

Master thesis

The 'DNA' of the Bloemerstraat

*Investigating how branding, in combination with the identity of a place, be used
in order to improve a street in decline*



Wouter Hunnekens

S4626508

Master Thesis Human Geography
Radboud University Nijmegen

Radboud University



Master Thesis

The 'DNA' of the Bloemerstraat

Investigating how branding, in combination with the identity of a place, be used in order to improve a street in decline

Author:

Wouter Hunnekens
S4626508

Course:

Master thesis Urban and
Cultural Geography

Mentor:

Prof. Arnoud Lagendijk

Radboud University Nijmegen
12th June, 2018

Preface

Before you lies my master thesis *the DNA of the Bloemerstraat*. This master thesis is the conclusion of my Master Degree in Urban and Cultural Geography at the Radboud University in Nijmegen. After obtaining my HBO diploma in Environment Science I realised that I needed a change. I noticed that my interest lies in the planning, geography and developing part of Environment Science, something that has not been covered to a great extent during my four years at Has Hogeschool. Geography has been a lifelong field of interest for me and I therefore chose to focus on finding a master that fits this field of interest. I needed to broaden my horizon and thus began to search for a suitable master program that would trigger my interest. The Human Geography master and its specialisations at the Radboud University were my first and only picks. I immediately became triggered by the master description because it was totally in line with my field of interest, especially the urban aspect.

I became intrigued in cities and how they have developed over time and how they actually need to develop in this modern age. This hybrid character of cities is what makes cities interesting research topics. Particularly city marketing and branding became my main interest, especially the fact how a city can be marketed and branded just as 'easily' as a can of Coca Cola. Therefore, I aimed to focus my master thesis on city marketing or branding. Seinpost Adviesbureau has given me this opportunity to investigate how identity-based branding practices can contribute to transform and revitalize a street economically and socially. Besides my master's thesis I wanted to combine my thesis with an internship to gain some work experience and see how the work field 'looks like'.

However, I could not have achieved this thesis without the commitment and willingness of various people. First, I would like to thank my supervisor Arnoud Lagendijk for his practical and also critical remarks when checking my research concepts. Second, I generously would like to thank John Bardoel, my supervisor from Seinpost Adviesbureau, for his patience, cooperation, critical view and the fact that he was always able to pick me up or drop me off at every train station when necessary. Also, I was able to contact him every time necessary to spar about new ideas. Last, I would like to thank all those who were involved and have contributed to my research in the form of data provision such as interviews. Therefore, I would like to thank Kees Buijns, Christiaan Roest and Jeroen Hinssen. Finally, completing this thesis was not always easy and has cost me a lot of time, effort and energy. However, I am very happy with the end results and now there is nothing left for me to say but to wish you a pleasure reading.

Wouter Hunnekens
12th May 2018

Abstract

The core of this research centred around the Bloemerstraat (and Smetiusstraat), a troublesome, multicultural and neglected street with a distinctive character in the city centre of Nijmegen. The municipality drafted a policy *Binnenstad van de toekomst, Visie en transformatie en aanpak leegstand*, in which the Bloemerstraat and Smetiusstraat were labelled as one of the most vulnerable areas in the city and needed to be addressed urgently. Reasons for this were the high vacancy rate, deteriorated quality of public space and the somewhat negative reputation of the Bloemerstraat. Vacancy is what became the opportunity for the Bloemerstraat to redeveloped and re-invent itself and also became the opportunity for the goal of this research: to investigate if a street in decline with its own typical problems, like the Bloemerstraat, can be improved by (better) branding and how this can be achieved by sticking close to its own DNA. Therefore, this research became the beginning to create a strong place brand in which people are inspired to work, live and visit the Bloemerstraat and in which the goals of the municipality are embedded.

The DNA of the Bloemerstraat or the place identity is based on the identity-based branding theory from Kavaratzis and Hatch. The place identity can be divided into two components. The place culture, or local culture, can be seen as a way of life that is experienced and created by people living and working in that place. In addition, the place image, is the reputation of a particular place formed by the image of outsiders of that particular place and thus the external defections of the place identity. The place identity is an interactive and dynamic process which is the results from a dialogue between different stakeholders. Therefore, essential stakeholders, residents, entrepreneurs, visitors and non-visitors, were included in this research to determine the place identity of the Bloemerstraat. The place identity of the Bloemerstraat is determined from the conducted interviews and surveys and translated into the following distinctive keywords: *raw, exotic, colourful, opinionated, multicultural, rebellious, challenging, social, resilient, vital, energetic, freedom, self-willed, contrarian, young, intelligent, self-conscious, independent*.

This understanding of the place identity of the Bloemerstraat opens the eyes to what is going on in the street and opens an effective way to base the branding on because the way in which the place identity is conceptualised has a significant impact on the way in which branding is conceptualised and executed. Thus, in this case branding is based on the place identity of the Bloemerstraat. Besides, effective place branding can, through the processes of expressing, impressing, mirroring and reflecting, influence and change the place culture and place image and therefore the place identity of Bloemerstraat. Effective place branding expresses the culture of that place, for example murals, and leaves impressions on others, such as the organisation of events, making promotional video and designing new streetlights that mimic the DNA of the street. These impressions are by others mirrored on the expected identity and new changes, symbols and meanings are evoked back into the place culture. However, it must be noted, that it is yet difficult to determine the impact of measures that have been going on or are currently going on in the Bloemerstraat. Still some plans, like façade improvement by using more green, are currently going-on and are executed by a group of entrepreneurs. These plans can certainly contribute to the improvement of the place image which eventually can put new symbols and meanings, such as sustainability and the greening process, in the place culture which results in positive enhancing of the place brand. Especially impressing is considered an important aspect of identity-based branding in this research. It is through this process that effective place branding, which is based on the place identity, changes and influences the place image of the Bloemerstraat. The new

entrepreneurs in the street, Lebowski, Bierhoeder, Flowink studio and de Paskamer, form the ambassadors of the streets. These ambassadors indirectly evoke the place identity, and the key words, of the Bloemerstraat and are used in promotional materials to show the positive aspects of the Bloemerstraat, to attract more visitors and to establish a Bloemerstraat brand.

Furthermore, looking from an assemblage point of view, the branding process of the Bloemerstraat and the actual Bloemerstraat brand can be analysed. This theory is a describing theory, it explores how certain phenomenon are created and from which elements it exists. The place identity is also in line with the essence assemblage: the sum of the parts is more than the sum of the whole. This is just like the place identity and branding of the Bloemerstraat, which is a coming together of different views from stakeholders and a process under influence through the four sub-processes. The branding of the Bloemerstraat has one common stakeholder goal in order to get the elements on one line and new elements can be incorporated and become part of the DNA. These elements have to fit within the DNA of the street. Other elements can also temporality fulfil meaning within the brand and other elements can alienate and disconnect in order to make the assemblage more stable. Furthermore, the place identity is the guide in this process that is moulding the branding process: elements from the place culture and place image are the triggers that start the creation of new policies, ideas, actions and practical measures to improve and invest in the street.

The branding of a street in decline is a way to express the meaning of that place by sticking close to the DNA of that particular place, or in other words: explain its identity, character and its purpose. This way of identity-based branding rediscovers and determines the meaning of a street in decline and the creation of a strong place brand gave an opportunity to understand the personality of the street. Thus, a clear profile of the street is an important base to create a certain new and improved image that can ensure a self-amplified effect in the long run. This can provide a positive impulse for the street, for example the coming of new entrepreneurs and visitors in the Bloemerstraat. A group of essential stakeholders coming together to tell the story of the street and to express the identity is an essential aspect of effective place branding. Together, with the redevelopment of public space, such as in the Bloemerstraat, and other adjustments in the street, such as the street art for example, can promote the place image, express the local culture and strengthening the local place identity.

Furthermore, the creation of a brand or the Bloemerstraat brand became a process to discover what and who creates the Bloemerstraat, which is a process of determining the unique characteristics and strongest assets, turning and regarding its negative elements into positive elements, develop ideas and concepts for the brand and building a story to tell through place branding practices. Finally, developing a comprehensive place brand for a street in decline is about building a new, improved and positive reputation, especially for the Bloemerstraat, which is a long-term process. The Bloemerstraat is improving and starting to bloom again and the fruits are already showing: the 'Bloemerstraat approach' that has been going on for the last year serves as the model project for other places in Gelderland.

Table of contents

1	Introduction.....	8
1.1.1	Core of the research.....	9
1.2	Social relevance.....	12
1.3	Scientific relevance.....	13
1.4	Research question.....	16
1.5	Reading outline.....	17
2	Theoretical framework.....	18
2.1	Assemblage theory.....	18
2.1.1	Assemblage theory in the Bloemerstraat case.....	19
2.2	3P's: place identity, place culture and place image.....	22
2.2.1	Interaction between the 3P's.....	23
2.3	Place identity in relation to place branding.....	26
2.4	The conceptual model: assemblage and place identity.....	30
3	Methodology.....	32
3.1	Case study.....	32
3.2	Data selection.....	34
3.3	Explaining the conceptual framework: 3P's and the four sub-processes.....	37
3.3.1	Place identity: place culture and image.....	37
3.3.2	The four sub-processes and the Bloemerstraat brand.....	38
3.4	Validation.....	40
4	The Bloemerstraat and similar cases.....	41
4.1	A brief history of the Bloemerstraat.....	41
4.2	2015 and onwards: current developments and plans.....	45
4.3	Similar cases.....	50
5	Research findings.....	55
5.1	Surveys.....	55
5.1.1	Residents.....	55
5.1.2	Entrepreneurs.....	59
5.1.3	Conclusion surveys.....	62
5.2	Interviews.....	64
5.2.1	Interview with Bloemerstraat entrepreneurs.....	64
5.2.2	Street interviews in the Bloemerstraat.....	68
5.2.3	Conclusion interviews.....	72
5.3	Tips.....	74

6	The Place Identity of the Bloemerstraat	76
6.1	Place identity: the culture and image	76
6.2	Place identity coming together in key words.....	82
7	Creating the brand: the four sub-processes in relation to branding	85
7.1	The Bloemerstraat brand: assemblage and place identity.....	93
7.2	Conclusion branding.....	96
8	Conclusion	97
8.1	Reflection and recommendations.....	100
	Appendix I. Interview questions Bhalu & Cafe de Plak	102
	Appendix II. Example of observation protocol.....	104
	Appendix III. Branch division in the core shopping area of Nijmegen	105
	Appendix IV. Comments from the resident survey	106
	Appendix V. Comments from the entrepreneur's survey	110
	Appendix VI. Observation Protocol – onsite visit Meijel.....	118
	Appendix VII. Observation Protocol – Bloemerstraat Openings Event.....	123
	Appendix VIII. Observation Protocol – meeting municipality Nijmegen.....	125
	Appendix IX. Communication strategy.....	130
	Bibliography.....	134

1 Introduction

For years newspaper headlines like 'one in three stores will disappear in 4 years' have been published and predicted the disappearance of physical stores and the image of the shopping street as we all know it today. The retail sector in the Netherlands is under pressure. Causes are diverse such as the recent economic recession, structural changes in the retail market and a changing consumer behaviour (Ossakina, Switak, Teulings, & Zwaneveld, 2016). This creates winners and losers in shopping areas. Some stores have become unprofitable, winners will benefit and economically live up, but losers are faced with long-term vacancy.

Furthermore, online shopping is increasing drastically which is, of course, good news for Bol.com and Zalando, but not so great for the retailers who have homogenised the image of the Dutch shopping street and made these streets so predictable (Hospers, Verheul, & Boekema, 2011). In recent years, the impact of online shopping and new technologies have become apparent on the meaning of physical stores. Consumers must be tempted more than ever to visit a store or a city centre. Consumers want more experience and entertainment in cities, think of festivals, events, hospitality and cultural institution. Also, public space plays an increasingly important factor in facilitating these forms of entertainment. The city centres and the shopping streets slowly transform from a place to buy to a place to be.

Nijmegen is also struggling with these problems. A shrinking demand for retail property combined with an overflowing market for retail space makes vacancy even more visible in the inner city of Nijmegen (Gemeente Nijmegen, 2015). Therefore, in 2015, the municipality of Nijmegen drafted a new policy document called *Binnenstad van de toekomst, Visie en transformatie en aanpak leegstand* to prepare the city centre for the future. Especially, vacancy is considered as one of the main problems in this policy document because of the negative effect it can have on the living environment and atmosphere, which could prevent people from visiting specific streets. However, it can also give way to new opportunities and innovations. Introducing surprising and new retail concepts, redevelopment of public space and improving the business and living climate can, as it were, be "made possible" by vacancy.



Figure 1. Left: a photo of the Bloemerstraat after the redevelopment in 2017. Right: a photo of the Smetiusstraat (taken from the Bloemerstraat) after the redevelopment in 2017 ©Joy van de Wert

This report focuses on the 'new opportunities' of vacancy in the Bloemerstraat (also includes the Smetiusstraat) in Nijmegen which has been in decline for some years now and is labelled, according to the municipality, as one of the most vulnerable streets in the city. See figure 1 for the current situation

of the Bloemerstraat after large scale redevelopments in 2017. The Bloemerstraat (along with the Smetiusstraat) is located in the city centre (see figure 2), is the fastest way from central station to Plein 1944 and is a very multicultural street where loads of different cultures come together. Besides, the Bloemerstraat has a large variety of restaurants and stores such as many döner kebab shops, sushi restaurants, coffee shops and the iconic cafe the Plak to nail studios, tattoo shops, a barber, medicine store and a do-it-your-own shop. Furthermore, the street has a rather rough and bad image and is characterized by its busy traffic and somewhat ugly and outdated houses build in post-war style. In addition, the Bloemerstraat struggles with a high vacancy rate and has the reputation of a rather violent and bad environment in the evening. The street is defined as a ‘vulnerable street’ by the municipality of Nijmegen, however, they also acknowledge the Bloemerstraat as a place with much potential and a place with a valuable number of distinctive stores which give a unique character to the street and the city of Nijmegen (Gemeente Nijmegen, 2015). So, how can the Bloemerstraat be economically revitalize and make it into an attractive shopping and living environment, or a place to meet?



Figure 2. The city centre of Nijmegen with the Bloemerstraat and Smetiusstraat marked with a red line ©Google Maps

1.1.1 Core of the research

The municipality of Nijmegen called, in their policy document *Binnenstad van de toekomst, Visie en transformatie en aanpak leegstand*, the city centre of Nijmegen as an area that is and will always be in constant development and under influence of national and local factors and trends. This policy document puts a clear focus on vacancy in the city centre, which is especially visible outside the A1 shopping area such as the so called ‘ringstraten’ including the Bloemerstraat and Smetiusstraat. Vacancy results in several negative consequences such as the deterioration of the business climate and degradation of the liveability and attractiveness of shopping streets for visitors, entrepreneurs and residents. The Bloemerstraat and Smetiusstraat are both labelled as vulnerable areas with urgent

needs (Gemeente Nijmegen, 2015). Strong improvement of the function profile, improvement of public space and facade improvement are aspects from *Binnenstad van de toekomst, Visie en transformatie en aanpak leegstand* that the municipality of Nijmegen wishes to improve in the street. This research further builds on the wishes of the municipality to revitalize the street and address the main problems facing the street. However, the aim is also to improve the diverse, multicultural and unique character of the Bloemerstraat. The municipality has acknowledged this as an important aspect in their policy document:

These streets are often vulnerable areas, but also very valuable areas because the businesses and stores in these streets have a typical "Nijmegen face". In these areas more, smaller businesses and stores can be found with a diverse character. The 'ringstraten' ensure that Nijmegen has a unique variety of retail. Also, Nijmegen has previously been voted the most varied shopping city in the Netherlands by the CBS. (Gemeente Nijmegen, 2015)



Figure 3. Left: photo of Vuurens a well-known cafeteria in the Bloemerstraat and in the whole of Nijmegen. Right: an image of a nail studio and Shisha Lounge which indicates the variety of businesses that can be found in the Bloemerstraat. ©Joy van de Wert

Thus, the municipality greatly emphasizes on maintaining the unique character of certain streets in Nijmegen such as the Bloemerstraat. Therefore, this research draws from these established goals to economically transform the Bloemerstraat by sticking close the typical and unique DNA of the Bloemerstraat. This results in the question: what is the DNA or identity of the street? This research attempts to gain insight into the DNA of the Bloemerstraat by using a concept called place identity from Kavaratzis and Hatch. Thus, by determining the identity of a place or the DNA, certain questions can be answered such as: What is the identity or story of the street? Who 'uses' the street? What is the image or opinion of visitors and non-visitors? How are new changes received by the public? Subsequently, this research also aims to trigger and conduct effective place branding, based on the DNA of the Bloemerstraat, in order to work towards a newly and revitalized Bloemerstraat. This way of branding is also called effective identity-based branding (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). This form of identity-based branding is also in line with the wishes of the municipality and is actually the 'tool' that really contributes to transform and improve the neglected and declined Bloemerstraat.

Furthermore, the following sections of this chapter shall discuss the relevance and the research questions. The social relevance will provide a detailed description of the relevance of this research for

the municipality and the city of Nijmegen and how this research is a part of the transformation process of the Bloemerstraat. The scientific relevance will focus on the uniqueness of this research by delving into current and popular studies and papers regarding branding and the identity of a place in combination with street renewal. Lastly, the research question, with smaller sub-questions, shall be discussed which will be the fundamental core of this research.

1.2 Social relevance

After the Second World War, new architecture and urban trends were used to rebuild cities, which also includes the Bloemerstraat and surrounding area. In the Bloemerstraat, some old buildings have been restored but generally, new modern buildings now dominate the scene. The city of Nijmegen is still in post-war transition to transform its public spaces. For example, Plein 1944, after the war it was decided to construct a large inner-city square however soon it served as a parking area for years. This changed in the 80's, when the parking function was removed, and the square was transformed into a bare and empty square surrounded by 'solid concrete blocks'. At that time, Plein 1944 only served for events such as the Vierdaagse celebrations, fairgrounds, carnival and markets. The dream of creating a meeting place with allure for all residents in Nijmegen became a desolate square without a meeting function. After years of work and redevelopment, it is still a square with wildly divided opinions. As Henk van Houtum, professor at the Radboud University, formulated in his opinion: 'the recently converted Plein '44, however, announced as a square for all, is practically a non-man's land in practice'. Henk van Houtum therefore suggests that it is an idea to return to the Roman origin of Nijmegen and to study how the Italians succeed in making such pleasant markets and meeting places.

The introduction about Plein 1944 is used to show how a city, or certain parts of a city, is never truly finished. Guidance and maintenance are sometimes necessary to keep up with the current time and changing consumer climate. The municipality of Nijmegen already mentions this in their policy document *Binnenstad van de toekomst, Visie en transformatie en aanpak leegstand*, in which the Bloemerstraat is labelled as one of the most urgent cases to tackle and transform. Just like Plein 1944, the Bloemerstraat is another example of a street that was almost completely rebuilt after the war. Nowadays, the street is characterized by impoverished post-war buildings, vacancy, many night- and coffee shops and sometimes chaotic traffic situations. Grey, drunk people, drugs, criminals and an unsafe atmosphere in the evening are words that come to mind when discussing and talking about the Bloemerstraat, especially with people who never actually visit the street. Reason enough why the municipality, as the initiator, has decided to redevelop the street and to tackle its current problems. The municipality has explicitly addressed the urgency and labelled the Bloemerstraat area as an area with a lot of potential but very vulnerable. Strong reinforcement of the function profile, facade improvement, improvement of public space are aspects that the municipality of Nijmegen wishes to promote in the street. In addition, the municipality wants to stimulate the diverse atmosphere and unique character of the Bloemerstraat.

By investigating the DNA of the street, it becomes clear how the street is assembled. How residents think about the street, what entrepreneurs like to see and how visitors look upon the street. Determining the place identity thus contributes to the long-term process of reviving the Bloemerstraat and tackling the problems facing the street. This research contributes to the wishes of the municipality and is part of the actual transformation process of the Bloemerstraat (also includes the Smetiusstraat). Therefore, this research helps stakeholders, such as the municipality, consultancy Seinpost, but also residents and entrepreneurs, in realizing their goals to revitalize the centre of Nijmegen make it resistant for the future and creating a pleasant working and living environment. Summarized, this research contributes in making the Bloemerstraat future-proof and develop it as an economic strong and social hotspot.

1.3 Scientific relevance

As has been discussed before the Bloemerstraat is part of the typical “Nijmegen face” with a diverse and distinctive character. Or maybe in other words it has its own DNA. This research is partly about that DNA and how to use it in further branding practices to reach the goals set out by the municipality. Therefore, this section will provide a detailed description how the concepts of place identity and branding in combination with for example streets, city centres or shopping areas, that are in decline, are gaining popularity due to the problems encountered in these areas. This chapter focuses around this fact and will elaborate around the use of the identity, DNA and branding in modern literature, research and debates.

First, place branding is an ever-increasing academic field and popular practice, especially when looking at the quantity of blogs, articles, interviews and academic papers about this subject (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013) (Anholt, 2008). The recent increase in place branding studies and the rising number of branding consultancy companies also shows the increasing popularity of this subject. This increase in popularity is also reflected in the development of city brand rankings such as the Anholt-GMI City Brands Index and the Saffron European City Brand Barometer (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). A growing number of publications on place branding have sought to initiate an overall theory of place branding. However, this progress is a slow one and instead of a collective theory in which the contribution of place branding comes together, there are many different perspectives (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). This can also be a ‘healthy’ sign for a young academic discipline such as place branding and the discussion can lead to clarification of the term, however at the moment there seems to be a large division between theory and practice and an urgent need for theoretical clarification of the field (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013).

Besides numerous organisations, consultancies firms and government organisation also investigate the meaning, usability and importance of branding and identity and how these components can contribute solving problems that for example Western inner cities and shopping areas are facing now. An example of such organisation is *Platform De Nieuwe Winkelstraat*, which is an independent network centre in the Netherlands, they have developed a method which focuses on analysing an entire shopping area by investigating all involved stakeholders. The results from the analysing process are then concluded in a report of recommendations with actions points for all the involved stakeholders. Furthermore, this method also deals with the concept of identity and ask what the identity of that certain area actually is. This stands in line with Kavaratzis and Hatch theory about place identity in which the identity of a place is an interactive and dynamic process made up of all the involved stakeholders, more in this in the following chapter (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). Also, the Dutch government has ordered numerous reports on the growing problems within Dutch inner cities and shopping streets. *Planbureau voor de Leefomgeving (PBL)* concludes, in their report called *De veerkrachtige binnenstad*, that there are major differences between city centres and that it is possible to distinguish five groups with a comparable social, economic and spatial profile. In this report it is stated that strategies to strengthen the economic position and quality of life in shopping streets and city centres must related to the identity of that certain area (Evers, Tennekes, & van Dongen, 2005). Another organisation *Platform31* compiled a report, called *de nieuwe binnenstad*, about the future of Dutch cities. In this report, Platform31 also addresses the increasing number of cities who focus on emphasizing their own identity and qualities and thus the particular DNA of the city that is preferably authentic and idiosyncratic (van Rooijen, Heebels, & Machiel, 2018). Furthermore, Platform31 explains in their report that cities have to put less

attention on the city centre as a mere shopping area, but more attention on culture, low-traffic, high-quality design of public space and above all: a place with its own face (van Rooijen, Heebels, & Machiel, 2018). However, it is still customization for each individual city. For example, it is easier for a city with an old historic city centre compared to a city like Eindhoven. In Eindhoven they aim to link the city centre to the profile of the city as a technology and design city, however, the inner city does not reflect this and therefore lags behinds (van Rooijen, Heebels, & Machiel, 2018).

Furthermore, another report related to branding, called *Ready to brand?*, is developed by the Dutch Council of Shopping centres. This report focuses on how to create a brand and centralizes around the importance of a distinctive character. This report also supports to answer questions like: how do you ensure that you are visibly distinctive? And how do you ensure an experience through which customers acknowledge you as relevant? While this report clearly mentions the importance of identity-based branding it also puts a great effort on dominant place branding methods with a strong focus on promotion and communication measures (NRW, 2014)

Not only in the Netherlands, but also in the United Kingdom cities and towns are facing some major problems. British high streets in cities and towns are facing urgent problems because of the increase in chain stores that contribute to the formation of clone towns which create a loss of sociability compared to the traditional shopping (Wrigley & Lambiri, 2015). The fading away of small and traditional shops is viewed as the erosion of the social glue that binds communities together and entrenching social exclusion in the UK (Wrigley & Lambiri, 2015). Also, smaller town centres experience the ongoing challenges faced by towns and cities in the UK and suggested that 'the town centre serves not only social, utilitarian or hedonic shopping purposes, but also supports out-of-hours entertainment and leisure services' (Wrigley & Lambiri, 2015). The way that consumers perceive and use town centres has fundamentally changed. These problems are visible in numerous towns across the UK, such as Alsager, Altrincham and Holmfirth, which are facing the same problems, and all have a sort of identity problem (Ntounis, 2017). Interestingly, these cases show the usefulness of place branding based on investigating the place identity of these towns (Ntounis, 2017).

The concept of place identity is also used in other cases such as the regeneration of cultural quarters. In his work, McCarthy argues that cities are increasingly searching for culture-related applications and encouraging so-called 'cultural districts'. In these situations, public art is often used to promote the place image and to strengthen local place identity. But, these attempts may ultimately be contradictory, because the image projected at the neighbourhood may not match the local place identity (McCarthy, 2006). McCarthy uses the concepts of place identity and place image to investigate effects of culture-related stimulation measures for urban reconstruction. These two concepts are used on a larger scale, namely in Northern Quarter Manchester and Cathedral Quarter in Belfast. Another research, which has a clear focus on place identity, has been conducted in the cities of Amsterdam (Oostenlijke Havengebied), Bilbao, Barcelona and Maastricht (Ceramique). In these cases, the local place identity was used to successfully develop transformation areas. These areas have had their own specific problems, especially when one type industry or services disappeared, and evolved by using their DNA and make this identity visible in the culture (physical environment) which also results in a changing place image (Joustra, 2005).

Thus, the role of identity in the transformation of urban areas, who are in decline or have specific problems, is an increasingly important and popular concept, especially in combination with the branding of a place. The relevance of this research is reflected in the fact that the application of the place identity concept, combined with place branding, is used on street level and thus contributing to the economic revitalization of single shopping street. The current debate and literature around branding and the use of identity regarding urban renewal has mainly been used on a larger scale such as (European) cities, villages or city centres (Moilanen & Rainisto, 2009). Thus, zooming in on street level, for example, has hardly been done (Ashworth & Kavaratzis, 2010) (Moilanen & Rainisto, 2009). Using the concepts on an even smaller scale, on a single street which faces its own specific problems, is something different. This is what makes this research interesting and relevant because it is just a single street, the Bloemerstraat, which is not a high street, not a large shopping area or an entire city centre. Thus, this research is delving deeper into the place identity on smaller scale and combining it with identity-based branding to contribute to revitalise a street in decline such as the Bloemerstraat.

1.4 Research question

A well-formulated research question guides, as it were, the research process and helps in developing appropriate research strategies. Therefore, the research question should focus clearly on the topic that is described in the objective (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2015). Furthermore, the efficiency of the research question refers to the extent to which the knowledge given by the question contributes to achieving the research goal (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2015). Looking back at research objective, the research question will focus be:

How can a street in decline be improved by branding? And what is the role of the identity of a place in this context?

This research will use be about how branding can contribute to improve a street in decline, and in this case the Bloemerstraat (and Smetiusstraat) in Nijmegen. Also, it is aimed to determine the role of the identity of a place in the branding of a street in decline. Furthermore, the part about a street in decline refers to the fact that a street in decline, such as the Bloemerstraat, is facing its own particular problems such as a deteriorated public space, poor living and working environment and a high vacancy rate. Besides, the part about ‘improved by branding’ refers to realizing and working towards the set goals by the municipality. These goals are for example: to tackle the vacancy problem, improve the business and living climate, making the unique and diverse character known and visible, improve the attractiveness and appearance of the street and a strong improvement of the function profile, public and the facades of building. Therefore, this research investigates if determining the place identity of the Bloemerstraat can positively contribute to the mentioned goals of the municipality by working towards a Bloemerstraat brand in which these goals are imbedded.

Several sub-questions have been formulated to support the main research questions, these are:

- *What are the problems that the Bloemerstraat in Nijmegen is facing? And what is the current approach used to improve the street?*

This sub-question refers to the street in decline from the main question: the Bloemerstraat. This street is used as an example of a shopping street in decline and it is therefore essential to investigate the past and current going-on, combined with the current approach that is going on to improve the street.

- *How are other similar streets dealing with their problems?*

This sub-question is aimed to investigate how other, maybe similar, streets who are in decline are dealing with their problems. Lessons can be drawn from these cases and enrich the results of this research.

- *How can the branding of a street in decline be analysed or explained in relation to the identity of a place?*

This sub-question refers to branding practices that contribute to making a Bloemerstraat brand it is therefore aimed to investigate how branding relates to identity. Besides, this sub-question also relates to how measures to improve the street can contribute to the creation of the Bloemerstraat brand and perhaps influence the culture or image of the place itself.

1.5 Reading outline

This study is divided into seven more chapters. The following chapter is **chapter 2. Theoretical framework** which provides the research with a scientific basis. Chapter 2 will elaborate on the different concepts which are being used in this research. The final section of the second chapter will show the conceptual model in which the aim and concepts of this research are combined.

Chapter 3. Methodology is focused around the operationalisation and how it is aimed to realize the objective of this research. The chosen research strategy, the different kinds of data collection and terms such as validation are discussed. Besides, the methodology chapter will provide details on how the links in the conceptual framework from chapter 2 will be measured and analysed.

The following chapter is **chapter 4. The Bloemerstraat**. This chapter will provide the first findings and contains a short literature study into the history of the Bloemerstraat. Besides, a description of significant historical events and a detailed description about the current 'going-ons' in the Bloemerstraat shall be given and discussed.

Chapter 5. Research findings will provide the empirical part of this research. This chapter shall discuss the data that is collected during the entire research. The collected data is discussed, analysed and the most significant conclusions, regarding the place identity and branding of the Bloemerstraat, are drawn.

Chapter 6. The Place Identity of the Bloemerstraat is focused on the research findings from the previous chapter which are used to determine (and visualize) the place culture and place image the Bloemerstraat. Together, the place culture and place image make up for the place identity.

Next, in **chapter 7. Creating the brand: the four sub-processes** the creation of the Bloemerstraat brand shall be discussed. Furthermore, this chapter provides insight in the four sub-processes of place branding and insight how these processes are situated within the Bloemerstraat brand. Besides, this chapter will provide information about place branding in the Bloemerstraat through the lens of the assemblage theory.

Finally, **chapter 8. Conclusion** will provide the overall and main conclusion of this research. The place identity and Bloemerstraat brand shall be addressed. Besides, this chapter shall also provide recommendations and a reflection of the research period.

2 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework is intended to provide this research with a scientific base. In the context of this, the concepts of place identity and branding from Kavaratzis and Hatch in combination with the assemblage theory of DeLanda are explained. First, the assemblage theory, together with its most important aspects, shall be discussed in order to create a basis for the next section about the role of this theory in the case of the Bloemerstraat, and especially within the Bloemerstraat brand. Secondly, the concept of place identity shall be discussed together with the place image and place culture and the dynamic interaction between these three concepts. Following is an extensive explanation of place branding, what this term means and how this relates to the concept of place identity. Lastly, the conceptual framework will be discussed which will link the assemblage theory and the concepts of place identity and place branding together.

2.1 Assemblage theory

The idea of assemblage was developed by the philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari and was first presented in the book *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980). Then the concept of assemblage was elaborated into a theory by Manuel DeLanda in his work *A New Philosophy of Society*. As Deleuze describes, an assemblage consists of a "collection" of heterogeneous elements or objects that enter certain and specific relations. These elements or objects are not all of the same type, since an assemblage homogenizes its own components (DeLanda, 2006). Historic processes play an important role in the creation of assemblages, it is the past that defines these assemblages and elements. After all, all assemblages have a full historical identity and each of them is an individual entity, individual community, individual organizational or individual city (DeLanda, 2006).

Assemblages are no organic totalities but collections of elements that temporarily have certain relationships with each other (Kooij, Lagendijk, Moonen, & Peeters, 2012). Therefore, assemblages have a strong dynamic character because the relations between elements can constantly change without the individual elements changing. This approach to relationships is also called relations of exteriority (Kooij, Lagendijk, Moonen, & Peeters, 2012). To regard assemblages as an organic totality, relations of interiority play an important role. In this case, the meaning of the elements, and even the characteristics of the elements, are determined by their roles within the social whole (Kooij, Lagendijk, Moonen, & Peeters, 2012). The role elements as a whole is determined by the meaning, properties and relationships of these elements. In this system, elements can even lose their meaning and do not exist independently of their relationships when separated from the whole (DeLanda, 2006). DeLanda contradicts this closed-system-thinking and prefers the idea of assemblages as an open combination of elements. Thinking from relations of exteriority, each assemblage has its own dynamics, and therefore its own contribution, both constructive and destructive. Relationships can therefore change without the elements changing (Kooij, Lagendijk, Moonen, & Peeters, 2012).

In the assemblage theory, relationships are formed by processes of coding and territorialisation. Coding refers to the role of language in creating an identity of a social entity (DeLanda, 2006). Coding concerns how to act and how to create an assemblage and gives an assemblage identity. Coding plays a role in developing and retaining identity, because by naming how it also clarifies why we have to act. Thus, coding can be seen as the way to shape, discover and create structures based on language (Kooij,

Lagendijk, Moonen, & Peeters, 2012). A clear example of coding are policy documents or concepts because it contains a "story" of issues, solutions, ambitions, etc. and how to achieve a policy goal.

Territorialisation is another process that can create relationships within the assemblage theory. This is the process of ordering, selecting, restriction and collaboration of the elements that form assemblages (Kooij, Lagendijk, Moonen, & Peeters, 2012). Territorialisation not only refers to the determination of the spatial boundaries of a whole, such as in the territory of a community, city or country, but also to what extent a component of an assemblage is drawn from a homogenous repertoire, or the degree to which an assemblage is homogenizing its own elements (Kooij, Lagendijk, Moonen, & Peeters, 2012). The challenge of territorialisation is to get a strategy or project going and to keep it going from the ideas and scripts, from the coding and the local translation of the coding, and to give it a well-defined place in social reality (Kooij, Lagendijk, Moonen, & Peeters, 2012).

An example of a high level of coding is the associated of control and centralization. The more despotic a state becomes, the more everything becomes coded: food, manners, common language, trade, currency etc.

Example of territorialisation is the spatial concentration of closely related business in a specific area, together with determination of firm and clear boundaries such as Silicon Valley in the United States and the Techno Campus in Eindhoven.

While coding and territorialisation create relationships between different elements there are processes that cause dysfunction of elements within in assemblages. This is a form of de- and reterritorialization (Kooij, Lagendijk, Moonen, & Peeters, 2012). A major reterritorialization process are the processes that affect the integrity of borders such as the loss of a province or the loss of a piece of territory to another country. The process of reterritorialization is sometimes accompanied by a changing identity of the whole. This can also affect encoding. In this way, the meaning of a concept can shift (Kooij, Lagendijk, Moonen, & Peeters, 2012).

In his work DeLanda gives a clear example of an assemblage in the way of an ecosystem. In this assemblage, the material components are the animals, trees and soil, while expressing components are regarded as habits, colours, smells. Further on the territorializing role in this assemblage are relations between the components, food chains and adaptive traits. These roles maintain the components, their relationships and the identity of the assemblages. On the other hand, is the de-territorializing role such as the invasion of foreign species, mutation, adaptation of the environment and climate change. Lastly, the coding aspects can be regarded by environmental discourses who seek to protect the ecosystem. (DeLanda, 2006)

2.1.1 Assemblage theory in the Bloemerstraat case

This section will focus on how the assemblage theory contributes to the development and analysing of the place identity and place branding process. It is aimed that the assemblage theory, in combination with the identity-orientated branding theory of Kavaratzis and Hatch, contributes to achieving a detailed and bottom up insight of the Bloemerstraat brand as an assemblage and how the brand can possibly can work.

As has been discussed before, the assemblage theory is suitable to find out how a certain phenomenon is established and functions on the basis of the convergence and collaboration of many different elements (Kooij, Lagendijk, Moonen, & Peeters, 2012). This allows the researcher to move away from the notion of the city as a whole to the city consisting out of multiple assemblages. Farias agrees with this way of thinking and states that “the concept of assemblage is coined to make sense of processes of construction by which cities, urban phenomena and urban life are constituted” (Farías, 2011). Also, Deleuze, as has been explained before, builds further on the argument that assemblages are entities which are made up of different heterogeneous elements that establishes (limited) relationships among these elements. Thus, the assemblage theory asks the question how a specific area works. A country, region, neighbourhood or even a street ‘works’ (for them) in a specific way because there is something special about that area that has its own dynamics and processes (streams of people, data, energy etc.). Essential is to look to an area from an ontological point of view and ask if all of this works or does not work. This point of view, that is key in the assemblage approach, looks at what is out there, what is the (urban) world made of. This also makes the history of an area very important. By examining from an ontological framework, it is more likely to include all elements, than when starting from an epistemological point of view. When studying assemblages from an ontological point of view, it becomes clear that these phenomena exist from interaction between different components and their relationships. Thus, assemblages are an emergent phenomenon through their components, these components together create the assemblages. This is in line with the concept of emergent properties which defines a property as a collective or complex system but not as an individual component (DeLanda, 2010). For example, the heart consists of various parts such as heart valves. But heart valves alone cannot pump the blood, the whole heart is needed. The sum of the whole is therefore more than its parts. This aspect of assemblage will come back later in this research.

The Kaaij is a cultural event which is held every summer underneath the Waal bridge in Nijmegen. It was a spontaneous idea by a group of people which has, over the course of five years, grown into a summer-long festival: ‘summer long enjoyment of old and new acquaintances, musicians, theatre makers, chefs, poets, DJs, artists, peddlers, bands, stands and entertainers of various plumes.’ The Kaaij can be looked upon as an assemblage because it is an emergent phenomenon through its components. It is based on relations and it has a strong dynamic character with a coming together of different streams of people. Thus, the Kaaij is based on different components which together constitute the festival as a whole.

Furthermore, two components of the assemblage theory can actually influence the relations between elements within an assemblage. These components are territorialisation and coding. Territorialisation refers to the structural coherence of an assemblages. It thus refers to the organizational structures and relationships that hold an assemblage together, give it shape and increase the internal homogeneity (DeLanda, 2010). On the other hand, coding describes the process of handling how to create an assemblage and gives it an identity (DeLanda, 2010). Coding can be seen as the way to shape, discover and create structures based on language (Kooij, Lagendijk, Moonen, & Peeters, 2012). These two processes play a key role within the assemblage of the Bloemerstraat. In the case of the Bloemerstraat, the physical and non-physical elements in the area have and are being territorialized, and have as it has been, their own space and power, these elements are further coded in a practical matter to work in the social whole, for example new agreements on the further development of the public space in the Bloemerstraat or creating a solution to the parking problems. The territorialized elements in the Bloemerstraat can be transformed into new practical plans with questions like why, who and how to

act through the process of coding. Coding gives the assemblages a new identity and plays a role in developing and retaining this identity because by naming how we act it also clarifies why we have to act. Coding is the process that influences the place culture and place image of the Bloemerstraat and therefore affects the place identity.

Summarized, why this theory? It is a describing theory, it explores how certain phenomenon are created and from which elements it exists. As is mentioned before it is desired to work towards identifying the place identity of the Bloemerstraat and to conduct effective branding in order to contribute to the economic revitalization of the Bloemerstraat. The assemblage theory will be incorporated into this research by using the essence of this theory in order to analyse the branding process and how the Bloemerstraat brand can actually work. Besides, the place identity is also in line with the essence assemblage: the sum of the parts is more than the sum of the whole. This also applies to place identity in which all the involved stakeholders are necessary to get a complete picture of place identity. Thus, the assemblage theory is used to investigate how the streets works, how the brand is constructed and how the brand can be viable and a stable assemblage.

2.2 3P's: place identity, place culture and place image

The following sections will focus on the core of this research: the place identity in combination with the place branding theory of Kavaratzis and Hatch. First of all, the place identity, together with the place culture and place image, shall be discussed. Furthermore, the interaction between these three concepts in the form of four dynamic sub-processes shall be explained and finally place branding in combination with place identity, or identity-based place branding, will be elaborated.

A common view of identity is that it is internal to a specific place. This is however contracted by Hatch and Schultz who suggest that the identity of a place is actually the interaction of between the internal and external definition of identity (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). Therefore, the identity of a place or the place identity can be divided in two other concepts that both influence the identity of a place, namely: the place culture and the place image. The place identity is thus a concept that is constantly constructed and deconstructed from the inside (place culture) and outside processes (place image) (Kooij, 2015). In their article about identity-based place branding Kavaratzis and Hatch describe the constructing and deconstructing of the place identity as follows:

'Place identities are constructed through historical, political, religious and cultural discourses; through local knowledge, and influenced by power struggles.'

The process that internally influences the identity of a place is the place culture or the local culture (Kooij, 2015). Place culture can be seen as a way of life that is experienced and created by people living and working in that particular place and therefore provides the context for the internal definitions of place identity (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). A collectively owned culture shapes and provides meaning for the way of doing things in each society and for all groups of people (Aitken & Campelo, 2011). For example, people in Catalonia are demanding independence from Spain because they have a collectively owned culture, that for them is different from the rest of Spain. It can thus be suggested that place culture embodies the internal definition of place identity (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). In addition, place culture represents an important link between place identity and place branding, Aitken and Campelo (2011) argue the role of place culture in the branding process as follows:

'brands play an integrative role when related to places because at the core of the brand is culture and the people who live and create it' (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013).

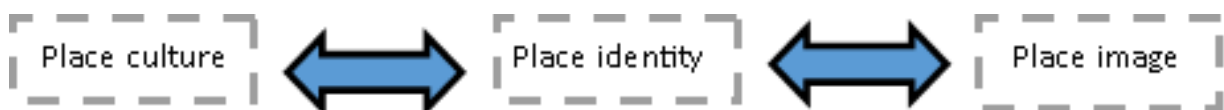


Figure 4. The place identity model according to Kavaratzis & Hatch (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013)

The process that externally influences the identity of a place is the place image (Kooij, 2015). The place image is the reputation of a particular place formed by the image of outsiders of that particular place (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). Outsiders or visitors have a different image of a certain place compared to people who actually live and work there. Thus, the place image is defined as the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that people have of that place (Gertner & Kotler, 2004). A particular image that someone can get from a specific place is actually the simplification of a large number of associations

and information from that place together (Gertner & Kotler, 2004). Take Amsterdam, for example, the first image that comes to mind for most people is the image of weed, drugs, canals and the red-light district. This is a small part of the bigger image that people have of Amsterdam, which also included the world-class museums for example. However, the perception of people to that place is not the attitude they have towards that place (Gertner & Kotler, 2004). Every city has its own offer of specific city-bound features. People can all have the same image of Amsterdam as a city with canals and beautiful historical buildings while someone else only sees a city with old dusty buildings and prefers modern Rotterdam.

Summarized, Kavaratzis and Hatch conclude that the place culture is '*the context of internal definitions of identity*' and place image is '*the site of external definitions of the identity*' (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). It can be noted that place identity is an interactive and dynamic process which is the result from a dialogue between different stakeholders. This dynamic process is, as it were, the identity structure and the place identity instead of the outcome of such a process (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). The assumption that the place identity is the process between the internal and external definition of identity contradicts current place branding methods and place branding theories (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). Therefore, in the vision of Kavaratzis and Hatch, identity and image can be considered as two sides of the same coin which mean nothing without each other (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). Understanding the identity of a place is a useful and effective way to build on branding theories because the way in which place identity is conceptualized has a significant impact on the way in which branding is conceptualized and executed (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). The following section goes on to explain why place identity is essential for identity-based branding methods.

2.2.1 Interaction between the 3P's

As is mentioned before, Hatch and Schultz consider identity as an endless conversation between culture and image. However, they also describe an interplay between these three elements in the form of four parallel sub-processes. These four sub-processes are: *expression*, *impressing*, *mirroring* and *reflecting* (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). The figure below illustrates the four sub-processes in relation to the place identity, culture and image

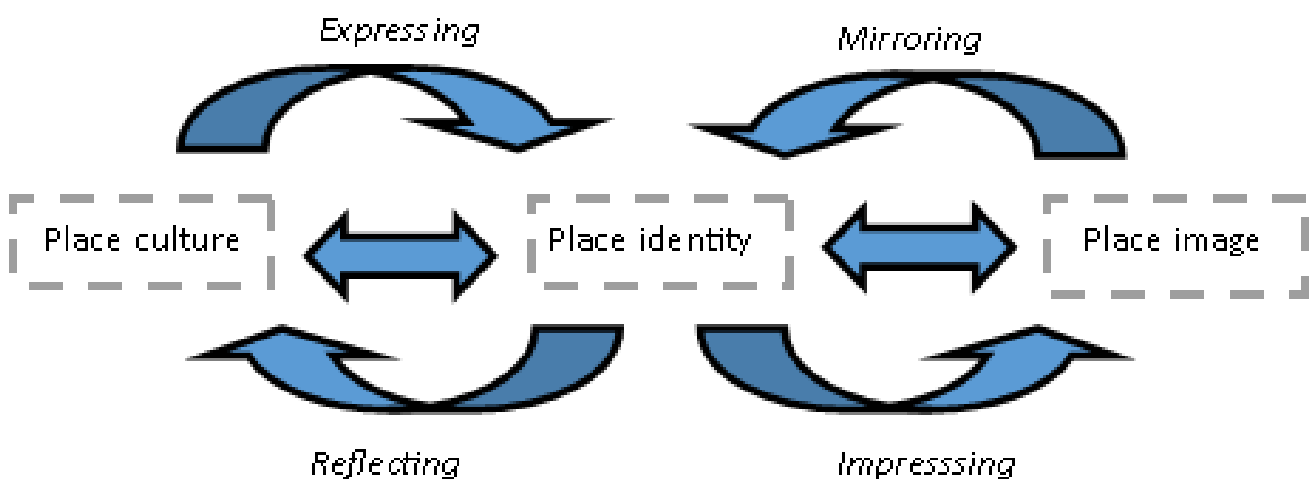


Figure 5. The place identity model with the four sub-processes of expressing, mirroring, reflecting and impressing (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013)

The first link is the process of expression which is the process in which the identity "understands" its own culture (cultural understanding) or the process by which culture makes itself known through identity claims (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). For example, the Catalanian case, they use their own flag, language and anthem to express their culture. The second link is the process of impressing by which the expressed identity leaves 'impressions' on others (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). This impression can be either positive or negative.



Figure 6. An example of expressing. Catalonians express their identity claim. Source: Reagrupament Internacional



Figure 7. An example of impressing. The amount of vacant buildings can leave a negative image on visitors and resulting in them not coming back. Source: own work.

The third link described by Kavaratzis and Hatch is the process of mirroring in which the identity of a place mirrors the images of another. Mirroring can help to better understand the place identity of an area or a way to reinterpret an identity of an area (Kooij, 2015). Mirroring causes the place image of a location to be related to another place identity, which eventually influences the place culture (Kooij, 2015). This possible effect on the place culture is the process of reflecting. Reflecting is the last process that is described by Kavaratzis and Hatch and is the process by which identity is embedded in cultural understandings.



Figure 8. An example of mirroring. A lot of cities try to mirror their image with the successful image of Silicon Valley in the United States. Source: Pixabay (allowed to reproduce)



Figure 9. An example of reflecting. The I amsterdam sign, logo etc. are new symbols and meanings that has influenced and has been incorporated into the place culture of the city. Source: Pixabay (allowed to reproduce)

It becomes clear that these processes are not a linear process and repeat themselves (Kooij, 2015). Thus, the place identity is under the influence of these four processes. Kavaratzis and Hatch describe the processes of expression, impressing, mirroring and reflecting as the process that influence the place identity:

'To put it differently, the internally informed aspect of identity (culture) is expressed by and expresses facets of the culture of the place, while this new round of internally formed and expressed identity leaves impressions on external stakeholders (images), which return the favour by informing the internally shaped aspects of identity by 'holding a mirror' to them. Culture thereby changes such that new cultural understandings will be expressed on the next round of expression from within the place to reframe and additionally inform the identity' (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013).

An example of these four processes in relation to place identity is given by Henk-Jan Kooij in his book *Space for Innovation, Innovation in Space*. Kooij focuses in the sixth chapter of his work on the city of Eindhoven, historically an industrial city known Philips and DAF. In 1990, these two industries fell on hard terms, and Philips even moved its headquarters to Amsterdam. The city had 'lost' its most well-known and iconic elements. Therefore, Eindhoven began to focus on other elements like regional diversity, cooperation and attempted to reform the region's economy from industrial production to research, technology and development. This process was taken on in the next two decades, however, Eindhoven remained its old industrial image and was still regarded as the city of Philips and DAF. Government officials in the city realized that this outdated image of Eindhoven reflected other regions such as Munich and Silicon Valley (Kooij, 2015). Therefore, the city decided to focus more on technology, design and innovation which currently 'makes' Eindhoven. In the case of Eindhoven, mirroring was part of regular government processes that ultimately evolved into the installation of a professional organization with the main objective: economic development and branding of the entire region (Kooij, 2015). Also, impressing was very important in order to express this new renewed image of Eindhoven, for example by inviting delegation to come to the High-Tech Campus.

Thus, the concepts of place identity, place culture and place image are under influence from each other through the four sub-processes. New emerged or incorporated elements in the place culture have a direct influence onto the place identity which also has a direct effect on the place image through the process of impressing. In these ongoing processes between the place identity, place culture and place image also stand the concept of place branding. After all certain practices of branding can have great influences on the culture and image of a particular place. The following chapter will elaborate on this and will explain the concept of place branding, what it means and how it relates to the complex interaction between the place identity, culture and image together with the four sub-processes.

2.3 Place identity in relation to place branding

For centuries, cities have been using branding as part of their municipal policies to create something unique that distinguishes them from other cities (Ashworth & Kavaratzis, 2010). This principle is as old as the first cities and the first government itself for example, city rights and special buildings are 'old forms' of urban branding (Ashworth G. , 2011). One of the main reasons why place branding has increased in popularity was the need for former industrial cities in the Western world, such as Eindhoven, Essen and Manchester, to redefine themselves by positively changing their imaging (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013).

However, what is branding in the current and modern field? Often place branding is mixed with place marketing, the difference between these two concepts is sometimes unclear. Some experts consider branding as the strategic marketing guide while others put branding in the range of marketing tools (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). However, the clear difference between place marketing and place branding is the reality. Place marketing is measured as the consumer choice while place branding, on the other hand, is difficult to measure because it concerns perception (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). This stands in line with the definition of a place brand by Zenker and Braun, who describe a place brand as:

‘a network of associations in the consumers’ mind based on the visual, verbal, and behavioural expression of a place, which is embodied through the aims, communication, values, and the general culture of the place’s stakeholders and the overall place design’ (Zenker & Braun, 2010)

This definition points to a few important points. First, just like place branding concerns perception, it is clear that brands are formed in the minds of people. Brands exist in the mind of the market thus branding is the management of perceptions (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). From this it can be conducted that the physical environment, landscape, atmosphere etc. are important aspects that trigger associations in the minds of people when visiting a specific place (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). Secondly, the significance of stakeholders is indicated in the description of Zenker and Braun. After all the identity of a place results from the dialogue between different stakeholders, like residents, visitors, non-visitors, entrepreneurs, government etc. Finally, branding of a particular place can create different associations with people (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). As discussed before, people have specific perceptions in their mind of certain places that are constructed by their own experiences, judgments and other factors (Kalandides, 2011). Therefore, the image of place is ‘something that you seem to be’ and the identity of a place is ‘something that you are’ (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). The place image therefore consists of different perceptions of people from the outside while the place identity is the characteristics of a place. Mismatch can occur when the place image and the place identity do not match.

This stands in line with arguments from Kavaratzis and Hatch, who argue against the dominant place branding methods, which are mainly focussed on communication, and prefer an identity-oriented mindview because branding and identity are strongly interlinked. An example of dominant place branding methods with a strong focus on communication and promotion are the place branding practices that mainly consists of developing new logos and slogans such as 'Altijd Nijmegen' and 'Tilburg je bent er' (Kalandides, 2011). Another example that shows a swift from dominant communication orientated place branding methods to more identity-orientated branding is the branding of the Ruhr area in West Germany. The story of the Ruhr is one of coal, industry, steel and

war. Previously, this region was trying to brand itself as a place where visitors can find beautiful castles and wonderful nature just like in other regions of Germany. However, this new image that they tried to create did not match the image that people already have of the Ruhr area. Therefore, it was chosen to focus on the strengths of the region, such as the rugged character and old industrial heritage combined with new cultural functions, instead of focusing on brand that has small change of landing in the perception of people (The Place Brand Observer, 2018).



Figure 10. Zeche Zollverein Schacht XII in Essen, a former coal mine, and nowadays an icon of modern industrial construction and a centre of art and culture. ©Jochen Tack

©Jochen Tack/Stiftung Zollverein

The case of the Ruhr area shows when the branding of an area is not based on the place identity, the branding capabilities can lead to ‘alienating’. For this reason, Kavaratzis and Hatch describe the clear dynamics between place branding theories and the identity of a place. Understanding the identity of a place is thus a useful, effective and necessary way to build on branding theories because the way in which the place identity is conceptualized has a significant impact on the way in which branding is conceptualized and implemented (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013).

Thus, it has become clear that the identity of a place is an important step in effective branding practices. However where is branding situated within the interactive process of the four sub-process? As has already been mentioned, brands influence and reveal the construction of identities both collectively and individually (Aitken & Campelo, 2011). This can be explained by various reasons. Easily seen, branding is a part of impressing in a way that effective place branding leaves an impression on others. Using the Hatch and Schultz model (see figure below), branding can also be looked upon as an instrument of expression because it expresses internal, cultural understandings of who ‘we’ are as a community or as an organisation (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). However, according to Kavaratzis and Hatch, even these arguments do not fully support the interaction between the four sub-processes because it is still based on the misconception that identity is the product of internal and intentional decision-making (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). Kavaratzis and Hatch answer to this question is to see branding as the identity process facilitator and as a process interwoven in identity dynamics:

‘a ‘shadow process’ that takes place at the same time and resonates with all four sub-processes of expressing, impressing, mirroring, and reflecting.’ (Kalandides, 2011)

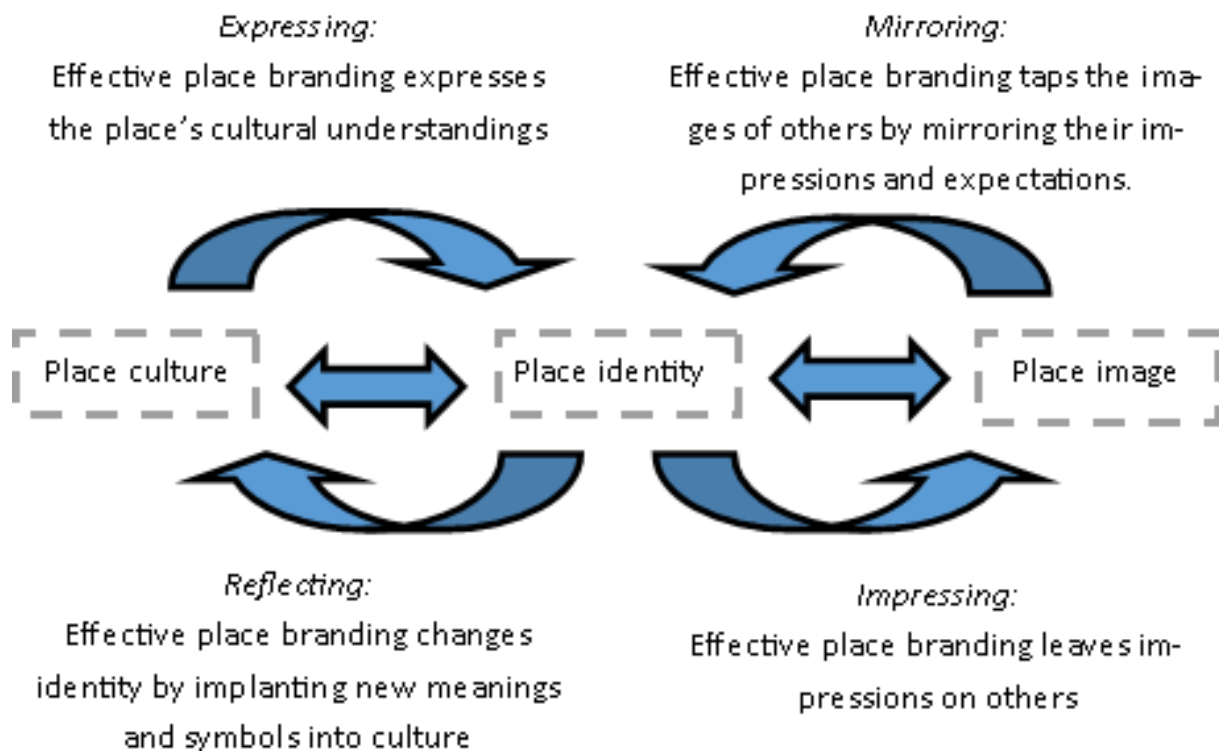


Figure 11. The place identity model with the four sub-processes in relation to place branding (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013)

Figure 11 is meant to illustrate the link between effective place branding and the identity process, or in other words: identity-based place branding (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). Effective place branding should be a practical tool for locals to express certain cultural features that are, for them, part of their place identity (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). The place culture is thus the authentic basis for the expression of a place brand, after all, it is the people who live in that specific area that make up for the culture. Important cultural features or stories of that particular place must then be recognized in the place identity and return to the branding process (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). In addition, branding plays an important role in the process of impressing. Branding leaves an impression on others and can affect people's perception and images (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). As is mentioned before, the landscape is an important element in this because it is the first impression:

'As an integral part of the place branding process, landscape can generate impressions that will inform images and thus become implanted in all the sub-processes of the place identity conversation' (Kalandides, 2011)

Branding also resonates in the mirroring process in the way that changes in the external image are and will be mirrored with the created brand (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). Changes in the place image can therefore be included and constitute as an essential part of place branding. Conversely, effective place branding can change the identity by implementing new meanings, symbols and values in the place culture. This process is also referred to as reflecting (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). An example of effective place branding that can influence and reinforce the identity with new meanings and symbols is: I amsterdam. This slogan is actually the base for Amsterdam's current branding practices and allows the

people to voice their pride and confidence while expressing support and love for their city. Aitken and Campelo describe the reflecting process as:

'brands impact culture by infusing or reinforcing meanings in peoples' live'
(Aitken & Campelo, 2011)

Furthermore, the four sub-processes connect the place culture, place identity and place image in a non-linear way, therefore, it is important that the branding process can facilitate the entire identity process at one time, or as Kavaratzis and Hatch describe:

'Thinking of the place branding process as stages that need to be taken in turn and the output of one will be input for the next simply misses the connection of branding to identity and the complexity of the place branding endeavour.' (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013)

Summarized, the branding process is an interactive and evolutionary process, just like the identity process, it never stops. However, this is only possible when the branding is 'open':

'This is only possible if the brand is conceptualized as fluid and open. It needs to be fluid in order to facilitate all the messy processes that construct identity, in order to cater for all the alterations in internal and external definitions of identity and, finally, in order to factor all the changes that the brand itself evokes. It needs to be open in order to allow for all the different interpretations and meanings that will be created, evaluated, and either reinforced or rejected during these processes.' (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013)

By using place identity in combination with place branding, branding can be looked upon from a different and new light. Identity is a complex process with four different sub-processes where branding plays the role of facilitator within this identity process. It is the relations and interactions between the different groups and processes in figure 11 where the branding possibilities lie (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). An important aspect is that these processes occur at the same time, not individually or separately. Thus, effective place branding at the same time ensures that:

'expresses the place's culture, leaves impressions on others, mirrors these impressions on the identity, and reflects the changes evoked back into the place culture.' (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013)

2.4 The conceptual model: assemblage and place identity

This section will bring the concept of place identity and the assemblage theory together to create a conceptual model which will be the base for the operationalisation part of this research. The figure below illustrates this conceptual model with in the centre the concept of place identity, place image and place culture. The identity-based branding theory has been chosen because of the way how Kavaratzis and Hatch conceptualize identity as a dynamic process between the culture and the image of place. Especially the part how the external place image can influence the identity of place became the trigger to include this theory. The place image is an interesting part to include because the Bloemerstraat has a rather 'bad' image, however, also because the way how a place is looked upon from outside is an important factor in branding process. After all, place branding is a way to make the identity of a place known and also to improve and influence the image of a place. Besides, this theory also fits with the established goals by the municipality to stick close to DNA and the unique character of the street.

The place identity of the Bloemerstraat will be determined by identifying the internal place culture, how the culture is acknowledged in the street, and external place image, how the street is looked upon by visitors and non-visitors. An important aspect in this research is the place branding of a neglected street, such as the Bloemerstraat, and working towards a Bloemerstraat brand. This is way the Bloemerstraat brand is incorporated into the conceptual model as a detached component, see figure 12. The 'Bloemerstraat brand' is not an element on its own and strongly connected with the place identity. The blue arrow between the place identity and Bloemerstraat brand indicates how interwoven these elements are, when changes in the place identity occur it will have effect on the place brand and vice versa. Furthermore, the four sub-processes of expression, mirroring, reflecting and impressing are illustrated because these are the process that can influence and change, the culture and image and therefore the identity of a place. The four sub-processes are the link between the identity process and effective place branding: it illustrates how effective place branding, for example impressing, can leave an impression on others and therefore change the (individual) place image and over time the place identity.

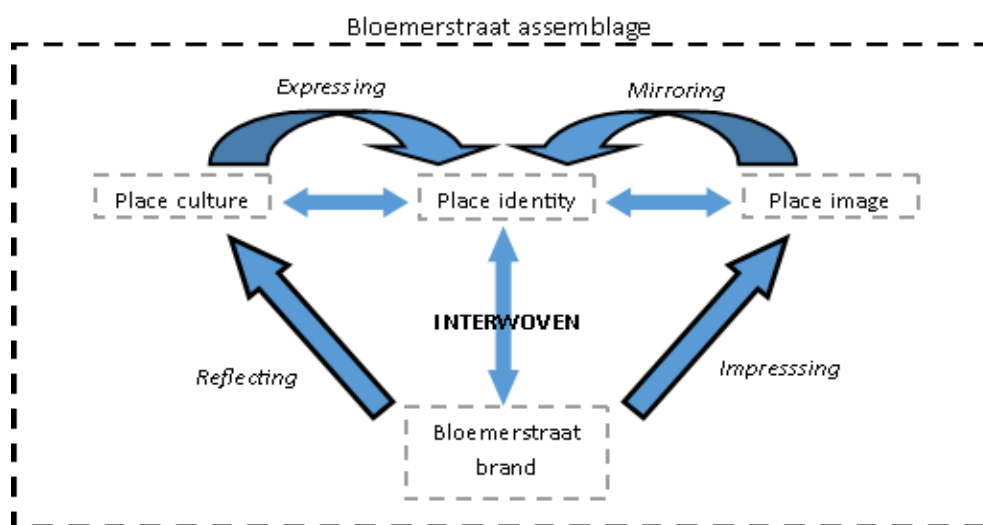


Figure 12. Conceptual model

In the conceptual model, the sub-processes of reflecting and impressing originate from the Bloemerstraat brand to the place culture and place image respectively. This is done to illustrate the connection between the Bloemerstraat brand and the other process, instead of showing the Bloemerstraat brand as an individual component on its own. Effective place branding such as reflecting, *changes identity by implanting new meanings and symbols in the culture*, and impressing, *leaves impressions on others*, are both aspects that can influence the place culture and place image from the brand itself. While expressing, *expressing of the place cultural understanding*, and mirroring, *mirroring the impression and expectation*, influence the place identity directly. However, still the place identity and Bloemerstraat brand are interwoven which means that changes from the impressing process that influence the place identity are connected to the brand as well.

Furthermore, the large square that outlines the conceptual model illustrates the assemblage of the Bloemerstraat. This Bloemerstraat assemblage is an entity which is made up from different heterogeneous elements that undergo limited and, in some cases, temporary relationships. Elements can therefore be disconnected or added to this assemblage, however this does not mean that every element can and will be successfully incorporated within the assemblages. These elements, such as the entrepreneurs and residents in the Bloemerstraat, are not illustrated in the conceptual model, however, they are a firm part of the place identity, place culture and place image of the Bloemerstraat and are therefore incorporated into these concepts. Besides, within the assemblage theory the sum of the whole is more than its parts. This is in line with the concepts of place identity which is used in the Bloemerstraat. The street can be looked upon as a sort of symbioses because the place identity is a complex dialogue between stakeholders. All these stakeholders are part of the place identity concept and without one of these groups, the place identity is incomplete. The Bloemerstraat, and especially the desired 'Bloemerstraat brand', is regarded as an assemblage with different elements that together undergo temporary relations. Also, it is within this outline where the territorialisation and coding efforts take place. Coding gives the assemblage an identity and leads in this case to the place identity, place culture and place image. Elements within the Bloemerstraat assemblage can be territorialized and further coded in practical matters. These measures from the coding aspect can directly influence for example the place culture and the four sub-process of effective branding. Coding is the process that can actually influence the place culture and place image of the Bloemerstraat and affects the place identity.

The conceptual model is the basis for the next chapter, which is about the methodological part of this research. Therefore, the next chapter will explain how the 'the boxes and arrows' from the conceptual model will be investigated, such as the boxes of the place culture and place image. Furthermore, this research is the first step in realizing the goal of creating a Bloemerstraat brand, therefore, it is also aimed to examine how this branding process is interpreted and how the first Bloemerstraat brand is conceptualised. Besides, the boxes the arrows, or the four sub-processes, are important aspects in the branding process and are therefore essential, especially how these processes are currently going-on in the Bloemerstraat. Finally, the part about the assemblage is theory is chosen to analyse the branding process of the Bloemerstraat and to explain how this brand works and can work.

3 Methodology

This chapter is focused around the operationalisation and how it is aimed to achieve the objective of this research. The research approach shall be discussed followed by an explanation about the different kinds of data collection methods and an explanation about how the conceptual model is going to be measured and analysed. Besides, the final section shall discuss the validity of this study.

3.1 Case study

A research strategy is understood a set of interrelated decisions about the way in which the research will be carried out. This often involves the collection of relevant data and materials and the processing and analysing of this information into valid answers the research question. However, it should be noted that no research strategy is in itself better or worse than any other research strategy. The only question is whether the selected strategy will enable the researcher to answer the specific research questions. First of all, and according to Verschuren and Doorewaard, a choice has to be made between a number of decisions know: width versus depth, quantitative versus qualitative and empirical versus desk research.

Verschuren en Doorewaard also make a distinction between five research strategies: survey, case study, desk research, the grounded theory approach and the experiment (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2015). To achieve the objective of this research, a case study has been chosen. A case study is a study in which the researcher aims to get a thorough and integral insight into one or a few time-spatially delimited objects or processes (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2015). Also, a case study is more about depth instead of a survey which is more focused on width (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2015). Case studies are more preferably used with questions like how and why because these questions are more explanatory and lead to the use of the case study (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2015). Also, a case study has an iterative methodological design which means that the researcher switches between theory, method and evidence throughout the process. The advantage of a case study is the depth, detailed description and complexity that can be captured that would otherwise be lost and not considered with pure quantitative research or a survey. Also, the case study is a typical field study with a high degree of flexibility in which the studied phenomenon will guide the researcher (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2015). Especially, flexibility makes the researcher able to adjust the research if unexpected findings occur. Also, numerous different sources of data, both qualitative and quantitative, are flexible and can be used to understand the investigated phenomenon. Thus, a case study asks for more labour-intensive forms of data rating and the use of different research methods to investigate the same phenomenon, which is called method-triangulation. This research will also use method-triangulation by using different research methods in order to investigate the phenomenon. Another characteristic of the case study is that the researcher tries as much as possible to get an integral picture of the object as a whole. Here you can speak of a holistic method where triangulation helps to obtain an integral image of the research object (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2015).

Thus, a single case study is being carried out for the research, with the Bloemerstraat in Nijmegen as a research object. Normally, the generalizability of a single case study is very limited because the research results cannot be compared. However, in this case it is not necessary to compare different cases with each other because the essence of this research is about the place identity of the Bloemerstraat and not about other cases. The following paraphs will discuss the different forms of

data collection, how the data is measured and how the data is analysed. The different forms of data collection were combined by using method and source triangulation and to work towards a holistic point of view.

3.2 Data selection

This section will discuss the different forms of data collection that have been used and will also explain the reason for choosing and using this method. The used data collection methods are: a short literature research, surveys and two types of interviews.

Literature research

To determine the place culture of the Bloemerstraat, it is important to know how people live and work in that area. Besides this, the history and stories of that specific place are important to understand the place culture. Because after all it is the past that shapes the future. The Second World War, the bombing of Nijmegen and the Pierson riots are all events from the past that have, also physically, shaped the street. Therefore, an in-depth analysis of the history of the street is necessary to answer questions like: how did the area originate? What was the function over time? What interesting events have occurred? What stories are there to tell?

Surveys

The results from two surveys will contribute to the empirical data in this research. The survey is an empirical research method and is more about generalizability than depth and detail. However, the goal of this survey is not about generalizability, but gathering specific information from residents and entrepreneurs in the Bloemerstraat. Thus, the goal of the surveys is to create a broad image of how they acknowledge the Bloemerstraat in order to 'fill in' the internal part of the place identity, also called the place culture. Residents have been chosen because they are an essential part of the culture. But also, entrepreneurs are essential because this stakeholder group is involved in the Bloemerstraat and therefore an important part of the culture (and also the external image). The following table shows the different themes with variables which are used in the surveys.

Theme	Variable
General judgment of the street	General judgement of the street
Services facilities	Range and diversity of hospitality
	Range and diversity of shops
	Range and diversity of hospitality
Accessibility, mobility	Accessibility
	Parking
	Findability (how good can you find the street)
Experience and appearance	Activities/events in the street
	Information provision
	The street ambiance
	The appearance of the street and maintenance premises
	Quantity and quality of green in the street
	The quantity and quality of the terraces in the street
Collaboration	Between residents
	Between entrepreneurs
	Between municipality
	Between property owners

Traffic and street safety	Traffic safety
	Street safety
	The quantity and quality of street lights
	Supervision/enforcement by police etc.
	Have you ever experienced a nuisance in the street?
	Have you ever experienced an unsafe feeling in the street?
	Violence, burglary, nuisance, vandalism experienced?

Table 1. Different themes with variables used in both surveys

Also, the residents and entrepreneurs were asked to give some comments and remarks on some of the themes and to name two positive and two negative aspects about the Bloemerstraat. These, sometimes interesting and varied, comments shall be discussed and subdivide per theme in the next chapters. Unfortunately, the survey for residents was a closed one, meaning that people filled in the questionnaire anonymously.

Interviews and meetings

Interviews are another important data collection method to make a more in-depth picture of the place culture and place image. Interviews have been conducted with Kees Buijns and Christiaan Roest, owners of recently opened Bhalu, and with Jeroen Hinssen who works as the iconic Cafe de Plak. These two businesses have been chosen because one has just recently settled in the Bloemerstraat while Cafe de Plak has been an iconic feature in the street for more than 40 years. Their opinion and insight towards the street are interesting to investigate for both the place image and place culture.

Interviewing is a very common format of data collection with many different forms, such as: unstructured, semi-structured, lightly-structured or in-depth interviewing. With semi-structured interviews there is a clear idea about the type of questions, however the order and the way of asking may vary. Structured interviewing is a way of asking specified sets of questions that is also asked in a specific order and thus very structured. On the other hand, stands unstructured interviews with (almost) no pre-arranged questions. This way of interviewing is generally suggested in conducting long-term field work because they allow respondents to let them express in their own ways and pace (Corbin & Morse, 2003). Unstructured interviews resemble a conversation which is skewed towards the interest of the interviewer. For this research unstructured (non-directive) interviewing have been chosen to perform and gather in-depth information with a set of pre-planned questions (Corbin & Morse, 2003). A couple of prepared questions, in relation to a wished topic, will be the guide for the interview. This way of interviewing is more informal, free flowing and spontaneous compared to structured interviewing and therefore perfectly lends to interviewing entrepreneurs in the Bloemerstraat. Appendix I, shows an interview format. All the interviews have been recorded.

Another data collection method is the attending of important meetings, sessions and events that for example are related to this research and provide this research with new information. For example, the Bloemerstraat Opening Event in May during which visitors and non-visitors were asked what they thought of the Bloemerstraat. These opinions from the visitors and non-visitors give meaning to the external part of the place identity (place image) and thus show how outsiders look upon the street. An observation protocol has been drawn up, to archive and summarize events such as the Bloemerstraat

Opening Event. This protocol is the guideline to properly archive and summarize the meeting. An observation protocol like this will contain the following details:

- The subject of the meeting: before the meeting begins, what you expect to be observing and why this meeting was selected
- Object of the meeting: the object and agenda of the meeting
- Setting/members: describe the setting and the number of attendance with description
- Meeting format: describe the format of the meeting (group conversation etc.) and duration of the meeting
- Session: describe a summary of the session with most important points that are discussed.
- Related to research: describe the most important points from the meeting/session etc. that are related and can be used in the research

The above-mentioned details may differ on the nature of the meeting, because not all questions relate to each specific meeting or event. Appendix II shows an example of an observation protocol.

Street interviews

Besides two unstructured interviews, several short street interviews have been conducted with a variety of people in the Bloemerstraat. The aim of these street interviews was to gain a deeper understanding of the place culture and place image of the Bloemerstraat, instead of the more 'flat' and empirical results from the surveys. The interviewed people vary from residents and business owners to visitors and just by passer. Especially by-passers and their opinion and perception of the street is important to fill in the place image of the Bloemerstraat. During the interviews, photos have been taken of the interviewee by a professional photographer. These photos, with quotes from the interviews, are also used in branding practices to promote the more positive aspects of the Bloemerstraat, more on this in chapter 7. The responses of the interviewees have been written down and unfortunately have not been recorded because of the street noise and the wish of most of the interviewees to not be recorded.

3.3 Explaining the conceptual framework: 3P's and the four sub-processes

This section will explain how the 'boxes and arrows' from the conceptual model are measured and further analysed. The data that is collected during this research is able to fill in the boxes, place culture, place image and the brand, and arrows, the four sub-processes. Together the place culture and image compromise the place identity of the Bloemerstraat.

3.3.1 Place identity: place culture and image

What is the place culture and place image again? The place culture is the process that internally influences the identity of a place, also called the local culture. Place culture can be seen as a way of life that is experienced and created by people living and living in that particular place and therefore providing the context for internal definitions of place identity (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). The place image is the process that externally influences the identity of a place (Kooij, Space for Innovation, Innovation in Space, 2015). The place image is the image of a particular place formed by the image of outsiders of that particular place (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). In order to determine the place identity of the Bloemerstraat it is necessary to fill in the concepts of place culture and place image. This is done by roughly four methods of data collection:

- Literature research Bloemerstraat.

A short literature research into the history and most important historical events regarding the Bloemerstraat. Also, this way historical or significant events from the past, like the bombardment in the Second World War and the Pierson riots, can be linked to present characteristic and the place identity of the street.

- The residents and entrepreneurs survey in the Bloemerstraat

These surveys are done in order to identifying the internal part of the place identity: how the local culture experienced and created by the residents and residents. The survey is divided in a few themes: general judgment of the street, quality and amount of services facilities, accessibility and mobility, experience and appearance of the street, activities/events in the street, collaboration between involved stakeholders and traffic and street safety. Different variables are divided between the themes such as: how would you judge the appearance of the street? The residents and entrepreneurs were asked to judge these variables with a number ranging from 1 till 5,4 as insufficient or inadequate and while 5,5 till 10 marks sufficient, enough or excellent. Further, the average from each variable can show how the respondents think about the traffic safety in the street for example. Besides, a general conclusion can be drawn from all the themes together which shows which aspects that the residents and entrepreneurs find the most and important and which aspect need to be addressed immediately. Lastly, respondents were asked to give both positive and negative comments about the Bloemerstraat.

- Interviews and street interviews

The two unstructured interviews and street interviews are conducted by interviewing residents, entrepreneurs, visitors and by-passers on appointment and on the street. This is done to create a more in-depth picture of the place culture and place image by determine how they experience the street, the way of life and the changes that the street has gone through. Especially, the view of outsiders towards the Bloemerstraat is an interesting aspect to consider when filling in the place image.

Appendix I shows the questions that were asked during the interviews with Kees Buijns and Christiaan Roest, owners of recently opened Bhalu, and with Jeroen Hinssen who works at de Plak. Also, the two unstructured interviews are recorded while the street interviews are unfortunately not recorded. The essential and most important parts from the interviews, regarding aspects that define and enrich the place culture and place image, are discussed and analysed in the research chapter.

- Meetings

During the research course, a number of meetings and events have occurred which in a way have contributed to determining the place identity and the main conclusion in this research. For example, the Bloemerstraat Opening Event, a meeting with the municipality and a visit to the town of Meijel. These meetings or visits have been summarized and archived with an observation protocol. Throughout the research, references can be made from the observation protocols which can be found in the appendix.

The results from the above-mentioned data collection methods are summarized and main conclusions are drawn. These results fill in the place culture and place image and therefore create the image of the Bloemerstraat identity.

3.3.2 The four sub-processes and the Bloemerstraat brand

This research is also about investigating how a street in decline with certain problems, such as the Bloemerstraat, can be branded. Therefore, the four 'arrows' or process from the conceptual model that interlink the place culture, place identity and place image will be investigated. An important note is the fact that this research is the start of the 'official' branding of the Bloemerstraat, thus making it difficult to analyse the influence of current branding practices. However, it is possible to investigate the importance of these sub-processes and to find out how these processes can play a role in the branding of the Bloemerstraat.

Expressing: effective place branding expresses the place's cultural understandings

- From the collected data, it will be determined how branding in the form of expression can and has influenced the identity of the Bloemerstraat. The cultural is the authentic basis for expression of the place brand. Therefore, important cultural features or stories of that place must then be recognized in the place identity and return to the branding process. Thus, important cultural features of the Bloemerstraat that are part of the expressing process will be determined from the collected data.

Impressing: effective place branding leaves impressions on others

- Impressing is an important aspect of the branding process because branding leaves an impression on others and can change the subjective place image. This process shall be determined by looking at how branding has left an impression on others or how changes in the street are acknowledge and impressed on others. Important aspects in the impression process are for example the physical environment, landscape, atmosphere.

Mirroring: effective place branding taps the images of others by mirroring their impression and expectations

- Changes in the place image can be an essential part of place branding. However, in the geographic world, place image is perceptual and is regarded as something that you seem to be while identity of a place is something that you are. Thus, the external images or something that you seem to be will, in the place branding process, be mirrored with the place identity (what you actually are). The mirroring process shall be described and determined by looking at the collected data and see if the impressed image of the Bloemerstraat is comparable towards the created brand of the street.

Reflecting: effective place branding changes identity by implanting new meanings and symbols into culture

- Thus, changes in the place image can be included as an essential part of the place branding. However, conversely, effective place branding can change the identity by implementing new meanings, symbols and values in the place culture. To investigate this sub-process new meanings, symbols and values that are incorporated into the place culture by effective place branding shall be discussed and described from the collected research findings.

The Bloemerstraat Brand

- As has been mentioned before the objective of this research is to determine the place identity of the Bloemerstraat in order to achieve effective identity-based branding and work towards an economic revitalize Bloemerstraat. Of course, a brand is not easily created and takes a considerable amount of time and effort. However, this research contributes to the start and creation of the brand and forms the base and beginning for identity-based branding. Later on in this research, the Bloemerstraat brand will be, also from an assemblage point of view, discussed through addressing the four sub-processes of effective identity-based branding.

3.4 Validation

This research makes a distinction between internal and external validity. First internal invalidity says something about the quality of the research design. A research can be internally valid when the right conclusions can be drawn from the chosen research methods. According to Verschuren en Doorewaard (2015) the internal validity of a case study can be large enough because of the depth and labour-intensive case study method. In this research several different forms of data collection (surveys, depth interviews, street interviews, desk-research and attending of significant meetings) have been used, to produce a large and diverse amount of data, and thus increasing the validity.

However, a critical note can be placed on the internal validity of this research, especially the surveys and the street interviews. There is no influence on the amount of responses. Also, the respondent cannot tell his or her story freely and are maybe inclined to respond a socially desirable answer, even when it is anonymous. Besides it can be difficult to find out the motivations behind the answers which could make the answers superficial. The same can be said for the street interviews, people could just say something in order to continue their journey. All these aspects could affect the internal validity of this research. To prevent this from happening or to diminish this chance, the respondents of the surveys are able to explain their answer in the comment section. Also, the questions from the surveys are about the street where the respondents live and work which makes it more likely that the 'right' answers are filled in. Also, the surveys are distributed in name of Seinpost with a clear description of the motivations of the survey.

External validity, also known as generalizability, is the extent to which conclusions can be generalized to the entire population or other situations that are investigated (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2015). It is difficult to formulate a general conclusion from a relatively limited number of cases, however, this is much easier in quantitative research because the external validity can be statistically demonstrated. Thus, for example, when examining the effects of vacant retail in shopping areas it is necessary and wise to examine a few shopping areas in order to secure the external validity. However, in this research, it is not the case to examine the place identity of several shopping streets. It is a single case study with the Bloemerstraat as a focus point.

4 The Bloemerstraat and similar cases

This chapter provides a detailed description of the history and current ongoing developments in the Bloemerstraat. Significant historical events and changes that have greatly influenced the Bloemerstraat in the last 100 years are discussed. Furthermore, a broad description of the Bloemerstraat in its current state is given, including relevant problems. . The final section contains examples of similar cases including their approach to deal with the situations at hand.

4.1 A brief history of the Bloemerstraat

The oldest records found of the Bloemerstraat originate from 1549, in which the street was mentioned by another name: the Bloemeborschestraat. Back then the street was named after a former defence tower called Bloemenborch or Blommerthorn which had already been demolished in 1511. However, in 1522 the name was changed into the name as we know it today. The name of the street refers to an old family name from Nijmegen called Bloem (Essers, sd). Moving on in history, the area around the Bloemerstraat and Smetiusstraat was largely rebuilt during the 19th century city expansion. Before the Second World War, the Bloemerstraat was a narrow street with old historic buildings and loads of craft shops where the production and sales of goods were often combined.



Figure 13. The Bloemerstraat in begin of the 20th century. ©Regionaal Archief Nijmegen

In 1944, Nijmegen was bombarded by the Americans, who thought they flew over German territory. This 'accident' caused the destruction of almost the entire historic city centre, including the Bloemerstraat and the surrounding area and the city burnt for days, see figure 14. However, something remarkable happened in the Bloemerstraat. The house of the Peereboom family at the Bloemerstraat 27 remained intact, all because of the heroic action of Hetty Peereboom's grandfather. Her grandfather had dragged huge Cologne pots with canned vegetables to the roof and threw them on the burning pieces (Jaspers & Jaspers, 2016). Through this action, the house of the Peereboom family became the border between the destroyed and saved houses in the Bloemerstraat.



*In the book *De pijn die blijft*, Hetty Peereboom, who was 11 years old in 1944, describes the chaos in the inner city. Hetty lived with her parents on Bloemerstraat 27 and remembers the terribly screaming and when everything in the house and the street was pitch black in seconds. Everyone in the city was panicking and looking for family, acquaintances or neighbours. The houses burned like torches and the Bloemerstraat was a sea of fire.*

Figure 14. Panorama towards Kolpinghuis (in the background). On the right, the Bloemerstraat, in the forefront newly built Plein 1944. The trees on the right to the background are from the Kronenburgerpark. Dating 1955. ©Regionaal Archief Nijmegen

Route Boekje Brandhaarden Bombardement
Nijmegen, STUDIO 0404

After the Second World War, Nijmegen began to rebuild itself which also included the Bloemerstraat. Old buildings that survived the war were demolished to make the once so narrow street wider and to make more car traffic possible. New modern residential buildings and shops were built and the Bloemerstraat flourished once again, see figure 15.



Figure 15. The Bloemerstraat with in the background Plein 1944 and the Augustijnenstraat and newly built apartments and shops in the Bloemerstraat. Dating 1970. ©Regionaal Archief Nijmegen

In the eighties, the city centre of Nijmegen was once again in a state of war with the Pierson riots. The riots arose from the municipality's plan to construct an underground car park, named Zeigelhof, in the Piersonstraat. The municipality acquired the buildings in the street to demolish them but soon squatters found their way to the vacant premises. Tensions between the squatters and the authorities eventually rose high and led to fierce riots in the Pierson- and Bloemerstraat. In order to reach the squatted houses, the police and ME had to go through a protest of hundreds of sympathizers in the Bloemerstraat. These non-violent activists were violently repelled by the ME. Tear gas as well as 200 ME buses, five tanks, a helicopter, armoured goods, and about 2000 man were employed to remove the squatters from the occupied premise, see figure 16. Eventually, dozens of people, squatters and police officers, were injured. After the riots, people in Nijmegen protested against the cumbersome performance of the police and the manner in which the municipality had handled this situation. Partly

because of the riots, the rise of the left wing began to play an increasingly prominent role in the city council. The left wing movement is still present today in Nijmegen and the raw, rebellious and characteristic character of this period is still 'available and noticeable' in the Bloemerstraat (Begheyn, 2004). Eventually, an underground car park was built underneath Plein 1944, many years later.

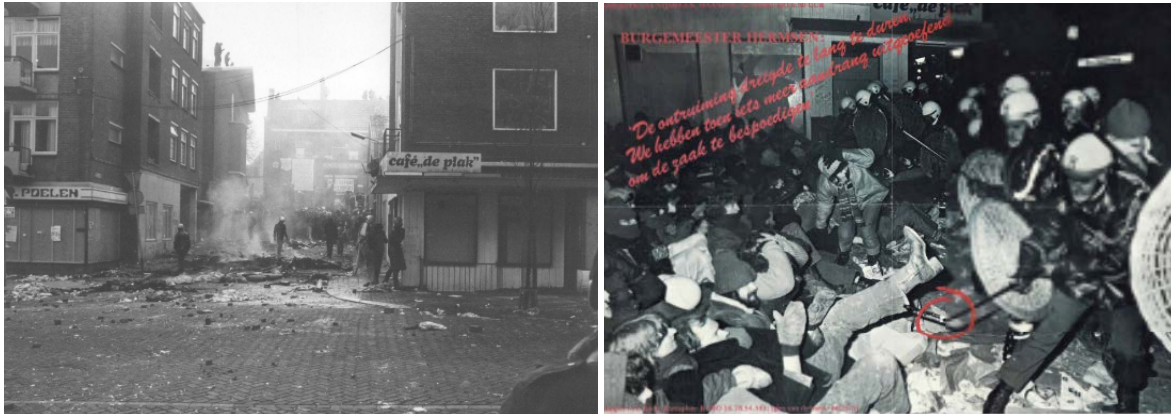


Figure 16. Left: the Pierson riots in the Piersonstraat, picture taken from the Bloemerstraat with in the right corner Cafe de Plak, a well know Cafe in the street. Right: the Pierson riots in the Bloemerstraat on the 23th of February. Dating 1980. ©Regionaal Archief

From the 80's towards the turn of the century, the Bloemerstraat had a combination of speciality and craftsmanship stores and services related business such as employment agencies and haircutters. However, over time most of these businesses faded away and new 'foreign' businesses or businesses with owners of a migration background entered the Bloemerstraat and Smetiusstraat. While some business, like Rijschool Correct (1971), Vurens (1948), Cafe de Plak (1979), Pimpernel (1979), Kapsalon Van Haaren (1960), Ronny's Hair (1986), Lopers Company (1984) remained, new businesses such as doner kebab shops, night shops, nail studios, Shisha lounges etc. came to the Bloemerstraat. Part of the reason why these businesses came to the Bloemerstraat were the low rental prices and excellent location within the city centre, more on this can be found chapter 5. Research findings.



Figure 17. An example of a diverse variety of businesses in the Bloemerstraat. ©Joy van de Wert

This shift in businesses has nowadays led to a multicultural street with a surprising diversity of cultures, entrepreneurs and business, from many doner kebab stores, sushi restaurants, coffee shops and the iconic Cafe the Plak to nail studios, tattoo shops, a barber, medicine store and a do-it-your-own shop. Thus, the area is characterized by a striking functional mix: in addition to shops (37) the Bloemerstraat

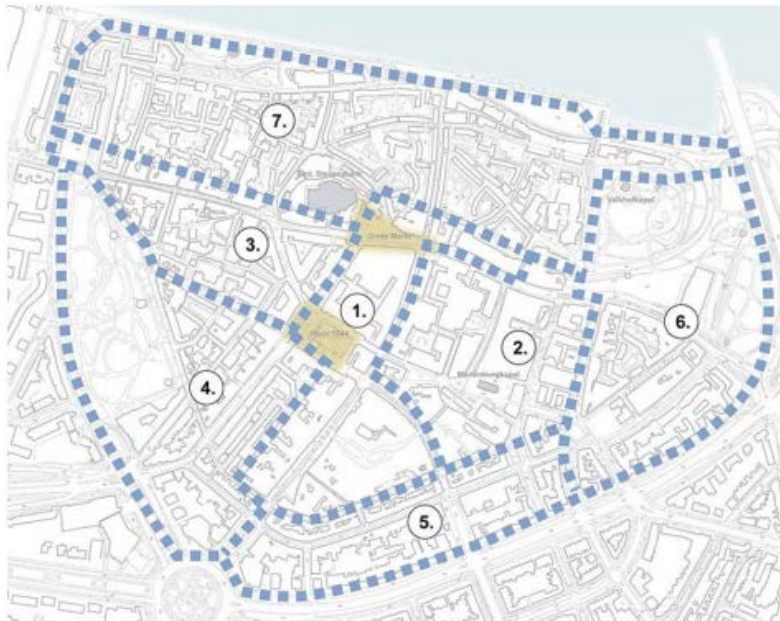
has a lot of restaurants, cafes etc. (40) and commercial services (31) (Gemeente Nijmegen, 2015). The self-employed entrepreneurs in the street are often young and there is a lot of dynamics: entrepreneurs move away just as fast as they have come. Many offerings belong to the lower market segment, with a moderate to bad character (Gemeente Nijmegen, 2015). Also, the Bloemerstraat and Smetiusstraat is an area where the mix of retail function is currently declining, while a lot of restaurants and other comparable hospitality establishments are opening their doors (Seinpost, Lindenberg, Mood, 2016).

Over the years the image that people have of the Bloemerstraat deteriorated into a 'raw, grey and urban' appearance (Gemeente Nijmegen, 2012). Traffic safety and street safety are two major problems in the street. Many of the almost 40 busses per hour do not follow the speed limit, scooters drive on the sidewalk, and in the evening there is often nuisance and a rather violent, shady and unsafe environment. Also, from the turn of the century, vacancy became an increasingly major problem within the Bloemerstraat area, for example the large Intersport building at the intersection with Doddendaal. In addition, the street is a target street meaning that people visit the street for a specific activity instead of going there spontaneously.

The above-mentioned problems became the trigger for the municipality to include the Bloemerstraat in their new policy *Binnenstad van de toekomst Visie op transformatie en aanpak leegstand*. The next section will elaborate on this policy document and will discuss the most recent developments of the Bloemerstraat.

4.2 2015 and onwards: current developments and plans

In 2015, the municipality drafted a new policy document addressing the vacancy problems in the so called 'ringstraten' and transforming the city centre. This policy document is called *Binnenstad van de toekomst, Visie en transformatie en aanpak leegstand*. The reason for drafting this new policy was to transform and prepare the city centre, and especially the Bloemerstraat area, for the future. In order to achieve this, the municipality appointed different subareas and judged these on twelve indicators, such as the quality of public space, the distinctive character of the areas and vacancy rate, see figure 18.



Subarea 1. Core shopping area such as: Grote Markt, Plein 1944, Molenstraat etc.

Subarea 2. Mariënborg, Marikenstraat etc.

Subarea 3. Lange en Stikke Hezelstraat, Houtstraat etc.

Subarea 4. Bloemerstraat, Smetiusstraat, In de Betouwstraat e.o.

Deelgebied 5. Tweede Walstraat, Van Welderenstraat etc.

Subarea 6. Hertogstraat, Kelfkensbos, Van de Bruggenstraat e.o.

Subarea 7. Waalkade, Oude Haven e.o.

Figure 18. The city centre of Nijmegen divided in 7 subareas (Gemeente Nijmegen, 2015)

The chart below shows the indicators on which the Bloemerstraat is assessed, with the dotted line in the middle indicating the average for the city centre.

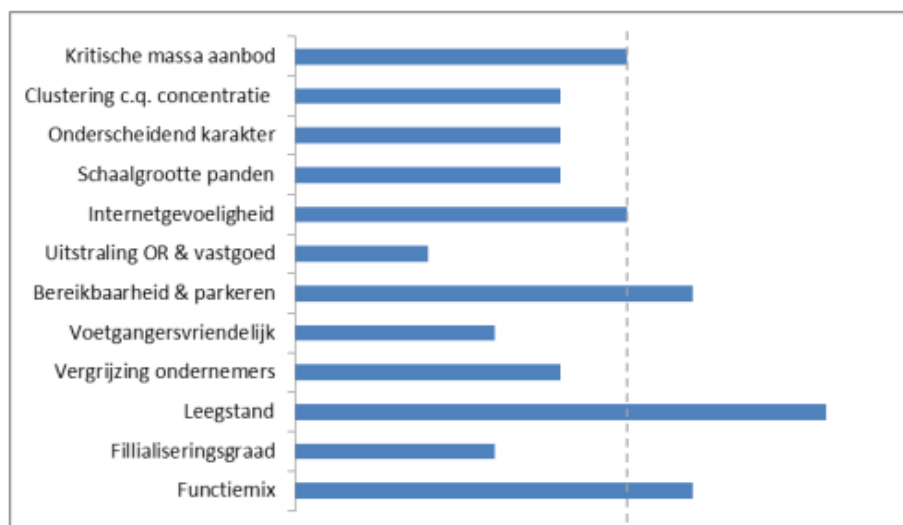


Figure 19. A chart showing the results of the Bloemerstraat assessment (Gemeente Nijmegen, 2015)

The chart shows and confirms that the Bloemerstraat has a very diverse range of facilities and stores, however, these are of moderate quality, partly poor presentation and some facilities belong to the lower market segment (Gemeente Nijmegen, 2015). Also, the accessibility and the amount of parking spaces is considered to be good compared to the average of the entire shopping area. However, the appearance of public space and real estate, the amount of vacant buildings premises, the distinctive character of the street and the pedestrian friendliness score poorly and below average, according to the municipality.

Furthermore, each individual area is also labelled with a predicate: defensible (weerbaar), vulnerable (kwetsbaar), slightly vulnerable (licht kwetsbaar). The A1-shopping area (subarea 1), Marienburg en Marikenstraat (subarea 2) and the area around the Lange Hezelstraat (subarea 3) are marked as defensible areas. The area around the Van Welderenstraat (subarea 5) has been marked as lightly vulnerable while the Bloemerstraat and Smetiusstraat (subarea 4) have been labelled as vulnerable areas (Gemeente Nijmegen, 2015). This label on the Bloemerstraat has resulted in the following new goals and ambitions, established by the municipality:

- Designating the Bloemerstraat and Smetiusstraat (the Smetiusstraat was actually included much later) as a focus area, in order to significantly improve the design of the public space and stimulate façade improvement;
- Improve the quality of life and safety in the area together with the local police;
- Strengthening and improving the business climate by stimulating more cooperation between entrepreneurs in the street;
- Strengthening the unique and varied character of the Bloemerstraat by improving the function profile;
- Make the motorized traffic less dominant and designate the area as a 30-kilometre zone. Also, implementing new safe crossings and narrowing the road;
- Improving and stimulating walking and cycling from station to Plein 1944 via Burgemeester Hustinxstraat Smetiusstraat-Bloemerstraat and carry out the necessary interventions in the public space;
- Stimulating strong and new concepts such as combinations between retail, craft, hospitality and other services. Besides, stimulate the Bloemerstraat as a breeding ground for new retail and catering formulas and offering space to new entrepreneurs.

In 2016, the municipality hired Seinpost Adviesbureau to work on these ambitions. Senior advisor John Bardoel from Seinpost was appointed as the street manager in the Bloemerstraat and Smetiusstraat. As the new street manager, Bardoel became the contact person and link between the involved stakeholders in the Bloemerstraat, such as the entrepreneurs, the municipality, residents and the police. Besides, a new organization was created called 'Blossom', which is a cooperation between Seinpost Adviesbureau (including the street manager), De Lindenberg Huis van de Kunsten and MOOD Concept Store. This organisation is formed to promote and 'fill in' the street with new and innovative concepts (Seinpost, Lindenberg, Mood, 2016). Blossom has drafted, together with entrepreneurs from the Bloemerstraat, a new area profile which roughly explains the future plans for the street. This report states that the Bloemerstraat will focus more on craft in combination with new, innovative (blurring) concepts such as a combination of a store and restaurant. Besides, the new area profile also differentiates six main action points: decreasing the amount of vacant buildings/real estate, improving

and inducing renewed entrepreneurship, place making, make use of the public space, improving the quality of businesses and stimulating more cooperation between stakeholders. Subsequently, Blossom drafted a plan of action to work on the six action points together with entrepreneurs and other involved stakeholders from the Bloemerstraat. When drafting the new function profile and the corresponding plan of action, it was also decided to include the Smetiusstraat into future plans (Seinpost, Lindenberg, Mood, 2016).

The first actions began in 2016 when the public space in the Bloemerstraat underwent major redevelopment. The sidewalk was partly renovated and broadened, and the old trees were replaced by new ones allowing more sunlight to enter the stores and houses. Also, the roadway is made narrower, parking spaces were removed and the street has become a 30km zone. As a result of these measures, the Bloemerstraat is in transition to become an attractive walking route between the central station and Plein 1944. See figure 20 which shows the Bloemerstraat before and after the redevelopment.

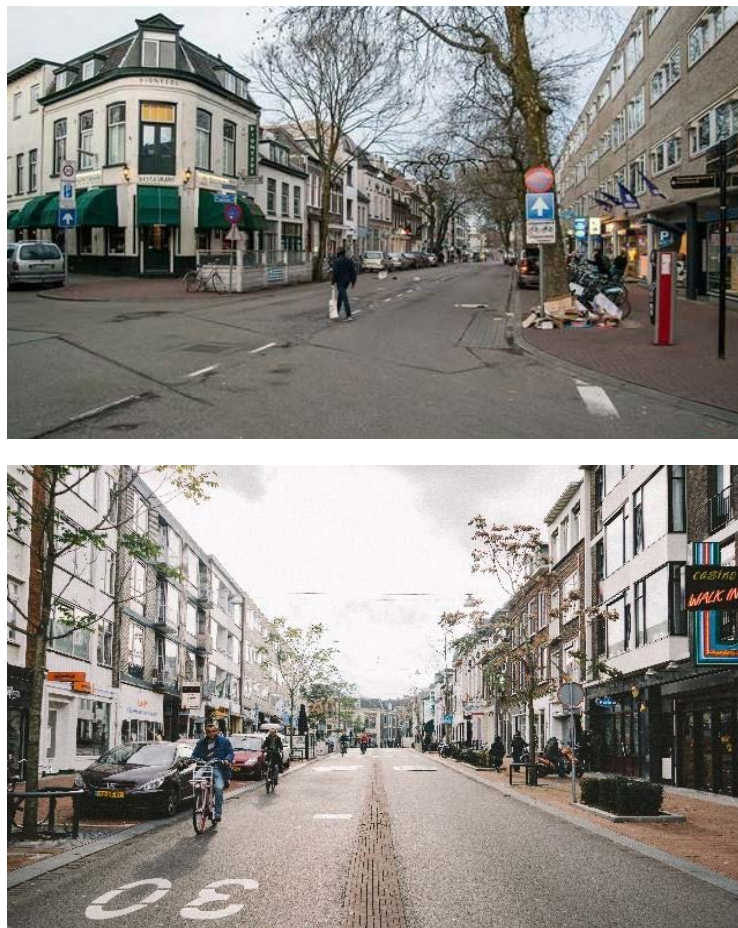


Figure 20. Photos of the Bloemerstraat before (left) and after redevelopment (right) ©Joy van de Wert

The current and new measures are already showing results: the vacancy level is slowly dropping, and new entrepreneurs are finding the street, such as Lebowski, Bhalu, Bierhoeder, BijSmaak and Flowink (Gemeente Nijmegen, 2017). Besides, research from 2017 already shows that the street is visited more frequently (Gemeente Nijmegen, 2017). Figure 21 shows the location segmentation of the core shopping centre in Nijmegen, with the busiest shopping areas marked as A1 areas (red). The segment

where shopping streets are located, is determined on the basis of the difference with the number of by-passers at the busiest point in the city centre, in this case the Broerstraat. Surprisingly, the busiest points in the city centre saw a decrease of visitors and by-passers while the edge of the shopping core show a slight increase in the number of by-passers compared to 2014. This trend is also visible in the Bloemerstraat and surrounding areas, the street moved from a B2 area in 2014 to a B1 area in late 2016. These results indicate changing pedestrian routes and visitor flows in favour of the ringstraten, such as the Bloemerstraat (Gemeente Nijmegen, 2017).

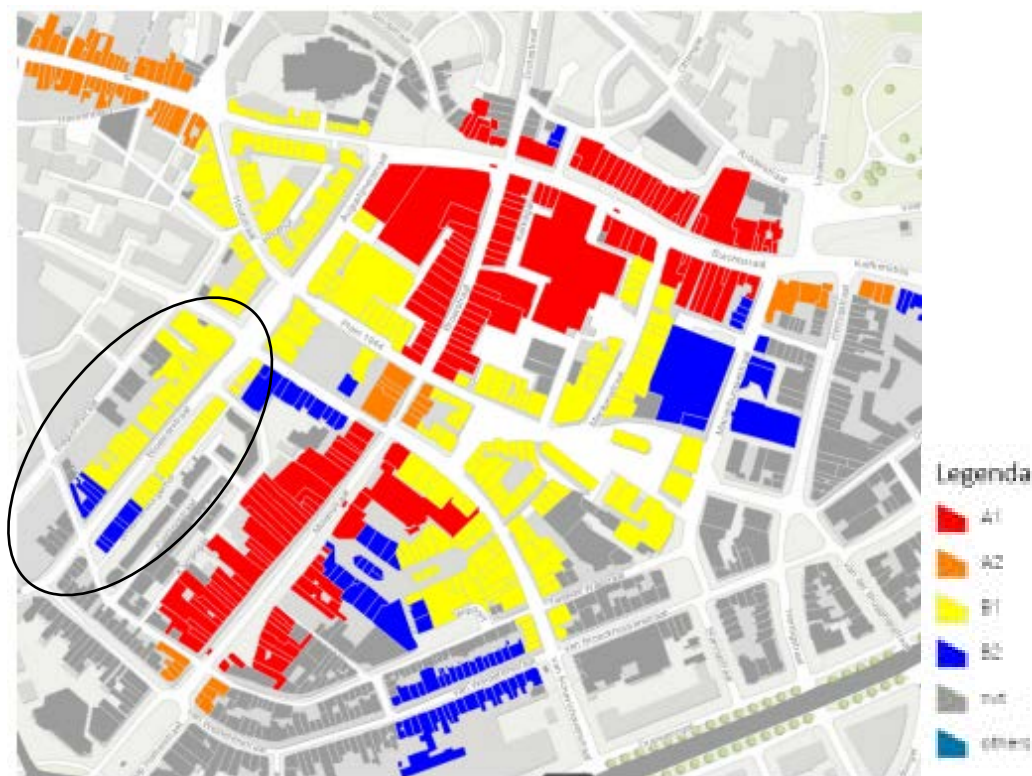


Figure 21. Location segmentation in the core shopping area of Nijmegen, at street level. Source: Locatus 2017

One of the main reasons of the municipality to transform the city centre is the changing retail sector and the increase of vacant buildings (Gemeente Nijmegen, 2015). Vacancy can have a negative impact on the atmosphere and residential climate and is therefore an urgent problem (Gemeente Nijmegen, 2015). The areas around the core of the city centre always had the highest vacancy rate, especially in 2010 when 14% of the total retail properties in the ringstraten of Nijmegen stood empty (Gemeente Nijmegen, 2010). From 2010 the vacancy rate increased and resulted in 2015, in a total of eight empty retail properties in the Bloemerstraat, including the large Intersport building on the crossing with Doddendaal (Gemeente Nijmegen, 2015). However, results from the beginning of 2017 show different numbers and a minor decrease in the amount of vacant buildings. These positive results can partly be explained by the recent redevelopment and refurbishment of the public space and the arrival of new businesses in Bloemerstraat. The figure in appendix III, shows the branch division in the city centre and zooming in shows only three vacant buildings in the Bloemerstraat, which included the large Intersport building. Currently, there are new and advanced plans to demolish the building and build a new large apartment complex with an Albert Heijn. Views against the plans were submitted to the municipality at the end of 2017 and are currently discussed.

The first goals of the municipality have already been realized. Yet, there is still enough room for more improvement in order to economically revitalize and transform the Bloemerstraat. Still the Bloemerstraat and Smetiusstraat have a high level of 'doorloop', which means business settle down and goes away very easily. While the public space has been redeveloped, the municipality finds the appearance of the real estate combined with cafes, restaurants and other related business of lesser stature prone for improvement (Gemeente Nijmegen, 2015). Therefore, this research is part of the process to transform the Bloemerstraat and to realize the other established goals by the municipality. In this case the identity of the Bloemerstraat is the main focus because determining this identity shows how the culture is acknowledged and how the image of the street is regarded by others. This identity forms the base for effective branding of the Bloemerstraat.

4.3 Similar cases

This chapter explores and discusses a synthetic description on similar streets and cases elsewhere in the Netherlands and as a part of the broader debate on city centres. In this section the streets are mentioned and referred to as 'ring streets', simply because there is no direct translation from the Dutch word *aanloopstraten* or a correct translation of 'ringstraten'. The final part of this section describes a very different case about the town of Meijel. This case is of course not a ring street, however, it shows how a town has improved the town centre by focusing on the local DNA, which is similar to the objective of this research.

First of all, the streets that are discussed are similar to the Bloemerstraat; they are or have been in decline and are facing their own particular problems. Besides these streets have in common that they are 'aanloopstraten' or 'ringstraten'. These types of Dutch shopping streets are characterized by a strong mix of retail, residential and work functions compared to other streets in A1 areas in a city (platform binnenstadsmanagement, 2015). Stores in these streets are mainly owned by independent entrepreneurs and are target visited or visited on purpose. Furthermore, these ring streets are somewhat unstable and constantly evolving (platform binnenstadsmanagement, 2015). Mostly, ring streets belong to the B and C shopping locations and the rent level is relatively low (compared to A1 shopping areas). Besides, Dutch ring streets usually run from one source point to the core shopping areas in the city centres (platform binnenstadsmanagement, 2015). Compared to the core shopping areas in city centres, ring streets have a relatively good accessibility and parking option.

However, the situation in some of the ring streets is worrisome. Just as has been mentioned in the introduction, the retail market and customer behaviour are changing. Numerous factors have contributed to an increase in empty buildings in ring streets, which is much higher compared to the main shopping areas in city centres (platform binnenstadsmanagement, 2015). Vacancy in ring streets is also an important indicator for the health of an entire city centre. Health refers to the economic and social functioning of the shopping core. A lacking liveliness in ring streets can influence the quality of life in the city centre and is therefore an essential part of the inner-city system (Whysall, 2013). A malfunctioning ring street can therefore have an impact on the functioning of an entire inner city (Whysall, 2013).

An example of a group of Dutch ring streets that are facing similar problems like the Bloemerstraat can be found in Maastricht. Especially, the streets around the old city centre and close to central station such as the Brusselsestraat, Grote Gracht, Kruisherengang, Keizer Karelplein and the cluster of Rechtstraat, Noord & Zuid, Hoogbrugstraat, Hoogbrugplein. The municipality finds these streets too diverse and both the layout of the public space as the appearance of the streets and shop premises are considered to differ too much from each other, or in other words: the streets form merely a sum of many different ones instead of one unity (BRO, 2012). In order to redevelop these neglected ring streets, Maastricht puts great effort in establishing a local identity. Especially the cluster of Rechtstraat, Noord & Zuid, Hoogbrugstraat, Hoogbrugplein in the Wyck area is focussing on life-style, design (clothing, fashion and living) and high-quality restaurants. However, this cluster of streets is also facing problems such as vacancy, drug problems, poor signage, traffic issues and a messiness of shops and other services that are not attractive or do not belong in that area. The municipality and other involved stakeholders actually see vacancy as an opportunity to transform the ring streets by stimulating the offer of life-style and design stores. Results are already promising with the arrival of 45 new businesses

and restaurants in the Wyck area in roughly one and a half year (van Loon & Bardoel, 2013). This caused the vacancy rate in the area to drop from 14% to approximately 8% (van Loon & Bardoel, 2013). The municipality argues that intensive cooperation between local stakeholders, the acquisition of speciality and craft stores and the strengthening of the potential of the streets have ensured this success. Also, the policy is that not every entrepreneur can simply start their business in the street, they have to fit within the DNA of the street (van Loon & Bardoel, 2013). This case shows how ring streets, that are far from the main shopping core, can also be 'discover streets' (correct translation in Dutch is ontdekstraten), with their own identity in comparison to the city centre that has the same stores as other city centres (van Loon & Bardoel, 2013).

Another example of a ring street is the Van Woustraat in Amsterdam. This street was constructed at the beginning of the 20th century during new expansions plans of the historical working-class neighbourhood de Pijp. The van Woustraat is located on the border of the 19th century heart of de Pijp and the expansion. In the last decades, de Pijp became increasingly more popular among students, young families and young entrepreneurs and especially the 19th century heart of de Pijp became a more lively and trendy place to go, live, work and enjoy (Kooyman, 2015). The Van Woustraat is a narrow and busy street with a lot of traffic which used to be a neglected street with a somewhat negative image. Besides the street was described by motorists and people as a street to pass through instead of a street where you would stop to get some groceries or do some shopping (Groenlinks, 2001). This made the nearby Ferdinand Bolstraat a more attractive place. Over time the traditional baker and butcher have been largely replaced by telephone shops, hair salons, doner kebab shops and cheap clothing stores by entrepreneurs with a migration background. However, more recently the 'van Woustraat' is in transition. The businesses that replaced the more traditional stores, are now being replaced by trendy coffee shops, juice bars, organic farmers' markets and restaurants. This retail trend has spread from the 19th century heart of de Pijp to the more younger neighbourhoods and streets, such as the van Woustraat (Kooyman, 2015).

Nowadays, the van Woustraat is characterized by a unique offer of facilities with some traditional stores remaining, traditional stores that are returning (such as the cheese farmer), telephone stores and doner shops and new trendy restaurants and smaller businesses like a DIY Soap store and a store entirely focused on everything around cycling. Because of this interesting arrangement of business, the van Woustraat became a more distinctive shopping street compared to other shopping areas in de Pijp, which improved the image of the street and attracted more visitors (Rooijers, 2014). Numerous of entrepreneurs from the van Woustraat are also working together to create an investment fund to, for example, promote the street even more. According to former street manager John Bardoel, the profile of the van Woustraat is 'responsible, traditional and authentic', which also reflects the culture (Rooijers, 2014). This new external image, together with the culture, of the van Woustraat was an important reason why businesses like Landmarkt and Marqt, who are selling organic fresh products, came to the street. Numerous of other food stores and restaurants have also come to the van Woustraat which, according to Thijs van Banning owner of Landmarkt, will only strengthen the appeal of the street and make it even more attractive (Rooijers, 2014).

The case of the van Woustraat shows how another ring street away from the main shopping centre has positively developed over the last years. When Hutspot moved to the street a chain reaction emerged and other businesses quickly moved to the street. It shows how a street with a diverse

character with new modern restaurants, stores and other businesses can cause a chain reaction for other businesses to move to the street. This eventually influences the external image in a positive way and attracts new buyers and visitors. A similar chain reaction is also occurring in the Bloemerstraat in Nijmegen: when Lebowski moved to the street it became the trigger for businesses like de Bierhoeder and Bhalu to move to the Bloemerstraat.

Furthermore, the Amsterdamsestraatweg in Utrecht is another similar street just like the van Woustraat and the Bloemerstraat in Nijmegen. The street is a five kilometre long road that crosses through the Noordwest neighbourhood and has a strong residential and business mix. Especially the part between the Paard Kruising and the Marnixlaan is the most problematic. This part contains the most stores and also has the most problems concerning vacancy, crime and nuisance of nighty visitors. Furthermore, the Amsterdamsestraatweg was constructed in the 19th century and had at that time loads of cafes and traditional stores, however, these made way for other stores and businesses opened by and for guest workers who came in the 60's (Platform 31, 2015). This trend has continued over the past thirty years and the street now houses more than 300 shops with a very diverse and multicultural offer. These reasons all combined where the cause for the municipality and other involved stakeholders to tackle and transform the Amsterdamsestraatweg area and improve the appearance, reputation and quality of life in the street. However, the people in Utrecht have a rather negative image of the Amsterdamsestraatweg (Platform 31, 2015). Currently, the street still has a high vacancy rate, a lot of pauperization, illegal prostitution, drug trafficking and a large number of low-value catering establishments in the form of tea houses and kebab shops. Also, one of the biggest problems is the lack of a clear identity (Platform 31, 2015). The municipality is struggling to tackle these problems, especially because all the properties in the street are owned by different corporations (Platform 31, 2015). However, currently an intensive safety operation is tackling illegal activities and new plans to redevelop the public space and address the road safety are being developed (Platform 31, 2015).

The aforementioned cases show how similar but also different each case can be. Most of the ring streets have a wide range of businesses, independent entrepreneurs and a somewhat neglected character after a period of decline. Ring streets are now vastly included in the plans to transform Dutch inner cities (see the case in Nijmegen) or great effort is done to tackle the streets independently such as the Amsterdamsestraatweg. The case in Maastricht clearly focuses on the local identity of the streets and to 'fill in' the empty premises with businesses that match this identity. While the case in the van Woustraat is more of a result of 'late gentrification' of de Pijp area and while the case in Utrecht is more about a street with a very negative image and a lot of criminality. This further shows how each street is different on its own and how there is no blueprint to transform or even brand each street in the same way. Furthermore, as is shown with the van Woustraat, a clear profile or theme is important for the success of a ring street (van Lieshout, 2014). This creates a certain image, which can attract new entrepreneurs, consumers and visitors. Therefore, a good and positive place image can, in the end, create a self-amplified effect, and in the long run provide a positive impulse to the street (van Lieshout, 2014). Another example of this is the Voorstraat in Utrecht, a one-way traffic street in the somewhat problematic Breedestraatbuurt outside of the A1 shopping area with a diverse mix of stores and restaurants. This ring street is in a positive transition with a declining vacancy and an increase of new innovative concept stores, alternative clothing stores, design stores and other trendy boutiques.

This new influx of businesses has led to a positive impulse and a new evolved image of a creative, trendy street which now attracts similar and matching businesses (van Lieshout, 2014).

Finally, another and perhaps unusual case is the town of Meijel in Limburg with around 6200 inhabitants. Of course, the case of Meijel is not about a ring street, however, this case shows how a group of stakeholders has come together to tackle certain problems in the town centre. This group of stakeholders especially focused on the local identity of Meijel. Around the year 2011, Meijel faced a number of problems, such as housing shortage, some deserted and unattractive areas in the town centre without any purpose, a population which was declining (especially young people moving away) and a high vacancy rate. A group of local stakeholders, residents, entrepreneurs etc., formed a group and began to realize that something needed to change immediately. They came up with a plan and lined out the future image of Meijel. This resulted in a new citizens initiative, with almost no help from the municipality of Peel en Maas, and they began to address the biggest problems: to redesign the centre of Meijel and to tackle the vacancy problem in the Dorpsstraat and Raadhuisplein. To realize this, they formed an even larger group stakeholders with entrepreneur from Meijel, residents from the Dorpsstraat and Raadhuisplein and some people from the municipality council and town council. Furthermore, this group began with little side projects in order to transform the centre of Meijel starting with tackling the housing shortage by consulting with other partners to build new apartment complexes (in combination with stores) on deserted areas in the town centre. They also addressed the road safety in the Dorpsstraat, began working on finding a new function of the empty town hall, facilitated in the relocation of a local bank and tackled the vacancy rate in the town centre. Currently, large parts of deserted areas in the town centre have been transformed in new apartments for young families and new modern restaurants have opened their doors. Also, in the last couple of years the vacancy rate has been drastically decreased with the opening of new shops with even a shop-in-shop concept within a large furniture store. Furthermore, the old town hall has been transformed to a high-class restaurant with options of business meetings, parties, overnights stays, group accommodation and entertainment.

Besides, the local stakeholder group also began to work on transforming and redesigning the town centre and to bring the 'Peel identity' back to Meijel. This 'Peel identity' refers to the 'De Grote Peel' which is a famous and large bog area on the border of the province of Limburg and Noord-Brabant. The municipality was glad with this new plan and gave the group money to realize their plans. Together with other experts, all from Meijel, they started drawing plans to transform the centre. Nowadays the Peel is back in Meijel. New peat blocks (turf blokken) with cane (which is very typical for the Peel) have been put throughout and around the Dorpsstraat and Raadhuisplein to make the street a harmonized entity, which also clearly defines the boundaries of the centre, see figure 22.



Figure 22. An example of new street art in Meijel that closely resemble the DNA of the Peel. Source: peelgeluk.nl

Furthermore, the architects of the plans designed wooden trails throughout (and at the edge) of the town centre just like the trails that can be found in the Peel. Also, residents and entrepreneurs came up with the idea to redesign the streetlights and to make them look like flouting cane which also reflects the Peel identity. Lastly, a large fountain was designed in the middle of the Raadhuisplein, which mimics the layout of the de Groote Peel. Around the entire edge of the fountain the lyrics of the song 'De Peel in brand' were carved and in the night the lights of the fountain go from yellow to orange to red to complement the song.

What is striking about the case in Meijel, is the fact that it is different from other revival cases. It is a bottom-up citizen initiative from local stakeholder which resulted in a newly improved culture and image of Meijel, see appendix VI for the observation protocol of Meijel. Wil van Oosteren, who gave a presentation about Meijel, told that this citizen initiative came together because of Meijel's history and identity. Meijel was always very isolated because of the many swamps (de Peel) that isolated the town and therefore had to rely on its own until the beginning of the 20th century when new paved roads were constructed. Because of this, Wil van Oosteren argued that entrepreneurship, relying on their own, doing something for the village and social cohesion is in the DNA of the people who live there. Therefore, he argued that these factors have contributed to the successful transformation of the town.

This successful transformation is especially visible in the town centre which got redesigned completely by transporting the history and identity of Meijel back into the town. Besides, the group of stakeholders worked to 'brand' Meijel and established an organisation called 'Peel Geluk' which is responsible for the branding aspect. This organisation promotes Meijel and also organises yearly events and dozens of other activities. While the case of Meijel differs from other cases because it is not a single shopping street or a 'aanloopstraat', it showcases how effective place branding which is based on the place identity can implement new meanings and symbols into a place. The new street art and lighting in Meijel also in a way expresses the local culture and history and leaves impressions on others who visit. Even the whole redevelopment of the town centre has attracted new businesses to the Dorpstraat. The case of Meijel clearly shows how the DNA of the place can be symbolized and captured in the physical environment and how interconnection of a significant group of stakeholders is necessary to fully embrace and create a place's brand.

5 Research findings

This chapter will provide a wide variety of research findings that have been conducted over the course of this study. First, two types of surveys have been conducted which provide internal information on the place identity of the Bloemerstraat. Further, two interviews with entrepreneurs and several street interviews in the Bloemerstraat have been conducted, during which residents, entrepreneurs, visitors and non-visitors were asked questions about the street. These interviews provide detailed context for internal definitions of the place identity and thus the place culture (also partly the place image). Furthermore, this chapter will also discuss the Bloemerstraat Opening Event during which visitors and non-visitors were asked questions about the Bloemerstraat. These answers show how people perceive the street and thus enrich the place image of the Bloemerstraat.

5.1 Surveys

This paragraph will focus on the results from both the conducted surveys. These surveys have been distributed amongst the residents and businesses in the Bloemerstraat. Each of the following sections will discuss the content of the surveys, the results and scores per topic. Besides, useable results and (positive or negative) comments from the respondents will be mentioned. The end of this section will be summarized with a short but detailed conclusion on both surveys.

5.1.1 Residents

The residents survey shows how residents assess or judge the street and how they experience life in the Bloemerstraat. In result of the residents survey contributes to the internal implementation of the place identity. The survey is divided in six themes, with each theme having its own specific questions:

- General judgment of the Bloemerstraat
- Quality and quantity of businesses and service facilities
- Accessibility and mobility
- Experience and appearance (activities/events, street ambiance etc.)
- Collaboration between residents, entrepreneurs, municipalities, property owners
- Traffic safety and safety on the street

In total, 27 respondents have responded from which 5 did not answer a single question, 4 failed to complete and 18 respondents completed the entire survey. The survey consists of 23 questions that are divided among the different themes. Residents were asked grade a scale from 1 (= bad to almost depressing) to 10 (= excellent) and answer questions such as: *What is your general judgment of the Bloemerstraat? How do you judge the amount and diversity rate of stores, restaurants and services? Or How do you grade the atmosphere that you experience in the street?* In addition, residents were asked to comment on each theme or explain their opinion. The comment section has been frequently used in the survey and important and useful comments shall be discussed and added in the results.

First of all, the residents were asked after the quantity and diversity of the stores, services and restaurants and other hospitality related in the street. The stores score a 5.4 while the restaurants and other related businesses score a 6.8 and the quantity and quality of service facilities score a 4.6.

Amount and diversity of stores, restaurants and services/filling of premises	
Quantity and quality of stores	5.4
Quantity and quality of restaurants (and other hospitality related business)	6.8
Quantity and quality of services	4.6

Various new restaurants and lunchrooms have settled in the Bloemerstraat in the last year, such as Lebowski (a wine bar), Bhalu (lunchroom combined with a yoga studio) and Kaniwa (sushi takeaway). Also, other food-related stores have opened their doors such as the Bierhoeder. These new facilities fit into the current popular food trend and the national wide increase of restaurants in the last couple of years. Previously and still, mainly sushi and kebab restaurants can be found in the Bloemerstraat with also two Greek restaurants, two Irish pub, coffee shops and some other cafes.

Subsequently, residents were asked to score the accessibility and mobility. The accessibility of the Bloemerstraat by car, bicycle and public transport scores an average of 8.2. This is easily explained by the central location of the Bloemerstraat, between central station and Plein 1944 in the city centre, and the many busses, almost 40 per hour, that go through the street. Parking possibilities (for cars and bicycles) in Bloemerstraat got a score of 4.8.

Accessibility, mobility	
Accessibility by car/bike/public transport	8.2
Parking spaces for cars/bikes	4.8

In total, 14 respondents have commented on the accessibility and mobility theme. This shows the importance of this theme compared to the previous theme where no comments were made. The comment section shows that residents are clearly satisfied with the easy accessibility and central location, however, the amount of parking spaces for bicycles and cars, especially after the redevelopment of the street, is insufficient. Due to the lack of bicycle parking, bicycles are placed in the wrong places, such as against trees, gates or in courtyards, which angers the residents (and entrepreneurs).

The following theme is about how the residents experience the Bloemerstraat and how they judge the physical appearance of the street. The number of activities and events organized in the street scores a 5.2, of which 9 out of 20 respondents gave it a 6. The information provision about the Bloemerstraat was also rated by a 5.2 and the 'atmosphere' in the Bloemerstraat scores a 4.9. Furthermore, the appearance and maintenance of the premises scores a low 3.8, the appearance and maintenance of the public space a 6.6, the amount and quality of green in the street scores a 5.9 and the quality of the terraces a 6.4.

Experience/appearance/public space	
Activities/events that are organized in the street	5.2
Information provision (about events in the street or the opening of new stores)	5.2
The 'atmosphere' in the Bloemerstraat	4.9
Appearance and maintenance of premises	3.8
Appearance and maintenance of public space	6.6
Quantity and quality of the public space green	5.9
Quantity and quality of the terraces	6.4

The appearance and maintenance of the buildings scores a 3.8 of which only three residents assess the street with sufficient numbers (two 7's and an 8). This low average was not unexpected. Old historical buildings in Bloemerstraat were replaced by new post-war buildings which have hardly been maintained in the last couple of years. The appearance of public space is assessed quite well with a 6.6 of which just one respondent gave a 1 and the other 17 respondent gave a 5 or higher. This positive figure can largely be explained by the recent redevelopment of public space in the Bloemerstraat, such as a broader sidewalk and new trees. Also, the respondents left 15 comments about this theme all about different aspects. From the comments, the street is described as the decayed and the most multicultural street of Nijmegen with paved houses and a shady and often aggressive atmosphere in the evening. In addition, residents are positive about the new redevelopment, but still would like to see more changes such as the widening of the pedestrian area by limiting the terraces, demolishing the Intersport building on the crossing with Doddendaal, more green in public spaces and more restaurants and other related businesses of better stature.

The following theme is about the collaboration between residents, entrepreneurs, the municipality and property owners. The cooperation between residents and entrepreneurs scores a 4.8 of which four respondents gave a score of 1, compared to twelve respondents who give a 6 or higher.

Collaboration	
Cooperation between residents and entrepreneurs	4.8
Cooperation between residents and municipality	5.4
Cooperation between residents	5.1
Collaboration between residents and property owners	4.8

Furthermore, the cooperation between the residents and the municipality was judged by nine scores lower than a 5 (of which two gave a 1) and 12 scores higher than a 5 ranking from a 5 till 7. Collaboration between residents is labelled with a 5.1 of which two respondents gave a score of 1 and seventeen respondents gave a score between 4 and 6. Finally, the cooperation between residents and property owners is judged with an average of 4.8 of which 4 respondents judge this cooperation with a 1. In addition, the remaining fifteen scores are between 3 and 7.

What strikes, are the outliers in this category. Some of them do not experience any cooperation between any of the groups, while other respondents are working together with others in the street. This is also clearly reflected in the comment section. Nine comments have been posted, in which the

residents all clearly outline that they have experienced little or no collaboration between the groups. Also, some respondents would like to see more information about the filling in of vacant buildings.

The last theme from the survey is safety. Concerning the Bloemerstraat, safety is an important aspect especially because of the busy traffic. Traffic safety is assessed on average with a 4.6, twelve respondents gave a 5 or lower (seven gave less than 3), and only seven respondents gave a 5 or higher (with four respondents giving an 8). Street safety scores on average a 5.1 and the amount of (street) lighting a 6.7. Monitoring and enforcement in the street by the police and Bureau Toezicht are judged by a 5 and 5.1, respectively.

Traffic safety and safety in the street	
Traffic safety	4.6
Safety in the street	5.1
(Street)lighting	6.7
Monitoring and enforcement by the police	5
Monitoring and enforcement by Bureau Toezicht	5.1
Did you experience nuisance in 2016/2017? If so, can you indicate what you have experienced? (19 respondents)	78.95% has occasionally experienced nuisance
Violence	21 %
Burglary	11 %
Nuisance	74 %
Vandalism	58 %
Does not apply	16 %
Otherwise	0 %

Subsequently, the respondents were asked if they experienced nuisance in 2016 or 2017 and if so what they experienced. Around 80% of the respondents has experienced nuisance in a form of violence (21%), burglary (11%), nuisance (74%) and vandalism (58%). While one respondent mentions the street is relatively safe because of the high social control, most respondents strongly criticize the safety. The speed limit (of 30 km/h) is not or hardly pursued by cars and buses and enforcement by police and Bureau Toezicht is also assessed as very negative. Besides, there are respondents who strongly argue against the street's safety and describe the Bloemerstraat as a street where 'women do not dare to walk alone at night'.

Finally, the residents gave the Bloemerstraat an average score of 5.7 with 52% of residents who gave a 6 and 14% of the who gave an average between 5 and 7. Also, of all the 21 respondents, 15% (3 respondents) gave a 4 or lower and 5% (only one respondent) gave a 7.

5.1.2 Entrepreneurs

As with the residents, a survey has also been distributed among the entrepreneurs in the Bloemerstraat. There is a wide variety of entrepreneurs in the street that give the Bloemerstraat its distinctive colour and character. The survey was distributed among the entrepreneurs in the late spring of 2017. Thirty entrepreneurs completed the survey, however, not every entrepreneur has filled in every question. The table below, shows the entrepreneur divided in different categories.

Type of entrepreneur	Entrepreneurs in the Bloemerstraat
Hospitality related business	Dyonisos, plan B, Vurens, Cafe de Plak, A Good Vibration, Backstage, Cafe van Deelen, Lebowski, Cafe Life
Clothing related store	Maya Mode, Up to no Good/BijSmaak, Lopers Company
Do-it-yourself shop	Boutje van Woutje
Drugstore	Pimpernel
Spa/nail studio	Thai Spa, Lin Spa
Driving school	Rijschool Correct
Employment agency	Olympia
Food related store	Bierhoeder
Hairstylist	Kapsalon Van Haaren, Ronny's hair
Phone store	Daily Phone
Supermarket/night shop	Dabaiwa market
Coffeeshop	GigaBijt, Happy Holland
Casino	Casino Walk Inn
Editor	Uitmagazine
Lingerie/ sex shop	Christine le Duc
Art leasing shop	Kunstuitleen ArtPartner
Bicycle shop	Bikewerk
Total	30

Table 2. List of the entrepreneurs in the Bloemerstraat who have filled in the survey distributed per type of entrepreneur

As the list in table 2 makes clear, there is a great variety of businesses in the Bloemerstraat and note that this is only the list of entrepreneurs who have filled in the survey. Also, the hospitality sector shows a great variety from snack bar Vurens to cafes, such as de Plak, van Deelen, Life and Backstage, to a new and trendy wine bar Lebowski and a few Shisha-lounge-like businesses. Just like the resident's survey, entrepreneurs were asked to give a grade from the scale from 1 (= bad to almost depressing) to 10 (= excellent) and answer the question.

First of all, entrepreneurs were asked to assess the quantity and quality of businesses in the streets. The range and diversity of the stores scores a 4.7 on average, the restaurants related business received a 5.4 and the services got a score a 5.2 in total.

Amount and diversity of stores, restaurants and services/filling of premises	
Quantity and quality of stores	4.7
Quantity and quality of restaurants (and other hospitality related businesses)	5.4
Quantity and quality of services	5.2

It is possible to make a clear distinguishing between entrepreneurs who, on the one hand, regard the hospitality and retail facilities as sufficiently and on the other hand as insufficient. The owners of the Gigabyte and Kunsttuileen ArtPartner indicate that there are enough or too much of the same restaurants in the street while Lebowski, BijSmaak, rock cafe Backstage and Uitmagazine indicate that the number of restaurants, especially lunchroom and coffee bars, is still insufficient. In addition, Lebowski gave a comment about the amount of small night markets and nail studios, because the customers that are visiting these places is not their customers. Other entrepreneurs agree with this and find the amount of night markets, kebab shops and other related businesses as too many.

In addition, entrepreneurs were asked to assess the accessibility of the Bloemerstraat. The accessibility received a very high average of 7.2. Entrepreneurs mainly argue that the street is easy to reach by bike and public transport. However, comments from this survey also show that the amount of parking spaces for bikes and cars are limited.

Accessibility and mobility	
Accessibility by car/bike/public transport	7.2
Parking spaces for cars/bikes	5.7

Furthermore, the entrepreneurs were asked to judge their experience with the Bloemerstraat. Organised activities and events in the street received a 4.1 of which four entrepreneurs gave a score of 1 or did not answer this question. The provision of information about new upcoming events, new stores opening or other street-related news, received a 4.6 of which three entrepreneurs gave a score of 1 and six entrepreneurs did not answer. The atmosphere in the street is labelled with an average of 5.3, however the numbers differ greatly with some entrepreneurs giving a 1 and some a 10. This strong variation in scores is also reflected in the rating for the streets appearance, namely a 5.2. Both new entrepreneurs and old entrepreneurs, who have had their businesses for years, judge the appearance of the street as bad and insufficient, while Thai Spa, Link Spa, A Good Vibration, Backstage and Dabaiwa Market assess the appearance of the street with a 7 or higher. In the comments, Plan B calls the Bloemerstraat a street in transition, not cosy but busy and impersonal.

Experience/appearance/public space	
Activities/events that are organized in the street	4.1
Information provision (about events in the street or the opening of new stores)	4.6
The 'atmosphere' in the Bloemerstraat	5.3

Appearance and maintenance of premises	5.2
Appearance and maintenance of public space	6.1
Quantity and quality of the public green	5.9
Quantity and quality of the terraces	5.1

Also, the appearance and maintenance of public space is assessed with a 6.1. Furthermore, the quantity and quality of the public green received an average 5.9 and the quality of the terraces in the Bloemerstraat received a 5.1.

The collaboration between entrepreneurs, municipalities, residents and property owners is assessed on average with a 5.3. Separately, the cooperation between entrepreneurs and municipality is assessed by a 5.3 while cooperation with residents received a 5.3.

Collaboration	
Cooperation between residents and entrepreneurs	5.3
Cooperation between residents and municipality	5.3
Cooperation between residents	5.5
Collaboration between residents and property owners	4.5

In the comments section, Kunstuitleen ArtPartner argued that there is almost no cooperation with other entrepreneurs in the street. Other entrepreneurs such as Christine le Duc commented that there have been meetings with each other in the past about improving the appearance of the street, however, not everyone wanted to join this initiative and the municipality was also not cooperating. Dabaiwa Market on the other hand mentions that collaboration with other businesses around his store is good while Backstage acknowledge no collaboration with other business. Finally, Uitmagazine, which is an editor, argues that it is difficult to work together due different interests and cultures. Also, Uitmagazine mentions that the rather bad image of the Bloemerstraat is not resulting in any pride which makes collaboration between other stakeholders difficult.

Entrepreneurs like, Olympia, Dyonisos, Gigabyte, Backstage, Ronny's hair, Lopers Company, who have been in the Bloemerstraat for at least 20 years, regard cooperation between other entrepreneurs as bad and neglecting. Some of these entrepreneurs also regard the cooperation with the other groups as really bad, while others, such as Lebowski, Bierhoeder, Dabaiwa Market and de Plak regard the cooperation between de groups as positive. Unfortunately, there is no clear and significant difference between the entrepreneurs who have been in the street for at least 10 years or longer and who have just settled in the Bloemerstraat in the last 5 years.

The last theme is about the traffic safety and safety on the street. Again, safety is an important aspect in the street and not only because of the busy traffic but also because of nuisance of nightly visitors in the evening. The overall traffic safety is assessed on average with a 4.6, whilst safety on the street scores a 5.9 and the amount of (street) lighting a 6.5. Monitoring and enforcement in the street by the police and Bureau Toezicht is judged respectively by 5.6 and 5.7. Subsequently, the respondents were asked if they experienced nuisance in 2016 or 2017 and if so, what they experienced. Around 60% of the entrepreneurs have experienced a form of nuisance. 48% of the entrepreneurs have experienced violence, burglary or vandalism while 40% have experienced an unsafe feeling on the street.

Traffic safety and safety in the street	
Traffic safety	4.6
Safety in the street	5.9
(Street)lighting	6.5
Monitoring and enforcement by the police	5.6
Monitoring and enforcement by Bureau Toezicht	5.7
Did you experience nuisance in 2016/2017?	
Violence, burglary, vandalism	48%
Nuisance	60%
Unsafe feeling	40%

In total, the general judgment of the Bloemerstraat by the entrepreneurs is an average of 5.7. Only 21 of the 31 entrepreneurs gave a general judgment of the street and yet again the numbers differ greatly. For example, Lebowski gave a 3 however explained in the comments that it is because of the high vacancy rate and acknowledge the high potential of the street. Also, another new entrepreneur who recently came to the Bloemerstraat, Bierhoeder, acknowledge the high vacancy rate and the high amount of 'less attractive' stores. Other entrepreneurs gave the street a 6, like Pimpernel and say commented that the street is not a shopping street but just a 'doorloopstraat' to go from central station to the city centre as quickly as possible.

5.1.3 Conclusion surveys

The discussed scores per theme from the resident and entrepreneur's surveys are summarized in the graphic below. The orange line represents the entrepreneurs and the blue line the residents.

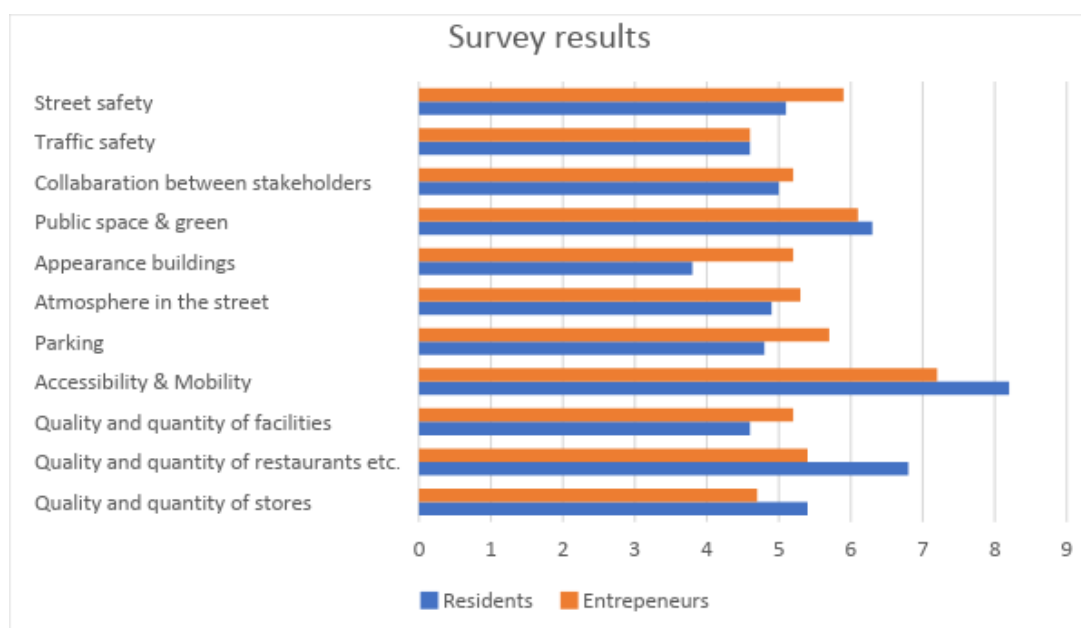


Figure 23. The results from both the resident and entrepreneurs survey

Comparing the results from both surveys show some differences the residents and entrepreneurs and how they judge and look upon the street. While residents find the quality and quantity of the stores and restaurants, and other related businesses in the street sufficient with a 5 or higher, the entrepreneurs are more critical. Especially young businesses such as Lebowski, BijSmaak and Uitmagazine commented that there are too few coffee bars and lunchrooms in the street. The accessibility and mobility are by both groups judged with a 7 or higher, not totally unexpected since the street is the quickest way from central station to Plein 1944 by foot and by bus. This also becomes clear when looking at the result from Stadsmonitor in 2017 which indicates that the street is visited from frequently (Gemeente Nijmegen, 2017). Parking is an issue that both entrepreneurs and residents tend to agree on. The amount of parking spaces for both bikes and cars is limited, and the placing of bikes outside the allowed spaces is a trouble for both parties. Also, residents are more concerned about parking spaces for their own bike and car while entrepreneurs are more concerned about parking spaces for visitors. The atmosphere in the Bloemerstraat is judged equally by both parties while the appearance of the buildings is judged with a 3.8 by the residents and a 5.3 by the entrepreneurs.

Both the quality of the public space and green in the street are judged with a 6 or higher. Still both the residents and entrepreneurs would like to see changes, some want more plants and flowers around the trees whilst others want a new approach to improve the facades of the buildings. Furthermore, the collaboration between different stakeholders is judged by both residents and entrepreneurs with an average number of 5. Both parties commented that there is no real and serious collaboration between residents, business, municipality and real estate owners. Traffic safety is judged with a low score of 4.6. Both parties agree heavenly with each other and indicate the unsafe situation on the road. Lastly, street safety got an average number of 5.1 from the residents while the entrepreneurs gave an average of 5.9. Also, with this theme both parties tend to agree on the fact that the safety is sometimes lacking with drunk people on the street who visit doner kebab shops in the night and scooters that drive on the sidewalk.

Still some results can be put to question because, as has been mentioned before, a critical note can be placed on the internal validity of the surveys. However, in order to minimize these chances, respondents were able to explain their answer and thoughts in the comment section of the surveys. The comment section has been used frequently and also indicates which of the themes and questions are important to the respondents. Also, the questions from the surveys are about the street where the respondents live and work which makes it more likely that the 'right' question are filled in. Furthermore, the results indicate something else. It shows how differently the street is acknowledged by the residents and entrepreneurs. Some who have filled in the survey are very negative and want to see loads of changes while others are more positive and see the charm of the roughness in the street.

The following section concentrates on the results from the interviews and the so called 'tips' from visitors and non-visitors from the Bloemerstraat Opening Event. These forms of data collection are aimed to gain a more in-depth image of the place identity in the Bloemerstraat, and also to secure the internal validity of this research.

5.2 Interviews

The results from the previous section show how the residents and entrepreneurs assess and experience Bloemerstraat. Both the surveys are providing the place culture with more meaning and therefore contribute with the internal implementation of the place identity in the Bloemerstraat. However, the results from the survey only gave a 'flat' image. Therefore, two interviews have been conducted in order to create a more in-depth picture of the place culture and place image. Two unstructured (non-directive) interviews have been conducted with Kees Buijns and Christiaan Roest from Bhalu and Jeroen Hinssen from de Plak. Kees and Christiaan have been chosen because Bhalu has only recently opened its doors in the Bloemerstraat and it is therefore interesting to know why they came to the Bloemerstraat and what their image of the street was before they opened Bhalu. Also, Jeroen Hinssen has been interviewed, he has been working at the Plak for years and is familiar with the changes that have occurred in the Bloemerstraat over the years. Furthermore, several street interviews have been done with residents, entrepreneurs, visitors and by-passers in the Bloemerstraat to gather information on how they look upon the Bloemerstraat.

5.2.1 Interview with Bloemerstraat entrepreneurs

This section shall discuss the most important aspects from the interviews which contribute to the determination of the place identity and the discussion about the place branding processes in the Bloemerstraat.

Bhalu has recently opened in the summer of 2017 and it is a lunchroom that serves healthy food all day and also provides yoga classes, workshops and mindfulness training. The two owners Kees Buijns and Christiaan Roest describe Bhalu on their website as:

'Bhalu is a living room. For you and for everyone. You can be together with us, talk together, laugh together and share knowledge together. But you can also relax on your own. When you walk into Bhalu, you see that the character of nature is nature. In Bhalu you are outside. The heat does not come from a fireplace, but from the people themselves.'



Figure 24. The inside of Bhalu. ©Bhalu

Bhalu is part of a new wave of young entrepreneurs who are currently settling in the Bloemerstraat. These new businesses are named Lebowski, Bierhoeder, Flowink studio and de Paskamer (which is now a combination of online sneaker store Bijsmaak, tattoo shop Vliegwerkpremium and music label

Draaikunde). When asking Kees and Christian what they thought of the Bloemerstraat right now, they were very happy with their decision. Beforehand they were not satisfied and convinced about the Bloemerstraat. Both owners have been living in Nijmegen for a longer period of time and did not have any good association with the street. They knew that some people in the city called the street the Gaza Strip of Nijmegen” because of the many cultures that can be found in the street. Thus, their place image of the Bloemerstraat was not very positive and had a lot of prejudices. However, when visiting the street and talking with the owners of other recently opened businesses, they began to see through prejudices and see the potentials of street. Especially talking with the owners of Lebowski, a new and popular wine and food bar across the street which opened in 2016, convinced them to choose the Bloemerstraat. According to the owners:



Figure 25. Right: owners of Bhalu Kees Buijns and Christiaan Roest. ©Joy van de Wert

‘The ladies of Lebowski have seen something in the street, it has been a big gamble for them, but it has worked out well. They said: look through the street, then you see the potential, in terms of location and as a new upcoming street in Nijmegen. Also, for Lebowski it was an attractive location because of the low rental prices and easy available alcohol permit’

After all, Kees and Christiaan think that the Bloemerstraat really suits Bhalu, especially after the redevelopment of the street. Another reason why the Bloemerstraat became their choice are the new plans for the old Intersport building on the corner of the Bloemerstraat and Doddendaal. These plans, which are still in development, consist of the realization of a large supermarket with apartments, which in time can cause a large influx of students and other people coming to the Bloemerstraat. Furthermore, the owners of Bhalu believe they are part of the positive and new reputation of the street. An example of this is given by Kees, who was sitting with his friends at a table outside Bhalu, when a girl on a bike come over and said to her friends how much the Bloemerstraat has changed. Thus, the changes that are going on in the street are recognized by the people which results in the place image they have of the street to change:

‘Not everyone sees the change, the roughness and cultural differences you have to find this interesting. It is a street full of cultural and diverse people which reflects current society. The Bloemerstraat was once a beautiful old street. This image is dated, you cannot ‘feed’ this image anymore and you need to let this go.’

Furthermore, Kees and Christiaan recognize the Bloemerstraat as a ‘doorloopstraat’, which it is. However, students and young adults are especially coming to the Bloemerstraat for places such as Bhalu and Lebowski. Christiaan thinks these people look for what Bhalu has to offer: a living room feeling and a place for relaxation and socializing. Older people accidentally visit when they walk through the street. Besides, the owners of Bhalu want to work together with other new and some old entrepreneurs in the Bloemerstraat who have the ‘energy’ to really change and make something of the street. They find this energy lacking with some older entrepreneurs which can be found plentiful in the Bloemerstraat and Smetiusstraat (for example the doner shops). Therefore, they prefer not to

really include them in the upcoming plans (something that is called during the interview as *liefdevolle verwaarlozing*):

'For us, it is not just about making a profit. You also must be a little bit crazy to see something beautiful in this street, you have to be able to see through this. However, Flowink, de Bierhoeder, Cafe de Plak, Lebowski everyone has this craziness. More entrepreneurs make it a more vibrating street with energy, where people often come, with social activities, to see what they can experience here. There, is a lot of potential. Maybe people will soon be going to the Bloemerstraat for an afternoon.'

Because of this, Kees and Christiaan aim to create a group of ambitious people who can work together to a common goal: to make the Bloemerstraat a more beautiful place. Also, their plans are to make the street greener in order to 'cover up' the ugly buildings and eventually become the greenest street in Nijmegen in the year 2018 when the city is the Green Capital of Europe. Finally, Kees and Christiaan talked about the fact that they see Bhalu not only as their business, but as a part of a larger plan and process to transform the Bloemerstraat:

'The best part is that we hear from people that the Bloemerstraat is changing. This is the best compliment we can get.'

The other interview was conducted with Jeroen Hinssen who has been working at café de Plak for at least 10 years. Cafe de Plak has been an iconic restaurant in the Bloemerstraat and Nijmegen for more than 40 years. It is a collective restaurant, which means that there is no boss and all employees contribute to the management and decisions-making. Over the years Cafe de Plak changed from an activist disco-cafe and restaurant to a flourishing cafe and organizer of spectacular cellar parties. They also have refugees who work in the kitchen and cook regularly for refugee's asylum centres. De Plak is especially famous for their minced cheese-meat burger and fresh vegetables. So, de Plak is a place for everyone to feel at home.



Figure 26. Cafe de Plak ©Cafe de Plak

Jeroen is very familiar with the changes in the last 20 years and finds that the street has changed on a positive note. The municipality and other stakeholders put a lot of effort into the street, according to Jeroen, and this effort is slowly paying off, especially regarding the arrival of new entrepreneurs.

Furthermore, Jeroen finds the many night-, coffee- and kebab shops and other related businesses of the same standard as something positive in the street, they bring life in the Bloemerstraat. Especially in the summer, people can spend hours outside and watch all the people that are passing by. However, the many scooters are a big irritation for all the stakeholders that are involved in the street because they do not follow the speed limit and sometimes drive on the sidewalk. Jeroen also mentions the negative image of the street especially in the evening when a lot of violent things happen with drunk people that are going out for a late-night snack in the Smetiusstraat. This stands in contrast with what it used to be, when the Bloemerstraat was a relatively quiet street where 'nothing really happened', according to Jeroen. However, the night shops, coffee shops and doner shops also brought more unrest in the street. Jeroen says that this can be regarded as a bad and negative thing (by some people) and a positive thing according to him. Also, Jeroen argues that the street is largely target visited, meaning that loads of people come to the Bloemerstraat for one specific store or restaurant. However, de Plak is visited by a diverse group of people aged 18 to 70 and all with different backgrounds. Jeroen also mentions that a lot of tourists come to de Plak because they are one of the only three restaurants in Nijmegen that are mentioned by Lonely Planet on their website.

In his years working at de Plak, Jeroen has noted how much the internal culture of the street has changed. The street used to be different with other businesses compared to now. This is also confirmed by the owner of Boutje van Woutje, more about him in the following section, who says that the Bloemerstraat used to have other and more businesses such as employment agencies and hairdressers with a clear focus on service-related business. Also, back then the street had more quirky and activist cafes, like Cafe de Plak. Over time, the street got more multicultural with the opening of sushi restaurants, Greek restaurants and other shops by people with a migration background. Partly the reason why these kinds of businesses came to the Bloemerstraat are the low rental prices compared to other places in the city centre. Also, the street still has a high level of businesses that just come and go while other shops have been in the street for more than 30 years such as, Runner World, Kapsalon van Haaren and Bikewer.

Lastly, Jeroen was asked about his thoughts regarding the Bloemerstraat, the changes he has seen and what he would like to see. He sees the diverse amount of businesses and residents as something positive, especially because every entrepreneur does his own thing which is fine and gives the streets its charms. It is an ugly street and it will never be a street like the Lange Hezelstraat, but that is ok because it does not need to be like that. Also, it is not necessary to have the same kind of businesses (for example loads of places similar to Bhalu or Lebowski), because this takes away the famous and most well-known aspect away from the street.

5.2.2 Street interviews in the Bloemerstraat

The street interviews have been conducted in order to gain a deeper insight into the place culture and place image of the Bloemerstraat. During these interviews, a professional photographer Joy van de Wert came along to make photos of the interviewees and of the Bloemerstraat. Also, together with the Blossom, it was decided that these street interviews and photos will be used for new branding practices to position the Bloemerstraat in a positive light through social media, more on this can be found in chapter 7.

The interviewed people were asked questions like: what they thought of the Bloemerstraat or what their opinion is of the Bloemerstraat (this can of course be either positive or negative)? And if they see changes in the Bloemerstraat? Has your opinion or view towards the street changed over the years? And what are the positive aspects about the Bloemerstraat? These so called 'stories' of the interviewees provide a deeper and enricher insight in how some residents, entrepreneurs, visitors and non-visitors experience and acknowledge the place image and culture of the Bloemerstraat. In total 16 people were interviewed of which 10 were regarded as useful for this research, partly because they declared that their information and photos could be used for social media and research. Thus, the following section will discuss the most useful aspects from each 'story' that contributes to this research.

First, the owner of a doner kebab shop on the corner of the Bloemerstraat/Smetiusstraat and Eerste Walstraat was interviewed. He was asked about his view against the street and argued that the street is way more alive again compared to 2006. Back then the Bloemerstraat and Smetiusstraat were far less lively with a lot of vacant buildings with paved and ugly looks. He also acknowledges that more and more people are coming to the Bloemerstraat because: *'everything you need or need in a city can be found in this street'*.



Figure 27. Owner of doner kebabshop Grillhouse Marrakesh ©Joy van de Wert



Figure 28. Owner of Café van Deelen ©Joy van de Wert

Talking to the owner and some regular visitors (not included in the picture) at Café van Deelen. The owner expressed that most of the people will not believe the things he has seen in the street: *'There is a lot of nuisance and noise in the street. It is a street with a lot of cultures coming together, which also causes and brings some problems. Especially the Moroccan youth who visit the Shisha bars on their scooters who do not follow the speed limit and drive on the sidewalk instead of the road.'* Besides this, the owner also talked about the new wave of entrepreneurs that have recently settled in the Bloemerstraat: *'Today there is this new energy and the street has been improved to become a better to link from central station to the city centre. The positive thing about the street are the new entrepreneurs and also the association of undertakings is active again. Also, the municipality is doing its job with tackling the growth of too*

many of the same businesses in the street. Vacant buildings are now easily filled, everything has been painted and the new entrepreneurs form the core of the new Bloemerstraat.'

Another street interview was conducted with the owner of a recently opened sushi takeaway Kaniwa. He admits that the street is in a slow transition and is visited by more and more people. Therefore, these were one of the reasons, together with the relatively cheap rental prices, why he chose the Bloemerstraat as his place for business. He further points out that Bloemerstraat is more alive than it used to be and although the recent redevelopment is very positive, the street is still not inviting enough: *'In my opinion the street needs to develop even more like other streets in the city centre. Also, there are not that many parking spaces and the traffic lights need to be improved. Overall, the street has been improved, but it still a street with a lot of and hectic traffic.'*



Figure 29. Owner of sushi takeaway Kaniwa ©Joy van de Wert

Wout Engelaar is another entrepreneur from the Bloemerstraat. He opened his shop do-it-your-own shop Boutje van Woutje years ago and has seen the recent changes in the street. *'A positive point about the Bloemerstraat are at least the few parking spaces it has, more than other shopping streets! Further I find the diversity of the street unique and positive, there is everything here. This is different from what it used to be, years ago there were a lot of employment agencies and hairdressers in the street, this image has changed.'* Wout also talked about the people that come visit the street. These people are target-shopping meaning that these people come here for the very specific things that can only be found in the Bloemerstraat or outside the city centre, such as a do-it-your-own-shop or specialised drugstore Pimpernel. Furthermore, Wout talked about the recent redevelopment: *'The redevelopment has drastically changed the street, a broader pavement and new trees, which do not block the sunlight anymore, are all great improvements. However, the 'foreign' busses to Arnhem that go through the city centre and other places should be banned from the Bloemerstraat and the city centre, this would greatly improve the safety in the street'*. Despite these positive remarks the street remains an unattractive place to walk through, which is unfortunate according to Wout Engelaar.



Figure 30. Wouter owner of Boutje van Woutje ©Joy van de Wert

A student who studies English at the HAN Nijmegen was interviewed about the Bloemerstraat. He explained that he does not visit the street that often and just uses the street as the fastest way to go to the city centre. Also, the street does not feel like a shopping street for him, but more: *'like a busy road because of the many buses, cars and scooters that go through it every day'*. Also, he noticed that there are a lot of new businesses in the Bloemerstraat for many different groups which he finds great. However, he also points out an element of the Bloemerstraat which it is quite common: *'there are still a lot of stores in the Bloemerstraat that just come and go.'*



Figure 31. A student on his way to the city centre ©Joy van de Wert

Furthermore, a young woman on her way to central station was briefly interviewed. She points out that she 'uses' the street because it is the fastest way from the city centre to the central station and further says: *'I have not noticed the recent changes such as the new sidewalk and I usually do not visit the street for its stores for example. It is more of a walk-through street and I used to get an unsafe feeling especially in the evening however that's completely gone now. For me it is the street to get something to eat and the street of de Plak because everybody knows de Plak in Nijmegen'*. Besides this, she expressed that the striking uniqueness of the street in the form of many new shops and restaurants that have recently been opened.



Figure 32. A student on her way to central station ©Joy van de Wert



Figure 33. ©Joy van de Wert

Another student was also interviewed: *'I come to the Bloemerstraat because of places like Bhalu but also because there are a lot of things to do and see in the street. However, some places do attract some (maybe unwanted) visitors like the Shisha lounges etc.'* Despite, he also acknowledges the diversity of the street as its biggest asset: *'I think diversity is the biggest asset of the street, and therefore makes it a very creative street. Also, it is different when comparing it to for example the Lange Hezelstraat because for me the Bloemerstraat is more active, you can come here to cut your hair, to shop, to buy beer and to drink beer. Thus, making it a very lively street'*. Furthermore, he expressed his thoughts about the borders in the street: *'I think that there need to be less borders in the street. Do not think on your own, like we are the Shisha places, we are that restaurant and we are that business. Restaurants, stores and other businesses should work together and think outside the box'*

Furthermore, another student was interviewed who passed by on her way to work. She pointed out that the recent redevelopment has greatly improved the street which makes it cosier. Besides, she also pointed out the great variety of shops and places to eat and get some food: *'I'm not here for the street and come for new things like Lebowski. Also, I usually visit the Bloemerstraat to get some food, especially sushi despite working at another sushi restaurant in the Molenstraat'*. However, here stops her 'interaction' with the street and she acknowledge the negative elements from the external place image that people have of the street: *'For me, the street could use some more green and the buildings are very ugly and need to improved right away'*



Figure 34. A student on her way to get some food ©Joy van de Wert

Furthermore, Ruth Plaggenborg was interviewed who lives in the Bloemerstraat. She talked about the multicultural and exotic aspects of the Bloemerstraat: *'For me, the Bloemerstraat is the nicest, multicultural street in Nijmegen! On every corner there are great and tasty smells from the many exotic restaurants (also the sweet smell from the Shisha bars) and during summer the street is really alive when the terraces are filled and when a lot of people from all different backgrounds are in the street. It is during summer that it almost feels like you are on vacation abroad.'* Furthermore, Ruth explained about the atmosphere in the street and how this has changed over the last couple of years in a very positive way: *'I say Hello to everyone and they all answer back, this gives a more countryside and village feeling. The assortment of shops is really great, especially with the new and young entrepreneurs which have recently settled in the Bloemerstraat'*. Lastly, Ruth pointed out something that became very clear after her story: *'Finally, the Bloemerstraat is a warm and cosy street if and only if you are open to it!'*. Especially this remark shows how invidiously backstory and perception can frame someone's attitude towards a street like the Bloemerstraat.



Figure 35. Ruth Plaggenborg who lives in the Bloemerstraat ©Joy van de Wert

Lastly, Jan is the owner of specialised drugstore Pimpernel, which opened its doors in 1976. Jan also points out the changes over the last years: *'The street has become new and has got a prettier appearance, the sidewalk is bigger, and the lighting is better. However, I think that the Bloemerstraat can be refurbished even more.'* Jan says the parking spaces in the street are a nightmare especially after the renovation when less parking spaces became available for bikes and cars. Also, he argues that it has become more difficult for his regular and older customers to come to the street because of the busy and chaotic traffic situations and the limited amount of parking spaces: *'Nobody follows the speed limit and the new rubber traffic bumps do not work at all'*. Furthermore, Jan point out that the street will never be a real shopping street like other streets in the city centre: *'It is, has to remain and will be a street with specialty and craft stores that attract certain visitors.'*



Figure 36. Jan owner of Pimpernel ©Joy van de Wert

5.2.3 Conclusion interviews

From the interviews it can be conducted that the Bloemerstraat has gone through some major changes in the last decades. Apparently, the street always had a leftist and social character but used to comprise of mostly services related businesses such as employment agencies for example. Over the years more diverse and 'foreign' businesses came to the street which have resulted in a more multicultural street, which it is well-known for today. However, according to some of the interviewees this has also caused an increase of more nuisance and other problems.

Overall the interviewees find the Bloemerstraat in a positive transition and more alive than it used to be. It becomes very clear that all the interviewees agree very positive to the new changes, such as the redevelopment of the public space and the influx of new entrepreneurs who bring new energy. Especially, the strong variety of stores and other businesses are being acknowledged by visitors, by-passers and other entrepreneurs. The Bloemerstraat is described as a street where you can find everything you need, from a specialized drugstore to a do-it-yourself shop and from a barber to a store entirely dedicated to speciality beer, especially when comparing the Bloemerstraat to the popular Lange Hezelstraat.

Furthermore, most of the entrepreneurs and visitors still think there is some work that can be done, especially regarding the greening of the street, a new approach to improve the facades of the buildings, the amount of parking spaces and the busy traffic. These elements come back in the results from the surveys, also, from the interview with Jeroen and several street interviews. It can be conducted that according to the residents and entrepreneurs the street is visited more frequently, something that can be confirmed by data from Stadsmonitor in 2017 which indicates that the Bloemerstraat has changed from a B2 area to a B1. While the street is visited more frequently, it can be conducted that quite a lot of people still find the Bloemerstraat an unattractive street to walk through with ugly buildings and some unattractive places. Some people only go through the Bloemerstraat because it is the quickest route to central station while others, according to Kees, Christian and several street interviews, visit the street for what it offers.

Some of the older entrepreneurs in the street acknowledge the well-known nuisance and safety issues in the street. The owner of Cafe van Deelen talked about the Moroccan youth who visit the Shisha bars and drive with their scooters on the sidewalk. Another very short interview was conducted with the owners of Snackbar Vuurens, which is not included in the section above. They also talked about the very dangerous traffic situations that sometimes occur in the street, especially in the Smetiusstraat, and the unsafe feeling that many people have in the evening. This unsafe feeling in the evening was also acknowledge by a woman on her way to central station, however she also replied that this unsafe feeling is gone now. Also, Jan from Pimpernel and the owner of Cafe van Deelen immediately focused on the negative aspects, especially the multicultural aspect, and on the things that could be improved. They both expressed that they have seen everything in the street and that some people will not believe their stories. However, what is striking: the owner of Cafe van Deelen immediately began to smile and talk enthusiastically when referring to the big and famous bird mural on the outside of his Cafe wall. Jan also looked from his own perspective because a lot of his clients are older and find it difficult to visit Pimpernel.

Finally, the last and very importing remark that can be done is a quote from Ruth Plaggenborg who says that the Bloemerstraat is a warm and cosy street if you are open to it. As has been mentioned before, this quote indicates how individual perception and attitude towards the street is very important: while some regard the place image of the Bloemerstraat as positive others can regard the exact same image as negative. Kees and Christiaan of Bhalu also discussed this matter. Their first image that came to mind of the Bloemerstraat was that of the problematic “Gaza strip of Nijmegen”, however this changed when they got to know the street. Jeroen from the Plak also acknowledges this, it is an ugly street with a distinctive character that you perhaps do not care about and prefer to visit other places in Nijmegen or love and see the charm of the urban, rough, exotic and multicultural atmosphere in the street.

5.3 Tips

As has been mentioned before, another data collection method is the attending of important meetings and events which contribute to the goal of this research and determining the place identity of the Bloemerstraat. One of these events is the Bloemerstraat Opening Event in May 2017 organised by Blossom, which is a cooperation between Seinpost Adviesbureau (including the street manager), De Lindenberg Huis van de Kunsten and MOOD concept store. This event was held in the Bloemerstraat to celebrate the redevelopment and refurbishment of the street with numerous of activities such as free ice cream for kids, open houses in various shops and restaurants and the placing of a memorial stone in memory of Dick van den Heuvel. This event was organised in order to put the new Bloemerstraat (back) on the map.

Bloemen voor nieuwe Nijmeegse Bloemerstraat

NIJMEGEN - De hernieuwde Bloemerstraat in Nijmegen is deze zaterdagmiddag feestelijk heropend. Met een bloemen werd een nieuw tijdperk ingeluid voor de straat in het centrum.



Figure 37. Newspaper article about the Bloemerstraat Event (Gerards, Carolien, 2017)

Figure 38. Photo taken during the Bloemerstraat event ©Joy van de Wert

Furthermore, during this event, visitors and non-visitors were asked about their view towards the Bloemerstraat, what their first association was with the street, what they missed and what kind of changes they would like to see. These tips were then written down on sticky notes and placed on an even larger sticky note in the street, see figure 39. These sticky notes from visitors and non-visitors provide an example of what people, who are not part of the place culture, think about the Bloemerstraat. The things they wrote down on the sticky notes are their first initial thought when asking about the Bloemerstraat and therefore provide further insight into the external place image of the Bloemerstraat. Besides, appendix VII. contains a summary of the Bloemerstraat Opening Event. The table below shows the notes which are divided into five categories: green, restaurants, stores & services, experience/appearance of the Bloemerstraat and traffic and safety:



Figure 39. A photo of the large sticky note

Traffic & safety

- Blind guided line in white (not everything is white)
- There is no control in the street especially speed enforcement (safety)
- Less criminals!
- Less drug dealers
- Bicycle storage next to student housing

Restaurants, stores & services

- New lunch places
- The erotic shops and other related stores give the street a bad image
- Less cafes in Smetiusstraat
- More lunch places
- Places for travellers
- More terraces

- When stopping cars from the Eerste Walstraat, stop sign is required. Stop before you have to go to Bloemerstraat.
- Free busses via Kronenburg circle
- Dangerous traffic
- Thresholds across the width
- No buses
- Move the bicycle storage board
- More bike racks
- More 'gezellige' cafes
- Make the street from central station until Plein 1944 one whole
- More attractive stores
- More vintage stores
- More boutiques and other stores!
- More stores like in the Hezelstraat which gives a vacation feeling
- More stores like in the Lange Hezelstraat
- Less coffeeshops (2 times)
- Less Shisha lounges

Experience/appearance of the street

- The street needs to be a unity
- Less advertising signs
- More colour in the street
- It is a messy street with a lot advertising signs. Creating a unity.
- More 'peace' in the street

Groen

- More green and new trees
- More greenery
- Flower shop
- Noch mehr Blumen!
- Placing more plants and flowers

More than half of the sticky note tips belong to the category of traffic & safety and restaurants, stores & services. Just like the surveys showed, traffic safety and safety on the street are regarded as one of the most important aspects by the visitors and by-passers. This can therefore influence the place image of the Bloemerstraat greatly. More about this and regarding the place image can be found in the next chapter. Besides, almost all the tips have a, or partly, negative tone, such as the shortages of parking spaces, the dangerous traffic situations and the amount of stores from the lower market segment. This points out that the discussed place image of the Bloemerstraat beforehand, that of grey, coffeeshops, dangerous traffic situations, drug dealers, Shisha lounges etc., is in fact accurate. Some visitors or by-passers have this external image, which is of course based on the real place culture because the coffeeshops and Shisha lounges form a part of this culture. Finally, some tips can be related to the fact that people would like to see the Bloemerstraat change in order to look more like, for example, the Lange Hezelstraat with little boutique stores and cute lunch places. This is somewhat opposing to the current and well-known aspects of the Bloemerstraat as the Lange Hezelstraat is a small shopping street with old buildings, no traffic and very different business.

6 The Place Identity of the Bloemerstraat

This chapter will discuss the research findings from the previous chapter and relate them to the concepts of place culture and place image. These findings will eventually come together to create the place identity of the Bloemerstraat, which will also be summarized and visualized. As has been mentioned before, the concept of place identity is used to discover the DNA of the Bloemerstraat to create a basis for effective branding practices, but also to accomplish the established goals by the municipality.

6.1 Place identity: the culture and image

According to Kavaratzis and Hatch the identity of a place is divided in two concepts of influences, namely: the place culture and the place image. The place identity is a concept that is constantly constructed and deconstructed from the inside (place culture) and outside processes (place image) (Kooij, 2015). Thus, the internal process, that influences the identity of a place is the place culture or the local culture and is about the way of life that is experienced and created by people living in that area.

History is an important aspect in the place culture of the Bloemerstraat after all it is the past that shapes the future. Over the last 100 years the street has changed drastically and historical events can be linked to present characteristic of the street. The bombardment in the Second World War has changed the street from a small, old and typical Dutch street with mainly craft shops to a widened street with a lot of traffic and a diverse variety of retail shops, restaurants and other services. Another event that occurred in the street is the Pierson riots, which got nationwide coverage. This event especially shows the current left-wing, openminded and tolerant character of the street. Also, between 1980 and the beginning of this century, the street looked a lot different according to Wout Engelaar, owner of Boutje van Woutje: *I find the diversity of the street unique and positive, there is everything here. This is different from what it used to be, years ago there were a lot of employment agencies and hairdressers in the street, this image has changed.* New and foreign business owners came to the Bloemerstraat, especially because of the low rental prices and the attractive location in the centre. New night shops, kebab shops, sushi restaurants, Greek restaurants, nail studios and a Irish pub and other businesses settled in the Bloemerstraat (and Smetiusstraat). Today, this results in a very multicultural street with a wide variety of business.



Figure 40. The multicultural Bloemerstraat ©Joy van de Wert

Both residents and entrepreneurs in the Bloemerstraat have mixed feelings about the street. They acknowledge positive points about the streets such as the accessibility, the central location and the vibrant character. Also, the recent redevelopment of the Bloemerstraat has led to a positive change in physical character of the street. Some entrepreneurs such as Rijschool Correct, de Plak, Bierhoeder, Ronny's Hair have all underlined that the redevelopment and refurbishment of the street has done a lot for the appearance, see appendix V for comments from the entrepreneur's survey. Also, Wout Engelaar says that: *'the redevelopment of the street has drastically changed the street, a broader pavement and new trees which do not block the sunlight anymore are all great improvements.*

However, there are some aspects that both the residents and entrepreneurs have in common. The diversity and amount of service related business, the atmosphere in the street, the amount of parking spaces and the appearance of the buildings and the terraces are regarded as insufficient. Also, the collaboration between residents, entrepreneurs, municipality and other stakeholders is something that is greatly lacking in. Another aspect is the level of safety in the street, especially traffic safety, which is regarded as very serious because of the overwhelming comments from the surveys and interviews, see the figure below. This stands in line with the image of the Bloemerstraat, which will be discussed later on, of a street with a sometimes-unsafe feeling which is also confirmed by business owners such as the owner of Cafe van Deelen and his regular visitors who state: *'There is a lot of nuisance and noise in the street. It is a street with a lot of cultures coming together, which also causes and brings some problems. Especially the Moroccan youth who visit the Shisha bars on their scooters who do not follow the speed limit and drive on the sidewalk instead of the road.'* This unsafe feeling, especially in the evening is also confirmed by the comments from the resident survey, see appendix IV. In the survey they have commented about the nuisance by young people who hang around the street the entire day, about the unsafe feeling that some women have when walking through the street and about the public that some cafe's and coffeeshops attract.

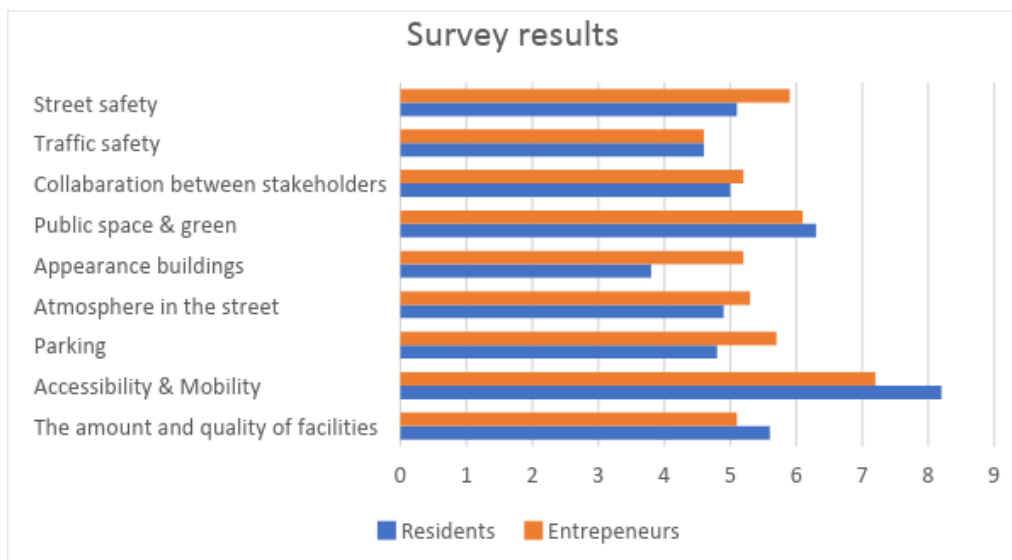


Figure 41. The results from the residents and entrepreneurs survey

Furthermore, some say the street is in a revival stage. Ten years ago, the Bloemerstraat was far less lively with a lot of vacant shops, more paved buildings and neglected public space. However, recently the Bloemerstraat is 'growing' again. Both resident and business owners confirm the fact that more and more people are coming to the Bloemerstraat or use it as a quick way to go from central station to the city centre. As one owner of a doner kebab shop on the corner of the Bloemerstraat and Eerste Walstraat has points out: *'Around 2006, the street was far less lively with a lot of vacant buildings with paved looks and more and more people are coming to the Bloemerstraat'*. Also, the new entrepreneurs bring a new energy to the street and are becoming the new ambassadors of the improved Bloemerstraat. Many people who were interviewed during the street interviews acknowledge the opening of new restaurants and businesses. Vacant buildings area filled in with new and innovative concepts that also really add something special to the street and not just another nail studio of sushi restaurant for example.

The coming and going of different cultures is inextricably linked with the Bloemerstraat. Ruben, who works at Cafe de Plak, talked about this during the Bloemerstraat Opening Event in May, see appendix VII. He regards de Plak and the Bloemerstraat as a reflection of the whole city, especially the left-wing character of the city. Besides he talked about how the multicultural, urban and city-like-feeling in the Bloemerstraat resembles cities such as Brussels and Rotterdam. Thus, some people find the multicultural aspects as a positive asset in the street. According to Ruth Plaggenborg, who has been living in the Bloemerstraat for several years now, the Bloemerstraat is: *'For me, the Bloemerstraat is the nicest, multicultural street in Nijmegen! On every corner there are great and tasty smells from the many exotic restaurants (also the sweet smell from the Shisha bars) and during summer the street is really alive when the terraces are filled and when a lot of people from all different backgrounds are in the street. It is during summer that it almost feels like you are on vacation abroad.'* However, she also acknowledged that the Bloemerstraat is a warm and cosy street if you are open to it, mainly because it is subjective: if your believes or perceptions are not in line with the alternative atmosphere or the different cultures in the street than you probably will not find the Bloemerstraat a warm and cosy place. Jeroen who works at Cafe de Plak sees the many night shops, coffee shops, nail studios and phone shops as something positive in the street, they bring life into the Bloemerstraat. Especially in the summer, some people can spend hours outside and watching all the people that are passing by. Also, other business owners recognize the multicultural aspect and regard it as something positive, such as Woutje Engelaar and the owner of Girlhouse Marrakesh who say, *'the diversity of the street is very unique and positive, there is everything here'*. However, there are also other people who directly link the multicultural aspect with the safety and nuisance problem because of the many kebab shops and Shisha lounges that attract a certain public that causes the nuisance in the street. Thus, it is safe to say that there is a clear distinction between people regarding the multicultural aspect as something positive or negative.

Summarized, residents and entrepreneurs are critically towards their street, they acknowledge the problems that the street is still facing and also see points of improvement. However, when talking face-to-face with them during the street interviews their opinion of the street becomes clearer and more positive points come forward. New entrepreneurs can look through the roughness and prejudices of the street and have begun to spread a new energy in the street. Also, these new entrepreneurs are growing into the ambassadors of the Bloemerstraat, more in this will be discussed in the following chapters about branding. The Bloemerstraat is a somewhat self-willed, energetic and resilient street.

While the grandfather of Hetty Peereboom used giant Cologne pots to stop the fire from destroying a part of the Bloemerstraat during the Second World War, nowadays there are new entrepreneurs who in their own resilient way are a part of the revival of the Bloemerstraat. Besides, the culture of the Bloemerstraat is a multicultural one, not only in the different cultures and people who visit the street but also by the diverse amount of business. Besides, the physical appearance has been a distinctive character of the street, it is an ugly street with paved and neglected buildings which do not make the street more attractive or beautiful. This can result in a partly negative place image because the physical environment, landscape and atmosphere can trigger certain associations in the minds of people when visiting the Bloemerstraat. However, the street is slowly in transition to change into a street where its multicultural, roughness, alternative, colourful, neglected and rebellious aspects, are its positive assets, more in this will also be discussed in the following section.



Figure 42. An example of old and well know businesses in the Bloemerstraat ©Joy van de Wert



Figure 43. An example of new and young entrepreneurs who have settled in the Bloemerstraat ©Joy van de Wert

Moving over to the external aspect of the place identity is the place image. This is the process that externally influences the identity of a place and is formed by the image of outsiders of that particular place. Therefore, the place image is defined as the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that people have of that place (Gertner & Kotler, 2004). These beliefs, ideas and impressions of the Bloemerstraat are gathered by the interviews and 'tips' collected during the Bloemerstraat Opening event. It has become quite clear that loads of people regard the Bloemerstraat as 'that' multicultural and neglected street of Nijmegen, some have even called it, according to Kees Buijns and Christiaan Roest from Bhalu, the Gaza Strip of Nijmegen.

Just as safety issues are a part of the place culture, safety issues are also part of the place image of the Bloemerstraat. The Bloemerstraat is well-known for its many buses, unsafe traffic situation, violent atmosphere in the evening and is sometimes described as a street where women should not walk alone in the middle of the night. All these elements have partly influenced the subjective and individual place image of people. Because of the above-mentioned elements, people have a somewhat negative image of the street which works deterrent. Others can have a very different image of the street because they have a very different attitude towards the elements that other people find negative. Uitmagazine also acknowledge the bad image of the street and described their business location as perfect but also

mentioned the rather bad image of the Bloemerstraat in Nijmegen, see appendix V for the comments from the survey.

Quite a lot of people use the street as the quickest and easiest way to go from station to centre. Also, the street is especially target visited, this is confirmed by Wout Engelaar and Jan from Pimperl who argue that people come to their store because of their speciality and craftsmanship or because it is the only store in the area. Non-visitors or by-passers also say this about the street: *'I don't usually visit the street and for me it is the street of Cafe de Plak'* while others say, *'I come to the Bloemerstraat because of recently opened Bhalu'* and *'I usually visit the Bloemerstraat to get me some food, especially sushi'* and *'I only come to the Bloemerstraat to visit the bar Lebowski'*.

However, the redevelopment of the street and the influx of new businesses has caused a first change in the psychical place culture of the Bloemerstraat which eventually influences the place image of the Bloemerstraat in a positive way. Visitors and non-visitors, see and notice the changes: *'the street is a cosy street with a lot of new and a great variety of shops and places to eat'* and *'I recently saw that there are a lot of new businesses opening in this street for all different target groups. This is great.'* and also *'I think the Bloemerstraat is a unique street in the making with a lot and new shops and restaurants'*. Another example is given by Kees and Christiaan, who were sitting with their friends at a table outside of Bhalu, when a girl on a bike came along and said to her friends how much the Bloemerstraat has changed. Thus, the changes that are going on in the street are recognized by the people which results in a changing image they have of the street. However, this has not changed in everyone's perception of course:

'Not everyone sees the change, the roughness and cultural differences you have to find this interesting. It is a street full of cultural and diverse people which reflects current society. The Bloemerstraat was once a beautiful old street. This image is dated, you cannot 'feed' this image anymore and you need to let this go.'

During the Bloemerstraat Opening Event, a lot of people only talked about the ugliness of the street, the safety problems and the number of Shisha lounges and coffee shops that bring a certain kind of people to the street. However, especially new and young entrepreneurs have begun to see the potential of the street and look through all the prejudices. Also, the reason why the new businesses, from the food and creative industry, come to the Bloemerstraat, are partly because of the low rental prices, but also because of the rough and typical climate in the street. The big-city-like-feeling, accessibility, location and multicultural aspects in this case create positive elements in their place image. These new businesses are becoming part of the street and therefore part of a changing place culture and place image. This fact is already acknowledged by Bhalu who see themselves as a part of the branding process that is currently going on in the Bloemerstraat. More on the branding of the Bloemerstraat and the associated sub-processes can be found in the next chapter.

Thus, as has become clear, the image that everyone can have of the Bloemerstraat is subjective, meaning that their image is constructed (and maybe simplified) because of many associations and information from that place together. It depends heavily on someone's beliefs, norms and values. For example, Jeroen from de Plak regards the multicultural in the street as positive and charming and sees it as:

'It is an ugly street and it will never be a street like the Lange Hezelstraat, but that's ok because it doesn't need to be like that. Also, it is not necessary to have all the same kind of businesses in the street, because this takes away the fact famous and most well-known aspect away from the street.'

It is not a typical shopping street such as the other streets in the city centre, and it will never be one like them. Although some people would like to see the street change into the Lange Hezelstraat, however, this is not preferable because it doesn't suit the identity of the street. Thus, there will always be people who do not like the street because of their subjective understanding of the Bloemerstraat, however, this is not bad. On the contrary, it marks the street.

After discussing the place culture and place image, the following section will focus heavily on the place identity. Furthermore, the identity or DNA of the Bloemerstraat will be summarized and visualized in graphic, to make it the basis for identity-based place branding methods.

6.2 Place identity coming together in key words

Something that has become clear in the previous section is the strongly different opinions from residents, entrepreneurs and visitors towards the street. Some would rather see the 'foreign' shops go away and make room for something else. However, this has become such a vital aspect of the place culture and especially the place image of the street. There is always something to see and always something to do, especially during summer: a street welcome for everyone and of course free to use for everyone but apparently not for everyone's taste. It is a beautiful street if you are open to it. A symbol that represents the place identity of the Bloemerstraat can be found in the bird mural on Café van Deelen. The bird and blossoms represent growth and freedom and the bird is actually a mix of different bird species which symbolises the multicultural aspect of the Bloemerstraat. Besides, it not only symbolises the multicultural aspects of the Bloemerstraat, it also depicts a lot of different elements from the past, present and future, in and around the bird, regarding the Bloemerstraat. This mural is thus a physical and positive impulse to promote the place image of the Bloemerstraat and to strengthen the local place identity (McCarthy, 2006). It represents a new and renovative Bloemerstraat with a clear note to the past.



Figure 44. Pictures of the bird mural on café van Deelen. From pixabay.com

In this research the place image as well as the place culture create the place identity in the Bloemerstraat. Some specific keywords have been distilled from the discussed place culture and place image in the previous section to summarize and simplify the DNA of the Bloemerstraat in just a few powerful words that embrace the place identity. These keywords are further used in branding processes to positively change or transform the place culture and image of the Bloemerstraat. These keywords have also been enriched with elements from the Brand Strategy Research-model. This model is developed by a Dutch market research agency called SmartAgent Company. This model divides societies in four groups or worlds. These four groups are blue, yellow, red and green all with specific values, standards, norms and needs (van Hattum, Pascal; The SmartAgent Company, 2010). For example, cosy yellow could characterize the Dutch culture and values, however, this yellow world is not applicable to the whole Dutch society. Also, millennials are often categorised within the blue world, while this is certainly not the case for all of them. Therefore, there are different groups of worlds within each society. This model can enrich the key words, clarify which 'customers' use and visit the Bloemerstraat and form the basis of further branding practices. The formation of the key words and using this as the basis for branding practices is discussed and mentioned in the communication strategy in appendix IX.

The Brand Strategy Research-model is divided by two axes: a horizontal sociological dimension and a vertical psychological dimension. The horizontal dimension indicates the extent to which one is directed towards itself (ego) or towards his or her environment (group). People are more individualistic on the ego side because their own goals and ambitions are the most important and are the guideline for their behaviour. Also, people from the ego side need appreciation, recognition or approval from others. People on the group side focus more on the social side and adapt more easily. On the other side stands the vertical psychological dimension which distinguishes a more extraverted or open

attitude towards society or a more introvert and closing attitude. Furthermore, there are four different groups:

- *Red world*: about freedom, adventure, culture, personality, extrovert and expression.
- *Blue world*: about control, luxury, wants to see and recover new things and egocentric.
- *Green world*: about peace, security, relaxation, conservatism, safety and group oriented.
- *Yellow world*: about sharing, harmony good food, enjoyment, group oriented and extravert.



Figure 45. Brand Strategy Research-model (van Hattum, Pascal; The SmartAgent Company, 2010)

From the research data and the Brand Research model it can be conducted that the general culture of the Bloemerstraat fits into the red and partly yellow and blue world. These worlds are about freedom, adventure, expression, culture, doing your own thing, energy, young people but also about 'gezelligheid', social environment and enjoyment. Thus, overall the BRS-model and collected research data provide the following key words which summarize, in a very simplified way, the DNA of the Bloemerstraat:

Raw, exotic, colourful, opinionated, multicultural, rebellious, challenging, social, resilient (veerkrachtig), vital, energetic, freedom, self-willed, contrarian, young, intelligent, self-conscious, independent.

The following figure shows the DNA of place identity of the Bloemerstraat visualized into one figure. The outline of the bird mural is illustrated within the key words in the centre. Furthermore, distinctive quotes from the interviews and surveys that represent the place culture and place image are lined around the outline of the bird mural.



'The Bloemerstraat is the nicest, multicultural street in Nijmegen!'

'It is during summer that it almost feels like you are on a vacation.'

The street is alive again. Around 2006, the street was far less lively with a lot of vacant buildings with a paved look. However current, the street is blooming again, and more and more people are coming to the Bloemerstraat.

Place culture

'Not everyone sees the change, the roughness and cultural differences you have to find this interesting. It is a street full of cultural and diverse people which reflects the current society.'

'The Bloemerstraat is a warm and cosy street if you are open to it!'

I think most of the people will not believe the things I see in the street. There is a lot of nuisance and noise. It is a street with a lot of multicultural, which also causes problems.



'The Gaza Strip of Nijmegen'

'It is during summer that it almost feels like you are on a vacation.'

'Look through the street they said, then you see the potential, in terms of location and as a new upcoming street in Nijmegen.'

Place image

'I usually visit the Bloemerstraat to get me some food, especially sushi. However, for me, the street could use some more green and the paved buildings need to be improved right away.'

'Target visited'

'Sisha lounges, took's, doner shops, coffeeshops are well known'



raw, exotic, colourful, opinionated, multicultural, rebellious, challenging, social, resilient, vital, energetic, freedom, self-willed, contrarian, young, intelligent, self-conscious, independent

7 Creating the brand: the four sub-processes in relation to branding

In this case, place identity is considered as a dynamic and endless conversation between the place culture and place image or from the dialogue between different stakeholders. There is an interplay between these three elements in the form of four sub-processes: expression, impressing, mirroring and reflecting (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). Expression is the process where the identity "understands" its own culture (cultural understanding) or the process by which culture makes itself known through identity claims (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). Impressing is the process by which the expressed identity leaves 'impressions' on others (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). The third link described by the process of mirroring in which the identity of a place mirrors the images of another. Mirroring can help to better understand the place identity of an area or a way to reinterpret an identity of an area (Kooij, 2015). The last process is reflecting by which identity is embedded in cultural understandings.

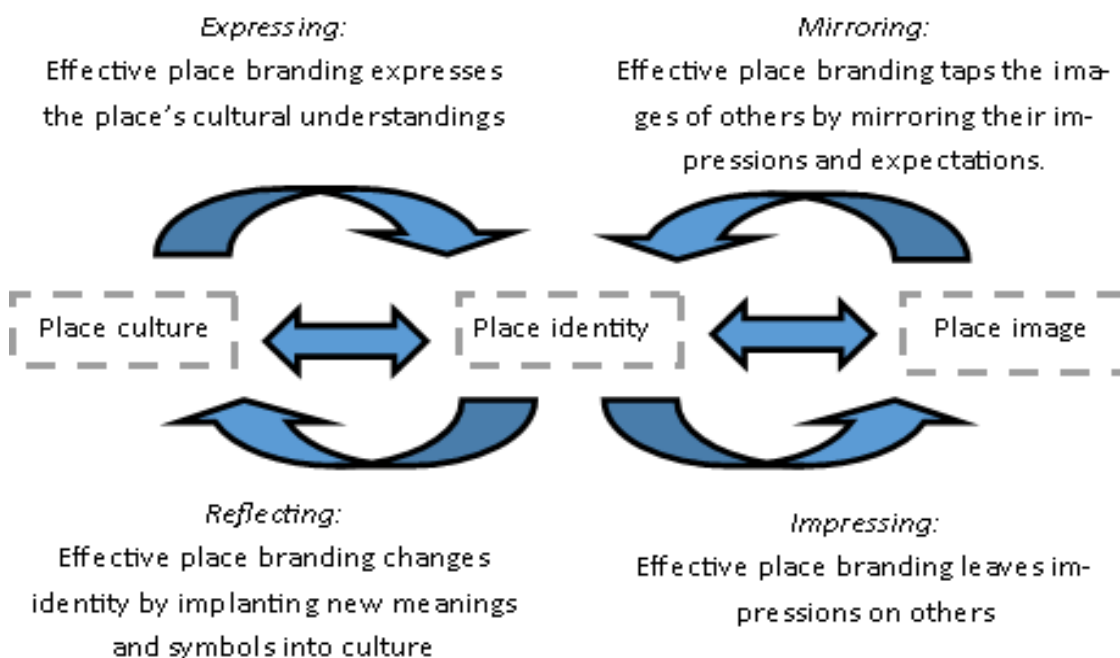


Figure 46. Illustrative figure from Kavaratzis en Hatch: how place branding shadows the identity process. (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013)

The four sub-processes repeat themselves constantly and are not linear which makes the place identity under constant influences of these processes. These processes construct the identity in a way that internally formed aspects of identity (culture) is expressed by and expresses facets of the culture of the place. This 'newly' formed and expressed identity leaves impressions on external stakeholders (hence the place image). These internal shaped aspects which are impressed on others are mirrored to the place identity. This results in the culture changing such (reflecting) that new cultural will be expressed.

As has become clear now, the figure above illustrates identity-based place branding. Effective place branding is meant as a way of branding that is linked to the identity process. Branding is therefore in this case a shadow process and resonates with the four sub-processes of expressing, impressing, mirroring and reflecting (Kalandides, 2011); this research is part of that process. Branding can

contribute to a unique positioning and differentiation. Trying to create a brand can therefore contribute to positively changing and influencing of the image of a particular place, because a brand is:

‘A network of associations in the consumers’ mind based on the visual, verbal, and behavioural expression of a place, which is embodied through the aims, communication, values, and the general culture of the place’s stakeholders and the overall place design’ (Zenker & Braun, 2010)

Expressing

For a place brand, the culture is the authentic basis for expression of the place brand, after all, it is the people who live in that area that make up for the culture. Important cultural features or stories of that place must be recognized in the place identity and return to the branding process. The new bird mural in the Bloemerstraat is a method of effective place branding. It clearly expresses the culture of the Bloemerstraat and also marks a new beginning of the street. Also, other features that express the place identity of the Bloemerstraat are places like Cafe de Plak. A typical restaurant for more than 40 years with an open, tolerant and left-wing atmosphere that clearly is in line with what the Bloemerstraat stands for. New businesses such as Lebowski, Bierhoeder, Flowink studio and de Paskamer (which is a combination of online sneaker store Bijsmaak, tattoo shop Vliegwerkpremium and music label Draaikunde) indirectly express the raw, colourful, social, energetic and young elements coming from the place culture into the place identity of the Bloemerstraat. These aspects then further influence the place image through the process of impressing.

Expressing:
Effective place branding expresses
the place’s cultural understandings



Impressing

Impressing is an important and essential part of the branding process. It is branding that leaves an impression on others, either good or bad, and can affect and change people’s perception and place image. Brands are therefore formed in the mind of people and are the management of perceptions. This makes the physical environment, landscape, atmosphere etc. really important parts of the impressing process because it creates the first impression and triggers associations in the minds of people when visiting that specific place. Thus, landscape can generate impressions that will form images which become implanted in all the sub-processes of the identity-based place branding practices. In the Bloemerstraat the physical appearance of the street and the quality of public space are essential aspects of the impression part. As has been discussed before, the Bloemerstraat is not a beautiful, old and attractive street with loads of historical buildings. The street got bombed during the Second World War and eventually new, modern buildings were built that are currently considered ugly and out of style. Over the years the street got neglected and the quality of public space deteriorated. Thus, these elements regarding the physical appearance and public space, together with the presence of a lot of vacant buildings, businesses of a lower segment and safety incidents, have left a negative impression on people which eventually affected the place



Impressing:
Effective place branding leaves im-
pressions on others

identity of the Bloemerstraat. However, new measures such as the refurbishment of public space, the wider sidewalk and the new trees contribute to a new and positive form of impressing which can ultimately lead to a changing place image in people's perception. Exploring the case of Meijel has also shown how the physical environment can be an important part of the impression process. Meijel completely redeveloped the town centre and the DNA of Meijel is now visibly present in the public space and art. Through the process of impressing the newly redeveloped centre is actually promoting the place image of Meijel as a "Peel village" and is also strengthening the local place identity.

However, other and new forms of impressing regarding the branding process in the Bloemerstraat can be distinguished such the bird mural. The new bird mural symbolizes a new Bloemerstraat and embraces the qualities that some people do not find attractive or positive. Numerous of local and regional newspapers, websites and Facebook pages took attention of the bird mural and published articles about what the mural symbolizes and the reason for creation. Besides, the mural even got voted as one of the most beautiful pictures taken in the Arnhem Nijmegen Regio of 2017 (Regio Arnhem Nijmegen, 2018). Thus, the bird is influencing the place image through the impression process and therefore influences the place identity of the Bloemerstraat. It is also a way of promoting the place image of the Bloemerstraat and to strengthen the local place identity, which according to McCarthy is done through branding practices such as public street art (McCarthy, 2006).

Besides, the big bird mural there are currently plans to improve the quality and quantity of green in the street as a creative way to improve the facades of buildings by using plants and flowers and also to become the greenest street in Nijmegen (van Bergen, 2018). In 2018 Nijmegen is the European Green Capital which is an excellent time to promote these measures. To achieve this goal, a group of entrepreneurs from the Bloemerstraat, who are all on the same level and want to make something of the street, have come together to discuss the possibilities. Current included entrepreneurs are de Plak, de Paskamer, Lebowski, Flowink Studio, Bhalu and Bierhoeder. Later, it is aimed to include more businesses in the Bloemerstraat. This greening process is also part of the impressing process because it can leave a positive and changing image on others. Also, as has been become clear from the analysed data, especially visitors and non-visitors would like to see more green in the Bloemerstraat.

Furthermore, an example of a negative impression is the way how Kees and Christiaan looked upon the Bloemerstraat beforehand. They have lived in Nijmegen for a long time, did not had any good association with the street and heard about the street as the Gaza strip of Nijmegen. Thus, their association with the street and their image of the Bloemerstraat was not a very good one. However, this changed when they visited the street and talked to the owners of Lebowski, which opened the way to see the potential of Bloemerstraat. Some of these new entrepreneurs, such as Lebowski, Flowink, Bhalu, de Paskamer and Bierhoeder, are 'chosen' as new ambassadors because they represent in their way the identity of the street and are part of the impressing process which ultimately leads to improving the place image of the Bloemerstraat. Already, the owners of Bhalu see themselves as part of the new image of the Bloemerstraat and as a part of a larger process to transform the street. Because these new businesses represent the place identity in such a way they were chosen as the Bloemerstraat 'ambassadors' in new promotional material. In this video four new business owners introduced themselves and told why they chose the Bloemerstraat as their place of business. Vera of Lebowski talked in this video about the fact that the Bloemerstraat is an ugly street however it is 'the most worldly street' of Nijmegen where more and more trendy stores and restaurants are opening.

Davy of de Paskamer talked about the large number of restaurants and Cafe that can be found in the street and how the Bloemerstraat is different from other typical Dutch shopping streets such as the Broerstraat in Nijmegen. Besides, he also mentioned how culture and art are and can be an important element to transform the Bloemerstraat even more. Lainey Bee of Flowink Studio talked about how people did not understand her decision to move to the Bloemerstraat. However, when visitors came to her studio they were immediately impressed on how much the street had changed and also understood why she moved to the Bloemerstraat. Besides, Lainey talked about the appearance of the street, how more green can be an asset to improve the appearance of the street and how the Bloemerstraat used to be a neglected street in the city centre but is now worthwhile to visit.

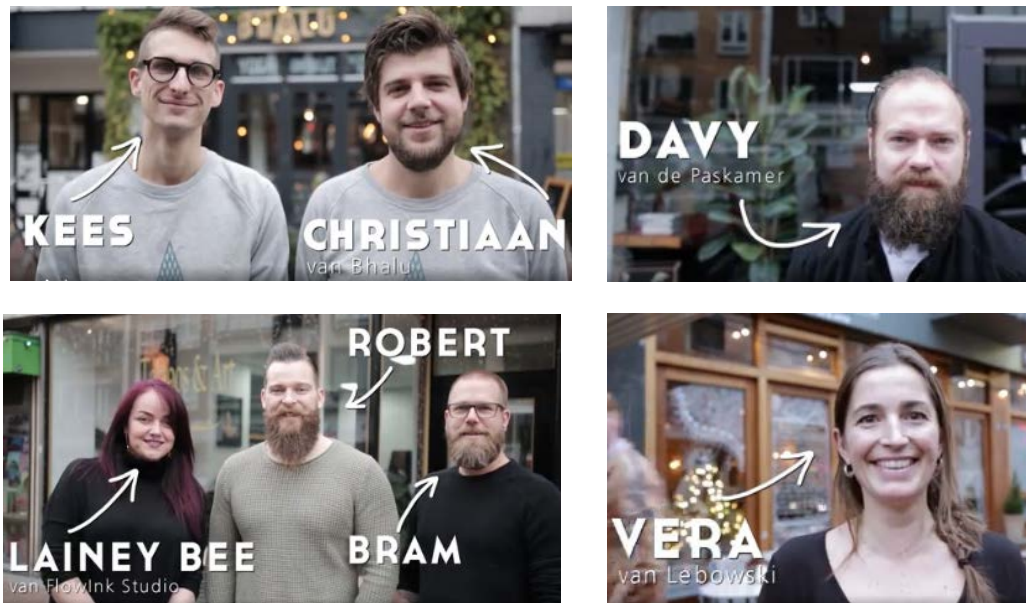


Figure 47. Screenshots of the promotional video. Up left: Kees and Christian owners of Bhalu. Up right: Davy owner of de Paskamer. Bottom left: Lainey Bee, Robert and Bram owner of Flowing Studio. Bottom right: Vera owner of Lebowski

Thus, the promotional video of the new ambassadors in the Bloemerstraat is also based on the place identity and a way to promote and leave a positive impression of the street. Other identity-orientated branding practices or ideas that are currently active in the Bloemerstraat are the creation of a Bloemerstraat logo and slogan (more on this later), developing new promotional material, stimulating and creating more street art and designing new street lighting. These new measures are part of effective place branding in order to work towards a Bloemerstraat brand and aim to leave a positive and improved impression of the Bloemerstraat. Another method of effective place branding that can leave an impression on others are the street interviews, which are used to put the Bloemerstraat in a positive light. Photos and specific quotes from the interviews are used to indirectly reflect the key words and therefore the place identity of the Bloemerstraat. These photos with stories are used on Facebook to promote and positively influence the place image of the Bloemerstraat.

Organizing events can also be part of the impressing process. On the 9th of June, a new event called Park(ing) day was organized by Blossoms and entrepreneurs from the Bloemerstraat. For this event, entrepreneurs, residents and artists changed the parking spaces in the Bloemerstraat into inspiring green mini-markets. In the mini-markets visitors found a combination of pop-up parks, performances and workshops. This event was organised to celebrate the diversity that the street has to offer and to

show that the Bloemerstraat is slowly but surely changing colour and composition, not only through the redesigning of the street with murals and new entrepreneurs but also through new activities (Gemeente Nijmegen, 2018). Besides, the aim was to reflect the quirky and alternative character of the street through this event with a surprising program. People could enjoy the atmosphere and music with a picnic basket in De Plak-Flowink-Bierhoeder-Lebwoski Pop-up Park. Also, Flowink provided wipe-off tattoos and painting workshops, Christine Le Duc provided extra discount on all their products, Boutje van Woutje gave a key making workshop and Bhalu provided free yoga lessons.



Figure 48. Left and upper right pictures: taken during the Park(ing) event © Ger Neijenhuyzen

Figure 49. Bottom right pictures: taken during the Park(ing) event

Summarized, some of the above-mentioned branding practices have been chosen to promote the keywords that strongly reflect the DNA of the Bloemerstraat. These words perhaps do not relate to everyone but reflect the DNA of the Bloemerstraat. However, the place image is still subjective because some people can look at the Bloemerstraat with a negative perspective because of their history, norms and values. Kees and Christiaan summarized this in their interviews as:

‘Not everyone sees the change, the roughness and cultural differences you have to find this interesting. It is a street full of cultural and diverse people which reflects the current society. The Bloemerstraat was once a beautiful old Dutch street. This image is dated, you cannot ‘feed’ this image anymore and you need to let this go.’

Thus, the identity-based branding process in this research stands in line with the case of the Ruhr area. In the case with the Ruhr area, the region moved from branding itself as a region with beautiful castles and nature to identity-based place branding with a clear focus on the raw and industrial image of the region. The Ruhr area example shows how effective branding practices can be achieved by basing these practices on the place identity or DNA of that particular area which avoids alienation. This is the reason why Kavaratzis and Hatch describe a clear dynamic link between the brand and the identity of a place.

Mirroring

While impression is the process in which effective place branding leaves an impression on other, mirroring is the process in which effective place branding taps the images of others by mirroring their impression and expectations. This results that changes in the place image can be regarded as an essential part of place branding. However, in the geographic world, place image is perceptual and is regarded as something that you seem to be while identity of a place is something that you are. Thus, the external images or something that you seem to be will, in the place branding process, be mirrored with the place identity (what you actually are). The place image therefore consists of perceptions of people from outside while the place identity is the characteristics. In the case of the Bloemerstraat the mirroring processes is rather difficult to explain from the collected data because new changes and current branding practices have yet to be acknowledge by the 'outsiders'. The Bloemerstraat brand is in the first stages of developing and first needs to 'land' with the public. However, already a form of mirroring has been taken place with Kees and Christiaan from Bhalu. They had the image of the Bloemerstraat as the Gaza strip of Nijmegen and as a street with a lot of violence, nuisance, kebab shops and drunk people in the evening. This image was mirrored and compared to the place identity when visiting the street and can created a mismatch with 'what it seems' and with the 'what it is'. What the area actually is proved to be nothing like the negative place image they had beforehand. Other, examples are the street interviews during which visitors and non-visitors were asked about their opinion concerning the new changes in the Bloemerstraat and thus mirroring new impressions of the street with the old expectations. Some of the interviewees acknowledge the new changes such as the recent redevelopment and the opening of new stores and said they greatly improved the Bloemerstraat. However, someone else also answered that she had not noticed any new changes meaning that her image has not changed when mirroring impression and expectation.



Reflecting

Furthermore, reflecting is the process in which effective place branding can change the identity of a place by implementing new meanings, symbols and values in the place culture. Aitken and Campelo also describe the process of reflecting as the way in which brands impact culture by infusing or reinforcing meanings in people's' lives. The reflecting process in the Bloemerstraat can be visible in some cases. An obvious example is the bird mural. This is an aspect that has been implemented into the place culture. Also, the greening process in the Bloemerstraat is an aspect that is slowly implemented into the place culture. Bhalu has started this process by improving their façade with plants and is currently gathering other businesses to join them to improve the entire street. This group of businesses is currently aiming to make the Bloemerstraat the greenest street of Nijmegen in 2018 (van Bergen , 2018). This way, Bhalu and other businesses are implanting a new meaning and symbol into the culture. Also, the Park(ing) event contributes to the reflecting process by strengthening, for example green and sustainable, as new meanings and symbols into the culture of the Bloemerstraat. Besides,



the Bloemerstraat Opening Event in May 2017 can be regarded as a form of reflection. During this event the Bloemerstraat was 'reopened' festively with numerous activities for visitors. Also, a memorial stone for Dick van de Heuvel, who was always very involved in the street and has lived there his entire life, was placed in the street to commemorate this active resident.

Also, previously it was discussed that identity-orientated place branding is more suitable than place branding with a clear and only focus on communication and marketing. However, in this case it was also chosen to create a logo with a matching slogan in order to visualize the Bloemerstraat brand and show that something was happening in the street. The logo was also designed to match with the key words of the Bloemerstraat. The grey-greenish colour represents the fact that more green is coming and the raw and shadowy character of the street. Also, the slogan 'a raw, creative street with a cool mix of styles, cultures and people' (een rauwe, creatieve straat met een gave mix van stijlen, mix culturen en mensen) was chosen to stick close and to represents the place identity of the Bloemerstraat. Besides a new Facebook pages has been created, called Bloemerstraat Bloeit, to promote the Bloemerstraat. Figure 50 shows the logo and slogan.

Besides, just as with mirroring, reflecting is still a process that is difficult to 'identify' from the collected data. The creation of the brand and associated effective branding practices are still going on and in an early phase. However, the creation of a strong Bloemerstraat brand can ultimately lead to the process of reflection such as the opening of new creative blurring concepts that fit the Bloemerstraat DNA, more street arts and new ideas such as current plans to design new street lighting. These aspects can implement new symbols and meanings into the place culture of the Bloemerstraat.



Figure 50. The new logo of the Bloemerstraat

What can be noticed is the fact that some the sub-processes are steerable in one way or another. In this case steerable means that for example Blossom can be stakeholder and steer, supervise and facilitate the branding process. Expressing, impressing and reflecting are processes that can be steerable by others. For example, the bird mural was an initiative from Blossom and Blossom uses social media to promote the qualities, potentials and key words of the Bloemerstraat. Also, impressing can be steerable because the creation of the brand and effective identity-orientated place branding leaves impressions on others. This impression part is also partly fuelled and facilitated by Blossom, for

example the initiative to design new street lights that fit the creative and raw character of the Bloemerstraat. Blossom brings knowledge, a vast network and facilitates this idea and works together with many entrepreneurs who have the energy to really change and make something of the Bloemerstraat. Furthermore, reflecting is also steerable in the fact that Blossom is putting new meanings and symbols in the street. It stimulates cooperation between the businesses in the street which greatly contributes in order to make a place brand. Also, Blossom has stimulated the realization of the bird mural and has created a unified branding promotion material for the Bloemerstraat. Mirroring, however is a process that is not easily steerable because it is formed in the mind of the people and the external image will be mirrored with their expectations. Therefore, the expressed image needs to match the expectations.

7.1 The Bloemerstraat brand: assemblage and place identity

This section will focus on the Bloemerstraat branding process and delve into this process through the lens of the assemblage theory. This theory is used to analyse the branding process and to explain how it can work. Therefore, it is aimed that the assemblage theory, in combination with the identity orientated branding approach of Kavaratzis and Hatch, contribute to achieve a detailed and bottom-up insight of the Bloemerstraat brand.

First of all, around 2015 the municipality labelled the Bloemerstraat as urgent for redevelopment. It was a street with a lot of vacant buildings and businesses went away just as easily as they came. The public space was regarded as bad and overall the street had a lot of negative issues. Thus, the aim was to create an economically revitalize street, strongly improve the function profile, redeveloped public space, improve the facades of buildings and also improve the diverse, multicultural and unique character. Since the start of Bloemerstraat project, things have drastically changed. The street got redevelopment and refurbished, with a new sidewalk and new trees, and over time even the vacant buildings were filled with new shops and restaurants that match DNA of the street. Currently, when a business moves away, and the buildings becomes vacant, it is aimed to find a new purpose to the building that also suits and fits within the Bloemerstraat. This is done to lower the overgrowth of other businesses which can be found in the Bloemerstraat (Gemeente Nijmegen, 2015).

Thus, as for now the Bloemerstraat is in transition. The goal is to brand this neglected street in the city of Nijmegen in such way which also contributes to realizing the established goals of the municipality. This is done by using methods which are based on the identity of the Bloemerstraat. The place identity has been determined and explained in the previous chapters and summarized into a few key words which reflect the identity: raw, exotic, colourful, opinionated, multicultural, rebellious, challenging, social, resilient, vital, energetic, freedom, self-willed, contrarian, young, intelligent, self-conscious and independent. These are used as the basis from which current and new identity-based place branding practices must take place in order to stay close to the place identity and prevent alienating. Thus, understanding the identity of a place is used to build the brand because the way in which place identity is conceptualized has a significant impact on the way in which branding is conceptualized and implemented. An example of identity-based branding is the bird mural in the Bloemerstraat which represents the DNA of the street.

However, this chapter also focuses on the coming together of the created Bloemerstraat brand and the assemblage theory. Looking through the lens of the assemblage theory, the Bloemerstraat can be regarded as an assemblage consisting of different elements which are both physical (like the buildings) and non-physical. In the beginning, before the redevelopment of the Bloemerstraat, the Smetiusstraat was not included in the plans from the Bloemerstraat. Thus, the Smetiusstraat became another important element within the assemblage because of its close relation with the Bloemerstraat, it is basically the 'entrance' to the street. Also, in the beginning when the municipality was drafting the policy document *Binnenstad van de toekomst, Visie en transformatie en aanpak leegstand*, the primary focus was especially centred around the entrepreneurs in the street. Residents and real estate owners were also included later because they became important elements in order to make the Bloemerstraat assemblage work. Figure 51 visualise the how new elements can be incorporated into the assemblage of the Bloemerstraat.

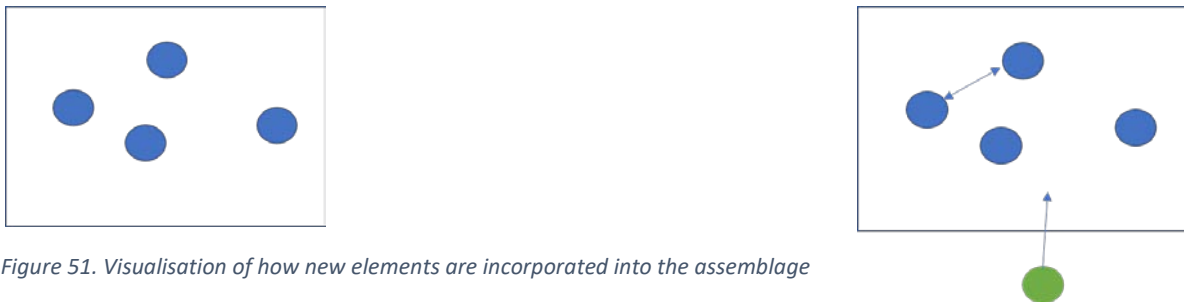


Figure 51. Visualisation of how new elements are incorporated into the assemblage

Another, element that got incorporated into the Bloemerstraat assemblage much later, are the courtyards behind the houses. This was done after the results from the resident and entrepreneur survey came back, which stated that the courtyards are a big point of irritation for the residents because of the nuisance and old bikes that are left there. Interestingly the results from the survey and complaints from the residence was the trigger to include the courtyards as an element in the assemblage and the start for creating new solutions to resolve these problems. This process can be traced back, as has been discussed in the theoretical chapter, to territorialisation and coding. These two processes play a role in the assemblage of the Bloemerstraat, because in this case, physical and non-physical elements in the area have and are being territorialized and have their own space and power. Further on, these elements are coded in practical matters to work in the social whole, for example new agreements on the further development of public space, or the inclusion of the courtyards in new upcoming plans or finding a solution to the parking problems in the street. This process of coding and territorialisation especially became visible when the results from the surveys, meetings and interviews were discussed with employees from the municipality and police, see appendix VIII with the observation protocol of that meeting. It was during this meeting that elements got further coded in new practical matters and policies. Also, it was decided during that meeting to include the courtyards into the project (assemblage).

Thus, coding is the process that gives an assemblage identity, it asks what the purpose is and by naming how we act it is also clarifies why we act. In the first policy documents from the municipality was determined to focus on economic revitalization of the 'ringstraten' which also includes the Bloemerstraat (Gemeente Nijmegen, 2015). This has changed from a primary economic angle of approach to a current project with a mixed focus on social, safety and economic approach (Seinpost, Lindenberg, Mood, 2016). Thus, in 2015 the angle of approach or the aim that began the transformation of the Bloemerstraat was first determined policy-based, however, this has over the course of the time changed because of the identity-based branding process, which 'opened the eyes' towards what is going on and consist the entire Bloemerstraat. Summarized, a new form of coding has been used in order to work towards a more stable Bloemerstraat assemblage. This is done because working with old coding that did not include for example the residents is not viable for the assemblage. Therefore, this new coding is based on the place identity of the street and has led to a new specific agenda which contributes to the creation of a stable Bloemerstraat assemblage.

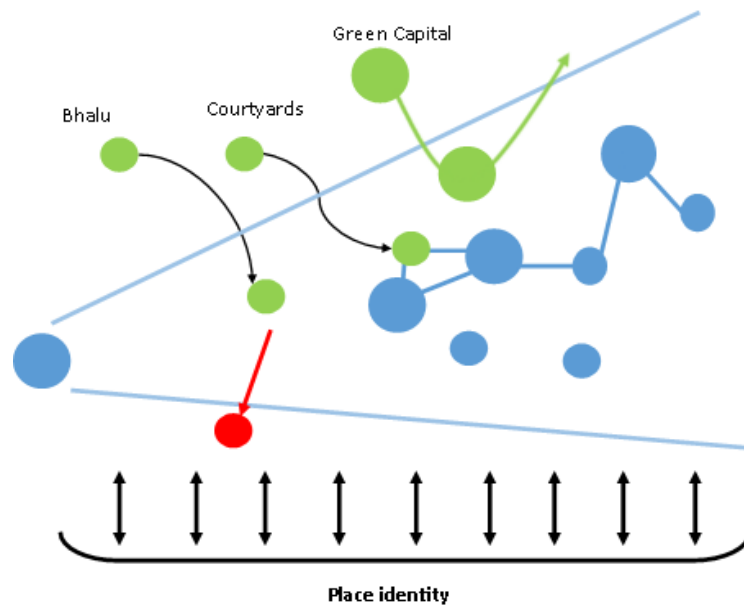


Figure 52. Illustrating the Bloemerstraat brand: how different elements can be in cooperated and dysfunction within the assemblage

Furthermore, figure 52 illustrates the assemblage process of the Bloemerstraat. It shows how over time more elements are incorporated into the assemblages which also undergoes new and different relations with others. For example, Bhalu and the courtyards are illustrated as elements that got incorporated into the Bloemerstraat assemblage after determining the place identity showed what is going on in the street. Other elements can temporarily undergo relations with other elements, such as the Green Capital initiative, during which entrepreneurs from the Bloemerstraat work together to make the street greener and even hopefully become the greenest street of Nijmegen in 2018. However, other elements within the assemblage can alienated, disconnect and even disappear from the assemblage. These elements can be for example a doner or telephone shop. Disconnecting can happen when the homogenization process within an assemblage does not ensure that elements are in line with the greater overall. However, when malfunctioning elements disconnect, the identity of the whole assemblage becomes more stable and the functioning of the assemblage enhanced. This can cause the exit of more elements and an increase of homogeneity.

The bottom line in figure 52 shows that in this case the place identity can be regarded as a trigger, which tests the efficiency of the new measures or branding practices. This becomes clear when, for example, new measures or effective place branding practices in the street such as the greening of the street or designing new street lights result in a higher and positive result by residents, entrepreneurs, visitors and non-visitors. Thus, these stakeholders judge the physical appearance and atmosphere in the street. This is the trigger from the territorialisation and is further coded in new measures or policies such as the creation of the bird mural or the organisation of events such as the Opening Event or plans to cover and brighten up the facades of buildings with plants and other green. Besides, this also results in a different approach of the territorialisation process with the organisation of a group of young and energetic entrepreneurs from the Bloemerstraat.

7.2 Conclusion branding

Summarized, the branding of the Bloemerstraat is done and based on the place identity or DNA which is in line with the identity-orientated branding theory of Kavaratzis and Hatch. A dynamic interplay between the place culture and place image can influence and transform the identity of the Bloemerstraat. Effective place branding expresses the place's culture, leaves impressions on others, mirrors these impressions on the identity, and reflects the changes evoked back into the place culture. The bird mural and the group of new involved entrepreneurs in the Bloemerstraat express DNA of the Bloemerstraat. Impressing is an essential part of the branding process because it is the process that can actually influence the place image that people have of that particular place. Especially when considering the rather negative image that is known about the Bloemerstraat in Nijmegen. Impressing is therefore the process that puts the DNA or the key words of the Bloemerstraat on the map by using, for example, new promotional footage of new businesses who introduce themselves and tell why they settled in the Bloemerstraat. Furthermore, mirroring is the process in which impressions are compared to the expectations thus what the place seems to be is compared to what the place is. This way the new improved an expressed image of the Bloemerstraat is compared to the negative image that people may already have resulting in the changes evoked back into the place culture through reflection. Mirroring is eventually resulting in reflecting. This the process in which new symbols and meanings are and can be incorporated into the place culture and ultimately the identity of street, such as the arrival of Lebowski in the Bloemerstraat which triggered other businesses such as de Bierhoeder, Bhalu, de Paskamer and so on to settle there to.

Thus, the Bloemerstraat brand is in the early stages of developing and the practices are based on the identity of that place. However, the identity of the Bloemerstraat and the associated brand is created by a complex dialogue between the involved stakeholders. This stands in line with the assemblage theory because an assemblage looks at what is out there from a bottom up and ontological point of view to involve all elements that make the assemblage. Also, with the assemblage theory there is no ending, an assemblage is constantly evolving just as the identity of the Bloemerstraat and the associated brand. All component within an assemblage create the actual assemblage which also applies to the Bloemerstraat brand. It needs involvement of all the stakeholders, and to get them on one line with the determined DNA of the Bloemerstraat to make the branding work. Besides, the Bloemerstraat assemblage is a symbiosis were elements that fit the DNA can be incooperated, for example Bhalu, the courtyards, de Paskamer or new designed street lights, or undergo temporarily relations, such as the Green Capital initiative, or disconnect, for example businesses that do not longer fit within the DNA of the street. Elements within the Bloemerstraat assemblage can be territorialized and further coded in practical matters, measures or policies which ultimately change and influence the culture and image of that place. Looking through an assemblage point of view, the place identity is the trigger for efficient place branding practices in the Bloemerstraat: when stakeholder such as visitors, non-visitors judge the appearance of the street or the quality of stores as negative or insufficient, then this becomes the trigger from the territorialisation process and eventually coding to create new measures, policies or branding practices to improve and stabilize the Bloemerstraat assemblage.

8 Conclusion

This research has focused on a troublesome, multicultural, neglected and ugly street with a distinctive character in the city centre of Nijmegen. The street in question is the Bloemerstraat, a street with a rich history, marked by the Second World War, rebuilt in the 60s and during the 80s the stage of the Pierson riots. The municipality labelled the Bloemerstraat as one of the most vulnerable areas in the city and needed to be addressed urgently. Reasons for this were years of decline that left the street with a high vacancy rate, deteriorated quality of public space and a somewhat negative image. Therefore, the municipality drafted a new policy with a new vision to transform the city centre and the Bloemerstraat, making it futureproof and tackling the vacancy problem.

In this case, vacancy is what became the opportunity for the Bloemerstraat to redevelop and re-invent itself. This also became the reason for the goal of this research: to investigate if a street in decline in a city centre with its own typical problems, like the Bloemerstraat, can be improved by (better) branding and how this can be achieved by sticking close to its own DNA. Therefore, this research became the beginning to create a strong place brand in which people are inspired to work, live and visit the Bloemerstraat and in which the goals of the municipality are embedded. The identity-based branding theory that has been explored is also in line with the wishes of the municipality and is the actual 'tool' that contributes to the approach to transform and improve the neglected Bloemerstraat.

The essence of identity-based place branding is to base place branding on the identity of a place. The place identity, or DNA, of the Bloemerstraat consist of two elements: the internal place culture and the external place image. The place culture is *'the context of internal definitions of identity'* and place image is *'the site of external definitions of the identity'*. It can be noted that the place identity is an interactive and dynamic process which is the result from a dialogue between different stakeholders. This dynamic process is, as it were, the identity structure and the place identity instead of the outcome of such process. Therefore, essential stakeholders, residents, entrepreneurs, visitors and non-visitors, were included in this research to determine the place identity of the Bloemerstraat. The place identity of the Bloemerstraat is determined from the conducted interviews and surveys and translated into the following distinctive keywords: *raw, exotic, colourful, opinionated, multicultural, rebellious, challenging, social, resilient, vital, energetic, freedom, self-willed, contrarian, young, intelligent, self-conscious, independent.*

This understanding of the place identity of the Bloemerstraat opens the eyes to what is going on in the street and opens an effective way to base the branding on because the way in which the place identity is conceptualised has a significant impact on the way in which branding is conceptualised and executed. What has become clear in this research is that the brand of a place is created in people's encounters with that place and all its diverse aspects. This can be seen when analysing the street interviews in which people said that they noticed the new and positive changes that were going on in the Bloemerstraat, such as the redevelopment of public space and the coming of new, young and trendy restaurants and businesses that attract a different customer group. Already, positive results show that the Bloemerstraat is visited more frequently because it turned from a B2 shopping area to a B1 area. Besides, effective place branding can, through the processes of expressing, impressing, mirroring and reflecting, influence and change the place culture and place image and therefore the place identity of Bloemerstraat. Effective place branding expresses the culture of that place, for example the bird mural, and leaves impressions on others such as street art, organizing events such as Park(ing), making

promotional video's and designing new streetlights that mimic the DNA of the street. These impressions are by others mirrored on the expected identity and new changes, symbols and meanings are evoked back into the place culture, such green and sustainable is currently implemented in the cultural understanding of the Bloemerstraat. However, it must be noted, that it is yet difficult to determine the impact of measures that have been going on or are currently going on in the Bloemerstraat. Still some plans, like façade improvement by using more green, are currently going on and are executed by a group of entrepreneurs. These plans can certainly contribute to the improvement of the place image which eventually can put new symbols in the place culture which results in positive enhancing of the place brand.

Furthermore, just like the place identity of the Bloemerstraat, branding is a coming together of different views from stakeholders and a process under influence through the four sub-processes. The branding process of the Bloemerstraat has one common stakeholder goal: to make the street a more beautiful place to live in and work at. New elements can be connected and become part of this DNA. Other elements can temporarily fulfil meaning within the brand and other elements can even alienate and disconnect in order to make a stable assemblage. The place identity is the guide in this process that is moulding the branding process. Elements from the place culture and place image are the triggers that start the creation of new policies, ideas, actions and practical measures to improve and invest in the street.

Also, exploring another case highlighted that someone cannot just simply put a label or a brand on an area, it has to match the place identity. This was the case with the Ruhr area in which the region moved to brand itself as a region with just as beautiful nature and castles as other regions in Germany to brand itself with a clear focus on its raw and industrial character. This change to identity-based branding thus complements the place image that people have of the area. This also applies to the Bloemerstraat. Some people said during the Bloemerstraat Opening Event that they would like to see the Bloemerstraat change into the Lange Hezelstraat with little boutiques. However, this does not suit the Bloemerstraat and would alienate the street from its identity. The Bloemerstraat is a lot more than just a street with a rough, raw and alternative character. This is the reason why key words, which are distilled from the place identity, suit the Bloemerstraat very well.

Thus, looking back at the research question, how can a street in decline be improved by branding? And what is the role of the identity of a place in this context? The branding of a place and the actual place brand is a way to express the meaning of that place by sticking close to the DNA of that particular place, or in other words: explain its identity, character and its purpose. This is exactly the essence of place branding in the Bloemerstraat because, previously, the meaning of the Bloemerstraat was somewhat missing and determining the place identity and continuing the creation of a strong place brand gave an opportunity to understand the personality of the place and help it grow. In the Bloemerstraat, a group of new entrepreneurs, including Lebowski, Bierhoeder, Flowink studio, de Paskamer but also Cafe de Plak, are considered as the new ambassadors of the street. These ambassadors indirectly represent the place identity, and the key words, of the Bloemerstraat and are used in promotional materials to tell the story of the Bloemerstraat, show the positive aspects of the Bloemerstraat, to attract more visitors and to establish a Bloemerstraat brand. Besides, exploring some similar cases also showed how important it is to understand the personality and profile of the street. The cases of the van Woustraat and Maastricht show how important a clear profile or vision for a

street(s) in decline can be in order to tackle its particular problems. A clear profile is especially important as the base to create a certain new and improved image that can ensure a self-amplified effect and in the long run. This effect can further provide a positive impulse for the street, for example the coming of new entrepreneurs and visitors. This is already showing in the Bloemerstraat with an influx of new businesses, such as Lebowski, de Bierhoeder, Bhalu and de Paskamer, and an increasing number of by-passers and visitors. Another example that got explored is the town of Meijel. This case shows the transformation of a declined town centre by a bottom-up initiative from the local culture itself. A group of essential stakeholders came together to bring the DNA of Meijel back into the town centre and to make it more visible in the physical environment or in other words: to tell the story of Meijel. The new town centre expresses the local culture, promoting the place image of Meijel and strengthening the local place identity.

Furthermore, the start of working towards a strong Bloemerstraat brand became a process to rediscover its DNA and developing and realizing ideas and concepts, together with involved stakeholders, for the Bloemerstraat brand. Already, more physical or hardware investments were and are being made, such as the redevelopment of public space and infrastructure, but also soft investments, such as events, opening of new stories, creating the co-operative organisation Blossom and creating symbols and symbolic actions such as a Facebook page and a Bloemerstraat house style with a logo and slogan. However, a clear focus was put on developing and to discover who and what creates the Bloemerstraat: a process of determining the unique characteristics and strongest assets, turning and regarding its negative elements into positive elements and building a story to tell through place branding practices.

Finally, developing a comprehensive place brand for a neglected street is about building a new, improved and positive reputation for the Bloemerstraat, which is a long-term process. The Bloemerstraat is starting to bloom again and the fruits are already showing: the 'Bloemerstraat approach' that has been going on for the last year serves as the model project for other places in Gelderland.

8.1 Reflection and recommendations

As with any research, also this one has its shortcoming. Therefore, this section will briefly address some prominent limitations and a reflection on the research period. Furthermore, recommendations regarding further research will be explained.

Looking back to this research, the results of current branding practices in the Bloemerstraat are difficult to investigate because they are in the early stages of developing. However, using the theory from Kavaratzis and Hatch on street level has shown the potential of identity-based place branding on a smaller scale instead of an entire city or region. However, it must be noted that the application of this theory was only investigated in the Bloemerstraat and no other cases or similar streets because it was decided to carry out a single case study instead of multiple studies. Therefore, it can be questioned if more research cases can lead to better and more general results and answers to the research question. During this research it became clear that the local context and the local identity of an area are essential. Multiple cases could therefore provide more insight into the branding of streets with their own specific DNA and problems. Besides, the Bloemerstraat is a street which differs from other streets in Nijmegen. It is located in the city centre and has its own distinctive place culture and place image. This made the Bloemerstraat a useful case to investigate the identity-based place branding theory on smaller scale. Also, it must be noted that every case is unique and there is no blueprint that can be used. The way how the place identity is determined and analysed in this research can be the same as for other cases, however, the place branding practices, just like the DNA of a place, unique to that particular place. Therefore, a recommendation would be to perform a multiple case study to investigate how identity-based branding theory can be implemented on other neglected streets in decline, such as the Bloemerstraat.

Furthermore, this research used several different methods of data collection such as: a short literature study, surveys and two types of interviews. These types of data collection were done to support the place culture and place image with empirical data and to avoid drawing general observations and conclusions directly from a few quotes. However, reflecting on the research period, more interviews with residents, entrepreneurs, visitors and or non-visitors could have provided more diverse forms of data. This also avoids drawing conclusions from a few sources even more, which in this research has been done sometimes. Besides, this would also secure the internal validity more. Especially visitors or non-visitors would have been an interesting group to explore even more and to see if their place image of the Bloemerstraat has changed. Thus, reflecting on the research period, it would have been more favourable to include more, and maybe diverse, forms of data and more extended research into the place image of the Bloemerstraat. Meaning more sources that could confirm the mirroring process for example. Thus more methods or more specific methods of data collection can provide more information about the four subprocesses and how these processes are currently going on in the branding practices of the Bloemerstraat.

Also, it would add more in-depth content if this research was intended to go on for a longer period or to do a follow-up study. This opens a way to explore the effective place branding and the influence of these measures even further. Especially, when at the moment more entrepreneurs are settling in the street and are just starting to work together to improve and brand the street. Also, the effect of branding practices on the place image and eventually the place culture are interesting aspects for further investigations. For examples, investigating new symbols and meanings that are being

introduced and implemented into the place culture or how visitors or non-visitors look upon the Bloemerstraat when the branding of this street has been going on for a longer period of time and see if this image has further changed.

Finally, this research has shown how complex and extended a whole research can actually be. It can take a lot of time, energy and effort, however, it also is an incredible learning process especially in combination with an internship. This research has been a part to transform the Bloemerstraat and thus being a part of this process, it is really satisfying to already see the changes that are going on in the street. Also, the fact that this approach has been welcomed with open arms by Seinpost and that this approach is used in other cases such as in Tiel and Arnhem is a big compliment.

Appendix I. Interview questions Bhalu & Cafe de Plak

Bhalu interview questions

- Vertel iets over Bhalu? Wat is jullie concept?
- Waarom ben je naar de Bloemerstraat gekomen?
- Wat was jullie indruk van de Bloemerstraat vooraf? Wat was je beeld voordat je hier kwam?
- Wat is je indruk nu?
- Wat voor bezoekers komen hier en wat is hun indruk van de straat? Feedback?
- Hoe gaat de Bloemerstraat zich verder ontwikkelen? Hoe moet de straat verder ontwikkeld worden?
- Hoe denk je dat het beeld van de Bloemerstraat nog meer veranderd kan worden?

De Plak interview questions

- Vertel iets over de Plak? Wat is jullie concept?
- Waarom heeft de Plak zich in de Bloemerstraat gevestigd?
- Op welke manieren (ondernemers, aanblikken, bezoekers etc.) is de straat in de afgelopen jaren veranderd?
- Hoe zou je, volgens de Plak, de cultuur van de Bloemerstraat omschrijven?
- Is deze cultuur veranderd?
- Wat voor bezoekers komen hier en wat is hun indruk van de straat? Feedback? Wordt de Plak gericht bezocht?
- Hoe gaat de Bloemerstraat zich verder ontwikkelen? Hoe moet de straat verder ontwikkeld worden?
- Moet de Bloemerstraat veranderen of zo blijven?
- Hoe denk je dat het beeld van de Bloemerstraat nog meer veranderd kan worden?

Appendix II. Example of observation protocol

Program/Session/Meeting Observation Protocol

Program/Session/Meeting name:		
Observer's name:		
Date:	Start time:	End time:

Before the observation begins, describe below what you expect to be observing and why you have selected it.

Subject of the observation: .

Object of the meeting

Describe the object of meaning of the meeting:
--

Members:

Number of present/in attendance:
Description of who was at the meeting:

Location/facilities

Location of meeting:
Location description:

Meeting format

Describe the meeting format (one person leads, groups shares facilitation responsibilities, group conversation, etc.):
Duration of the meeting:

Session

Describe the session:

Reflecting to research

How does this meeting (or the most important points) relate to the research:

Appendix III. Branch division in the core shopping area of Nijmegen



Source: Locatus 2017

Appendix IV. Comments from the resident survey

<i>Vraag</i>	<i>Gemiddelde cijfer respondenten</i>
Algemeen oordeel Bloemerstraat?	5,7
Voorziening aanbod /invulling panden	
Aanbod en de diversiteit van de winkels	5,4
Aanbod en de diversiteit van de horeca	6,8
Aanbod en diversiteit van de dienstverlening	4,6
Bereikbaarheid/toegankelijkheid/mobiliteit	
Bereikbaarheid met de auto/fiets/ov	8,2
Parkeermogelijkheden auto en/of fiets	4,8
Beleving/uitstraling/openbare ruimte	
Activiteiten en evenementen	5,2
Informatievoorzieningen (voer activiteiten in de straat bijvoorbeeld)	5,2
Sfeer in de straat	4,9
Uitstraling en het onderhoud panden	3,8
Uitstraling en het onderhoud openbare ruimte	6,6
Hoeveelheid en kwaliteit van het groen	5,9
Samenwerking	
Terrassen	6,4
Samenwerking tussen bewoners en ondernemers	4,8
Samenwerking tussen bewoners en gemeente	5,4
Samenwerking tussen bewoners onderling	5,1
Samenwerking tussen bewoners en vastgoedeigenaren	4,8

Veiligheid	
Verkeersveiligheid	4,6
Veiligheid in de straat	5,1
(Straat)verlichting	6,7
Toezicht en de handhaving door de politie	5
Toezicht en de handhaving door de Bureau Toezicht	5,1
Heeft u in 2016/2017 overlast ervaren? Zo ja, kunt u aangeven wat u heeft ervaren?	78,95% heeft weleens overlast ervaren

Heeft u nog opmerkingen over de bereikbaarheid en toegankelijkheid van de Bloemerstraat/Smetiusstraat?

- Auto parkeren kan vnl. in de omgeving
- Bereikbaarheid helemaal prima, je kunt alleen nergens je fiets kwijt
- De fietsenstalling is altijd vol en je fiets in de stalling op Plein 44 kost €2,50 per nacht.
- De fietsenstallingen zijn vaak overvol. Sinds de renovatie in de straat zijn er veel minder fietsenrekken
- Er is een gebrek aan fietsenstallingen waardoor er vrijwel altijd fietsen buiten de rekken worden geparkeerd
- Er staan veel fietsen op de stoep onderaan de Bloemerstraat. Fietsenstalling daar uitbreiden
- Geen plek voor fietsen!
- Geen.
- Kleinere bussen graag
- Meer fietsenrekken
- Persoonlijk vind ik het jammer dat er minder fietsenrekken zijn teruggeplaatst na het opknappen van de straat
- Te weinig rekken voor fietsen dus ze worden overal tegen de hekjes van de bomen geplaatst
- Veel fietsendieven en vandalisme van fietsen, zelden tot nooit plek voor je auto.
- Veel te weinig fietsenrekken!
- Weinig fietsenstallingen
- Onduidelijke kaders voor parkeerplaats auto
- Te weinig plekken"

Heeft u nog opmerkingen over de uitstraling en beleving in de Bloemerstraat/Smetiusstraat?

- De borders zijn net nieuw dus nog weinig over te zeggen, maar op het oog hadden daar wat mooiere
- De sfeer in de straat is zeker in de avond vaak agressief
- De terrassen zien er beter uit dan voorheen, nu de meeste voorzien zijn van schermen
- Doordat terrassen iets te breed zijn is de doorgang vrij beperkt.

- Geen.
- Het pand Intersport op de hoek bij Plein 44 is al jaren een doorn in het oog van ons en van alle Nijmegenaren
- Het vervallen, vergeten multiculti-straatje van Nijmegen Centrum. Je loopt er doorheen.
- Ik mis de grote bomen heel erg :(
- Ik mis het schoonmaken van de stoep/rolluiken van enkele winkeliers. Ook het anti-graffiti beleid.
- Ik vind het mooier als in de perkjes bloemen komen te staan i.p.v. die hoge planten.. Ziet er niet uit.
- Meer restaurants zoals Lebowski en de hippie bar deze brengen gezelligheid en leven. Maak er een uni café.
- Meer terrassen in de zon bij cafés
- Te weinig groen
- Verpaupering van panden
- Veel terrassen zien er niet uit, veel overlast voor panden drugdealers

Heeft u nog opmerkingen over de samenwerking op de Bloemerstraat/Smetiusstraat?

- Bewoners worden haast nergens bij betrokken
- Er stonden ineens poorten in de Bloemenburgerhof, waar ik niets van af wist en eigenlijk nog steeds
- Geen.
- Heb hier geen ervaringen of kennis van, maar er is geen optie om dat aan te geven
- Ik merk er eigenlijk niks van. Dit is een van de eerste initiatieven.
- Meer informatie over wat er gaat gebeuren met leegstaande winkels e.d.
- Samenwerking gemeente en bewoners ??
vastgoedeigenaren??
- Weet ik te weinig van
- Welke samenwerking?

Heeft u nog opmerkingen over uw beleving van de veiligheid in de Bloemerstraat/Smetiusstraat?

- De politie moet veel vaker verkeersovertredingen bekeuren
- De snelheid van 30 km/u wordt niet of nauwelijks nageleefd door de meeste bestuurders.
- Door de hoge sociale controle is het relatief veilig.
- Een vrouw kan vaak niet alleen door deze straat lopen zonder lastiggevallen te worden door vreemden.
- Gaat hard achteruit!
- Het voelt weg onveilig door veel zwervers etc.
- Ik begreep van een aantal vrouwelijke studentes dat de straat vaak vermeden wordt in het donker.
- Ik zie regelmatig politie, dus het een en ander wordt in de gaten gehouden, maar toch gebeurd erop
- In de nacht heel onrustig op straat en wordt hard door de straat gereden. Als vrouw voelt het niet veilig.

- Je wilt niet weten wat wij allemaal zien. Als hier een politiecamera zou hangen dan waren veel criminaliteit.
- Over het algemeen heb je voorrang op een zebrapad, maar soms zien de chauffeurs van de stadsbussen niks.
- Politie en Toezicht treden nauwelijks handhavend op, hooguit voor fout parkeren.
- Politie zien we zelden en toezicht deelt alleen bekeuringen uit en let verder nergens op
- Veel te vaak verkeer wat te hard rijdt

Appendix V. Comments from the entrepreneur's survey

		Algemeen					
	Naam	Algemeen	Toelichting	Sterkste punten 1	Sterkste punten 2	Belangrijkste problemen 1	Belangrijkste problemen 2
1	Boutje van Woutje			Parkeergelegenheid auto	Kleine zaakjes	Te veel bussen	Gesloten panden (overdag)
2	Maya Mode	6,5		Fietsen	Busstation	Parkeer	Meer winkels volmaken (niet te duur)
3	Up to no good/Bysmaak			Bereikbaarheid	Zichtlocatie	Eenzijdigheid winkelaanbod	Weinig laad/los mogelijkheden
4	Thai Spa	6		Goede verlichting		Parkeren van de auto	Afval. Veel fietsen voor de deur
5	Dyonisos	5		Ligt in het centrum	Breedte van de straat	Verkeer	Buitenbeentje
6	Rijschool Correct	7	Uitstraling (bijna compleet)			Veiligheid/Lege panden	Meer controle
7	Plan B			Bedrijvigheid	Diversiteit	Verkeer (druk+rijdt hard)	Veel belwinkels: eentonig winkelaanbod
8	Vurens					Overlast hangjongeren/drugs	Slecht onderhouden panden
9	Olympia	6		Doorgangsweg, centraal, bereikbaarheid	Diversiteit aanbod winkels	Hangjongeren	Fietsenstalling ontbreekt
10	Plak	6	Ook al is de straat goed opgeknapt, bussen rijden nog steeds roekeloos	Centraal gelegen	Breed publiek	Verkeersoverlast/busverkeer	Leegstand
11	Lin Spa	6		Openbare ruimte		Te druk	Lawaai 's avonds
12	Bierhoeder	6	Goed toegankelijk, maar teveel leegstand en minder aantrekkelijke zaakjes	Toegankelijkheid	Looproute station-centrum	Sjofele uitstraling door leegstand	Rondhangende jeugd met scooters
13	Casino Walk Inn	4		Herinrichting	Verkeersveiligheid	Hangjongeren	Drugsoverlast
14	Pimpernel	6	Geen winkelstraat, slechts doorvoerstraat	Klantgerichte winkels	Doorvoer naar plein vanuit station	Parkeren	
15	A Good Vibration	6		Het multi culti Mondiaal gevoel	A Good Vibration	Overlast van wielen door de straat. Fietzers ontwijken de straat ivm grote bussen komen steeds op de stoep	Bloembak bij nr 65 staat in de weg

		Algemeen					
	Naam	Algemeen	Toelichting	Sterkste punten 1	Sterkste punten 2	Belangrijkste problemen 1	Belangrijkste problemen 2
16	Giga Bijt	7		Netjes	Goed onderhoud	Bushalte, kost veel plaats voor terras	Plein '44 heeft voldoende bushaltes
17	Daily Phone					Te veel werklozen lopen op straat	Klein winkel (kleine ondernemers)
18	Kapsalon Van Haaren						
19	Kunstuitleen ArtPartner	7		passanten		Te veel bussen	Publiek uit lagere sociale klassen is oververtegenwoordigd
20	Christine le Duc	5		Doorgang vanaf station naar Plein '44		Bus/auto's/fiets: verkeer	Te veel shisha café's
21	Bikewerk			Opgeknapt na verbouwing	Gescheiden rijbanen	Drempels	De straat wordt als racebaan gebruikt
22	Backstage	7	Verbetering, maar alles kan beter	Overzichtelijk		Toezicht parkeren	Overlast scooters op stoep + rijgedrag
23	Ronny's hair		Mooie bestrating			Hangjongeren	
24	Dabaiwa Market	10		Druk	Begin centrum (gunstig)	Laden/lossen	Geen parkeerplaats voor klanten
25	Café Van Deelen	6		Opgeknapt na verbouwing	Goede doorloop	Bedelaars	Hard rijdende Marokkanen
26	Lebowksi	3		Veel leegstand met potentie	Juiste ligging voor zon op het terras	Te hard rijdende scooters, auto's en bussen, dubbel parkeren van vooral shisha house bezoekers	Soort café's/winkels/etc. en bijbehorend publiek
27	Lopers Company	6		Station -> Centrum	Teveel (...) horeca	Onvoldoende toezicht	Zelfverzekerd, ambitieus
28	Happy Holland	7,00		route		vuil	hard rijden
29	Cafe Life		wil niet meedoen				
30	Uitmagazine	5	vindt het voor ons bedrijf een prima plek, maar heeft een slecht imago	bereikbaarheid	parkeren	teveel louche zaakjes trekt louche bezoekers aan	heeft een slecht imago

		Voorzieningen aanbod/invulling van panden					
	Naam	Aanbod en diversiteit winkels	Opmerkingen	Aanbod en diversiteit horeca	Opmerkingen	Aanbod en diversiteit dienstverlening	Opmerkingen
1	Boutje van Woutje	7		7		7	
2	Maya Mode	5		5		5	
3	Up to no good/Bysmaak	4		5	Lebowski is top, maar het enige	4	
4	Thai Spa	6		7		7	
5	Dyonisos	1		1		1	
6	Rijschool Correct	6	Lege winkels beplakken, zodat het nog iets uitstraalt	6		8	
7	Plan B	1		6		7	
8	Vurens	2	Alleen óf horeca óf belzaken	3	Veel döner kebab	5	
9	Olympia	7		7		7	
10	Plak	6	Jammer dat er zo veel leegstand is en veel winkels zo vaak van invulling wisselen. Zo is het moeilijk om het straatbeeld te	8		6	
11	Lin Spa	6		6		7	
12	Bierhoeder	3		6		6	
13	Casino Walk Inn	3		4		3	
14	Pimpernel	5		5		5	
15	A Good Vibration	7		7			
16	Giga Bijt	5		1	te veel	3	
17	Daily Phone	6		6		6	
18	Kapsalon Van Haaren	5		6		5	
19	Kunstuitleen ArtPartner	6	Beperkte diversiteit, veel buitenlanders	7	Voldoende	7	Voldoende
20	Christine le Duc	3		5		3	
21	Bikewerk	5		6		6	
22	Backstage	7	Langzaamaan beter, wellicht nog meer keuze	7	Langzaamaan beter, wellicht nog meer keuze	5	Te weinig, maar is ook niet nodig
23	Ronny's hair	1		1		3	
24	Dabaiwa Market	9		9			
25	Café Van Deelen	5		8		3	
26	Lebowksi	2	Overshot aan (kleine) nachtsupermarkten en nagelstudio's. Geen winkels waar ons publiek heengaat.	2	Er zijn geen lunch/koffiezaken, dus weinig publiek overdag		
27	Lopers Company	5		6			
28	Happy Holland	6,00		6,00		6,00	
29	Cafe Life						
30	Uitmagazine	3	te weinig winkels	3	geen of the weinig niveau	4	er is nagenoeg niets

		Bereikbaarheid/toegankelijkheid/mobiliteit					
	Naam	Bereikbaarheid	Opmerkingen	Parkeren	Opmerkingen	Vindbaarheid	Opmerkingen
1	Boutje van Woutje	8		7	Te veel auto's en fietsen van bewoners	7	Kortste route van station naar centrum, maar toch komen velen via Bisschop Hamerstraat het
2	Maya Mode	7		6	Auto parkeren te duur, zo komen er minder mensen winkelen	5	
3	Up to no good/Bysmaak	8		6		8	
4	Thai Spa	6		6	Fietsen overlast voor de deur	6	
5	Dyonisos	9		7		8	
6	Rijschool Correct	8		7		7	
7	Plan B	9		7	Hoeft niet meer parkeermogelijkheden. Slechte paden/lossen omstandigheid (vergunning)	9	
8	Vurens	8		5	Te weinig plaatsten in de straat, zeker als de terrassen uit mogen	7	
9	Olympia	7		5		8	
10	Plak	9	Met de fiets en ov goed te bereiken	6	Niet goed fietsrekken	7	
11	Lin Spa	6		6	Parkeren voor bezoekers is lastig	2	
12	Bierhoeder	8		6		7	
13	Casino Walk Inn	4		4		4	
14	Pimpernel	6		4		6	
15	A Good Vibration	9		7	Fiets is ok, auto parkeren is erg duur	10	

		Bereikbaarheid/toegankelijkheid/mobiliteit					
	Naam	Bereikbaarheid	Opmerkingen	Parkeren	Opmerkingen	Vindbaarheid	Opmerkingen
16	Giga Bijt	1	Eigen pand slecht te bereiken met goederen	1	Te weinig parkeermogelijkheden	6	
17	Daily Phone	8		6	Te veel auto's en fietsen van bewoners	6	
18	Kapsalon Van Haaren	7		6		7	
19	Kunstuitleen ArtPartner	8		8		8	
20	Christine le Duc	7		7		7	
21	Bikewerk	8		4		7	
22	Backstage	8		7		8	
23	Ronny's hair	1		1		3	
24	Dabaiwa Market	5	Auto slecht, ov goed	5	Auto 0, fiets 10	10	
25	Café Van Deelen	8		5		8	
26	Lebowksi	8	Het is voor leveranciers lastig om voor de deur te stoppen	7	Voor de deur zouden we meer fietsenstalling kunnen gebruiken. Nu is het vaak een zootje voor de	8	
27	Lopers Company	7		5		7	
28	Happy Holland	7,00		6,00		6,00	
29	Cafe Life						
30	Uitmagazine	10	prima	8	voldoende	8	prima

		Uitstraling en beleving						
	Naam	Informatie	Sfeer	Uitstraling/onder	Uitstraling/onderhoud	Hoeveelheid en kwaliteit	Terrassen	Opmerkingen
1	Boutje van Woutje		4	4	6	6	5	
2	Maya Mode	6	7	6	6	6	5	
3	Up to no good/Bysmaak		7	6	8	7	6	
4	Thai Spa	7	7	7	6	6	6	
5	Dyonisos	5	4	4	3	7	6	
6	Rijschool Correct	6	7	7	6	6	6	
7	Plan B		2	4	8	8	3	Niet gezellig, echte doorgangsstraat. Druk, onpersoonlijk. Wel iets beter met nieuwe stoep
8	Vurens	6	4	2		6	5	
9	Olympia	4	6	7	6	6	6	
10	Plak	7	6	6	7	6	7	
11	Lin Spa		6	7	8	7	6,5	
12	Bierhoeder	6	6	3	6	3	6	
13	Casino Walk Inn	4	3	4	4	4	4	
14	Pimpernel	4	4	6	6	7	6	
15	A Good Vibration	5	7	7	7	7	7	Graag ons terras aan de zaak
16	Giga Bijt	6	8	4	7	7	2	Eigen terras te klein door de bushalte
17	Daily Phone	6	5	6	6	6	5	
18	Kapsalon Van Haaren	5	6	6	6	5	6	
19	Kunstuitleen ArtPartner	7	7	7	7	7	7	
20	Christine le Duc	0	6	5		0	4	
21	Bikewerk		3	2	6	7	3	
22	Backstage	1	6	7	8	7	7	Welke activiteiten? Er gebeurt (nog) te weinig in de straat en als je iets wil
23	Ronny's hair	1	1	3	1	1	1	
24	Dabaiwa Market		10	9	10	10		Weinig plaats voor terrassen
25	Café Van Deelen	3	4	6	5	5	7	
26	Lebowksi	2	2	2	4	8	3	Het enige wat echt veranderd is, is de lichtinval door het vervangen van de grote bomen voor de kleinere. Er
27	Lopers Company	5	6	6	6	6	6	
28	Happy Holland	4,00	4,00	6,00	6,00	6,00		
29	Cafe Life							
30	Uitmagazine	6	5	3	5	4	3	

	Naam	Tussen ondernem	Met gemeente	Met bewoners	Met vastgoedeigenar	Opmerkingen
1	Boutje van Woutje	6	6	5		
2	Maya Mode	6	6	6	6	
3	Up to no good/Bysmaak					Geen ervaring mee
4	Thai Spa	6	7	7	7	
5	Dyonisos	3	6	6	1	
6	Rijschool Correct	6	6	6	5	
7	Plan B		6			Geen idee
8	Vurens	7				
9	Olympia	5	7	6	nvt	
10	Plak	7	7	7	nvt	De ondernemersvereniging is weer actief, dat is
11	Lin Spa	7				Samenwerking is goed
12	Bierhoeder	7	7	7	4	
13	Casino Walk Inn	3	3	4	4	
14	Pimpernel	4	4	4	4	
15	A Good Vibration	7	7	7	7	
16	Giga Bijt	2	6	6	1	
17	Daily Phone	6	6	5		
18	Kapsalon Van Haaren	6	6	7	3	
19	Kunstuitleen ArtPartner					Hiermee ben ik onbekend, want slechts weinig
20	Christine le Duc	3	3	0	0	Zijn wel eens bijeenkomsten geweest om deze straat meer sfeer te geven of iets te organiseren, maar niet iedereen wilde meedoen met een potje, of we kregen het niet
21	Bikewerk	6	5	6	6	
22	Backstage	0		0	0	Ik ervaar geen/weinig samenwerking. Jammer
23	Ronny's hair	5	1	1	1	
24	Dabaiwa Market	10		10	10	samenwerking is vooral goed met ondernemers rondom mijn winkel
25	Café Van Deelen	6	1	7	5	
26	Lebowksi	7	5	7	7	
27	Lopers Company	4	6	5		
28	Happy Holland	4,00			6,00	
29	Cafe Life					
30	Uitmagazine	5	5	7	8	Door verschillende belangen en culturen lastig om samen te werken. Door slecht imago, is er ook géén trots. Dan wordt samenwerken, niet makkelijker.

	Veiligheid					
Naam	Verkeersveiligheid	Veiligheid winkelomgeving	Verlichting	Toezicht/handhaving	Toezicht/handhaving toezicht	Opmerkingen
Boutje van Woutje	4	5	6	5	5	
Maya Mode	5	7	7	7	8	
Up to no good/Bysmaak	5	5	8	7	10	Zwervers/junks lopen wel eens binnen als we de deur niet afsluiten
Thai Spa	4	6	7	7	7	
Dyonisos	7	7	6	4	6	
Rijschool Correct	5	5	6	5	5	
Plan B	2	6	5	2	2	Fietsen vernield, lampjes gestolen, 's avonds onveilig
Vurens	2	6	7	5	5	
Olympia	6	7	7	7	7	
Plak	5	6	7	6	6	De kauwgom automaten aan de zijkant van ons gebouw zijn een keer vernield. Er rijden vaak scooters over de stoep
Lin Spa	5	6	7	5		
Bierhoeder	5	5	6	5	6	
Casino Walk Inn	7	6	5	5	5	
Pimpernel	6	7	7	7	7	
A Good Vibration	1	7	6			onveilig ivm straat en stoep
Giga Bijt	7	7	7	5	5	
Daily Phone	6	5	6	8	6	
Kapsalon Van Haaren	6	7	7	7	7	
Kunstuitleen ArtPartner	8	8	8	8	8	
Christine le Duc	3	3	4	5	6	
Bikewerk	1	6	6	3	6	
Backstage	3	8	8	1	1	Er is geen/weinig/sporadisch toezicht
Ronny's hair	1	1	1	3	1	
Dabaiwa Market	7	10	10	10	10	1x raam kapot
Café Van Deelen	5	4	7	6	5	
Lebowksi	3	6	8	7	6	Onafhankelijk van bij wie de
Lopers Company	6	6	7	4	4	
Happy Holland						
Cafe Life						
Uitmagazine	5	4	7	7	5	

Program/Session/Meeting Observation Protocol

Program/Session/Meeting name: onsite visit to Meijel		
Observer's name: Wouter Hunnekens		
Date: 20-10-2017	Start time: 10:00	End time: 13:00

Before the observation begins, describe below what you expect to be observing and why you have selected it.

<p>Subject of the observation:</p> <p>Meijel has gone through some drastic changes the last couple of years. The municipality defines Meijel as a 'Peeldrop', however, when visiting this village, no one would image that this is a village next to the Nature reserve the Groote Peel. Thus, the way how Meijel has transformed itself in a 'Peeldorp', but also the way how the town is revitalizing are interesting aspects to take into account.</p>

Object of the meeting

<p>Describe the object of meaning of the meeting:</p> <p>The object of the meeting was to find out the process that has been going on in Meijel the last couple of years. Especially how they did it, and with what kind of people. It is an interesting and unique process because it was a bottom up citizen initiative with almost no input from the municipality.</p>

Members:

<p>Number of present/in attendance:</p> <p>9</p>
<p>Description of who was at the meeting:</p> <p>Wil van Oosteren (speaker)</p> <p>Lars Pijlman, John Bardoel, Mathieu Vaessen, Rien Romijn, Hugo Braun, Lauren Bruijning, Brechtje Schildkamp, Wouter Hunnekens</p>

Location/facilities

<p>Location of meeting:</p> <p>Meijel, Municipality of Peel en Maas, Limburg</p>
--

Location description:

the meeting was held at the Burgemester in the centre of Meijel which is a new and hip restaurant in the former town hall with also options for parties, meetings, coffee tables, overnight stays and (group) entertainment with the modern technology virtual reality (VR).

Meeting format

Describe the meeting format (one person leads, groups shares facilitation responsibilities, group conversation, etc.):

One person (Wil van Oosteren) had the lead and gave a detailed presentation about the processes that have been going on in the last couple of years in Meijel.

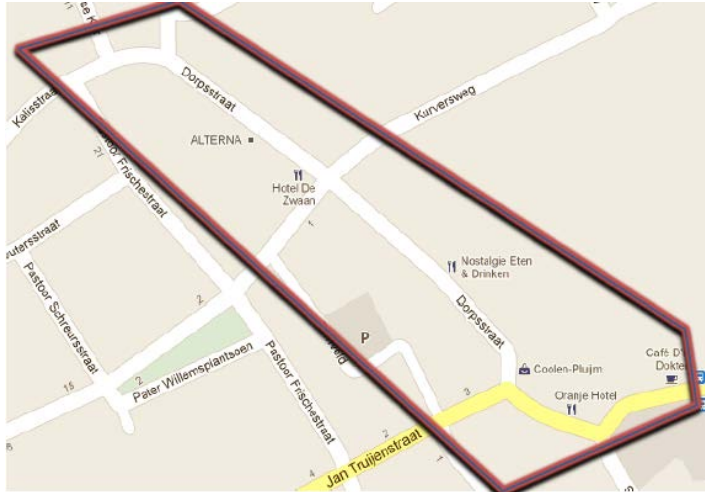
Duration of the meeting: 2 hours

Session

Describe the session:

In and before 2011, Meijel faced a lot of problems like housing shortages, deserted areas, young people moving and a have vacancy rate towns centre. It was during this time that a group of people formed a project group and began to realize that something needed to change. They lined out the future image of Meijel and used these goals as a guideline to work with. This resulted in the emerge of a new citizens initiative, with almost zero help from the municipality of Peel en Maas, to address the biggest problem: to redesign the centre of Meijel and to tackle the vacancy problem in the Dorpstraat and Raadhuisplein. Therefore, they formed a larger group with external experts, entrepreneur from Meijel, residents of the Dorpstraat en Raadhuisplein and some people from the municipality council and town council. This group began with little side projects in order to transform the centre of Meijel starting with the tackling the housing shortage by consulting with other partners to build new apartment complexes (in combination with stores) on deserted areas in the centre. They also addressed the road safety in the Dorpstraat, began working on finding a new function of the empty town hall, facilitated in the relocation of the Rabobank and tackled the vacancy rate in the towns centre. Currently, large parts of deserted areas in the towns centre have been transformed in new apartments for young families and new modern restaurants have opened their doors. Also, in the last couple of years the vacancy rate has been drastically decreased with the opening of new shops with even a shop-in-shop concept within a large furniture store. Furthermore, the old town hall has been transformed to a high-class restaurant with options of business meetings, parties, coffee tables, overnights stays and group accommodation and entertainment.

The group also began to guide the transformation and redesigning project of the towns centre and to bring the 'Peel identity' back to Meijel. The municipality was gladly on board with this new plan and gave the group money to realize their plans.



Together with other experts, all from Meijel, they began drawing plans to transform the centre. Nowadays the Peel is back in Meijel. New peat block (turf blokken) with cane (which is very typical for the Peel) have been put throughout and around the Dorpsstraat and Raadhuisplein to make the street a harmonize entity, which also clearly defines the boundaries of the centre.



Furthermore, the architects of the plans constructed wooden trails throughout (and at the edge) of the centre just like trails you can find in the Peel (see picture). Also, the streetlights were resigned to mimic the Peel identity. Residents and entrepreneurs came up with the idea to make them look like flouting cane. Lastly, a new large fountain with water features was designed, in the middle of the Raadhuisplein, to mimic the layout of the de Groote Peel. Around the entire edge of the fountain the lyrics of the song 'De Peel in brand' were carved in and in the night the lights of the fountain go from yellow to orange to red in order to complement the song.

Meijel was always very isolated because of the many swamps that isolated the town. Therefore, Meijel relied on its own until the beginning of the 20th century when new paved roads were being

constructed through the swamps. Because of this, Wil van Oosteren argued that entrepreneurship, relying on their own, doing something for the village and social cohesion is in the DNA of the people how live there. He therefore argued that these factors could have contributed to the successfully transformation of the town. Also, it is quite remarkable that there are 600 registered business in Meijel on a population of around 6000.

Wil van Oosteren argued that three main conclusions can be drawn from the towns transformation process:

- The initiative must be a bottom-up citizen initiative. With someone who is totally independent (especially from politics) and thinking of village interest and concerns
- Total transparency to the residents, entrepreneurs and municipality
- Communication is the key word. Someone has to tell 'the story'

Reflecting to research

How does this meeting (or the most important points) relate to the research?

What is interesting about this case is the fact that the village 'on its own' has managed to positively change its image by maybe unintentional and indirect place branding. Especially with making the Peel more noticeably they tried to tell the story of Meijel. Not only the transformation of the centre but also other 'changes' that have occurred in the village such as the formation of the Peel Geluk organisation with a brand-new website, the creations of ambassadors who tell the story, the increasing number of volunteers, the organisation of dozens of events for young and old (with very often a Peel like feeling) and with more than a hundred entrepreneurs who are involved with the Peel Geluk initiative.

In this case place branding is an effective tool to express specific and certain features from the place culture of Meijel. The above-mentioned details are all aspects of how the created a newly improved Meijel (or brand in this case) is expressed. This has developed and enriched the place identity of Meijel. Furthermore, effective place branding leaves an impression on others and can affect people's perception and images. Especially the changed physical landscape in Meijel (also with other initiative such as the use of the same colours and banners for all the shops) leave an improved impression on others. Thus, this process of impression has positively affected the external place image of Meijel. Following this, is the process of mirroring which is the way that changes in the external images are and will be mirrored with the created brand. Effective processes of place branding in Meijel (the processes and projects that have been done in the last couple of years to transform the village) also influence the identity with new meaning and symbols.

All these processes that have been going in Meijel the last couple of years have influenced the place culture and therefore influenced the place identity, compared to the place identity before 2011.

This has also influences the improved place image of the town which nowadays leaves and improved image, through impressing, on others. The people of Meijel are prouder, visit the centre more often and are more and more actively participating in the social scene and daily going-one of the town.

Program/Session/Meeting Observation Protocol

Program/Session/Meeting name:		
Observer's name: Wouter Hunnekens		
Date: 20-05-2017	Start time: 14:00	End time: 13:00

Before the observation begins, describe below what you expect to be observing and why you have selected it.

Subject of the observation:

This event is focused around the 'reopening' of the Bloemerstraat. Especially hearing some of the entrepreneurs their vision, their opinion regarding the street and why they chose that location is interesting to observe.

Object of the meeting

Describe the object of meaning of the meeting:

The Bloemerstraat and Smetiusstraat, especially the public space, has been completely renovated and refurbished. This called for a party and the municipality of Nijmegen and the entrepreneur treat everyone to culinary surprises, 'experiences', free 'Brandende liefde zaadjes' and more.

Besides there were short interviews with two entrepreneurs, Ben van Hees from the city council and Josan Meijers from the province of Gelderland. Also, there was a visit to Bhalu during which the new owners explained the vision of their concept and why they chose the Bloemerstraat. Finally, a memorial stone was unveiled for Dick van de Heuvel, who had lived in the Bloemerstraat for his entire life.



A photo taken during the Bloemerstraat event when flower and balloon marked the beginning of the event

Members:

Number of present/in attendance: -

Description of who was at the meeting:

John Bardoel, Rianne Bruin, Michelle de Wit, William Willems, Josan Meijers (deputy), Ben van Hees (city council member), Marjolein van der Zandschulp (city council member)

Also, several municipal and provincial officials were presents just as loads of other entrepreneurs, residents and visitors.

Location/facilities

Location of meeting:

Bloemerstraat in Nijmegen

Meeting format

Duration of the meeting: around 2 hours

Session

Describe the session:

Interview with Ruben from the Plak: he regards de Plak as a reflection of the whole city Nijmegen, especially the left-wing character of the city, and as a part of the history of the Bloemerstraat. Also, the new design adds value to the street. It is now even more cozy, greener and more atmospheric. The street has a multicultural, urban and city-like-feeling such as Brussels and Rotterdam.

Owner of the Bierhoeder: the street really has a large urban feeling, and this also attracts more people from a certain kind of public. The street has also become a part of the centre. Therefore, the street, together with the other business, fits with our concept and personality.

Interview with Willemijn van den Berg, Ben van Hees and John Bardoel: the Bloemerstraat had to be tackled urgently. In the past it was mainly a street with a security and image problem. A new approach was desperately needed according to the municipality, especially the redevelopment of public space. A new approach has been made and a new function profile for the street has been drafted, in which new craft and blurring concepts are great possibilities. Blurring is combining different concepts such as a mix of retail with catering for example.

With the redevelopment of the street, a first step has already been taken to tackle the security and image problem. The street has flourished, and the beauty of this approach is not the physical investment in the buildings but in a process approach.

Reflecting to research

How does this meeting (or the most important points) relate to the research:

What is interesting to note is the way how de Plak and the Bierhoeder look upon the street. They both feel that their concepts fit within the character of the street and they also both acknowledge the urban feeling of the Bloemerstraat. Besides, it is also interesting to notice that the beauty of the 'Bloemerstraat approach' is not the physical investments in building but the process that is currently going on in the street. Furthermore, the so called 'tips' that were gathered during this event are another important source of data that was collected during the event. These tips are discussed in the research findings chapters.

Appendix VIII. Observation Protocol – meeting municipality Nijmegen

Program/Session/Meeting Observation Protocol

Program/Session/Meeting name: Overleg gemeente Nijmegen – Bloemerstraat/Smetiusstraat		
Observer's name: Wouter Hunnekens		
Date: 31-08-2017	Start time: 10:00	End time: 12:00

Before the observation begins, describe below what you expect to be observing and why you have selected it.

Subject of the observation:

This meeting is all about discussing the results from the surveys etc. with important people from the municipality and police. This way everyone is update date on the going ones in the Bloemerstraat and new concrete actions can be determined to improve the function of the street.

Object of the meeting

Describe the object of meaning of the meeting:

Discussing the results and judgments (from the surveys etc.) of residents, entrepreneurs and visitors regarding the Bloemerstraat-Smetiusstraat. Besides, aiming to create new and concrete actions to improve the function of the streets.

Members:

Number of present/in attendance:

Description of who was at the meeting:

Willy Arends (projectleider herinrichting), Ben van Gelder (economische zaken), William Nijland (politie), Judith Koster (veiligheid), Jeroen Sinke (Toezicht en handhaving), John Bardoel (Seinpost), Wouter Hunnekens (Seinpost)

Location/facilities**Location of meeting:**

Municipality of Nijmegen, Gelderland

Location description:

-

Meeting format

Describe the meeting format (one person leads, groups shares facilitation responsibilities, group conversation, etc.):

John Bardoel was the speaker and followed and discussed the agenda of the meeting while the others gave comments, ideas, remarks on the most pressing results from the surveys.

Duration of the meeting: 2 hours

Session

Describe the session:

Below follows a detailed summary of the meeting, which is in Dutch.

1. Opening en mededelingen

- Enige tijd geleden hebben we bij de Plak met een aantal gemeentelijke vertegenwoordigers, politie, ondernemers en bewoners om tafel gezeten. Insteek was om regelmatig met elkaar actie—en resultaatgericht overleg te hebben.
- Via een enquête onder bewoners, ondernemers en aan de hand van tips van bezoekers aan het openingsevent aangevuld met gesprekken met ondernemers en bewoners hebben we een goed beeld van de aandachtspunten wat betreft het functioneren van de Bloemerstraat.
- Doel van vandaag is om daar ook acties aan te koppelen.

- Vervolgens wil John een terugkerend overleg plannen met gemeentelijke vertegenwoordigers, de politie, de ondernemers en bewoners.

2. Enquête onder ondernemers, bewoners en tips van bezoekers

- Zowel bewoners, ondernemers als bezoekers zijn kritisch. Sterk punten zijn de bereikbaarheid, de centrale ligging en het bruisende karakter. Ook de herinrichting heeft een positieve bijdrage geleverd aan de straat. Dit merken we ook bij de nieuwkomers, de herinrichting en de plannen dragen bij aan een beter imago.
- Maar er kunnen ook zaken beter. Zoals samenwerking. Voor goede samenwerking is een gedeelde agenda nodig. Vandaar dus ook dit overleg, om te kijken welke elementen vanuit het perspectief van de gemeente op die agenda moeten. Vervolgens kunnen we met de ondernemers en bewoners in gesprek over hun rol en inbreng. Wellicht kunnen we tot een set van 'huisregels' (positief geformuleerd; in de Bloemerstraat doen we het zo) komen. Dat moet volgen uit het overleg met de ondernemers en bewoners.
- Aandachtspunt fietsparkeren.
 - Onderzocht wordt of het handhavingsgebied verruimt kan worden (toevoegen hofjes) zodat ook daar wrakken meegenomen kunnen worden/gehandhaafd kan worden. De klachten vanuit het gebied (uitkomsten enquête) vormen belangrijke argumenten om ook in de hofjes op te treden.
 - Bij toezicht is er voldoende capaciteit om meldingen op te volgen. Betekent wel dat bewoners en ondernemers moeten melden. Overlast melden is echter niet echt laagdrempelig.
 - Idee is om (bij interesse bij ondernemers/bewoners) een 'opschoondag' te organiseren om ook wrakken uit de straat te verwijderen. DAR zou dan aanwezig zijn om spullen mee te nemen.
 - In de onderdoorgang naar de Zeshuizerhof worden aan weerszijden weer fietsklemmen geplaatst na aanbrengen muurschildering.
- Aandachtspunt verkeersveiligheid.
 - Drempels worden op korte termijn weer opnieuw aangebracht.
 - In overleg met William wordt samen met ondernemers en bewoners moment bepaald om snelheid te meten na terugplaatsing drempels.
 - Stopverbod wordt stringent gehandhaafd.
- Aandachtspunt overlast.
 - Indruk William is dat na afsluiten Bloemburgerhof en aanspreken ondernemer automatenhal op zijn verantwoordelijkheid overlast is afgenomen.
 - Mogelijk dat in het kader van de eerder genoemde huisregels ook andere ondernemers aangesproken kunnen worden.
 - John gaat de whats appgroep Bloemerstraat waarin ondernemers (veiligheids)meldingen doen uitbreiden en ook toezicht toevoegen.
- Aandachtspunt uitstraling / reclame. Op een aantal plekken is de reclame niet in overeenstemming met het beleid. Kan aanleiding vormen voor extra actie.
- Terugkoppeling. In de terugkoppeling over de enquêteresultaten wordt ook opgenomen welke inzet er al wordt geleverd door politie en gemeente en welke acties er nog op de rol staan. Vervolgens wordt in een regelmatig terugkerend overleg de voortgang besproken.

3. Stand van zaken

- Zaterdag 20 mei openingsevent 'Bloemerstraat Bloeit' in samenwerking met de Provincie. De provincie Gelderland noemt de aanpak Bloemerstraat een voorbeeldaanpak voor andere gemeenten. Hinkelpad was ook een succes omdat het de bezoekers uitdaagde op

een andere manier naar de Bloemerstraat te kijken. De plaatsing van de gedenksteen voor Dick van den Heuvel is door bewoners en de familie bijzonder positief ervaren. We kijken tevreden terug, de betrokkenheid van ondernemers is/blijft wel een aandachtspunt.

- In aanloop naar 20 mei is op verschillende plekken groen tegen gevels geplaatst die door ondernemers en bewoners worden onderhouden.
- Vrijdag 14 juli opening van de muurschildering bij Café van Deelen. Veel uitgesproken positieve reacties in de straat en op social media.
- Zaterdag 9 september komt Big Draw naar het gebied. Verschillende workshops worden dan in de straat georganiseerd en ondernemers kunnen ook individueel meedoen door hun etalages te laten beschilderen.
- Afdeling veiligheid houdt focus een aantal panden in de Bloemerstaat. John gaat gesprekken aan met vastgoedeigenaren om te bezien waar mogelijk plekken beschikbaar komen voor nieuwe ondernemers. In samenspraak met Judith wordt gekeken naar mogelijke gesprekspartners
- Henk Nas. Onderdoorgang is probleempunt. Pand heeft hotelfunctie gehad. Zouden marktmogelijkheden kunnen zijn. Gedeelte richting eerste walstraat is verkocht aan Ton Hendriks. John, William en Ben gaan met hem in gesprek. William neemt na zijn vakantie hiertoe initiatief.
- Aanpak luifels 107 – 115 -123. John is in gesprek met de eigenaren over de aanpak van de gevels en het vergroenen van de daken.
- Vergroenen van de Bloemerstraat. Groen draagt niet alleen bij aan het winkelklimaat, maar ook aan het woonklimaat. Op het moment dat het aantrekkelijker wonen is in de Bloemerstraat, draagt dat bij aan het (economisch)functioneren van de straat. Denkbaar is bijvoorbeeld dat het daarmee mogelijk wordt om andere doelgroepen naar de straat te halen. Verder kunnen subsidies bijdragen aan het haalbaar maken van businesscases zoals het aanpakken van luifels. John verkent de mogelijkheden met Hans Visser.
- Sloop en nieuwbouw Intersport-pand/Doddendaal 1. Plannen zijn gereed. Op dit moment worden zienswijzen ingediend, reacties hierop binnenkort in het college. Streven is om in het najaar te slopen. Actiepunt is om de bouw aan te grijpen om iets te doen met deze plek. Ben onderzoekt de mogelijkheden.
- Streetart. Idee is om met ondernemers en bewoners te gaan spreken over het ‘verhaal’ van de Bloemerstraat om dit ook te vertalen in ingrepen in de openbare ruimte zoals met de muurschildering bij café van Deelen en het hinkelpad is gedaan.
- Terrassen. Nieuwe spelregels zijn nog niet vastgesteld. Economische Zaken pakt dit op. Oproep van Willy is om nog eens kritisch te kijken naar de plaatsing van de terrassen. Deze worden nu soms zo geplaatst dat er parkeerplaatsen verdwijnen. Dit zal worden meegenomen in nieuwe terrassenbeleid. Ben pakt dit op.
- Quackplein wordt vanaf 2 oktober aangepakt, de burgemeester Hustinxstraat wordt heringericht. Willy stuurt beelden/schetsen voor de communicatie hierover met de ondernemers/bewoners.
- Kolpinghuis. Niet bekend wat de plannen zijn.
- Smetiusstraat 8. Politie heeft beheerder van tips voorzien om de overlast door studenten daar te verminderen.

4. Rondvraag

- Een uitwerking in de vorm van een nieuwsbrief (deze zal digitaal en per post worden verspreid), een uitnodiging voor sessie met bewoners & ondernemers en een uitnodiging een nieuw integraal overleg volgen.

- Jeroen stuurt cijfers door die een beeld geven van de ontwikkeling van de incidenten in de straat de afgelopen jaren.

Reflecting to research

How does this meeting (or the most important points) relate to the research?:

The most important and pressing attention points in the Bloemerstraat were conducted from the surveys, interviews, other meeting and the Opening Event in May. This goal of the meeting was to link some direct actions to these attention points. The Bloemerstraat has some very positive points, such as the accessibility and the central location, however there are still some negative points. What is interesting for this research is the fact that the results and remarks from the surveys and meeting give a direct cause to involve the stakeholders in order to change these things, such as street and traffic safety, nuisance problems, limited amount of bike parking, increasing the amount of green in the street and tackling the appearance of the street and the facades of buildings. These facts are taken in consideration when addressing the Bloemerstraat through an assemblage lens.

Appendix IX. Communication strategy

Allereerst: de theorie of de methode

De place identity is het verhaal, het DNA of de identiteit van een gebied en is onderverdeeld in twee componenten. Enerzijds de place culture die bestaat uit de beleving en oordelen van de bewoners en ondernemers. Hierbij horen ook cijfers en feiten zoals pandinformatie (branchering, WOZ-waarde, huurprijsniveau, e.d.), sociaaleconomische gegevens over de bevolking (leeftijd, inkomen, etniciteit e.d.), mobiliteit (parkeertarieven, aantal parkeerplaatsen e.d.) en denk ook aan leefstijlinformatie over het gedrag van de bewoners en bezoekers. Het model winkelgebieden van Seinpost geeft een meer uitgebreid overzicht van relevante elementen en indicatoren.

Hiertegenover staat de place image, dit is de beleving of het oordeel wat bezoekers bij die specifieke plek ervaren. Zowel de place culture als de place image hebben invloed op de place identity en kunnen beschouwd worden als twee kanten van dezelfde munt.

Place identity is een interactief en dynamisch proces dat ontstaat uit dialoog tussen verschillende stakeholders. Dit dynamisch proces is als het ware de identiteit van een plaats in plaats van de uitkomst van zo'n proces.

Om dit proces te beïnvloeden is communicatie een belangrijke component. Om tot een passende strategie te komen, is het allereerst zinvol om een goed beeld te krijgen van de place culture en place image. Dit kan door onze professionele analyse van het gebied in combinatie met oordelen van bezoekers, bewoners en bezoekers. Op die manier ontstaat een beeld van de karakteristieken van een gebied. Daarnaast is het raadzaam om terug in de tijd te gaan. Hoe is het gebied ontstaan? Wat was de functie in de loop van de tijd? Welke belangwekkende gebeurtenissen hebben zich voorgedaan? Welke verhalen zijn er te vertellen?

Door op verschillende niveaus naar de straat te kijken, krijgen we zicht op de lagen die gezamenlijk het verhaal van een gebied maken. Vervolgens is het de opgave om hieruit de meest passende, treffende woorden/begrippen te destilleren. Deze noemen we kernwaarden. Deze kunnen vervolgens geconfronteerd worden met trefwoorden en waarden die passen bij verschillende leefstijlen. Via die confrontatie ontstaat een scherper beeld van het karakter van een gebied. Vervolgens kan de 'kleur' ook helpen om tot passende beelden, vormgeving en bewoording te komen in de communicatie richting de te onderscheiden doelgroepen.

De praktijk

In de communicatiestrategie voor de Bloemerstraat wordt onderscheid gemaakt in vier doelgroepen met de volgende doelstellingen:

- de bezoekers: verleiden om meer het gebied te bezoeken
- nieuwe ondernemers: verwerven en acquireren
- huidige ondernemers, vastgoedeigenaren en bewoners: informeren en de beeldvorming over de straat positief beïnvloeden, uitdagen om een rol als ambassadeur te pakken
- niet-bezoeker: verleiden om het gebied te bezoeken

De place identity zoals gezegd subjectief en objectief benaderd worden. Zaken als sfeer, beleving kunnen door mensen op verschillende wijzen geïnterpreteerd worden (subjectief). Deze interpretatie wordt beïnvloed door ervaringen, gedachtes en door de perceptie die anderen bij de straat hebben. Het gaat dus om het positief versterken en positioneren van de collectieve place identity in de Bloemerstraat om zodoende de subjectieve (individuele) place identity te beïnvloeden. Hierdoor ontstaat een vergelijkbaar beeld (tussen het collectieve en individuele) over het 'brand' de Bloemerstraat en wordt mismatch voorkomen.

Om dit tot stand te krijgen wordt gewerkt vanuit verschillende lagen en verhalen. Historische gebeurtenissen/verhalen van de Bloemerstraat zijn gebruikt om hieruit typerende kernwaarden te herleiden. Het is immers het verleden wat de Bloemerstraat vorm heeft geeft. Het bombardement, de wederopbouw, de Pierson rellen, de brandgrens en bijvoorbeeld oud bewoners zijn verhalen en kenmerken die de straat hebben gevormd. Daarnaast is ons beeld gevormd door enquêtes onder ondernemers, bewoners, gesprekken met hen en met vastgoedeigenaren. Daarnaast hebben we tips opgehaald bij bezoekers tijdens het openingsevent.

Aan de hand van deze verhaallijnen is een eerste beeld gevormd over de kernwaarden die de pijlers vormen onder het verhaal van de Bloemerstraat en die de kaders vormen voor de communicatie richting de doelgroepen. Deze hebben we geconfronteerd met woorden die passen bij verschillende leefstijlen. Hier is het volgende overzicht uit ontstaan.

Rauw, exotisch, kleurrijk, eigzinnigs, multicultureel, rebels, uitdagend, sociaal, veerkrachtig, vitaal, energiek, vrijheid, eigzinnig, tegendraads, jong, intelligent, zelfbewust, onafhankelijk.

Deze kernwaarden vertonen overlap met de rode/paarse leefstijl en weerspiegelen de identiteit van de Bloemerstraat.

De strategie

Positieve beeldvorming en ambassadeurschap creëren

Vooralsnog kiezen we ervoor om niet per doelgroep een specifiek 'verhaal' te gaan brengen. De focus is allereerst om de beeldvorming positief te beïnvloeden (vooral vanwege de slechte beoordeling door ondernemers en bewoners). En om het (gewenste) verhaal meer zichtbaar en leefbaar te maken. Anders gezegd; we gaan mensen niet expliciet oproepen om het gebied te bezoeken, maar willen ze indirect verleiden (indirecte aanleiding geven) om naar het gebied te komen en te ervaren of het geschetste beeld ook klopt, waar is. Ingrepn zoals een muurschildering op de gevel bij Cafe van Deelen, dragen daar ook aan bij. Ook de activiteiten van Big Draw in september passen hierbij. Via facebook communiceren we over deze activiteiten. Verder nodigen we lokale media uit om te schrijven over deze activiteiten en nieuwe ondernemers. We onderzoeken de mogelijke rol van UIT in Nijmegen (maakt een eigen magazine). Dit moet leiden tot een positieve houding en betrokkenheid van ondernemers en bewoners en positieve aandacht in de (sociale)media. Belangrijk, is het optreden van

ambassadeurs als representatieve “uithangbordjes” van deze kernwaarden, zoals Bhalu, de Plak, de Bierhoeder, Lebowski en Bijsmaak. Vandaar dat we ze ook willen betrekken bij het uitwerken van ideeën voor streetart in de straat. Planvorming in najaar, realisatie begin 2018.

Alternatieve opzet mix and match sessie

Op dit moment zijn er geen panden per direct beschikbaar. Op termijn komen er door verplaatsing, acties vanuit het ‘veiligheidsspoor’, opheffingen e.d. naar verwachtingen weer panden beschikbaar. We kiezen ervoor om per pand te kijken naar geschikte kandidaten en deze gericht te bezoeken. Daarnaast zal een meer positieve beeldvorming ook bijdrage aan de interesse van kandidaten. We zoeken nog naar een vorm om via een mix & match sessie toch lijntjes te leggen naar potentiële kandidaten. Om dit te laten slagen is verandering van de beeldvorming een belangrijke opgave omdat de locatiekwaliteiten deels op orde zijn of omdat er via andere sporen aan gewerkt wordt.

Programmering Facebook

Facebook is een ander belangrijk medium om verhalen, kernwaarden en ambassadeurs naar buiten te dragen. Wekelijkse berichten over de Bloemerstraat dragen bij aan het opbouwen van het “brand”, het versterken van de collectieve identiteit en het positief beïnvloeden van de individuele identiteit. Voor de facebook acties kan gekeken worden naar hoe andere vergelijkbare cases (Modekwartier in Arnhem bijvoorbeeld) hun social mediakanaal invulling geven.

De volgende verhalen gaan we uitwerken:

- Straatnamen. Waarom heet de Bloemerstraat zoals die heet? En waar komt de naam Smetiusstraat vandaan. Op deze site is informatie over de achtergrond van de straatnamen te vinden. <http://www.gaypnt.demon.nl/straatnamen/B.html#Bloemerstraat>. Uitwerken in twee verhalen.
- Brandgrens. De binnenstad is tijdens de Tweede Oorlog getroffen door een vergissingsbombardement. Een belangrijk deel van de stad, en van de Bloemerstraat, is daarbij verwoest.
- Granaatscherf. Het verhaal gaat dat in/nabij Bloemerstraat 17 er nog een granaatscherf in de muur zit. Deze kon niet verwijderd worden en is vormt dus een blijvende herinnering.
- Keulse potten. Een bewoner heeft de verwoestende brand van het bombardement gedooft door de inhoud van Keulse Potten op het vuur te gooien.
- Pierson Rellen. Weliswaar niet direct in de Bloemerstraat, maar wel verbonden aan de straat vanwege de tanks die in de straat stonden.
- Zittende ondernemers.
 - De Plak. Al 40 jaar een herkenbaar eigenzinnig cafe in de Bloemerstraat. Het is een collectief waarbij meerdere mensen samen vorm en inhoud geven aan dit bedrijf. Staat ook bekend om het sociale karakter doordat ze bijvoorbeeld vluchtelingen helpen.
 - Plan B wereldvrouwen. Zie <http://www.ontmoetplanb.nl/page/214/..html> voor meer informatie.
 - Rijschool Correct. De oudste Rijschool van Nijmegen.
 - Lebowski
 - Bakaroshop

- Vuurens. Iconische friture.
- Toine van Wilderen en Wout Engelaar. Drijvende krachten achter de ondernemersvereniging met ieder ook een bijzondere zaak. Toine is in de Bloemerstraat begonnen na zijn atletiek loopbaan en is de drijvende kracht achter Runnerworld en nu Lopers Company. Wout is de eigenaar van de enige doe-het-zelf zaak in Nijmegen.
- Nieuwe ondernemers.
 - Bhalu
 - Bijsmaak
 - Flowink
 - FashionKids.
 - Mr Sushi & Ms Wok & Kaniwa Sushi
- Verhaal acStenen met daarop wie het pand gebouwd heeft en wanneer.
- Vincent William. Woonachtig in de Bloemerstraat, maker van schildering onderdoorgang, woont in studentenhuus.
- Riette Hendriks en Nonke ... Betrokken bewoners over hunzelf en wellicht ook Dick van den Heuvel Oud Ondernemer en ook woonachtig geweest in de straat. Onlangs overleden en heeft een eigen boom gekregen. Eventueel verhaal van correct als basis gebruiken.
- Rijschool correct
- Wederopbouwarchitectuur aan de hand van bijvoorbeeld het pand van Flowink waar de karakteristieke gevel nog zichtbaar is. Wat is het verhaal achter het ontwerp? En waarom spreekt deze gevel deze ondernemer nu zo aan?
- Pand Intersport/Doddendaal. Hier was net na de oorlog de luxur bioscoop gevestigd. Daarna heeft ook de intersport hier gezeten die naar Plein '44 is verhuisd. Sindsdien staat het pand leeg. Naar verwachting wordt het pand eind 2017 gesloopt en zal er een supermarkt met daarboven appartementen worden gerealiseerd.

Bibliography

- Aitken, R., & Campelo, A. (2011). The four Rs of place branding. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 913-933.
- Anholt, S. (2008). *Place branding: Is it marketing, or isn't it?* Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ashworth, G. (2011). De instrumenten van place branding: hoe worden ze ingezet? In G.-J. Hospers, W. J. Verheul, & F. Boekema, *Citymarketing voorbij de hype: ontwikkeling, analyse en strategie* (pp. 53-63). Den Haag: Boom Lemma uitgevers.
- Ashworth, G. J., & Kavaratzis, M. (2010). *Towards effective place brand management: branding European cities and regions*.
- Begheyn, P. (2004). *Nijmeegse Biografieën 1*. Nijmegen.
- BRO. (2012). *Aanpak kwaliteitsverbetering aanloopstraten Maastricht*. Boxtel: BRO.
- Corbin, J., & Morse, J. (2003). *The unstructured interactive interview: Issues of reciprocity and risks when dealing with sensitive topics*. Qual Inq.
- DeLanda, M. (2006). *A New Philosophy of Society: Assemblage Theory and Social Complexity*.
- DeLanda, M. (2010). *Deleuze: History and Science*. Atropos Press.
- Essers, R. (n.d.). *Straatnamen*. Retrieved from Gaypnt: <http://www.gaypnt.demon.nl/straatnamen/B.html#Bloemerstraat>.
- Evers, D., Tennekes, J., & van Dongen, F. (2005). *De veerkrachtige binnenstad*. Planbureau van de leefomgeving. Den Haag: Uitgeverij PBL.
- Farías, I. (2011). *The politics of urban assemblages*. Routledge.
- Gemeente Nijmegen. (2012). *Raamwerk Nijmegen Centrum*. Nijmegen: Gemeente Nijmegen.
- Gemeente Nijmegen. (2015). *Binnenstad van de toekomst*. Nijmegen: Gemeente Nijmegen.
- Gemeente Nijmegen. (2017). *Stadsmonitor 2016-2017*. Nijmegen: Gemeente Nijmegen.
- Gemeente Nijmegen. (2018, Mei). *Make-over Bloemerstraat*. Retrieved from Nijmegen: <https://www.nijmegen.nl/nieuws/make-over-bloemerstraat/>
- Gerards, Carolien. (2017). *Bloemen voor nieuwe Nijmeegse Bloemerstraat*. Nijmegen: De Gelderlander.
- Gertner, D., & Kotler, P. (2004). *How can a place correct a negative image?* Pleasantville, NY: Henry Stewart Publications.
- Groenlinks. (2001). *"Op weg naar een covenant Van Woustraat"*. Retrieved from Groenlinks: <http://www.groenlinks-oudzuid.nl/vanwou/pompres.html>

- Hospers, G.-J., Verheul, W. J., & Boekema, F. (2011). *Citymarketing voorbij de hype: Ontwikkeling, analyse en strategie*. Den Haag: Boom Lemma uitgevers.
- Jaspers, B., & Jaspers, R. (2016). *R0ute boekje brandhaarden Bobardement Nijmegen 22 feb 1944*. Nijmegen: STUDIO 0404.
- Joustra, P. (2005). *De rol van identiteit bij de ontwikkeling van stedelijke transformatiegebieden*. Rotterdam.
- Kalandides, A. (2011). The problem with spatial identity: revisiting the “sense of place”. *Journal of Place Management and Development*, pp.28-39.
- Kavaratzis, M., & Hatch, M. (2013). *The dynamics of place brands: an identity-based approach to place branding theory*. Sage .
- Kooij, H.-J. (2015). *Space for Innovation, Innovation in Space*. Nijmegen: Ipskamp Drukkers.
- Kooij, H.-J., Lagendijk, A., Moonen, A., & Peeters, H. (2012). Novio Tech Campus door de bril van Assemblagetheorie. *Ruimte en Maatschappij*, 25-45.
- Kooyman, J. (2015, juni). *Cashewmelk wint het van kapsalon*. Retrieved from NRC: <https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2015/06/12/cashewmelk-wint-het-van-kapsalon-1503566-a994195>
- Mccarthy, J. (2006, June). Regeneration of Cultural Quarters: Public Art for Place Image or Place Identity? *Journal of Urban Design*, pp. 243–262.
- Moilanen, T., & Rainisto, S. K. (2009). *Branding cities: the search for place identity*. PALGRAVE MACMILLAN.
- NRW. (2014). *Ready to brand?*
- Ntounis, N. (2017). *Re-branding the High Street: the place branding process and reflections from three UK towns*. Manchester: Manchester Metropolitan University.
- Ossakina, I., Switak, J., Teulings, C., & Zwaneveld, P. (2016). *Winkelleegstand na de crisis*. Den Haag: Centraal Plan Bureau.
- platform binnenstadsmanagement. (2015). *Transformeren in binnensteden*. Boxtel: platform binnenstadsmanagemen.
- Poppegaai, Maaïke; Minkjan, Mark; Berends, Derk; Rozema, Nathan. (2015). *Analyse Amsterdamsestraatweg, Utrecht*. Den Haag: Platform 31.
- Regio Arnhem Nijmegen. (2018, Januari). Retrieved from regioan: <https://www.regioan.nl/>
- Rooijers, E. (2014, December). *'Een succesvolle winkelstraat is meer dan een optelsom van winkeltjes'*. Retrieved from Fd: <https://fd.nl/frontpage/economie-politiek/1086435/een-succesvolle-winkelstraat-is-meer-dan-een-optelsom-van-winkeltjes>

- Seinpost, Lindenberg, Mood. (2016). *Gebiedsprofiel en actieprogramma Bloemerstraat/Smetiusstraat*. Nijmegen.
- The Place Brand Observer. (2018, Maart). *Interview Gert-Jan Hospers*. Retrieved from Place brand observer: <https://placebrandobserver.com/interview-gert-jan-hospers/>
- van Bergen , J. (2018, Maart). *De Nijmeegse binnenstad: dit gaat er komend jaar allemaal veranderen*. Retrieved from In de buurt Nijmegen: <https://indebuurt.nl/nijmegen/nieuws/de-nijmeegse-binnenstad-dit-gaat-er-allemaal-veranderen~18874/2/>
- van Hattum, Pascal; The SmartAgent Company . (2010). *Brand Strategy Research (BSR) Van theorie naar statistiek*. Amersfoort: The SmartAgent Company.
- van Lieshout, R. (2014). *Aanloopstraten in transitie, een antwoord op de leegstand problematiek*. Utrecht.
- van Loon, R., & Bardoel, J. (2013). *Winkelleegstand praktisch oplossen*. Kamer van Koophandel.
- van Rooijen, H., Heebels, B., & Machiel, K. (2018). *De nieuwe binnenstad*. Platform31. Den Haag: Platform31.
- Verschuren , P., & Doorewaard, H. (2015). *Het ontwerpen van een onderzoek*. Amsterdam: Boom Lemma uitgevers.
- Whysall, P. (2013). Retail planning and retail change in central Nottingham since the 1970s. *Town Planning Review*, 769-794.
- Wrigley, N., & Lambiri, D. (2015). *British High Streets: from Crisis to Recovery?* Southampton: University of Southampton.
- Zenker, K., & Braun, E. (2010). 'Branding a city: a conceptual approach for place branding and place brand management'. *39th European Marketing Academy Conference*. Copenhagen.