Marketing the Hanse experience

Hanseatic cultural heritage in the marketing of German towns

Master thesis

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Abstract

Hanzesteden Marketing, part of MarketingOost located in Zwolle, conduct a joint placemarketing operation for the Hanseatic towns along the IJssel: Hasselt, Kampen, Zwolle, Hattem, Deventer, Zutphen and Doesburg. These places are offered as a package, advertising their shared Hanseatic past and atmosphere, or a Hanseatic formula. The assumption in this research is that the concept of the Hanse, is more established and animate in German society, as Germany is its place of origin.

This research sets out to get a clearer view on the role of Hanseatic heritage in the marketing of German cities, and the perception of the Hanse in Germany. The methodology incorporates a qualitative case study using semi-structured in-depth interviews with a strategic sampling of experts in both placemarketing and historical background. Additional methods that were used are short interviews with respondents on location who interact with historic heritage, observational methods, and analysis of documents such as promotional materials.

The Hanse indeed has strong historical roots in Germany, and it is experienced as an undisputed term that comes with associated positive values. It has been imagined and re-imagined over the years, mostly from a German perspective. In the last few decades, Hanseatic research has become more Europeanized, and parallels have been drawn between the old Hanse and its modern re-inventions. The Hanse revival has been gratefully used more than ever in the recent economic depression. In Germany, it is also more politically neutral to take a bigger step back in history, avoiding the delicate subject of twentieth century history, and again pointing to the resentment-free Hanse past.

The three cases of Wesel, Dorsten and Soest were selected as mirror cities in terms of population size, and because of their proximity to the Dutch border. Also, Westphalian cities sometimes have to convince the audiences that they are legitimately Hanseatic. These specific cases were also selected to provide an insight into how this is done. The case of Wesel shows that the city uses the Hanse in a modern sense. With a city center that was largely destroyed in the war, effort was made to highlight the Hanse past and present in recent renovations. Dorsten shares the same problem, but acknowledges the fact that it was a small Hanseatic city in the past, and mainly employs the Hanse to conduct warm

placemarketing, to boost local pride, and show the people the history of their town. Soest is a town that has the formula, and the scenery for a Hanseatic town, yet the Hanse label is used very selectively, and mostly when marketing the city to other Hanseatic towns. It is used as an added value, and a mark of quality.

In neither of the three cases is the Hanse the spearhead of the place brand. It is always seen as a part of the story of a city, an important part, but nonetheless just a building block. Cities try to find their own uniqueness within the Hanse. The issue of uniqueness does not have to be a problem. The League character of the Hanse means that all associated towns can reap the benefits of its overwhelmingly positive image in their own way.

The outcomes of both the historical study and the three cases are used to reflect what the Dutch *Hanzesteden* can learn from this, resulting in conclusions and recommendations on: the role of uniqueness within the Hanseatic League, the use of the Hanse in warm placemarketing, the ways substance can be given to a Hanzestad label, the need to bear in mind historical reality, and the appeal of Dutch Hanseatic towns to a German audience.

1.   Introduction

1.1   Marketing the Hanzesteden on the IJssel

In 1995, seven Dutch cities situated along the River IJssel, all former member of the Hanseatic League, have started a joint placemarketing operation based on their common Hanse heritage. Cultural-historic elements from the golden age of the Hanse, presented in a modern fashion, are connected to active forms of recreation such as shopping, watersports, and hiking (den Hartigh & van Maaren, 2003). The seven cooperating cities are Hasselt, Kampen, Zwolle, Hattem, Deventer, Zutphen and Doesburg. These branding, marketing and promotional activities are coordinated through Hanzesteden Marketing, that is a part of MarketingOost, who also direct geographical marketing of other parts of the province of Overijssel; the IJssel delta, the city of Zwolle, Vechtdal Overijssel, Waterreijk, and Salland. The main goals of MarketingOost are to improve the public image, and to increase public awareness of these regional brands (www.marketingoost.nl). As not all of the seven cities are located in the province of Overijssel – Hattem, Zutphen and Doesburg are situated in Gelderland – Hanzesteden Marketing is also endorsed by the province of Gelderland. The strategic framework of Hanzesteden Marketing details its mission; to connect and to inspire from its directional function, and to promote and market from its executive role. Hanzesteden Marketing has defined four core-values, based upon Hanseatic tradition to provide the 'Hanse-DNA'; Working together, dynamics, pragmatism and historical awareness. Ultimate goal of these activities is to generate more publicity, visitors, spending, and jobs (Beleidsnotitie Hanzesteden Marketing, 2013).

The means by which these goals are to be achieved include giving substance to three key aspects in marketing the Hanse-brand, these being *signing*, *scenery* and *dynamics*[1]. These aspects are derived from the brand scan analysis conducted by De Positioneerders (2012). They are continually used as guidelines in the marketing of the Hanse-cities on the IJssel and therefore also highly important to this research. The first aspect is **signing**, which includes findability, recognizability, and accessibility. To analyze signing, one could pose questions

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[1] This is a translation of the terms *duiding, decor*, and *dynamiek* commonly known as the '3 Ds' within Hanzesteden Marketing. They are proposed by dr. Maathuis of De Positioneerders.

such as; is the Hanse-brand easy to find? What is it exactly? Where does it begin and end? Which buildings are connected to the historic Hanse? Making the answers to these questions more clear to the visitor would be an improvement to signing. The second aspect is concerned with **scenery**, key elements that make a city a Hanse-city. De Positioneerders (2012) have set up a list of characteristics through which the Hanse-identity manifests itself in a particular city; the proximity of water, specific buildings from the Hanse-era in Hanse-gothic style, the distinct feel and ambiance of an old city, the ground plan of the medieval urban environment, and inspiring historic stories and events that are connected to the city. The scenery aspect in terms of marketing can be improved by composing a uniform '*formula-book*' in which characteristic aspects of the Hanse-identity are defined, that should function as an indicator for the minimal requirements that a city should meet to be a part of joint Hanse-promotion campaigns (De Positioneerders, 2012). The third aspect is **dynamics**, that looks beyond the cultural-historic that the city has to offer. It describes what activities are taking place, in the sense of a broader experience of shopping, leisure, relaxing, going to a concert or taking a boat trip combined with cultural activities against the 'backdrop' of the historic Hanse city. This last aspect incorporates not only dynamics of tourism, but also economic dynamics. These perspectives could ideally reinforce each other, again drawing upon the Hanse-heritage of entrepreneurial spirit.

As of 2013, the Hanzesteden Marketing campaigns have undergone a change in approach with regards to these aspects. A change in signing is taking place in the form of a new uniform design in visual branding, including the building of a new website scheduled for April 2013, and promotional materials incorporating the same brand colors, logo's and fonts. This new visual style is also designed in the context of the position of the brand, and its potential target audiences, which will be discussed in the next paragraph.

1.2   Positioning and potential of the Hanzesteden brand

The expectations that the consumer has of a Hanse-city have been mapped in a survey conducted by KennispuntOost (2012). 62,2 percent of respondents can name a number of things that they expect to see and experience when visiting a Hanse-city, the other 38 percent has no answer to this question. Terms that are mentioned frequently include; old buildings,

nice buildings, old city center, history, water, and culture. Aspects that could be reasons for a visit to one of the cities are shown in figure 1.

Figure 1. Reasons for visit

1. **Old city streets 75,4%**	6. **Shores 35,6%**
2. **Historic buildings or citywalls 73,9%**	7. **River 30,2%**
3. **Cozy terraces 58,0%**	8. **Museum 27,1%**
4. **Authentic atmosphere 57,1%**	9. **Culinary 24,0%**
5. **Boutiques and shops 42,7%**	10. **Nature 19.9%**

Source: Resultaten Hanze-enquete, KennispuntOost, 30 mei 2012

45 percent of people indicate that a city being a former Hanseatic city is an added value for a visit, for familiar reasons; authenticity, history, and old buildings. So in what way do Hanse-cities in the Netherlands give substance to signing, scenery and dynamics at present? In a review of 22 former Hanse-cities in the Netherlands shows that most cities do not fully utilize their historic heritage as Hanseatic cities (IJsseldelta Marketing, 2013). Specifically the signing of Hanse-past is not clear in cities such as Arnhem and Nijmegen, that choose to profile itself in different ways. The seven cities on the IJssel of Hanzesteden Marketing are shown to have an advantage in this area, as they are branded as Hanseatic cities and it has been demonstrated that they are being recognized as such by the general public.

To further assess the unexplored potential of marketing the Hanse-brand in the Netherlands, we have to explore previous research on this issue. In research done by NBTC-NIPO (2012) on the place brand awareness among the Dutch population with regard to the regions of the Overijssel, the Hanzesteden were included for the first time. This survey gives a positive outcome; figures indicate a spontaneous awareness of 52 percent and a prompted awareness of 83 percent among Dutch population. The individual Hanzesteden show the following figures:

Figure 2: Brand awareness for the individual Hanse cities

	Spontaneous awareness	Prompted awareness
Doesburg	10%	76%
Zutphen	39%	90%
Deventer	60%	93%
Zwolle	53%	93%
Kampen	52%	89%
Hasselt	4%	75%
Hattem	5%	76%

Source: NBTC-NIPO Bekendheid Overijsselse Regio's 2012

As we can see, Zutphen, Zwolle and Deventer are recognized the most as being Hanseatic-cities. These are also the cities that are considered the most for vacation and day trips; Zwolle is considered for vacation by 14 percent, Deventer by 15 percent and Zutphen by 10 percent. Also, of all Hanseatic cities in the Netherlands, the seven cities on the IJssel are mentioned the most often. It can be concluded that there lies a lot of potential to be gained from investing in the Hanzesteden brand (IJsseldelta Marketing 2013; KennispuntOost 2013) by drawing upon the recognizabilty and strength of the brand. Also the term Hanze raises a positive association with almost 100 percent of people. The identity is positive and appealing (KennispuntOost, 2013), and is shown to be an added value to draw more visitors to the seven cities.

So how can we specify the groups of target audiences that potential Hanzesteden-visitors belong to? In this regard, Hanzesteden Marketing utilizes a Lifestyle-Atlas to find their target audience. This inventarisation of lifestyle profiles was designed by SmartAgent, published by RECRON (2011) and is used by over 700 organizations in the tourist and recreational branches, to map different groups of people into seven lifestyle profiles. These profiles not only consist of the groups demographic characteristics such as age, education and income, but place the emphasis on the basis of a specific groups wishes, motives and fields of interest when it comes to recreation (Recreantenatlas Dagrecreatie, 2011). The seven different groups have colors assigned to them, and are specified as follows:

- Adventurous purple; 9,4% of Dutch recreationists.

- Creative and inspiring red; 6,1% of Dutch recreationists.

- Exuberant yellow; 18,2% of Dutch recreationists

- Cozy lime; 24,2% % of Dutch recreationists

- Tranquil green; 16,4% of Dutch recreationists

- Subdued Aqua; 16,7% of Dutch recreationists

- Stylish and luxurious blue; 9,0% of Dutch recreationists

Which of these profiles fit into the target audience of a Dutch Hanseatic city? Three of these profiles have shown to have the most potential[2]. For these three groups, elaborated below, the Hanse-brand provides the most added value to a visit (KennispuntOost, 2012):

Adventurous purple: Most strongly represented in the age segment of 35 to 54, the purple recreationist generally has a higher education and an above average income. Recreation-wise this audience likes to be surprised and inspired, especially by culture. They are looking for a special experience, mostly cultural but also active and sportive. A relatively large group of this lifestyle-profile consists of young one- or two-person households. Their personality I characterized as rational, capable, assertive, intelligent and self-conscious.

Creative and inspiring red: Recreationists in the red profile are mostly represented in age group 18 to 34, with a higher education, but with a lower income (students or starters), or with a higher income further along in their career. They are looking for creativity, challenges and inspiring experiences. They like to go beyond the conventional paths, as the unknown is exciting and stimulating. Their personality is characterized as independent, intelligent, artistic and open-minded. Recreation means, apart from relaxing, also searching for new and refreshing art and culture.

Subdued aqua: Strongly represented in the age group of 55 to 64, aqua recreationists are thoughtful, interested in culture, and looking for a meaningful participation in society. Among the aqua lifestyle, we find a lot of empty-nesters who want to spend time on their own interests. Their character is described as helpful, interested in others, serious, and respectful.

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[2] For a complete detailed description of these lifestyle-profiles, see Recreantenatlas Dagrecreatie, RECRON, 2011, Driebergen. Internet: http://www.recron.nl/ric/belevingswerelden-dagrecreatie

To appeal to these three specific target audiences, Hanzesteden Marketing focuses on two propositions: Hip visit to a Hanse-city and Waterfun (visiting the city from the water).

1.3   Project framework

In branding, marketing, and promoting the Hanseatic cities, Hanzesteden Marketing has the intention to utilize a 'formula-book', in which the characteristic elements of the Hanse-identity are defined, that serve as guidelines that indicate minimum requirements for a city to take part in the Hanzesteden Marketing. This formula-book spans all three aspects by which the Hanseatic cities are marketed; signing, scenery and dynamics. The aim of this thesis is to contribute to the composing of this Hanse-formula by researching how the historic Hanse-identity is constituted in German Hanseatic cities, and in what ways their Hanseatic cultural heritage is being deployed in geographical marketing and branding of these places. The motivation to study the cultural heritage of the Hanse in Germany comes from the following argumentations; present-day Germany is regarded as founding place and former heartland as well as basis of power of the medieval Hanseatic league, with the city of Lübeck as informal centre and capital city; the 'queen of the Hanse' (Westholm, 1996). This expresses itself in a strong, historically-grown, Hanse-identity of many cities, that causes the concept of the Hanse to be highly recognizable and familiar amongst the German populace. Inhabitants of cities with a strong Hanse-identity also take a great deal of pride in their cities Hanse-heritage. German researchers have explained this positive image through its associated values such as cosmopolitanism, entrepreneurship and independence. According to Looper (2010) we must realize that the Hanse has remained a living concept in Germany, often reimagined for various purposes, such as motivating the citizens of Hamburg when it was besieged by Napoleon. Especially in the nineteenth century, German cities put considerable effort in placing emphasis on their Hanse history (Zeiler, 1997). This can be illustrated exemplifying a number of German cities. In the case of Hamburg, the Hanse-identity is found in the official name of the city: *Freie- und Hansestadt Hamburg*, a name which it carries since 1806. The expression Hansestadt is also seen on the automotive registration plates on cars from the city; the letters '*HH*' indicate that this vehicle is registered in the area Hanzestadt Hamburg. Another example, the state of Bremen, also carries the Hanse-heritage in its official name, *Freie Hansestadt Bremen*. The state, that includes the cities of Bremen and

Bremerhaven, is the smallest of all German states, its borders itself a historic remnant of the wealth of the Hanse-era. The former Queen of the Hanse, Lübeck, also carries the official name Hansestadt Lübeck. Chapter four will take a more in-depth look at what the historic Hanseatic League actually was, and how its name still inspires today.

1.4   Scientific and societal relevance

The scientific relevance of this inquiry lies in the fact that it tries to add to our understanding of how cultural heritage is used to market places, uncovering parts of the underlying processes involved. Furthermore it attempts to make clear what constitutes the Hanse-identity and branding in German cities as opposed to what the Hanse means for Dutch cities. The societal relevance relates to a greater understanding of Hanse cultural heritage in Germany, that can benefit the way the Dutch Hanzesteden operate in marketing their place-product. These insights can add to the way in which people are attracted to the seven Hanseatic cities on the IJssel, and thereby draw visitors and recreationists by effective placemarketing. A positive and well-known image of Hanse-heritage could add to the attractiveness of Gelderland and Overijssel and the broader eastern part of the Netherlands.

1.5   Research objectives

From the project framework we can identify a knowledge gap in the field of Hanseatic cultural heritage in Germany and its relation to the production of cultural heritage attractions and the place branding of cities and regions. The underlying hypothesis here is that the Hanse heritage, identity and place branding is given substance to in different ways than in the Netherlands, specifically in the seven Hanzesteden on the IJssel. The aim of this thesis is to provide insight into the ways in which the Hanse heritage is deployed in placemarketing efforts. The main research objects therefore are cultural heritage spaces within German Hanseatic cities. Fulfilling this research goal, this thesis hopes to contribute to the branding formula of Hanzesteden Marketing, extracting useful insights from German Hanseatic towns.

The goal of this research is to provide an insight into the ways in which Hanse cultural heritage is deployed in the place marketing of Wesel, Soest and Dorsten in order to provide lessons for the creation of branding formula-guidelines of Hanzesteden Marketing.

The underlying hypothesis here is that there are differences in the ways that the Hanseatic identity is experienced between Germany and in The Netherlands, and that this might also cause differences in the way that Hanseatic cultural heritage in used in placemarketing. German cities and regions, being the former heartland of the Hanse, with a presumably stronger Hanse identity, thus might provide useful insights from which Dutch placemarketeers can learn.

1.6   Research Questions

Central research question:

- *In what ways is Hanseatic cultural heritage deployed in the place marketing of Soest, Dorsten and Wesel?*

To get a clear and complete answer to this question the following sub-questions are used:

- *How is the Hansaetic identity expierenced in the German towns of Dorsten, Soest and Wesel, and in what ways does this differ from The Netherlands?*
- *What consequences does this have for the way that Hanseatic cultural heritage is deployed in marketing of German towns?*

2. Methodology

2.1 Qualitative inquiry

Based upon the project framework, the theoretical concepts used, and the research goals, this research embodies a qualitative case study involving multiple cases. It can be characterized as a **collective case study**, in which one issue, here being the use of cultural heritage in place marketing, is illustrated using multiple case studies (Cresswell, 2007). A collective case study is selected as the appropriate research method because we want to get an in-depth and complete insight into these spatiotemporally defined objects (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2007). To achieve such an integral view on the selected cases, multiple qualitative methods were used to generate in-depth data. Qualitative methods used in this inquiry include;

- *Semi-structured in-depth interviews* chosen through purposeful (strategic) sampling of experts in the field of place marketing and tourism or cultural organizations in the selected cities. These interviews are the primary source of data.

Data gathered through in-depth interviews were analysed through a process starting with open coding, where data is categorized, compared and labeled. Secondly axial coding, where new data is compared with existing data, constantly rethinking the categorizing of data, determining what information is important to the research, and what is of lesser importance. Finally the data will be coded selectively, gathering explanations and answers to the main research questions (Boeije, 2005). Respondents were interviewed using an interviewguide to provide the general outline for conversation. Questions were structured as to avoid common pitfalls in qualitative research such as response bias and reflexivity. It is of importance to pose questions in a non-suggestive manner. A balance has to be found between a certain friendliness and a satisfying answer (Yin, 2003). Some other aspects are not easily avoided, such as inaccuracies due to incorrect or partial recalling of events by respondents. Also the subjectivity of the interviewer, who is shaped by his own prior experiences and knowledge, needs to be recognized.

In addition to this main source of data gathering, other used methods include:

- *Short interviews* from a non-selective sampling with respondents that interact with Hanseatic heritage in different ways.
- *Analysis of documents and audiovisual materials* such as the examination of travel guides, promotional brochures and other material, tourism websites, photography of cultural heritage sites and exhibitions.
- *Observational methods* include observation as participant of activities involving cultural heritage and as observer of how cultural heritage sites are produced and reproduced as a tourist commodity.

These forms of qualitative data gathering were combined using method- and source triangulation to understand the essential of the examined cases as a whole, and work towards a holistic point of view. Furthermore, the four selected cases were studied **on-location**, in order to examine the selected research objects in their natural environments.

2.2   Choice of cases

The focus of this research is placed on several strategically selected in-depth case studies rather than width through a wide array of cities. The choice to place emphasis on depth is made in order to thoroughly examine the selected cases, and get a clear and complete overview of the use of Hanseatic cultural heritage in their placemarketing processes, utilizing several in-depth qualitative research methods. Secondly, this mode of research is the most appropriate to gain the insights required to fulfil the goals of this thesis in amount of time that is given. Three German cities are selected as cases for research; *Wesel*, *Dorsten* and *Soest*. The choice for these places is grounded in the formation of a set of selection criteria, which are elaborated below.

Figure 3: *Location of Wesel, Dorsten and Soest in relation to the Dutch border*

Source: Google Maps, edited

Firstly, the decision was made not to examine any major cities of the Hanse era such as for example Lübeck, Rostock or Bremen. This is due to the obviousness of their Hanseatic heritage, and the awareness that these cities have as being Hanseatic cities. As the Dutch *Hanzesteden* are very much in the process of establishing the Hanse as a touristic brand in the Netherlands, a comparison with smaller, closerby Hanseatic cities was chosen in favour of obviously well-anchored Hanse-branded places like Lübeck, that lie much further away. Following this argument, *mirror* cities were chosen that are more comparable to the Dutch Hanzesteden on the IJssel, in size of population and location, Starting point in the selection of suitable mirror cities was to look at partner cities of the Dutch Hanse-cities. Soest is a partnercity of Kampen, also branding itself as Hansestadt Soest. With roughly 47.000 inhabitants it is comparable to a city like Zutphen. Dorsten is a city of some 76.000 inhabitants located in Kreis Recklingshausen in Westphalia. The last city to be selected for a case study is Wesel. Although not a partner city of any of the seven Dutch Hanse-cities, Wesel is close to the Netherlands and also shares some of its historical ties with it. The city profiles itself as a Hanseatic city on the Rhine and with around 60.000 inhabitants it fits the framework of this research.

The three selected cities are all situated in the German state of North Rine-Westphalia, that borders large parts of the eastern Netherlands. The Westphalian Hanse-towns have historical ties with the Netherlands not only by their proximity but also in the organizational structure of the historic Hanse, as they were part of the same *Drittel* (later

Viertel, after reorganization) as the Hanseatic towns on the IJssel. This means they were organized in the same region of the Hanse, and thus regularly met and made decisions together. The last argument involves the varying degrees of Hanse heritage, especially in the built environment, that still exists in these cities. This is relevant to this thesis in the sense that it provides insight into how cities with different resources of cultural heritage, deploy these resources in their placemarketing efforts.

2.3   Research strategy and process

Research data concerning the Marketing of the Hanzesteden on the IJssel was gathered during my research internship at Hanzesteden Marketing in Zwolle, The Netherlands. The data is on the one hand quantitative, such as statistics concerning brand awareness and target audiences. One the other hand qualitative data was gathered through existing qualitative research such benchmarks of other Hanseatic towns, and frequent conversation with employees at Hanzesteden Marketing and MarketingOost. These combined data were used to describe marketing of Dutch Hanseatic cities in chapter one.

For the three case studies, interview respondents were strategically selected on the basis of their involvement in the research domain. Initial contacts were made on the 14th of June 2013 during the 33rd international Hanseatic Days in Herford, Germany. Further contacts and interview appointments were arranged via e-mail. Interviews were taken on-location in combination with observational research.

The outline of the three cases is not symmetrical, as it was chosen to let the content and outcome of the interviews dictate the building structure of each case. This method was chosen to describe the way in which Hanseatic heritage is employed in detail for that particular case, as the approach of each of the chosen case cities varies.

3.   Theory

This chapter outlines the theoretical framework from which this thesis is written, determining workable definitions for recurring concepts and terms. The framework is structured to start from a more broad theoretical view on the place of tourism attractions as a commodity in our society, moving on to discuss place marketing in various aspects, and ending with more specific and practical thoughts on place and destination branding.

3.1   Cultural heritage as a tourism commodity

Tourism is a phenomenon that has become increasingly mainstream since the 1950's, no longer being only the privilege for a cultured elite, but a practice for an increasing number of people who have access to travel. Why do people travel long distances to experience other places? John Urry (1990) argues that tourism consist of traveling abroad to look for visual experiences that cannot be found at home or at the workplace. The tourist adopts a 'tourist gaze', meaning that they look for different meanings in a place than its inhabitants (Hospers, 2011). The main activity of the tourist is 'gazing at signs': looking at famous and distinguishable features of a place, often in the built environment. The expectation of these features is socially constructed, manipulated by a wide variety of channels constructing the 'gaze'. Urry argues that both the tourist and the attraction are manipulated, as the gaze falls upon those landmarks that are already anticipated. This implies that any space, terrain and landscape can be commodified and circulated, therefore places can be *consumed* (Adey, 2011). The rise of mass tourism coincides with the development of photography, which started to play a major role in tourism. Touristic attractions and features became not only places to 'gaze upon', but also to photograph, which caused signs to be reproduced through photographic images.

So what is the role of culture in tourism and what is cultural tourism? The relationship between culture and tourism is in an ongoing process of convergence, becoming ever more integrated into the same social practice (Richards, 2003). This is also something that Urry (1995) notes: the blurring boundaries between culture and tourism. Culture has become a part of the tourism product, making cultural tourism an established market, placing us in a 'culture of tourism' wherein culture as such ceases to be a product for tourist

consumption, but tourism itself will be culture (Richards, 1999). Urry illustrated this through two parallel processes; firstly, the culturisation of society, including the breakdown of previously distinct social and cultural spheres, with the creation of an economy of signs. Also the deconstructing of boundaries between high and low culture in postmodern times plays a major role here. The second process is identified as the culturisation of tourist practices, implying that tourism itself has become culture, or a way of life (Richards, 2003). In this way, cultural tourism has developed from something for a narrow cultural elite, focusing on purposeful visits to revered cultural and historical sites, to a much wider phenomenon, also covering popular culture and the 'atmosphere of places' (Richards, 1999). Cultural tourism is thus defined by Richards (1996) as: 'The movement of persons to cultural attractions away from their normal place of residence, with the intention to gather new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs'.

Cultural tourism is a growing market wherein tourists consume cultural heritage attractions, produced by the supply side of the market. The production of cultural heritage can be understood through the commodification process of heritage attractions, in other words, the process of turning cultural heritage into a consumer good, becoming primarily evaluated in terms of their exchange value in the context of trade in the Marxian sense. The commodification process is often seen as shaping the activity of tourism in modern consumer culture, conforming to the essential logic of capitalism (Watson & Kopachevsky, 1994). Apart from their direct use-value and their exchange value, another type of value is also embedded in modern tourist commodities; sign-value (MacCannell, 1976). This type of value was introduced by Baudrillard in his analysis of consumer society as the *Political Economy of the Sign* (1972). Sign value implies that a third source of value comes from the indications of distinction, taste and social status that a commodity can provide. So, the connections with cultural tourism as a commodity can be made. The symbolic capital of the sign creates actual value. Watson and Kopachevsky (1994) argue that touristic consumption is generally sign- and media-driven. Again, also Urry's concept of gazing at signs comes back into play here. The tourist gaze involves 'the symbolic transmutation of many ordinary objects, places and experiences into sacred ones'. The gaze is a tourist experience that includes the consumption of signs, symbols and cultural heritage (Watson & Kopachevsky, 1994). Bourdieu (1984), also argues that in postmodern consumer societies, forms of

consumption are a way for social classes to distinguish themselves, in the same way that education, occupation and social practices are. The consumption of services and experience can have important symbolic meaning and can play a major role in social distinction (Munt, 1994). Urry (1990) also notes that if people in modern society do not travel, they lose status. Postmodern tourisms are being seen as embodying personal qualities in the individual, Munt (1994) notes; feats such as strength of character, adaptability, and 'worldliness'. Bourdieu labels these forms of distinction as *cultural capital*. This line of thought is widely used to theorize the processes of cultural consumption in studies of tourism (Richards, 1996). But cultural capital is not only a form of personal or collective distinction, it is also a *real* attribute of place. Cities and regions emphasize the aesthetic qualities of material commodities in the built environment. Zukin (1991) argues that cultural products of place are a physical form of cultural capital, equally important as symbolic forms of cultural capital; "Cultural goods and services truly constitute real capital – so long as they are integrated as commodities in the market-based circulation of capital." (Zukin, 1991 in: Richards, 1996).

3.2   Hanse heritage and authenticity

This movement of people can also be interpreted as a modern day pilgrimage, not for religious symbolism, but as a 'sacred crusade or pilgrimage for authenticity' (MacCannell, 1976).

	Tourists believe the experience is real	Tourists believe the experience is staged
Real scenes	1. Authentic experience	3. Denial of authenticity (suspect staging)
Staged scenes	2. Staged authenticity	4. Contrived authenticity (overt tourist space)

Figure 4: *Degrees of authenticity in the tourist experience* (Cohen 1979; in Timothy, 2011)

This authenticity is an important issue for MacCannell, as he argues that tourists are emerged in a system of staged authenticity and that they are content with inauthentic places because they are unable to see through the façade (Timothy, 2011). Urry, however, insists that tourists do have the ability to spot the 'fake' from the authentic. Cohen (1979; in Timothy, 2011) divised a model to categorize degrees of authenticity in the tourist experience (Figure 4).

3.3   Placemarketing

In the previous paragraphs a theoretic framework of cultural heritage as a commodity is presented. Also the term placemarketing is mentioned multiple times. Now, I would like to define 'Placemarketing', what is meant by that, and how cultural heritage comes into play when marketing places. Lombarts (2008, p. 19, in: Hospers, 2011) gives the following definition of citymarketing: 'Placemarketing is the long-term proces and/or the policy instrument consisting of multiple, coherent activities aimed at attracting and retaining specific target audiences for a specific city'. This is also the general understanding of placemarketing that is used in this thesis.

Placemarketing in itself is not a new phenomenon, but with ever more people living in cities, as much as 60 per cent in Western-Europe, competition between cities to attract and keep people and businesses is increasing (Lombarts, 2011). Thus, a growing number of cities and regions have employed the use of placemarketing and branding, which has caused the field of placemarketing to become more theorised and professionalised. Kotler (1993) argues that marketing places is an absolute neccesity: "In our new world economy, every place must compete with other places for economic advantage [...] Places are, indeed, products, whose identities and values must be designed and marketed. Places that fail to market themselves succesfully face the risk of economic stagnation and decline." Placemarketing is used to affect the image and attractiveness of cities with certain wanted target groups, and improve their competitive edge in the struggle between rivaling cities. Although placemarketing is in fact marketing, it is different from 'normal' product marketing because the offered product is inherently geographical. A city is a historically grown spatiotemporal unit, made up of inhabitants that produce and reproduce the city, therefore it cannot be treated in the same way as a product. The city can mean very different things for someone who lives in the city,

than for recreationists that come visit for just two days. People create a certain affection, an attachment to places, that is widely known as *topophilia* (Tuan, 1974) in geography. The *sense of place* is formed by the meaning that is given to it, socially constructing identities of cities and regions. The emphasis on human experiences is thus very significant; humanistic tradition in geography states that we can only know the world around us through the whole of human experience (Entrikin & Tepple, 2006). These perspectives on what the city is can differ from person to person. This leads us to the second difficulty when marketing places - they are often hard to demarcate; where does a region begin and end? Cresswell (2004, in: Warnaby, 2009) notes: 'no-one quite knows what they are talking about when they are talking about place, it is a word wrapped in common sense. Place is both simple and complicated'. Although many place-products have a clear spatial definition, others are more informally defined and involve elements of contestation (Medway et al. 2008, in: Warnaby, 2009). This causes what is labeled as place *fuzziness*. Thirdly, in contrast to a consumer product, the city has a multitude of functions such as living, working, and leisure. Considering the issues mentioned before, placemarketing calls for a different approach than conventional marketing. Place-marketing, unlike purely business or commercial product marketing, requires the active support of public and private agencies, citizens and interest groups (Kotler, Haider & Rein, 1993). This is labeled by Kotler as *strategic place marketing*, focusing on building a strategy for a specific place that involves defining target audiences, understanding their needs and expectations, forming a realistic vision of what the place can offer, and then build organisational consensus to implement the place marketing strategies. Ashworth & Voogd (1987) have called this *geographical marketing* which is defined as "a process to connect an urban or regional environment to the wishes of their selected target audiences as well as possible, in order to create permanent stimuli for the social and economic functions of the specific area." The spatial nature of the place-product makes it neccesary to employ different avaiblable measures and instruments. In contrast to traditional business applications of the *marketing-mix*, Ashworth & Voogd (1990) define a geographical marketing mix, consisting of the following set of instruments at the disposal of placemarketeers and planners: *promotional-*, *spatial-functional-*, *organisational-*, and *financial measures*. Additionally, Kotler, Haider & Rein (1993) summarize five strategies for place improvement; urban design (place as *character*), infrastructure improvement (place as a *fixed*

environment), basic services of quality (place as a *service provider*) and attractions (place as *entertainment and recreation*).

The process of placemarketing, as described before, thus requires a thorough understanding and insight on the expectations and needs of the desired target audiences. Kotler, Haider & Rein (1993) define four broad target markets that a place can aim to attract; visitors, residents and workers, business and industry, and export markets. Similar categorisations include; residents, businesses, visitors and highly educated talent (Hospers, 2009). The main target group of research interest here are the the non-business visitors and the tourist that travels to experience a place, and to a lesser extent the business visitor.

3.4   Place branding and cultural heritage

In traditional marketing theory the term branding is an established concept. A strong brand can bring a competitive advantage in the target market. A recognizable brand adds to the unique selling point of that particular product, as a brand not only delivers the direct use value of the consumed product or service, it also adds some symbolic- or sign-value that distinguishes it. The concept of branding has also been translated into the field of place marketing, labelled as place branding. Again, due to the nature of the (place-)product, branding a place comes with other challenges than product or service branding. The complex relationship between culture, national identity, and the many stakeholders involved in managing a place brand, means places cannot be branded as clearly, because they do not have a single identity (Skinner, 2008). It is often even argued that a place itself cannot be branded, and that it is only to be observed that places *have* place branding (Anholt, 2008). The image of a place though, can be manipulated and branded, but the products to which they relate remain vaguely deliniated (Ashworth & Voogd, 1990).

When attempting to build a strong place brand, one has to take into consideration the *image* of a place. Kotler (1993) defines a place's image as 'the sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a people have of a place.' So unlike a new product launched onto the market, a place's reputation never starts out from *zero base* in the consumers perception (Hankinson, 2004). Ashworth (2011) notes three ways in which the image of a particular place is constructed in our imagination; firstly, it is influenced by our own experiences with a place. Secondly, representation plays a role. The way in which a place is presented in art,

films, literature, the news and so on. Thirdly, the physical, built environment of a city influences our perception of the place. The morphology, architecture and mapping of a city, along with all the historical changes that have taken place in it. Lynch (1960) has studied what the city's physical form actually means to people who dwell in it, in the classic work *The image of the city*. He found that city-users understood their surroundings in consistent ways, projecting a mental map hat incorporates five recurring elements of the built-up environment: paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks. Lynch suggested that cities have varying degrees of legibility of their urban form. Places that evoke a strong image, are easier for individuals to organize the various elements into coherent images (Gold, 2011). In branding a city, some of these elements can become icons for a place, for example iconic landmarks or well-known districts. We can see the use of these icons in place branding as they tend to appear in place brand logo's and other promotional materials. Iconic landmarks such as the Statue of Liberty can become a major component of reproducing the idea of a city, thus affecting our image of it. Summing up the aforementioned elements that contruct our knowledge of a place; "local communities, the built environment, heritage and infrastructure, form a constituent part of image and identity" (Trueman, Cornelius, & Killingbeck-Widdup, 2007 in: Skinner, 2008). On the place of cultural heritage in identity, we can also identify elements other than visible history in the built environment such as important historical events, verbal symbols like 'Amsterdam, the Venice of the North', links with well-known (historical) figures or groups, and hosting of events (Noordman, 2003; Ashworth, 2011). The gap between the identity and the image of a place can often create tension. Identity is defined as what a city really is, and image the projection of what a city appears to be (Pellenbarg, 1991). Therefore, as Kotler (1993) stresses, it is important to have a realistic and feasible vision of what a place can offer. For building an appealing image for a specific target group, it must meet five criteria: it must; be valid, believable, be simple, have appeal, and lastly, be distinctive (Gertner & Kotler, 2004).

Finding a general definition for the term place branding can be difficult, als literature and research concencerning this subject originates from multiple disciplines of study, such as geography, tourism, marketing and economics. This can create confusion for both academics and practitioners. Davidson (2006, in: Skinner 2008) claims that the term 'place branding' has the same problem as 'marketing'; that there is no satisfactory way to communicate what it

involves, and that 'place branding' is the best description we have, but still a misnomer.' I would like to add some distinction between the terms *place marketing* and *place branding* as suggested by Skinner (2008). *Place marketing* is better suited to be used in relation to issues concerning a place's overall management, covering marketing towards desired audiences by its multiple stakeholders, characterised as an outside-in approach. *Place branding* is linked mostly to a place's promotional activities and marketing communications, branding the place with a distinct identity in the perception of target groups. This is characterised as an inside-out approach, with multiple stakeholders communicating the place brand's identity to the outside world as they wish it to be presented. Baker (2012) gives the following definition of a place brand; "the totality of thoughts, feelings, and expectations that people hold about a location. It is the reputation and the enduring essence of the place and represents its distinctive promise of value, providing it with a competitive edge."

Lastly, we elaborate on one particular strand of place branding, namely *destination branding*. This term originates from tourism literature, and concerns the marketing of a place brand as a tourism destination (Kavaratzis, 2005). As the focus in this thesis lies on the non-business visitor to the selected Hanse-cities, destination branding requires mentioning here. Baker (2012) lists a destination brand, as one of five types of place brands: Firstly the overarching place brand, which is the overall, high level umbrella brand embracing the city's holistic qualities. Secondly the aforementioned destination brand, that is used in the context of the location being an attractive place to visit. Thirdly the economic development brand, directed towards business relocation, expansion and investment. Fourthly the community brand, created to resonate with local residents, providing a sense of identity and boosting local pride. Essentially a side of what Hospers (2011) defines as 'warm' placemarketing. Lastly, there is the thematic brand that can be founded on historical, culinary, sporting or cultural themes that can be linked to a specific region. Baker notes that if a city has both an overarching place brand and a tourism brand, there must be very close links between the two, underlining the notion that place branding is a process that requires a joint operation and active support from multiple stakeholders.

4.   The Hanseatic League: then and now

This chapter discusses The Hanseatic League in both the historic and contemporary sense; firstly, it tries to define the meaning and signifance of the historic Hanse, thereby clarifying what is meant by '*the Hanse*' and from there get a better view on *what* Hanseatic cultural heritage *is*. After this, the historiography of the Hanse is discussed, providing us with a view of the constant re-interpretations of the Hanse. Then comes a concluding analysis of Hanse history, identifying *why the Hanse is so well grounded in German society*, thereby answering one of this thesis sub-questions. Lastly, we look at the ways in which the principals of the Hanse still inspire to the present day in connecting cities in networks of coorperation throughout northern Europe, and we once again return to its use in placemarketing.

4.1   The Hanse: 1200 - 1700

The legacy of the Hanseatic League is mentioned often in this thesis. As we have seen in chapter one, it can bring certain associations to people's minds; from an added value to visit a city, experiencing an authentic atmosphere, to even local pride, sense of freedom, independence, being a part of history. It therefore seems that the existence of this medieval partnership of cities is a fixed historic fact. But the Hanseatic history is long, spanning over three centuries, set to the background of turbulent politics of medieval Europe. To understand what Hanseatic cultural heritage is, we must take a look at not only the Hanse history itself, but also its *historiography*. In doing so, we can see that '*the Hanse'* as an historical concept is not so easily defined as might be expected.

Historians more or less agree that the Hanse finds its origins in the emerging long-distance trading routes of merchants from northern Germany and Westphalia in the twelfth century. With Westphalian merchants, in particular from Cologne, paving the way into England and Jutland, and the northern cities reaching towards Sweden and the Baltic. This expansion into the east coincides directly with the expansion of German-speaking peoples into present day Poland. The northern cities (or *Wendic* cities as they would come to be known) of Lübeck, Rostock, and Stralsund would become the backbone of the League. By the thirteenth century, cities as far east as Danzig and Riga were ruled by families of Lübeck traders, and a vast mercantile network was organized through its main hub in Visby, on the

island of Gotland. The northern and Westphalian merchants increasingly intertwined their networks, with traders from Soest and Dortmund establishing business in Sweden and the Baltic, and Wendish traders conversely settling in London, with Bruges as the main port for trade along the North Sea (Brand, 2007, p. 12). Bruges also served as connection to trade from as far as the Iberian peninsula. In London, both groups joined into a combined 'German Hanse' that enjoyed trading protection from the English king, acquiring their own place in the city at the Stahlhof. So the famous Hanse-trading route that stretched from London to Novgorod came into existence (see figure 5). However, this was a gradual process of interlinking trade routes and separate groups of merchants. Henn (2010) stresses; 'the whole was not there before the parts'. The far reaches of the network, Bruges, London, Bergen and Novgorod held a Hanse *kontor*, a foreign office that handled business there, and included a staple market for the export of goods. These staple markets reinforced the quasi-monopoly of the Hanse merchants (Brand, 2007 p. 13). Some of the commodities traded through the Hanse routes include: Furs, cloth, grain, timber, tar, iron, copper, leather and salt.

Figure 5: *extent of the Hanseatic Trade network around 1400*
Source: wikimedia commons

The early period of the Hanse is generally described by historians as the *Hanse of Merchants*. However diplomatic relations increasingly made merchants dependant on support from

town governments, due to the declined power of the Hohenstaufen dynasty of holy roman emperors, and forced the German cities to be more self dependant. This power-vacuum can be considered one of the direct causes of the emergence of decision-making structures within the Hanse (Brand, 2010). As the trade network kept growing, we can see a transformation at the end of the thirteenth century into what has been called the *Hanse of Towns*. The establishment of the alliance of towns became anchored through the first Hansetag in 1356 hosted In Lübeck. The Hansetag was a general meeting in which cities sent representatives to discuss common policy and make joint dicisions. The Hansetag of 1356 also exemplifies the emergence of the League's considerable political power, as the meeting called for joint action against Flanders, sending delegates from all three governmental regions (or *Drittel*) of the Hanse. Later meetings also decided to wage war against powers that threatened the position of Hanse trade, such as Denmark in 1370, Holland in 1438 and England in 1468. So the Hanse developed a defensive aspect to protect its privileges and monopolies. During the fourteenth century the *kontors* also came under the direct supervision of the Hansetag. These developments transformed the Hanse from a relatively loose network of traders into an organization of towns with a certain extent of unity. But it would be wrong to think the League acted as one, undivided power in these situations. Member cities always weighed pros and cons between supporting the Hanse and their own interests. The victory over Danish king Waldemar IV in 1368-1370 is traditionally seen as the height of Hanseatic economic, military and political power (Brood, 2007). However the majority of Hanseatic cities did not even take part in the alliance against Denmark. Therefore the question among historians has risen if we can even speak of a *Hanseatic* war at all (Brand, 2010 pp. 39). The Wendic towns, led by Lübeck were, as always, at the forefront of the conflict. Notable in this case is that the Dutch towns of Amsterdam, Zierikzee and Den Briel did join the alliance against the Danish king, but came into conflict with the Wende towns themselves in 1438 in the Holland-Wendic war. In that particular case, the Zuider Sea towns like Kampen did not aid the Wende towns, to protect their own trade interests with Holland. This shows how divided the Hanse could be at certain times. Brand (2010) also describes the *free-riding* that commonly occurred within the League. An example is Dortmund, that put no real effort in aiding Lübeck in in 1368, yet demanded to be included in the peace treaty of Stralsund to reap the benefits.

These scattered interests played a major role in the decline of the Hanse (Bejczy, 2001). This begins somewhere at the end of the fifteenth century and has been described as a two-hundred year long period of prolonged demise (Brand, 2010, pp. 15). The causes of the diminishing relevance of the Hanse lie in the rise of new economic and political powers that formed as early states. The concept of the sovereign state began to emerge, and dictate political thinking, disadvantaging loose alliances like the Hanse (Hammel-Kiesow, 2010). The Dutch Republic and Great-Britain became fully emerged in the shift to the Atlantic trade system, whereas the Hanse lacked integration into this colonial system (Heerma van Voss & van Nederveen Meerkerk, 2007). In the aforementioned Holland-Wendic war, Lübeck had already been forced to give up the right of trade along the Sont to the County of Holland, which added greatly to the growth of Dutch trade. The balance of the trade routes shifted to cities as Amsterdam, Antwerp and London, leaving the Hanseatic trade increasingly confined to the Baltic area (Looper, 2010). This made the Baltic, Prussian and Wendish towns, who engaged in the same Baltic trade markets, rivals rather than allies. A fragmentation of the Hanse system thus followed, crippling the working of the once so successful staple markets. Traders from Prussia for instance, where more than willing to cut out the middle-men in the Wend towns when they traded with Holland. An insurmountable blow to the League came at the end of the Thirty Years War when Sweden occupied the north of Germany in 1648. The influence of the Hanse had then almost completely faded. The last Hansetag was held in 1669, where only six cities where represented and no decisions were made, causing this event to become generally regarded as the end of the Hanse.

4.2   Historical perspectives on the Hanse

Now, I would like to discuss the historiography of the Hanseatic League. Some central questions arise at this point that need to be answered. Firstly, how can we accurately define the meaning and signifance of the Hanseatic League in a historic perspective, and secondly, how has this historiographical perspective developed under various circumstances. It has to be pointed out that the Hanse was never officially founded in some form of document of constitution. It ended the same way. The last Hansetag in 1669 was not planned to be the last meeting, nor had the contemporaries an idea that it would be the last (Hammel-Kiesow, 2010, p. 193). We can exemplify this on the basis of some historic details; Emperor Leopold I

still asked Lübeck to gather the Hansetag in 1684 to gain the support of the Hanse against the Ottomans. Also, there have been initiatives to revive the Hanse in the period directly after the Thirty Years War. So we can conclude that even shortly after the final breakdown of the Hanse, the concept remained lingering in the subconscious of Germany and elsewhere. The non-definitive ending of the League can be argued to be one the reasons for this. Historians have widely different perspectives on the significance of the Hanse. This is not surprising, because even contemporaries have had trouble defining the League (von Brandt, 1962). The research on the Hanse has often been conducted through *hineininterpretieren*[3] and is imbued with contemporary political-economic interests and bias (Looper, 2010, p. 109; Brand 2007, p. 21). Wubs-Mrozewicz (2012) states: "The use and reuse of the Hanse is well-apparent in the context of German national history. It is a recurrent topic of self-reflection in recent scholarship." In describing the historiography of the Hanse, the place to start are the works of Georg Sartorius (1765-1828), arguably the first major modern research into the Hanse. Sartorius was a historian who devotedly wrote about the Hanse, but also a liberal and constitutionalist and much of his work can be seen in this light, especially considering the backdrop of the Napoleonic wars. In the second half of the nineteenth century, around the German unification, two strands of Hanseatic research began to develop. Firstly a liberal view, encouraged by the bourgeoisie, laying the emphasis on the economic freedom and self-determination of the Hanse. They saw the Hanse legacy as a justification for participation and a right of say in the authoritarian Prussian-led state that was formed. The *Hansische Geschichtsverein*, founded in 1871 is an example of such an organization based on liberal ideas. A second strand of research set out in a conservative-nationalist vision, employing Hanse history for the greater good of imperial Germany. In particular, the maritime aspect was underlined. The Hanse control over the seas was used as a historic justification for the expansion of the German fleet (Wubs-Mrozewicz, 2012 p. 22). This strand of research mixed with propaganda would gain the upper hand in the newly formed German empire. Dietrich Schäfer and Walther Vogel were the historians that popularized the Hanse for a wide audience, placing the Hanse past in a context of German influence and expansion. This kind

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[3] Hineininterpretieren; in this context: to interpret a historical process from contemporary bias, knowledge and assumptions, drawing wrong conclusions.

of glorification of national history is offcourse inherent to the spirit of late nineteenth century Europe, where nationalism and militarization would ultimatly lead to World War One. Hammel-Kiesow (2010, p. 197) points out the origins of another misconception regarding the Hanse from this era: nineteenth century maritime paintings. In the efforts to impress spectators, German painters pictured Hanse-ships (*Koggen*) with great historical inaccuracy. The image of Koggen as enormous ships that could rival with seventeenth century Dutch and English vessels, was imprinted in German minds through reproduction, for instance in schools. This false image continues to exist even to the present day.

Figure 6: *The Hanseatenkreuz, a military decoration issued by Bremen, Hamburg and Lübeck in World War I. The self-conscious Hanseatic towns awarded their own variation on the Prussian Iron Cross*

Source: Wikimedia commons

After the First World War, there was a brief period of more focus on socio-economic and cultural aspects of the Hanse, that would not last long because of the rise of the Nazi party (Hammel-Kiesow, 2010 p. 198). In the 1930's the nationalistic and expansionistic side of German medieval history became more emphasized than ever, and this naturally included Hanse historiography. Hanse-scholars including Fritz Rörig, commisioned themselves to a writing of history that centred the superiority of the German people. "The Hanseatic trader turned into the paragon of Germanic virtue, and a prime example of the superiority of German entrepeneurship, culture and law in Europe" (Wubs-Mrozewicz, 2012, p. 22). Rörig described the Hanse as a unifying factor in the Baltic sea region, building bridges between

East and West, contributing to a unified Europe, under German initiative. It is not at all suprising that the Nazi propaganda machine gladly used this reading of Hanse history to justify territorial claims.

After the second World War, a turn in Hanseatic research took place in reaction to the nationalist power-politics of the decades before. Instead of the focus on Germany as the center, the Hanse became presented as a European research topic. Heinrich Sproemberg is the most known post-war advocate of this approach (Brand, 2007 p. 21). He regarded the Hanse as a European phenomenon and called on historians from the Netherlands, Belgium and other countries to make Hanseatic research a much wider discipline. This encouraged a de-politicized viewpoint of the Hanse. Exemplary of this persepctive, Wubs-Mrozewicz (2012, p. 23) cites Karl Schwebel (1964): "It is imperative to view the Hanse from a resentment-free and supranational vantage point." These views shaped the image of the Hanse in the second half of the twentieth century. While I argue the Hanse became indeed a more neutral and less controversial topic from the 1960's onward, it cannot be said that it did became fully de-politicized, as the Hanse became ever more utilized in rhetorics such as promoting European integration, but these will be discussed later on. Firstly we can describe the turn from a traditional view of the Hanse as a strong united association of cities with Lübeck at the top of the hierarchical pyramid, to a more historically accurate view of a "loosely structured community within which cities used economic and legal privileges to defend their own interests" (Brand, 2007 p. 21). It was Ludwig Beutin, who first viewed the Hanse a no more than a mediator between seperate regions in Europe that were economiccaly very different in nature. He emphasized the diversity and even dared to question if the League had ever even existed. While one could argue it would be going too far as to back this statement, it might be closer to historic reality than the idea of a strong, unified coalition of cities. Important Hanse-historian Ahasver von Brandt (1962; in Brand, 2007) also argues that 'the Hanse was only visible as long as a number of cities decided to join together to pursue a particular joint policy'. Not to say the Hanse did not exist at all, but the concept of a *League* of cities could be considered inaccurate. His arguments for this included the numerous confrontations between the Hanse and Sweden, the deliberate defiance of decisions by cities, and the ever-changing alliances within the Hanse. Volker Henn (2010 p. 12) sums up some subsequent contemporary descriptions: Friedland (1987),

who described the the Hanse as a 'political-mercantile eventuality community', Luntowski (1982) who spoke of the 'constantly changing appearance of Hanseatic coalition-forms' and Schubert (2002) who calls the substance of the Hanse nothing more than 'action-based pragmatism'. So, the idea of the Hanse as a builder of bridges, a mediator, between different local economies has become predominant. Following all of the aforementioned arguments, the term Hanse (in the historic sense) will be seen in this thesis as a 'community of interests' rather than a unified alliance of cities.

4.3   The Hanse in Germany and The Netherlands

The following paragraph will attempt to make clear some of the differences in the perception of the Hanse in Germany as opposed to The Netherlands. We can conclude that scholars and placemarketeers alike, seem to have a strong notion that the Hanse legacy is more animate in German society than in The Netherlands. It is a well known and very much an ongoing conception with 'a magic ring to it' (Brand & Knol, 2010).

> "You can notice that the concept Hanse is very alive in Germany. For Germans, it's almost an honour to be a Hanseatic city, and in The Netherlands it doesn't work that way."

> (*Kampen representative at Westfalischer Hansetag Soest, 10th of May 2014*)

Historically, we can elaborate on the causes of why the Hanse is so well-anchored in the German collective conscience. Firstly, The Hanseatic League has often been labeled as a German phenomenon: Germany is the historical heartland of the Hanse. The term 'Deutsche Hanse' has been used to refer to the Hanse as a whole throughout its existence. The Hanse is increasingly described as 'an alliance of traders who spoke Low-German' (Hammel-Kiesow, 2010). The medieval German language influenced Scandinavian and Baltic languages through the Hanse. Secondly, after its demise, the Hanse has remained very much a living concept in Germany (Looper, 2010). Also, historiography, interpretation and re-interpretation has for the greater part been conducted from a German point of view, as discussed in § 4.2. Only recently has Hanseatic research become more Europeanized. Thirdly, most Hanseatic-revival movements have German roots and contemporary

expressions of the name Hanse are found in numerous strands of German culture, it is very much an *identity-providing* concept (see also figure 7: a collection of expressions of the Hanse brand name in contemporary German and Dutch culture).

> "[...] Exemplary of this are Hamburg and Bremen, who derive their status as a federal state from the fact that they still were autonomous Hanseatic cities in the seventeenth century [...] So for them, it is an identity, and not only identity, even a symbol of independence.

> "I have been to cities like Rostock, Wismar and Stralsund, who all came free of DDR rule in the 1990's, and the first thing they did was polish up that old Hanse-image, and thereby a piece of pride from a long neglected past."
>
> *(M. Groothedde, city archaeologist of Zutphen, 24th of April 2014)*

Aside from differences in 'Hanseatic' as an identity, some note a different attitude towards history in general.

> "[...] I do recognize the indifferent attitude towards the Hanse and the history. I think the people like it when you explain it to them... In Kampen we are organizing the Hanseatic Days in 2017, and suddenly it's starting to come alive here."
>
> *(Kampen representative at Westfalischer Hansetag Soest, 10th of May 2014)*

> "In my experience, Germans have a much greater interest in their medieval history. They have obviously lost a lot of that, and there is a rather arduous struggle with their nineteenth and twentieth century unification history."
>
> *(M. Groothedde, city archaeologist of Zutphen, 24th of April 2014)*

Respondents from Germany elaborate on this ambivalent relationship with their own national history, especially of the twentieth century, and the sensitive points of being proud of heritage:

Figure 7: *Contemporary expression of the Hanse in Germany and The Netherlands*

7.1 *Hamburg license plate*

7.2 *Bremen license plate seal*

7.3 *German airliner Lufthansa*

7.4 *FC Hansa Rostock*

7.5 *Hansaplast packaging*

7.6 *Stralsund city limit sign*

7.7 *Hanzesport Zutphen*

7.8 *Hanzesteden Verzekeringen*

7.9 *Hanze Parket Deventer*

7.10 *Hanzehogeschool Groningen*

7.11 *Hanzehof Zutphen*

7.12 *Hanzelijn railway*

"Because sincerely, in Germany, when you are talking about tradition or the old days, we have a break, a cut. Because we have a very negative part of our recent history, which has a lot to do with tradition, because these people from '33 to '45… they spoke in name of this long history, and that is really bad. So in the generation afterwards, identification to say 'I am German' is a bit… it's tricky, because if you are sensible, you don't say it too proudly… about the past. So it's really very difficult."

(Dorsten representative at Westfalischer Hansetag Soest, 10th of May 2014)

The appreciation of national history is thus a delicate subject in Germany, but the Hanse seems to be a more politically neutral, and even positive subject to emphasize.

"[…] if we make a *big* step back, of four hundred years, to anchorage our identification way back there, maybe then it's easier for us. More positive and more easy to get an identification from our history. Because that is not as we say *belastend*."

(Dorsten representative at Westfalischer Hansetag Soest, 10th of May 2014)

The memory of the Hanse does not come with the historical burden, and is labeled as a good thing to commemorate: "The building there is like a memorial, not for war.. but for a good thing." (A. Jordans of WeselMarketing, 2013). The positive values associated with the Hanse extend beyond just the use in marketing a place at this point, they add to a positive re-imagining of the own national history.

"Yes, freedom to trade, respect for other countries […] because it is about cooperating, it's a small European community of five hundred years ago, so maybe that's also a point. We have worked a lot on our recent history between '33 and '45, to really show, and not be fearful, and to say; there have been very bad people here in our city. Our population is very *attent* with history generally speaking […] and always in a positive way, to bring it today and for the future, because only when projected to the future, to make something for friendship between all people, for freedom, then it has a sense."

(Dorsten representative at Westfalischer Hansetag Soest, 10th of May 2014)

We have seen that the Hanse is associated with positive values in both The Netherlands and Germany; entrepeneurship, daring, solidarity, trust, freedom, virtue, progressiveness, quality, tradition. (Looper, 2010; Wubs-Mrozewicz, 2012; Brand, 2007). However, the significance of the Hanse is perceived different in The Netherlands.

> "We have noticed that for Germans, the notion Hansestadt is a mark of quality. So Hansestadt means... something extra. It means it is a city that has something extra for tourism as well as.. the products they supply."
>
> *(Dutch Hanseatic re-enactor IV in Soest, 10th of May 2014)*

As in German culture, the Hanse concept has become a brand name. Looper (2010, p. 109) even argues, more so than any other historical phenomenon in The Netherlands. But the significance of the Hanse in collective Dutch conscience seems less far reaching, firstly because of historical reasons.

> "For all kinds of reasons the Hanse in Germany is present in a more.... distinctive manner. In The Netherlands, it is always just something that happened to preceed the VOC-era and the Dutch Golden Age, and these towns in the East of the Netherlands have had a period of growth too, apparently. In Germany the Hanse is undisputed"
>
> *(M. Groothedde, city archaeologist of Zutphen, 24th of April 2014)*

We return to the identity-providing properties of the Hanse. These qualities are exceeded by other historical phenomena in The Netherlands as a whole. The principal identity-providing events are those of the revolt against Spanish rule in the sixteenth and seventeeth centuries, for it resulted in the very creation of the Dutch Republic and the subsequent 'Golden Age'. "VOC-heritage appeals more to the imagination." adds Groothedde (2014). These are the sources of national pride that are predominant in Dutch historiography. The Dutch 'story of the Hanse' is therefore more confined to the Eastern regions of The Netherlands, and this is where its identity-providing properties are mostly effective.

"The associations with the Hanse are positive, everyone uses this Hanse label for different reasons, in the Eastern Netherlands this might have to do with defying Holland, because in a way the Hollanders killed off the *Hanzeaten*."

(M. Groothedde, city archaeologist of Zutphen, 24th of April 2014)

Therefore Hanseatic heritage in the Eastern parts of The Netherlands and its interrelations with German history might contrast with Dutch national history in the eyes of the *Hollander*. The IJssel towns like to place emphasis on their own golden age as to confirm their identity that comes from a rich heritage:

"Every nation, every region searching for a piece of identity in the past [...] this has to do with a sense of identity. Because puny as they are now compared to the mighty Holland, once, these IJssel towns did matter.... and this was the Hanse era."

(M. Groothedde, city archaeologist of Zutphen, 24th of April 2014)

"Kampen was off course very big [in Hanseatic trade]. Bigger than Amsterdam at the time, something we also like to say in Kampen."

(Kampen representative at Westfalischer Hansetag Soest, 10th of May 2014)

Concludingly we can state that there are differences to be noted in the experience of the Hanse-concept. The next paragraph will relate the modern concept of the Hanse to contemporary revived interest.

4.4 The legacy of the Hanse in modern day Europe

"The idea of the Hanse, to breathe new life into these old ideals in the context of cooperation seems obvious."

(M. Groothedde, city archaeologist of Zutphen, 24th of April 2014)

The vision of the Hanse lends itself very much to draw parallels with contemporary issues such as European integration. Such parallels include: the economic motives behind its existence, the extinsive territory that the organizations cover, the horizontal hierarchy, the

collective decision-taking, the exchange of goods and ideas, and the regional networks (Wubs-Mrozewicz, 2012 p. 24). Müller-Mertens (2002, in: Brand 2007) has stressed the relevance of Hanseatic research in the light of the current regionalism within the EU. Historic research could be much helpful in issues regarding the 'Europe of Regions', transfer of cultural values, and the European identity (if such a concept exists). The various Hanseatic revival movements and organizations that came into existence from the 1980's onward gain ever more members, especially in the past few years. The global economic crisis is seen by some as an important catalyst for this revived interest:

"[…] we are now in an economic depression, nowadays, we need the participation of the inhabitants, to make a it worth to live in a city and you get citizen participations if you give them an idea of what there has been once"

(Dorsten representative at Westfalischer Hansetag Soest, 10th of May 2014)

The economy, in the gutter since 2008, then people start to think how can we fix this, and now it's six years later […] So to make it all function somewhat better again, we want to attract people from the outside, and this helps with the economy, this has succeeded first in Germany but it's also going to happen in The Netherlands. So I certainly think the crisis has helped to let the Hanse develop again."

(Dutch Hanseatic re-enactor III in Soest, 10th of May 2014)

On an European scale there is the *City League the Hanse*, originally founded in Zwolle in 1980 as the *New Hanse*, and sometimes referred to just as The Hanse. Beginning with 43 member cities initially, the organisation consists of 183 members in 16 countries as of 2014. Any town that was a part of the Hanse, was orientated at Hanse trade, or held a Kontor is open to membership. We can thus say the organization very confidently claims the Hanseatic heritage. We see the predominantly modern perspective on the Hanse ringing through in its mission statement:

"The "new" Hanseatic League [...] set itself the task of keeping alive the spirit of the League as a social and cultural alliance. By cultivating traditions and encouraging a

vibrant exchange between its members, the Hanseatic League aims to bring about closer economic, cultural, social and national ties across Europe"

- Städtebund die *HANSE (www.hanse.org)*

The selected cities for case study are all part of this new Hanseatic League. The cases will now be presented in chapters five, six and seven.

5. Marketing Wesel

5.1 Introduction

The city of Wesel is, as all the selected case cities, situated in the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia close to the Dutch border, on the bank of the river Rhine at the crossing with the Lippe. It has 60.750 inhabitants and is also the administrative capital of the Wesel district. In this paragraph, the history of Wesel will be described, especially the Hanse-era heritage, and the role it has played throughout the centuries.

The historic roots of known settlement along the northern Rhine in the surrounding area of Wesel begin with the famous Roman *Limes Germanicus*, the fortified border along the Rhine to protect the empire from Germanic tribes. We can still see that history in places like Xanten, which is a part of Kreis Wesel, although Wesel itself has no Roman cultural heritage. Archeological evidence under the Willibrord church in Wesel suggests there was already a previous church built there in the 8th century, and other sources indicate a Franconian manor existed there. But the first mention of the name Wesel in written documents stems from 1065. Due to its strategic position, Wesel began to grow of the trading from the Rhine to the Lippe in the 12th and 13th centuries, leading to granting of several rights and privileges concerning trade, taxing and justice (wesel.de). Aside from trading, Wesel began processing raw materials for export, causing further economic growth. With all the aforementoined history, it is logical that the city of Wesel became a member of the Hanse in 1407. It grew to be one of the more influential cities in the western Hanse, hosting the 'Tagfahrt', a general meeting of the western Hanse-province, multiple times. The relation with the Dutch hanseatic cities also flourished in the 15th century, as all manner of trade goods were transported from the western hanseatic area, from as far as London to the Netherlands and on to cities like Lübeck and Stralsund. The benefits of the Hanse began to show in the built environment of Wesel, through a boom of building activities. Many merchantile warehouses were erected or upgraded in the characteristic late-gothic style of the Hanse. The 'rathaus' or town hall was even upgraded twice in the short period of 60 years. Aside from the trade relations through the Hanse, there are other connections with the early history of the Dutch republic. Wesel became a Lutheran city in the time of the reformation, coming to the aid of Dutch refugees fleeing the Spanish persecutions in the Netherlands. The city came to be

known as 'Vesalia Hospitalis', or Hospitable Wesel, because of the generosity to protect religious refugees. In the religious conflicts that followed in the 17th century, Wesel was liberated from Spanish occupation by the Dutch in 1629. The glory days of the Hanse were now ending, and the history of Wesel hereafter is greatly influenced by the Prussian remaking of the city into a military fortification in the 18th and 19th centuries. We can see the evidence of this at the Prussian citadel in Wesel, that still remains today. In militarizing the town however, a signification portion of Hanse-era buildings had to make place for towers, trenches and garrisons. The first and mostly the second world war had a devastating impact on the city. After the Second World War, 97 per cent of the city lay in ruins, destroying virtually all of its medieval city centre, and thus also everything that could still be seen of the Hanse-era. The rebuilt city dates from after the war, and situated close to the Ruhr-area, there is also a large amount of industry in the direct proximity. Wesel's modern economy largely centres around chemical and gravel industry, glass processing, mechanical and equipment engineering and sanitary ceramics (kreis-wesel.de).

This exactly points out a challenge that Wesel (and many other German cities) face; the Hanse encompasses a significant portion of the city's heritage and tradition, but all that can be seen and touched of this, has been destroyed in bombings at the end of the war. Yet, the Hanse as a concept, and an idea, is still very lively. The lack of physical remains of the Hanse does not have to mean that the marketing of Wesel is not succeeding. As Kotler (1993) points out, a place's potential depends not entirely on its location, climate or resources, but more so on the amount of human skill, energy, values and organization. Thus, the wealth of the Hanse can and must be brought alive in other ways. The following paragraphs will provide insight in how this heritage is employed, and what place it takes in marketing the city of Wesel.

Figure 8: wesel.de   *weselmarketing.de*

Marketing of Wesel is done by WeselMarketing GmbH that coordinates promotional and branding activities for Wesel. Their website (www.weselmarketing.de) is the main portal for visitor information about the city. Another website for the city itself also exists (www.wesel.de), but it is outdated, and not nearly as current and topical. However, it does include the term Hanse quite clearly in the city's name (figure X) whereas WeselMarketing does not. As mentioned before, Wesel has a rich cultural heritage, from for instance the Hanse era and Prussian times, but was almost completely left destroyed after the second world war. The Hanse theme makes up only a part of numerous themes and symbols that Wesel's brand image is centered around:

Themes in Wesel's place brand
Historic events:
• The Hanse-era, also described as the glory days of Wesel.
• The Prussian-era, when Wesel was highly militarized due to its strategic location.
Association with persons:
• Konrad Duden, German linguist whos name lives on through the Duden-dictionary.
• Peter Minuit, third governor of the New-Netherland colony, famous for buying the island of Manhattan from Native Americans.
Verbal symbols:
• The Donkey from the 'Wesel-Esel'-rhyme[4] has become more than a verbal symbol as it is used in multiple ways in Wesel. For instance, there has been a Donkey-Path art project of 111 painted plastic donkeys throughout the city.
• 'Vesalia Hospitalis' or hospitable Wesel. A name by which the city came to be known during the reformation era.
Hosting of events:
• Historic Hanse-festival centered around re-enacting medieval hanse times
• EselRock (Donkey Rock), music festival featuring local artists
Landmarks:
• Willibrord-church
• Rathaus at Großen Markt
• Prussian *Zitadelle*

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[4] A rhyme 'Wie heißt der Bürgermeister von Wesel?' on which the echo replies 'Esel'. Well known in Germany and The Netherlands as it also works in Dutch.

As we can see, the city of Wesel is associated with a variety of themes that it can utilize in branding the city.

Figure 8*: Representatives from Wesel at the Westfalischer Hansetag using both the Hansestadt theme as well as the donkey from Wesel. Source: author*

5.2   Target audiences

Defining potential target groups is difficult due to a lack of research specificly aimed at Wesel. Official statistical sources cover a greater area, such as the Niederrhein area as a whole, and the state of Nordrhein-Westfalen. "Unfortunately we have no measured / verified insight into the visitors of our city. Official researches and statistics cover a wider range, so we have to build on our own observations and knowledge." declares Jordans of WeselMarketing. From these observations, a picture of dominant target audiences emerges; firstly couples in the age range of 45 to 75, and second couples with children aged 5 to 12. To attract and retain these groups, Wesel does not follow a fixed strategy or 'masterplan' but rather focuses on the tasks at hand: "Generally we try to improve our network of cycling routes, try to keep our marketing in pace with the development (huge task) and try to prepare for the demographic change." There are plans however, to create a more long term

strategy in cooperation with a third party agency. What this would look like is not yet known, and so, also the role of Hanseatic heritage in this plan is yet to be determined.

Looking at a regional scale, the largest groups of foreign visitors to the Lower Rhine area come from the Netherlands, with 44,4% of overnight stays in 2006, the United Kingdom second (6,2%) and Belgium third (4,4%). We can say the Niederrhein region is not benefitting fully from the overall positive trend of increased tourism in Nordrhein-Westfalen as a whole, and belongs to the few regions that risk stagnation on the long-term (Touristisches Leitkonzept Niederrhein, 2007). The causes for this lie in several factors. Firstly, awareness for the Niederrhein as a touristic destination is weak, with a spontaneous awareness among Germany of 1,8% in 2005, dropped from 2,0% in 1999 (Wenzel Consulting, 2005). The imageprofile can be considered weak, especially when compared to Cologne (22,1%) or the Ruhr (22,9%). Within Nordrhein-Westfalen awareness is higher, but on 4,1% still not great. The Niedderrhein area has no intentions of using Hanseatic heritage in the regional brand in specific, although there might be some aspects that connect the associations of the Niederrhein to those of the Hanse, such as the Rhine, water, and shipping, that are top associations with the Niederrhein (Wenzel Consulting, 2005). The proximity of water is, as we have seen, important to the Hanse-DNA of a city.

In conclusion we can say that the lack of insight into target groups for Wesel specificly is an area for improvement as knowledge of the target market, and knowing what to offer is essential in effective placebranding.

5.3   Hanse heritage in Wesel's place brand

In the building of the Wesel-brand, none of the mentioned themes seem to be the center of focus. Rather, it is a blend, or a combination of all the symbols. Alexander Jordans of WeselMarketing describes;

> ''The Hanse is not our main focus, it is a combination, all part of the same historical story, it goes from the early medieval times, into the Hanse, into the Prussian times to the modern days. Our story is built like a house, you have to start with the foundation on which subsequent layers are built for a continuous picture"

> *(A. Jordans of WeselMarketing, 18th September 2013)*

We see this perspective of Wesel's *story* in promotional material and websites where the three aforementioned historical themes are highlighted: the hanse, Prussia and modern times from 1945 onward. Yet there lies great dissimilarity in these themes. The ideas that are associated with Prussian times and the Hanse-era are different, almost contradictory; "People link Prussia with authority, discipline and militarism; you have to do this, and you have to do that!" says Jordans, whereas the Hanse brings the opposite feeling to mind; "It stands for freedom, freedom to trade with anyone you want, and to take the opportunities yourself." Yet the Prussian heritage is also very visible in Wesel and a major attraction. The citadel from 1687 has a number of well preserved military buildings and now serves as a museum and cultural centre (www.preussenmuseum.de). The Berliner gate is also a remainder of Prussian times, built in baroque style. So physiccaly, this historical period is just as much visible in the built environment. We see an example of a constituted, multiple, identity of a place. The varied historical background and multiple cultural influences often means a place cannot be branded as clearly (Skinner, 2008). There are however a number of projects that employ the Hanseatic part of Wesel's story, strenghtening the Hanse-element in the place brand, which I will elaborate below.

5.3.1   The rebuilding of the Rathaus facade

The original *Rathaus am Großen Markt* (Town Hall on Market Square) was built in 1455 in Flemish-late Gothic architecture. It stood as a visible manifestation of Wesel's wealth brought forth by its position the Hanseatic League. Like most of Wesel, it was unfortunately destroyed in the war. A citizens' initiative however, has been taking effort to rebuild the iconic facade since 1986 and ultimately succeeded in their goal. After a long period of discussion and debate over these plans, the foundation has raised funds from a wide variety of partners including the city council, the state of Nordrhein-Westfalen, and multiple private contributors. This resulted in the laying of the first stone in 2007, and the complete rebuilding of the facade in the years 2010 and 2011 (www.historisches-rathaus-wesel.de). The restoration is an example of a public initiative in which multiple stakeholders combine into a joint effort. This sort of community involvement is very valuable in effective placebranding (Kotler, Haider & Rein, 1993; Baker, 2012).

Difficult as it is to define 'Hanseatic' heritage, we can certainly define the original Rathaus as being a remainder of Hanseatic past. Firstly because its existence is an outcome of wealth via Hanse trade, and secondly the Flemish-gothic architecture is a product of cultural exchange during the middle ages, in which the Hanse played a certain role. Hence this style being used in Westphalia.

Figure 9: *The Rathaus featured prominently on an invitational flyer for the 2016 Westfälischer Hansetag. Source: City of Wesel*

To address the question of authenticity, we could obviously answer that the experience is staged or contrived (MacCannell, 1976; Cohen, 1979). To an extent it might be, but we are off course dealing with a restoration of an original historic icon here, that was in itself little more than a facade placed in front of existing buildings. The positive associations with the Hanse are also noticed here, as the rebuilt Rathaus brings the Hanse past alive, even though it was destroyed in World War II: "It is very important to have something to see, to touch or to smell, otherwise it gets too abstract. The building there is like a memorial, not for war.. but for a good thing." says Jordans. The Hanse is once again explicitly labeled as a *good* thing. Something that imbues a degree of pride, to show the rest of the world: "Mit der

Rekonstruktion dieses Rathauses aus der Hansezeit wird der Stadt Wesel eines der bedeutsamsten Stadtobjekte ihrer traditionsreichen geschichte zurück gegeben: Zur nachhaltigen Erinnerung für heutige und nachfolgende generationen." (historisches-rathaus-wesel.de). So this spatial-functional operation (Ashworth & Voogd, 1990) can be filed under an improvement of **scenery**, when we describe it in the terms that Hanzesteden Marketing uses (see chapter one), as the existence of specific buildings in Hanse(-gothic) style are important to the composition of the Hanse-identity of a city (De Positioneerders, 2012). Kotler, Haider & Rein (1993, p. 100) also argue that a place needs a sound design and fully develop its aesthetic qualities, when it comes to the *character* of a place: the urban design redefines how that character is transmitted from one generation to the next. For a city like Wesel where not much of Hanseatic buildings remain, this is off course a key factor in redefining the Hanse-character, and (re-)creating that authentic Hanse-feel that has the 'magic ring' to it.

5.3.2   Renewed Pedestrian Area

We can observe good example of the recent Hanse-revival movement in the center of Wesel. In 2007, the old city centre was deemed a zone in need of redevelopment and modernisation. An architectural design competition was held, from which the winning plans would be put into action by a professional project-group. The costs of the project were around four million euro's, from which more than half was paid for by the state of Nordrhein-Westfalen. Also the project was subsidized by the European Fund for Regional Development (www.weselmarketing.de). Improvements include better bicycle parking facilities, a more efficient waste disposal system, and better lighting for pedestrians. The most striking feature however is the Hanse-band, a mile-long ribbon showing the names of the 183 towns of the 'New Hanse'. We can characterize the project as a *spatial-functional* measure with a distinct touch of the Hanse-theme of Wesel's place brand. It combines two place improvement strategies: urban design and infrastructure improvement (Kotler, Haider & Rein, 1993).

Figure 10: *Hanseatic ribbon across the renewed 'Fußgängerzone' in Wesel. Shown here are some of the Dutch Hanseatic towns. Source: Author.*

The modernisation of the pedestrian area is a city improvement that adds to the **dynamics** of a formerly Hanseatic city. This is because it looks beyond the cultural-historic that the city has to offer. It combines cultural background with a broader tourist experience of leisure and shopping. Dynamics also incorporates economic aspects, that is why the Hanse ribbon was placed in the main shopping area – the link with the entrepeneurial and commercial spirit of the Hanse. "All the shopkeepers here are very enthousiastic about it". Once again we have to mention how urban design plays a role in te reproduction of a place's character. This project lays an emphasis on the more conceptual heritage of the Hanse; that of its values of entrepeneurial spirit and trade, rather than cultural heritage in the form of physical buildings from the Middle-Ages.

Another Hanse-themed element adding to city dynamics is the Hansefest, held each year in the last weekend of October:

"The Hanseatic festival is a good way to recreate the feeling of the Hanse. Find 'crazy' people in your city who can enthusiasticly recreate this idea, and show it to the people, so that they can see a part of their history even though it's not visible anymore in the buildings."

(A. Jordans of WeselMarketing)

5.3.3 City partnerships

Wesel participates in a number of Hanse-themed organizations such as the New Hanse and the Westfälischer Hansebund, but also a local cooperation of towns; *Die Rheinische Hanse* is a union consisting of Wesel, Kalkar, Neuss and, last to join in 2009, Emmerich am Rhein. It is based on the model of the Westfällische Hanse, but on a more local scale. Drawing on their shared Hanseatic past and their location on the Rhine, the organization set its goals for increased cooperation and improvement of the Hanse-awareness in the Niederrhein-region. We can find some striking similarities with the Dutch *Hanzesteden on the IJssel*, both situated along the stream of an important trading route in the Hanse time, seeking to mobilize that heritage to jointly employ the added value, that 'magic touch' of the Hanse, to develop their place brand. For instance, the combined Rheinische Hanse showcases itself at the International Hansetag. But what does this partnership have to offer for Wesel? WeselMarketing have been interested in the way that things are organized along the IJssel, eager to draw lessons from The Netherlands, and hinting at cooperation at joint meetings at the Hansetag in Herford of 2013.

When we compare the strength of both regional brands, the Dutch *Hanzesteden* seem to be a few steps ahead of their *Rheinische* counterparts. Granted, the Hanzesteden have been around longer, but even trying to find any information on the Rhineland Hanse is difficult. There is no uniform brand structure for the four towns, or combined leisure activities on offer, and a website is missing. At WeselMarketing, we find some reasons for this lack of recognizability of the Rheinische Hanse. "Compared to Zwolle, Deventer, Zutphen and so on... the distances between cities are just too far for us." The problem is that Wesel, Kalkar and Emmerich are some thirty kilometers apart, while Neuss is sixty kilometers away, on the far side of the industrial Ruhr area. Not suprisingly, Neuss appears to be the least connected town in the network: "Neuss doesn't do much with it, the current mayor is not so enthousiastic about it." Jordans argues that they probably do not see the benefit in it. If the Rheinische Hansebund wants to move beyond a formal partnership and raise awareness of Hanseatic heritage in the Rhineland, and develop as a regional brand, tighter cooperation will be required through a common strategy. Also, the desires of selected target audiences will have to be known so the region can build a feasible image of it has to offer to potential

markets. The Hanseatic awareness seems to be present in the region to some extent, pointing at the examples of the Rathaus and the pedestrian area in Wesel, but also from names like the Hanse-realschule in Emmerich. So the Rheinische Hanse was formed, but not used to its full potential. A comparable situation for Wesel exists with its partner city of Salzwedel, situated in Saxony-Anhalt. Salzwedel is increasingly branded as a Hanseatic town (official name changed to Hansestadt Salzwedel in 2008), and has a town center where characteristic Hanse-buildings can be seen. However, it is located over four hundred kilometers away and has a quite small population of around 24,000 inhabitants. These are the main causes for the lack of activities between the two partner cities. We can conclude that partnership with other cities is underdeveloped area for Wesel. The cooperations are certainly there, but they are not brought up to their full potential

6. Marketing Soest

6.1 Introduction

The city of Soest is located in the eastern part of Nordrhein-Westphalia, has around 47.000 inhabitants of which some 30.000 live in the cities core, while the rest is divided between the surrounding districts. Soest is first mentioned in historic documents in 836 in its latinised form *Sosat* or *Susatum*. The inner city is a characteristic medieval town, originating from the tweltfh and thirteenth centuries, when Soest grew to one of the biggest cities in the Holy Roman Empire.

In 2004, the city of Soest decided that a specialised organization would cover placemarketing and tourism efforts of the city. The existing sections concerning tourism and events, that fell under the city administration, as well as the commercial development branch were outsourced to a single, separate placemarketing organization, named Wirtschaft and Marketing Soest (WMS-Soest). WMS Soest is still directly linked to the city administration, as the funding for placemarketing comes from the city administration. The city is also involved in such activities as planning event dates, but WMS Soest is responsible for carrying out these plans. The city administration still carries its own overarching place brand of Soest, that includes the website *soest.de*. WMS-Soest can be characterised as a combined destination- and economic development brand, as the name *Wirtschaft and Marketing* already suggests. The web portal *wms-soest.de* thus presents the tourism and leisure offer, as well as information to attract relocating businesses – for instance management consultancy. The overarching brand is in this way closely linked with tourism and economic development which is important for effective branding (Baker, 2012, p. 29).

Figure 11*: Soest.de and WMS-Soest*

The wider strategic network of stakeholders includes local merchants, shopkeepers hotels and restaurants. Additionally for the bigger events such as the Allerheiligenkirmes,

sponsoring is needed, which come from partners such as the Warsteiner brewery and Sparkasse bank.

6.2   Target audiences

The main target group that Soest as a destination brand aims at are aged sixty-five and older. The category of the wealthy healthy older people, who have the time and resources to make frequent day leisure trips. The group that is interested in culture and appreciates a scenery like the one that Soest offers. Geographically, the biggest market for day trips and longer stays to Soest is the Ruhr area. The greater part of visitors come from there to seek the relative rest and authentic qualities of the Soester *altstadt*, that are hard to find in the Ruhr area, and for this group, Soest is located at a convenient distance. A part of the sixty-five plus group falls in the themed tourism like bicycle or hiking routes which is a part of Soest's offer but this kind of tourism is off course not unique to Soest. Another significant market for Soest is the event tourism that is generated by large events such as the Allerheiligenkirmes.

6.3   Green sandstone and Allerheiligenkirmes

The image of Soest is very much built up from the scenery that the historic altstadt provides, and the sense of place that this decor attributes to the city. Two key elements in the built environment contribute to the atmosphere of being in Soest: the large concentration of unique green sandstone buildings, and the half-timbered houses that dominate the inner-city scape. The core of advertising the brand Soest is captured in the slogan 'worldwide unique green sandstone ensemble: Altstadt Soest'. The green sandstone buidlings in Soest feature building styles on display from the romanesque period to eigteenth and nineteenth century architecture. The most prominent green sandstone buildings in the inner city include:

- The St. Patrokli church: A romanesque church built in various phases from the eleventh to the fourteenth century that contains relics of Saint Patroclus, and is one of the prime examples of romanesque architecture in Westphalia
- The St. Petri which is the oldest church of Soest, consist of a remarkable combination of romanesque architecture with gothic expansions and even a baroque tower from the eigteenth century.

Another striking feature of the altstadt are the half-timbered houses that can be seen in Soest.

The celebration of the annual allerheiligenkirmes is a piece of cultural heritage in itself for Soest. Being the biggest inner-city kirmes (fair) in Germany, the kirmes is being held in 2014 for the 677th time. First mentioned in documents in 1338, it still exists today and draws around a million visitors each year. The fair lasts for five days each year in November, starting Wednesday after All Saints Day.

6.4   Hanse heritage in Soest's place brand

Soest has a significant Hanse history and heritage, but in what way is this ultimately employed? Birgit Moessing, head of WMS-Soest, explains what the term Hansestadt means for Soest: "It is one more stone in the mosaic of proofs of a rich heritage and an important history." But it encompasses more than that: "If I would say that it is just a nice addition to have, that wouldn't be right, it is more than just that". The Hanse history is again described as part of the story, a major building block of a city's history.

Figure 12: *Newspaper headline announcing new car license plate identification for Soest with the abbreviation HSO (Hansestadt Soest) as an April Fool's joke.*
Source: Soester Anzeiger 1st and 2nd of April 1995 (from: Stadtarchiv Soest)

Yet in branding Soest, the Hanse is primarily used as an added value and not a distinct feature, or a unique selling point. Westphalia has a high density of over fifty towns that are a part of the new Hanse, and call themselves Hanseatic in some way or form. This detracts from the uniqueness of using the Hanse in marketing, where distinction and recognizability

are of great importance. We can see that the placebrand of Soest follows these marketing logics: the focus leans strongly towards the things that *are* distinctive to Soest and cannot be found anywhere else; the green sandstone ensemble, and the Allerheiligenkermis. The distinctiveness of the Allerheiligenkermis however, is in some ways connected to Hanse heritage, as the characteristic atmosphere of this event draws heavily on the decor of the old town. The questions then remains to what extent the old town of Soest can be labeled Hanseatic, keeping in mind the difficulty of defining Hanseatic heritage in the first place. Traditionally, the key feature of Northern German and Baltic Hanse buildings is the use of brick-gothic, which we do not see in Soest. City archaeologist of Zutphen Michel Groothedde explains the difference between various Hanseatic cities: "Look, there's Hanse and Hanse… the definition of the Hanse is not that they built in bricks." He argues the difference lies in the fact that the Wendic cities of Lubeck, Rostock, Stralsund and Wismar were primarily founded to trade along the Baltic coast in the wake of German peoples that spread to the east. Cities that got involved in the Hanse that were already medieval metropoles have a different story, they got involved with the Hanse when they already were significant settlements, and it can be seen in the architecture.

The wealth of medieval trade caused Soest to flourish in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, resulting in the building of the large green sandstone structures. We can argue that these landmarks are *built in the Hanse-era*, rather than *Hanseatic buildings*. Most green sandstone structures in Soest are buildings of religious purpose. It therefore is quite logical that other features, and not the specifically Hanse-past, are dominant in branding of Soest. This can be seen clearly when we look at the signing in the Altstadt, for example the walking tour of the old town. The most important eyecatching buildings have information signs explaining history and context to the viewer. Although most of the buildings originate from times when the Hanse existed, none of them make any reference specifically to the Hanseatic League. This selective use of the Hanse-image also comes forward in other ways. In the last few years, there has been discussion within many German town administrations wether to add the official label Hansestadt to the city name or not. Some of them, like Salzwedel decided to do this, Soest did not. Moessing elaborates on this issue:

"We have forces in our city that are in favor of this, but we decided not to. We also have forces that feel it should be kirmes-stadt. In my opinion, we can be proud enough of our city to say: it's Soest, and that is enough. So no official Hansestadt label."

But on other occasions, the Hanse label is purposefully brought forward:

"We don't really need it, but when we advertise on the road, especially in tourism advertising, we also need this label, and the written text and the headline, we then often need the word or a symbol like *Old Hanseatic City of Soest.* So in that context we do need it."

Moessing explains the importance of giving substance to the name Hansestadt, should a city choose that particular label:

"If you need the expression Hanseatic city, and you use it on the official city signs, and you work with it in a professional way, you have to live it. If you only have the label and that's it.... [...] When the sign is ready and it's there, and nobody does more after this has happened, if there are no offers, no events that force the Hanseatic idea, then there is something wrong and you are not able to use this. So then there is an etiket, but there is no content inside, it's empty, and not believable."

Soest however does have the scenery to give substance to such a label because of the characteristic medieval setting, yet the Hanse label is used sporadicly and selectively.

Figure 13: *two expressions of merchandise: modern 'I ♥ NY' inspired text versus Hansestadt Soest*

Source: author

Concludingly, we can say that Soest, with its characteristic inner city, has the least difficulty of the three selected cases to live up to the Hanse brand when it comes to scenery. Soest employs the Hanse very selectively, and it has been shown that in some areas, Soest just does not need the Hanse in the way a smaller city might grasp the Hanse label when there is nothing else to set it apart from the rest. Soest has its own unique features and the Hansestadt prefix is used as an added value and a sign of quality.

7.   Marketing Dorsten

7.1   Introduction

The city of Dorsten is located in western Westphalia, on the bank on the river Lippe, in the district of Recklingshausen and it has around 76.000 inhabitants. Settlements have existed in the area since around 750 B.C. Findings suggest a Roman military camp to have been located near Dorsten in 11 B.C. Dorsten got it city rights in 1251 when the Archbishop of Cologne began to fortify the city as a defense on his northern borders. At the time the town had only 90 inhabitants (City of Dorsten, 1995). This sparked the growth of the city from the thirteenth century onward, when crafting and trade began to flourish, and Dorsten gained market and coinage rights. Also its position on the Lippe, close to important trade routes through the Rhineland and Westphalia provided Dorsten a place in the long distance trade network of medieval times. Dorstens place in the medieval Hanseatic League can be characterised as a status of 'beistadt', a smaller Hanseatic town that took part in the existing trade routes but administratively fell under the more influential Hanse town of Dortmund, and made use of that city's Hanse-privileges. In this manner, Dorsten was not itself present at the Hansetag in Lübeck, but was represented as part of the Dortmund sphere of influence. However, we can trace the presence of merchants from Dorsten in the Hanse network starting from the first half of the fourteenth century. Names of Dorstener citizens have been identified in cities such as Danzig, Deventer, Rostock, Wismar and Zutphen (Verein für Orts- und Heimatkunde Dorsten, 2014). Dorsten did attend regional meetings with closerby cities such as Essen, Recklingshausen, Buer and Gladbeck. The end of the Hanse era came for Dorsten after the Thirty-Years War when the Hanseatic towns had suffered a great loss on the Baltic coast. Cities like Dortmund saw their influence decline and naturally the smaller Hanseatic cities in its geographic area were also affected. After the Peace of Westfalen, Dorsten could not regain its former position in European trade. Until far into the eighteenth century, Dorsten's economic recovery was halted by further fortification, involvement in wars, and occupation. The industrial revolution and the growth of the Ruhr area however brought new economic boosts to Dorsten. The coal mining industry reached the city and brought jobs and people with it. In the interbellum period, The Wesel-Datteln-Canal was constructed, connecting the city to industrial shipping routes. As for many German cities, air raids in World War II

destroyed much of the historic Old Town. For Dorsten it is tragic that the most severe damage came from a bombing just shortly before the end of the war, on the 22nd of March 1945, leaving 80 per cent of the town in ruins. In the reconstruction period after the war, Dorsten grew in population, expanding into the surrounding area, incorporating nearby villages into suburbs and rural outer regions. The destroyed inner city was rebuilt based upon the old city plan. Dorsten's modern economy is based on industrial components such as coal, steel construction and mechanical engineering, but also increasingly on commerce and services. In the outlying rural parts of the town agriculture is still an economic factor.

The place marketing of Dorsten is carried out by Wirtschaftsförderung Dorsten (Win-Dor). Their tasks include attracting starting entrepeneurs and companies, assisting in relocation of firms, spatial development projects, tourism affairs, and off course marketing and branding of Dorsten. The municipality of Dorsten also carries its own brand, including the website *dorsten.de*, but the combined destination- and economic development brand is outsourced to win-dor.

Figure 14: *Wirtschaftsförderung Dorsten GmbH and Dorsten, kleine Hansestadt and der Lippe.*
Sources: win-dor.de, City of Dorsten brochure (2014)

7.2 Hanseatic heritage in Dorsten's place brand

"Dorsten im Übergang vom Mittelalter zur Frühen Neuzeit:

eine „kleine Hansesadt''

(Verein für Orts- und Heimatkunde Dorsten, Dorsten, einst und jetzt, May 2014)

Dorsten faces a challenge that many German cities face; a rich historic heritage that was destroyed in second World War, and the search to make this past visible in some way. Dorsten does not carry the Hanse as a prime focus in its place brand; there is no official

Hansestadt label, and the city does not promote itself as a characteristic Hanseatic city. However, the Hanse concept is used in other ways, that are in a state of development, in the wake of the current Hanse-revival. Dorsten advertises itself consciously and knowingly within the Hanseatic partnership as the *small Hanseatic town on the Lippe*. This in itself exemplifies the current popularity of the Hanse in a place marketing context, even a *beistadt* such as Dorsten sees the opportunities of deploying Hanse heritage.

> "We have records already in the thirteenth century that we have merchants of Dorsten written in the books of big Hanseatic towns […]. But Dorsten was probably not named as a Hanseatic city, it more or less belonged to Dortmund and was a smaller town. So that's also why we call it: the small Hanseatic town. So there is a distinction between the big Hanseatic cities and then the smaller Hanseatic cities, that always belong to a big one, so most of the Westphalian cities are *small* Hanseatic cities."
>
> *(Dorsten representative at Westfalischer Hansetag Soest, 10th of May 2014)*

Dorsten thus strives to employ a realistic vision of its Hanse heritage, and keeping historical reality in sight. A remnant of the past is the inner city plan of Dorsten which was rebuilt in the shape of the pre-World War II pattern;

> "[…] we have the luck that the historic city center is still with the print of a historical city. With round walls, even if it was destroyed in the second World War, but the *stadtplan* is like it was 500 years ago. Even though the houses are new, but the plan is like it was 500 years ago […] so the inner city map here, if you see the city, you can nowadays , 400 years later you can walk with this through the city, it's still the same."
>
> *(Dorsten representative at Westfalischer Hansetag Soest, 10th of May 2014)*

Other than the city plan, not much of historic heritage remains in the built environment, but the location of Dorsten on the river Lippe is a factor that adds to a 'Hanseatic' environment as a traditional German Hanse town is on the waterfront.

"[…] that we are on the river Lippe here, and that was important for the trade routes in former days […] for most of the older Hanse towns… the connection to water is important. Classic Hanse towns are mostly on the water, and it is connected to water.. or sea trading ."

(Local Stonemason in Dorsten, 17th of May 2014)

Related to the connection with water, is the craft of -historic- ship building. The image and heritage of this craft is still seen today in the cityscape and some aspects of the Dorsten brand.

Figure 15: *Dorstener shipbuilders depicted on a fountain in the city centre (left). Brochure advertising the eleventh Hanseatic Day in Dorsten (right). Notice the historically inaccurate eighteenth century warship. Sources: author, City of Dorsten.*

The next paragraph will discuss the uses of the shipbuilding tradition, and the Hanseatic past in Dorsten.

7.3 Hanseatic values as warm placemarketing

With absence of a vast quantity of historic heritage, the Hanse-past is brought forward in other ways. Dorsten shows us how the Hanseatic identity can act in the building of a favorable identity of a place. An employee of win-dor especially argues about the effect this can have own the own population, besides attracting tourism.

"[…] that is the Hanseatic idea for me as citymarketing. So not only… yes it's to show to the outside, working for people from outside to come visit, and off course spend money in restaurants and hotels, but for me it's also to create a realization of the population about the history, and get them into the idea what it was."

(Wirtschaftsförderung Dorsten employee, 10th of May 2014)

Dorsten was one of the first cities to join the New Hanse, but for a lot of years, little was done with the concept. The economic crisis is presented as one the reasons for the revaluation of Hanseatic heritage, and a tool to of warm placemarketing:

"We use it as to remind the people; look our history is an ancient one , and it is worth something to live here, to make something of your city. Because that's what I believe, we are now in an economic depression, generally speaking in Europe, so also our city does not have so much money, if you compare it with thirty years ago, the cities had lot of money to spend… Nowadays, we need the participation of the inhabitants, to make a it worth to live in a city. So that the citizens participate, and you get citizen participations if you give them an idea of what there has been once, and it makes me happy to help them discover this, and they like it, and then they help. So you give the input, and you get from the population feedback."

(Dorsten representative at Westfalischer Hansetag Soest, 10th of May 2014)

The Hanseatic concept as an identity and a source of self-consciousness as it has been used by cities as Hamburg, Bremen and Lübeck is also perceived to be of value in Dorsten. Since recently it has become more developed;

"[…] since a couple of years, let's say five or six years we are developing the idea more and more, because for us it's an identification. The people like to remember where they come from. Or to *show* people where they come from. Because if you show people where they are coming from, then you can make it better, the relation that they feel nowadays for their own city. So it's also a discovery for the people of Dorsten, to discover their own history. It's sometimes for them like 'Wow!', because for many years it has been forgotten."

(Dorsten representative at Westfalischer Hansetag Soest, 10th of May 2014)

The positive associations with the Hanse speak to the forming of a Hanseatic identity as a city and strengthening the current residents' identification with a place in order to transform them into authentic ambassadors for the city, which is so important in the competition for residents (Zenker & Petersen, 2013).

"[…] because it makes the people in the city proud, who didn't know it before and they learn it. It makes them proud of it to live in a city which is four or five hundred years old.. which has a rich history, that was important once, not anymore, but it once was. So I think that helps it."

(Dorsten representative at Westfalischer Hansetag Soest, 10th of May 2014)

One of the ways the Hanse past is made visible is the 'Tag der Hanse' which is held annually is May. It is one of the events that is in development to grow into a larger base of participants from the city. Participants include artisans and craftsmen from Dorsten, that re-enact how their craft was performed in the times of the Hanse, for example a local hairdresser, bookshop, the Schützenverein, a stonemason and shipbuilders.

"So we are doing the day of the Hanse, with the Hanseatic association each year in May, one Saturday. […] not with so many visitors from outside or other Hanseatic cities, but among the own people. This year, I'm very proud that […] a lot of people

are participating. So these are people, who are not paid to come there, but they are enthusiastic for themselves and to show what they are doing to other people.

[…] And my idea is to make it bigger and bigger, last year we had four participants, this year we have ten participants, my aim is to have in ten years the whole city with something like thirty participants."

(Dorsten representative at Westfalischer Hansetag Soest, 10th of May 2014)

The process of letting the own inhabitants of the city learn about the Hanse is really a project under construction at a scale beyond just marketing. Education is also suggested as a tool to recreate some awareness among the populace, starting in high schools by making city history a standard.

"It's a good idea to also get involved the young people, partially we are doing it in the history lessons of the local schools […] they are doing already city history, and we are doing from our city marketing department the city sightseeing tour for kids of around eight years old, and then for the older kids of like fourteen and fifteen years old […] it depends on the teacher, but it's a good idea to maybe make it standard […] for little kids its already standard when they are like eight years old, but you cannot go into details of all these economic ideas, that you have to do when they're fourteen or sixteen."

(Dorsten representative at Westfalischer Hansetag Soest, 10th of May 2014)

One of the projects were the involvement of young people is combined with maritime heritage is already happening. It is the *Dorstener Aak* project, an educational programme that is centered around rebuilding a eighteenth century trading ship. The *Aak* sailed the trading routes along the Niederrhein and Lippe in former days. The project is mainly aimed at the unemployed and those still looking for jobs after finishing high school, educating them in skills such as construction and woodworking for a period of six months.
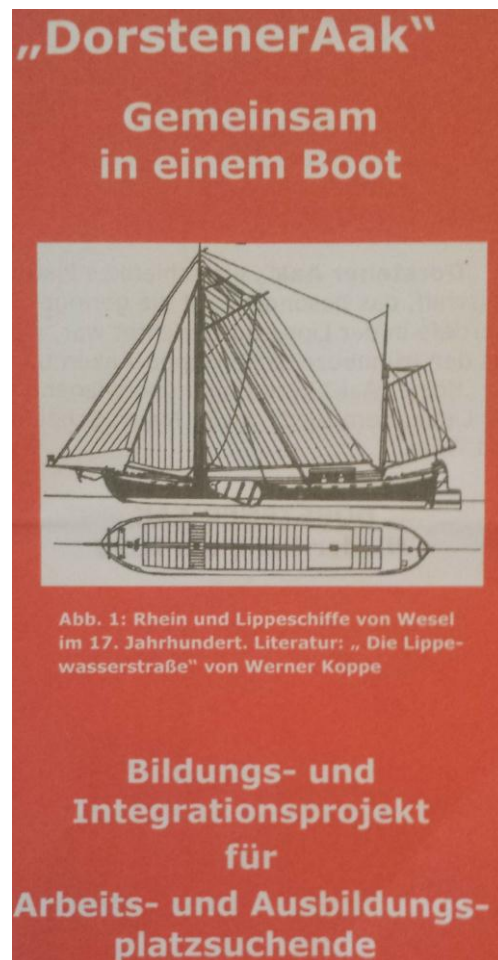
66

Figure 16: *advertisement for the Dorstener Aak project: Gemeinsam in einem Boot, or; we are in this together. Source: Bildungs-Centrum Nies*

The process of involving people with the history of the home town is an issue in which even a modest Hanseatic past can thus play a role.

8.   Findings

When we examine cities that are branded as Hanseatic, we come across some issues, difficulties and contradictions. Findings from the case studies in this research show a number of these seemingly paradoxical issues that need elaboration.

8.1   League of cities versus uniqueness

Firstly, the vast majority of placemarketing literature, points out the absolute necessity of distinctiveness, the choosing of unique features as selling points, and the creation of a place brand that provides a competitive edge. Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005 (in Warnaby, 2009) state that the mental aim of city branding is to endow an urban place with 'a specific and more distinctive identity'. Hospers (2012) notes that 46 per cent of Dutch cities promote themselves as providing tranquillity and space, and 85 per cent of English cities have historic heritage on their promotional materials. The question is posed to what extent cultural heritage and a pretty landscape are unique. The conclusion here is that cities need to find their distinctiveness in an increasingly uniform world: "What makes your city truly different from all those others?". "[A place's image] must be distinctive. The image works best when it is different from other common themes. There is an overuse of the words "a friendly place", and "a place that works" (Kotler, Haider & Rein, 1993 p. 150).

This kind of marketing practise can raise issues when employing Hanseatic heritage, considering the League-character of the Hanse. The New Hanse has over 180 member cities that all call themselves Hanseatic to a greater or lesser extent. Nordrhein-Westphalia, the geographic area of the case studies presented in this thesis, has a very high density of cities branded Hanseatic
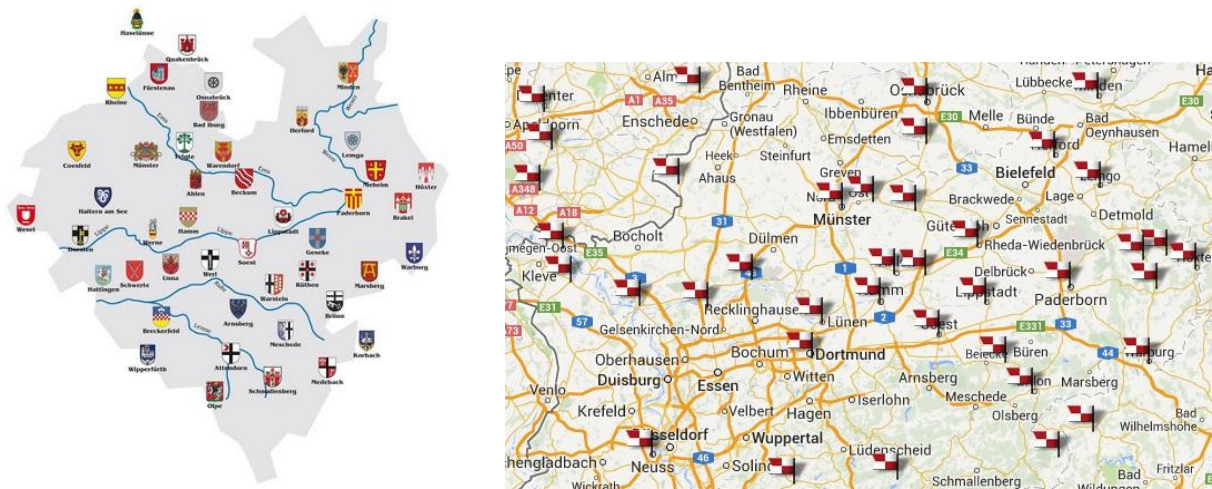
Figure 17: *Density of Hanseatic-branded towns in Westphalia*
Sources: The New Hanse: hanse.org, Westfalischer Hansebund: hansebund.org

The shown multitude of Hanseatic cities offers a challenge to individual cities in their branding efforts. Various cities overcome these problems in different ways, but in most cases we see the search for those distinctive features within the greater network of Hanseatic towns. The Dutch *Hanzesteden aan de IJssel* show this in their seven affiliated towns by accentuating differences and using diversity as an advantage, for example; local football rivalries, competitions on social media, in which the public can vote for the nicest buildings in a 'battle of the cities'. Soest uses the added symbolic value that the label Hanse provides, but selectively. It is needed on some occasions, for example in promotion on the modern Hanseatic meeting. However we also find that the Hanse is not the focus of the Soest place brand. It is a part of the story. Soest also looks for distinctiveness, and the features that make the city stand out from the density of nearby Hanseatic towns, such as the Allerheiligenkirmes and the green sandstone. The case of Wesel shows the same characteristics, with the Hanseatic past being a part of the story of the city. Despite of considerable efforts to re-imagine the Hanse past in a modern way through projects such as the rebuilding of the Rathaus and the redeveloped pedestrian area, Wesel's place brand still consists of a variety of aspects that exist alongside the Hanse such as the donkey theme, that is unique to Wesel. The large number of Hanseatic cities and the lack of uniqueness is not always perceived as a problem however.

"Well every city has its own individuality, and this also applies for the cities in other countries. [...] in my opinion, it is about putting your own Hanse town on the map in your own way. But if this is problematic, no I don't feel that way."

(Kampen representative at Westfalischer Hansetag Soest, 10th of May 2014)

"I don't think that the number of Hanseatic cities makes a difference, that is not the question, because a league is a league, if there are ten or a hundred…. if the league has an image, then you can use this positive image for yourself. Why not use it for your own development?"

(B. Moessing of WMS Soest)

The Hanseatic League thus has a positive image that member all member cities can use to an extent that they deem beneficial for their own image. Rather than a distinctive feature, it is a binding factor:

"No I don't believe so because we are spread over sixteen different countries […] so it's actually a great international network. And you can notice that it's getting more substance, this network. See, the international Hanseatic days are more than just a market where you present yourself. There are partnerships in economic areas, in cultural areas… […] And the underlying thought is: this is what binds us."

(Kampen representative at Westfalischer Hansetag Soest, 10th of May 2014)

"I think it's a strong idea to create identification, because generally speaking I think it's a human thing to identify with something. That's very human, that's why there are so many people soccer club supporters… […] because it's human to have to feel, and to identify in a group, and this Hanseatic group is a very good thing to feel, and to give a positive identification of the history and of the old tradition."

(Dorsten representative at Westfalischer Hansetag Soest, 10th of May 2014)

The league character of the Hanse implies that it can never be a unique selling point. But this does not have to be a problem. The positive image can be used and adapted for the benefit of a specific place.

8.2 The difficulty of defining Hanseatic

As discussed in chapter 4, the history of Hanseatic research is one of constant use and re-use, imagining and re-imagining. But what should we make of this appropriation of history? Volker Henn (2010) claims; the appreciation of the Hanse is in contrast with the actual indeterminacy and our lack of knowledge of it. However, the current 'uses' of the Hanse in regional integration and placemarketing can be considered desirable in my view. And I do think parallels can be drawn between the Hanse of old and contemporary incarnations, which can be mobilized for all kinds of positive aspects of cooperation. But we must keep historical truth in our view. Hammel-Kiesow (2010) concludes in this light that we must first of all be glad with the revived interest in the Hanse, but adds a warning against any misrepresentations that compose misleading views.

Many cities in Europe were in some way involved in Hanseatic trade, from medieval metropoles to small towns that were located on trading routes, so when we define Hanseatic heritage, we can ask the question where it begins and ends.

> "You could off course say; all the way to the smallest farmyard that once supplied grain that eventually ended up in Lübeck… is this then Hanseatic heritage, no off course not. […] and small rural towns can also be questioned… because aside from the church there is nothing from that time. But when there is indeed still a medieval town with medieval heritage, whether it's brick gothic or otherwise…"
>
> *(M. Groothedde, city archaeologist of Zutphen, 24th of April 2014)*

We can find some criticism from respondents in the use of the Hanseatic name by some cities, for example in the case of Oldenzaal and Attendorn:

> "Oldenzaal has to put a sign there, otherwise you would never think of the idea that it ever was a Hanseatic town. Oldenzalers didn't live like *Hanzeaten* […] Hanseatic

traders were economic powers, rich families that were already capable to build three story houses in the fourteenth century."

(M. Groothedde, city archaeologist of Zutphen, 24th of April 2014)

"But the small towns… Attendorn, in Sauerland is sixty kilometers away, it's a small town, not so big as Soest.. has now officially the name Hansestadt… wow. [laughs]" […] There is no other thing there."

(D. Elbert, Stadtarchiv Soest, 10th of May 2014)

So for small towns, a certain degree of scepticism seems to exist in relation to the recognition as Hansestadt. In Germany, some major northern cities are undisputed Hanse-towns, but smaller towns in Westphalia can have a hard time 'convincing' others that they are indeed a legitimate Hanseatic city.

''In a classic way, a Hanseatic city is on the water. Like Rostock, Hamburg, Bremen, Lübeck. If you see the sign on the registration plate they all have the letter 'H'… but only these cities have this special letter. We have a unique collection of Hanseatic cities in Westphalia, nowhere in Europe has this concentration of Hanseatic cities, about fifty nearby. But most of the people, also in Germany think; Hanseatic cities? That's Hamburg, Lübeck etcetera… or maybe Münsterland. But Westphalia? They don't know this exists. […] Especially for smaller cities, that's exciting to say; hey we are a Hanseatic city, and we're proud of that! And sometimes people say; that's a laughable story."

(B. Moessing of WMS-Soest, 18th of March, 2014)

As we have seen from the case of Dorsten, the city advertises itself as a small Hanseatic town, or a 'Beistadt der Hanse' to reflect historical reality. When we compare Dorsten to another *small* Hanseatic town, Lünen, we find some similarities. Both located in Westphalia, formerly in the Dortmund sphere of influence during the days of the Hanse, and of comparable size in the modern day. Yet, Lünen seems to have very consciously chosen not to employ their marginal Hanseatic past, whereas Dorsten has.

"[…] the "Hanse" in Lünen has no meaning for the marketing and we do not promote active the Hanse.

[…] if you study the history of the "Hanse" you will find the information that Lünen was just a "Beistadt der Hanse", so not a real Hanseatic city. There have been numerous "Beistädte", like Lünen, who shared the trade privileges, but had not a say within the Hanseatic League. I think this is the main reason why Lünen has chosen not to use the Hanse brand at all."

(Stadt Lünen Stadtentwicklung und Stadtmarketing employee, 9th – 23rd of April 2014),
(e-mail correspondence)

The fact that both cities had similar status within the Hanse, yet Lünen does not use the Hanse past but Dorsten does, shows that it is a real choice for city marketeers to grasp the Hanse as a marketing concept. In Dorsten the idea is in development and it shows some potential, Lünen has decided to focus their marketing on other themes, and leave the Hanse alltogether.

8.3   Perception on the Dutch Hanseatic brand

The Dutch Hanzesteden on the IJssel are appreciated by their Westphalian counterparts, especially the position in the new Hanse league.

"[…] Zwolle is the premier league concerning Hanseatic relationships, in our existing league. So I would say Zwolle is one of the most important cities concerning the Hanseatic League."

(B. Moessing of WMS-Soest, 18th of March, 2014)

Also, the format of a group of cities that are presented together rises interests of cities who are setting up a similar cooperation like the Rheinische Hanse of Wesel, Kalkar, Emmerich and Neuss. When asked about the Dutch Hanzesteden, most respondents have a positive image of the marketing organisation there. Conversely, Dutch respondents feel that the *Hanzesteden aan de IJssel* could potentially be very attractive for a German audience:

"[...] I regularly get German colleagues that are absolute fans of Zutphen. And why? They didn't know it. And then they come here, and their reaction is; this is exactly a city that we have all lost [...] And I think this is totally underestimated. I once said; the advertisement of Zutphen should be on TV in Germany!"

(M. Groothedde, city archaeologist of Zutphen, 24th of April 2014)

Respondents thus experience a potential in the fact that the IJssel cities could offer exactly what cities like Wesel and Dorsten have lost.

9.   Conclusions

In this concluding chapter the central research question will be answered in accordance to the findings of this research, as well as the sub-questions. Firstly, conclusions are drawn from the three presented cases. Secondly, what was learned on Hanseatic identities in both German and Dutch towns is presented. Ultimately, the findings also reflect on the question of *what we can or can not learn from the marketing of these German cities in the Netherlands* and important notions that can be applied in The Netherlands.

9.1   Case studies

The three case studies all show unique characteristic in the way of employing Hanseatic heritage. Wesel is a city where the absence of historical buildings in the inner city is one of the causes for a focus on the present and future of the Hanseatic spirit. We can see this through the various projects that emphasize the present 'New Hanse' association, yet there is also effort put in reliving the past with the examples of the Hanseatic festival and the rebuilding of the old Rathaus. The Hanse is however not a prime focus in marketing efforts, rather a part of the story of Wesel. It has a place between Prussian and modern themes, as well as the donkey theme, that is unique to Wesel. The city of Wesel could benefit from a clearer picture of their target audiences and how these groups appreciate the Hanse, to evaluate the usefullness for its placemarketing. The case of Dorsten shows some similarities with Wesel. Also, Dorsten has to cope with a destroyed inner city and therefore no great amount of historical buildings. Dorsten however has the advantage of the city plan that is exactly how it was in medieval times. Different from Wesel, Dorsten employs its Hanseatic heritage in a way that is more oriented towards the past, with Hanseatic days that mainly show medieval craftsmanship and shipbuilding. Dorsten recognizes its status as former small town of the Hanse and thereby avoids the issue of falsification of history for the sake of marketing. Other than using the Hanse to attract visitors from outside, it is also aimed at the own populace, to provide some insight, participation and even boost local pride. Soest is a city that, in contrast to Wesel and Dorsten, has an impressive and atmospheric inner city center. The city therefore can certainly 'live up to' the brand. Yet also here, the Hanse brand is used selectively. It was decided to not carry the official name Hansestadt in Soest, and in

marketing, the Hanse is mostly used when promotion is done in other places, in a Hanse-setting, such as Hanseatic days. For Soest, the Hanse is an great added value, but the there is also the focus on the things that only Soest has to offer, like the Allerheiligenkirmes and the green sandstone buildings. Different as the three cases are, we can find some common issues. The Hanse is never a prime focus of placemarketing efforts, yet it is always a building block of the story. Respondents all indicate that it is, however, an important part of the story, that can have great value when employed in a realistic way. Within the Hanse, cities find their own uniqueness. The league character of the Hanse means all the cities associated with it can reap the benefits from the overwhelmingly positive image that it carries.

9.2   Understanding of Hanseatic identities

When examining the meaning of Hanseatic history in both Germany and the Netherlands, the starting point of this thesis is the hypothesis that there is a difference in the way it is experienced. From the findings in this research we can conclude that there are indeed differences. Firstly, the Hanseatic League has endured in Germany even shortly after its demise. Its non-definitive ending with the last Hansetag in 1669 would cause the League to be interpreted and re-interpreted in the following period. Hanse imagery such as the Kogge-ships where used in artistic expressions throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to refer to a glorious past of maritime tradition. Later, during the time of German unification and in the twentieth century during both World Wars, the Hanse past continued to be an object of re-imagining for various political and non-political purposes. The historiography and discussion on the Hanse has taken place in Germany, from a German point of view up to this time. It is only recent, since the 1960's, that the Hanse became a more Europeanized research topic. It also became less politicized, and more of a neutral and 'safe' subject. References to the Hanse name are common in German culture, as it is something that provides identity, most strongly in the north, classic Hanseatic cities as Hamburg, Bremen, and Lübeck for whom it is a symbol of independence and an identity of the people. Some respondents have also experienced more interest in medieval history among Germans in general. Another reason for the revival of the Hanse in Germany takes us back to the notion that the Hanse is nowadays seen as a 'safe', de-politicized historical subject. Looking back to the past and traditions, and feeling pride for that, can be sensitive in Germany. Therefore,

looking back further than the recent history, into the medieval times of the Hanse, is generally regarded as politically neutral, and positive. With a more Europeanized view also came the parallels with cooperation in Europe.

The positive associations with the Hanse are almost undisputed in Germany, this is something all respondents confirm. A Hanseatic city has something extra, and it can be seen as a mark of quality. This is to an extent also the case in The Netherlands, but foremost in the eastern and northern cities, for whom the Hanse were the glory days of the past. For these regions it is also an identity-providing concept, and something to show the rest of the country. In Dutch national history in general, the Hanse plays a minor role compared to the seventeenth century Golden Age.

9.3   Recommendations

In this final paragraph, the results of what is learned from this research are linked to how these concepts can be used in *Marketing the Hanzesteden aan de IJssel*.

- From the case studies, we can conclude that the Hanse is almost never the spearhead of a place brand. In the presented cases, it is an important building block of the story of a Hanseatic town. In some situations, it is used very selectively. It is connected to the consideration of *how much* Hanse a *town* needs for a succesful place brand. Cities find their own uniqueness within the Hanseatic League. The strength of the added value of being a Hanseatic city lies just in that diversity, that is connected to the crossing-borders mentality of its image. In a place brand it is a binding factor, rather than a distinctive feature.

- Established as the Hanse is in Germany, the Westphalian cities from this research can still have a hard time convincing even Germans that they are legitimately Hanseatic, as in the common sense a classic Hanseatic city is in northern-Germany, and on the water. The label Hanse definitely needs substance. If there is no content to the label it is not believable and empty. Some respondents are skeptical of towns that carry the Hansestadt label. For some towns it has even been called a 'laughable story', or it is met with comments of sarcasm. A Hanse label in marketing has to be 'lived', and

certainly cannot stop at the point of using the concept. The scenery, signing and dynamics as Hanzesteden Marketing has dubbed this, are important, and from the case studies we can extract some ways in which these towns fills in the gaps of, for example, an absent 'Hanseatic' scenery: Wesel shows us how this can be compensated to an extent with a focus on the New Hanse. By restoring some parts of its old architecture, but mostly by emphasizing the future. As dynamics are concerned this is also seen in the hosting of the Westfalian Hansedays in 2016. Giving substance to the Hanseatic label can go only as far as historic reality offers. A realistic perspective on the past is presented in Dorsten where the term 'small Hanseatic city' is used. A neighbouring town like Lünen decides not to use the Hanse. Examples like these show the main consideration is to what extent the believability of a place as 'being' Hanseatic stretches. A second issue is what is considered Hanseatic heritage and where that line is drawn. A Dutch town like Oldenzaal has little credibility in the eyes of some of the respondents in this thesis, whereas Harderwijk is pointed out as far more authentic, and a better potential candidate for cooperation with the seven *Hanzesteden*, as it better fits the required formula.

- The Dutch Hanseatic towns are very much recognized as being influential in the New Hanse. Also, respondents feel that they have a lot to offer, especially to a German audience. Presenting some great architecture, they can show some of the things German towns have lost. Some repsondents indicate a great opportunity in making German tourists aware of the Eastern Netherlands and the Hanseatic cities.

- The Hanseatic image can be a way to conduct warm placemarketing, towards the residents already living in a town. The case of Dorsten shows a number of potential ways to employ such a strategy. A positive self identification with a place can build a strong place attachment in people, and introducing the people to a past of wealth through the Hanseatic trade network can play a role in this process.

In conclusion, Dutch cities can look to the development of the Hanseatic *identity* in Germany, that is indeed very lively, and make an effort to reproduce this undisputed status in The Netherlands. But marketing-wise, some Westphalian towns could surely learn from how it is done on the IJssel.

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Appendices

1.   List of interview respondents

- *Semi-structured in-depth interviews*

Respondent	_Organization_	_Location, Date_
Mr. A. Jordans	WeselMarketing	Wesel 18th September 2013
Mrs. B. Moessing	WMS-Soest,	Soest 18th of March, 2014
Mr. M. Groothedde	City of Zutphen	Zutphen 24th April 2014
Mr. D. Elbert	Stadtarchiv Soest	Soest 10th May 2014
Mrs. B. Seppi	Win-Dor	Soest 10th May 2014
		Dorsten 17th May 2014

- *Other interviews*

Respondent	_Location, Date_
Representative from Kampen	Soest 10th May 2014
Representative from Unna	Soest 10th May 2014
Representative from Dorsten	Soest 10th May 2014
Representative from Wesel I & II	Soest 10th May 2014
Hanse re-enactor I & II	Soest 10th May 2014
Hanse re-enactor III	Soest 10th May 2014
Hanse re-enactor IV	Soest 10th May 2014
Local Stonemason	Dorsten 17th May 2014

2.   Interviewguide

<u>Soest version</u>

<u>Interviewguide Marketing Soest.</u>

Wirtshaft & Marketing Soest

- Could you describe your own function?
- Can you tell me how the marketing department of Soest is organized?
- Can you tell something of the history of place marketing in Soest? Since when does WMS Soest exist, and was it different before that?
- Is there a distinction between the overall Soest brand and Soest wirtschaft and marketing?
- Can you tell me something of where the budget comes from?
- Could you describe what (public and or private) parties/stakeholders are involved in marketing soest?

City brand

- What does the brand of Soest stand for? What image are you trying to communicate?
- What is the image of Soest? What does it consist of?
- In what ways do you try to be distinctive (or) different and unique?
- Are there aspects of the brand that are negative and that you wish to correct?

Target audiences

- Can you tell me about your target audiences that the city attracts?
- What kind of target audience do you wish to attract
- How do you try to match what the city can offer tot the needs of your target groups?
- What cities would you consider your competitors in attracting

Strategy:

- How do you try to make the city more attractive for your target audiences?
- What are the current projects you are working on?
- Future projects

Promotion

- Can you tell me about how the promotion of Soest works? What media do you use?
- On what scale is the promotion aimed? Is it regional/local/national or border crossing to the Netherlands?
- People as ambassadors?

The Hanse

- What does it mean to have 'Hansestadt' Soest in the city name? What does this add for Soest?
- What does the Hanse identity mean for you?
- In what ways ist he Hanse visible in Soest?
- How important is it for you to sign the Hanse?
- What role does the Hanse play in the whole of Soest brand?
- What audiences does the Hanse attract?
- How is the Hanse perceived in Germany in general?
- Are there any scenario's in which the Hanse theme is less suitable, or you would definetly NOT use the Hanse theme?

Cooperation with other cities

- Can you explain what the Westfalischer Hanse does and what its goals are?
- Are you satisfied with the working of the Westfalischer Hanse?
- Westfälischer Hansetag am 10 mei
- What are the goals of these organizations and what do you wish to achieve with it?
- How would you describe the partnership with the city of Kampen?

Neue Hanse

- What does Soest do with the New Hanse
- In what ways does Soest benefit? Are you city with its operation? What could change?