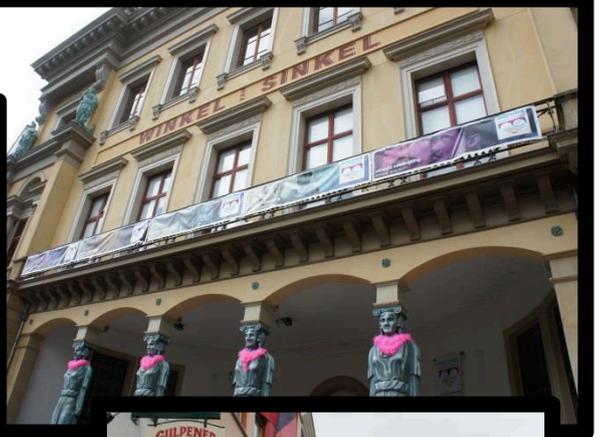




Utrecht Through The Senses

Utrecht and its sensescapes, marketing and branding

Alex Bright - August 2013



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A special thanks goes to my supervisor Bas Spierings for his guidance and pushing me forward when I needed it, and to my family and girlfriend for supporting me through the experience.

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Contents

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 Introduction	5
1.1 Scientific Relevance	6
1.2 Societal relevance	7
1.3 Research problem & questions	8
1.4 Research structure	9
Chapter 2 Theoretical chapter	10
2.1 Introduction	10
2.2 Sensescapes	10
2.21 Sensory perception & experience of place	11
2.22 Emotional Response	12
2.3 Tourism	13
2.31 Destinaton choice	13
2.32 Destination branding and management	14
2.4 The senses & tourism	17
2.5 Conclusion	20
2.6 Conceptual summary	21
Chapter 3 Methodology	22
3.1 introduction	22
3.11 Case target site	22
3.12 Case target sample	23
3.2 Content Analysis	24
3.21 Background	24
3.22 Operationalisation	25
3.23 Analysis	25
3.3 Walkalongs	25
3.31 Background	25
3.32 Operationalization	26
3.33 Analysis	29
3.4 Auto Photography	30
3.41 Background	30
3.42 Operationalization	30

3.43 Analysis	31
Chapter 4 Content Analysis	32
4.1 Introduction	32
4.11 Aims	32
4.2 Process	32
4.3 Results	33
4.31 General Picture	33
4.32 In depth	34
4.4 Conclusion	35
Chapter 5 Walkalong Analysis	37
5.1 Introduction	37
5.2 Results	37
5.21 Voorstraat	38
5.22 Oudegracht	40
5.23 Mariaplaats	42
5.24 Neude	43
5.25 Zadelstraat	45
5.26 Vismarkt	47
5.27 Pandhof	48
5.28 Dom	50
5.29 Lange Elizabetsraat	51
5.3 Vredenburg	53
5.4 Discussion	57
5.41 Tourists & residents	57
5.42 Sensory Marketing	58
Chapter 6 Conclusion	65
6.1 Findings	65
6.2 What this means for Utrecht University	66
6.3 What this means for branding and marketing in general	67
6.4 Limitations	68
Chapter 7 Appendices	69
Chapter 8 References	78

Introduction

The acceleration and intensification of globalisation appears to have resulted in an increasingly competitive environment for cities (Sassen, 1998). Whilst at the top of the global hierarchy 'World Cities' are competing for multinational companies and the world's biggest events, further down the scale, smaller regional and provincial cities must also compete for attention, investment, visitors and shoppers, in addition to having to fight to hold onto their own locally produced talent and knowledge (Morgan & Pritchard, 2012).

In order to do so many cities have begun to focus on place marketing or branding as a means of distinguishing themselves from others (Morgan & Pritchard, 2012). One aspect of this is the branding and marketing of places as tourist destinations in an attempt to attract visitors (Aaker, 1997). This means trying to create an attractive picture of what is on offer which also appeals to the desires of potential visitors (Chacko, 1997).

It's also important to ensure that visitors have a positive experience during their trip and that it matches their expectations, which in general are built upon the image marketed (Kozak & Rimmington, 2000). This is seen as key to inspiring brand loyalty and increasing the chance of return visits or recommendations (Opperman, 2000).

At the same time tourism is increasingly being considered as an inherently sensual experience, reflecting a wider sensorial revolution within the social sciences (Howes, 2006). Academic authors such as Crouch and Desforges (2003), Degen, DeSilvey and Rose (2008), Edensor (2006), Markwell (2001), Pallasmaa (2005) and Rodaway (1994) have all argued for a multisensory approach, calling for an appreciation of the complex interplay between the senses, and experience of place.

With this in mind it's clear that the senses should play a crucial role in enriching place marketing and branding. Consequently this thesis intends to incorporate academic theory on destination branding and tourism into an empirical study of sensescapes. With authors such as Ingold and Vergunst (2008) seeing walking as the primary mode of experiencing place, and Wylie (2005 p.236) suggesting "walking corporealities and sensibilities allow for reflection on the shifting mood, tenor, colour or intensity of places and situations" a walking based methodology ties the study together suitably.

The aim of this study then is to delve deeper into the qualities of Utrecht's built environment exposing the sights, textures, sounds and smells present, the pleasures or challenges they might offer to visitors or tourists, and their potential to be used as an additional layer in the marketing and branding of Utrecht.

1.1 Scientific relevance

With a critical turn towards the senses in academia, especially Human Geography, it has become widely recognised that there is a need to move towards a multi-sensory approach to research, avoiding the analytical and methodological separation of the senses (Degen, DeSilvey & Rose 2008; Ingold, 2004; Pallasma, 2005; Rodaway, 1994; Saldanha 2002; Coleman & Crang, 2002; Crouch, 2009).

The emerging field of sensescapes is a reflection of this and has attempted to look in more depth at the sensual experience within a variety of contexts. It has produced work in areas such as the mundane practices of everyday walking in pedestrians (Middleton, 2010), shopping behaviours and ways of seeing in the mall (Degen, Desilvey & Rose, 2008), the embodied practice of walking and its relationship with urban rhythms (Wunderlich, 2008) and the regulation of unpleasant sensescapes in the context of urban regeneration (Degen 2003).

With reference to the connection between sensescapes and the tourist experience, there have been some geographical studies, but these have tended to focus in on one or two particular senses (see Crouch, 1999; Dann and Jacobson, 2003). There is also a small body of literature within the tourism management field looking into the use of sensory marketing in destination branding but again most case studies have concentrated on one or two of the senses alone.

Whilst there have been studies looking into the embodied experiences of domestic visitors, students and residents in Utrecht, these have focused on route choice, spatial knowledge and the visual aspect of the senses (see Hogeboom, 2012; Lok, 2011 and Van Benthem 2012).

Thus at present an apparent gap in the scientific literature exists specifically relating to the empirical investigation of multiple sensescapes through the eyes (ears, nose and skin) of the (pedestrian) tourist, situated within the wider context of destination branding and marketing for the city of Utrecht.

1.2 Societal relevance

As the Netherlands fourth biggest city and main transport hub, Utrecht's concentration of creative talent, culture, knowledge and business mean it is one of the countries most prosperous cities (www.Utrecht.nl). According to an NBTC NIPO report on tourist visits to Utrecht, it is also now the third biggest city in terms of tourism receiving almost 3 million visitors per year, the majority of which find it to be an attractive and hospitable destination for both tourism and business (Utrecht in top of most hospitable cities once more, 2012; Utrecht most attractive business destination, 2012).

Regardless of this Utrecht suffers from low brand awareness both inside and outside the Netherlands. Known within the Netherlands primarily for its Oudegracht canal, Dom church and Hogh Catherijne shopping centre, abroad it is associated with little aside from being a smaller version of Amsterdam (Bezoekcijfers, 2011). Often cited within the media as an 'unsung city' or 'hidden gem', it could certainly benefit from a more focused brand image and stronger marketing of its attributes.

Additionally according to several press reports by the city's tourism agency despite positive feedback from visitors who do choose to come to the city, the city "cannot rest on its laurels" and "has some work to do in the area of appearance and hygiene" with several public spaces needing to be "dealt with" (Utrecht in top of most hospitable cities once more, 2012 p.1) Continuing and building upon its successes as a tourist destination by attending to such issues appears to represent one way in which the City of Utrecht can achieve its self-proclaimed goals - remaining prosperous in a tough economic climate, and retaining its creative talent (Gemeente Utrecht, Position paper, 2013).

This is especially important considering that the tourist destination has now gone beyond Mossberg's (2007 p.43) concept of 'service-scape' to become an 'experience-scape' in which experiences become not only of distinct economic value, but also according to Pine and Gilmore, (1998) of the highest position on the four-stage-continuum of the progression of economic value.

Whilst more tourists might be good economically, there are always going to be implications for other stakeholders, and planners must attempt to address the resulting cultural, social and environmental implications, for example the effect on life in the city for residents (Agapito, Valle & Mendes, 2012). Nevertheless the value of creating a successful, identifiable brand that captures the spirit of a city goes further than attracting tourists, it can also serve to inspire the general population serving to strengthen a city's ability to retain an educated workforce (Agapito et al, 2012)

Indeed with the establishment in 2011 of the Marketing Utrecht Taskforce, the city has already begun to rethink its approach to branding and marketing, furthering the dialogue with marketers of the cultural and tourist sectors with the end goal of promoting Utrecht on a larger international scale with a minimum budget (Gemeente Utrecht, position paper, 2012)

Utrecht then represents an interesting subject for a case study for several reasons. Firstly in uncovering the sensescapes present, it could provide an additional layer in the marketing of city visits and tourism as a multisensory experience, helping to differentiate the city brand through the promotion and description of unique sensory experiences just as others cities around the globe are beginning to do. It could also uncover the importance of non-visual sensescapes in producing either positive or negative emotions in particular spaces of the city encountered by tourists or residents who may be deciding to leave or stay in the city post university.

Given that scholars such as Degen (2008) and Middleton (2010) have implied that it's possible to design for the senses, such information could prove useful for those involved in policy making, marketing the city and ensuring it remains a prosperous centre of knowledge and talent herein providing the societal relevance of this thesis.

1.3 Research problem and questions

The purpose of this study then is to explore the nature of sensescapes present in the city of Utrecht as experienced by visitors and (temporary) residents on foot, and investigate their potential to create an additional layer in the promotion of the cities' brand image.

The following three research questions are based upon this problem:-

1. Which attributes are the brand image of Utrecht built around, which areas of the city are they linked to, and how are they described in terms of sensory description?
2. How do the senses affect visitors perceptions of the main attributes associated with Utrecht's brand image?
 - 2a. What are the sensescapes present within the areas linked to Utrecht's main attributes as perceived through the eyes (ears, nose and skin) of visitors and (temporary) residents?
 - 2b. To what extent are feelings of Topophobia or Topophilia related to the sensescapes of particular areas or attributes for visitors and (temporary) residents?
3. How could the city's sensescapes be managed and how could they be used to enrich Utrecht's current marketing and brand image?

The first question will attempt to uncover which aspects of the city are portrayed as the key attractions of Utrecht and will be answered through the content analysis of promotional

material. The second question has two parts and deals with mapping out the actual senses capes and associated positive or negative experiences of visitors. These will be answered through the analysis of walk along interviews and auto photography. The third and final question will reflect on the answers of the first and second, in an attempt to provide answers as to how the city's sensescapes might be planned for and whether the marketing of Utrecht's brand image could perhaps be improved upon through sensory marketing.

1.4 Research structure

This research project is composed of 7 chapters (this being chapter 1). Chapter 2 sees an analysis of the current literature and corresponding theory with reference to tourism and the senses. It begins by broadly clarifying the key concepts surrounding tourism and exploring work in the emerging field of sensescapes, before focusing in on sensory perception within the tourist experience and its use within marketing. This chapter culminates in a conceptual model drawing upon the theory explored.

In chapter 3 the problem and research questions based on the work of the previous chapter are presented. Following this is a justification for each of the methodologies chosen and explanation of how they were to be operationalized and analysed using the theoretical concepts identified previously.

Chapter 4 is composed of the results of the content analysis and is designed to provide an answer to the first research question. Chapter 5 then provides an interpretation of the results of the walk-alongs and auto photography with the aim of answering the remaining research questions

Finally in chapter 6, an attempt is made to draw conclusions from the analysis made and highlight the value and implications of the findings to the relevant bodies.

Theoretical Chapter

2.1 Introduction

This thesis is fundamentally based around the exploration of urban (tourist) sensescapes. Consequently the focus of this chapter will be to both present the emerging literature in the field of sensescapes, and situate it within the wider context of the tourist experience, with particular reference to place marketing and branding. The chapter will thus begin with a discussion of the work on human sensory perception and emotional response to it, looking specifically into the emerging field of sensescapes and Tuan's work on topophobia and topophilia. Following this will be an investigation into the motivations behind the behaviour of both tourists and tourist providers. Why do tourists choose to go to a particular place?, How do providers appeal to tourist motivations?, How is this shaped by destination branding? and what links can be made here with sensescapes and sensory marketing. At this point experience evaluation models, and destination loyalty will also be touched upon. The perception of the environment through each of the five senses and how these are being increasingly incorporated into the marketing of destinations will then be explored in further detail. The discussion will conclude with an argument for the importance of a multisensory approach to tourism management and the introduction of a conceptual model serving to illustrate how this translates into answering the research problem and questions laid out in the introduction (and at the beginning of the next chapter).

2.2 Sensescapes

We will now look to the study of the senses within academic literature. Engagement with the senses within research on the urban environment is nothing new. Until recently though, much of the work on sensual perception has been focused on the visual (Pan and Ryan, 2009). This is not surprising given that it arguably represents our primary mode of experiencing the world around us (Pallasmaa, 2005).

Nevertheless, within the last decade or so there has been something of a 'Sensorial Revolution' with a call for lived, embodied experience to be considered as multisensory (Howes, 2006 p.115). It has also been acknowledged that privileging the visual over other senses is inherently problematic as visual perception itself is always experienced in complex interplay with other sensory registers (Degen, DeSilvey & Rose 2008; Dann & Jacobsen, 2003; Ingold, 2004; Pallasmaa, 2005; Rodaway, 1994; Saldanha, 2002, Edensor, 2006).

The emergence of the field of sensescapes reflects this, building upon the original work of Porteus (1990) who defined the term itself, proposing that senses other than the visual and its associated landscapes could be spatially ordered or related to place. Consequently the

auditory, gustatory, olfactory and haptic could also be translated into geographies of the senses themselves. These would be known as touchscapes, smellscapes, soundscapes and tastescapes.

This has provided a steadily growing body of research into “the role of the senses in shaping our urban experiences” across the academic disciplines (Adams and Guy, 2007 p. 133), with studies such as Urry (1990) on the ‘Tourist Gaze’, Dann & Jacobsen (2003) on smellscapes within travel writing and Henshaw & Bruce (2012) mapping the smellscapes and soundscapes of several cities within the UK. Middleton (2010) has produced work on the embodied experiences of pedestrians, Wunderlich (2008) on the phenomenology of walking practices and their connection to urban rhythms and Wylie (2005) on the sensation, perception, affection and performative milieu of coastal walking. Jones (2012) has studied the influence of haptic stimuli on the affective capacity of cyclists and Bissel (2010) on the link between corporeal awareness and intense sensation in terms of the affective atmosphere on trains. With reference to tastescapes, Quan & Wang, (2004) and Boniface (2003) have both pointed to the importance of gastronomy in the tourist experience. Franklin (2003) has also looked at tourism considering its link with the soundscape.

Aside from these it would appear that there are only a small number of studies looking explicitly into aspects of the ‘multisensory’ tourist experience (see Crouch, 2002; Markwell, 2001, Pocock, 2002), none of which took place in the Netherlands or relate to place marketing and branding.

2.21 Sensory Perception and Experience of ‘Place

Senses play a crucial role in the interaction of humans with the environment. According to Holloway and Hubbard (2001) our interaction with the world is actually constructed by our senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch.

The work of psychologists initially focused on the assumption that individual knowledge of the world was derived solely from the senses and the stimuli acting upon the senses (Wood, 1969). It’s now clear that a complex interplay exists between the way we interpret, perceive or are affected by the sensorial information we take in, and that our external environment is both produced by and a product of both our cognitive and emotional responses to such information (Rodaway, 1994)

This is important because for Tuan (1975 p.153) both ‘place’ and ‘senses of place’ are constructions of such an interplay, “known directly through the senses and indirectly through the mind”. Sensory perception then appears to be crucial to not only our direct experience of place but also the way we imagine it to be. Indeed as Agapito, Valle and Mendes (2012 p.10) notes “it is through the senses that every individual becomes conscious of and perceives organizations, products, and brands”.

2.22 Emotional response

From the other side of the process, feelings and emotions result from the filtering of sensual information through our perception of the environment and thus play a vital role in the evaluation of a destination and future selection. We will now look to the work of Tuan on Topophobia and Topophilia.

Tuan (1974) introduced the concept of Topophilia, based on the idea that people develop feelings of love or an emotional attachment to places. These can be constructed through pleasant sensory experiences such as a delight in aesthetic or tactile sensation but also be mediated by race, cultural background and gender, where a bond might be based on an association with memories or home. The work of Davidson and Smith (2007) amongst others within 'Emotional Geography' has attempted to explore this relationship further, looking at the many different ways people perform, function and experience place with their entire physical being and the associated feelings of topophilia that can arise from them.

Contrary to Topophilia, Tuan (1979) also stated that the opposite could occur. Topophobia denotes feelings associated with uneasiness, fear or being repulsion of a place. According to Holloway & Hubbard (2001) with reference to the urban environment such fear can be subdivided into several categories. These include the inherent fear of noise such as traffic, construction, screaming children, accident & emergency sirens and alarms, and an intrinsic fear of people or the unknown, for example the homeless, ethnic minorities or groups of young people speaking foreign languages.

Bissell has noted (2010 p.44) that although senses "are not discrete, different sensory experiences might be intensified at different times", the same can be said for emotional responses. Whilst Topophobia and Topophilia represent two polar opposite emotional responses, there exists nevertheless a range of degrees of each feeling that lie in between.

If as Tuan (1975 p.153) states 'places are constructed out of such elements as distinctive odours, textural and visual qualities in the environment' and 'seasonal changes of temperature and colour' and our perception of the world is primarily built upon our emotional response to the such elements, then sensual perception is clearly fundamental to both the marketing and experience of destinations.

2.3 Tourism

2.31 Destination Choice:-

So why do people choose to go where they do? How are their choices affected by marketing?

Push and pull factors have often been seen as the driving force behind Tourist motivation. (Yoon and Uysal 2005). People who travel are said to be pushed into it by internal emotional forces, pulled into it by external forces (such as the attraction of destination attributes) or both pushed and pulled by a combination of both factors (Uysal & Jurowski, 1994).

According to Crompton (1979), push motivations can be grouped into the following categories:- a desire for: escape, rest and relaxation, prestige, health and fitness, adventure and social interaction, family togetherness or excitement. Other studies have also pointed to the desire for excitement or conviviality (Ekinici & Hosany, 2006). However, from an anthropological viewpoint, it's argued that the majority of tourists are motivated by a desire to escape the routine of everyday life, and are seeking authentic experiences in which they feel immersed in the environment at the destination (MacCannell, 1977; Urry, 1990).

Escapist tourist experiences involve some aspects or elements that induce pleasurable experiences which, by comparison of the everyday, are out of the ordinary. Potential objects of the tourist gaze must be different in some way or other. People must experience particularly distinct pleasures which involve different senses or are on a different scale from those typically encountered in everyday life (Urry, 1990, p.12).

Tung and Ritchie (2011) labels such experiences as 'memorable experiences' or 'MEs' and point to the connection between the emotion and the senses, suggesting that strong feelings produced by an abundance of choice, moments of amazement, and local distinctiveness are most likely to result in such experiences, all three are an inevitable product of the senses. Examples might include the tastes or smells of exotic food in an open air market, the feeling of walking through narrow medieval streets, the colour of the sea in tropical bays or even hearing different types of wildlife for the first time.

Pull factors on the other hand, according to McGehee, Loker-Murphy and Uysal (1996) relate to the external, situational, or cognitive aspects of a destination, and thus serve to attract visitors or inspire travel. From one side this means the more functional (physical/measurable) aspects of a city which together give rise to a holistic image or more generalised mental image of the destination (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003). These might include the destinations scenery and natural attractions, historical sites and museums, entertainment and nightlife, architecture, transport infrastructure, shopping facilities, climate, prices, gastronomy and accommodation (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003).

On the other side are the more psychological characteristics of a destination, again made up of a combination of its psychological attributes, for example its ambience, hospitality or friendliness, level of personal safety, fame or reputation, and its holistic feeling or atmosphere (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003).

Whilst it's argued that the idea of peak experience is derived directly from attractions such as historical sites or special atmospheres, factors affecting the supporting experience of sleeping, travelling, eating and shopping such as the cost or friendliness are still important. For this reason tourism providers must try to design and market an environment which can not only stimulate inherent push motivations but also fulfil the desires for a memorable, unique experience, whilst simultaneously achieving a balance between the provision of both a tourist and a supportive experience. This is inherently what destination management and branding is all about (Swarbrooke & Horner, 1999).

2.32 Destination Branding & Management

"There is increasing evidence in the press that branding, at least as a concept, is increasingly being applied to locations" (Hankinson, 2001 p.129)

Destination branding is a relatively new area of research but aspects of it have also been covered extensively under the label of destination image studies (Ritchie and Ritchie, 1998) with Cai (2002) maintaining that although image formation is not the only component of branding, it does constitute the core of the latter. Central to destination branding then, the concept of destination image is based on people's perceived ideas or images of a place. Gartner (1993) argues there are three main components of this image: the cognitive - or what someone knows about a place, the affective - concerning what people feel about their knowledge of a place and finally the conative - which refers to how people act on their knowledge and feelings about a destination. There is a clear relationship between these and the process of destination choice.

The marketing of destination characteristics (or pull factors) for example plays a key role in influencing people's perception or destination image. As explained above, these are composed of both psychological and functional attributes and their associated holistic feeling and imagery. Chacko (1997) terms these as intangible and tangible characteristics. If people are aware of these, and they appeal, then they are much more likely to choose to visit a destination, thus creating tourist motivation is about creating an image

Kotler, Heider and Rein (1993) have established the following criteria for a place image to be successful: It must be simple, realistic, believable, have appeal and emphasize its unique characteristics in order to differentiate itself from other destinations. This need to differentiate is seen to be borne out of an increasingly crowded field of imagery being produced by competing destinations and can be considered as one of the driving forces behind the stronger idea of destination branding as a whole (Evans, 2003).

Echtner & Ritchie (2003) argue that certain pull factors are more unique than others, brands can be built around common functional or physiological characteristics such as their price level, climate, or reputation, but are more likely to be successful if they draw upon more unique attributes for example the carnival in Rio de Janeiro or the mystic atmosphere of Nepal.

Certainly according to Cai (2002, p.722) and Caprara, Barbaranelli, and Guido (2001) the missing link between image and building a unique brand is 'brand identity' or 'personality' Aker's (1997) idea of *-destination personality* is based on the perception of *sets of human characteristics associated with a destination* from the perspective of the tourist. Destination personality appears to be related to the idea of marketing the intangible attributes of a destination. A study by Ekinci & Hosany, (2006) point to conviviality, excitement and sincerity as examples of such characteristics. Keller (1998) alternatively cites descriptors, such as *youthful, sophisticated, energetic* and *extrovert*. Both Keller (1998) & Ekinci & Hosany, (2006) argue that a distinctive brand personality can assist in creating favourable associations and stronger emotional ties with a place increasing the positive impact of destination image on brand loyalty, that is to say the likelihood of returning or recommending. Brand personality is embodied by cities, Paris for example is *romantic* and *chic*, London is *open-minded, unorthodox, vibrant*, and *creative*, Wales is *honest, welcoming*, and *down to earth* (Morgan & Pritchard, 2002).

Alongside brand image, brand awareness forms another important aspect of destination branding. Awareness relates to the strength of the recognition of brand images or personalities. Thus a destination must not only create a positive image, but it must also exist in the mind of potential tourists (Goodall, 1993). As Holloway & Hubbard (2001, p. 48) have stated interaction with places may be 'through direct experience of the environment or indirectly through media representations', highlighting the importance of marketing a particular brand image or personality as part of a wider brand identity. As cities are often heterogeneous it can be difficult to define a brand, Whilst some cities succeed as a wider brand, for example New York with its key attractions, the empire state building, wall street and central park, its nickname 'the big apple' and logo 'I love New York', others such as Berlin struggle to define themselves due to their discontinuity.

Brand management then can be understood as the strategic and tactical coordination of each component of destination branding (Keller, 1998). From a practical standpoint this means differentiating a place by emphasising its unique brand identity and portraying it as possessing superior qualities than the competition by creating and promoting place images in order to influence tourists' perceptions and subsequently the evaluation and selection process (Echtner and Ritchie, 1993).

Alongside successful marketing through branding, maximizing travel satisfaction is also seen as vital to the success of a destination (Swan & Combs, 1976), hence it is often incorporated

into a feedback loop within destination choice models due to its ability to influence future selection (Chon, 1990).

The importance of the relationship between place marketing and satisfaction is highlighted within the following quote by Fairweather and Swaffield (2002, p. 293) “When visitors encounter settings of experiences that differ markedly from their expectations, created through projected images . . . (through marketing, media, social interaction, arts and literature) . . . , their evaluations can be very negative”

Pizarro (2009, p.273) has observed for example that the lack of attention to the other senses often leads to dissatisfaction, when something marketed primarily visually is let down by the “poverty of its other sensorial attributes” - being experienced as too windy, too noisy, smelling bad, giving rise to feelings of discomfort, disgust or fear. Cities known and marketed for their romantic atmosphere and visual beauty such as Paris or Venice are often in reality let down by the fact that people expected them to feel cleaner (Paris) or smell better (Venice). One (rather extreme) example is the notorious ‘Paris Syndrome’ in which some Japanese tourists experience a psychotic break down on arriving in Paris and realising that it doesn’t live up to their highly romanticised and disney-fied expectations (Halim, 2009). Other cities can face the opposite problem, being let down by the fact they are too sterile or bland and lack in reality compared with their marketed image, for example Frankfurt or Zurich.

On the other hand if expectations are met, evaluations are more likely to be positive. It’s also widely recognised that there is a strong relationship between travel satisfaction and destination loyalty, that is that if tourist’s experiences are positive, they will be more likely to re-visit or provide positive word of mouth recommendations to others (Yoona & Uysal, 2005; Oppermann, 2000) This is often seen as beneficial to tourist managers as it can result in reduced costs of marketing to repeat consumers (Oppermann, 2000).

Uysal & Noe (2003) suggest travel satisfaction can be measured in terms of the evaluation of the instrumental performance of a destination - its physical attributes, and by the psychological interpretation of its expressive (experiential) attributes. Both elements are seen to be crucial to overall satisfaction, as expressive (experiential) attributes have the ability to create an emotional response and memorable or unique experience, while physical maintenance attributes are necessary to facilitate such an experience in comfort and safety (Uysal & Noe, 2003).

As the experiential paradigm, in which the way of consumption rather than products themselves is valorised strengthens (Holbrook, 1999) research is increasingly pointing towards the importance of multisensory stimuli and the gratification of all the senses in order to both intensify the experience of destinations and develop new branding strategies (Krishna, 2009). In doing so Pine & Gilmore (1998) suggest experiential marketers can

engage individuals emotionally, physically and intellectually, whilst simultaneously influencing consumers preferences and behaviour (Krishna, 2009).

The tourist experience is often said to be about learning and escapism (Pine and Gilmore 1998), Interestingly with the advent of modern technology such as smart phones and the web, and the corresponding access to mass media, many facets of the tourist experience such as gazing at distant places or learning about different cultures can now be achieved visually from afar, for example by reading blogs, using Google street view or watching documentaries. Nevertheless as Urry (1990) has stressed destination marketers must understand that there are distinct learning styles: the visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic, which respond to visual, audial and haptic stimuli respectively, further underlining the need for a multisensory approach.

Many have cited the link between place and bodily experience for example (see Crouch, 2002; Rodaway, 1994). As Crouch and Desforges (2003, p.8) note even typical tourist “practices such as sightseeing involve taking the body on particular routes around sites so that the senses, in their full kinaesthetic complexity, engage with and construct the touristic experience” This emphasises the need for an awareness of non-visual sensation in tourism and its management.

In summary tourist destinations must provide a sensorial experience that creates some degree of feeling of topophilia and instils a desire to return or inspires others. In doing so, Ogunseitan (2005) has argued that places must create a sense of environmental familiarity in order to make tourists feel comfortable and safe, whilst simultaneously providing enough sensual diversity to create a unique or memorable experience. We will now to look to the individual senses and how sensual diversity is being incorporated into destination marketing and branding around the world in an attempt to try to create unique appeal.

2.4 The senses and tourism

The Visual

According to a number of authors, sight is said to be the most powerful and seductive of the human senses due to its ability to attract attention, incite curiosity and bring material to life (see: Smith & Burns, 1996 and Orth & Malkewitz, 2008). Combined with the fact that visual images are easier to promote to tourists than other senses, historically tourism providers have calculated the design of their cities for a primarily visual effect and continue to do so. This is probably grounded within the historical context of presenting visual images as pre-selected, pre-packaged, and pre-projected sites and spectacles for tourists, a practice that emerged in the 18th and 19th centuries (Dan, 1996 and Ryan, 2003) The majority of large tourist destinations still tends to market their appeal based on tangible attractions that are experienced primarily as a sight or must see ‘site’ for example the Empire State Building in New York, Big Ben in London or the Eiffel Tower in Paris (McCannell, 1976). Lindstrom

(2009) however has the opinion that visual images are more effective and meaningful if they are combined with other senses such as scent and sound.

The Olfactory

Dann & Jacobsen (2002) have argued that an 'Over-emphasis on the tourist gaze tends to disregard the fact that the unique character of a place can additionally be imparted by its aromas'. It's argued that this in part due to the fact that scents can strongly affect our emotions inciting feelings of pleasure and wellbeing, and also as a result of the power of smell in evoking memories (Wilkie, 1994). This reflects Tuan's (1977 p.11) comments suggesting that 'odours often lend character to places making them easier to identify and remember' fitting in with the modern western tourists desire for distinctive experiences that can simultaneously evoke the past and inform the future.

Accordingly a city's smellscape can become part of its identity or image and so facilitate brand awareness. Dann & Jacobsen (2003) suggest a world distinctly divided into the olfactory good and bad, following along the lines of Corbin which talks of the foul "stench of the sinner and the fragrance of the saint" (Corbin, 1986 p.36). Correspondingly some cities become known for unpleasant smells such as the canals of Venice, others for positive associations with the aromas of food, for example chocolate in Bruges or *frieten* and *moules* in Brussels.

Destinations have also begun to promote themselves on the back of their distinctive smellscapes. Dan and Jacobs point to the success of the Andalucian cities of Granada and Seville in using smell of orange blossoms and jasmine perfume in their attractions such as the Alhambra and Alcazar gardens, marketing themselves as an exotic escape from the bland scentless-ness of northern Europe. The city of Rio de Janeiro has gone as far as to market favela tours based on experiencing the 'genuine smell of poverty' albeit whilst also gazing across the beauty of the city from its best vantage point, effectively doing what Rodaway (1994) proposes holds the most appeal for tourists - combining different sensations.

The Haptic

The work of Crouch (2002) has drawn attention to the pleasure and pain felt by 'someone who has happily tramped across their favourite rural landscape' and 'the teenager dragged round monuments' Additionally Veijola and Jokinen (1994) have proposed that the immersion of the body in unique experiences such as sunbathing, dancing and drinking within new surroundings provides one of the principle motivations for travel, highlighting the fact that the 'haptic' is clearly an important constitutive part of a multisensory experience due to its potential to impact on both the 'peak' tourist experience and 'supportive' consumer experience. Despite this little attention appears to have been paid to the potential of marketing the 'haptic' experience in conjunction with destination branding. One example that could be cited is the commodification of forms of dance by the tourism

industry in Cuba. Going beyond the traditional gaze performances and dance events are seen as something for tourists to participate in themselves as opposed to just something purely visual (Ruxandra, 2012)

The Gustatory

Within tourism food has often been associated with the supportive experience, viewed as essential for gratifying physiological needs (Tikkanen, 2007). Yet as Zainal, Zali and Kasim (2010) propose food can also be key to characterising a destination's appeal. Paul (2010) notes that in destinations such as Mexico, Croatia and Vietnam 'tastescapes' represent the central aspect of the overall experience, also comprising an important component in places such as France and Italy. Drawing upon the notion of tourism as a desire to escape the mundane, Heldke (2003) suggests gastronomic tourists can be seen as food adventurers for whom culinary tourism provides opportunities for tourists to "taste" the contrariety. Santich (2004) is in agreement that food tourism is essentially about being immersed in a different culture from one's own. As an intangible attribute food it could be argued then has asserted itself as a pull factor in destination marketing (Boniface, 2003). Destinations are subsequently beginning to focus more and more on using their unique cuisines or tastescapes to fulfil tourists inherent desires for escape, exhilaration and enjoyment (Frochot, 2003). One such example being Malaysia which has gone as far as basing its national tourism marketing campaign around food and the 'Taste of Malaysia' (Zainal et al, 2010).

Individual cities have been known to market food not only as an attraction in itself, but also as a mode through which to achieve peak experiences. This is becoming increasingly commonplace with the creation and promotion of food festivals and events such as the Festa di Cioccolato in Florence, Galway Oyster Festival, New York City Food and Wine Festival amongst countless others.

The Auditory

Garlin & Owen (2006) argue that sound has a clear link with emotions and feelings and thus plays a key role in the interpretation of experiences. Franklin, (2003) for example has maintained that soundscapes form a salient element of the tourist experience, involving a diverse range of sounds from natural sounds, foreign languages, music and media through to everyday noise from traffic or reconstruction.

With reference to branding, destinations are increasingly trying to use their soundscapes to differentiate themselves. This is unsurprising given the fact that in terms of the cognitive aspect of brand image, music in particular can be both a tangible and intangible attribute. Gibson and Connell (2005). The use of music images and sound in tourism promotion can also help to create a holistic perception of the destination (Schofield, 2009). Manchester for example has played upon its popular music heritage, marketing its musical audioscape through tours as a distinctive dimension to the city's place brand, something that other cities

such as Prague, Vienna and Hamburg have also done with classical music (Schofield, 2009). The tourism message of Liverpool has also drawn upon its audio scape, invariably acquiring titles of “City of Music” by UNESCO (2010) and “World Capital of Pop” by the Guinness Book of Records (2003) promoting artists, venues, festivals and events as key attractions. In a similar vein the South African city of Durban has recently established a partnership with National Geographic in order to promote Durban as a tourism destination, with marketing material exclusively focused on its soundscape (Mmstadium, 2012).

2.5 Conclusion

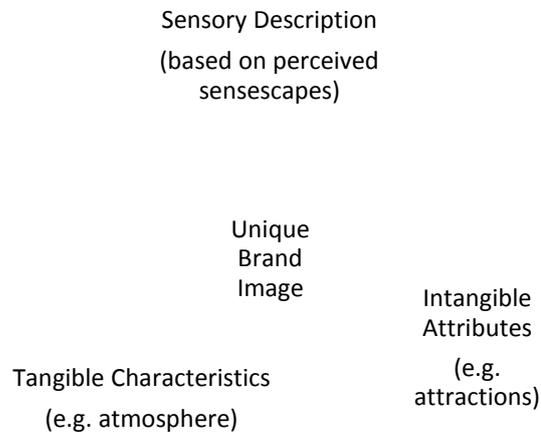
As a social and cultural creation, tourist experiences can be defined as a constant flow of thoughts and feelings (Carlson, 1997). It’s clear now then that these are formed as a response to the perception of a variety of sensescapes including soundscapes, smellscapes, touchscapes, tastescapes and visual landscapes (Krishna, 2010).

The senses and emotional response to them play a crucial role in several aspects of the tourist experience. Perhaps most importantly is their potential to maximise travel satisfaction by facilitating unique and memorable experiences. Especially so in an emerging experience economy in which tourists have shown an active desire to engage creatively, intellectually, emotionally and physically with the destination. They also plays a factor in influencing the evaluation and selection process in destination choice behaviour - which is said to be based on the factual knowledge previously gained through bodily experience at the destination or via destination marketing which itself comes in the form of a variety of sensorial images - not just visual, but sounds, textures, smells, tastes, pains and pleasures, (Damásio, 1995)

“The traditional conceptualization of the tourist experience is no longer effective in a dynamic landscape of travel and tourism” (Kang & Gretzel, 2007). As Govers & Go (2005 p.77) have stated “The lack of understanding of the experiential nature of tourism amongst ... tourism industry decision makers” often means the way its promoted fails to reflect the “multi-sensory, fantasy, and emotive aspects” of its true potential.

Thus gaining a better understanding of how the senses can be used to “design communicate, brand, and boost experiences, to potentially increase satisfaction, and consequently, long-term recollection and loyalty” could be beneficial to not only tourists, and providers of tourism competing in an increasingly difficult market, but also city marketing agencies and residents themselves (Agapito et al, 2012, p.9).

2.6 Conceptual Summary



This chapter illustrates the fact that the tourist experience is inherently multifaceted and multisensory. In order to appeal to tourist motivations, in particular a desire for escapism and experiencing the 'unique', cities are beginning to differentiate themselves by going beyond the usual marketing of their tangible, functional characteristics and focusing more on intangible characteristics such as atmosphere and personality which can now be seen to represent a form of destination branding. The sensory description of both tangible and intangible characteristics can add an additional layer to branding, helping to create a more unique brand image, something which is increasingly being done by destinations across the globe. In order to understand how this can be done for a particular destination, in this case the city of Utrecht, it is necessary to first identify the tangible and intangible attributes being marketed, then uncover the sensescapes present within areas associated with them and finally establish the nature of their relationship with positive and negative emotions. The research methods used to do this will be explained in the following chapter.

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with an overview of the site and sample chosen before going on to provide an explanation of and justification for the research methods chosen.

In order to answer the first research question, a content analysis of marketing literature was undertaken, the results of which were to form the building blocks of the methodology chosen to answer the second and third research questions by informing the route and questioning to be used during walk-along interviews. The interviews were supported by a third methodology auto-photography, which it has been argued goes well with the walk-along method.

3.11 Case Target Site

This study took place in the historic centre of Utrecht. Utrecht was chosen as brand awareness has recently been reported as being low in comparison with its competition despite being within the top five tourist destinations in the Netherlands (Utrecht in top of most hospitable cities once more, 2012) With marketing currently focusing on the city's tangible characteristics, enquiring into the sensual perceptions of visitors could thus provide useful information on how to create a stronger or more enticing brand, drawing upon the sensescapes to describe both tangible and intangible aspects of the city, just as other cities around the globe have begun to do so. This could be particularly useful considering the fact that the City of Utrecht have suggested the growth of tourism should play a key role in remaining prosperous in the face of a tough economic climate (Toerisme Utrecht, 2012).

According to the Utrecht Municipality, the centre of the city can be subdivided into several different areas. These are:-

- Wijk C
- Breedstraat & Plompentorengracht e.o.
- Hoog Catharijne, NS & Jaarbeurs
- Nobelstraat e.o.
- Domplein, Neude & Janskerkhof

- L. Elizabethstraat & Mariaplaats e.o.
 - Hooch Boulandt
 - Lange Nieuwestraat e.o.
 - Nieuwegracht Oost
 - Springweg e.o. & Geertebuurt.
- (Gemeente Utrecht, Plattegrond Binnenstad, 2010).

The walk alongs all took place on a fixed route built upon the results of the content analysis within the Domplein, Neude & Janskerhof and L. Elizabethstraat & Mariaplaats e.o. areas. These were deemed to represent the places most likely to be frequented by visitors as they fell within the 'tourist hotspot' area described on the Visit Utrecht VVV Toerisme website (see Figure 8 in the appendices). The actual route is explained in further detail within the following chapter.

3.12 Case Target Sample

The sample taken for interviewing comprised of international visitors to Utrecht and a small number of national visitors and non-permanent residents. These ranged in age, nationality and background with roughly a 50/50 gender split between visitors, thus fitting to the general profile of tourists in Utrecht (Toerisme Utrecht, 2011). This research was first and foremost based on international tourists. Despite this a small number of national visitors and non-permanent residents were also included in the study. This was done for several reasons, primarily to provide a broader picture of how the city and its sensescapes were perceived but additionally to confront the wider impact of tourism on the city of Utrecht, especially considering the fact that the city marketing association and municipality documents also focused on the importance of retaining their local talent and attracting business visitors from within the country. All interviews were arranged via friends of friends. This produced a total of 14 respondents, the profiles of which are below:

Respondent 1: Johann a 25 years old Dutch male who has lived in Utrecht for the past 5 years

Respondent 2: Adrienn, a 26 year old Hungarian female visiting Utrecht as an international tourist

Respondents 3 & 4: Daniel, a 30 year old British male and Dhaleen, a 31 year old British/Thai female both visiting Utrecht as international tourists

Respondent 5 & 6: Ana and Isabel, both 23 year old Spanish females visiting Utrecht as international tourists

Respondent 7: Sofia, a 24 year old Greek female living in Utrecht as a temporary resident whilst studying at the University

Respondent 8: Ioanna, a 23 year old Greek female living in Utrecht as a temporary resident whilst studying at the University

Respondent 9: Marieke, a 24 year old Dutch female from Amsterdam, visiting Utrecht for a day trip

Respondent 10: Andrew, a 35 year old British male visiting Utrecht as an international tourist

Respondents 11 & 12: Glen and Caroline, a 26 year old British male and 24 year old British female both visiting Utrecht as international tourists

Respondents 13 & 14: Helen & Mark, a 59 year old British male and 57 year old British female both visiting Utrecht as international tourists.

3.2 Content Analysis

3.21 Background

Content analysis is considered to be *“an approach to the analysis of documents and texts that seeks to quantify content in terms of predetermined categories and in a systematic and replicable manner”* (Bryman, 2008, p.289).

In this project content analysis was chosen because it provides the logical solution to finding an answer to the first research question (which consequently plays a crucial part in answering the final research question) and is flexible enough to apply to a range of unstructured textual information (Bryman, 2008).

Content analysis appeared to give a simple, unobtrusive means of assessing how the brand image of the city of Utrecht portrayed itself and appeared to be portrayed within the press. This reflects the suggestion of O’Leary and Deegan (2005) that content analysis of written information, such as guidebooks and travel brochures can produce a great deal of information about the images projected by a tourism destination. Additionally content analysis is also seen as a transparent research method, facilitating repetition in future, either as applied to other cases, or in more detail with reference to this case (Bryman, 2008).

With reference to its limitations content analysis is a purely descriptive method and cannot be used to determine causal effects (Bryman, 2008). As such, the underlying motives behind any observation can only be based on assumptions. This does not pose a significant problem to this study however as in this case content analysis is used primarily to provide a

preliminary study for walk-along interviews. Whilst it also serves to answer the first research question - this seeks to know 'what' rather than 'why'.

3.22 Operationalization

In order to undertake the analysis, a sample of 10 documents was used giving a total of 32,660 words. These comprised of websites such as the Gemeente & VVV Toerisme Utrecht websites, and also both travel blogs and articles produced within the press surrounding Utrecht as a travel destination (These were taken from the 'Utrecht within the Press' section of the Toerisme Utrecht website). The specific documents can be found in the following chapter. The documents were chosen based upon having content directly related to the promotion of Utrecht and marketing of its brand image. It must be noted here that the amount of text did vary per site, with the city tourism websites containing substantially more so than in the press articles. The aim of the content analysis was to identify the most frequently used language used in the promotion of Utrecht as a tourist destination by the city tourist authority, the gemeente and in foreign press articles.

3.23 Analysis

In order to perform an analysis on the sampled documents, the websites, blogs and articles were manually browsed and scanned for textual content. This was then copied, pasted and saved into separate Word files (depending on source document) and then analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively using the MAXQDA computer program. MAXQDA was chosen as it was deemed to have the most user friendly interface in terms of presenting the data. The written material was then coded and categorised according to whether it related to sensory description and / or tangible (product) or intangible (experiential) characteristics (Chacko, 1997). This process was informed by literature cited within the theoretical chapter. The groups of coded material were then compared with each other across all documents and by groups of matching document type. In addition a quantitative word frequency count was undertaken. The results of both served to provide an answer to the first research question and thus in turn inform the methodology for the walk-along interviews.

3.3 Walk-alongs

3.31 Background

The go-along is a relatively new technique within social science research of which walk-alongs constitute one form. The walk-along itself can be considered as a type of hybrid participant observation in which the researcher performs an in depth interview whilst walking alongside the respondent in their natural environment, thus adopting the role of observer whilst also participating in the experience (Carpiano 2009; Kusenbach 2003;

Bryman, 2008). By observing their informants' spatial practices *in situ*, it's argued that "ethnographers are able to capture the stream of perceptions, emotions and interpretations that informants usually keep to themselves" (Kusenbach, 2003, p.464). Incidentally it is these which are considered to make up everyday experience (Carpiano, 2009).

As with all empirical research, the presence of a researcher is undeniably an intrusion on the private dimension of lived experience and consequently the walk along cannot be considered as a true gateway to experience of the observed (Kusenbach, 2003) indeed it is often critiqued that it is unnatural to comment on one's unconscious actions or perceptions and often difficult for average layperson to describe (Kusenbach, 2003).

Nevertheless in its ability to allow the researcher to actively observe and participate in the experience whilst simultaneously questioning the respondent, it goes much further in removing the filters of perception which are shaped by and sensitive to social contexts than other methods (Kusenbach, 2003). In sharing the experience the researcher is not only able to perceive the environment himself but also gain a better understanding of how the respondent perceives the environment by questioning their responses to it. For this reason Carpiano (2009) argues it is particularly suited to exploring a respondents 'sense of place'.

Described by Kusenbach (2003 p.466) as offering "privileged if not unique access" to the theme of perception of the environment, go-alongs then appear to represent the most logical choice of research method for this study, particularly in the form of the walk-along, as the centre of Utrecht is heavily pedestrianized and traversed by tourists primarily on foot.

3.32 Operationalization

A total of 10 walk along interviews were undertaken over a period of several weeks. Nine of these were semi structured and informed by the interview guide that can be seen on the following page, the other one was unstructured taking place before the interview guide was finalised (this still produced significant material for analysis and was nevertheless included within the study). Each interview varied in length between roughly 45 and 90 minutes and was undertaken whenever the interviewees were available. All 10 took place during the day. As most of the international visitors came with friends or partners, most were taken around in pairs in order to avoid taking additional time out of their holiday. The list of interviews can be seen below:

Interview 1: Danny & Dhaleen - Date & Time: Monday morning - Weather conditions: dry and bright - Length: 45 minutes

Interview 2: Johann - Date & Time: Thursday afternoon - Weather conditions: sunny with showers - Length: 90 minutes

Interview 3: Adrienn - Date & Time: Monday afternoon - Weather conditions: Sunny & warm - Length: 45 minutes

Interview 4: Isabel & Ana - Date & Time: Wednesday afternoon - Weather conditions: sunny with showers - Length: 48 minutes

Interview 5: Sofia - Date & Time: Thursday afternoon - Weather conditions: showers- Length: 42 minutes

Interview 6: Marieke - Date & Time: Tuesday morning - Weather conditions: dry, sunny and warm - Length: 45 minutes

Interview 7: Glen & Caroline - Date & Time: Sunday afternoon - Weather conditions: cloudy - Length: 49 minutes

Interview 8: Andrew - Date & Time: Saturday morning - Weather conditions: sun and cloud - Length: 44 minutes

Interview 9: Helen & Mark - Date & Time: Monday morning - Weather conditions: dry, warm & bright - Length: 61 minutes

Interview 10: Ioanna - Date & Time: Friday afternoon - Weather conditions: dry and cloudy - Length: 45 minutes

In order to build trust, the interviewees were contacted prior to the walk alongs and provided with an overview of what would happen on the day and some background information on the project before consenting to perform the research. In addition to this the respondents were asked whether or not they would like to remain anonymous. In addition, using respondents gathered via the friend of a friend method gave a degree of familiarity that helped to attain a level of trust allowing the respondents to open up more freely, thus creating a deeper level of insight into their experience, and going some way to address the critique raised by Kusenbach (2003).

With reference to the walk-alongs, due to the explorative nature of the topic a loosely (semi) structured interviewing format was chosen. This included a set of questions based upon the key themes emerging from the literature that could be used as prompts to create discussion about what respondents were observing through their sight, hearing, smell and touch. Initially taste was also to be included in the research, however after the first interview it became obvious that this would be difficult to do without including a sample of stops in the city's eateries, and thus a separate study would be more apt. Bryman and Bell, (2007, p.482) have suggested that an interview guide "allows the interviewer to glean the ways in which research participants view their social world". It's clear that combining this with open

discussion could allow for a rich mix of data covering the full range of sensory perception and emotional response.

In order to uncover respondents' sensory perceptions, emotions and views on the Utrecht brand an interview guide was utilised. This was composed of the following questions (with some variation in wording):-

- *What do you notice first about your physical surroundings?*
- *Do you notice any particular smells, sights, sounds or tactile sensations in this street / square / area?...and how do they make you feel?*
- *In general do you think this street / square / area is attractive or unattractive? And what makes it so?*
- *How would you describe the atmosphere in this street / square / area ?... and how does it make you feel?*
- *What do you think contributes most to creating the atmosphere in this street / square / area ?*
- *Do you feel comfortable or uncomfortable in the street / square / area... and why?*
- *What do you feel makes this square / street / area unique, if anything?... And why?*

In general after every question explanatory questions were also asked such as:-

- and for what reason? / and why is that? / what makes it seem that way?

Post Interview, the following questions were asked...

- *What did you know about Utrecht before you came or what did you expect it to be like?*
- *What do you think the brand image / marketing of Utrecht should be focused on*
- *Which area of the walk-along produced the most sensual experience?*
- *Do you think the city of Utrecht could benefit from being a more sensual experience?*
- *Do you have any ideas for creating a more sensual experience?*
- *Do you think describing the sensual experience of Utrecht (e.g. the colours, sounds, smells of the Oudegracht) would make it seem more appealing to tourists reading about it in articles/magazines/websites?*

In addition to this a sample of specific questions derived from the marketing material presented with in the Utrecht VVV Toerisme website and documents were incorporated into the questioning at each of the larger sites. These questions were based upon the analysis of such material during the content analysis. The questions can be seen below:-

Domplein:- The Dom has been described in tourist literature as dominating and iconic...

- *Would you agree? If not why not?*

- *What aspect of the church or square, if any do you feel makes it seem dominating or iconic?*

Pandhof Garden:- The Pandhof garden has been described in tourist literature as an undiscovered gem, both idyllic and attractive...

- *Would you agree? If not why not?*

- *What exactly do you think makes it idyllic or attractive?*

The Oudegracht:- The Oudegracht has been described in tourist literature as lively, charming and romantic...

- *Do you agree with any of those labels? If not why not?*

- *What senses do you think help to create that atmosphere?*

Vredenburg:- The shopping area around Hogh Catherijne has been described in city policy documents as untidy and unattractive...

- *Do you agree? If not why not?*

- *Do you feel the problem is entirely visual or are there other senses which you feel impact on the area or make it feel uncomfortable?*

Voorstraat:- The Voorstraat has been described in tourism literature as trendy and modern?

- *Do you agree? If not why not?*

- *Is there anything particular that you can see, hear, feel or smell that would fit those labels?*

Zadelstraat:- The Zadelstraat has been described in tourism literature as colourful, charming and historic?

- *Do you agree? If not why not?*

- *Is there anything particular that you can see, hear, feel or smell that would fit those labels?*

3.33 Analysis

In order to translate the walk along interviews into material that could be analysed, the interviews recorded were then transcribed to MS Word documents. This data was then imported into the NVIVO computer program and coded in order to both transform it into a map of sensescapes within Utrecht and translate it into theoretical concepts that could be used in order to answer the research questions the study is based upon. More information on the coding process can be seen in the analysis chapter. In order to retain transparency transcriptions of the interviews themselves can be found on an accompanying cd.

3.4 Auto-Photography

3.41 Background

According to Thomas (2009) auto-photography, in which the research respondents themselves produce visual images is becoming an increasingly popular research method within the social sciences. Thomas (2009) has argued this is because photographs can help research participants to impart their own narratives, retaining a sense of social context and thus moving away from the historically unequal power relations between the researchers and researched.

The products of auto-photography can either be combined with an interviewing process known as photo elicitation, qualified as a source of visual data themselves to be coded and analysed by the researcher, or serve as aide in illustrating analysis (Bryman 2008).

With reference to this particular project one limitation of using auto-photography to support research material is that it can only be used to show respondents perceptions of visual sensescapes. Whilst it can also show aspects of the physical environment contributing to other sensescapes it cannot show them explicitly through the ears, nose and skin of the respondent.

3.42 Operationalization

Thomas (2009) has argued that photographs represent an excellent way of making comparisons between places, illuminating the desires of participants that might be difficult to articulate through speech and highlighting any contradictions between what people say and what they represent. For this reason before the interviews took place, it was explained to the respondents that they would be given a digital camera in order to take photos to support their descriptions. The respondents were asked specifically to take photographs of any place they felt strongly about - in terms of sensual stimuli or emotional response, or at any point in which they struggled to articulate their perceptions (particularly important to this study as the majority of the interviewees did not speak English as a first language)

At that point they were then asked why they had taken the photo. Thomas (2009 p.3) also sees doing this as of great use stating that *“researchers can glean different social motivations by considering why certain scenes were captured when they were; each photo is a lesson about the subject who took that particular picture. When a person takes a picture knowing that it is for a research project, they have made a decision to represent themselves through the visual scene they frame in the camera”*

The subsequent photos served as what Bryman (2008) calls an 'aide memoire'. Amongst others Sarah Pink (2008:190) has suggested the analysis of photographs goes hand in hand with the go-along method of research. She states that "In photographs I find reminders and representations of the materiality, sensoriality and sociality of the tour", thus reflecting Bryman (2008) who notes that the use of pictures can be crucial in making sure significant affects are not forgotten about when it comes to analysis.

3.43 Analysis

As previously stated the photographs produced during the walk alongs functioned as supporting data for the interviews. Consequently they were categorised by location and respondent and used to assist in supporting statements taken from the transcribed interviews. During the analysis an attempt to retain what Pink (2001) has called a 'reflexive position' was undertaken, acknowledging that a researcher must be 'sensitive to the context in which ones age, background and gender may influence the way in which visual data is generated and its potential for multiple meaning.

Content Analysis

4.1 Intro

This chapter follows with the process, results and conclusions of the content analysis conducted for this research. The results are split into two sections, one discussing the general picture emerging across all documents, and another looking in more depth at the differences between the documents. The conclusion seeks to clarify the relevance of the results to the research and demonstrate how they translated into building the foundations of the walk-along interviews.

4.11 Aims

As stated previously within the methodology chapter, the use of content analysis within this thesis served a dual purpose. It was undertaken primarily to provide an answer to the initial research question, but also in order to provide the building blocks of the methodology for the walk-along interviews conducted.

4.2 Process

In the end a total of the 10 documents were chosen for analysis. This translated into 32,660 words of text. These included, two PDF documents taken from the city tourism agency website 'Visit Utrecht - Utrecht City Guide 2012' and 'Utrecht for the 1st time', a promotional PDF document entitled 'Utrecht Time' produced by the municipality (Gemeente), an Utrecht focused webpage on the national tourist board website 'Discover Holland' and six smaller web articles produced in the foreign press relating to the promotion of Utrecht, two of which were French, two English, one Spanish and one Italian. Links to these documents can be seen in the appendices.

Text from each document was translated into English if required and saved into separate word documents. These documents were then opened in the MAXQDA software program and each was coded progressively, first openly and then more selectively. The coding tree that emerged can be seen below and was based on an attempt to categorise material within the documents as relating to tangible (functional) characteristics, intangible (psychological) characteristics, text concerning sensory description, or any combination of the three. (See Figure 1). As this was a qualitative process, the results of any analysis would always be determined to some extent by the coding itself. For this reason in addition to comparing the percentages of categories and subcategories coded per document and across all documents, an analysis of word frequency was also included. The results of these will now be discussed.

4.3 Results

To provide an overview, the content of all 10 documents together was studied, the results of this can be found under the 'General Picture' heading. In order to highlight any differences between the documents, the documents were split into several groups. This is found under the 'In Depth' heading. The groups chosen were:-

Foreign press articles - Monnuage, Regional Mag, Miles Mag, Hola, Mainly Cities, 10 Choses
Municipality documents - Gemeente Utrecht time

Tourism documents - VVV Toerimse First Time, VVV Toerisme Stadsgid, Discover Holland (Utrecht)

4.31 General Picture

The top 10 most frequent words across all 10 documents analysed (deeming 'Utrecht'. 'City' and 'Centre' as irrelevant) were almost exclusively associated with Utrecht's tangible attributes. In particular those relating to its canals, shops, cafes, museums and churches. These included words such as 'Dom', 'Tower', 'Shopping' and 'Oudegracht' (see Figure 2)

Words relating to intangible characteristics were less frequent but did occur in the top 25 most frequent words. This may have partly been due to the fact that such a variety of descriptive words can be used to describe a particular atmosphere. The words 'charming', 'picturesque' and 'idyllic' for example could all be considered as synonyms. Nevertheless the most common words found were those associated with; history, such as 'medieval' or 'old', those with culture including 'cultural', and those with atmosphere such as 'special' This can also be seen in Figure 2.

With reference to sensual description within word frequency counts interestingly little was found. The only words featuring in the top 25 were 'see' and 'beautiful' suggesting that any sensual description within the documents was primarily based on the visual sense (see Figure 2).

Looking at Figure 3 which shows the overall percentages of material coded per category we begin to see a picture that reflects the findings of the word frequency analysis. Over half of the total content is qualified as relating to tangible attributes, with just over a quarter ascribed to intangible attributes and just under a quarter representing that associated with sensory description.

The top five tangible attributes themselves according to material coded also appeared to be Utrecht's canals, cafes & restaurants, shops, museums and Dom church with roughly equal coverage given to each. Others of note were the cities' architecture and gardens. (Figure 4)

On the other hand the most prominent intangible characteristic presented across all documents seemed to be 'atmosphere' and various subsets of it including 'friendly', 'cosy', 'relaxing' and 'intimate' amongst others. This represented over half of all content. A smaller share of coverage was also given to the cities' history and culture (see Figure 4.1)

Across all documents analysed, over half of all material coded as referring to the senses was coded as visual. Descriptions drawing upon the haptic, audial and gustatory senses were again roughly equal but less frequent. Interestingly throughout all the documents there was barely any reference to the olfactory sense (See Figure 4.2).

4.32 In Depth

By looking in more depth at the breakdown of content as per the groups of documents some interesting observations can be made.

Whilst the breakdown as per overall content and intangible attributes were roughly the same for all three groups, there were noticeable differences between them in terms of which tangible attributes and which senses featured the most. The tourist documents for example seemed to pay significant attention to the biggest variety of attributes, with more coverage devoted to architecture, gardens and entertainment when compared to the other documents. The foreign press articles on the other hand contained the most content with reference to what one might consider typical tourist attractions, the canals, cafes, museums and Dom church. In comparison the Gemeente (municipality) document appeared to be much less focused on the typical tourist attractions, instead paying more attention to location, shopping facilities, and fairs, exhibits and festivals (See Figures 6, 6.1 & 6.2). This was also reflected with in the top 25 word frequencies (Figure 5) which included the words 'shops', 'shopping', 'business', 'central' and 'location'.

In terms of sensory description the Municipality document was found to be the most focused on the visual sense. Foreign press articles were also heavily biased towards the visual but also had a sizable portion of text relating to the haptic. The tourism documents were the most balanced and held the only reference to the olfactory sense, nevertheless text relating to the visual still represented almost 50% of the documents.

4.4 Conclusion

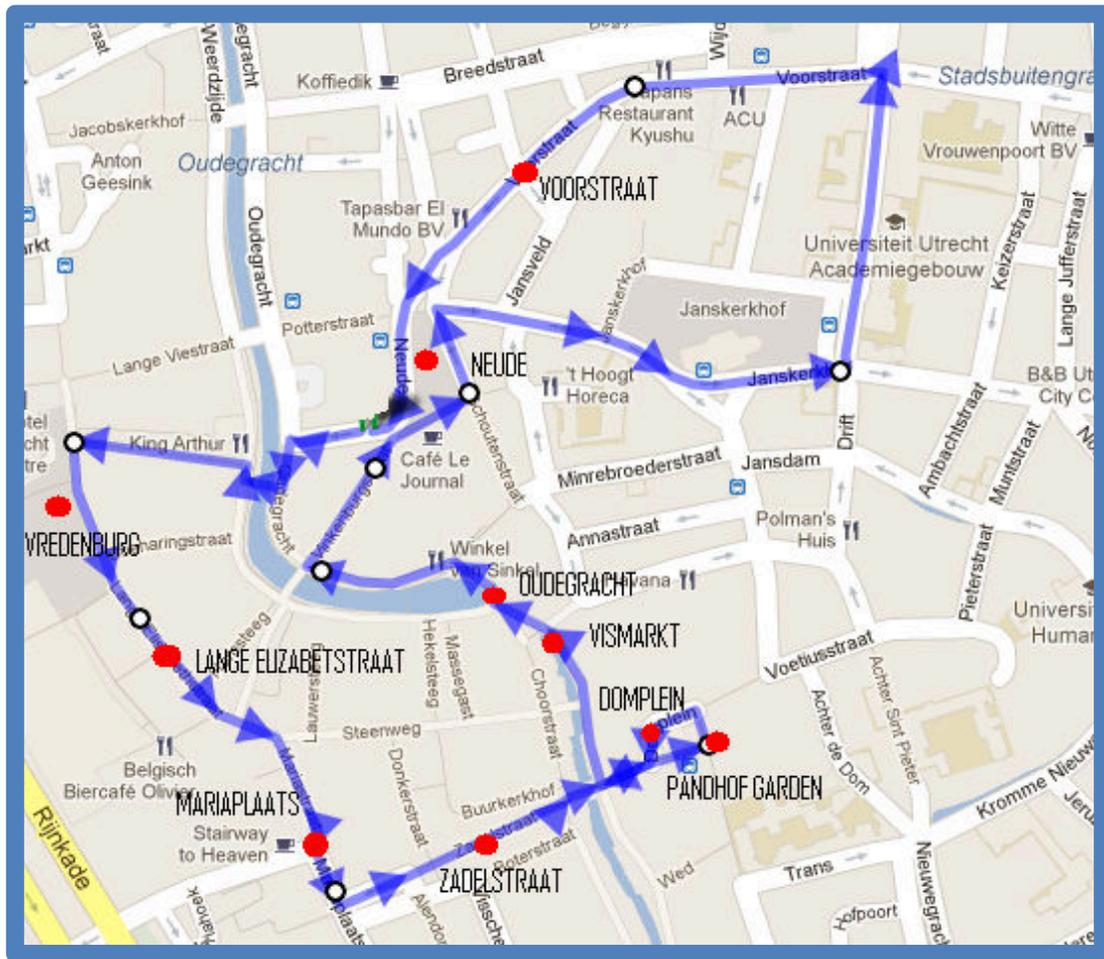
The city appeared to be marketed slightly differently depending on who produced the material. This is probably due to subtle differences in their target audience. The foreign press articles and tourism documents appeared to be more geared towards international tourists, and this was reflected by a stronger focus on typical attractions than the Municipality documents which seemed to stress the location more alongside attributes such as museums, shopping facilities, fairs, exhibits and events. These are the kind of things that would probably appeal more to visitors from within the Netherlands, suggesting that the municipality documents were aimed at people visiting for conferences or business in addition to the international tourist.

Despite these differences across all marketing material a fairly coherent image could be seen. This appeared to place a stronger emphasis on the cities tangible characteristics with the image of Utrecht being primarily associated with its canals, cafes and restaurants, shops, churches and museums. Whilst it's clear that promotional materials have also attempted to draw upon the (intangible) history, culture and atmosphere associated with these attributes, emphasis has lied heavily on the visual description of these and the visitor / tourist experience as being primarily visual in nature.

With a lack of attention given to the other senses, studying them could provide an additional layer in the marketing of what is increasingly being seen as an inherently multisensory experience.

With these results in mind, a route for the walk along interviews could be established. Several sites associated with each of the key tangible attributes emerging from the content analysis were chosen that fell within the 'tourist hotspot' area described on the Visit Utrecht VVV Toerisme website (see Figure 8). These included the Vredenburg, Lange Elisabethstraat, Zadelstraat and Voorstraat representing shopping areas, The Domplein and Pandhof Gardens representing the Dom, the Oudegracht and Vismarkt representing the canals, and the Neude and Mariaplaats areas representing cafes & bars. No sites associated with museums were chosen as this would have necessitated visiting the museums themselves which wasn't possible given the nature of the project.

The chosen sites also offered some overlap in terms of which attribute they represented and had also been associated with in the tourist literature with particular intangible characteristics which translated into more specific questioning regarding the atmosphere of the majority of the sites (The site specific questions can be found within the methodology chapter as part of the interview guide). The sites selected were then linked together to form a route which would take between approximately 45 and 60 minutes. This can be seen below:-



Analysis

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will follow firstly with an overview of the results of the walk along analysis and supporting photography, with tables and charts taken from the NVIVO software showing how the analysis was conducted. Subsequently the results for each of the 10 areas as established within the content analysis chapter will be presented, drawing insight into the sensescapes present and emotional responses to them within the centre of Utrecht as experienced by tourists and visitors. This will also seek to outline and explain any connections found between sensual perception and emotional response to sensescapes, and any variation between different types of visitor, thus providing an answer to research question 2. The chapter will then conclude with a discussion concerning the management of the city's sensescapes and their potential to be used as an additional layer in the description and marketing of the key features of Utrecht's brand image, and so provide an answer to the third research question.

5.2 Results

In the end 14 people were interviewed during 9 semi structured walk along interviews and one unstructured walk along. These were all conducted on various days within the month of June. The interviews all ranged between 45 and 90 minutes producing a total of 8 hours and 34 minutes of material for analysis. 10 respondents were international visitors, two short term residents (university students), one a long term resident within Utrecht, and one a visitor from another Dutch city. The composition of respondents meant some interviewees already had a greater familiarity with the city than others. As an interviewer, my familiarity with the area and interview process grew as the research went on, accordingly as patterns began to emerge, during the case of later interviews I was able to include questions based on the observations made by respondents during previous interviews, which allowed for a greater level of comparison to be made.

The transcribed interviews (which can be found on the attached cd) were copied into the NVIVO software programme and analysed qualitatively. The use of NVIVO served to assist the analysis in several ways. Coding helped to both organize and structure the empirical data, in addition to assisting in uncovering the relationships that were to be found within it. In creating memos NVIVO also helped to identify a variety of concepts which facilitated the understanding and presentation of the analysis.

The category and coding tree can be seen in Figure 9. The percentage of coded material for sensory perception as experienced across all areas can be seen in Figure 10. Compared to Figure 4.2 showing the percentage of coded material for sensory description found within the content analysis, the results are somewhat similar with the visual appearing to be dominant. On the other hand looking more specifically at the different locations along the interview route, a different picture begins to emerge. The breakdown for each site can be seen in Figures 11 through 11.9. The results of which will now be discussed in more detail.

5.21 Voorstraat

Voorstraat was perceived as a somewhat creative and multicultural street with a youthful yet slightly edgy atmosphere. This appeared to be built around a picture of intriguing brickwork and laid back colourful cafes smelling of ethnic food interspersed with disconcerting views of aging prostitutes in red light windows and suspicious looking characters 'hanging around' outside coffeeshops giving off a strong odour of marijuana. The sound of bicycles bells ringing, gears clicking, pedestrian crossings and general city noise dominated the soundscape. The majority of people felt either neutral or a degree of topophobia at this site.

Bicycles, bicycles, bicycles!

One prominent aspect of the street responsible for creating a variety of sensescapes was the presence of bicycles. These were commented in one way or another by practically every respondent. It must be noted that although bikes are a strong presence throughout Utrecht, Voorstraat was the starting point for the majority of interviews and thus presented the first opportunity to notice them, especially for first time visitors. And notice them they did, especially in terms of the landscape and soundscape

R: there are lots of broken bikes, lots of rusty broken bikes everywhere

R2: and if you compare it to Amsterdam, Amsterdam felt crowded because of the tourists. The only time you feel crowded here is when you've got a flock of bicycles and that's about it.

R: Yeh the number of bikes is insanely noticeable - Daniel & Dhaleen

R: sort of like, you can hear the gears going a little bit and maybe the occasional bell, but mostly you can just see a lot of bikes – Glen & Caroline

'Hipster' but 'Edgy'

Throughout the interviews, Voorstraat presented itself as somewhat two sided, with an 'edgy' atmosphere producing feelings of both topophilia and topophobia.

R1: a bit ropey, I did immediately notice of it's a bit tatty it's a bit kind of Soho-ishit's a place that I might choose to be in, rather than find myself in, if I found myself here I might think oh where's that other bit gone, because it's a bit different, it might be a bit edgier at night, if there is music and stuff.....it feels like a real street yeh, I can imagine that people kind of live there, they do their stuff what they do and it's lived in, so it kind of its ok –Mark

For some a positive atmosphere was created by the combination of the look and sound of colourful cafes and busy shops. Andrew for example stated it “*makes a buzz about the place, makes it lively*” highlighting the amount of young people outside and the colour of the cushions and benches in some of the cafes, suggesting it made the street seem fashionable or even a little 'hipster'. On the other hand the two Spanish girls Isabel labelled the street as 'dark', 'disorganised', 'dirty' and even 'dangerous' pointing to the presence of prostitutes and coffeshops as a source of discomfort.

I: and is there anything which makes you feel uncomfortable?...

R2: the crazy guys we saw, most of the time, because we are near the coffeshop maybe the people are high or something, sometimes crazy. There was one scruffy man picking cigarettes from the floor, it seems quite weird so – Isabel

Something which others also did...

R: yeh the marijuana and the prostitutes, many times I walk outside these weed places and I see people that I don't like. I feel like walking on the other side of the street, because I don't like walking outside these – Sofia



Interestingly however, for both Dutch respondents, one a resident and the other a visitor from Amsterdam (who took the previous picture) it was described as being a friendly neighbourhood like atmosphere where someone might do their groceries before going home after work. This may have been due to the fact that as Dutch nationals they were more acutely aware of any real danger or lack thereof associated with the red light windows and coffeeshop clientele.

5.22 Oudegracht

Interestingly the sensescape of the Oudegracht seemed to be made up of two distinct layers, reflecting the unique way in which it is structured. Street level was associated with a feeling of liveliness and vibrancy coming from the sights and sounds of people sat outside busy cafe terraces chatting, the exotic smells of street vendors, street musicians playing their instruments and a jumble of architectural styles, but also a feeling of danger as bicycle frames rattle loudly over the cobbles as they pass by too close for comfort. Down below at canal side, the atmosphere was perceived as calmer, isolated away from the noise with canal boats and ducks quietly passing by and people eating in restaurants shaded by leafy greenery. In general visitors felt topophilia, whilst residents felt topophobia here.

Movement & Calm

The idea of the uniqueness of the area coming from its contrasting layers is nicely summed up by the following two respondents comments, and subsequent picture illustrating them taken by Glen

R: it's the combination that within a busy place, you have really calm views, when you turn around like this you see all the people moving, and you turn around back and it's like oh, it feels a bit like a park where you can walk through....yeh I think you can find a nice balance, you can escape the busy scene by walking down the stairs and you enter a totally different world

R: I think it kind of implies that when you go down there, it's calmer down there, you've got the bustle up here and the calmness down there, and you get a bit of that contrast – Glen



Varietas Delectas

The Oudegracht appeared to be particularly characterised by its abundance of sights, sounds, smells and feeling on offer which seemed to produce feelings of topophilia.

R:there seems to be a lot going on, I can see some guys on a paddle boat stuck under a bridge over there, there are bikes everywhere, there are food stalls, shopsI think, you get that sort of mix and sort of it hits the senses a bit more strongly and you can sort of think oh well, it entices you I guess really, and then there's the noise of that flower guy just shouting 5 euros all the time, 5 euros for that many flowers seemed pretty good.....I think it's nice you can really feel yeh I like the variety – Glen



Respondents particularly liked the variety of architecture they could see:-

R: so it's so old, and I really like the fact they kept the old pavement, I really like the fact they kept the old buildings, but then you can see these really modern cafes outside, so it's like a kind of contrast – Adrienn

Helen took the previous picture at this site commenting that “the hotel and the architecture on that side of the canal, some old buildings, you see the tops of the roofs.... they are all very different, some of the older ones are really lovely”

Memories

In addition to its ability to produce positive sensations, the Oudegracht also appeared to be capable of conjuring up images and provoking comparisons more so than at other areas of the walk along. Several respondents commented on the canals, lights and cobbled streets as reminding them of Venice, yet favourably without the smell

R: if you're not wearing high heels, you know it takes me back to walking in an older city like it reminds me a bit of Rome or Siena, maybe because I've been to Italy, but I like it.....Maybe because we are walking, but I expected maybe you know because I've been to Venice that the canals would smell, but you can't really smell it. All I can smell is just the tree smell, mainly because of the flowers and everything - Adrienn

R2: yeh, I'd say yeh, I think it's a classic case because canals conjure up romantic notions of Venice and being slow moving - Helen

5.23 Mariaplaats

Much like the Oudegracht, the way the Mariaplaats was laid out physically gave it two distinct sensescapes, one side of square appeared to be characterised by its quiet and greenery, with shady trees, benches and smooth cobblestones producing a feeling of being in a French square. At the other side it was typical city sights and sounds - bikes and cars next to laid back bars, fun looking cafes and people sitting out on sunny terraces. The smell of food was particularly strong here. The site was associated overwhelmingly with topophilia; however this site was skipped over in several interviews due to time restraints so the result may not be representative.

Inviting cafes and uninviting smells

The smell of food and opportunity to be sat outside really seemed to appeal to respondents as they passed through the square

R2: again the location of the restaurant or the tables outside, you can be in the street eating, a really great atmosphere when you are walking around....the street invites you to sit there and chat and just enjoy the atmosphere - Isabel

R1: (Mariaplaats) that place on the corner I could really smell food there and that's got me feeling hungry – Mark

Whilst passing through, one feature of the built environment did however detract from the comfort level of several of the respondents, the street urinal or 'pissoir' - the smell of these were invariably described as 'awful' and 'disgusting' invoking some degree of topophobia.

Greenery

At the other side of the square the site was noticeably greener and quieter which respondents also liked.

R2: this is just like typical French square isn't it Particularly the trees in this square bit, and the cobbles, but particularly the shape of the square - Helen



Sofia a short term resident notes:-

R: I really love this point with the huge trees, I think especially in summer you can have a quiet relaxing moment here

5.24 Neude

Much like the Mariaplaats, each side of the square seemed to have a different sensescape. One side was seen as having a typical continental feeling. This was attributed primarily to the

mass of colourful tables, chairs, cushions and umbrellas and sea of people eating, drinking and chatting that could be seen on its café terraces. The soundscape of people laughing, chatting, talking and making conversation, but also bird noise and traffic passing by in the background was also consistent. Like the Vredenburg, the sensescape at the other side (nearest the road) changed according to its use. When empty it was perceived as windswept with a slightly 'odd feeling, when occupied it was judged as cluttered and lacking in space. Interestingly despite being an eating area, the smell of food was not a strong feature here. Emotional responses at this site were mixed.



Eyesores

The general feeling here was one of topophilia or neutrality however several things were responsible for making some respondents uncomfortable. One noticeable negative reaction was the sight of a large grey high rise building (home to one of the tourism offices).

*R: I have to say it kind of bugs me that there's kind of that not very nice high rise behind it, that's quite noticeable, that big old brick buildings and a concrete high rise.
- Daniel*

R2: I think this one stands out particularly because it's completely different architecture, it's like a bit offensive, it's modern but not contemporary – Caroline



Several respondents had the same reaction, another pointed out how the

combination of the grey building with the nearby pissoir and rubbish containers made that corner of the square and terrace nearest much less inviting than the rest.

Friendly Sights & Sounds

The most prominent aspect of the Neude square according to interviewees was probably the soundscape which for the most part added to feelings of topophilia and helped to create a positive atmosphere, illustrating the clear link that Garlin & Owen (2006) argue exists between sound, emotions and feelings.

R: yeh it's so vibrant, so good, full of life, constant conversation, voices all over, the complete opposite of the other square and silence. – Adrienn

Isabel for example states that *"yeh the sound is really good, it makes you feel happier, I don't know how to say, its likes you feel a really great atmosphere."* whilst Sofia notes that *"I like to hear the sound of the people when I go out..... Can I say friendly"*

On the other hand for visitor Marieke, whilst visually it looked friendly but the soundscape had the opposite effect *"if all the tables are full, then it's kind of loud here.....with all the trees and greenery, It looks friendly, but maybe when there are too many people, it could become a little too much"*

5.25 Zadelstraat

Through the eyes of respondents Zadelstraat had a pleasant and friendly, festive atmosphere. It was dominated by its fairy-tale like views of the Dom and the colour of its' street furniture, building facades, windows, awnings and flags. This was set against a background of quiet footfall, and conversation occasionally interrupted by the musical sound of church bells and occasional smell of cigar tobacco. Little was associated with haptic sensation here. In general this was a site strongly associated with topophilia.

Colourful & 'Peculiar' shops

Zadelstraat represented one of the more favoured shopping streets during the walk, especially in terms of its sensescapes and individuality. It also appeared to fit most strongly its representation in tourist literature as charming, historical and colourful.

Whilst most respondents pointed to the narrow feeling of the street, the sight of Victorian style gas lamps, and medieval style flags alongside the imposing view of the Dom church as serving to create a historical atmosphere, or sense of being in the medieval time period, the style and type of the shops themselves were what seemed to give the street a more individual or unique character.



R: I think it's the shop fronts and the buildings themselves are all coloured differently that adds to the individuality of them, and the flags... and we are stood next to some brightly coloured plastic things... and then like you said all the awnings, and all the buildings, the buildings are quite old and all the shops look quite different, it adds to that feeling of independence because often when you get chain shops they all look quite similar - Glen

R2: yeh a lot of cute shops like, very peculiar, special..... Look at that shops, I don't know what they are selling there, I don't know what you can buy there, that's why it's unique, it's like a surprise! – Isabel

Marieke commented that it reminded her of the Negen Straatjes area in Amsterdam (also having a reputation of being one of the more individual or unique shopping areas in the city).

Space to move

The layout of the street was also a frequent mention throughout interviews. Respondents felt they had a break from the feeling of bikes passing by dangerously closely and more space to breathe, or so to speak

R: one thing I'm still getting used to is the fact the pavements are quite wide compared to the bike bit in the middle, or it might just be a road.....I think the main difference for me here, is that yeh there is a little bit more space for pedestrians which it didn't really feel like there was in other bits - Glen

R2: it's ok because you have the sidewalk for pedestrians and it doesn't seem like there are too many problems with bikes - Isabel



5.26 Vismarkt

The Vismarkt was seen as an attractive street with a cosy but somewhat touristy atmosphere. The narrowness of the street contributed the most to its sensescape, producing a feeling of being enclosed or endangered as crowds, bikes and scooters passed by. The soundscape appeared to be amplified due to this resulting in the perception of loud conversation, scooter engines whining and motorboats chugging past. In addition the feeling of cobblestones underfoot along with strong smells of marijuana, coffee and food frying were a constant feature. In general people felt either neutral or feelings of topophobia associated with the haptic and auditory senses.

Bottleneck feeling

The soundscape and touchscape here contributed to feelings of discomfort in the majority of respondents. This appeared to be related to features of the built environment. In particular the narrowness of the street meant the feeling of people, bikes and scooters passing by dangerously near and the noise associated with them was magnified compared to in other areas of the city.

R: well the scooter engines coming past are pretty loud, also I can really feel the sun here, there isn't really any shade.....obviously bikes are one thing, but the scooters are going faster, so maybe it feel it's a bit more dangerous walking down here, it seems like a bit of a bottleneck. - Andrew

Ioanna seems to suggest this spoils her enjoyment of the street saying "it's really busy, you cannot walk easily and enjoy your wall, because the place it's really nice, but there are a lot of bikes, a lot of people walking in both directions, also you have, so pedestrians have a really limited space to walk and all the other space is for bikes, and they don't respect it" On a more positive note, the sound of the church bells coming from the Dom were present during the majority of interviews and often provoked pleasant feelings in respondents. Amongst others, Mark described them as musical sounding "I like them, it's like a wind chime or music box, it's absolutely gorgeous"

The smell of coffeeshops and coffee shops

Aside from the touch and soundscape some of the most prominent sensations in the Vismarkt came from the smellscape. The strongest smells associated with this area being Marijuana from the coffeeshop on the corner, and the smell of fresh coffee from the neighbouring shop selling tea and coffee. The smell of Marijuana drew mixed responses, some found it annoying, some disliked and others were neutral, whilst almost all respondents who commented on the smell of coffee found it to be positive. This seems to back up the suggestion of Wilkie, 1994 that scents can strongly affect our emotions.

R: the sound of the bells was really nice, really nice coffee smells, but somehow it's different from that coffee smell when you drink a coffee, I don't know if it's the coffee beans, and then this typical marijuana smell. – Adrienn

Several respondents also noted that the smell and sight of the coffeeshop along with souvenir shops, tourists taking photos, and the impending view of the Dom lurking around the corner appeared to be what gives the area a more touristic atmosphere.

5.27 Pandhof

Along with the Oudegracht, the Pandhof garden was associated with a sensescape composed of a diverse range of visuals, sounds, smells and tactile sensations which were seen to create an atmosphere described as calming, relaxing, serene and sometimes mystical. The overall sensescape was characterised by contrast, between the dark, enclosed cool stone arcade, with its echoing acoustics producing the pleasant sound of incomprehensible conversation, and the light, open courtyard with its greenery, subtle flowery smells and relaxing sounds of water flowing gently from its central fountain. Topophilia was the strongest emotional reaction at this site.

Contrast

Both Marieke and Isabel sum up the contrast well: -

R: green everything is so green, and it's like this arcade - cold and dark, it's like the contrast that it's so dark but also light, and I really like the sound of the flute, and the fountain - Marieke

R2: the contrast with the flowers, the architecture, everything is like grey, but the garden with the flowers is really colourful - Isabel



Whilst the contrast appeared to create a feeling of topophilia in the majority of respondents this was often dependent on external factors. For example when a tour group was passing through the pleasant acoustics of echoing conversation were judged to have been replaced with the irritating noise of children running around and screaming, and feeling of being crowded. In addition one contrasting element that was consistently described as negative was the sight of steel and glass making up the window of the adjoining teahouse, which it was argued was misplaced or simply should have been different materials.

A hidden escape

Described as both hidden and undiscovered, within marketing material, respondents indeed seemed surprised by what was inside

R: yeh I wouldn't have thought that, I was assuming or expecting that as we walked through that door we would've walked into a church and suddenly were in a courtyard - Glen

R: it's beautiful because you don't expect to find it in these buildings, and it's the first time I've seen it, so that's why I took some pictures. I also like the buildings, the arcs and the details, it's really nice – Ioanna

The contrasting sensescapes alongside “windows without windows, and those statues (Gargoyles) screaming down” (Johann) were also described as creating a mythical but also philosophical or “scholarly” atmosphere giving rise to the sensation of being in a monastery, or having escaped the city, something regularly cited as one of the most important motivations for travel (Urry, 1990)

R: this place could have been somewhere on a mountain top, if you didn't know it was in Utrecht - Johann

R: if you would just like to calm down... or escape then I would say I could sit here, and if the sun was coming in I could just sit here and listen to the fountain - Adrienn



5.28 Domplein

Similar to other areas, the Domplein again was perceived as having two separate sides with differing sensescapes. In front of the Dom tower colourful cafes, the sound of street musicians, the feeling of cobblestones underfoot and the view of the church towering magnificently above created what was considered a touristic atmosphere within the cultural and historic heart of the city. On the other hand to the interior of the square the feeling of the wind, coupled with the noise and sight of construction prevailed. Consequently the site was a mix of topophilia, topophobia and neutral feelings.

Drawing the eye upwards

Perhaps the most commented on feature of the area was the tower of the Dom itself which was described

predominantly in terms of the awesomeness of its height for an old building

R1: just the towering size of it, it's very powerful, it's the kind of sureness that pulls your eye upwards – Mark

R: yeh, because it's so tall, because if I look up now, it's as if the top is nearly hitting the clouds, I know it's not but it's just so tall - Adrienn

R: yeh the Dom is something, everything surrounding the Dom is historical heritage, so it dominates the city centre, everything's lower, and you can see the Dom from almost every part of the city – Johann

Wind Effect

The experience of being in the square was overwhelmingly dominated by the effect of the wind, seemingly regardless of the time of day or weather conditions. The wind here was probably being channelled through the walkway underneath the tower of the Dom, adding to the potential for wind in the already exposed open interior of the square. Most respondents commented one way or another on its various effects whether visual, audible or tactile:-

R: you can really hear the wind now, and we're getting smashed in the face by a bit of sand now as well

R2: dust in my eyes yeh - Glen & Caroline

R: it's not really nice, especially if I don't stay, it must be like a wind tunnel, you could feel a breeze before but now it's so windy....I can really hear this kind of noise from the construction, and then how the wind moves the flag - Adrienn

R: I think it's clean but it seems dirty mostly because of the wind, it's dirty because of the leaves not because of the garbage - Ioanna

Emptiness

The empty interior of the square also gave a sense that the area was peripheral and not being used to its full potential. Mark points this out commenting it could be a very enjoyable place for visitors to come to

R1: I think this is a potentially beautiful square, that there not doing anything to put to advantage.....it's just a great pace, the shade of the trees is gorgeous but there's not much space to sit, it's a massive space in which there is no kind of obvious thing to do.....I wouldn't have known I was in the centre, it feels off centre if anything - Mark

5.29 Lange Elisabethstraat

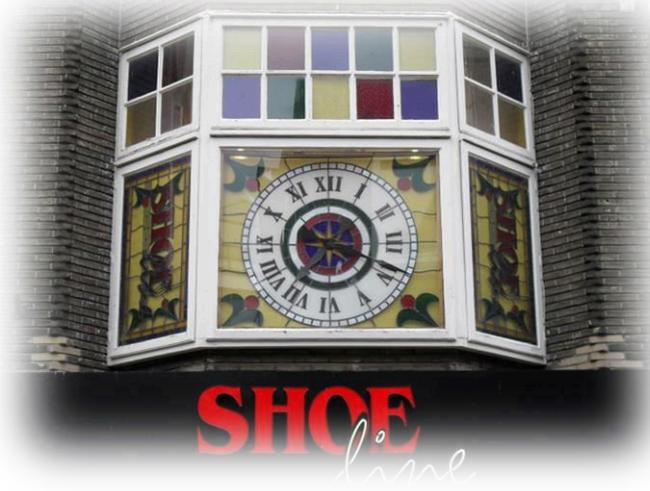
As opposed to the diverse sensescapes of other areas such as the Pandhof and Oudegracht, Lange Elisabethstraat was characterised more by its blandness than anything else. Respondents noted above all the sight and sounds and feeling of shops and shoppers and the occasional street musician. In general the atmosphere was seen as overly commercial, both grey and uninviting despite colourful signs and flowers on lampposts. The result being a sense of topophobia.

All things commercial

All manner of associations with shops dominated peoples' perceptions of this street. Some inciting positive emotions, some negative and others simply neutral. For some such as Sofia the sight and sounds of people and crowds produced positive emotion, perhaps due to her association with the cities of her home country Greece, a view appeared to be shared by both Ana & Isabel, also from a southern Mediterranean country, Spain. This is in line with Tuan's (1974) ideas on topophilia suggesting feelings are often mediated by cultural background and associations with home.

R: again most of the time it's really crowded, so I like it.... Yeh I think it's the first thing I miss in this town, I wouldn't say it's such a busy city – Sofia

On the other hand the sight of so many shops and crowds was a negative factor for others; the signs seemed to be particularly annoying with several respondents commenting they drew attention away from some of the nicer features of the buildings



R: yeh totally dominated by commercial signs, I really dislike this street the most in Utrecht, you know when you come to the canals, that's a much more attractive atmosphere, it's always crowded in this street, and at this intersection there are always people bumping into each other and trying to sell you something - Johann

Johann also pointed out it's a mono-functional street and because of that,

it feels less comfortable to be around when the shops are not open stating

R: I think at night time it's worse, because really only there are people from bars and pubs crossing here, there's totally no life there, it's really an awful place with the fences down in front of the shops, it really gives you a feeling that you're a little bit trapped in the street. - Johann

Ioanna also a temporary resident seemed to suggest that not only was it mono-functional but the shops lacked individuality

R:...I've noticed that in every city in the Netherlands you can find exactly the same street and sometimes even the shops are in the same order

I: so it's the opposite of unique then

R: exactly – Ioanna

In fact the street was so commercial, it also seemed to make it appear less attractive, it was often described as lacking in atmosphere, despite the more historical features such as the architecture and lampposts with flower pots which were described as attractive.

5.3 Vredenburg

The Vredenburg, a market square was marked by two distinct sensescapes completely dependent on whether it was market day or not. With the market present it was perceived as having a lively, enjoyable atmosphere, with the sights and smells of colourful produce and the sound of market traders shouting and posing their goods. Without the market it was perceived as a bare, empty, grey unpleasant feeling and uninviting windswept square characterised by sight of construction, discordant architecture, scruffy buildings, ‘‘tacky’’ advertising screens and the smell of Vlaamse frieten. The smell of perfume from two neighbouring perfume shops at one corner of the square was also evident here. Again the dual sensescape meant overall a mix of topophobia, topophilia and neutrality was reported as being felt.

Visual Mess & Topophobia

As an area earmarked for improvement and already described as untidy and unattractive in various tourism reports (Utrecht in top of most hospitable cities once more, 2012) and by the municipality itself (Gemeente Utrecht, 2013) this location provided some of the most interesting results of the study. Above all the Vredenburg square was seen in a negative light, the most prominent observations being haptic and visual sensations that produced negative feelings. The majority of respondents commented that visually the square was unappealing, in particular the fact it was grey or lacking in colour which appeared to give it a flat or plain atmosphere, consequently meaning people wouldn't like to hang around for long.

R: if it was less concrete, like you know its all hard stone, you know it really suggests it's a place to pass, not one for times like this - Johann

R2: it's just a mess all around....scruffy, there are bits of cafes that are kind of shoved to one end, cheap shops around, all the front of the shops look a mess.... all the graphics and that are all just mixed, and it's just a mess.

The sight of discontinuous styles of architecture and video advertising screens also appeared to contribute to the ‘visual mess’.

R: unattractive and it's too big, look at the advertising screens, why? It's just too much - Marieke



R: I really dislike the TV screens, I think it's really too much, it's just a historical town, we don't need that.....it can really annoy me, I think you have to try to capture the character of the place and those flashy signs don't belong here, it's like the flashy signs from the shops, it's a shame they're standing next to that beautiful building - Johann



Another thing that was consistently cited as adding to the visual mess throughout interviews was construction. Interestingly during the latter interviews of the study a wall of living greenery had been added to the square (which can be seen in the above picture), presumably by the municipality as means of distracting people's attention away from it. Opinions on its effectiveness were mixed. For some it appeared to be an effective distraction, with respondents not mentioning the construction till later, others argued it only served to add to the mess, that the square was perceived as:-

R2: I don't think it's adding anything at all, it's lost, I think they've wasted their money I think it's a waste of time

R1: that! I think it's ridiculous

R2: it's even got a barrier around it; I think it's a bit pointless; you can't go anyway near it

I: so it doesn't add anything at all then?

R2: no, except more mess, it's just a visual mess.....at the side of all the work, they need to make it big enough, if they are going to do something like that why don't they just have a huge one right across there. This looks half dead anyway, it's covered in dust, they've wasted their time, they didn't think it true, it's covered in dust, and it's dying.

Noted by Sofia and Johann, both currently living in Utrecht, but not the tourists was another issue - the lack of lighting, in such a large square, in dark evenings, or at night this was said to create unpleasant feelings or a degree of topophobia

R: I know this place during night time and it's a little bit... even worse then, because there's really poor lighting as you can see, and it's always unpleasant to cross this square with people hanging out in the dark – Johann

Market dichotomy

There was a clear difference in perception of the square depending on whether a market was present or not, during the interviews in which a market was present the smells, sights and sounds seemed to produce more positive feelings, but also drew comparison with how the square appeared or might appear without it. Isabel for example states that "it's very attractive to your attention because there are a lot of things like flowers, cheeses, and a lot of colours, it's very nice, they use colour very well" but goes on to say "when its empty it's too sad, and with the construction going on in the square, if you don't come here on a day when there is the market it could be very depressing, you're going to have a completely opposite feeling to today. Ana having seen the market on a previous day adds "I don't like the square without the market, it's really sad it's like nothing"



Nowhere to sit and nothing to do

As already stated without the market, feelings were generally towards the side of Topophobia. A place which people wouldn't like to hang around in for long. It would seem that two of the most important factors in this were the fact that without the market, the square didn't seem to have any function or purpose, and that it appeared to be devoid of any seating area. As the first point of entry into the city via the train station, it should serve as a reception point for the city, yet respondents noticed a lack of any consistent signposting and a lack of anywhere to sit and wait for someone, Adrienne's comments reflect this

*R:..benches, if they would put benches, because obviously Hogh Catherijne is where you come out from the station so obviously if you could sit and wait for someone to come, it's just I don't think this space is practically used, obviously apart from if it's used for a market –
Adrienn*

This appeared to be a running theme throughout the interviews

R: the streets themselves look fine, but there's nothing really, or any kind of focal point I think if they want to use this space then they could have something, even if just like some seating and a fountain, just something for people to congregate around....yeh and people are sat on the floor now because there are no other seats.

5.4 Discussion

5.41 Tourists & Residents

In looking at the results above per each area of the city centre studied, it's clear that the sensescapes of any given area whether positive or negative (alongside practical issues), can and do play a significant role in producing feelings of topophobia or topophilia and are thus capable of affecting both comfort and enjoyment levels for visitors or residents to Utrecht. It's also apparent that the degree of topophobia or topophilia or indeed neutrality is somewhat subjective. There is a clear distinction between the effects of any given sensescape on tourists and for residents. This is more than likely due to a difference in affective capacity. Whilst the sounds and sensations produced by bikes passing through crowds scared some of the first time visitors, they were simply irritating or annoying for residents. At the same time the degree of topophilia appeared to be tempered by on-going exposure to particular sensescapes. The majority of visitors were amazed by the variety of sights, sounds, smells and sensations offered by the Oudegracht and consequently when questioned at the end of interviews, nearly all chose the site as being the most comfortable, most attractive and having the best atmosphere. On the other hand for temporary residents Sofia and Ioanna, the Oudegracht, despite still being beautiful had lost its appeal and become an area they would rather avoid at times. Sofia comments:

R: somehow all buildings in Utrecht centre all look the same...to be honest I'm bored of it, when I went to Den Haag there was just one big one, but I enjoyed walking around different neighbourhoods and not just the canal.....it's comfortable, but when sometimes you see so many tourists, it's not so nice to be here.....sometimes I try to avoid this street – Sofia

Ioanna's comments are much the same - "the first time I was in Utrecht it was really impressive for me, to walk across the canals, and yeh it was really nice, now it's really annoying to walk because of the bikes and a lot of people walking too, but mostly the bikes.... it's not actually less impressive, but you get used to it, I see it almost every day....I think most of the times I think I just pass this street really quickly because it's so crowded and I don't like to walk there, so I don't hang out here, it's just a passage for me"

At the same time both Ioanna and Sofia's preferred site was the Voorstraat, coincidentally the least appealing for visitors. Perceived as unattractive on the surface with its coffeeshops, red light windows and rough around the edges look by visitors, its creative content was clearly something which needed 'discovering' over time, something noticed by Glen and Caroline during their interview:

R2: I think that's something you would like find out once you'd had a look, or explored the area a bit more

R: I think you'd have to experience it more than just walk down it

R2: yeh you'd have to actually go in the shops to find out.....you don't know the content till you've been inside the shops and cafes sort of thing"

And also commented on with regards to the Zadelstraat by Ioanna, highlighting the importance of marketing the right kind of places to tourists and residents.

R: as a tourist I didn't notice this street, but as I'm living here and I discovered some shops I really like this place – Ioanna

5.42 Sensory Marketing

With reference to the potential of sensescapes to be used as an additional layer in the description and marketing of the key features of Utrecht's brand image. It certainly appears to make sense.

As seen from the results of the content analysis chapter, at present Utrecht's brand image is predominantly focused on the promotion of its major tangible attributes, its cafes, restaurants and bars, canals, and churches, and to a lesser extent its architecture and gardens. When presented in promotional material either by the local or national tourism agencies, by the municipality, or within articles in the foreign press, descriptions of the attributes themselves, and atmospheres associated with them are currently focused overwhelmingly on the visual.

From the analysis of the walk-along interviews we can see that in situ, whether from the viewpoint of tourists or residents, the experience of Utrecht's urban centre is again primarily visual. Despite this it's also clear that a range of other sensescapes are present which do play a significant role in creating the general atmosphere of any given location.

In the theoretical chapter, it has already been stated that the visual is inherently tied to the other senses, thus it would make sense to support visual descriptions with those of the other supporting senses (Lindstrom, 2009)

The most positive emotional responses appear to have come from what were judged to be the most unique areas of the city. For visitors these were generally considered to be the Oudegracht and the Pandhof Garden. Their uniqueness and associated atmosphere seemed to be produced by the layering of a variety of contrasting sensescapes in the same location. The variety and contrast between the sounds, sights, smells and sensations down by the canal side and up at street level meant the Oudegracht managed to be both relaxing and lively at the same time. Much the same was true for the Pandhof Garden with its dark, cool, echoing stone arcades proving a stark contrast to its quiet calming, peaceful, green interior, resulting in an area that could offer a variety of sensations and feelings to a first time visitor including that of escape.

Focusing more on the sensescapes that contribute to the atmosphere of a tangible attribute could clearly be more effective than labelling the atmosphere alone, as in doing so it would help people imagine or recreate the feeling and overall image of a place in their mind when deciding where to go and thus be more likely to influence their decision. This idea was backed up by the responses of respondents who when questioned all agreed that reading about the sensual experience of Utrecht and its' key attractions within promotional material would make it seem more appealing to visit as a tourist.

As illustrated within previous chapters, Utrecht currently suffers from a lack of brand awareness. This was also apparent amongst respondents within this study, most having an idea that Utrecht had a canal and was similar to Amsterdam yet slightly smaller, but not much more. This would suggest that at present the brand image amongst Utrecht is not particularly strong, especially amongst international visitors.

In terms of using Utrecht's sensescapes as a marketable attribute in themselves there were several suggestions. One of these was to concentrate on the visual beauty and diversity of its architecture, art and design, that of both its buildings and within its various galleries. Other ideas focused on branding it as a 'haptic' destination, in particular as somewhere to experience an *al fresco* or *all'aperto* lifestyle, perhaps eating or drinking in the city's canal side cafes, bars and restaurants, out in the elements, whether under the shade of a sun umbrella, or with the warmth of a blanket and artificial heaters. Branding the city as an urban cycling experience was another proposal. Given the extensive nature of Utrecht's cycling infrastructure, the feeling and tactile sensations associated with being able to explore a city almost entirely by bicycle in a safe and environmentally friendly manner could be something particularly unique. This also fits in with Veijola and Jokinen's (1994) idea that immersion of the body in unique haptic experiences within new surroundings represents one of the principle motivations for travel. It was argued this could be facilitated by making it easier for tourists to hire municipality bikes straight from the station without the need for subscriptions, especially considering the length of most stays.

Aside from these the general consensus was to focus the brand image of intangible characteristics or attributes and the sensescapes that contribute to them. Suggestions differed between residents and tourists. Residents seemed to suggest the youthful vitality, central location, creativity and new urban culture of the city should take priority. Given the size of the sample this is only anecdotal evidence, however a further study could show that it might be better for agencies (such as the Gemeente) wishing to attract business investment or attract and retain academic talent to focus more on these kind of aspects of the city within marketing material. Visitors on the other hand felt the city should focus its brand and in turn try to attract visitors by portraying its diversity of culture, friendliness, tolerance and atmosphere of conviviality, which interestingly represent some of the key things tourists desire to experience according to Ekinici & Hosany, (2006). Helen and Marks' comments

epitomise this, Mark's in particular illustrating the importance of making people aware of what a place is like before they go

R2: conducive, again really social, it's really all about a city which can look after people, it's all geared around enabling people to be sociable with each other, again down by the canal there's all these cushions around, some of the trees so it's all about relaxing and creating a stress free environment or that's what it seems like to me - Helen

R1: I think what's unique is its conviviality, its general sense of open sense of sociability, and I think it's really got something there, I've not been to Amsterdam yet and I don't really want to go, because I've kind of got a prejudice now, I'd recommend this over Amsterdam which is strange because I've never been there, but I'd recommend it anytime, I'd say Utrecht is pleasant, convivial, so in a sense for me it should just go on being Utrecht in all its complex history and its present moment with maybe just a bit more thought – Mark

Sensory Experience

"I think many feelings are controlled through embodied experiences of places, to be there. Sensory experiences are hard to capture on camera and vary in time of the days. The chance that visitors will experience the sensory experience as described in the magazine is limited and can cause disappointments" - Johann

Regardless of how well a place is marketed it is crucial that the images promoted match the reality of the destination as *"ultimately, the quality of a tourist experience and sustainable host communities depends on the intelligent alignment of the perceived destination image and projected identity"* (Govers & Go, 2005, p.87)

With this in mind, the walk along interviews also uncovered a range of issues associated with the city's sensescapes that could be addressed by policy makers.

Bicycle conflict

The conflict between bicycles and pedestrians was one of the strongest themes throughout the walk-alongs. For the residents and visitor from Amsterdam, this was seen as an irritation or problem, but one that was to be expected and not particularly dangerous.

"R: I know during busy shopping days there's a really big conflict between bicycles and pedestrians, as you can see the sidewalks are totally claimed by things from the shops, so people always start to walk in the streets, but the cyclists are still there on busy days, but that's really annoying because you've got lots of frustrated bells and shouts and things like that. But today its really in balance" - Johann

On the other hand for some of the visitors it provided a genuine source of topophobia with respondents scared or worried about actually getting hit by a bike.

R: I think the fact that the bikes are coming along as well, you feel like everything is moving, because I've never been before in a street where bikes are allowed to ride and I think the fact I can physically feel the bikes passing by, I don't feel like imp just strolling around with other people...at first to be honest I was a bit extra cautious about the bikes, I felt like I might be run over – Adrienn

For some the sound of the bikes was worse than the feeling or sound, in line with the work of Holloway & Hubbard (2001) arguing that topophobia is often linked to an inherent fear of noise.

R2: for me the view but also the sound, the sound was very annoying for me, and also the sound of the bell on the bikes when it's really crowded, because it's really stressing for me - Caroline

Dhaleen and Daniel go on to compare Utrecht with their own city, surprised how bicycles seem to take priority over pedestrians and commenting that it isn't clear where they are supposed to walk.

R2:the actual bit for the bicycles is very orderly and modern and a smooth surface as opposed to the pedestrianized section which kind of reemphasises that the priority is for things with wheels, like this bit really doesn't matter...what I find kind of weird though, sometimes the road and the pavement don't feel disconnected enough (further down Oudegracht)

R: yeh you don't know where the road and the pavement are

R2: like just now with the bus going by it felt very very close... and I notice it's the same with walking, you don't always walk on the pavement you walk on the road, everyone does it and it's just a bit odd - Daniel & Dhaleen

Solution: Better Signposting

With bicycle conflict clearly an issue, it's important to make sure pedestrians (particularly visitors to the city) are aware of where they are supposed to walk. Better or clearer signposting could do this. Alternatively as the situation is different street by street a possible solution could be to demarcate the distinction between bike path and pedestrian path using coloured lines, especially considering that the use of colour in general seems to add to the attractiveness of a given area.

Reconstruction

The sight and sound of construction was also ever present during the study, particularly so at the Domplein and the Vredenburg. This was seen in a negative light. Although most accepted it was a temporary feature, the majority of respondents seemed to suggest that they would at least like it to be a bit clearer what was happening or going to be done.

R2: for me it's really good except for the construction, because now you focus on the construction instead of everything else, of course the town is bigger, but the construction, the noise - Isabel

Solution: better screening and more information

As stated previously during the latter interviews attempts had been made to distract attention away from or screen unsightly construction at the Vredenburg site. In addition more information was also provided towards the end of the study about what was happening at the Domplein construction site. Developing these solutions could certainly make a difference. Although the wall of greenery idea at the Vredenburg was possibly an improvement, some respondents argued it was too small and that if possible technically, then larger screens, such as the canvas ones showing reconstruction information or an image of what will come would be a better option. Other suggestions included models or projections of planned buildings at the Domplein to give tourists something to engage with when visiting rather than arrived at a supposed 'attraction' only to find it in a state of reconstruction.

Sensorial Poverty

Other sites such as the Lange Elisabethstraat, Mariaplaats, Neude and Vismarkt were generally liked but let down either by one or two sensorial elements, the smell of urinals, the noise of shoppers or an unsightly building for example, or by simply lacking in sensual diversity. The result being an overall feeling of neutrality.

Solution: masking / distracting attention

In addressing a lack of sensual diversity, certain areas could be improved upon by deliberately introducing sensescapes with positive associations. This reflects Degen (2008) and Middleton's (2010) comments stating that the senses could be designed or planned for. This could work particularly well in relation to the smellscape which was often insignificant or absent entirely. As one respondent noted, flowers were visible throughout the city, but the smell was barely noticeable. Just as other cities have done in Spain (see theoretical chapter) flowered areas and gardens could be artificially perfumed in order to change a neutral sensescape into a positive one. Another respondent noted how much of a difference the scent of the flower market and enticing smells of food stalls made to the Oudegracht. The smell of flowers might do the same in other areas.

In addition it would appear that positive sensations are also capable of masking negative ones. The smell of marijuana for example, producing strong feelings of topophobia in Voorstraat, appeared to have much less effect in the Vismarkt area where it was presumably

moderated by the friendlier more touristic atmosphere and strong smells of coffee. Another example was street musicians which were said to be able to make a street seem more lively, or even improve the soundscape “*by blocking out the usual city noises*” - Andrew. In terms of the visual the Vredenburg wall of greenery described above provides an excellent example of how something can potentially distract ones attention away from something else

R2: yeh the advertising and those plants coming out of the wall

R: oh yeh it's quite sort of interesting, I don't really know how to describe it, interesting yeh, and yeh actually by looking at it closely, just above it there's sort of like an old building that's a bit sort of derelict, but it takes your eye away from it with that wall in front of it. Glen & Caroline

Evidently a variety of things such as the use of public art projects, screenings for construction, sound sculpture or even artificial smells could all be used to mask less desirable aspects of the sensescape of area.

Lack of Purpose

In addition to being spoiled by reconstruction the Vredenburg also suffered from a lack of purpose when the market wasn't there. Comments on this were also echoed to some extent when discussing the open part of the Neude square commonly used for events, also being described as unappealing when empty.

Solutions: - More events, fairs and exhibitions

With reference to the space required for the market or events, the general consensus seemed to be that alternative uses were better than an empty square. The obvious way to do this would be to designate the space on free days to a larger variety of fairs, events or even exhibitions. In the Vredenburg an exhibition relating to the improvements going on around the Hogh Catherijne, station and new Concert hall might be a good idea. In addition respondents felt the lack of seating was a major stumbling block to the appeal of the square. Creating more seating areas and better signposting and information could help transform the area into the reception point of the city that it should be for friends and families welcoming guests to the city.

Avoiding Disneyfication

Perhaps the most important theme emerging from the research was ‘avoiding disneyfication’ or so to speak. With the suggestions made above it's important to remember two things, firstly that whilst the city is a tourist destination actively seeking more visitors, it is also a living and working city, and one in which its residents choose for that reason. Secondly the kind of people visiting Utrecht do not necessarily want to see the disney-fied

version of the Netherlands that can be found in South Holland or the picture of the Netherlands associated with Amsterdam. Comments throughout the interviews reflected this

R: yeh, with all the shop fronts and signs, these for example are not necessary.....maybe it would be better if they had the older style shop fronts instead of really modern ones....but that has two sides because then if they all had awnings for example, maybe it would look too touristic –

I: and what about the lights which you can find along the canal?

R: yeh I like it but it belongs here, you don't have to.... I prefer this, but at the other side it can be too much, like you're in a fairground or something - Marieke

R1:In terms of what there is here, I do like the mixture, I wouldn't want it to be made twee and as if it's a stage set, it feels real, and that's important to me.... I don't always want things to be comfortable, I don't want to be in a place that's created to never take me out of my comfort zone, I like to be able to think oh there might be a jazz club around that corner or some live music or there might be a musical instrument shop.....and this is alright, its lived in and I think that's what I like about it, it doesn't seem to be created, it's just I imagine how Holland has always been.

If Utrecht wishes to be successful it needs to be different to its competitors, and what would appear to be the best way to do so would be to market itself as the 'real' Netherlands. Ritchie (2011) argues that experiencing local distinctiveness is one of the paths to 'memorable experience'. Yet it needs to be realistic. Giving people the opportunity to immerse themselves in the everyday sensescapes that Dutch people do, enjoying the convivial soundscape on the terraces of one of its many *gezellig* cafes, enjoying the sensation of riding a bike over cobbled streets or watching canal boats go by whilst eating a canal side lunch might just hold the most appeal for this reason.

Conclusion

6.1 Findings

As explained in the introductory chapter Utrecht is a city with a self-proclaimed desire to not only increase its revenue from international tourism, and business travel, but also retain the talent and knowledge produced by the local university. Despite this as present it lacks a strong brand image and brand awareness has been stated as low both with in the Netherlands and abroad.

The theoretical chapter of this dissertation served to both explain the relation between the senses and destination branding, and highlight the lack of research into the multisensory nature of tourism. Sensescapes along with topophobia and topophilia were established as theoretical concepts from which to investigate the sensual perceptions of visitors to Utrecht and consequently any potential for sensory description to be used within the destination branding of the city.

Within the content analysis it became clear that in general the local and national tourism agencies, municipality and foreign press are all focusing their marketing on the visual aspect of the cities' main tangible attributes and to a lesser extent the atmosphere associated with them.

On the surface findings from the walk along interviews appeared to be consistent with the findings of the content analysis, the city was experienced primarily visually, just as it had been portrayed within marketing material. Exploring how individual areas of the city were perceived however showed that this wasn't the full picture. Some sites were experienced strongly in terms of visual perception and this may have skewed the overall result, as at others the sensescape appeared to be fairly balanced or even dominated by the auditory or haptic sense. It could be therefore that marketing agencies are missing out on the potential to use a variety of sensations to describe the experience of visiting (or even living in) their city, particularly when referring to specific areas or attractions.

The results of the study show that the overall sensescape of an area (formed from the combination of sensual information perceived) seemed to be more responsible for the overall atmosphere of a place than features of the built environment or content, though to some extent this was dependent on the profile of the respondent, be it a visitor or resident. Across the majority of sites each individual sense appeared to be capable of producing both positive and negative sensations, depending on the profile of the respondent, time of day and weather conditions. Consequently the majority of sites were associated with a mix of topophilia, topophobia and neutrality, rather than one feeling alone.

Nevertheless the areas producing the most positive experiences were the Oudegracht, Zadelstraat, Pandhof, Mariaplaats and Dom. Interestingly at these sights the overall sensescapes were fairly balanced and topophilia was associated as much with the other senses as it was what people could see.

The Vredenburg, Neude and Voorstraat were all responsible for producing more topophobia than topophilia, but in general were seen in terms of their neutrality. In each of these sights the visual was the dominant perception.

Lange Elisabethstraat and the Vismarkt were the only two sites associated predominantly with feelings of topophobia. At the Vismarkt topophobia was undoubtedly related to the senses in particular the haptic and auditory. Topophobia at Lange Elisabethstraat on the other hand appeared to be more connected to the content of the street and fact that it was overly commercial, although this did also contribute to an unappealing landscape.

The findings suggest that a number of things. Although perception of the urban environment does indeed seem to be primarily visual, perceptions based on the other senses seem to be equally capable or even more so of provoking an emotional response whether it be positive or negative. In addition the atmosphere of a place seemed to be derived from the perception of the sum of sensual information together, the sensescape, rather than from one sense alone. This would suggest the tourist encounter is unquestionably multisensory, certainly in the case of Utrecht, the implications of which will now be discussed.

6.12 What this means for Utrecht

In terms of attracting tourists to Utrecht, walk along interviews have shown there are a wide range of sensations available to the visitor including but not limited to the visual. Tourists having experienced the city without much prior awareness generally found intangible characteristics such as the atmosphere of the city to be the most enjoyable part of their experience, in particular, the cities sociability and conviviality. It would make sense then for agencies involved in marketing the city to tourists to put a greater emphasis on these. During the study, for tourists in particular, the atmosphere of a place appeared to be primarily based on sensory perceptions, therefore describing the overall sensescape linked to any given atmosphere would appear to provide the best way of letting tourists know what they can expect to experience beforehand. It's also clear that in situ, contrasting sensescapes seemed to create the most unique atmospheres, which in turn held the most appeal. As it's generally argued that visitors are seeking unique experience, focusing on these would also be a sensible suggestion when producing marketing material or creating branding policies. Aside from intangible characteristics, Utrecht might also consider branding itself based on its sensual properties alone, one of the best suggestions arising from the study being to clarify

its position as one of the world's top cycling cities, offering the haptic experience of being able to explore a city entirely by bike in a safe and environmentally friendly manner. There were also clear differences between what residents, business travellers and visitors were looking for in a destination - especially in terms of tangible attributes. Different marketing agencies should continue to differentiate their focus depending on their audience, as was seen in the results of the content analysis. Despite this creating an overall brand based on intangible aspects such as the youthfulness or vitality of a city is likely to appeal to all parties.

A variety of policies could also be implemented to improve the sensual experience of the city on the ground. With careful planning, the use of features such as art or sound sculpture could be incorporated into an area to mask or detract attention away from negative aspects of the overall sensescape. Alternatively sources of artificial sensation such as perfume could be strategically placed in areas that are currently seen as neutral in order to enrich the sensescape.

In doing so such policies could serve to not only increase the enjoyment and comfort level of visitors and residents but also help to ensure a brand marketed as being a positive sensual experience matches that marketed. In terms of tourism this could be the difference between giving positive word of mouth or not, and could also increase the likelihood of return visits. The importance of this extends beyond tourism. Long term or short term residents of university leaving age are much more likely to want to base themselves in a city that they feel is comfortable, vibrant and relaxing and consequently be more prepared to commute than move elsewhere to find work post study.

On a cautionary note, it is important to make sure the city does not become 'over staged' or overly focused on comfort for tourists, as at present Utrecht is living and working city, and one which could draw advantage from the fact that it represents the real everyday Dutch experience rather than the stereotypical picture of clogs, tulips, cheese, windmills, sex and drugs (all of which can still be found if one looks in the right places).

6.13 What this means for branding & marketing in general

If a tourist's desire is to escape the everyday and to experience the unique, then what is marketed needs to be something that it would be difficult to experience elsewhere. A brand image based around tangible features such as churches, shops or even canals is unlikely to be successful because in themselves these features are not unique, they can be experienced through photos or videos visually and audibly. The atmosphere of a place on the other hand is experienced through the interplay of all the senses and thus requires actually visiting the destination. Building a brand image based around such characteristics would therefore be beneficial, echoing the argument of Echtner & Ritchie (2003) which can be seen in the

theoretical chapter. It would appear the best way to market this would be to describe how the senses come together to form unique sensescapes contributing to the overall atmosphere of a place.

The potential of incorporating sensescapes into branding or marketing must always be considered on a case by case basis. Nevertheless, investigating the sensescapes associated with a destination can provide a rich source of descriptive material which can be used to enrich branding or marketing material and thus increase appeal, especially for the contemporary tourist who is more interested in immersing themselves in the local environment than stereotypical tourist attractions.

6.14 Limitations

This study had several limitations. Firstly in terms of time, it was only possible to choose 10 sites representative of the attributes marketed within the city along a fixed route. The sites chosen however may not have been truly representative of routes taken by tourists, visitors or residents. It could be useful in future therefore to create a wider study of the area drawing upon route choice behaviour in order to select walk along routes most likely chosen by each distinct group.

Again this study was also limited by the fact that walk-alongs were only conducted within the daytime. One stated aim of the city of Utrecht is to achieve more overnight visits. The city marketing agencies have already created a brand slogan - 'too much fun for one day' and developed evening only events such as the Trajectum Lumen light project based around this. A study similar to this one, investigating the sensescapes of Utrecht at night might help identify factors affecting the likelihood of staying overnight whether positive or negative. It could also uncover a range of unique sensual experiences only taking place at night that could appeal to potential visitors and be used to enrich marketing material.

A final limitation of this study was that it did not take into consideration tastescapes. Several respondents hinted during interviews at the fact that Utrecht's eateries had a particularly unique atmosphere, and that the brand might focus around the *all'aperto* terraces of its street side cafes and canal wharf-side restaurants. In order to test this idea, an in depth study focusing on the tastescapes of the city centres' various eating areas could provide a rich area of future research.

Appendices

Figure 1 – Content analysis coding tree (MAXQDA)

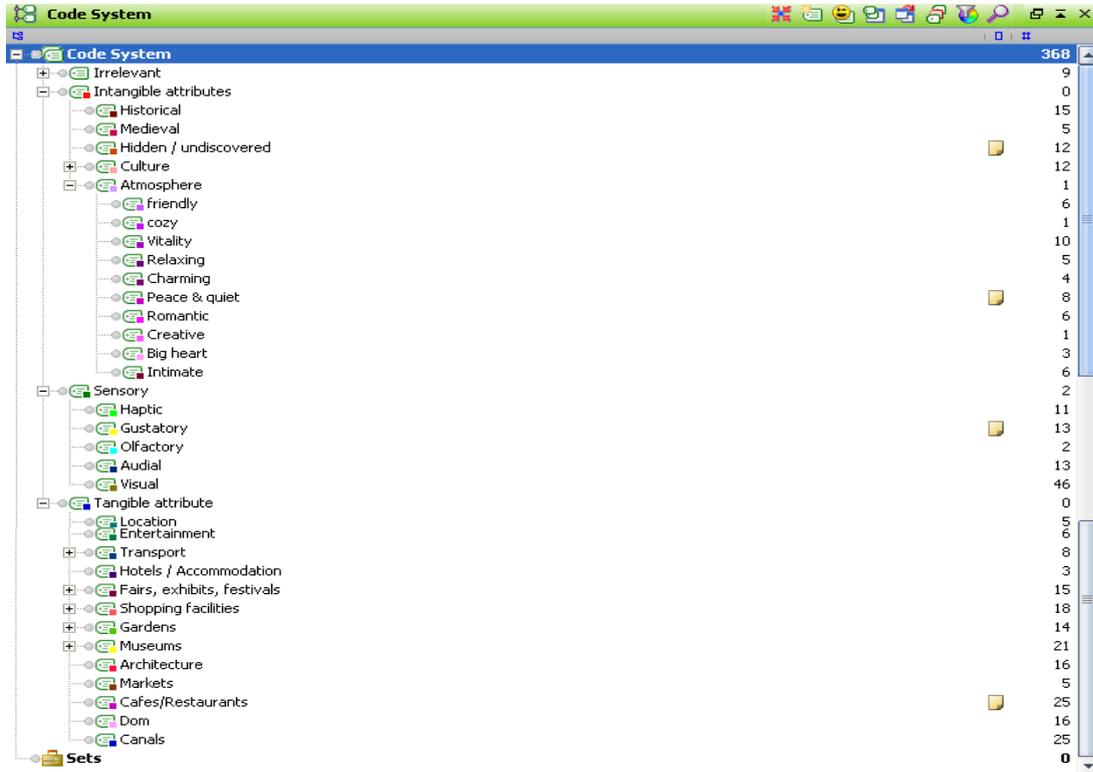


Figure 2 – Word frequency across all documents (MAXQDA)

Word	Word length	Frequency	%	M...	M...	M...	H...	1...	R...	G...	D...	V...	VW Toerism...
utrecht	7	417	3.18	17	18	9	8	7	9	106	29	186	28
city	4	225	1.72	10	11	4	7	4	9	64	14	87	15
museum	6	94	0.72	9	5	2	2	2	6	21	6	37	4
centre	6	92	0.70	0	0	4	0	0	2	40	6	36	4
dom	3	56	0.43	0	0	3	1	1	1	1	10	33	6
tower	5	48	0.37	2	4	4	1	1	2	2	14	15	3
oudegracht	10	48	0.37	2	1	0	3	0	3	0	3	32	4
shopping	8	45	0.34	9	0	0	3	0	0	13	5	13	2
canals	6	44	0.34	1	6	3	3	2	4	3	7	14	1
hotel	5	42	0.32	1	0	2	0	0	5	4	0	28	2
enjoy	5	40	0.31	0	1	1	3	0	0	1	5	28	1
visit	5	39	0.30	3	4	0	0	0	0	4	12	13	3
old	3	39	0.30	2	3	1	3	0	2	7	4	16	1
art	3	38	0.29	2	1	1	1	0	2	5	6	20	0
cultural	8	38	0.29	2	0	0	3	0	0	6	0	25	2
shops	5	37	0.28	1	2	1	4	0	2	12	9	4	2
station	7	37	0.28	0	0	0	0	0	0	28	0	7	2
see	3	35	0.27	3	1	0	1	2	1	2	4	21	0
medieval	8	33	0.25	3	4	2	4	0	2	1	1	15	1
special	7	32	0.24	0	1	1	0	0	0	6	5	15	4
beautiful	9	31	0.24	2	5	0	2	2	0	0	7	13	0
market	6	30	0.23	2	0	0	0	0	0	3	15	8	2
garden	6	30	0.23	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	9	16	1

Figure 3 – Material coded per category across all documents (MAXQDA)

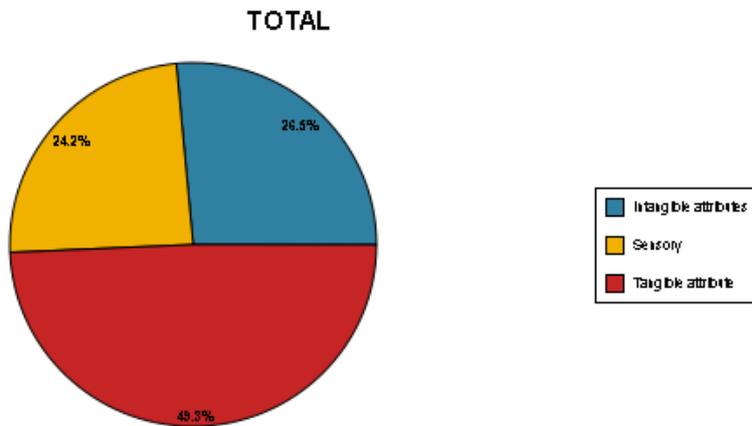


Figure 4 - Material coded per tangible attribute across all documents (MAXQDA)

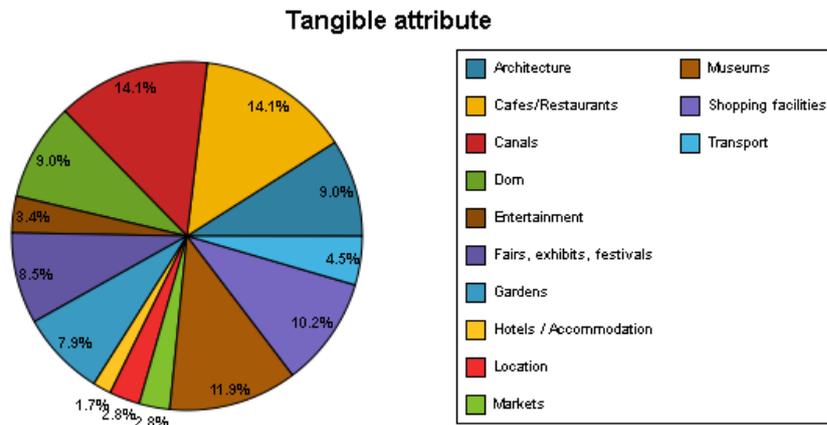


Figure 4.1 - Material coded per intangible attribute across all documents (MAXQDA)

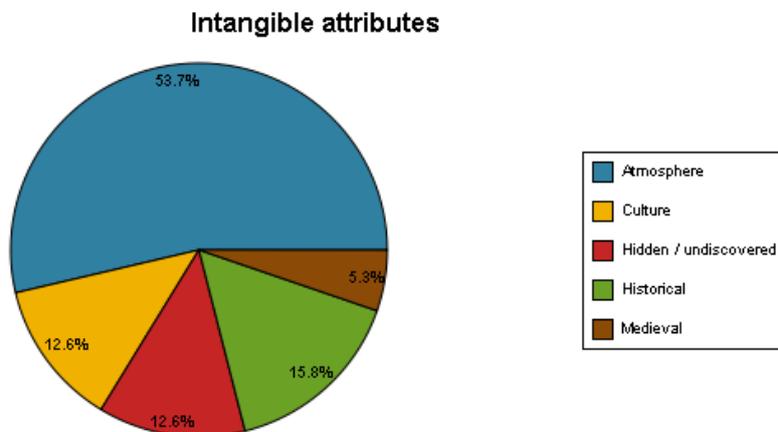


Figure 4.2 - Material coded per categories of sensory description across all documents (MAXQDA)

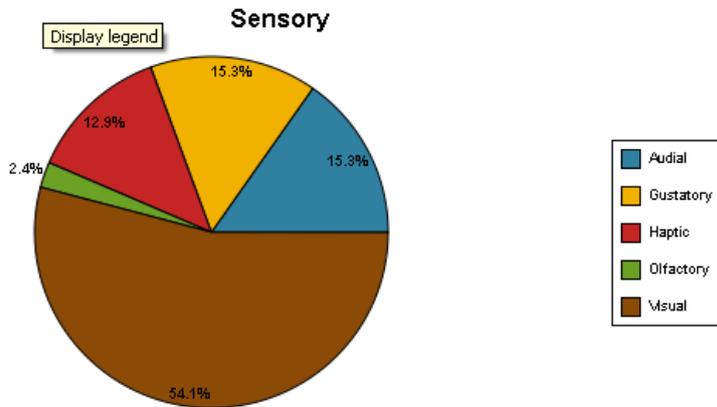


Figure 5 - Word frequency Gemeente Utrecht Time (MAXQDA)

Word	Word length	Frequency	%	M...	M...	M...	H...	1...	R...	Gemeente_utrecht_t...	D...	V...	VW To
utrecht	7	417	3.18	17	18	9	8	7	9	106	29	186	
city	4	225	1.72	10	11	4	7	4	9	64	14	87	
centre	6	92	0.70	0	0	4	0	0	2	40	6	36	
station	7	37	0.28	0	0	0	0	0	0	28	0	7	
museum	6	94	0.72	9	5	2	2	2	6	21	6	37	
shopping	8	45	0.34	9	0	0	3	0	0	13	5	13	
university	10	25	0.19	0	0	0	1	0	1	13	4	6	
businesses	10	13	0.10	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	0	0	
shops	5	37	0.28	1	2	1	4	0	2	12	9	4	
people	6	28	0.21	0	2	1	0	1	0	12	0	11	
large	5	25	0.19	1	1	0	1	0	0	11	3	7	
central	7	19	0.15	0	1	0	0	1	0	11	0	6	
district	8	13	0.10	1	0	0	0	0	0	10	1	1	
entertainment	13	18	0.14	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	6	
space	5	11	0.08	0	0	0	0	0	1	10	0	0	
attractive	10	16	0.12	0	0	1	1	0	0	9	3	2	
restaurants	11	24	0.18	1	2	3	0	0	3	9	0	3	
business	8	10	0.08	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	1	
young	5	21	0.16	0	0	0	1	0	1	8	1	10	
certainly	9	12	0.09	0	0	0	0	0	2	8	1	1	
future	6	10	0.08	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	1	1	
location	8	16	0.12	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	7	

Figure 6 - Material coded per tangible attribute for Foreign Press Articles (MAXQDA)

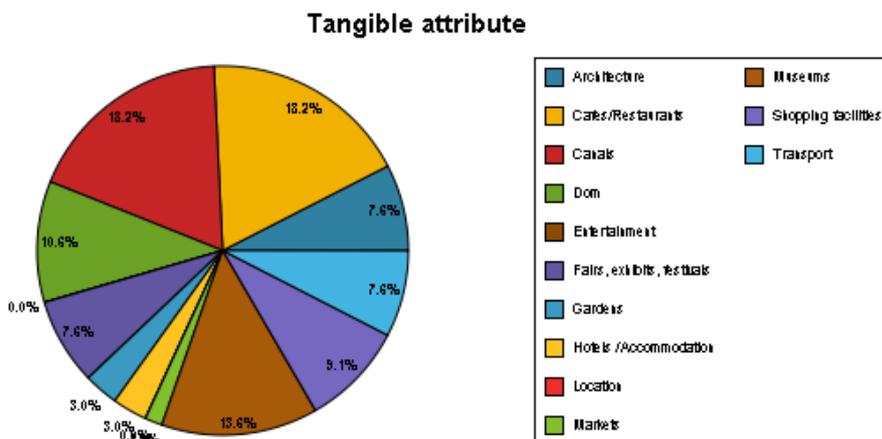


Figure 6.1 - Material coded per tangible attribute for Tourism Documents (MAXQDA)

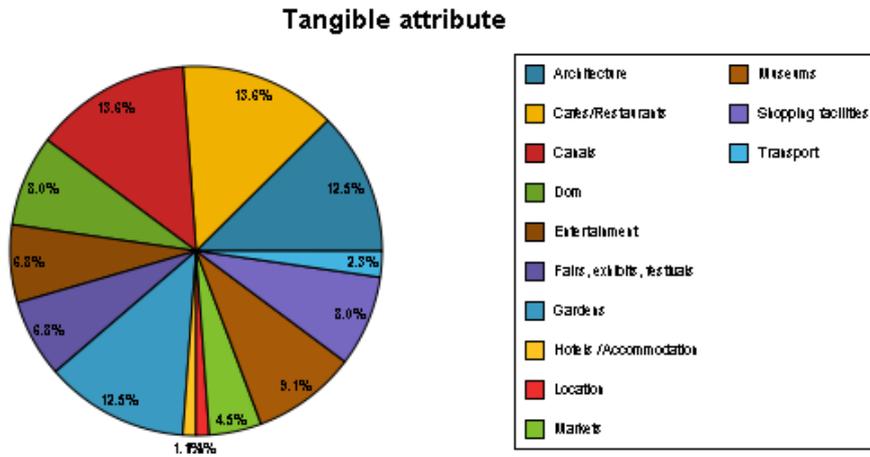


Figure 6.2 - Material coded per tangible attribute for Municipality Documents (MAXQDA)

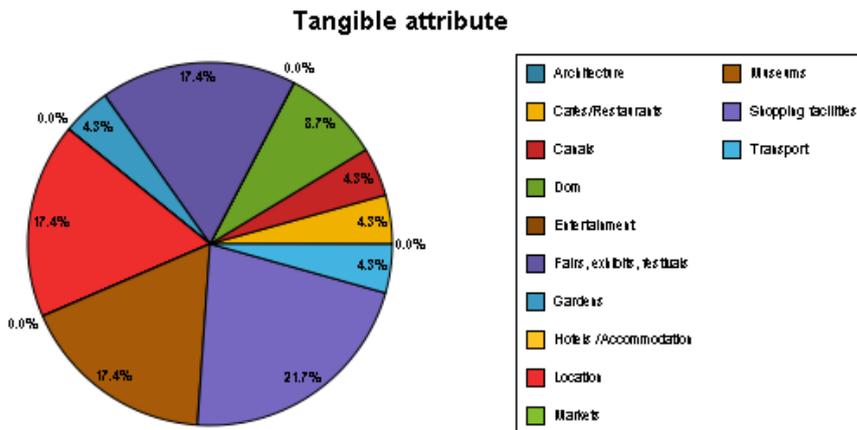


Figure 7 - Material coded per categories of sensory description for Foreign Press Articles (MAXQDA)

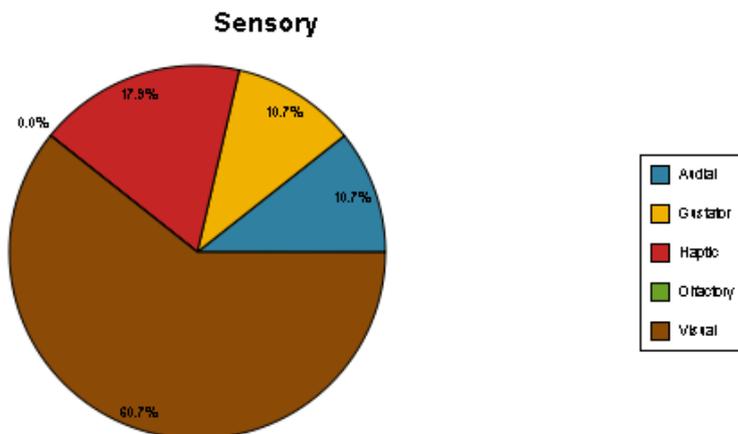


Figure 7.1 - Material coded per categories of sensory description for Tourism Documents (MAXQDA)

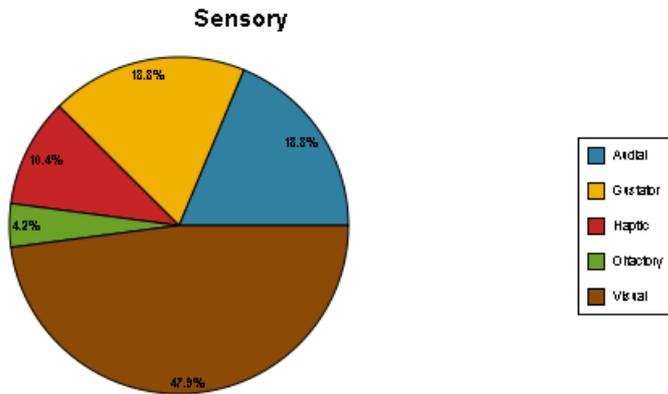


Figure 7.2 - Material coded per categories of sensory description for Municipality Documents (MAXQDA)

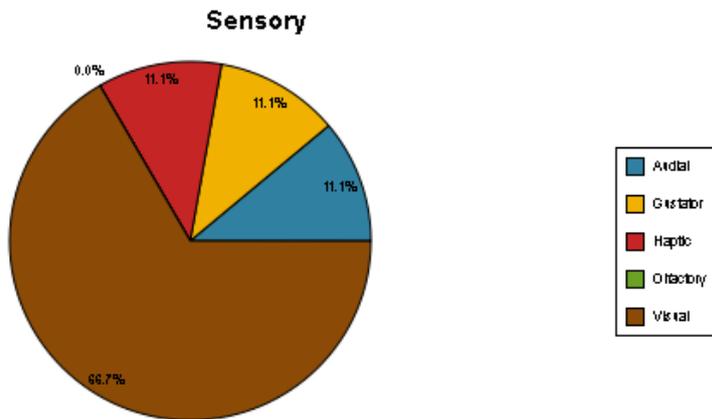


Figure 8 - VVV Utrecht tourist hotspots map

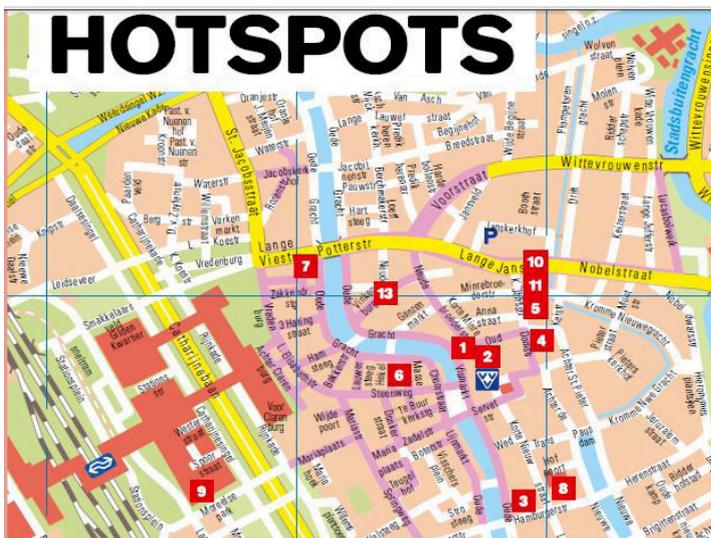


Figure 9 – Walkalong Analysis coding tree (NVIVO)

Nodes		
Name	Sources	References
Branding & Marketing	0	0
Branding	9	9
General questions	9	9
Locations	0	0
Oudegracht	10	19
Zadelstraat	9	12
Voorstraat	8	12
Vredenburg	9	11
Pandhof	10	11
Vismarkt	10	11
Domplein	10	10
Neude	10	10
Lange Elizabetsraat	8	9
Mariaplaats	4	4
Emotions	0	0
Topophilia	9	79
Topophobia	9	63
Neutral	9	37
Senses	0	0
Visual	10	337
Auditory	10	148
Haptic	10	101
Olfactory	10	71
Gustatory	0	0

Figure 10 – Zadelstraat coding chart

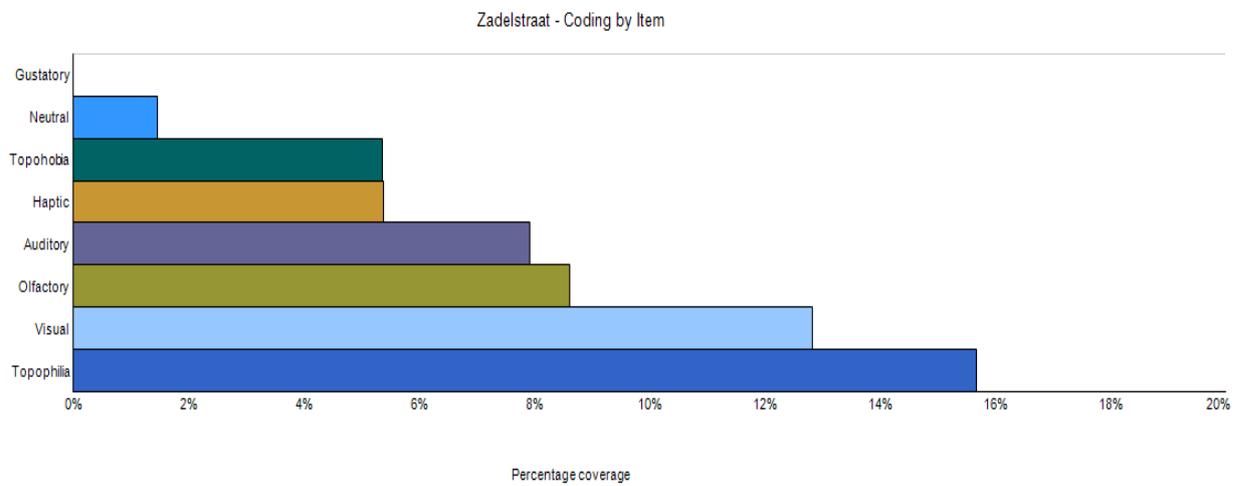


Figure 11 – Vredenburg coding chart

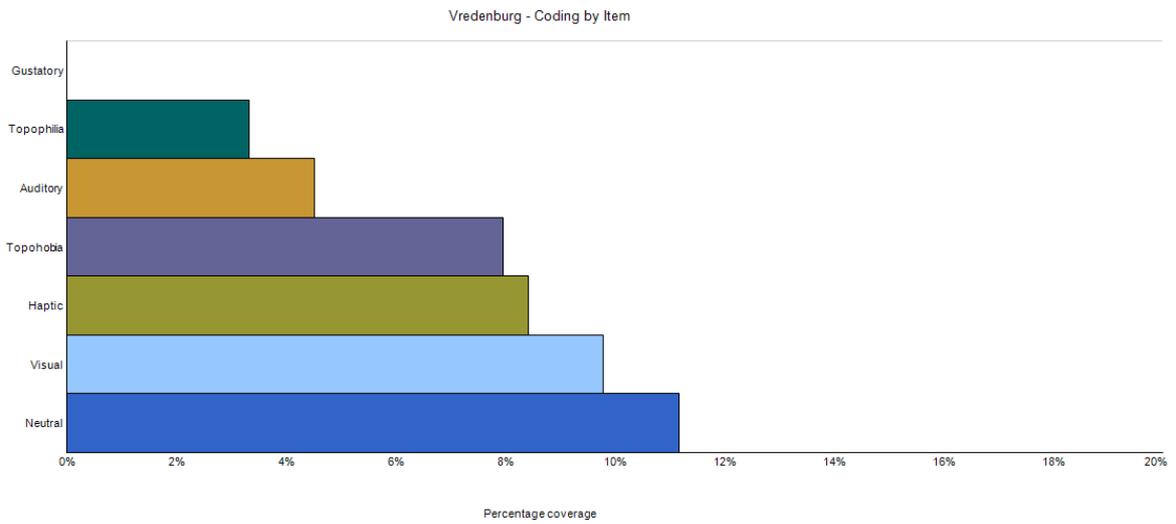


Figure 12 – Voorstraat coding chart

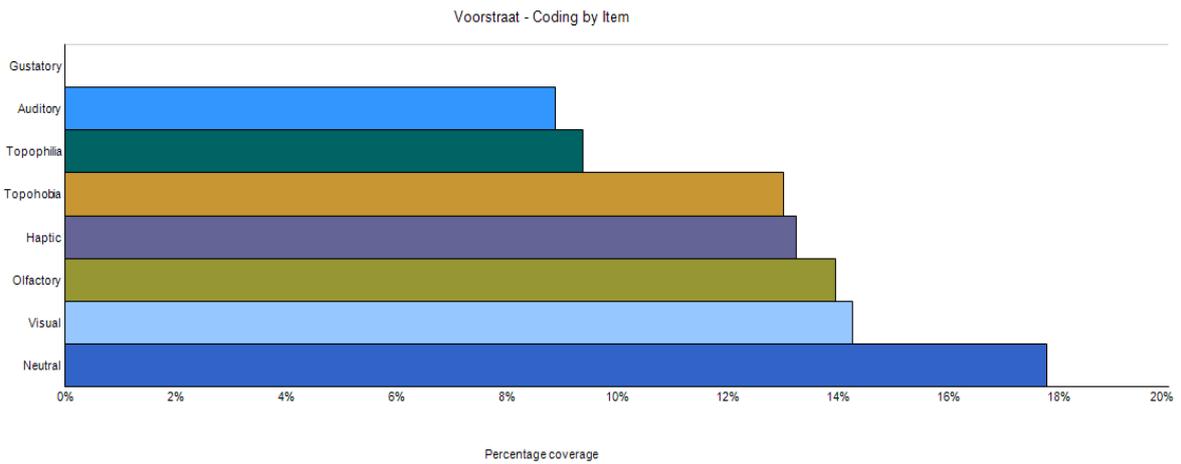


Figure 13 – Vismarkt coding chart

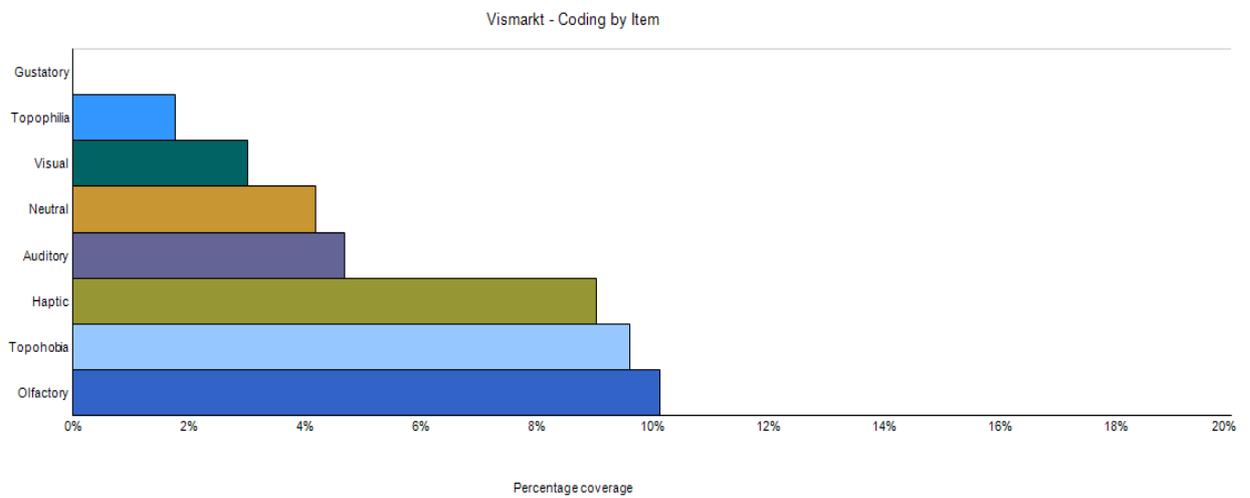


Figure 14 – Pandhof coding chart

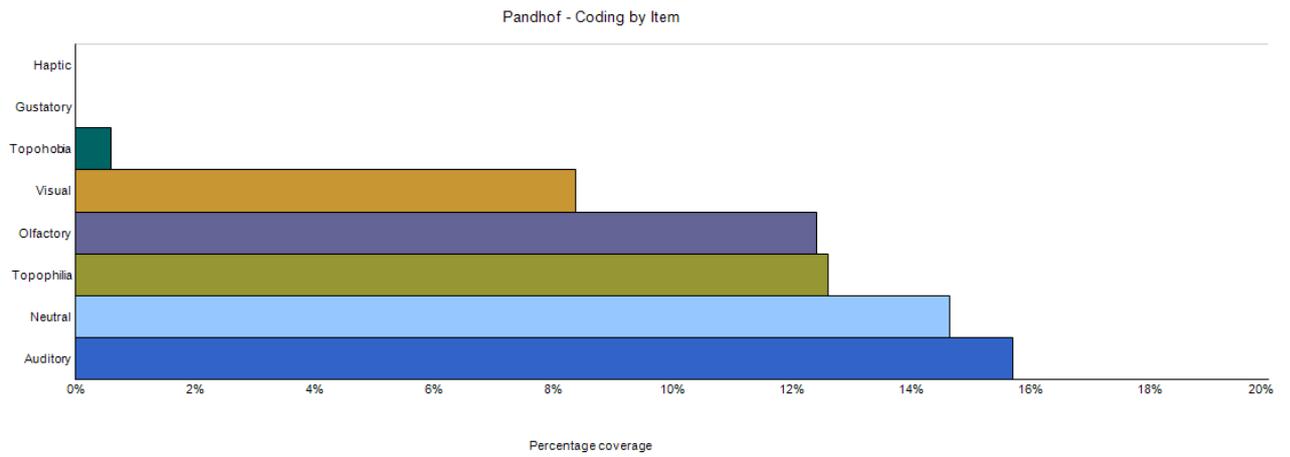


Figure 15 – Oudegracht coding chart

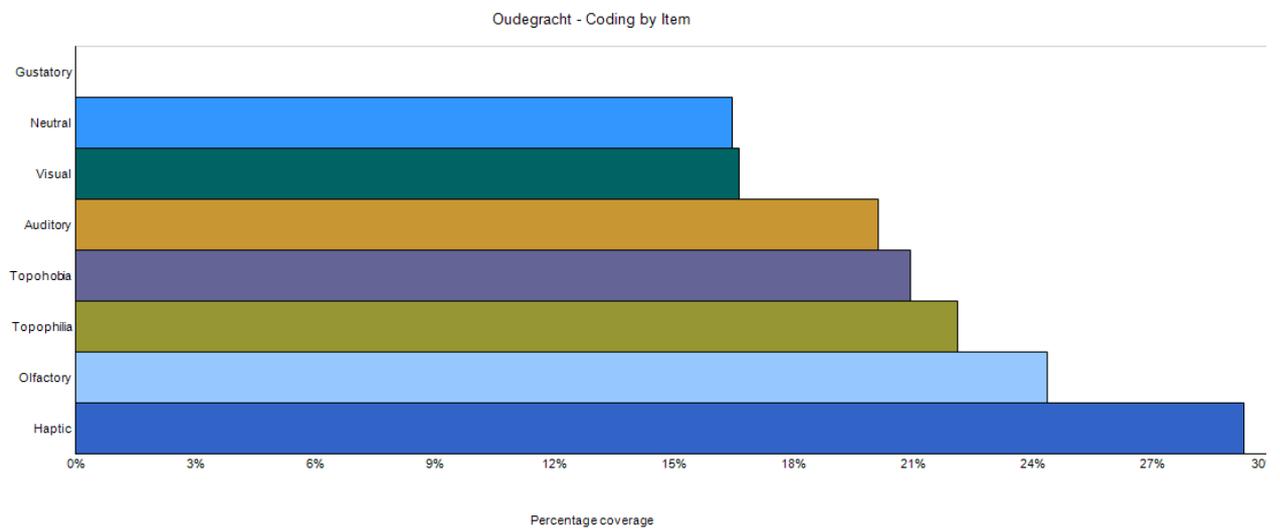


Figure 16 – Neude coding chart

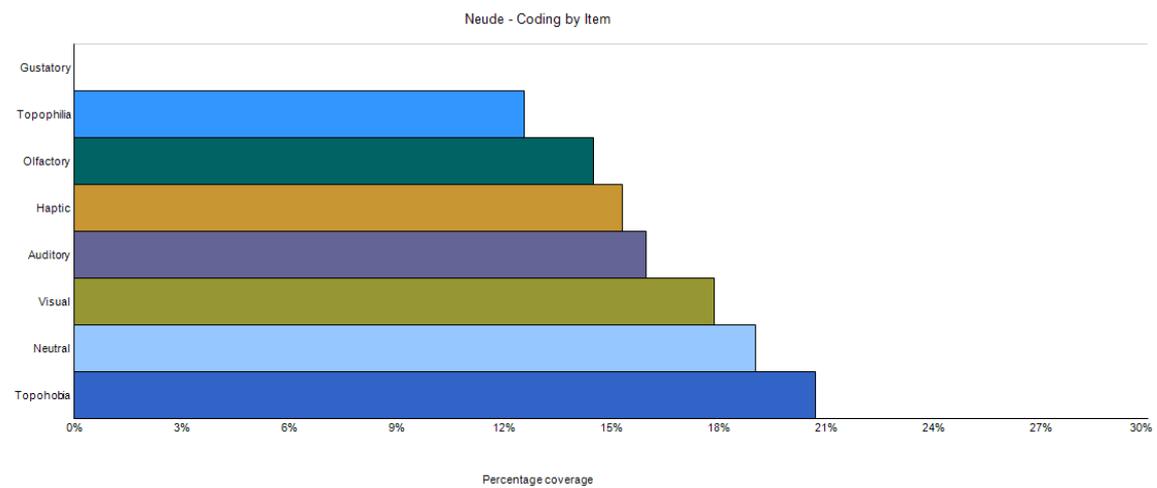


Figure 17 – Mariaplaats coding chart

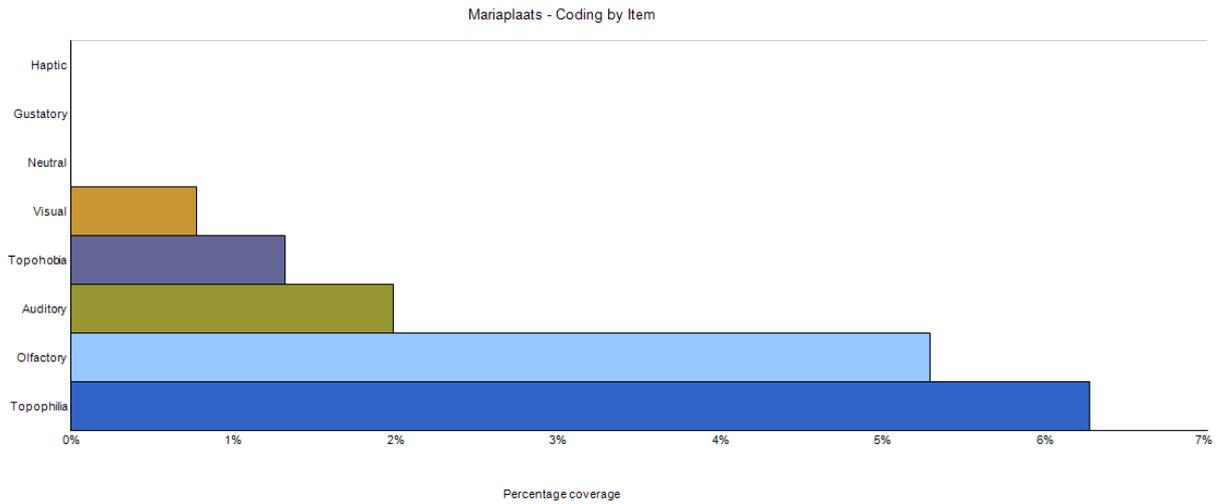


Figure 18 – Lange Elizabetraat coding chart

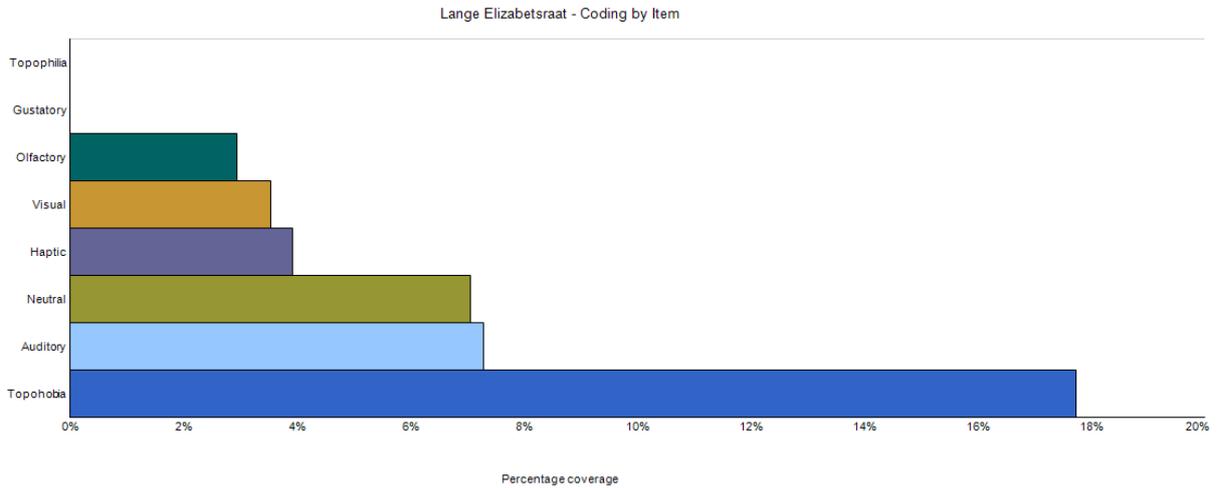
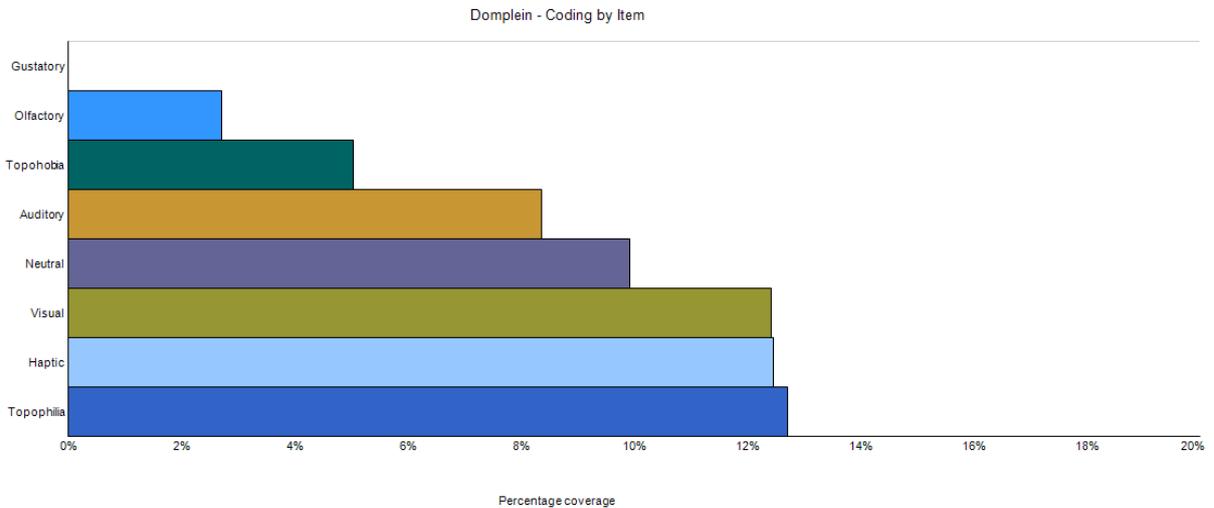


Figure 19 – Domplein coding chart



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