was to examine the experiences of Dutch immigrant who have moved from one country to another. Since she had no experience herself of the subject she argues that she could not relate to it in the same way as the Dutch informants. If her work would have focused on women who have grown up on the countryside she would then have had a much closer relationship to the subject (Wangenfors, 2011, p. 11).

Validity is not only a question regarding methodology. When discussing the methodological issues regarding validity, theoretical questions are automatically raised about the nature of the phenomenon that is under investigation (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 271). The validity of a study is therefore highly dependent on the theoretical assumptions that are made and how well they are reinforced (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 267). The primary question is therefore; does this thesis investigate what it claims to investigate in the introduction chapter? This subheading regarding validity will discuss why the theoretical foundation in this thesis is suitable and relevant when answering the research questions.

This study is based on a theoretical framework that unifies two fields of research; migration and place marketing. The first section of the theoretical framework is primarily focused on migration studies in order to provide the reader with essential information about the migration process and the motives behind it. The information that is provided in the first section cannot entirely be
used to answer the three research questions stated in this thesis since they are only focused on
the place marketing efforts made by Hagfors municipality and therefore not directly concerned
with migration. This does not infer that the theoretical framework regarding migration is
unimportant, on the contrary, this section provides the thesis with essential background
information about what causes migration, why people move from one place and what attracts
them to another. It is therefore of great importance that rural municipalities answer these
questions, preferably by using the push and pull theory, before actually creating and conducting
place marketing campaigns with the purpose of attracting new inhabitants.

The second section of the theoretical framework is primarily concerned with perspectives
regarding place marketing. The first research question: “How has place marketing been used by Hagfors
municipality in order to attract Dutch migrants from the Netherlands?” is mainly focusing on the strategies
that have been applied by Hagfors municipality in order to attract new residents from the
Netherlands. In order to answer this question it has been crucial to include research about how
other rural municipalities in Sweden have done in order to reach the same goal and intentions as Hagfors. Three of the most commonly used marketing strategies used by Swedish municipalities
in order to specifically attract residents from the Netherlands are therefore included in this
section. When discussing the strategies it is also very important to include a discussion regarding
the main target groups of these promotional efforts.

Stuart Halls classical model encoding/decoding has primarily been utilized in order to be able to
answer the second question: “How is the Hagfors brand perceived by the Dutch population living in the
municipality and how well do their interpretation of the brand correspond to the image that is communicated by
Hagfors?” Through this model it is possible to establish how the Hagfors brand has been created
and produced by the municipality, what meanings that have been attached to it and finally how
these meanings have been decoded and interpreted by the Dutch immigrants. The interviews
with the municipal employees and Dutch immigrants will therefore enable this thesis to establish
the degrees of symmetry and asymmetry that have been established between the encoder-producer and decoder-receiver in this study. This model will allow this thesis to determine
whether the communicative goal of Hagfors municipality is currently being fulfilled or not. Have
the Dutch immigrants living in the area decoded the meaning of the brand in the exact way as
Hagfors originally intended or not? The encoding/decoding model has been used in combination
with so-called image-making agents since the mediation of a place occurs under similar
conditions as Hall describes in his model. By incorporating typology over how much control the
sender can have over a message depending on which media channel that is utilized it is possible
to determine which media forms could be most beneficial to use when establishing a trustworthy,
strong brand for a rural municipality like Hagfors. Image-making agents are also used in order to
provide a theoretical foundation for the third and final research question “To what extent can the
effectiveness of the place marketing strategies performed by Hagfors municipality be measured?” Places are highly
dependent on the images that are mediated by the media since they can help to improve the
knowledge of a certain place. Through this typology it is therefore possible to determine the
advantages of using certain media channels over others. This is important in order to establish
how the Dutch informants became aware of Hagfors municipality. Was it through Emigration
Expos, reality TV-shows or word of mouth?

4.5.2 GENERALISATION

The remaining question after discussing whether the results of this study are reliable and valid is
if they are generalizable. A statistical generalization has been used when conducting this study.
This method implies that conclusions about a population are drawn by only studying a sample
from this particular population in order to be able to ascribe the objects (Dutch immigrants and
municipal employees in Hagfors) certain mutual characteristics (Østbye et al., 2008, p. 237).
Another aspect that has been taken in consideration regarding generalization is: are the results
primarily of local interest or can they be transferred to other informants and situations (Kvale & Brinkmann,
2009, p. 280). The study conducted in this thesis is limited to a specific geographical area which
implies that the empirical data only represent the values and opinions of Dutch immigrants who
are living permanently in Hagfors municipality. The results of the study are therefore especially
important and relevant for Hagfors since they provide a local perspective on how place
marketing can be used in order to attract new residents to a rural area. If this study would have
been conducted in another municipality in Värmland or if several municipalities would have been
included in the study, another result could probably have been achieved since different contexts
and places are then studied. The relationships that humans have towards different places are just
as complex as the relationship between humans. Place marketing and the commercialization of
places imply a series of physical, ethical, cultural, ecological and social aspects that affect who we
are and what we do (Ek & Hultman, 2007, p. 13).

In the year of 2009, Statistics Netherlands (2012A) reported that over 700 000 Dutch people had
plans to emigrate to another country. In 2011, emigration hit a high new record in the
Netherlands when a total of 133 000 people settled abroad (Statistics Netherlands, 2012B). The
amount of Dutchmen emigrating to Sweden has nearly doubled since the beginning of the 21st century (Statistics Sweden, 2013D). These statistical facts imply that the Dutch population is very likely to migrate and that Sweden has become a very popular destination for this migration. Since there are so many rural municipalities in Sweden that are struggling with issues regarding out-migration and an ageing population, attracting new inhabitants has become more important than ever before in order to secure the future of these areas. Using the practice of place marketing can therefore help these municipalities to turn this negative trend around. This thesis could probably enable them to do just that. Even though this study provides a local perspective, other municipalities facing the same problems as Hagfors can therefore use the results in this thesis in order to create their own place marketing strategies.
5. RESULTS

This chapter will present, discuss and analyse the empirical results that were acquired through the qualitative interviews with the Dutch immigrants, municipal employees and real estate agent Bengt Pettersson. The chapter follows the theoretical structure in this thesis which implies that the results are divided into two separate parts. The first part presents the results that are relatable to migration research while the second and final part reveals the results that are mainly relatable to the practice of place marketing. The main reason for dividing the chapter into two separate parts is to reach uniformity between the theoretical framework and the empirical results. This structure will enable the reader to understand the relationship between what existing research says about migration and place marketing and the results that have been found through the qualitative interviews.

5.1 HOW IT ALL BEGAN

An important milestone in the counterurbanisation of Hagfors municipality took place over ten years ago in the Dutch city Utrecht when a local real estate agent in Hagfors, Bengt Pettersson began to promote the community by participating in the annual Emigration Expo. For several years, Pettersson had regularly visited similar exhibitions in Germany when the country was still divided into East and West since the property market in Hagfors was far too small. When these two states reunified the economy was heavily affected which caused Pettersson to realize that the market would probably cease to exist. In the year of 2000 he began representing Hagfors municipality on emigration fairs in the Netherlands with the intention to sell houses to Dutchmen. At this moment in time, Pettersson was the only real estate agent from the hole of Scandinavia. No other real estate agency or estate agent in the Nordic countries had attempted to market rural municipalities in a similar matter before which made Pettersson an early innovator within his field. Little did he know that these annual visits to Dutch emigration exhibitions would lead up to the Dutch in-migration that Hagfors is experiencing today.

When attending the Emigration Expo in the Netherlands for the very first time, Pettersson quickly realized that he was facing a significant challenge, namely to try and change the Dutch
perceptions about Sweden which were quite negative and prejudiced at the time: “First of all it was very cold, it was dark, it was very expensive and polar bears were almost walking on the streets.” This was what they knew, or thought they knew about Sweden when Pettersson entered the Dutch market. In order to be able to attract new inhabitants to Hagfors municipality he knew that these perceptions needed to change and be replaced by more positive characteristics such as low house prices and beautiful nature. From the very beginning, Pettersson was forced to change an image of Sweden that was very strong and deeply rooted among the Dutch population. Pettersson argues during the interview that these perceptions derive from old rumors that have persisted until now. The rumor that Sweden is an expensive country is a reputation that was true 20-30 years ago but somehow he argues, it tends to linger and is kept alive through word of mouth. It can therefore be quite difficult to change a rumor that has survived for such a long period of time. Even today, it is difficult for him to understand how people have created these opinions about Sweden and how they have been created. Besides trying to change the image of Sweden, Pettersson also tried to raise awareness about where in the world Sweden was situated during the Emigration Expo in Utrecht: “We had to try and put Sweden on the map because they did not know where Sweden was located, they mixed up Sweden and Switzerland which was very disturbing.” Pettersson knew that if the majority of the visitors did not know where Sweden was located, then they would certainly not know where in the world the rural municipality of Hagfors was situated either.

Bengt Pettersson took several measures in order to try and change the negative perceptions about Sweden during the Emigration Expo. Firstly it was very important to establish a personal contact with the visitors in order for him to be able to explain more about Sweden and especially why Hagfors potentially could be a suitable place for them to live in the future. When talking directly to visitors and meeting them face to face, it was possible for Pettersson to give immediate response and feedback to those who appeared at his showcase, especially those with negative and prejudiced opinions about Sweden. Secondly, Pettersson has also held numerous lectures and seminars during these exhibitions in order to be able to provide visitors with more detailed information about Hagfors municipality. Today, more than ten years after Pettersson first entered the Dutch market, several Swedish regions, municipalities, cities and towns have appeared at the Emigration Expo. Bengt is no longer a single actor in this market; he is now competing with other places in Sweden that also have discovered the benefits of marketing Sweden in the Netherlands which automatically has given rise to an increased rivalry.
5.1.1 LITTLE CANADA?

Another event that would come to increase the Dutch in-migration to Hagfors was when a Dutch entrepreneur bought the ski resort Värmullsåsen from Hagfors municipality in the year of 2003. Anders Bäcker describes this individual as a very talented marketer who knew how to use the media to his advantage. When the mass media in the Netherlands heard about his remarkable story, a television show was soon produced about him, depicting him as the Dutchman who had bought a whole mountain in Sweden which he called “Little Canada”. The show gave Hagfors enormous publicity in the Netherlands making Dutch people very curious of the municipality were you actually could afford to buy a whole mountain. The Netherlands is notorious for being a very densely populated country where a garage easily can cost up to 200 000 Euros. When receiving the news that it is possible for a person to buy an entire mountain it is understandable that it caught the interest of Dutch TV-viewers. A Dutchman purchasing a facility like Värmullsåsen gave Hagfors a lot of free, positive publicity in the Dutch media which helped to put the municipality on the map. This event, however, gave rise to a number of consequences that would come to have a negative impact on the future of Hagfors municipality.

After being in operation for two seasons only, Värmullsåsen was declared bankrupt. A Dutch trio bought the facility of the bankruptcy trustee but after a couple of seasons they offered Hagfors municipality to become the owner of Värmullsåsen once again. At this particular moment, municipal officers in Hagfors chose not to accept the offer. The owners began to sell pieces of the property, fell the surrounding forests, dismantled the facility and sold the mechanical equipment that had been used during maintenance work. When the municipality bought Värmullsåsen in 2009 they purchased a butchered and empty facility for 200 000 Euros which was a lot of money considering that they only received 5000 Euros when selling the facility the first time (Nilsson, 2013). This background information about Värmullsåsen is included in this section regarding results for two specific reasons. Firstly, the interviews with the Dutch immigrants clearly suggest that this facility was one of the reasons why they were attracted to the area. Secondly, the informants strongly believe that Värmullsåsen could attract even more inhabitants if the facility would be put into operation once again. This issue will be further discussed under the subheading: “Push factors of Hagfors.”

The empirical results clearly indicate that Little Canada has become a well-established expression among the Dutch inhabitants living in Hagfors municipality. It is difficult, however, to determine
if the concept refers to the whole region of Värmland or only to Hagfors municipality. Simone and her husband Martin lived in Labrador, Canada for several years before they moved to Sweden due to Martin’s work in the military. They describe the district as a very isolated place since the only way to reach the area was by plane or boat. Despite the remoteness, the couple enjoyed living in Labrador very much which implies that they were already accustomed to living in a rural area before moving to Hagfors. They had always planned to stay in Canada but when they became grandparents they decided that it was better to move closer to their children and grandchildren who were living in the Netherlands. One of Simone’s and Martin’s friends asked them why they did not move to the province of Värmland, especially when people call it Little Canada. They visited Hagfors municipality and they immediately felt like home because the area reminded them so much of Canada. Now when they live in Sweden they are much closer to the Netherlands which implies that they can visit their relatives and friends more regularly. The fact that plane tickets from Canada to the Netherlands are very expensive was also taken into consideration before the couple decided where to settle down.

I order to escape from the city and the hectic lifestyle in the Netherlands, Marrethe Klerk and her husband went on long trips abroad just to get away from where they lived. During one of these trips they visited Canada for three months. Before they moved to Hagfors they heard from friends who were already living in the municipality that the area was called Little Canada. This implies that their previous experience of Canada allowed them to create a good understanding of how it may look like in Hagfors without having experienced the area themselves. The interviews imply that Sweden and Canada share many similarities. Besides the difference in size, the two countries share the same nature, wild-life and climate according to the informants. Several of the immigrants refer to the rich animal life and how it is possible to see bears, elks and wolves in their natural environment. The informants also associate Sweden and Canada with countryside living by referring to the way in which houses are built and constructed. The so called barns in Canada reminded the participants of the traditional red Swedish houses with white house corners.

One important question that needs to be discussed is how the Dutch informants know that the two countries share so many similarities when the majority of them have not visited or lived in Canada before? This question can be answered in two different ways judging by the empirical data. Firstly, a majority of the informants have received information about Canada through their family and friends who either have visited Canada or lived there. When these individuals visited the Dutch immigrants in Hagfors for the first time they were amazed by the fact how similar the
area was to Canada. The interviews with the Dutch informants imply that word of mouth has been very important in order for the expression to reach a wider and greater impact among Dutch people living in Hagfors as well as in the Netherlands. Secondly, two of the informants believe that people have created their image of Canada through the media by referring to movies and television programs that mainly puts emphasis on the nature. During the interview, Maria Treub describes how she created her own opinion about Canada and how the country shared many similarities with Hagfors: “The nature here is the same as in Canada but I have never been in Canada, but I have read about it and seen it on television so I thought that it must be correct.” This result corresponds very well to the theoretical framework where it is stated by Helt Cassel (2011) that opinions about what a place represents are created through the visitors’ prior experience of the area, relatives and friends who have told them about the area and the media (p. 16).

According to the municipal officers, the expression Little Canada was first coined by the Dutch entrepreneur who bought the ski resort Värmullståsen. This event together with the initial efforts made by real estate agent Bengt Pettersson would become the initial starting shot for the Dutch immigration to Hagfors municipality. It is very important to emphasize that the term has a very strong connection to a certain event that was considered to be quite ordinary by people living in the Netherlands, namely that a Dutchman bought a whole mountain in Sweden when it can cost up to 50 000 Euros to buy a garage for your car in the Netherlands. Due to the high property prices and lack of space in the Netherlands it is quite understandable that this piece of news received a lot of attention and later remained in people’s minds. Many of the informants also believe that if the distance between Canada and the Netherlands was shorter there is a possibility that Dutchmen would choose Canada instead of Sweden due to the English language.

5.2 PUSH FACTORS OF THE NETHERLANDS

The qualitative interviews with Dutch immigrants who live in Hagfors imply that there are several factors that caused them to leave their native country. The first push factor which also seems to be the main reason why the informants chose to leave the Netherlands is the reigning congestion. Since there are so many people living together on a very small surface it is almost impossible to find places where you actually can be entirely alone. Marretee Klerk describes how she and her husband used to take small trips during weekends and days off in order to visit places where it was calmer, less crowded and less stressful. Pieter van Dijk argues that there is no place in the Netherlands where it is entirely quiet: “Even where we lived on the countryside, even there you can hear factories, cars and see lights in the sky. Everywhere! No matter where you
are in the Netherlands, there is no such place where you do not hear anything.” The excess of population in the Netherlands implies that there are only a few places in the country where you can experience nature and wildlife. Julie Vries states during the interview that she was very lucky to live in a house that was closely situated to a forest in the Netherlands. When talking to other people about how she lived, they were often very amazed that she had so close access to the nature. When Julie went out for walk in the woods however, she met at least hundreds of other hikers who were on their way back on the trail which is a very good example of how difficult it can be to find a place where you can be alone. Since there is such a shortage of space in the Netherlands, people are also forced to live very closely together. It is therefore very rare for Dutch people to live in a free-standing house without any adjacent neighbors. Julie discusses how this way of living is not available for ordinary people in the Netherlands: “It is a dream for us to live where, there are no neighbors, but that is only for the king, queen and very rich people, they have a free-standing house with big fences.”

Other push factors that were distinguished through the qualitative interviews were the nature and the environment in the Netherlands. Several of the informants talk about the Dutch climate, saying that it is often cloudy, windy or rainy. The air pollutions that are caused by busy highways and industries are also important push factors according to the informants. The extreme traffic implies that it can be quite the struggle, just to get to work in the morning. Marretje Klerk discusses how it goes faster to go by bike than by car when you have to travel from one place to another: “In the Netherlands it took half an hour to go by bike to work because if I would take the car it would take at least 45 minutes since there is a traffic jam from the house to work.”

The informants moved from the Netherlands in order to get away from their stressful and hectic lifestyle. While living in their native country, the immigrants had very demanding jobs that required them to work long hours, sometimes as much as 50 hours per week. Nicole and Thomas Groot discuss how the entire life is based on the clock in the Netherlands and that everyone is always in a hurry which causes a lot of stress. A clear majority of the immigrants are under the impression that working in the Netherlands is much more demanding than working in Sweden. Peter van Dijk states during the interview: “My manager asked me; do you think your job is stressful? Then I had to laugh and say; you should work a week in Holland, then you know what stress is. You do not have any stress here!” The interviews also imply that it is quite difficult to receive a job or to change career in the Netherlands since there are so many people living in the country. It is especially difficult for the Dutchmen who would like to start their own
company due to the high prices on both land and real estates in the country. Julie Vries states during the interview: “When working 100 hours here you have to work 200 hours there, it is impossible to start your own company! First you must pay 40 000 Euros for a little place and then you must have rich parents or capital.”

5.3 PULL FACTORS OF HAGFORS

The previous subheading discussed why people chose to leave the Netherlands by examining the negative attributes of the country. Now it is time to focus on the main pull factors, namely the positive features that cause Dutch immigrants to move to Hagfors. One of the most important pull factors of Hagfors according to the informants is undoubtedly the nature and environment that exist in the municipality. The area consists of large woods, lakes and untouched wilderness making it a perfect place to start companies within the tourism industry. It is the calm, nature, fresh air and absence of stress that mainly attract the Dutch immigrants to rural Hagfors. Pieter van Dijk discusses how quiet it is to live on the countryside: “We walk for five minutes, then we are in the woods, then you hear nothing! No cars, no factories, nothing!” During the interview he also refers to a statement that his uncle made about Hagfors while visiting the area: “You are so close to the stars here! And when we walked into the woods he said that; my ears hurt! This is how quiet it is here!”

The second pull factor that attracts Dutch immigrants to Hagfors is that the area is very sparsely populated. Many of the Dutch immigrants are therefore very impressed by the amount of living space that Hagfors can offer residents. It is possible to find a house that is completely situated on the countryside without any adjacent houses. The immigrants can actually choose if they want neighbors or not which they consider to be a luxury. When they first arrived to the municipality they were chocked to see that they could drive for several miles before even seeing a house or populated area, maybe because this sight is very unusual in their country of origin. The low prices on real estate are also an important pull factor that causes in-migration to the municipality. A house in Hagfors can cost ten times less than a house in the Netherlands. When the immigrants see the prices for the first time they almost do not believe their eyes. They either believe that the price is incorrectly written or that there has to be something very wrong with the house. When purchasing a house in Hagfors it is not uncommon for buyers to receive a certain amount of forest that is attached to the property as well.
Through the interviews it is also possible to determine that the access to municipal services and local attractions in Hagfors caused the Dutch immigrants to settle down in the area. Even though Hagfors is a small municipality on the countryside, the Dutch immigrants were very enthusiastic that the area offered close access to a hospital, ski resort, an airport and a public bath for example. To have close access to these facilities without living in a big city was therefore an important pull factor that attracted the immigrants to the area. This particular result corresponds very well to the theoretical framework where it is stated that individuals tend to seek-out places and environments that are experiencing a positive development (Regionförbundet I Kalmar län, 2003, p. 14).

The push factors of the Netherlands and the pull factors of Hagfors correspond very well with the physical and social features that Keith Halfacree (1994) outlined in his study of British migrants. The most important resemblance between the empirical data and the study made by Halfacree is that the high environmental quality of the countryside is a very important pull factor that attracts Dutch immigrants to Hagfors. The research made by Fuguitt and Zuiches (1975) also shows that the rural countryside offers an environmental quality that attracts urban inhabitants. The main reason why the environment is such an important feature could be due to the fact that the nature that exists in Hagfors offers large untouched woods, open landscapes and a rich animal life that is rather absent in the Netherlands. Another reason why the environment is a pull factor is that the Dutch immigrants see the nature in Hagfors as a way to make money since they know through own experience that there is a certain demand for nature experiences in the Netherlands. Another similarity between the study made by Halfacree (1994) and the qualitative data is that the migrants feel that the destination area was more open and less crowded. The informants in this paper did not feel hemmed in by houses due to the fact that the area is sparsely populated. They also felt that the area was quiet, cleaner, less stressful and had a sense of community.

5.4 PUSH FACTORS OF HAGFORS

Not all Dutchmen stay in Hagfors municipality after moving to the area, in fact many of the immigrants have moved back to the Netherlands. This subheading regarding the push factors of Hagfors has been incorporated in this chapter in order to be able to establish the main negative attributes of Hagfors that cause Dutch immigrants to move back to their native country. Today, after living in the municipality for numerous of years the immigrants have begun to experience the downside of living in a rural municipality like Hagfors. As stated in the previous subheading,
the Dutch immigrants moved to Hagfors due to pull factors such as the airport, a hospital, a public bath and a ski resort. They have now begun to witness how the future of these attractions and facilities are threatened by closure, cutbacks or liquidation. Through the interviews it is possible to determine that the informants are very concerned about the future of Hagfors, especially when more and more stores in the center of Hagfors are disappearing. Ruben and Kim believe that it is the short distance to the region capital of Karlstad that causes companies to shut down in the municipality. Instead of supporting local stores, inhabitants of Hagfors go to Karlstad where there is a wider range of products to choose from to a much lower price. Ruben states during the interview how important it is for municipalities which visit the Netherlands with the purpose of attracting new residents to have something to offer the immigrants: "When you come here, the health care is deteriorating, shops are disappearing and everything is just getting worse. Then you have too little to offer those who move in and want to do something." Kim also expresses her concern about the current situation in Hagfors: "It bleeds, it bleeds! Everything dies out!"

A specific topic that is much talked about within the Dutch minority is how unfortunate it is that Värmullsåsen is not in operation anymore. Local inhabitants in Hagfors, not the municipality have recently begun to open the children’s slope which is a step in the right direction but a significant amount of work remains in order to open up the entire resort. The Dutch immigrants believe that the ski resort is a very important facility that will help to attract new residents to Hagfors, especially families with young children. This result is directly relatable to the theoretical framework where Hjort (2011) discusses how too many cutbacks on services may prevent potential inhabitants from moving to a certain area (p. 8). Both Värmullsåsen and the airport are two very important pull factors that separate Hagfors from other rural municipalities. Not every municipality in Sweden can boast with having their own ski resort or airport, especially not the rural ones. It is therefore possible for Hagfors to use these services as their main arguments when attracting new residents from urban cities for example. The municipality can then position themselves as an area where you can live on the countryside but still have access to a range of activities and means of communication that are otherwise associated with urban cities for example. Dennis Jong discusses during the interview how important it is for a place like Hagfors to open Värmullsåsen again if they want local inhabitants to stay in the area: ‘If the ski resort would open then there is a reason for everyone to stay here. It will not only be a touristy town but it would be a town that everyone would thrive in. Well, when people come here to Hagfors, they want to find out things. If they see that everything is closed, not working and nothing is getting started, well then there is no reason to stay here. If you are
here and hear that the ski resort is open during the winter, then everybody would hear that it is still in operation then everything will go, well then anyone can stay.”

One service in particular that has received a significant amount of attention in the empirical material is the lack of access to high speed internet. When Dutchmen move to the municipality they often choose to settle down in areas outside of the main center of Hagfors. It is therefore very important that these areas also have good internet possibilities since it is in these smaller towns that the Dutch immigrants prefer to live in when they move to the area. They do not want to live in Hagfors conurbation, on the contrary they prefer to live in the periphery, in smaller communities like Råda, Ekshärad and Sunnemo for example. Marretje Klerk chose to settle down in Uvanå which is a little village in Hagfors municipality with only 16 inhabitants. She argues how important it is for Hagfors to invest in better internet infrastructure in order to be able to make the countryside more attractive to potential residents. Today, it is very common for people to work from the comfort of their own home. Ander Bäcker discusses how his Dutch neighbor in Sunnemo is dependent on a reliable internet access since he makes instruction manuals for cars and telephones for companies all around the world. The Dutch entrepreneurs are a group that is especially dependent on internet since some of them manage their entire companies through the World Wide Web. Entrepreneur Ben Linden has recently invested in high speed internet that is distributed through fiber optic cable. One year ago he contacted the municipality to discuss the possibilities of installing such infrastructure at his company and he was very glad that the municipality offered to invest in half of the installation. During the interview he argues that good internet infrastructure is the key to a vibrant countryside: “I think it is crucial for the area! In order to go on! If you want to develop something here you need the internet. And if you want to get companies in this place, of course it is good to be in Karlstad but if you want to keep an area like this alive, what investment can you do? I think invest in the internet infrastructure, that is the best way to do it.” One of the negative aspects with living on the countryside in Hagfors is the uneven access to the internet. Before buying a house that is located in the middle of the countryside it is crucial that immigrants are aware of the fact that they might not have mobile coverage or access to the internet in certain locations.

Several of the informants discuss how important it is to be prepared when moving to a rural area like Hagfors. It can therefore be a good idea to visit the area of destination before actually making the decision to move from the Netherlands in order to be able to experience life on the countryside. To visit the area before moving can be very important, especially for those who are used to live in an urban environment where everything is much more accessible than in a rural
area. When moving to Hagfors it is important to be aware of the fact that there is limited access to restaurants and evening activities such as nightclubs for example. Several of the Dutch immigrants moved to the area due to the tranquility in the municipality. When being on vacation, this may be a characteristic that is highly desired by the tourists since they are able to relax and enjoy their free time. The question is however, will they find this attribute to be just as appealing when it becomes a part of their weekdays? One push factor of living in the countryside could be that life becomes too calm, especially for those who are used to living in an urban environment.

Several Dutchmen move to Hagfors in order fulfil their dreams of becoming entrepreneurs since it is both difficult and expensive to start a company in the Netherlands. When selling their properties or companies in their home country they often receive enough money to buy a new house and start their own company in Hagfors municipality. Anders Bäcker discusses how the Dutch immigrants are often under the impression that it is easy to start a company in Hagfors, and maybe it is but this does not imply that it is an entirely problem-free process. On the contrary, it can be even more difficult to start a company in a rural area like Hagfors. This corresponds very well with Tim Creswell’s (2004) statement that the countryside is often seen as a place away from problems that exist in urban areas and that it is portrayed as a problem-free realm (p. 114). Since it is so difficult to start a company in the Netherlands it has become more of a myth that it is so much easier to start one in Hagfors. Bäcker states: “Many Dutch migrants have a fantasy image in their minds- that they are going to live on water, air and love and this is not possible, after a day or two they are going to get hungry.” They tend to think that anything is possible in the municipality and that everything is much easier when it comes to starting your own business: “Some tend to think that the market is larger than it really is and they do not realize that the amount of people living here is much smaller than it is in the Netherlands.” Some of their ideas about starting a company are sometimes more suitable for large, urban cities than for a small, rural town like Hagfors Bäcker argues. When starting a business in Hagfors it is therefore very important that immigrants know how to make money because they cannot survive in the area without a job or income. It becomes quite obvious when talking to the Dutch informants that the most important aspect to consider before moving to a rural area like Hagfors is how to make a living since the job opportunities are not as many as in an urban city. To receive a job in Hagfors or in other adjacent municipalities in Värmland was therefore an important requirement for the immigrant before moving. This result corresponds to the theoretical statement where Boyle et al.(1998) discusses how it is the myth and lure of the countryside that drive much counterurbanisation, but this migrant option is highly dependent upon a secure, regular and relatively well-payed job (p. 143).
It is very common for the immigrants to start companies within the tourism industry. When starting a camping for example it is crucial that they are aware of how short the summer season is in Sweden. In order to make money during the fall and winter season they might have to find another job in Hagfors which can be quite difficult due to the high unemployment rates in the municipality. Arjen Fagel discusses during the interview: “There are Dutchmen who think that you can move to another country and start a Bed and Breakfast with eight beds, that you can live from that. You cannot live from that! And what we have seen during the last years is that there are Dutchmen who have moved here, they have lived here for three years and moved back again. And within these three years they have used the money that was left from selling their house in the Netherlands. They have to move back because they do not make any money from a Bed and Breakfast with eight beds.”

Some of the immigrants are also under the impression that it is quite difficult to establish a contact with the local inhabitants in Hagfors. This is one of the main reasons why Tessa and Chris Boos have made the mutual decision to put out their house and company in Hagfors for sale. As soon as they manage to sell their property they are considering moving to a larger city in Sweden or back to the Netherlands. It has been very difficult for the family to make friends with other people living in the municipality. They are especially concerned over the fact that their children have not been able to make any Swedish friends in school. When they moved from the Netherlands, Tessa and Chris thought that it would be quite easy to interact with the local inhabitants in Hagfors since they had three young children. They believed that having small kids would enable them to establish a better and quicker contact with other parents for example. The family feels isolated and they have made several attempts to create a better contact with the locals but they have not received the response that they have hoped for. Chris argues that the locals already have a very strong relationship with their relatives and friends which may imply that they are not very keen on letting someone else into their sphere of acquaintances.

Ruben and Kim Haan discuss during the interview how they also thought that it was going to be quite easy to integrate in the Swedish society since they had heard that the Swedes and Dutch were very alike. Now when they have lived in Hagfors for eight years they have managed to receive a better contact with the locals but it took quite some time. Another explanation why it can be difficult for the Dutch informants to establish a contact with locals may derive from the fact that they are foreigners. Ben Linden discusses how it is common for people who are living in smaller places like Hagfors to become suspicious of other people who do not originate from the
area: “I’m also from a small place and you will always be someone from outside. And it was like that in the place where I was living, we also were looking on the people from the outside. I will never be someone from here.” When settling down in Hagfors, the immigrants were under the impression that everyone knew who they were while the Dutchmen themselves did not know anyone.

Another push factor that can cause the immigrants to leave Hagfors is the Swedish educational system. The informants describe the Dutch system as being very strict when comparing it to the Swedish system. Dutch children begin primary school at the young age of four which is two years before Swedish children who are still in kindergarten at the age of six. This implies that Dutch children are much more far ahead in their education than Swedish children when arriving to the area.

5.5. REPLACING THE CITY WITH THE COUNTRYSIDE

The interviews imply that the immigrants made a conscious choice to live on the countryside when moving to Sweden. It was therefore not an alternative for them to live in larger cities such as Stockholm, Gothenburg or Karlstad for example. The informants knew from the very beginning that they did not want to live in a city when migrating to Sweden since this was an environment that they were already very accustomed to. If their ambition was to move to a big city they could just as well have stayed in the Netherlands according to the informants. This result corresponds to the theoretical framework where Eimermann (2012) discusses how Dutchmen prefer to live in rural, sparsely populated areas instead of urban cities (p. 343).

One important reason why the immigrants did not choose to settle down in Karlstad, the region capital of Värmland was due to the high prices on real estates in the area. When leaving the Netherlands, the immigrants chose to live on the countryside since the houses were much cheaper in these particular areas. Research made by Fuguit and Zuiches (1975) show that certain associations can be made between the countryside and various high quality of life indicators such as cheap living and environmental quality. The same results have been found in this particular study. When selling their house in the Netherlands, the immigrants often receive millions for their property. When moving to the countryside they can use this money to buy a property that costs ten times less than in the Netherlands which implies that the immigrants have a lot of money left after buying a house in Hagfors. This excess of money gives the immigrants a lot of freedom to fulfil their dreams and thereby achieve a higher quality of life.
The Dutchmen knew that they wanted to live on the countryside in order to get away from the negative attributes of their native country such as congestion and air pollutions for example. They associated the countryside of Hagfors with nature, green vegetation, animals, peace, water and freedom. The countryside is also associated with space. The possibility of living in a house with no adjacent neighbors is a very important reason why Dutchmen are attracted to Hagfors municipality. Since the Netherlands is such an overpopulated country, people are forced to live very closely together. The rural idyll that is described in the theoretical framework is very connected to privacy in this study. Being alone in the woods or in your own garden is therefore considered to be a luxury. The empirical material implies that it is primarily the physical features of Hagfors municipality that attracted the immigrants to the countryside. They experienced all of these features while visiting the area as tourists which imply that they were able to create an image of the rural during their vacation. The theoretical framework suggests that individuals who move to rural areas may already be familiar with the location before actually moving to it (Laoire, 2007, p. 333). All of these aforementioned features correspond entirely with the physical characteristics that Keith Halfacree (1994) managed to outline in his study on British migrants. The similarities between these two separate studies could imply that it is possible to determine why people in urban cities move to the countryside, regardless of which country they migrate from. The fact that British and Dutch migrants share the same motives for moving to the countryside even though the studies are conducted almost ten years apart could suggest that these results are generalizable and can be applied to other migrant groups in other European countries.

The countryside is also described as a place where it is possible to go “back to basic.” This refers to how the Dutch immigrants are able to be much more self-sufficient in Hagfors and thereby live from their own land. They make their own bread, grow their own vegetables and heat up their houses with wood from their own forest. The Dutchmen have therefore become much more independent while living on the countryside.

When asking the informants about where they lived in the Netherlands before they moved to Hagfors it was actually very common for them to answer that they lived in a village. Several of the informants originate from small towns in the Netherlands that either have the same amount of inhabitants as Hagfors or even less. This result implies that the immigrants were already accustomed to a life on the countryside meaning that they already had previous experience of a rural lifestyle before moving to Hagfors. It is very important, however to emphasize that villages and cities are situated very closely together in the Netherlands since they are extremely
interconnected with each other. It is possible to cross 15 different villages and cities while driving a distance of 30 kilometres. Some of these villages are therefore closely connected with larger cities. The countryside in the Netherlands is therefore not comparable to the countryside in Hagfors according to the informants. The Netherlands is so densely populated that there is almost no difference between the countryside and the city environment.

5.6 MOBILITY: THE POSSIBILITY OF BEING FAR AWAY BUT STILL CLOSE TO HOME

A significant amount of the informants were very focused on leaving the Netherlands before they moved to Hagfors, but they did not always know where to move in the world. Moving to Sweden was therefore not an obvious choice. Several of the immigrants could imagine themselves moving to other countries such as France, New Zealand, Australia and Canada. The main reason for not moving to any of the three last-named places was due to their location in the world. These countries were simply too far away in order for the immigrants and their families to keep a close and regular connection to relatives and friends back home in the Netherlands. It is of course possible to be mobile when living in these countries but this mobility comes with a price. Plane tickets from these particular destinations to Europe can be very expensive. Travelling with four kids can affect the economy of the immigrants which can potentially prevent them from visiting their home country as often as they would prefer.

One important aspect that the immigrants took carefully into consideration when deciding where to live was the degree of mobility that they would have in the destination area but, also how easy it would be to travel from Sweden to the Netherlands and vice versa. The immigrants were very convinced that they wanted to move from their home country but they did not want to move too far away from their previous home either. Good transportation facilities between the two countries had a significant impact on the immigrant’s motives for moving to Sweden. This particular result harmonizes very well with the statement made by Moss (2006) in the theoretical framework, namely that access-facilitating technology such as ICT and the availability of cheap means of long distance transport ease contacts (pp. 12-13). It is possible to drive from the Netherlands to Hagfors and vice versa in one single day. The immigrants describe how Hagfors is perfectly situated in the middle of Sweden. It is not too far north where it is colder and darker during the winter half year and it is not too far south where the landscape is too flat. Even though Hagfors is considered to be a rural municipality by the immigrants, the area offers great
transportation possibilities such as an airport with two departures to and from Arlanda, Stockholm every single day. Hagfors is also closely situated to the Norwegian border which implies close access to Gardermoen, the airport in Oslo. Going by car from Hagfors to Stockholm or Gothenburg takes approximately four hours.

Through this study it is possible to draw a very important conclusion about mobility and how this freedom of movement can cause immigrants to make quick and rather impulsive decisions about their future. Arjen and Anna Fagel provide an interesting example about how they bought their company in the municipality. In the year of 2003 they bought a holiday house in Hagfors and for two years the couple visited the area on a regular basis as tourists. This implied that they had managed to create a good opinion about Hagfors and the possibilities of potentially starting up a company in the area. In the year of 2005 they received an offer to buy an old country store. They had dreamt about starting their own company for so many years that they drove from the Netherlands to Hagfors on a Thursday night, looked at the store on Friday and bought the store on Monday. Now they suddenly had a holiday house and a shop premise in Sweden while they were still living permanently in the Netherlands. At this particular moment they had no idea about what kind of company to start in Hagfors. They moved to Hagfors the 1\textsuperscript{st} of March 2006 and opened up an outdoor shop on April 29\textsuperscript{th}.

Several efforts have been made by the Dutch minority in Hagfors to increase the level of mobility between the municipality and the Netherlands. One of these measures has been to establish an airline between Hagfors and the Netherlands or between the region capital of Karlstad and the Netherlands. Since there are so many Dutch inhabitants living in the area the immigrants strongly believe that an airline would be very beneficial for Hagfors in numerous of ways. Firstly, this transportation facility would enable the Dutch minority group to visit their family and friends more often and vice versa. Secondly, direct access between Hagfors and the Netherlands could also imply that more tourists would visit the area. Several attempts have been made by the Dutch immigrants to convince airline companies such as Ryan Air to establish a route between Karlstad and the Netherlands, but none has so far been willing to take the risk of developing these ideas. The degree of mobility can however be significantly reduced when moving from an urban city to the countryside. The immigrants in this study have experienced how much more difficult it is to get from one place to another while living permanently in the area. As a rural resident you are highly dependent on your car, especially if you live in the outskirts of Hagfors in small towns or villages where there are no bus lines for example.
The interviews show that the Dutch immigrants have based their entire mobility on a dream. The movement from one place to another in this thesis symbolizes a fresh start and a new beginning for the immigrants who leave their secure lives in the Netherlands in order to venture the unknown in Sweden. They quit their well-paid jobs, sell their houses and successful companies and leave their family and friends behind in order to fulfil their dreams and ambitions of creating a better life for themselves in Sweden. The act of moving is therefore very connected to a strong feeling of self-realization. In fact, this urge is sometimes so strong that it can cause people to make fast and impulsive decisions that can have a negative effect on their future. The journey to self-fulfillment has been facilitated through cheap means of long distance transport and the regulations of the European Union that allows European citizens to move and live freely within the member states. These are two very important conditions that have enabled the international counterurbanisation to occur between the Netherlands and Sweden.

All of the informants except for one couple have no intentions of moving back to the Netherlands. They are very satisfied with their lives in Hagfors municipality and they would not like to replace their life on the countryside with their former home environment in the Netherlands. It is clear that they perceive Hagfors as their home. Marretje Klerk provides an interesting statement during the interview that corresponds very well to what Savage, Bagnall and Longhurst (2005) describes as elective belonging in the theoretical framework (p. 45). She states: “After half a year I said, and I still mean it, that I feel more at home in Uvanå than I have ever felt in the Netherlands. I have lived on three different places in ten years and I have never felt at home anywhere.” By moving to Hagfors Marretje experienced the feeling of home for the first time in ten years. This is a perfect example of how it is possible for people to feel more at home in a completely different country than they did while living in their native country. However, the informants express a concern about their future in Hagfors. Even if they do not want to move back to the Netherlands they are already thinking about how their lives will become when they retire and age takes its toll. The immigrants could consider moving back to their native country if they would become ill and need elderly care, or if their respective other would pass away implying that the other would become all alone in the municipality. Some of the informants also express a concern of not being able to maintain the Swedish language when they get older. They are afraid of becoming isolated from society if they are only able to speak Dutch with their surroundings.
5.7 TOURISM AS THE FIRST STEP TO ATTRACTING NEW INHABITANTS

Before the immigrants decided to move to Hagfors they did not even know that the municipality existed. A clear majority of the informants in this study had never heard about Hagfors before which is a quite peculiar result since there are so many Dutchmen living in the municipality today. They are clearly attracted to the area but how do they become aware of the municipality? Before answering this question it is important to emphasize that several of the informants had previous experiences of Sweden before they moved to Hagfors. The interviews imply that they visited Sweden for several reasons. They had visited the country either on weeklong vacations with their children, they had a summerhouse in Hagfors or in an adjacent municipality, they worked in Sweden or visited urban cities such as Gothenburg and Stockholm. One of the informants visited Sweden in order to attend a course in the Swedish language in order to be better prepared when finally moving to the country.

The interviews show that there is an obvious relationship between tourism and migration. The theoretical framework suggests that individuals who move to rural areas may already be familiar with the location before actually moving to it (Laoire, 2007, p. 333). Tourist Manager Madeleine Andersson discusses how the first step to attracting new residents to Hagfors is to get them to visit the municipality as tourists. Once they experience the area they might feel encouraged to visit the municipality again. After spending a significant amount of their free time in Hagfors they might begin to consider purchasing a summer house in the area so that they can visit the area more regularly. After visiting the area more often they might even consider moving to the area permanently. Madeleine discusses how tourism is always the beginning towards attracting permanent residents to Hagfors municipality. “Yes, it is definitely the most common. I still have not heard about anyone who has not been here on vacation and moved. They have been on holiday and then moved here, I think that everyone has done that. And then also, many have moved here because their children or their parents have moved here, they have accompanied them, or other friends they know who have been here, who they have visited but that goes under vacation as well so that is how you get here first. It is always a beginning.” This particular result corresponds very well to the theoretical framework where Thomas Niedomysl (2006) through empirical findings managed to conclude that tourism exerts a positive influence on migration. Places with a successful tourism industry are considered to be successful when it comes to attracting migrants. Migrants seldom move to places that they have no prior knowledge about (p. 31).
In the year of 2005, Dutch entrepreneurs Jakob and Emmy Geels bought a camping in Hagfors. During the interview, Emmy discussed how she and her husband have noticed how several of their guests have now become permanent residents in Hagfors after visiting the area as tourists: “When developing tourism in a proper manner, it causes people to come here. We have experienced that a lot of people who live here now where first at our camping site. Then they thought that it was so wonderful to live here, a fantastic experience and after that they came here once again maybe or perhaps rented a house. Then they thought that it was fantastic to live here and then they suddenly see more things that are funny. Then they see the possibilities of starting a company, then they start a company and that provides much better conditions too, more companies will come here.”

The theoretical framework suggests that tourists improve their knowledge about the places that they visit during their vacation (Niedomysl, 2006, p. 31). This is exactly what the Dutch informants did before they finally decided to settle down in Hagfors municipality. When discussing their migration plans with their family and friends in their home country or with Dutch acquaintances that already lived in Sweden they were often very encouraged to visit the country. It was therefore very common for the immigrants to go on vacation in order to be able to improve their knowledge about Sweden and the practical details of moving from one country to another. Going on a vacation to Sweden would also give them the opportunity to figure out where and how they wanted to live and what they could potentially work with in the destination area. When they arrived to Sweden they often visited several different places in Värmland and other counties such as Dalarna and Jämtland. Several of the immigrants describe how they just drove around in their cars or mobile homes and explored different places in Sweden. When they reached Hagfors municipality, some of the immigrants saw houses for sale that matched their requirements. Entrepreneurs Thomas and Nicole Groot wanted to start a western ranch in Sweden. While driving around in Hagfors municipality they saw a property that was for sale and they immediately knew that this was the perfect place for them to start their business. They contacted a real estate agent and bought the house which had 18 hectares of land attached to it. It was therefore the perfect location to start a western ranch.

Judging by the interviews, there are several explanations of how the immigrants could become aware of Hagfors except for finding the area by pure chance, namely through word of mouth, through family or friends who already lived in the municipality, through the internet where they found cheap houses and established a contact with a real estate agent.
Dennis Jong moved to Hagfors because he did not have a choice. When he was 15 years old, his mother and father bought a holiday house in Munkfors municipality from mutual friends. They were offered to buy the house for 40 000 Euros which was an offer they could not refuse since the prices on real estates was so high in the Netherlands. Dennis parents travelled to Sweden and spent a week in the area before they finally made the purchase. When they returned to the Netherlands, Dennis and his brother received the shocking news that the entire family was relocating to Sweden. At this particular moment, the sudden decision to move to another country was made so quickly that his parents did not have the time to plan how they would support themselves in the destination area. Dennis took the news quite hard considering that he was still in school and had just begun to establish a strong circle of friends in the Netherlands. The family had never been to Sweden before and they did not know anything about the country. The only thing that Dennis really knew about Sweden was that the country was situated in the northern parts of Europe. He states during the interview that it would have been beneficial if his family would have visited the area as tourists before they moved: “We had never been abroad and we thought that it was great fun that we had a house here, we thought it was great fun to come here but before we had even been here on vacation they had already decided to move here.”

The stepdaughter of Pieter van Dijk and her boyfriend had always dreamt about owning a camping in the Netherlands. Due to the high prices of real estate and land they knew that it would not be possible for them to fulfil their vision. They investigated the possibilities of pursuing their dream in France as well but it was very expensive to buy such a facility there as well. When talking to an acquaintance who had a holiday house in Sweden the couple was informed about two campings that were for sale in Hagfors and the adjacent municipality Munkfors. As a truck driver, Pieter van Dijk was very familiar with several municipalities in Värmland such as Grums and Skoghall since he had delivered goods to companies in these areas on several occasions. He followed his stepdaughter and her boyfriend to Sweden in order to look at the facilities. Since there were so many individuals who were interested in both properties the couple was forced to make the decision in only two days. Peter van Dijk states how difficult it was for them to make such a big and life changing decision considering that they had never even been in Sweden before and was now about to buy a camping in an environment that was totally unfamiliar. The couple bought the camping in Munkfors and moved to Sweden. Their relocation caused Pieter van Dijk and his partner to buy a holiday house in Hagfors. They later became permanent residents when Pieter received a job as a truck driver in Karlstad.
In the theoretical framework, Thomas Niedomysl (2006) discusses how tourists are more likely to create a positive impression of a place since they have more time for enjoyment (p. 31). Ruben Haan states during the interview that people tend to only experience a place for real when they actually live there for a longer period of time. He refers to his own experience when he and his partner Kim were on vacation in Sweden in order to decide where to settle down. “When you are on vacation and you go into a store and people say; hello hello! I thought to myself; hello? Do you know me? It is completely different in the Netherlands and it is very good that you are treated in that way, but when you live here for a longer period of time you see that you have problems here as well. When you are on vacation and travelling around then it always appears to be so so nice but yes, then you see that you have problems here as well.” When visiting a country for a couple of weeks it is therefore highly possible that tourists only tend to see and experience the pull factors of a specific place. When actually living in the area for a longer period of time it is therefore very likely for people to experience the push factors of the area.

5.8 THE HAGFORS BRAND

The subheading is going to examine whether the perceptions of the Dutch immigrants regarding Hagfors correspond to the image that is being communicated by the municipality. Are the receivers decoding the brand just in the way that Hagfors has originally intended? What do the Dutch immigrants associate with the Hagfors brand and what are their attitudes towards it? What did the immigrants know about Sweden, Värmland or Hagfors before they finally decided that Hagfors would become their new home?

What the Dutchmen think they know about Sweden and what they actually know about the country are two entirely different things. One of the major challenges that Bengt Pettersson faced when participating in the Emigration Expo for the very first time was to try and change the strong and sometimes very negative perceptions that Dutchmen had about Sweden. When asking the informants in the study about what the general perception is about Sweden in the Netherlands they always gave the same answers; that it is very cold, dark, rainy, wet, a lot of mosquitos, very expensive and a country far away. This is generally what Dutchmen think they know about Sweden. This result could imply that the negative and incorrect image about Sweden is still very strong and well established in the Netherlands, even though more and more Dutchmen choose to move to rural areas in Sweden. If this image of Sweden is so widespread within the Dutch population why do so many of them move or even consider moving to
Sweden? The answer to this question is tourism. Those Dutchmen who actually have been in Sweden know for a fact that these negative perceptions are not entirely true.

The interviews show that these negative opinions about Sweden are primarily being mediated through word of mouth. Arjen Fagel discusses how negative rumors tend to remain much longer in people’s consciousness than positive rumors. “One bad summer lasts for ten years while a good summer is forgotten the next year.” It is therefore very important that tourists who visit Hagfors municipality for the first time has a pleasant experience in order for them to speak positively about the area. The empirical results imply that those immigrants who moved to Hagfors experienced Sweden as tourists before settling down in the country. When visiting Sweden for the very first time they had the opportunity to experience the push factors of the country and therefore see for themselves that the preconceptions about Sweden were much exaggerated. After visiting Sweden, these individuals became very important ambassadors for the country since they could mediate a new and more positive image of Sweden by informing their family and friends that there is much more to the country then cold and darkness for example. Tourists Manager Madelene Andersson discusses how the first step to attracting new residents to Hagfors is to get them to visit the municipality as tourists. Once they experience the area they might feel encouraged to visit the municipality once again. When spending a significant amount of their free time in Hagfors they might begin to consider moving permanently to the area.

Madelene states during the interview: "If you do not know anything about Sweden, you firstly tend to think that it is very far away. Dutchmen have perhaps a much better notion than the Englishmen for example but you think it is far away, you think that it is very expensive, you think that it is a lot of mosquitos and you think that it is very cold. These are not good qualities. But this is what Sweden constantly has to fight against. But they also know that it is exotic and of course they know that it is wilderness and they believe that it is almost wilderness only. But if they have been here, they realize that it is not far away, it is absolutely not expensive if they have Euro as currency and mosquitos not so much either and it is not cold in the summer when they come. So that is why it is so important to get them to come here one time. [...] Mouth to mouth is very important! These qualities must be used in the marketing material, we have to show images where we are sitting in tank tops for example, where we bathed in our lakes so they can see that it is not cold." Madelene also discusses how Sweden is constantly forced to work against these existing prejudices. It is therefore always a matter about informing potential tourists about what is right and what is wrong about a country. For example if Dutch inhabitants are under the impression that Sweden is an expensive country it is important for the marketing material such as brochures to include prices of how much an average visit to a
restaurant can cost for example. It is important to emphasize that the Dutch immigrants also think very positively about Sweden. They associate the country with high quality, especially referring to companies like Scania, Volvo and Saab for example. Sweden is also well-known for push factors such as the nature and space but also the high social security.

When asking Anders Bäcker about the Hagfors brand and what it represents he advised me to contact the press office staff at the municipality in order to receive an answer to my question. The primary reason for not answering the question himself was that he did not want to provide incorrect information about the brand. When contacting this department about the brand and what it represents I was told that there are no strategic steering documents available regarding the Hagfors brand and how it should be communicated, developed and preserved. No decisions what so ever have been made on a higher level within the municipality about what Hagfors should represent in different contexts. The only information that the press office staff could provide about the brand was how it is related to nature. It is therefore quite difficult to establish whether the perceptions of the Dutch immigrants regarding Hagfors correspond to the image that is being communicated by the municipality since Hagfors does not have a brand strategy that is being communicated. Hagfors municipality has produced so called goal cards where the directorate has established guide lines for how the municipality should act towards customers and citizens for example but no brand platform has been established.

When asking the immigrants about the Hagfors brand and what the municipality represents they usually needed some time to think before answering the question. Out of all the questions in the interview guide, this was the only question that caused the informants to really reflect upon their answer. Judging by the statements made by the Dutch immigrants, Hagfors municipality does not have a strong brand, in fact a majority of the informants are under the impression that Hagfors does not even have a brand. Judging by the interviews it is obvious that the immigrants do not have a uniform image of the brand; in fact their opinions differ significantly from each other. The empirical results suggest that it is necessary for the municipality to create a much stronger brand in order to be able to communicate a more uniform image of the municipality towards visitors and potential new inhabitants. Since a significant amount of rural municipalities have realized that Dutch immigrants may be the solution to their problems regarding depopulation, it is more important than ever to have a strong brand in order to stand out from the crowd. Word of mouth has been proven to be a very effective and cheap form of place marketing according to the empirical data. If Hagfors municipality would communicate a much more distinct and well-
defined brand towards the Dutch minority the possibility of attracting new residents could potentially increase significantly. When studying the empirical data it is almost like the informants have a better notion about the Hagfors brand and what it should represent than the municipality itself. The Dutch entrepreneurs have worked a great deal with place marketing and they know for a fact what the Dutch target group wants.

The Dutch immigrants perceive the Hagfors brand as a place where nature meets technology and heavy industries. It has been stated before that the immigrants tend to settle down in the peripheral areas of Hagfors such as Ekshärad, Råda and Sunnemo. The main center of Hagfors is therefore considered to be less attractive since this is where the major companies are situated. The municipality is strongly associated with the steel company Uddeholms AB since it is the largest employer in Hagfors. This company in particular is described as the heart of Hagfors by the informants. If this industry would be forced to shut down then it would have a devastating impact on the entire municipality since it would cause a lot of local inhabitants to lose their jobs. Several of the informants express their concern about a methanol factory that is going to be built in Hagfors. The informants are mostly concerned about the overall image of Hagfors and how the area will be perceived by tourists if they only see heavy industries while driving into the city center. The image of Hagfors as being an area that mainly consists of beautiful, untouched nature could therefore be affected by building an industry that produces a toxic chemical like methanol. Informants Paul and Emmy Geels are two of the informants who are skeptical to the methanol factory. They live close to this particular plant and they are especially worried about the air pollutions and potential odor that this facility will cause. If they experience any of these negative side effects they will move. Since one of the push factors of the Netherlands is air pollutions caused by traffic and factories the immigrants do not want to move to other areas where the same problems exist. Instead of investing money in the methanol factory, the immigrants believe that it would be beneficial for the area if Hagfors municipality restored Värmullsåsen. The interviews imply that the brand of Hagfors is very attached to two physical facilities in the area, namely the airport and the ski resort. The immigrants believe that Hagfors would become a much more attractive area for tourists especially if Värmullsåsen would reopen.

The empirical data also reveals that the Hagfors brand is very connected to Rally Sweden which is the largest motor sport competition in the country. Uddeholms AB, the steel factory in Hagfors was name sponsor for the WRC Uddeholm Swedish Rally between 2001 and 2008. Even though Uddeholms AB is not the main sponsor of the rally today, several of the routes are still located in

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Hagfors municipality. This event is a typical example of when technology meets pure nature. The snow-covered forests of Hagfors become the main arena for this event where spectators are able to see fast and innovative cars fighting against ice, snow and cold. Entrepreneur Ben Linden discusses during the interview how Hagfors should emphasize the connection between nature and industry when branding the municipality: “And that could be the combination of industry and nature and freedom. Just like, it is simple, when you are looking to the Volvo branding it is a strong car in the nature, that’s branding! Then you bring two things together, that’s what we see here. That’s what people want to see! So the idea is to do more with this airport, with rally cars, it could be fantastic because it’s really a little bit trying to get the industry area directly within the woods and the forest. Should be that nature is an important thing and try to connect it to the industry. And then you can brand it!”

5.9 PLACE MARKETING STRATEGIES

According to the municipal employees and Dutch immigrants, mass media is considered to play a very important role when attracting new inhabitants to a rural area like Hagfors. A clear majority of the informants are also under the impression that the mass media is the main reason why Hagfors has become such a center for international counterurbanisation, especially in the county of Värmland. Hagfors has become the main destination for Dutchmen due to the marketing that has been made by the municipality according to Tourist Manager Madelene Andersson. She states during the interview: “The difference why we have so many more is because we have marketed, we have been good at marketing. Other municipalities have not been marketing as long as we have. They have started now, and we have cheap houses.” Once again is can be determined that the low house prices in Hagfors is an important argument when place marketing the municipality. The price itself is sometimes even more attractive than images depicting the nature or wilderness in the area. Anders Bäcker agrees with Madelene Andersson that it is the marketing that has caused Hagfors to stand out from other municipalities in Värmland. This marketing has however not necessarily been performed by the municipality itself but by the Dutch immigrants who are living in the area. He states during the interview: “Yes, I believe so. Because it all started when the Dutchman bought the ski resort, and then he had bought an entire mountain in Sweden which he called Little Canada. Hagfors received a lot of publicity then.” How the Dutch immigrants have place marketed Hagfors is discussed in subheading 5.9.7 “The Dutch immigrants as place marketers.”

The result that the media is considered to play a very important role in the counterurbanisation is quite peculiar since none of the informants in this study had taken part in any place marketing
where Hagfors was the sender before visiting the area as tourists. They had not seen a reality show about immigrants who had moved to Hagfors, they had not read about the municipality in the press or in magazines and they had never seen Hagfors on the Emigration Expo in Utrecht, even though Bengt Pettersson was the only representative from the whole of Scandinavia for a significant amount of time. None of the immigrants had therefore taken part in any place marketing from Hagfors municipality. Out of 20 informants there were only one couple who had seen an article in a Dutch newspaper that discussed the problem regarding rural-depopulation and how so many young individuals in Sweden and Norway where moving from the countryside to urban cities. The main purpose of this article was to make Dutchman pay attention to how these areas where in great need of new residents. The sender of this featured offered the readers to receive help if and when they would move.

The result that none of the informants had taken part in any place marketing from Hagfors municipality is directly relatable to the results that Niedomysl (2007) required in his study when investigating the effects of place marketing that was performed by Swedish municipalities (p. 700). Through his research he established that marketing campaigns did not have a positive effect on in-migration, but in a few cases a positive impact could not be ruled out (p. 698). The place promotion made by Hagfors municipality has not had any impact whatsoever on the Dutch immigrant’s motives for moving to the area according to the empirical data. It has been stated before that some of the informants had never heard about Hagfors before they visited the area by chance when passing by the municipality as tourists.

5.9.1 MARKETING HAGFORS THROUGH THE VÄRMLAND BRAND

Hagfors is mainly marketed through the Värmland brand which implies that the municipality uses the brand and profile of Värmland. In contrast to Hagfors, the county of Värmland has an extremely well-developed trademark that is maintained on a regular basis. The main purpose with the brand is to increase the interest and awareness while creating a positive attitude to Värmland and the commercial and industrial life in the county. This goal is applied within the county, in the rest of the country as well as Norway, EU and in special cases the rest of the world. In the long term, the goal of Värmland is to be mentioned as the best regions to work in, to cooperate with, to relocate to or stay in. Some of the main characteristics of the brand Värmland that have been established are: the lake Vänern, successful companies, Klarälven, plenty of forests, happy, pleasant and snappy people, culture, sport, close to Norway, sun, stories, tales, dialect, rally and elk. A majority of these qualities can very well be applied to Hagfors.
The tourism industry in Värmland has marketed the county towards the Netherlands for several years according to Madelene Andersson. She discusses how Hagfors was a part of the so called Klarälvspjektet which is a project that was initiated in 2008 and consisted of six municipalities in Värmland: Hagfors, Torsby, Munkfors, Forshaga, Karlstad and Hammarö which are all located in the valley along the river Klarälven. The purpose of this project was to make the county more attractive for tourists by for example building a 90 kilometre car free bicycling trail between Karlstad and Hagfors. The EU, Region Värmland (organization for regional development in Värmland) and all of the municipalities invested a total amount of 200 000 Euros into the project. Until the year of 2010 when the project ended a significant amount of money had been spent on promoting municipalities in Klarälvdalen towards the Netherlands. These marketing efforts caused many Dutch tourists to visit Hagfors municipality according to Madelene: “We noticed a very big boom within tourism in general, and especially from Holland during the time of the Klarälvspjektet. And later when the project ended, I have seen that it has gone down because we have spent incredible amounts on marketing in Holland and this is something that the municipality cannot afford right now because it was an EU-project, we do not have the money to spend and that shows. Because now we are not visible in these magazines and ads that we had in Holland and then you do not exist. Now Värmland is working at large towards Holland, but the fact that Klarälvdalen made such a campaign it shows.”

A form of marketing that has expanded is news management according to the theoretical framework. This term is described as the techniques and strategies that are being used in order to try to influence what becomes news and how these texts are being created (Palm, 2002, p. 83). The key word within this form of marketing is visibility (Falkheimer & Thelander, 2007, p. 130). Hagfors utilizes this form of marketing in order to gain visibility in the international press. Today, Hagfors is primarily place marketed through Visit Sweden which is a communication company that markets the brand Sweden and Swedish destinations internationally. The company collects local, regional and national actors in order to promote Sweden and Swedish experiences abroad. Municipalities can sign a so called business-to-business agreement with Visit Sweden where they agree on paying a certain amount of money in order to receive help from the company to market their specific area abroad in order to give it more visibility. Visit Sweden helps municipalities like Hagfors or entire counties like Värmland to establish a contact with the media since they already have well-established communication channels in the world. It is very important to receive articles in Dutch magazines according to Madelene and this is much more possible when cooperating with a company like Visit Sweden. During the interview she discusses how Visit
Sweden is the best alternative when marketing a place abroad: “It is the most expensive, but the best gateway when you are marketing yourself in a country, regardless of which country it is.”

5.9.2 ATTRACTING THE RIGHT TARGET GROUPS

The main target group of the place marketing campaigns made by Hagfors municipality primarily consists of Dutch, prospective migrants. The main reason why Dutchmen are such an important and interesting target group is due to their strong willingness to move from urban cities in the Netherlands to a rural municipality like Hagfors. In the theoretical framework of this thesis, it is stated that companies, tourists and potential inhabitants are the main target groups when performing a place marketing campaign (Kearns & Philo, 1993). All of these three categories are both desired and targeted by Hagfors municipality in their promotional efforts towards the Netherlands. The empirical data imply that tourists are the most important target group out of all these categories since these individuals are very likely to move to Hagfors and therefore become permanent residents after experiencing the area one or several times. When visiting or living in the municipality they are more likely to discover the possibilities of starting their own company in the area. Attracting tourists can therefore be a very good beginning in order to be able to attract new residents and entrepreneurs for example.

Some residents are more attractive than others (Eriksson, 2011, p. 65). The demographics and characteristics of the Dutch migrants who are moving into Hagfors municipality are therefore very important to determine since different groups may have different effects on the economic development of a municipality. The most desired group of Dutchmen according to the municipal officers is preferable young, well-educated families with more than one child who have sold their house in the Netherlands and have therefore received a significant amount of money for their estate before moving to Hagfors. By bringing new capital to the municipality, the immigrants are self-sufficient since they are not in need of any economic support, on the contrary, it is the Dutch immigrants who contribute money to Hagfors by paying taxes for example. The immigrants are innovative and arrive to the municipality with new, creative ideas that have not been realized in the area before. They are ambitious, hard-working and are not afraid to try new things. The ideal group of Dutchmen moves to Hagfors with the intention to start a company, preferably within the tourism industry that will attract new tourists to the area. Without taxes and new companies it is impossible to maintain good municipal services according to Anders Bäcker. Every new adult citizen that moves into Hagfors is worth approximately one million Swedish crowns per year in
income for the municipality. By bringing their children to Hagfors they help to secure the future of village schools in the smaller villages in the municipality such as Sunnemo and Råda.

Hagfors is also currently in a phase where the municipality is in great need of new labor force that will be able to replace the baby-boomers of the 1940s who are about to retire. It is therefore important to attract young, Dutch immigrants who have the knowledge, education and skills in order to be able to replace the individuals within the industry sector, municipality and county council who are about to retire.

5.9.3 EMIGRATION EXPOS

The most frequently used place marketing strategy that has been utilized in order to attract new inhabitants to Hagfors municipality has been to participate in the annual Emigration Expo in Utrecht. In recent years, Bengt Pettersson has been accompanied by Business Developer Anders Bäcker during this event. The two joined forces in 2007 in order to market Hagfors in a more effective and unique way that will enable them to stand out from the crowd. While Bengt talks real estates, Anders talks about the entrepreneurial climate in Hagfors. These are the main questions that visitors want to know more about when they are visiting the exhibition in Utrecht. Anders Bäcker helps visitors who are interested in starting a company in Hagfors on the spot. He talks to them about their business ideas, how they can apply for benefits and the Swedish tax system. This provides the visitors with an idea about how much they would have to invest if they ever decide to leave their home in the Netherlands for Sweden. Through experience, Bäcker knows that handing out brochures about Hagfors is not effective enough in order to attract Dutch people to the municipality since they want more concrete information. During the interview he discusses how other Swedish municipalities tend to market their respective areas by focusing on tourism and not on real estates. The primary goal for Bengt Pettersson during the Emigration Expo is not to attract tourists to Hagfors; it is to represent his clients and their properties in the municipality which makes his showcase quite different from other exhibitors. Pettersson collaborates with the municipality but the overall marketing of Hagfors municipality occurs on his terms. During the interview he argues that the municipality can manage their own promotion if their goal is to attract tourist to Hagfors.

Today, it is all about standing out from the crowd which can be quite difficult according to Anders Bäcker, especially when every municipality in Sweden has beautiful nature to offer potential visitors and residents. In order to attract more attention from visitors, Pettersson puts
up photographs of houses that are for sale in the municipality in his showcase. This implies that people at the exhibition can look at pictures, read necessary information about the houses and most importantly, they can see the price and this is what catches their immediate attention according to Pettersson. A house in the Netherlands can cost up to 300 000 Euros while a house in Hagfors can cost less than 30 000 Euros. The difference between these sums is striking and when Dutch people see the price they almost cannot believe their eyes. Their initial response is that the price is incorrect and that the specified amount is missing a zero at the end. By showing the visitors the price and objects that are for sale in Hagfors, Pettersson gives them a short preview of what is waiting for them in the municipality. This minor indication of how their future home could look like gives rise to an immediate interest since the Dutch visitors are already very focused on leaving the Netherlands when visiting the Emigration Expo.

On several occasions, the duo has also been joined by Dutch economist Marretje Klerk who both lives and works in Hagfors. In the year of 2006, she was employed by a local accounting firm because there were so many Dutchmen living in the municipality. The company was therefore in great need of someone who would be able to discuss financial issues with the immigrants in order to avoid eventual misunderstandings. During the Emigration Expo she offers visitors who are considering to start a company in Sweden to simulate a budget that will create an overview over their potential incomes and expenses. This implies that she can estimate how much they would need to pay in taxes and how much money they can expect to earn for example. Having a Dutch immigrant like Marretje present on these exhibitions has turned out to be quite beneficial since visitors of the showcase then get the chance to speak to someone who actually has experienced the entire migration process by moving from the Netherlands to Sweden. Once again it is therefore important to put emphasis on the personal contact and how important it is when participating on the Emigration Expo. The visitors are then able to see a face behind the information and the promotional efforts that are being utilized during this event which is not possible when only distributing a brochure for example.

Marretje Klerk discusses how the Emigration Expo is filled with thousands of dreamers. Sometimes they are so focused on leaving the Netherlands that they are not entirely prepared when they finally take the step and move to Sweden. “From my perspective, they do not move to Sweden but they flee from the Netherlands.” During the interview she also discusses how the process of moving to Sweden is sometimes beautified by Hagfors and other exhibitors which is an image that she has tried to oppose from the very beginning. It is therefore very likely that the dreamers
who already are searching for excuses to flee become even more determined and encouraged to leave the Netherlands when being lavished with only positive information. It is very easy to present an image of Hagfors as being an area where it is easy to start your own company but in reality it is always very difficult no matter where in the world you choose to start it according to Marretje. She argues that it is necessary for exhibitors to take into consideration that most of the Dutch visitors have never owned or operated a company before.

When visiting the Emigration Expo it is also very likely that some of the visitors have already created their own fantasy image of how wonderful and easy it might be to start a company in Hagfors by visiting the area as tourists. Marretje describes an interesting scenario about how stressed parents of young children from the Netherlands can visit a camping in a rural area like Hagfors and become utterly amazed by the rural idyll. “There is no sound, no cars, you can go canoeing and be alone on an island even during high season.” This positive experience causes them to think that they as well can buy a camping since the current owner appears to be living entirely from it. In reality, only a few camping owners in Sweden can actually make a living from operating a camping due to the short summer season Marretje argues. In recent years she has noticed however that Hagfors municipality has begun to mediate a more realistic view of rural living. She argues that it is quite obvious that municipalities want to present their best qualities during this exhibition but it cannot be made on the expense of the Dutchmen. There is nothing wrong with having dreams about changing your life but before realizing these ambitions it is important that the Dutchmen are aware of the positive and negative aspects of living in a rural municipality like Hagfors according to Marretje.

Just like Marretje, Tourist Manager Madelene Andersson is also very critical towards how the municipality has depicted Hagfors during the Emigration Expo in Utrecht. During the interview she discusses how important it is not to promise the moon and stars during this event. The key to success is to be honest towards visitors about the problems that do exist in a rural area like Hagfors which will enable them to be more prepared if they choose to move to Sweden. This is a goal that the municipality has failed to achieve according to Madelene who argues that Hagfors has always been good at mediating a perfect and beautified image of the area that does not correspond to reality. She also believes that this incorrect image is one of the main reasons why the Dutch immigrants choose to move back to the Netherlands. This negative development is directly relatable to the theoretical framework where Gold & Ward (1994) describes how the place product as consumed may not always correspond at all to the place product that has been
promoted (p. 43). If the highlighted image of a place is proven to be way too far from the everyday experience of the local inhabitants there is a risk that it will be perceived as superficial and untrue by potential visitors or migrants (Helt Cassel, 2011, p. 151). It is very important according to Madelene to explain to the visitors about what it really means to live in a rural area, especially when the visitors are used to living in an urban environment where everything is accessible. “You should be very careful and tell them how our countryside is and how our wilderness is because it is not the same picture that they have about the countryside.” She provides an example about how common it is for Dutch immigrants to buy a house in the middle of the countryside where the closest neighbor lives several kilometres away.

Madelene argues that word of mouth is so strong that it is crucial that the Dutchmen who move to Hagfors are satisfied. If not, it is possible that they express their negativity about the municipality to families and friends in the Netherlands which can prevent other Dutch immigrants from moving to the area. During the interview she states that it is very important for the municipality to be honest during the events such as the emigration fair in Utrecht. “I will not say that they have stood there and lied, that has certainly not been done but they should build up our reality to them.” Anders Bäcker discusses how important it is to tell visitors the truth about how difficult it can be to start a company in Hagfors and that he would not consciously try to trick anyone in moving to Hagfors. “If I would stand and trick people to come here I would get fired. I don’t want anyone to get hurt due to bad guidance where I lie or withhold facts, that would never occur to me.”

One of the entrepreneurs that has participated in the study has considered participating in the Emigration Expo in order to inform visitors about the negative aspects of living in a rural area: “I thought about being on the site too and talk about the other side. […] It is also important to have an understanding for the individuals who move, perhaps they are leaving their well-paid jobs, and maybe now they are going to leave Holland because they cannot see a future there but it is a difficult process to go through because it is not so easy that you say; okay we are going to live in Sweden now, it is one month’s trip or perhaps a two year trip before you are here and when they get so disappointed with how it is in reality then it is perhaps good to tell them already on the exhibition that well, there is possibilities but it is not always positive, there are also negative things. So that people are a little bit more prepared for what they can expect, then it might come less but those who come are better prepared, I believe so.”

The majority of the Dutch informants in this study is very negative towards the Emigration Expo. The general perception about this event among the informants is that the exhibitors are
good communicators who know exactly how to formulate themselves in order to achieve their main objectives, namely to attract tourists, companies and new residents to their respective area. These exhibitors are considered to be dishonest, not trustworthy and they are also perceived as being individuals who take very lightly on the migration process. Exhibitors tend to romanticize the rural and they do not always take into consideration just how life-changing it can be for a Dutch family to leave their lives behind in order to begin a new one in a completely different country. They sell everything they own, quit their jobs and take their children out from school believing that everything is possible in an area like Hagfors. After living in Sweden for a couple of years they realize that they cannot survive from a Bed and Breakfast and are soon forced to move back to the Netherlands, i.e. if they have enough money left to buy a new house. Marketing a place with the intention to attract new inhabitants is not like promoting a new sort of shampoo for example. If customers are dissatisfied with the shampoo they will probably not experience that many negative consequences. They might return the product, get their money back or choose not to buy that specific brand ever again.

The fact that the negative opinions regarding the Emigration Expo are so strong and well-established among the Dutch immigrants is quite peculiar, considering that only a few of them have actually visited this particular event. When speaking about the Emigration Expo it is almost like the informants are expressing a general opinion about how they think regions, municipalities, cities and towns tend to market themselves rather than having their own experience of the event. Once again, the empirical results suggest that some of the immigrants have created this negative image of the Emigration Expo through word of mouth. Simone Visser is one of these informants who never visited the exhibition in Utrecht but she heard several negative stories about people who were persuaded to move to Sweden and when these individuals finally moved from the Netherlands they did not receive any work in the area of destination.

When selecting the qualities that are going to represent a certain geographical area, the negative aspects are automatically eliminated in order to be able to mediate only positive and attractive images towards the potential target group. Municipalities should therefore replace vague or negative images with positive representations in order to attract new inhabitants according to Hall (2005, p. 102). Not a single municipality or region would attract new inhabitants through the Emigration Expo if they would tell every visitor about every single negative attribute that the area holds. It is therefore quite obvious all municipalities want to market themselves by putting their best side forward since this is the main purpose with place marketing. The interviews imply that
Dutchmen are very direct and they prefer when people are honest against each other. It is better to provide them with information that will prepare them for a potential life in Hagfors. Every place has positive and negative attributes, but if the immigrants are aware of them in advance they are more likely to succeed in Hagfors and remain in the area.

5.9.4 ENTERPRISING ON THE 60\textsuperscript{TH} LATITUDE

As an exhibitor, Anders Bäcker discusses how difficult it can be to achieve a personal contact during the Emigration Expo due to the high number of visitors. A short DVD film has therefore been produced in order to be able to provide visitors with necessary information about the municipality. This implies that the visitors can watch the film in the comfort of their own home and then visit the website of Hagfors for further information. The film with the title “Hagfors municipality, enterprising on the 60\textsuperscript{th} latitude” is based on five main key words: enterprising, wilderness, success, quality of life and commitment. The word enterprising refers to the possibilities of starting a company in the municipality. In the year of 2006 Hagfors was appointed the title entrepreneurial municipality of the year in Sweden by Företagarna (the largest company organization in Sweden) and UC, Upplysningscentralen (the leading business and credit information company in Sweden) by achieving a strong growth in sales and new business investments. The main purpose of the award is to draw attention to the municipalities in Sweden where business enterprising has developed the most during the past year (Företagarna & Upplysningsenheten, 2006). In the year of 2009 the municipality received the title entrepreneurial municipality in the county of Värmland by Företagarna and the UC for developing one of the highest credit rating in Sweden (Företagarna & Upplysningsenheten, 2009). These awards may be the primary reason why the film refers to Hagfors as Swedish champion in enterprising.

The word wilderness refers to the uninfluenced and child-friendly nature that consists of large forests, wild animals, lakes, and the river Klarälven. These characteristics are illustrated by images portraying small children who are going on a horse and carriage ride through the woods, families dancing around the traditional Swedish maypole och swans swimming on a lake for example. Throughout the film, the municipality has strategically incorporated interviews with immigrants who have started their own companies in the area. In the feature regarding wilderness an entrepreneur discusses how she had visited the area as a tourist and how she grew to love the area due to the wildlife, natural terrain and natural resources such as the Klarälven river. She also discusses how helpful Hagfors municipality was when she settled in the area. This feature is recorded in the vicinity of the river Klarälven on a sunny summer’s day since her camping is
located close to the river. The film promotes Hagfors by highlighting the main contrasts between the Netherlands and Hagfors. When studying the film it becomes quite apparent that Hagfors municipality is well aware of the push factors of the Netherlands and the pull factors of Hagfors. These contrasts become especially apparent when the arguments “180 km² of canoeing possibilities” and “90 km of car-free bike path” appear when explaining the meaning of the word wildlife.

When describing the word success, the municipality has incorporated a feature when a representative from Uddeholms AB is sharing information about how the company is a world leading manufacturer of high quality tool steel. Through the word success the municipality is also referring to several athletes that grew up in Hagfors and who have reached an international status as world champions. The term “quality of life” refers to the peace and serenity that can be found in the area since there are only seven inhabitants per square kilometres. When describing the term, Hagfors has also incorporated another feature with a Dutch couple who moved to Hagfors for two reasons, firstly due to the low prices on real estates and secondly they were under the impression that there were more opportunities to start a company in Hagfors than in other parts of Sweden. Once again the Dutch entrepreneurs discuss how Hagfors helped them with paperwork from the Swedish authorities for example since it can be quite difficult for foreigners to find their own way when moving to a new place.

The final word is commitment. In this section of the film, Business Developer Anders Bäcker himself describes how engaged the municipality is in the immigrants who move to Hagfors and how he and his fellow co-workers can help them to start their own business in the area. He argues that the municipality can help them with everything, from receiving their Swedish Social Security Number to making sure that their kids will be placed in the right school for example. This particular scene is recorded in a beautiful environment where Anders is surrounded by beautiful meadow flowers, sparkling water, a red house with white house corners and a bridge that is slightly hidden by green vegetation. This section is therefore filmed in a very traditional, Swedish environment. The so called “dream image” that potential new residents from the Netherlands might have about Hagfors could potentially be even more enhanced by watching this film since it includes all of the push factors that attracts Dutch immigrants to the countryside. It is important to emphasize that none of the immigrants have seen this particular movie. There are two explanations to this, firstly only a few informants have actually visited the
Emigration Expo. Secondly, those who visited this event did not know that Hagfors was one of the exhibitors.

5.9.5 THE REAL ESTATE BUSINESS AS A FORM OF MARKETING?

The internet is a very important compliment to the Emigration Expo. As stated before, it can be quite difficult for exhibitors to establish a personal contact with every single visitor of the event. Business cards and tourist brochure of Hagfors are therefore distributed in order to encourage visitors to visit the webpages of both Bengt Pettersson and Hagfors municipality. The internet enables Pettersson to establish a dialogue with his customers in the Netherlands which is not possible through an ad in the daily press. When performing business with customers outside of Sweden he easily can send prospects, information about properties and even contracts through the internet which implies that he does not have to meet his clients in order to close a deal. The most important and difficult part when marketing yourself on the internet according to Pettersson is how to get noticed in the enormous sea of information. In order to receive a good contact with customers in the Netherlands he has therefore launched a web page that is especially directed towards the Dutch market. This implies that all information on this page is translated into Dutch. It is thirteen years ago since Pettersson attended the Emigration Expo for the very first time and during this period he has noticed that more and more people are finding their way to his website. The fact that Bengt was the only real estate agent from Scandinavia present on the Emigration Expo could be a possible explanation why so many Dutch people have moved to the area. Hagfors was the first municipality in the Nordic countries that the Dutch population was exposed to. The interviews imply that the real estate business and the act of selling houses have become a form of place marketing. A cheap facility in Sweden is often the main solution to the problem that the Dutchmen have in the Netherlands, namely that it is almost impossible to start a company in the country due to the expensive land and real estate prices. When they see the low prices on a website where all information is translated into Dutch they often realize that their dream of becoming entrepreneurs could become a reality in another country.

Those informants who have been in contact with Bengt Pettersson speak very positively about the real estate agent, stating that he is a very important reason why Hagfors has become such a center for counterurbanisation. Arjen Fagel is convinced that Pettersson managed to attract Dutch immigrants to the area through his web page which is especially directed towards the Dutch market. Pieter van Dijk heard from people in his surrounding that Bengt was said to be a good real estate agent and therefore felt encouraged to hire him as well. He discusses how helpful
Pettersson was when he and his wife bought a house in Hagfors. As a newcomer it can be quite
difficult to know the practical details about becoming a home owner in Sweden. During the
interview he describes that this positive treatment is a form of marketing as well since Pieter will
recommend the services of Bengt Pettersson to other Dutchmen who are considering moving to
the area: **What he is doing is also marketing. I can only speak positively about him and if a Dutch comes to me
and he wants to buy a holiday house I will say; go to Bengt Pettersson! He knows everything, he is honest, he does
not lie, nothing!”** Two other informants, Emmy and Jakob Geels are convinced that Bengt
Pettersson has utilized place marketing much more than Hagfors municipality has done by
referring to the amount of years that the municipality has participated at the Emigration Expo.
The informants argue that Hagfors municipality should have discovered the benefits with
participating during this event much earlier when Pettersson began to place market Hagfors.

Today’s tourists are very independent. If they need information about a specific place they can
easily find it on their own through the internet. This development has caused the Tourist
Information in Hagfors to receive fewer visitors according to Madeleine Andersson who argues
that every Tourist Information in Värmland is currently experiencing the same problem. This
does not imply that the employees of the Tourist Information have less to do; on the contrary,
the internet allows the staff to have constant contact with tourists through email for example.
This form of communication has increased while the number of physical visitors has decreased.

### 5.9.6 WHEN THE IMMIGRANTS ARRIVE

So far, this chapter regarding results has only discussed how Hagfors has used the practice of
place marketing in order to attract new inhabitants to the municipality, but what measures have
been taken in order to make them stay in the area? The empirical material suggest that place
marketing is not just all about attracting new inhabitants to a specific place. To participate in an
emigration fair which implies talking to visitors and handing out DVD films, brochures and
business cards can be considered to be the easy part. The difficult and most challenging part
begins when the immigrants arrive because then it is up to the municipality to live up to the
expectations that have been created through the place marketing strategies. It is necessary for a
municipality that has the goal to attract international migration to have a well-elaborated strategy
over how to take care of the immigrants when they arrive to the area. If this plan is not
developed enough it can cause the immigrants to move back to the Netherlands or even prevent
other Dutchmen from settling in the area. Today, not a single strategy has been developed by
Hagfors municipality that discusses how to treat new residents when they arrive in order to make them stay and develop in the area.

The place marketing that is directed towards the immigrants who are already living in Hagfors municipality is inadequate according to the municipal officers and the Dutch immigrants. Both of these groups of informants believe that much more can be done in order to help the immigrants and to make them feel more welcome and appreciated by Hagfors municipality. When arriving to Hagfors, the immigrants’ initial contact was with Anders Bäcker who is solely responsible for questions regarding in-migration and business enterprising in the municipality. The immigrants describe their contact with Anders Bäcker as positive stating that he has been very helpful in the beginning when they were in the progress of starting their own business. Once the immigrants had moved to Hagfors and started a business in the area the contact from Bäcker and the municipality subsided. Entrepreneur Maria Treub states during the interview: “Hagfors municipality visited us when we opened our store, but after that we receive no visits, telephone calls or letters.” She argues that Hagfors should pay more visits to both Swedish and Dutch entrepreneurs in the municipality in order to be able to create an overview over the entrepreneurial climate in the area. Once a week, Anders Bäcker and a colleague from the municipality do visit companies in Hagfors but for some reason the informants have not received any visits from municipal officers since they started their business. Economist Marretje Klerk who has accompanied Bengt Pettersson and Anders Bäcker to the Emigration Expo in Utrecht has also noticed how the municipality tends to lose interest in the immigrants as soon as they have moved to the municipality. “They help to start up your own company but then there is not much more help after that.” She argues that if Hagfors wants to keep the Dutchmen who are living in the municipality and attract new residents they need to be more engaged in the immigrants and help them to find their way in the area.

The Dutch informants who own their companies in the area are especially disappointed about how uninterested the municipality is in their establishments. Dutch entrepreneur Arjen Fagel is under the impression that Hagfors does not necessarily care about if he and his wife stay in the area or if they are still in business after a couple of years because the municipal employees are so confident that there will always be other Dutch immigrants who can take their place. “A new Dutch comes with fresh money and that is also good for the municipality. So, I don’t feel that they work really hard to keep us here. The last time we spoke to the municipality was three years ago maybe?” Arjen discusses how it would be beneficial if municipal officers of Hagfors could maintain their contacts with the Dutch inhabitants in a better way by asking the immigrants if they need help with something. It appears
that the entrepreneurs in this study have successfully managed to establish their company despite that they did not receive as much help and encouragement from the municipality as they first had anticipated. The immigrants do not necessarily need much help since they are quite determined to succeed when they arrive but what they do need is encouragement from the municipality and to feel that what they are doing is important for the welfare of Hagfors. Sometimes that is all it takes judging by the interviews.

Madelene Andersson argues that Hagfors municipality needs to take much better care of the Dutch immigrants when they move into the area. It has been stated before in this chapter that one of the main push factor of Hagfors municipality is that the immigrants find it quite difficult to interact with the local inhabitants which is an important reason why they eventually move back to the Netherlands. Madelene suggests that local societies and non-profit organisations in Hagfors that are currently screaming after new members could be a solution to this particular problem. She is quite confident that there is a society for everyone in Hagfors and if the municipality would present these networks to the in-migrants when arriving to the area they could potentially establish important contacts with local inhabitants and therefore become faster integrated in the Swedish society.

On one occasion, Anders Bäcker organized an exhibition in Hagfors for the Dutch immigrants who were living in the area. The main purpose of the event was to gather the in-migrants so that they would have the opportunity to meet each other and make connections. Bäcker had also invited television, radio and the daily press to cover the event. Swedish companies and state agencies such as the Swedish Tax Agency, the County Administrative Board of Värmland and Almi (a business partner that offers counseling and loans to people who are born in other countries but who now live in Sweden and want to start a company) were also present during the event in order to inform the immigrants about their services. The negative aspect of the event however, was the fact that only Dutchmen were invited to this exhibition. The immigrants would have preferred if local inhabitants were invited to this event as well. Several of the in-migrants stated that they did not move to Sweden in order to mingle with fellow Dutchmen.

This year, the municipality has developed a welcome package that will be distributed to immigrants who recently have moved to the municipality. This package will contain gifts such as a USB device and free entrance cards to different activities in the municipality. The newcomers will also receive an invitation to visit the city hall in order to meet the employees such as the local
government commissioner Mikael Dahlqvist and get an introduction about where to go if they encounter problems or have questions regarding building permits or waste disposal for example. The welcome package has already been produced and purchased by the municipality but they have not decided who will be responsible for distributing this gift to the immigrants. Anders Bäcker believes that this package has a good, symbolic value that will signalize to the immigrants that the municipality cares about them.

The theoretical framework suggests that place marketing campaigns do not necessarily have to be directed towards target groups who are living in another geographical location. The promotional efforts can also be directed towards people who are living in a certain area (Ek & Hultman, 2007, p. 28). In order for a place to create positive images and eliminate negative representations it is crucial that and area has good ambassadors who are proud of living in the area and who thereby can help to mediate positive stories about the place to other people. It can therefore be very important to include the local inhabitants and local business life in the marketing of a place (Kotler, Donald, Irving (1993). The empirical material clearly suggests that the municipality should pay more attention to the Dutch immigrants who are already living in Hagfors in order to make them feel more welcome and appreciated. A significant amount of the informants, especially the entrepreneurs have a very negative attitude towards the municipality for several reasons. These motives can however not be discussed in this thesis due to the possibility of municipal officers being able to reveal the identity of the informants. It is crucial however that the municipality creates a good relationship with the Dutch immigrants who lives permanently in the area because if they speak negatively about Hagfors to their friends and relatives back home in the Netherlands there is a risk that Hagfors will receive a negative reputation.

It has already been stated in this thesis that word of mouth has proven to be one of the most profitable and effective forms of marketing when promoting Hagfors municipality, if the immigrants speak positively about Hagfors that is. This is how the majority of the Dutch immigrants became aware of Hagfors or Sweden before visiting the country as tourists. They did not take part in any information from Hagfors that was communicated through communication channels such as television, newspapers or the Emigration Expo. The empirical results suggest that it would be beneficial if Hagfors directed much more place marketing towards the Dutchmen who already live permanently in the municipality. It is important to emphasize that this form of marketing does not have to involve expensive or drastic measures, it can be as simple as introducing the immigrants to local societies or involving more municipal employees in
issues regarding in-migration. There number of Dutchmen living in Hagfors is currently very high which could imply that it is necessary to employ more people that are responsible for questions regarding in-migration. Now that Hagfors has achieved the goal to attract new inhabitants they have to be able to take care of the immigrants.

5.9.7 THE DUTCH IMMIGRANTS AS PLACE MARKETERS?

Unlike the other subheadings regarding place marketing, this subheading will not discuss the promotional efforts that have been performed by Hagfors municipality in order to attract new inhabitants to the area. This section will only focus on how the Dutch entrepreneurs in Hagfors have contributed to the place marketing of Hagfors. The empirical material implies that this is a very important group of individuals that have given the municipality a lot of free publicity since they have promoted the area on their own through the Internet, brochures, mouth to mouth communication and Dutch reality TV shows. The entrepreneurs have therefore invested a lot of their own time, money and resources in order to be able to put Hagfors on the map. Anders Bäcker discusses how the Dutch entrepreneurs are an important factor why Hagfors has become such a center for the international counterurbanisation from the Netherlands “They themselves have made marketing, moved here and managed to get Dutch television to come here and put Hagfors municipality on display to a great extent in Holland.” Dutch entrepreneurs Thomas and Nicole Groot are under the impression that Dutch companies in Hagfors are performing more place marketing towards the Netherlands than the municipality itself “I believe that we as a company do more!” Emmy Geels discusses how she believes that it is mainly the Dutch companies within tourism that have place marketed Hagfors to a great extent: “I believe that it is the companies that have started within tourism, everybody have marketed a lot. Hagfors municipality has done nothing! Or, forgive me for putting it like that, but our feeling is that they have done too little, they have only been to the emigration fair the last two, three years.”

In the year of 2005, Jakob and Emmy Geels bought a camping in Hagfors municipality for a very low price. While living in the Netherlands the couple always knew that if they were going to move they wanted to start a business within the tourism industry in Hagfors since both of them had prior knowledge and experience of outdoor activities. When they bought the camping they had to start from scratch since there was practically nothing on the property that would enable them to open up the camping to visitors. They began by building ten small cottages and an activity center where they could offer potential guests the opportunity to practice outdoor activities. The couple also spent an incredible amount of money on marketing the camping in order to attract potential tourists to the site. Before selling the camping in the year of 2010 they
participated in Dutch reality TV shows, the Emigration Expo, appeared in magazines and marketed their company in other countries like Norway and Germany. While marketing their own company through these channels they automatically promoted Hagfors municipality as well. When the couple opened the camping, they had 2000 guest nights and when they sold the facility in 2010 they had managed to increase the number of guest nights to 22,000 through extensive marketing.

Newer so called hybrid programs like reality shows and documentaries can help to put a specific place on the map. In the typology made by MacKay & Fesenmaier (1997) these texts are referred to as independent material in the theoretical framework since they are not directly influenced by the promoters of destinations which can increase the credibility of the mediated texts. Four of the Dutch entrepreneurs who have participated in this study have market themselves and Hagfors municipality through these Dutch reality shows. Every single one of the informants have seen these particular shows about people who leave the Netherlands in order to move to another country. It is important to emphasize that none of the informants stated during the interviews that they had seen a reality show while living in the Netherlands about Dutchmen who specifically had moved to Hagfors municipality. They had however seen other shows about people who had moved to other European countries like France, The Czech Republic or Hungary for example. Even though the film crews follow their main characters to different locations in the world, the arrangement of these programs is still the same. The most interesting result however was that a clear majority of the informants believe that these television shows have had an impact on the international counterurbanisation to Hagfors. The main reasons why are discussed in the following paragraphs.

The plot of these programs often begins with an introduction of the individuals who are going to leave the Netherlands. They discuss their motives for moving and how they expect their lives to be in the area of destination. The main characters often have a very clear and distinct idea about what they are going to do when they arrive in the new location. Judging by the results in this study, the most common reason for leaving the Netherlands is to start a company in Hagfors municipality. After the introduction the viewers are able to see the sometimes very emotional part of the program when it is time for the immigrants to say goodbye to their loved ones. Some of the informants discuss during the interviews how difficult it can be to make the final decision to move to a completely different country if relatives or friends are not supportive of their choice. Hearing negative comments about how unrealistic their expectations were about Sweden caused
them to second guess themselves if they really had made the right choice for their family. When the immigrants arrive to the destination area, viewers are allowed to see how hard these characters are working in order to turn their sometimes lifelong dream into a reality.

In the year of 2005, Jakob and Emmy Geels agreed on being followed by a Dutch TV crew in order to make a program about their move from the Netherlands to Hagfors. At this particular moment, the couple and the Dutch entrepreneur who bought Värmlullsåsen in the year of 2003 were the only ones in Hagfors municipality to promote their tourist companies through these reality shows. When arriving to Hagfors, Jakob and Emmy worked together with another Dutch couple who had bought a hotel in the municipality. The crew filmed both of the couples which imply that they received one hour each of television time when the program aired in the Netherlands. In 2006 the same program was broadcasted once again in Dutch television which gave the camping and Hagfors even more, free promotion. After one year, the film crew returned to Hagfors in order to produce a follow-up episode about the immigrants regarding how their lives in Hagfors had turned out. Jakob and Emmy estimate that the first program received almost two million viewers in the Netherlands since the show aired on prime time. It was not only the Dutch population in the Netherlands who could see the program. During the interview, Emmy discusses how even her brother who lived in South Africa at the time had seen his sister and brother-in-law on television which implies that the show had a very wide range.

After the three programs had aired, Jakob and Emmy began to notice how tourists started to visit the camping just to meet the couple in real life and see how they were doing. Jakob discusses how the programs created a certain curiosity among the viewers about their camping and the entire area of Hagfors. After visiting the municipality for the very first time, some of the tourists returned to the camping several times and some of them even moved permanently to the area. According to Emmy, the mass media has therefore played a very important role for her and Jakob when they tried to make people aware of their camping. It was possible to see the direct impact of the programs when tourists started to arrive shortly after the show was broadcasted.

Another Dutch television show about people who have moved from the Netherlands to Hagfors was produced in 2009. This time a Dutch television crew followed Thomas and Nicole Groot, a couple who left their lives behind in the Netherlands to build a western ranch in Hagfors. The end result was a one hour long documentary that filmed their last day at work in the Netherlands, the entire building of the ranch and the official opening. Before they began to film, Thomas and
Nicole had come to the mutual agreement that they would not say anything negative about each other when filming the show. While filming, it was mandatory for the couple to wear microphones which implied that the couple needed to be extra careful not to reveal any negative opinions about each other or their company while the microphone was still on. A 25 minute follow-up episode was also produced about the couple during the winter season.

After the program had aired on Dutch television, Thomas and Nicole noticed that the show had attracted an enormous amount of visitors to their website. Normally their website had approximately 200 visitors per day but after the show was broadcasted they reached 5000 visitors per day which caused their site to become heavily overburdened. The couple was therefore forced to buy a new package that would increase the capacity of the site so that more people could visit their homepage now that people have finally managed to locate it. Every Dutch family who participated in the reality show had their own guest book on the web site of the television network according to Thomas and Nicole. The move to Sweden did not go as well for certain families as it did for the informants who participated in this particular study. It was very common for viewers of the show to write very negative comments in the guest books of these families.

In contrast to Jakob and Emmy Groot, Thomas and Nicole did not receive any immediate bookings or visits from Dutch tourists. The couple is under the impression that the tourists wanted to be sure that Thomas and Nicole would be able to stay in business before they booked a trip to Hagfors. It was first a couple of years later that they began to notice how Dutch tourists began to visit their ranch because they had seen the couple on television and therefore wanted to meet them in real life. Thomas and Nicole have noticed that a lot of daytime tourists have begun to visit their ranch as a result of participating in the television show. Nicole states during the interview: “They say, oh! We saw you on television, we just came by to have a look. If we would take 50 Swedish Crowns for every person, oh, we would have made a lot of money!” The daytime tourists only stop by to see the ranch and meet the owners. Even if they do not buy anything or book guided tours, Thomas and Nicole believe that it is very important to take time for these visitors even if they know that they will not earn anything on their visit. If the tourists have a positive experience on the ranch they might return to the Netherlands and recommend the ranch to their family and friends. This form of communication is the most credible agent according to the typology by MacKay & Fesenmaier (1997, p. 539). Produced organic material (stories that are told by acquaintances of the receiver) and organic material (the receivers own, personal experience)
(Falkheimer & Thelander, 2007, p. 138) can therefore be the most effective agents when attracting new Dutch tourists and immigrants to Hagfors municipality.

The reality shows about Dutchmen who move to other countries have several positive and negative qualities. The positive aspect with these programs is that they do not necessarily try to present a beautified image of the migration process in contrast to the Emigration Expo in Utrecht for example. The programs are very well-known for containing a significant amount of drama and they often show everything that can possibly go wrong when migrating to another country, for example the immigrants have not acquired a job in the area of destination before moving, they do not speak a single word Swedish or they discover a major fault in their new house that they have purchased. Thomas and Nicole discuss how important it is that individuals are well prepared before they move from one country to another. Moving to another country can be quite difficult, even if the migrants have prepared for their re-location for several years. Moving without being prepared can therefore have devastating consequences. Before starting a company for example, it can be crucial for entrepreneurs to look into details regarding building permits in order to know whether it is even possible to expand their company in the future or if they are allowed to make eventual changes on a facility for example. Julia Vries provides an example of a show that she saw while living in the Netherlands: "One time I saw a show from The Czech Republic about a family with a little child, three dogs, the whole roof of the house was missing and they went there with 50 000 Swedish Crowns. What do you expect, with a whole family? You are crazy! You have to have a back-up and exactly know: do I have work, do I have an income every month, I have to buy food, I have to pay rent, you know that in advance because you have to do that in other countries as well. I think that they are quite foolish people, they take too many risks." Through these programs, viewers are able to experience the downside of moving to another country which may cause them to realize just how important it is to be prepared before taking the risk of migrating.

Another positive aspect of these programs is that they provide moving images of places. The primary goal of the reality shows is to capture the lives of the Dutch families. While doing so, viewers are also able to take part in the environment in which the programs are recorded. Some of the push factors of the Netherlands is the reigning congestion, heavy traffic and the absence of green areas such as forests. When the viewers see a program about a family that has moved to Sweden it is therefore possible for them to see the beautiful nature, lakes and wildlife that they dream about. It has already been established that Dutchmen have very strong preconceptions about Sweden, especially those who have never visited the country before. Since they are under
the impression that Sweden is a cold, dark and expensive country the programs about Dutchmen who move to Hagfors can therefore help to change these strong, negative opinions about Sweden. It is also very important to emphasize how these preconceptions can become even more enhanced if these programs are recorded during the winter season in Sweden for example. Through these programs it is therefore possible to mediate an image of a place that is already very stereotypical among a certain group of people which could make the preconceptions even stronger.

The less positive aspect of these programs is that they sometimes tend to mediate an image that is too negative. Informants Marretje Klerk and Julia Vries refer to the same episode when discussing the negative aspects of these migration programs. It is important to state that these informants did not perform the interviews together. Their statements were therefore made during two completely separate occasions. They both talked about a Dutch man who moved from the Netherlands to Sysslebäck which is a small conurbation in Torsby municipality. This man had decided to open up a bike shop in an area where the demand for this particular service was quite absent. Marretje Klerk discusses during the interview: “I believe that it was someone from Sysslebäck who was going to open its own bike shop and I had not heard about it, but I received SMS and emails from ten different friends from Holland within a week, have you heard about this? How can you think of anything so stupid? Then I had to go in and watch the program on the internet to see and yes, it was only negative actually.” Julia Vries also shared her opinions about the program during the interview: “He goes up to Sweden where no one lives! One person and he wants to sell bikes? It is like that when you watch TV and you see that kind of people, then you think they are all crazy! Yes, it is not the success stories that you see on the television. If they ask me, will you go on the telly with your company I say no I don’t want to be an imbecill on the telly. So the good people you don’t see on the telly. I think.” To only put emphasis on the things that can go wrong can also discourage people from migrating. Julie Vries states during the interview: “If I see the programs there, I always think oh my God I will never go to the foreign country. I don’t think it is positive!”

Another negative aspect with these programs is the way in which they are edited. The immigrants and Hagfors municipality have very little control over how they will be depicted in the show when it is produced and finally aired on television. In the theoretical framework these programs are therefore referred to as independent material which is texts that are not directly influenced by the promoters of a certain destination (Falkheimer & Thelander, 2007, p. 136). It important to emphasize that the television company behind these programs have an agenda and specific conditions that need to be filled (Falkheimer & Thelander, 2007, p. 134). It is very common for
the editors to manipulate the material that has been collected when filming the informants in order to achieve more drama and therefore increase the number of viewers. Several of the informants who have participated in these shows stated during the interview how 80 hours of film is reduced to only an hour or sometimes even 25 minutes. Two clips that have been filmed during two separate occasions are very often put together in order to create more drama. Pieter van Dijk talks about this particular problem and how these programs tend to mediate a wrong and negative image of the immigrants. He refers to his daughter Mary and son-in-law Rick who bought a camping in Munkfors municipality: “They had a dog and they bought it in Holland. The dog had to be vaccinated first before he could come here. So it took three, four months before the dog could come here. And then she missed the dog. At one time or another, they talked about the dog and she began to cry and then they had cut in this clip and made it look like it was Rick who had done something on the camping so that she had started to cry. That he was mad on her, so it is a little bit, negative.”

The informants describe reality programs as very entertaining and sometimes even embarrassing. Several of the Dutch immigrants describe how they tend to feel ashamed for the sake of the participants in the show since some of them tend to have a romanticized image of how their lives will become in the destination area. The individuals who participate in these programs are therefore often depicted as individuals who are careless, impulsive, naïve, unrealistic, crazy and sometimes even stupid according to the informants.

A majority of the Dutch inhabitants in Hagfors is working within the tourism industry. They tend to see great possibilities where the locals only see impossibilities. The immigrants have opened and restored disused hotels, opened camping facilities and built cottage villages. They have also started companies that are mainly focusing on the main attributes of Hagfors such as the beautiful nature and wildlife. As a tourist you can visit Sweden’s only moose and alpaca park, go on moose and beaver safaris, ride horses on a western ranch and go canoeing on the Klarälven river. The immigrants have basically found new and innovative ways to profit from the scenery and the environmental resources of Hagfors. The empirical material suggests that the Dutch entrepreneurs within the tourism industry are very important spokesmen for the municipality since tourists and potential residents tend to ask them for their advice and guidance about the migration process. When tourists come to their shops or camping sites it is therefore not uncommon for the Dutch entrepreneurs to receive a lot of questions from curious Dutch visitors. It is therefore possible to say that the Dutch entrepreneurs become important place promoters towards their fellow countrymen since they have already gone through the process of
moving from the Netherlands. Not only do they speak the same language, they also have a fairly good understanding for what Dutchmen are searching for. A text can receive higher credibility by the receiver if another client has expressed their trust for the sender. This is referred to as open persuasion of the second degree in the theoretical framework regarding the image-setting agents developed by MacKay & Fesenmaier (1997). The interviews imply that tourists tend to perceive the entrepreneurs as a very reliable source of information since they are considered to have a lot of experience.
6. CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

This chapter will summarize the main findings that have been obtained in this work. Since the research questions were presented in a bulleted list in the introduction chapter, the conclusions in this section will therefore be answered through bulleted list as well.

- How has place marketing been used by Hagfors municipality in order to attract Dutch migrants from the Netherlands?

The main purpose of the place marketing strategies is to attract new inhabitants to Hagfors, preferably well-educated, young families with children and entrepreneurs who can help to maintain the economic prospects of the municipality. The primary place marketing strategy that Hagfors municipality has utilized in order to attract these target groups from the Netherlands is by participating in the Emigration Expo in Utrecht together with real estate agent Bengt Pettersson. Their showcase is decorated with images of the rural idyll picturing lakes, animals and nature. Together they are selling the countryside because they know that the current situation in the Netherlands is what makes Hagfors so attractive. As exhibitors they demonstrate how the visitors can replace congestion, air pollutions and stress with space, clean air and serenity by moving to Hagfors. The interviews with the Dutch immigrants clearly show that the Emigration Expo was of minor importance when deciding where to live in the world. Some of them had visited the event but never saw the show case of Hagfors. The interviews clearly show that Dutchmen are very negative towards this event since exhibitors are considered to present a beautified image of places that do not exists. The information that is provided through these events is therefore considered to have a low credibility.

The internet has become a very important channel when place marketing Hagfors municipality. Both tourists and potential migrants have become much more independent since they can search for information about a place on their own. The real estate business and the act of selling houses have almost become a form of place marketing in itself. During the Emigration Expo Bengt Pettersson puts up houses that are for sale in the
municipality on display. The low house prices catch immediate attention of the visitors. Back home, the visitors can easy visit the Dutch website that Bengt has developed in order to receive more information about their future home. Finding their dream house online can therefore encourage the Dutchmen to visit the area. It is therefore not only the location of Hagfors that attracts immigrants to the area, the form of housing is also an important factor.

Another important conclusion is how the Dutch immigrants themselves have become important place marketers. The municipality relies very much upon the Dutch immigrants who live permanently in the area, especially the entrepreneurs who have invested both time and money in order to promote their own businesses in the municipality. By marketing their own companies, the immigrants have automatically marketed Hagfors through several media channels such as their own webpage, by participating in Dutch reality shows and emigration fairs. Hagfors has therefore received a lot of free publicity through initiatives that have been made by the immigrants. The results of this thesis imply that the entrepreneurs are place marketing Hagfors much more than the municipality itself. The Dutchmen have become very important ambassadors for Hagfors municipality. If they are proud to live in the area and speak positively about Hagfors to their friends and family, then this form of marketing has proven to be much more effective than participating in the Emigration Expo for example. The interest from the municipality tends to fade as soon as the immigrants have settled down in the area. The empirical results suggest that it would be beneficial if Hagfors directed much more place marketing towards the Dutchmen who already live permanently in the municipality. If the immigrants feel welcome, appreciated and taken care of they will most likely recommend their family, friends and customers to visit the area or even move to Hagfors. Instead of actively trying to receive more immigrants to the area they should invest time and money on the Dutchmen who are already living in the area.

- How is the Hagfors brand perceived by the Dutch population living in the municipality and how well do their interpretation of the brand correspond to the image that is communicated by Hagfors?

Hagfors municipality does not have its own, independent brand. There are no strategic steering documents available regarding the Hagfors brand and how it should be communicated, developed and preserved. No decisions what so ever have been made on a higher level within the municipality about what Hagfors should represent. This implies
that it has been difficult for the municipality to communicate a uniform image of Hagfors towards the target groups of the place marketing strategies. The fact that Hagfors does not have a strong, well-developed brand is confirmed when talking to the Dutch immigrants about the brand and its main characteristics. The empirical data imply that the Hagfors brand is very connected to nature and facilities in Hagfors which make the municipality appear as an area that is experiencing a positive trend and development. The immigrants believe that Hagfors would become a much more attractive area for tourists, especially if Värmullsåsen would reopen and the airport would continue to be in operation. The Hagfors brand is also associated with rally Sweden which is an event that is globally recognized. The municipality is therefore a well-known name within the world of motor sports.

Hagfors is currently being marketed entirely through the Värmland brand. This implies that Hagfors, together with every other municipality in the county are a part of a regional brand which main objective is to increase the interest and awareness about the county while creating a positive attitude to Värmland and the commercial and industrial life in the county. When studying the well-developed brand of Värmland it becomes apparent that all municipalities within the county share the same characteristics. They all have beautiful nature, lakes and space to offer potential residents. Being a part of the Värmland brand can be very beneficial for a rural municipality like Hagfors that do not have the economic opportunities to perform large and expensive place marketing campaigns. The result implies however that it is still necessary to develop a strategy for the Hagfors brand in order to be able to attract new inhabitants to Hagfors through the Dutch inhabitants who are already living permanently in the area. If these immigrants are more aware about the Hagfors brand then they are more likely to communicate it to their customers, family and friends in the Netherlands since word of mouth is the most effective and cheap way of marketing Hagfors according to the empirical data. The power of word of mouth is therefore much stronger than any of the place marketing strategies that have been applied by Hagfors municipality.

- To what extent can the effectiveness of the place marketing strategies performed by Hagfors be measured?

Just because a significant amount of Dutchmen have moved to Hagfors does not necessarily imply that the place marketing strategies performed by the municipality have been effective or successful. It is therefore important to emphasize that an increased in-
migration is not an appropriate way of measuring the effects of place marketing strategies. Hagfors has become the main center for international counterurbanisation due to the marketing that has been performed by the municipality according to the municipal officers in this study. Since there are so many Dutchmen living in Hagfors the representatives from the municipality are under the impression that the Dutch immigrants were mainly attracted to the area through successful marketing, especially since Hagfors has been visible in the mass media such as television shows and articles in magazines. The interviews with the Dutch immigrants however, reveal a completely different story. None of the informants in this study had taken part in any place marketing where Hagfors was the main sender before visiting the area as tourists. Even though Hagfors was the first municipality to be represented during the Emigration Expo, none of the immigrants who had visited the event prior to migrating had seen the showcase of Hagfors. It is therefore possible to conclude that none of the Dutch immigrants moved to Hagfors as a direct result of the place marketing campaigns that have been performed by the municipality.

The most interesting question that appears is how the immigrants could become aware of Hagfors if they did not take part of any place marketing from Hagfors municipality or the mass media? Out of all the rural areas in the world, how could the Dutch immigrants even know that Hagfors even existed? The answer is tourism and word of mouth. Tourism has had a very positive effect on the Dutch migration to the municipality. By marketing Hagfors through the Värmland brand and participating in regional projects in order to make the county more attractive, the municipality noticed an immediate effect of these measures. When participating in the so called Klarälven project, the municipality noticed how the number of Dutch tourists increased significantly in Hagfors. The same effect has also been noticed by the entrepreneurs who have participated in Dutch reality shows. After these programs had aired they noticed that tourists visited Hagfors in order to meet them in person. Several of the informants had visited Sweden prior to their migration which implied that they had previous experience of the country. This prior knowledge meant that they already had debunked the negative myths about Sweden. When discussing their migration plans with their family and friends in their home country or with Dutch acquaintances that already lived in Sweden they were often very encouraged to visit the country. It was therefore very common for the immigrants to go on vacation in order to be able to improve their knowledge about Sweden and the practical details of moving from one country to another. As tourists they often found
Hagfors by pure chance when driving around in Sweden and had therefore been able to create an image of the area before they moved to the municipality. It was also very common for the immigrants to become aware of Hagfors through word of mouth, through family or friends who already lived in the municipality, through the internet where they found cheap houses and established a contact with a real estate agent.

6.1 FINAL WORDS

How does this study contribute to the overall discussion on international counterurbanisation? This thesis has added an international dimension to the term counterurbanisation by studying how well this concept can travel across countries, namely between the Netherlands and Sweden. By positioning this work within the mobilities paradigm, it is therefore possible to describe how this international counterurbanisation has been enabled through different forms of mobility such as tourism for example in which second home ownership is included. By incorporating two countries in the study, rather than including one single country in which counterurbanisation occurs between different places, the results in this thesis are applicable over a greater variety of geographical areas. Through this thesis it is possible to establish that international counterurbanisation takes place in three different steps that often are mutually dependent of each other.

If rural municipalities in Sweden want to attract new inhabitants from another country they should primarily focus on attracting tourists to the area first because people rarely move to a place that they have not experienced before. The second step is to make sure that these tourists have a positive experience of the area which will encourage them to visit the area one or several times more. If these tourists visit the area on several occasions they might find it to be more economical to buy a summerhouse. Once they have bought such a facility in Hagfors they are more likely to become permanent residents. There are a lot of summerhouses that are empty during low season and therefore it is very important to direct place marketing campaigns towards those Dutchmen who already have experienced the municipality. Owning a second home in Hagfors can enable Dutchmen to create a distinct link between dream and reality. The low prices on real estate in Hagfors have made it possible for individuals to buy a summerhouse in the municipality. It is therefore possible for them to live permanently in an urban environment but still have close access to the countryside where they can live temporarily during the summer for example. This implies that the push factors in the Netherlands can be replaced by the pull factors of Hagfors municipality that are not available in their native country such as nature and space for
example. The second homes can therefore be perceived as a place of recreation where it is possible to achieve a lifestyle and a higher quality of life that is not possible in the Netherlands. Owning a summer house can therefore be perceived as a form of temporary mobility that can cause individuals to become permanent residents in the future.

This conclusion brings about a discussion regarding the relevance of utilizing different certain forms of communication over others. In order to attract international counterurbanisation it is necessary to focus on the immigrants who already have a distinct connection to Hagfors rather than those who are in the beginning of their migration process. This thesis strongly recommends the rural municipality of Hagfors to direct their attention and place marketing efforts towards Dutchmen who already have a certain connection to the area, namely those who live permanently in the area or those Dutchmen who only live temporarily in the municipality by owning a summerhouse. It is clear that the individuals who have participated in this study care about Hagfors and they have no intentions of moving back to the Netherlands. They are interested in social issues regarding Hagfors and sometimes they are very concerned about the future of this rural municipality. The changes within mobilities have clearly affected the commitment that the immigrants have towards their native country. This conclusion implies that Dutchmen are a target group that are very positive towards migration and open for mobility in order to fulfil their dreams. In fact, they are very willing to move, especially to a rural environment. When they move and arrive to their area of destination they will most likely remain there if they are well taken care of. Place marketing only becomes successful if those who move to Hagfors stay in the municipality.

Hagfors municipality have received between 250-300 new inhabitants through international counterurbanisation. The fact that municipal officers do not know exactly how many Dutch inhabitants who are living in the area or how many Dutchmen who owns a summerhouse also imply that it becomes much more difficult for the municipality to establish how many of them move back and most importantly why they move back. The municipality does not have any control whatsoever over how many Dutchmen who are moving in and how many are moving out. When examining the existing scholarly research within migration and place marketing, the primary concern of these publications is primarily how the practice of place marketing has been used in order to attract new inhabitants and if these promotional efforts have been successful or not. Successful in this context usually implies if a place has managed to attract individuals from the appointed target group or not. An important question that has developed during this work is:
What occurs after a rural municipality like Hagfors has attracted new residents and how can place marketing be used in order to make them stay in the area and perhaps even make them attract even more inhabitants? How can place marketing be used towards the local inhabitants who are already living permanently in the area? I argue that these questions that have not received enough attention within existing research. This thesis has established several push factors of Hagfors but in order to give these more reliability it is necessary to perform interviews with Dutch inhabitants who have moved from Hagfors back to the Netherlands in order to determine why they did not remain in the area. This is also the main reason why it is necessary to have a register of those Dutchmen who live in the area.
7. REFERENCES


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8. APPENDICES

8.1 INTERVIEW GUIDE

8.1 MUNICIPAL OFFICERS

1. Vad är din främsta uppgift som näringslivsutvecklare, turistansvarig i Hagfors kommun?
   What is your main work task as a Business Developer, Tourist Manager in Hagfors municipality?
2. Hur många inom kommunen arbetar aktivt med frågor angående den holländska migreringen?
   How many employees within the municipality are working actively with questions regarding the Dutch migration?
3. Hur har dina arbetsuppgifter förändrats? Vilka var dina arbetsuppgifter innan migreringen började och hur har de förändrats under dessa tio år som migreringen har pågått?
   How has your work task changed? What were your work tasks before the migration began and how have they changed during these ten years?
4. Vilka var Hagfors huvudsakliga problem innan migreringen?
   What were Hagfors main issues before the migration?
   - Urbanisering
   - Hög ålderstruktur
   - Outbildade invånare
5. Hur många holländare är bofasta inom kommunen idag?
   How many Dutchmen are living permanently in the municipality today?
6. Har siffrorna ökat eller minskat under denna tioårspериod? Varför, varför inte?
   Have these numbers increased or declined during the last ten years? Why, why not?
7. Vad är det som utmärker Hagfors kommun jämfört med andra kommuner i Värmland?
   What distinguishes Hagfors municipality compared to other counties in Värmland?
8. Har Hagfors kommun ett varumärke, vad representerar det?
   Does Hagfors municipality have a brand, what does it represent?
9. Varför väljer holländare att flytta till Hagfors? Vad är det som lockar?
   Why do Dutchmen choose to move to Hagfors? What attracts them to the area?
10. Varför är Hagfors den kommun i Värmland som har mest holländare?
    Why is Hagfors the municipality in Värmland with the most Dutchmen?
11. Hur länge har den holländska migreringen pågått?
    How long has the Dutch migration been going on?
12. Vad är den huvudsakliga orsaken till varför denna migrering startade?
    What are the main reasons behind the migration?
13. Vilken grupp av holländare är mest eftertraktad? Varför?
    Which group of Dutchmen is most sought after? Why?
    - Äldre
    - Familjer med eller utan barn
    - Unga
14. Vad har denna migrering betytt för Hagfors och vilka positiva respektive negativa förändringar har denna process skapat i kommunen?
What has this migration meant to Hagfors municipality and what positive or negative changes have this process created in the municipality?

15. Hur hittar de just till Hagfors?
How do they become aware of Hagfors?
- Kontakter (familj och vänner).
- Contacts (family and friends).
- Mässor
- Exhibitions
- Turistbesök i kommunen
- Visiting the area as tourists
- Word of mouth
- Internet eller annan media (tidningar, radio, TV)
- Internet or other media forms (newspapers, radio, television).

16. Vilken betydelse har Internet för att locka holländare till Hagfors?
How important is the Internet in attracting Dutchmen to Hagfors?

17. Vilka metoder använder kommunen för att locka holländare till Hagfors?
Which methods have been used by Hagfors in order to attract Dutchmen to the municipality?

18. Vad är ert syfte med marknadsföringen gentemot Holland?
What is your main purpose with the promotional efforts towards the Netherlands?

19. Hur vill ni att Hagfors ska framstå i er marknadsföring?
How do you want Hagfors to appear in your marketing?

20. Genom vilka kanaler marknadsför ni Hagfors. Varför?
Through which channels do you market Hagfors? Why?
- Tidningar, magasin
- Newspapers, magazines
- Internet
- Mässor
- Exhibitions
- TV
- Guideböcker
- Travel guidebooks

21. Vilken roll har svensk och holländsk media spelat i marknadsföringen av Hagfors kommun?
What role has the Swedish and the Dutch media played in the marketing of Hagfors municipality?

22. Både svensk och holländsk media har uppmärksammat den holländska migreringen. Tror du att denna medialsa uppmärksamhet har haft någon inverkan på inflyttningen till Hagfors?
Both the Swedish and the Dutch media have paid attention to the Dutch migration. Is there a possibility that the attention by the media has had any effect on the in-migration to Hagfors?

23. Finns det några strategier för marknadsföring som används i nuläget av Hagfors?
Are there any marketing strategies that are currently used by Hagfors?
- För att locka holländare till Hagfors?
  To attract Dutchmen to Hagfors?
- För att få dem att stanna?
  To make them stay in the municipality?
- Är de bofasta holländarna delaktiga i någon marknadsföring (intervjuer, foton, broschyrer)?
  Are the Dutch residents in Hagfors involved in any marketing material (interviews, photos, brochures)?

24. Är det viktigt för holländarna att behålla kontakten med sin familj och sina vänner i Holland?
Is it important for the Dutchmen to stay in contact with their family and friends back in Holland?

25. Hur behåller de kontakten med sin familj och vänner?
How do they stay in touch with family and friends?

What do you anticipate for the future regarding the Dutch in-migration? Will it continue or decline. Why, why not?

8.2 DUTCH IMMIGRANTS

1. Vart i Holland kommer du ifrån?
   Where in Holland are you from?
2. Hur länge har du bott i Hagfors?
   How long have you lived in Hagfors?
3. Vad arbetar du med i Hagfors?
   What do you do for a living in Hagfors?
4. Av vilken/vilka anledningar sökte du dig från Nederländerna?
   Why did you move from the Netherlands?
5. Hade du någon kontakt med Sverige, Värmland eller Hagfors innan du flyttade från Holland?
   Did you have any contact with Sweden, Värmland or Hagfors before moving from the Netherlands?
6. Vad hade du hörts om Hagfors innan du flyttade till kommunen?
   What had you heard about Hagfors before you moved to the municipality?
7. Det du hade hörts om Hagfors innan du flyttade hit, stämde detta överens med verkligheten?
   What you had heard about Hagfors before you moved here, did it match reality?
8. Hur skapade du denna uppfattning?
   How did you create this opinion?
9. Vad tror du att holländarnas generella uppfattning om Sverige är?
   What do you think is general perception about Sweden in the Netherlands?
   - Positive?
   - Negative?
10. Varför valde du att flytta just till Hagfors kommun, vad var det som lockade?
    Why did you choose Hagfors as your destination area? What attracted you to the area?
11. Hur blev du medveten om Hagfors kommun?
    How did you become aware of Hagfors municipality?
   - Kontakter (familj och vänner).
     Contacts (family and friends).
   - Mässor
12. Har Hagfors ett varumärke, vad representerar Hagfors det?
   Does Hagfors have a brand, what does it represent?

13. Vad är positivt respektive negativt med Hagfors?
   What is positive and negative with Hagfors?

14. Vad förknippar du med landsbygd?
   What do you associate with the countryside?

15. Upplever du att du bor på landsbygden? Varför, varför inte?
   Do you feel that you live on the countryside? Why, why not?

16. Hade er bild av landsbygden någon inverkan på ert val att migrera?
   Did your image of the rural have any effect on your decision to migrate?

17. Har migreringen ändrat din livsstil? På vilket sätt?
   Have you changed your lifestyle since you moved to Hagfors? In what way?

18. Har någon i din familj eller umgångskrets flyttat till eller besökt Hagfors efter att du har bosatt dig här?
   Have someone in your family or acquaintances moved to or visited Hagfors after your relocation?

19. Hur tycker du att Hagfors kommun arbetar för att behålla holländare kvar på orten?
   What does the municipality do in order to make Dutchmen stay in the municipality?

20. Vilken roll har svensk och holländsk media spelat i marknadsföringen av Hagfors kommun?
    What role has the Swedish and the Dutch media played in the marketing of Hagfors municipality?

21. Både svensk och holländsk media har uppmärksammat den holländska migreringen. Tror du att denna mediala uppmärksamhet har haft någon inverkan på inflyttningen till Hagfors?
    Both the Swedish and the Dutch media has paid attention to the Dutch migration. Is there a possibility that the attention by the media has had any effect on the in-migration to Hagfors?

22. Gör du något speciellt för att marknadsföra Hagfors i Holland?
    Do you do anything specific in order to promote Hagfors in the Netherlands?

23. Tycker du att det bor för många holländare i kommunen? Om antalet skulle komma att växa ännu mer skulle du då kunna tänka dig att flytta?
    In your opinion, do you think there are too many Dutch people living in the municipality? If the number would grow, would you be willing to relocate?

24. Vad saknar du mest med Holland?
    What do you miss most about the Netherlands?

25. Är det viktigt för dig att behålla kontakten med din familj och dina vänner i Holland?
    Is it important for you to keep in touch with your family and friends back home?

26. How do you stay in touch with your family and friends back home?

27. Kommer du någonsin att flytta tillbaka till Holland? Varför, varför inte?
    Will you ever move back to the Netherlands? Why, why not?
### 8.2 FACTS ABOUT THE INFORMANTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
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<tr>
<td>Madelene Andersson</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Tourist Manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tessa Boos</td>
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<td>Chris Boos</td>
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<td>Laura Brouwer</td>
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<td>Teacher</td>
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<td>Niels Brouwer</td>
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<td>Enterprise architect</td>
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<td>Anders Bäcker</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>Business Developer</td>
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<td>Pieter van Dijk</td>
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<td>Truck driver</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anna Fagel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emmy Geels</td>
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<td>Entrepreneur and occupational therapist</td>
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<td>Dennis Jong</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marretje Klerk</td>
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<td>Economist</td>
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<td>Kim Haan</td>
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<td>Ruben Haan</td>
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<td>Ben Linden</td>
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<td>Bengt Pettersson</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>Real estate agent</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>Maria Treub</td>
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<td>Entrepreneur</td>
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<td>Julia Vries</td>
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<td>Martin Visser</td>
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