

# Region Branding in the Netherlands:

## A comparison of 3 innovative case studies

Els Hegger, Henk Oostindie & Henk Renting

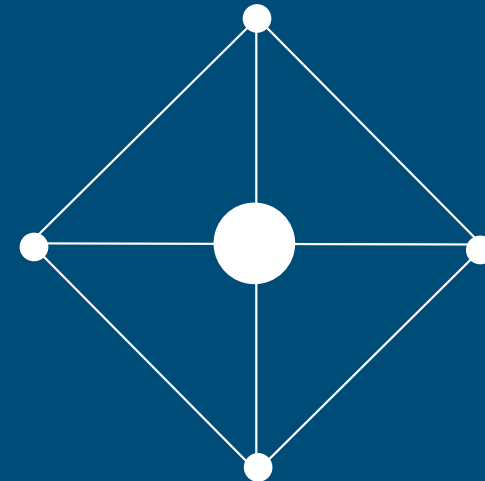
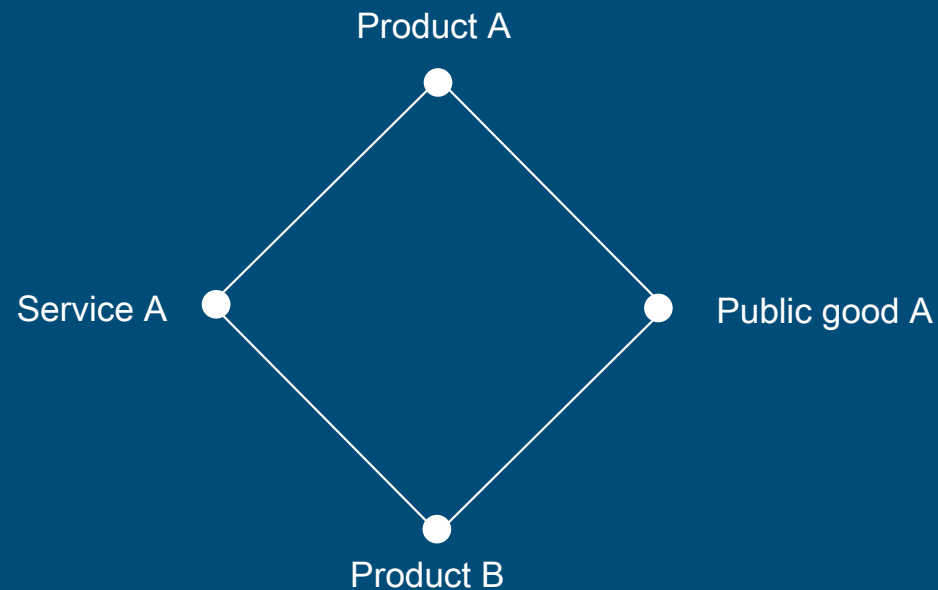


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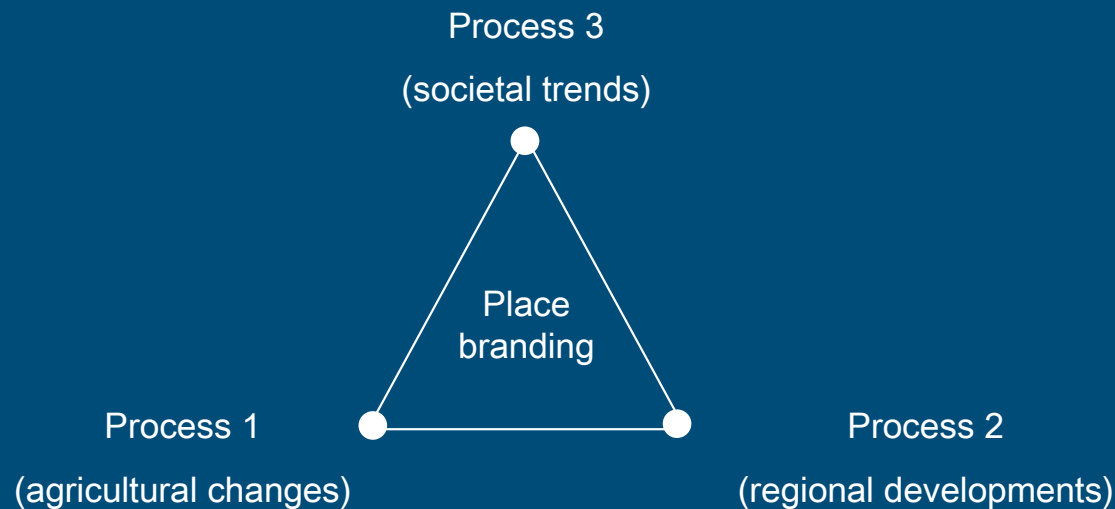
# What is region branding?

- Basket of products and services
- The region as the aggregate 'product'
- Telling the region's story
- Wide network of actors



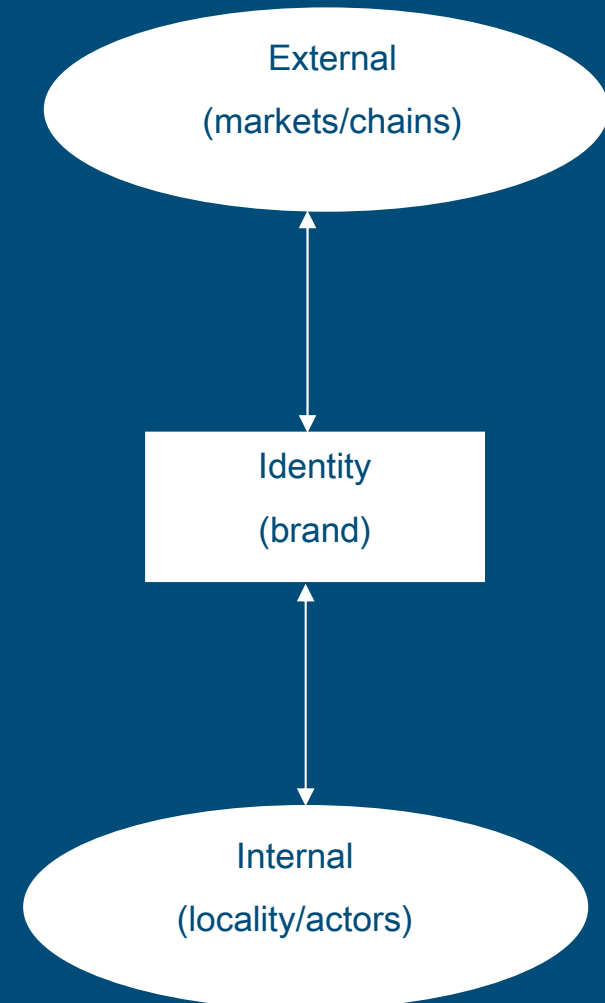
# Why region branding?

- Three significant historical processes
  - Agriculture and its changing role in society
  - The alteration of the countryside
  - Wider societal trends
- Region and branding as key conceptual categories



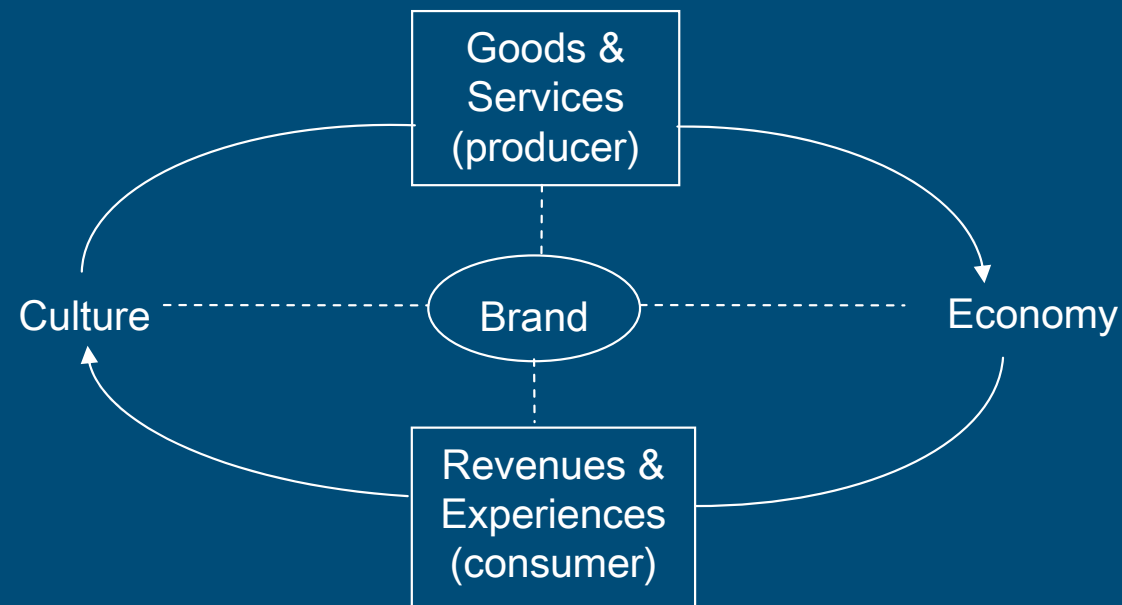
# Conceptual framework (1)

- Culture Economy as starting point  
“attempt by rural areas to localise economic control; to (re)valorise place through its cultural identity” (Ray, 1998)
- Strong focus on connection between local and extra-local
- Identity as central connector



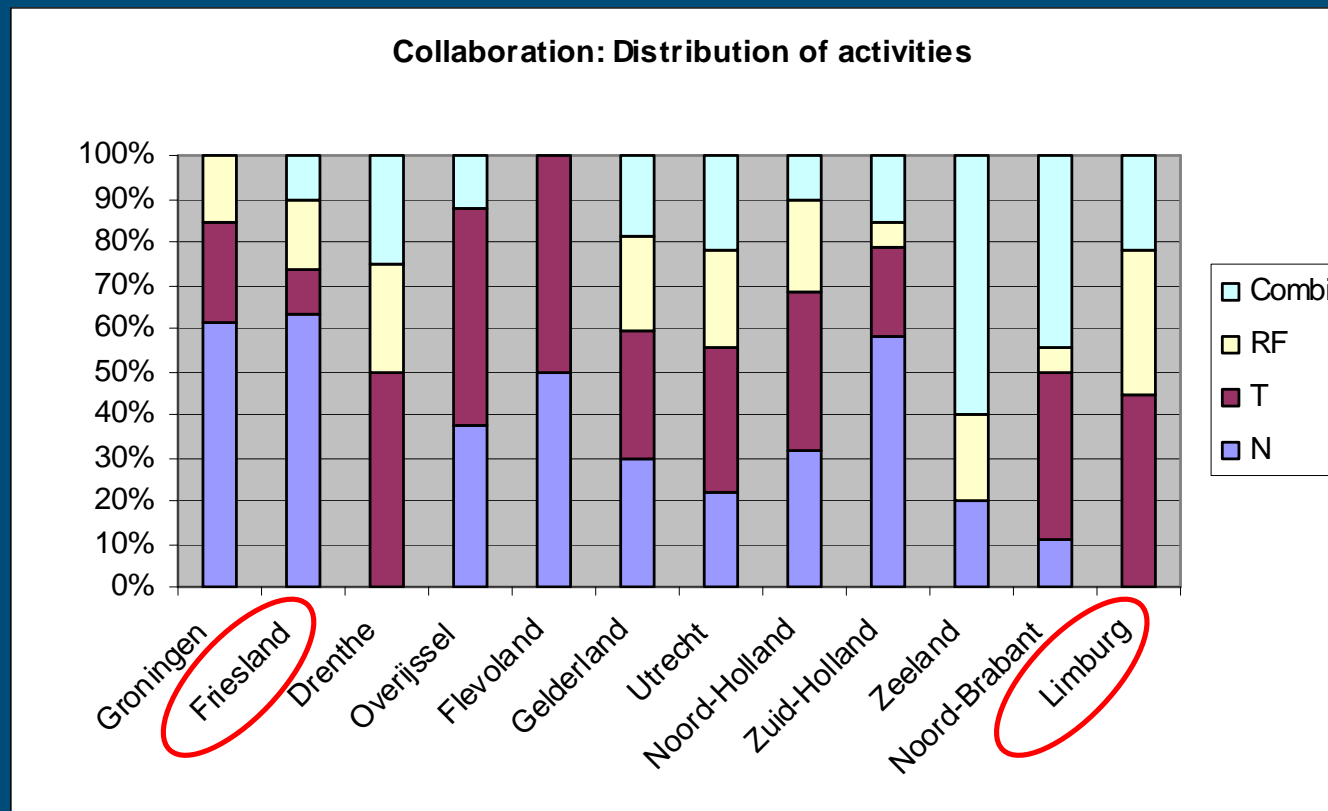
# Conceptual framework (2)

- Connecting culture economy to branding
- Central role of identity within branding
- Creating strong, multiple level networks



# Internet Research: Results (1)

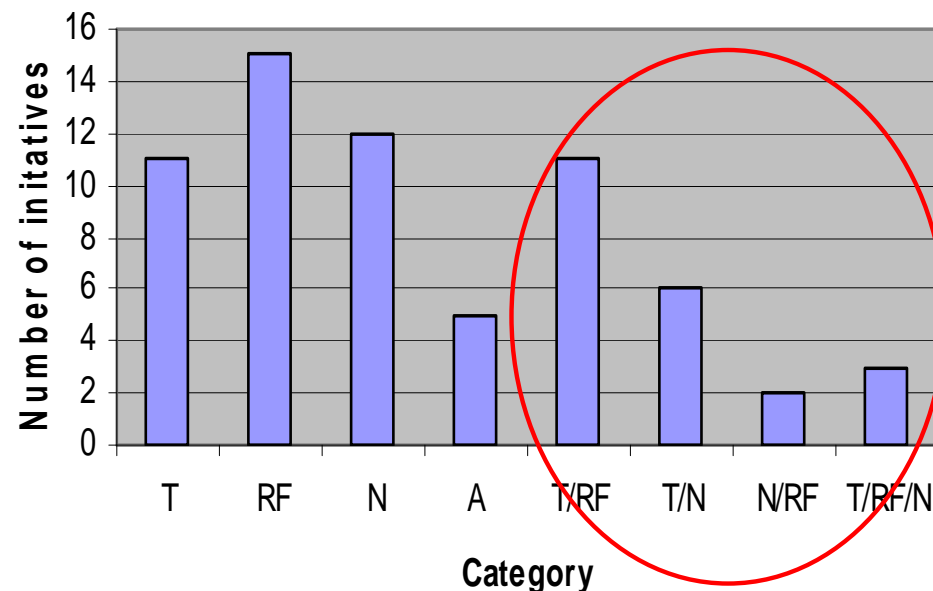
- Rough idea of regional differences
- Some historical roots visible



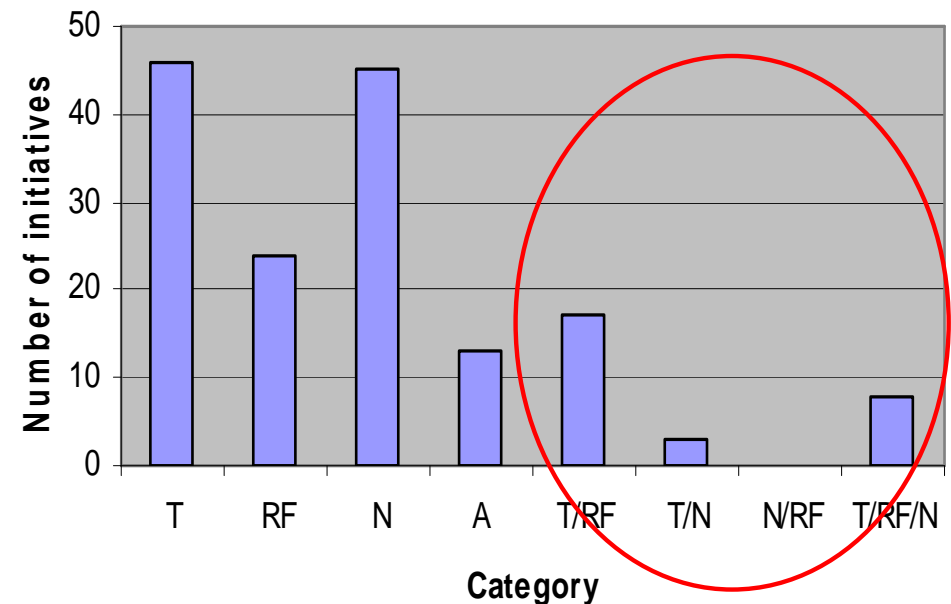
# Internet Research: Results (2)

- Not aim to draw rigid conclusions
- Combination of functions low, except T and RF

RSO research: 65 collective initiatives

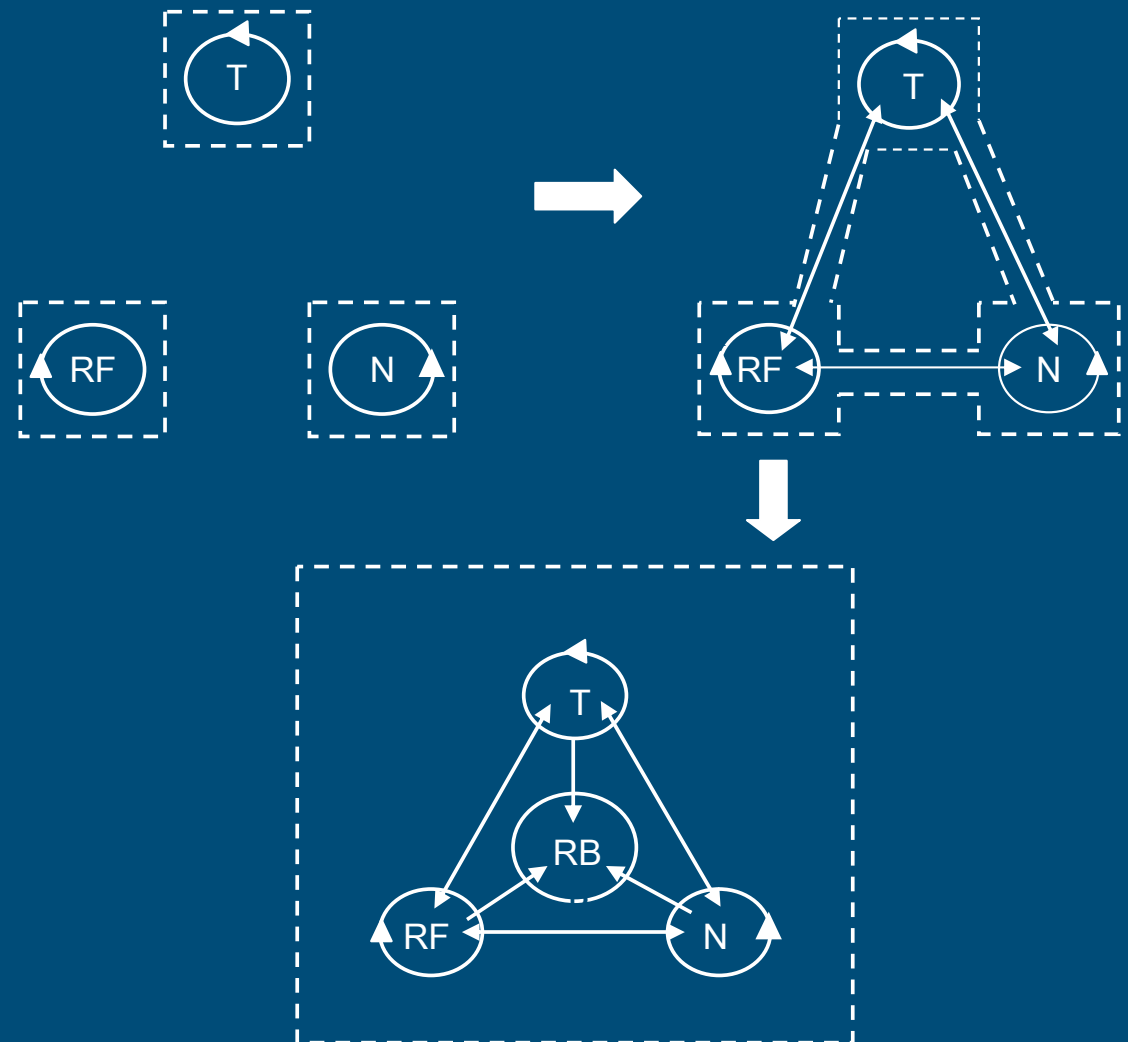


VVHP research: 170 collective initiatives



# Internet Research: Results (3)

- Institutional setting not favourable
- Co-operation still largely within sectors
- Policy development towards regional co-operation





# Case Studies: Valleï & Boerderij (1)

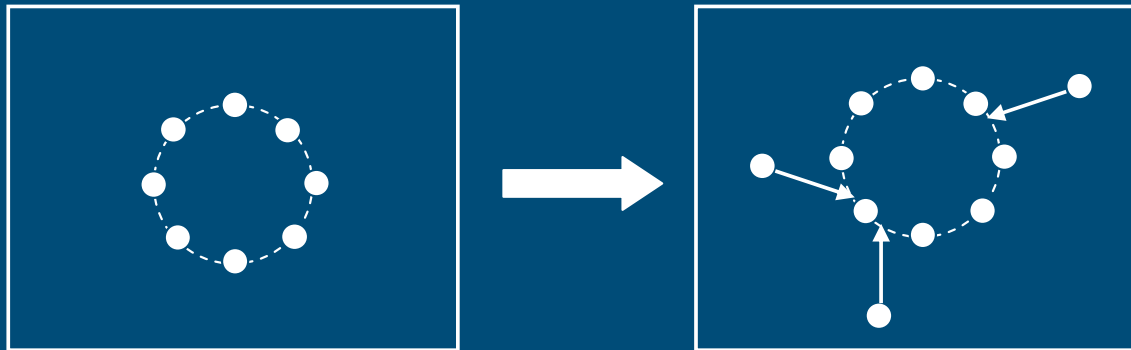


Name:	Vallei & Boerderij
Foundation date:	1998
Status:	Association
Founders:	Agrarian entrepreneurs in the area
Members:	65 entrepreneurs with an agrarian background
Emphasis:	Recreation and agrarian characteristics
Region:	The area between the 'Utrechtse Heuvelrug' and the 'Veluwe'
Target area:	National and international



# Case Studies: Vallei & Boerderij (2)

## ■ Network development

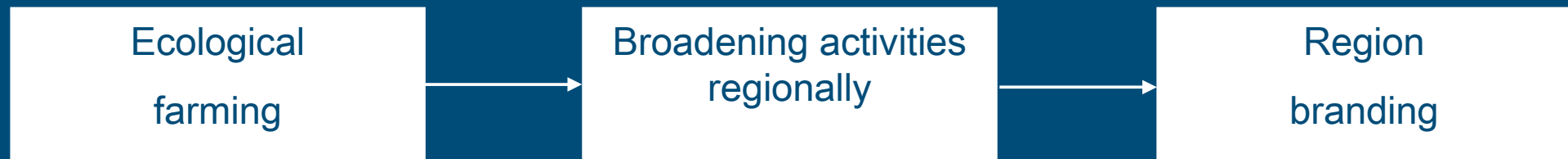
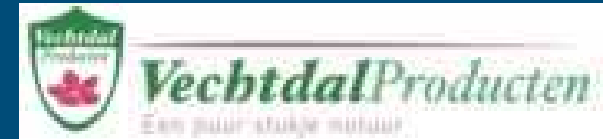


## ■ Future challenges

- Establish quality criteria
- Develop a clear identity for imaging
- “Our biggest challenge is to just keep breathing”

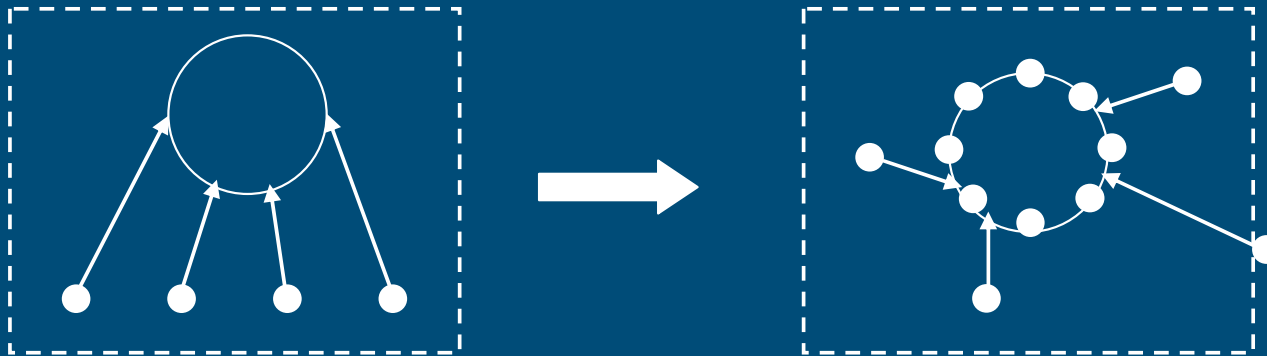
# Case Studies: Vechtdalproducten (1)

Name:	Vechtdalproducten
Foundation date:	29 June 2004
Status:	Foundation 'Dianthus'
Founders:	Farmer and consultant/researcher (not from the area)
Members:	37 farmers, restaurateurs, butchers, nature organisations, municipalities, entrepreneurs
Emphasis:	Environmentally friendly and regional quality food and services
Region:	The basin of the Vecht (in the province Overijssel)
Target area:	National



# Case Studies: Vechtdalproducten (2)

## ■ Network development



## ■ Future challenges

- Establish quality criteria
- Larger selling points
- “People should come for the product Vechtdal rather than for Vechtdalproducten; that would be ideal!”

# Case Studies: Het Groene Woud (1)



Name:	Het Groene Woud
Foundation date:	1992/1993 but more concrete in 2005 with 'Streekfestival'
Founders:	Farmer and consultant
Members:	Farmers, entrepreneurs, government bodies, nature organisations, various other organisations
Status:	Foundation 'Streekfestival'
Emphasis:	The region's nature, landscape and economy
Region:	The triangle between Eindhoven, Tilburg and Den Bosch
Target area:	Citizens in the triangle Eindhoven, Tilburg and Den Bosch

Existing initiatives  
focused on broadening



Region identified as  
National Landscape

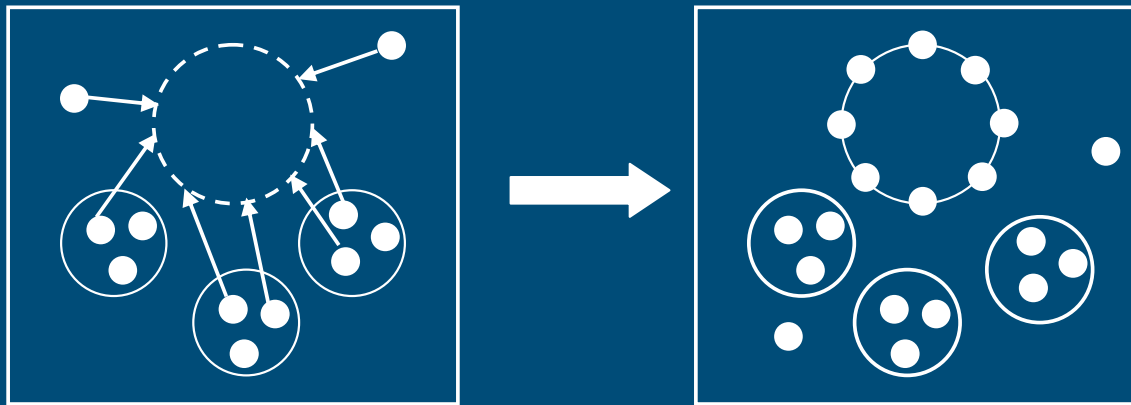


Region branding



# Case Studies: Het Groene Woud (2)

## ■ Network development

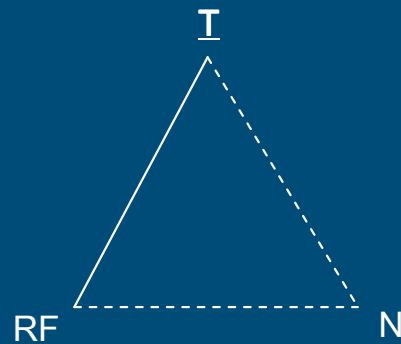
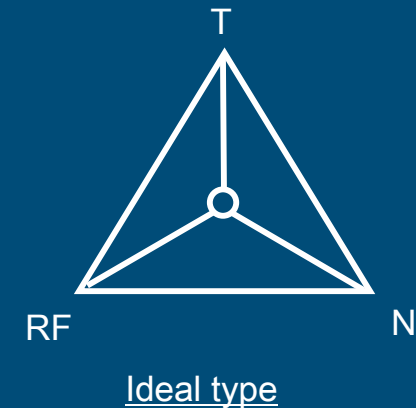


## ■ Future challenges

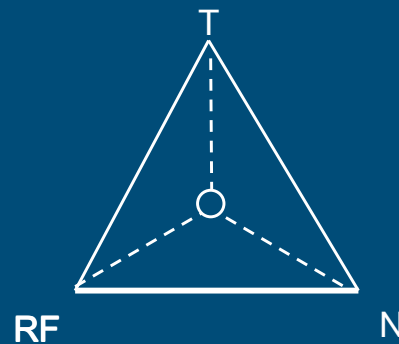
- Develop the rest of the ‘bus’ (driver, ticket,..)
- Establish a new legal status
- “Until now we have made many plans, but this year we will know how they will work out in practice.”

# Case Studies: Comparative Analysis (1)

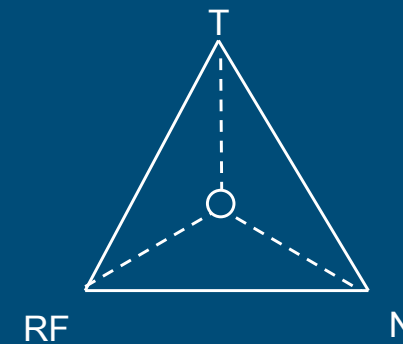
- Different combinations of T, N, RF
- Focus and development stage varies



Vallei & Boerderij



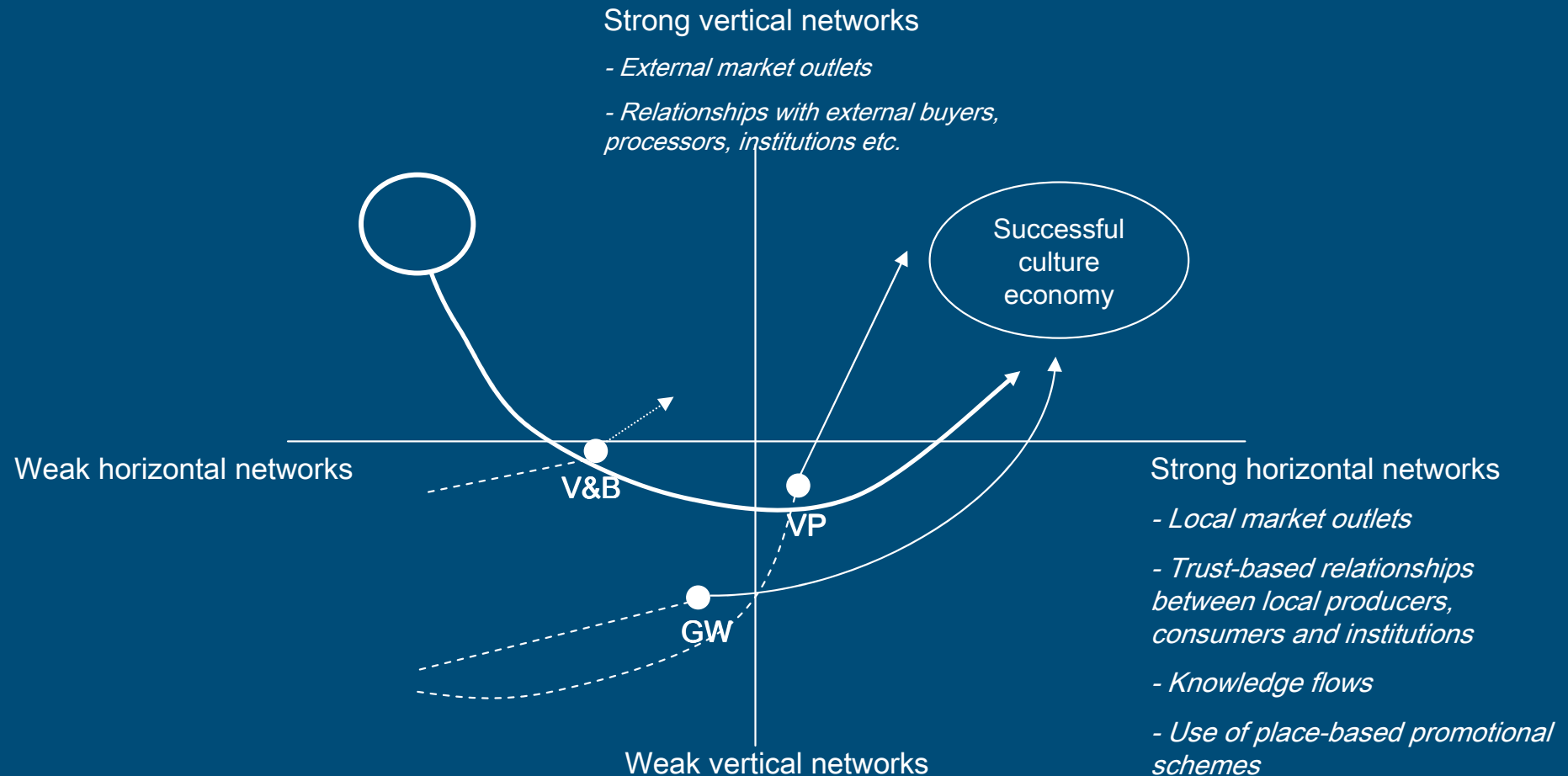
Vechtdalproducten



Het Groene Woud

# Case Studies: Comparative Analysis (2)

## ■ Differences in dynamics and network trajectories

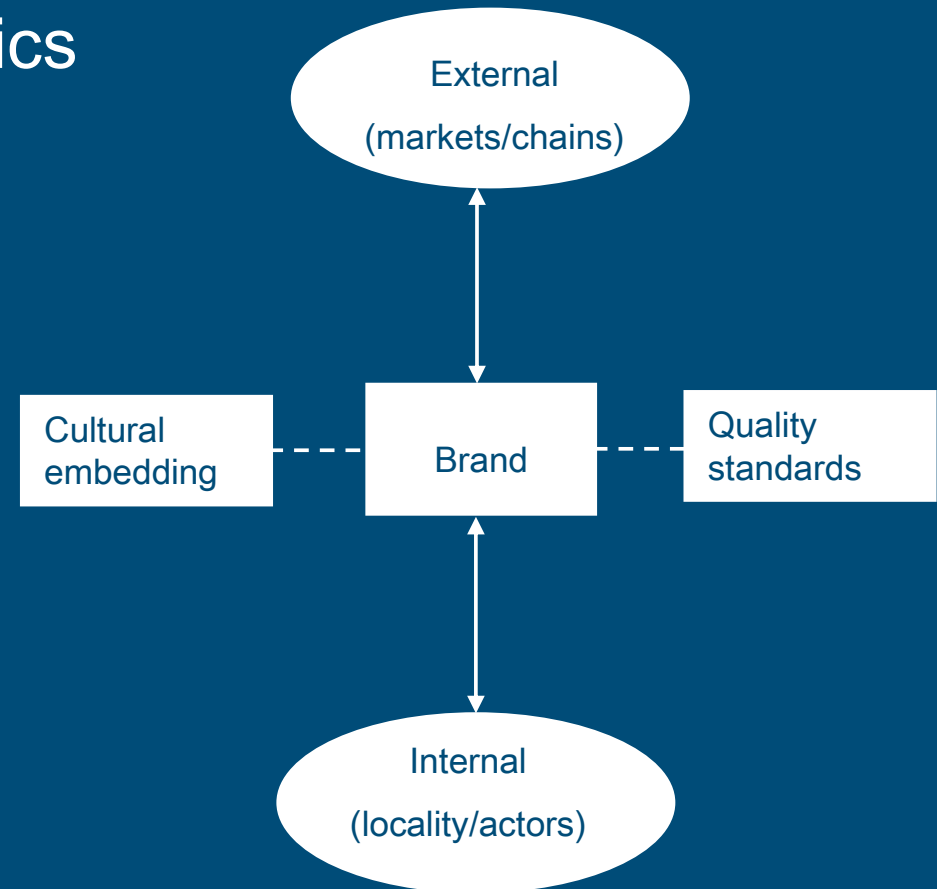




# Case Studies: Comparative Analysis (3)

## ■ Differences in life-cycle dynamics and organisational strategies

- Diversity of members
- Financial and organisational support
- Quality standardisation
- Difficulties in identity creation
- Cultural differences between regions difficult to recognise



# Main Conclusions

- Region branding response to variety of factors in the field of agriculture and society at large
- Co-operation result of blurring boundaries between disciplines and fields
- Historical roots in emergence of initiatives visible
- Main difference is size and variety of members
- Importance of strong leadership
- Quality as main issue determining brand
- Culture delicate issue: discrepancy theory and practice



# Recommendations

- This research has resulted in 11 recommendations for a research agenda:
  - Region branding as a concept is ill defined → there is a need for a conceptual classification of region branding.
  - The concept of region branding creates a new kind of competition among regions → how to deal with the lack of distinctive power of some regions?
  - Identity is a key issue in region branding but largely absent in the empirical data → how can an identity be constructed in a setting where it has largely disappeared?



# Thank you for your attention!

Please feel free to ask questions.



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