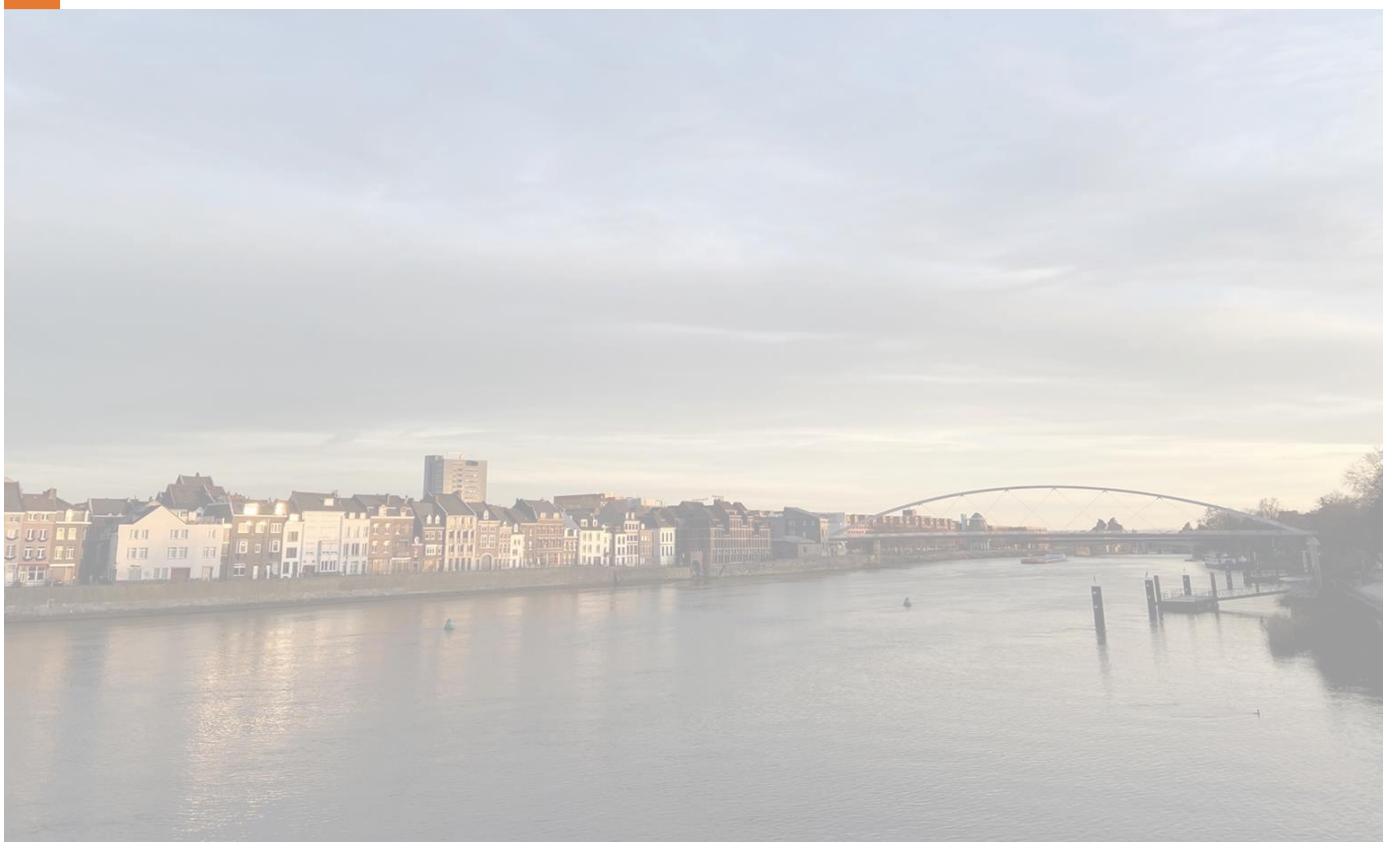


THE DYNAMICS BETWEEN LOCAL RESIDENTS AND INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN MAASTRICHT



LINKING TOWN-GOWN DYNAMICS
TO PLACE ATTACHMENT

The Dynamics between Local Residents and International Students in Maastricht

Linking Town-Gown Dynamics to Place Attachment

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Abstract

This paper investigates the relationships between local residents and international students in the city of Maastricht. The paper aims to answer the following research question: How are the dynamics between international students and local residents in Maastricht? This question is seen through a geographical lens, and since we are dealing with humans and their experiences, thoughts, and feelings, it is the theory of humanistic geography on which the focus lies. An important aspect of humanistic geography is the idea of place attachment. A tripartite framework, or PPP framework, by Scannell and Gifford (2010) should form the basis for the rest of the analysis. The social place dimension is particularly interesting because this relates most to people's interactions among each other and could show what relationships the students and locals have.

After the theory section, this paper gives an overview of some contextual topics, such as a brief history of the city of Maastricht, which highlights its unique identity. The emergence and development of Maastricht university are too explained, as well as the establishment of and the meaning behind the internship organisation for and with whom this paper was written. Thereafter, the paper turns to the methodology section. In the methodology section, then, it is first explained why in humanistic geography qualitative methods are preferred over quantitative methods. This reasoning comes back to the argument that people's individual opinions, experiences, and especially feelings cannot be statistically measured. Therefore, the necessary information is conceived through qualitative methods, in the form of interviews, and mini focus groups.

This is a nice way to hear what experiences people had, and what they felt while these things happened to them. It became, however, clear that true and deep feelings are difficult to grasp in around 45 minutes to one hour. On the contrary, it is a nice means of asking people what they think could change for the better, or what should remain as it is now. Hereafter, the concept of town-gown, its history and meaning is discussed. One will see that town gown is a relevant concept still, but that it is often seen from a neo-liberal perspective. There are human aspects town-gown too, such as the relations between students and locals. This is where humanistic geography and place attachment on one side and town-gown on the other find their connection.

The analysis, then, eventually, provides citations and quotes relating especially to the PPP framework. The opinions, thoughts, feelings, and recommendations of five local residents and five international students are discussed. One main conclusion made out of these insights, is that, relating to the research question, there are rarely any dynamics, or any relationships between international students and local residents. Why this is the case and what measures could perhaps overcome this lack interaction can be found in the analysis part of this paper. In the last section of

this last chapter, two other remarks are made, relating to the role of the municipality and the university, and people's opinions about them.

Key words: humanistic geography; place attachment; PPP framework; Maastricht; town-gown; international students; local residents; bubbles.

Preface

Maastricht, the city I grew up in, and in which I still live. The city where the Maastricht Treaty was signed in 1992, which laid the basis for the current European Union. A city with many faces, the stage on which the lives of local residents play a role as well as those of many international students. A city in which one celebrates Carnaval rather than Kingsday. A city from which one can visit Belgium and Germany easily either by car or by bike, sometimes even by foot, and one does so because some products there are simply much cheaper than in the Netherlands. Maastricht is a city that looks more like a small French town than a Dutch one. A city where innovation and tradition meet. A city for which I grew a love, and in which I experienced many significant things.

I was born and raised in Maastricht, I went to school here, and even though my parents are both not from Maastricht, nor from Southern Limburg, I am able to understand the local dialect nearly perfectly and I can speak some words and small sentences myself. I always knew there was a university, in fact I lived very close to some of the faculties. My mother works for the university, students came to visit at my high school to tell us about their studies and why we should choose them, sometimes we saw students play football on the grass field behind our house, and occasionally I was addressed in English in restaurants or stores. This is all I ever noticed from the university before I went to study there myself in 2018. In that year I started my bachelor's in European Studies, where I met more international people than I had ever met in my entire life, ranging from many Germans, French and Belgians, and other Europeans, to people from outside Europe.

Soon, during the group discussions for the courses we followed, but also in more informal spheres, it became clear to me that some international students had certain frustrations about the Maastricht population. People not wanting to switch to English is something I heard several times, as well as complaints about rude or discriminatory behaviour. On the contrary, however, I came to notice the locals were also not always too fond of the students. Especially when I studied at the university myself and I had a side job to earn a little extra money, I found out my colleagues were annoyed with students not even trying to speak Dutch and I noticed they grew certain stereotypes surrounding them. From both sides, and during the same period of time, I noticed these frustrations, which put my mind to work.

Starting a master's in Urban and Cultural Geography, I thought researching the dynamics between the two 'groups' would be interesting, since the problem, as which I perceived it, took place in an urban sphere, on an urban level, and included the dynamics between two completely different cultures, namely those of the local Maastricht one, and the international student culture. Since I lived at my parents' home during the full three years of my bachelor and I already had

friends from before as well as hobbies, I never really got involved with any associations or organisations that helped students find their way in Maastricht. Therefore, when I was looking for an internship, it was nice to see that there are actually some organisations that do help students with certain things. StudentenStad, or StudentCity, is one of those organisations, and they did not hesitate to provide me a place in their office, because they were very curious to see what would come out of my research.

The research would not have the same if it was not for a group of people whom I am thankful for. I first would like to thank my thesis supervisor Dr. Olivier Kramsch, who I could always go to for questions, or when I had issues and when I was in need of feedback, and who always assured me that he was curious to see what my research would bring and who trusted it would all come together well. Second, then, I would like to thank all the people at StudentenStad, especially Thomas Schäfer for putting trust in me and my research and hiring me, and Martijn Weyenberg for investing time in the project as well and for being a kind of second supervisor. Of course, I would like to thank all other colleagues with whom I worked together too, as they shared useful information and advice, and they were always in for a talk and a laugh.

Another group of people I really want to thank are the participants of my interviews, or mini-focus groups. Five international students and five local residents taught me things about Maastricht that I never knew about, even though I have been living here all my life. Moreover, they were not afraid to share their honest opinions and to tell me about their experiences in the city of Maastricht, sometimes very unpleasant ones. To them I thank the outcomes of my research, the conclusion could not have been written without them. Furthermore, I thank them to be interested enough in the topic to decide to participate. The recruitment process was not easy, and therefore every new participant caused a spark of happiness.

Last, but definitely not least, I would like to thank my family and friends. It may sound cliché, but I am truly thankful that they were interested in my research, that they were understanding of the moments I sacrificed to be able to write my thesis, and that they kept me sane and encouraged me during these months. Thus, to them, and to everyone else I mentioned above: **thank you!**

Now, the time has come to share my work with you. I hope you enjoy reading it, but above all I hope it inspires people to think about this topic more, and to make Maastricht a city in which all residents, whether locals or internationals, are able to live together in harmony.

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1. Introduction

In the past decades, it has become seemingly easier to study abroad, especially for the ones who do have the financial resources to actually realise it. Especially in the Schengen region on the European continent, the mobility among the countries belonging to this region has become rather effortless. However, another reason that could be attributed to students being able to study abroad, is the emergence of increasingly more English-taught courses and studies. The growing numbers of universities on the European continent, as well as in the entire world, have resulted in an intensification of competition between these universities.

Well-known prestigious universities, such as Harvard in the United States (US) or Cambridge in the United Kingdom (UK) for obvious reasons have always taught in English. This made it not only attractive for British or American elite students to study there, but also for other students from other countries, who master the English language well enough to follow classes. It might not be surprising, therefore, that other, non-UK and non-US, universities took inspiration from this and started to offer courses and curriculums in English. This way, more international students are attracted to these universities, which in turn heightens the chances of enrolling better students than can be found 'at home'. That could then lead to the improvement of a university's reputation, because of the higher quality papers being published and the increasing number of students graduating from that university.

To keep this competitive spirit, not only the best students are needed to improve the university's image, but the best possible staff has to work there as well. If this staff has to be recruited from other countries, then so be it, as long as these professors, lecturers, tutors etc. deliver the highest quality of work as possible. Universities, thus, help increase the number of international people living in university cities and areas. This is certainly not the only reason why cities have become more international over the last decades; however, it does provide one side of the story. The problem that arises with cities becoming more international is that it could increase the tensions between people due to differing opinions and beliefs, potentially leading to actual segregation.

Personal experiences of inhabitants of a city, whether local or international, have an influence on people's attachment to that place and their sense of belonging in it (Scannell & Gifford, 2010; Lewicka, 2014). One could thus feel left out from the population, but one could also feel a very strong bond with the local population of a city, resulting in different forms of attachment to a place. Potential town-gown tensions could possibly have an effect on people's attachment to places.

1.1. Societal Relevance

Maastricht is located in the very south of the Netherlands and is the country's first university to offer programmes fully taught in English (Wilkinson, 2012, p. 6). The city is part of the Meuse-Rhine Euroregion, consisting of areas in Belgium, the Netherlands, and Germany. It is easily accessible for Belgian, both Flemish and Walloon, and German tourists, but also for students from these areas. The English programmes are particularly interesting to the latter, as more cross-border students have better English than Dutch language skills. Maastricht is also the city, where in 1992 the so-called Maastricht Treaty was signed, also known as the Treaty on European Union. This treaty formed the foundation of the current European Union (EU) and the European currency the 'Euro'. This, in combination with the proximity of the Belgian and German borders, has resulted in Maastricht often being referred to as 'the beating heart of Europe' (e.g., Volt, 2022).

Therefore, it might be no surprise that many European students are attracted to the university of Maastricht, as well as the significant city. Maastricht University hosts the most international students in the Netherlands, with 55% internationals from 123 different countries in 2020 (Maastricht University, 2020). However, one could view Maastricht also from a national perspective. If we do this, it becomes clear that Maastricht is the capital of the province of Limburg, which is perceived to be part of the Dutch periphery. The Randstad, consisting of Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Den Haag and Utrecht, and everything in between, is the economic centre of the Netherlands where approximately half of the Dutch population lives.

The province of Limburg, and therefore Maastricht too, is often seen as some sort of outsider, resulting in the Maastricht population not feeling as nationalistic as people might feel in the Randstad. In turn, however, the people who are born and raised in Maastricht may feel rather proud and loving about their city. Different from the rest of the Netherlands, the Maastricht population has its own traditions, dialect, and burgundy way of living, as well as a rich history. The city of Maastricht, thus, hosts many internationals as well as proud locals. The question that remains is how such different groups manage to interact with each other.

Due to the increasingly more international students studying in Maastricht as well as the many tourists from Belgium and Germany visiting, the languages spoken in Maastricht are not only the dialect and standard Dutch. Especially English is a language that is being spoken increasingly more, but there are some people from Maastricht that already have difficulties with speaking standard Dutch instead of the dialect. English, thus, might be too difficult or take too much effort for some. A recent article showed that Maastricht, according to the Expat City Ranking 2021, was one of the most unfriendly cities toward expats (Schreuder, 2021). The ranking states that connecting with the local inhabitants is difficult because they live in their own bubble with their

own friends, who share the same local interests and speak the same dialect. Locals are often not willing to put in the effort to speak another language and to get to know different cultures. Therefore, international students and other expats tend to socialise with other internationals, which leads to some sort of division of the Maastricht population into two groups, namely the local residents and the internationals.

Moreover, the chances of building a career in Maastricht are not high and finding a place to stay is difficult too (Schreuder, 2021). The Dutch housing market has been under a lot of debate recently already, however, internationals seem to have even more difficulties finding a room, as they might get left out, discriminated against, or scammed (e.g., Opdenacker, 2021; Rietjens, 2021). Rebuilding dwellings into student houses is in general a difficult topic in Maastricht, as also Philippens (2022) points out. His article shows how even the municipal government puts a certain stereotype on students, and that therefore they find it hard to accept plans to make new student homes. Career chances then, for international students, are not great either, resulting in many students leaving the city after they graduate, taking their knowledge and expertise with them. This division into locals and internationals, the (linguistic) tensions that might occur and the leaving of students after graduation make this research societally relevant.

1.2. Scientific Relevance

The scientific relevance then lies in other aspects, such as town-gown recently gaining a more positive tone. Rather than a distinction between university and city, they have grown closer together through mutual benefits. Such more positive discourse is shaped by e.g., a university providing more job opportunities to a city, students spending more money on housing etc. Furthermore, the city could provide advantages to the university too, as students can gather experiences and data from the city to use for their research.

Such benefits are primarily seen from more neoliberal perspectives, as the university contributes to the city's economy and the city is used to improve the quality of students' research, which in turn increases the university's ability to compete with other universities. This is what Brockliss (2000) and Bruning et. al (2006) point out in their works too. However, what Bruning and colleagues (2006) do also realise, is that the residents of a city can feel distant from the university, whereas students might feel less distant from the city since they live in it and use it as study material. Thus, instead of focusing on why a university might be good for a city's economy and why the city could contribute to the university's global ranking, this research aims to focus more on the humanistic side of town-gown, a focus that has not been addressed much in the literature before.

Therefore, the scientific relevance of this paper is to study the town-gown relationship in Maastricht through a more humanistic lens, emphasising how the process of place attachment correlates with the dynamics between internationals and locals. Humanism, as a geography theory, had its heyday in the 1970s and 1980s and has since not been used much in the academic literature. However, the theory's main points can still be very relevant today (Entrikin & Tepple, 2006, p. 30). Moreover, the theory can also be linked to more recent theories in geography, such as 'moral geography', 'placemaking', and 'place-attachment' as well. Especially the latter should help explain the relationship between the Maastricht residents and international students through a focus on humans' experiences and senses of place.

1.3. Research Question and Outline

The research question that this paper aims to answer is: "How are the dynamics between local residents and international students in the city of Maastricht?" A second question relating to this is: "How can the theory of place attachment be connected to the concept of town-gown?" The international students in this question are students who come from outside the Netherlands to Maastricht to study there, initially for the short term as they probably do not know yet if they will stay after they graduate. The local residents, then, contain people who have been living in Maastricht for a significant amount of time, say at least 10 years, and who also intend to stay there for the long term. The word 'dynamics' relate to behaviours, interactions, and communications between people¹.

To answer this question the paper first gives a better understanding of the theory used in this paper, which is the theory of humanistic geography. The next section explains the theory of place attachment, highlighting different views by different authors and eventually arguing for one specific framework of the theory. The paper then continues by explaining the methodology used and after that some contextual notes which provide a better understanding of the situation in Maastricht, and the recognition that a form of town-gown may exist in the city. This leads to the explanation of what town-gown actually is and how it developed throughout the years, and how it relates to the theory discussed in the beginning. Thereafter, the analysis part is situated, which links the theory used to the outcomes obtained through the methodology. Finally, the conclusion sums up the main ideas and points in the literature review as well as the main findings of the research.

¹ <https://www.nicola-williams.com/themes/understanding-relationship-dynamics#:~:text=Relationship%20dynamics%20are%20the%20patterns,in%20a%20position%20of%20employment.>

2. Humanistic Geography

In the introduction, we saw that nowadays it is recognised that both the university as well as the city can benefit from each other's presence, mostly from an economic perspective. The university uses the city to gain real-life experiences, which should contribute to students' research. This in turn should increase the overall quality of the university's research, leading to a better national and even international reputation and possibly a higher ranking on the list of best universities. The city sees the number of students increasing year by year, and profits from all the new consumers that come in. Moreover, the city could benefit from the graduates that stay after their time at university. There are, however, more social ways in which the university and the city meet, namely through the students and local inhabitants who live together in a city. Certain interesting dynamics occur in one place, namely the university city.

Talking about place moves the interaction between locals and internationals towards a more geographical perspective. Geography and spatial organisation, according to Tuan (1977), consist of the structure of the human body, i.e., people's feelings and behaviours, as well as the relations between humans (p. 34). Thus, the spatial organisation of a university town and the dynamics of its citizens is comprised of the way the two groups behave and how they stand in relation to each other. This idea, and many more of Tuan's works, contributed to the emergence of the theory of humanistic geography in the 1970s and the 1980s. Humanistic geography stems from the humanism theory and might be a good fundament to explain the interaction between local inhabitants and international students.

2.1. What Does Humanistic Geography Entail?

The broader humanism, according to Gregory (2009) is "a philosophical tradition that places human faculties (reason, consciousness, and the like) at the centre of human action, in order to account for and inform conduct" (p. 356). Humanistic geography, in that respect, is thus not a science of the earth, but rather belongs to the social sciences and the humanities. Today the term humanistic geography is often associated with the geographical orientation of the 1970s and 1980s (Entrikin & Tepple, 2006, p. 30). In this orientation, both place and humans were seen as the centre of geography, of 'being in the world' (Williams & Miller, 2021, p. 17; Sharp, 2009, p. 356). Humans and places are the main characters of human geography, just as they are in the dynamics between international students and local residents in a university town.

Humanistic geography aims to better understand humans and their conditions, which is the reason why it rather belongs to the social sciences and humanities instead of physical geography

(Tuan, 1976, p. 266). For humanistic geographers, it is interesting to study the relation of people to nature, and their feelings and behaviours towards specific places and spaces (Tuan, 1976, p. 266). This could be interesting, considering the different people living in a university city and their behaviour towards each other and the place they live in. Humanistic geography, as Tuan (1976) puts it, emphasises geographical activities, which are distinctive to humans.

2.2. Origins and Characteristics

The term humanism has been around since the Renaissance, with scholars such as Erasmus trying to enrich the interpretation of human individuals. Historically, humanism is described as a way to explain what humans are and what they are able to do (Tuan, 1976, p. 266). Especially in the times of the reformulation of modern human geography, however, humanism played a pivotal role (Gregory, 2009, p. 356). Nowadays, instead of religion, science is the main means of describing the man and his actions. Humanistic views do build on these scientific perspectives, instead of blindly following the church (Tuan, 1976, p. 267).

Even though the current humanistic view is building on science, humanistic geography was too a criticism of the increasing quantitative spatial studies, which emerged during the 1960s (Ley, 1981, p. 250). Humanistic geography was, however, always a very loosely structured and abstract movement in the late 20th century. Entrikin and Tepple (2006) even argue that it was held together rather because of what the theory opposed than because of what the theory stood for (p. 30). Thus, the broad humanism stream within geography was a reaction against spatial science, as at the core of the humanities lie capacities such as critical reflection, creativity, and consciousness (Gregory, 2009, p. 356). Such aspects in turn counter the abstractive and objective inclinations of spatial science geographers.

Thus, humanistic geography as a coherent theory was not the case, as Sharp (2009) argues as well, that the movement came about because it was a reaction against the ‘dehumanising’ effects of structural Marxism as well as positivism (p. 356). Common aspects of humanistic geography do, however, exist. Cloke and colleagues (1991) for instance explain that humanistic geographers see the world as a sum of human experiences through encounters with outer realities. Such experiences can only be accessed through one of the cores of humanities, namely consciousness, or the human mind.

The humanistic geographers of the 1970s viewed their work as introducing the discipline of geography to more real-life conceptions of humans as actual geographical agents, who would draw on their experiences, beliefs, attitudes, and judgements when making spatial decisions (Entrikin & Tepple, 2006, p. 31). Here it is explained once more how the humanistic movement

was a criticism at its core since humans as geographical agents challenge the overemphasis that existed on analytics and the additional ignorance of the chaotic dynamics of everyday life. The human agent creates meaning, instead of meaning already being present in objects. Places, regions, countries etc. are not solely given spatial categories, but human processes of making the earth their homes (Tuan, 1991) through communication between individuals in a community. Human agents in this respect are, individually and in a group, the principal place-makers (Entrikin & Tepple, 2006, p. 35). Giving meaning and human agency are therefore so important for humanistic geography and make humanistic research subjective.

Another critique that humanistic geography brings is toward capitalism, and the additional disappearing distinctiveness and diversity of places (Williams & Miller, 2021, p. 17). The attachment of people to one particular place and its specific characteristics is what humanistic geography tries to highlight. The different smells, tastes, and touches in a place give a sensation, that one's thought qualifies as one of a kind. These experiences construct a certain reality and create a feeling and a thought about a particular place (Tuan, 1977, pp. 8-9). The given is not something to be known in itself but is created through experiences. Humanistic geography shows that instead of having all places look similar because of capitalism and consumerism, the human-specific experiences lead to the place becoming a shared feeling (Tuan, 1976, p. 275), which is what makes a place unique.

Such uniqueness could in turn enhance a sense of place or the attachment to place. Experiences are also comprised of memories (Tuan, 1977, p. 10), which in turn deepens one's sentiment for a place and one's attachment to it. Tuan (1977) argues that older people love the place even more than younger people, implying that the more memories one has of a place, the more profound the sentiment. Such personal experiences, memories, and feelings are impossible to measure through statistics, as there is no decimal notation that could be translated into such abstract aspects. Instead, humanistic geography requires appropriate qualitative and interpretative methods (Sharp, 2009, p. 357; Williams & Miller, 2021, p. 18). Such an approach has also been criticised as being too 'soft', however, the humanism perspective, Entrikin and Tepple (2006) point out, does not try to manipulate the research, but rather tries to ask different kinds of questions focusing on interpretations, meanings, and values (p. 32).

After all, as Tuan (1976) points out, humanistic geography provides information of which researchers themselves might not be aware (p. 274). Such new and abstract insights could be overwhelming at first, and they may seem as irrelevant to scientific research. However, it is the task of the human geographer to simplify people's experiences, feelings, thoughts and behaviours into various concrete structures and themes, making it easier to scientifically explain them (Tuan, 1976, p. 274). Such a geographical agent, exploring different human experiences and translating them

into scientific information is, according to Entrikin and Tepple (2006) an important legacy of the 1970s humanistic trend.

2.3. Criticising Theories and Legacy

Previously we saw that an argument against the humanistic geography direction was that the qualitative approach was too soft to fulfil scientific purposes. There are, however, more criticisms towards the humanism approach. Sharp (2009), as well as Entrikin and Tepple (2006) for instance, mention that critics would not fall for the individualistic character of the theory and the additional freedom such individuals got. Such critics would rather argue that humans are tied to political, economic, and cultural systems, limiting their abilities to choose and act for themselves. In the 1980s, therefore, a new theory emerged, called the structuration theory. This theory explained how practices constrained by cultural, economic, and political systems would reproduce and transform social structures (Entrikin & Tepple, 2006, p. 34). Thus, everyday transforming routines tied to such systems were studied, however, with little attention being paid to individual meanings.

The requirement for qualitative methods in humanistic geography has also caused Entrikin (1976) to describe the concerns going around about the methodology. This qualitative methodology, he explains, has been overly subjective in comparison with regular empirical data collection. Moreover, with such qualitative methods, the humanistic geographers tend to emphasise understanding instead of explaining, as they criticise the geographers before them to blur the division between explanation and prediction (Ley, 1981, p. 252). However, the humanist understanding does not necessarily have to be similar to the explanation of causal relations that they are looking for either, which forms another critique of the humanism approach. Finding an explanation for an action within a single individual is not doable since external context might have an influence on this action as well. Ley (1981) therefore points out that humanistic geographical work is rather starting to focus on group interaction instead of on a single person or group.

Criticising theories such as the structuration theory, poststructuralism, and even anti-humanism, resulted in a more radical movement, namely that of posthumanism. Post-humanist theory criticises the emphasis on people being the centre of geography, of being, and instead includes non-human actors in the creation of human and hybrid geographies (Gregory, 2009, p. 356). Although these theories have some legit critiques on humanistic geography, the humanism movement has left a legacy in the form of other theories. One of these is moral geography, which is a stream that includes many themes and is, therefore, just like humanistic geography, loosely structured (Entrikin & Tepple, 2006, p. 36). Once the connection to moral theory is made, the

political relevance of humanistic geography can be traced back too. Todorov (2002), for example, recognises how humanistic geography is closely tied to the idea of liberal democracy.

Liberal democracy fits well with humanism, because “it adopts the ideas of collective autonomy (the sovereignty of the people), individual autonomy (the liberty of the individual), and universality (the equality of rights for all citizens)” (Todorov, 2002, p. 31). Even though this is a nice bridge to the political spectrum, it has to be noted that liberal democracy and humanism will not appear at the same time. Todorov (2002) mentions that democracies are not perfect reflections of people’s main principles and that humanism and democracy do not have a relationship of mutual involvement (p. 31). Thus, the link of humanism with moral theory could contribute to the creation of democracies, or just the creation of more democratic and humane environments (Entrikin & Tepple, 2006, p. 39), but the two movements are not completely similar. Such democratising and humanising effects of humanistic geography could nowadays still be good arguments in favour of the theory, even though it has lost its significance in the late 1980s.

Thus, to conclude, we have seen that humanistic geography might be a good theory to discuss the dynamics between international students and local residents in a university city like Maastricht. Humanistic geography argues that all places are unique and that such uniqueness could enhance a certain sense of place or an attachment to place. This place attachment determines to what extent people are attracted to a place. The next chapter explains more in detail what it is, and how it can be studied.

3. Place Attachment

The previous chapter gave an outline of humanistic geography and explained why that view fits well with this paper. Related to humanistic geography is the idea of ‘place attachment’, which is a term often used in various disciplines resulting in the emergence of many different definitions. This chapter first gives a brief overview of how the concept of place attachment gained importance over the years. The section thereafter discusses the multiple definitions of the concept, after which a brief explanation follows of the relevance of the idea of ‘place attachment’. The chapter then goes on to give an overview of the different theoretical frameworks of place attachment that exist. It ends with a section on a framework that was introduced by Scannell & Gifford (2010), which tries to include all the different definitions and frameworks in the existing literature. The chapter closes off with a short conclusion.

3.1. Historical Context

As we have seen in the chapter on humanistic geography, the literature on human geography was filled with quantitative methods, spatial science, and logical positivism up until the 1960s and the early 1970s. This particular literature talked about people rather as rational objects instead of emotional subjects (Cresswell, 2009). The human individual was not frequently mentioned, nor were the human experiences often discussed. Williams and Miller (2021), too, explain that before humanistic geography rose to become a significant theory, it was the modernist metatheory that highlighted the importance of a transition to a mass society and the management and measurement of human satisfaction through quantitative modelling.

In the years that followed, the 1970s and 1980s, humanism gained more importance and significance in the geography discourses. The academic literature showed increased interest in human experience, affect and emotion and qualitative methods (Williams & Miller, 2021). Terms such as placemaking and sense of place started to highlight the experiences humans have with place. Especially the concept of ‘sense of place’ shows how the relatively objectified term ‘place’ was balanced out by the subjective concept ‘sense’. This was done initially to bring down the quantitative, logical, and objective trends, but it eventually resulted in a new humanistic wave within the field of human geography (Foote & Azaryahu, 2009, p. 97). As this humanistic geography was a completely new phenomenon, the idea of ‘experience’, as Cresswell (2009), as well as Foote and Azaryahu (2009), point out, was quite revolutionary.

After the humanistic trend of the 1970s and 1980s, the ideas that had gained momentum during that time would continue to be of importance in the human geography discourse.

Metatheories that followed humanistic geography focused more on human experience, identities, practice, meaning and human action (Williams & Miller, 2021 pp. 15-23). Moreover, the idea of 'sense of place' permanently settled itself into the human geography discourse, highlighting the importance of considering the value of looking at geographical phenomena from a humanistic view (Foote & Azaryahu, 2009, p. 96). Sense of place then is a term which is often associated with place attachment. Some authors interpret the two concepts as similar; others argue that there are some differences between the two. In the upcoming section in which different definitions of place attachment are outlined, this ambiguity comes to the fore as well.

3.2. Defining Place Attachment

There are many authors who have defined 'place attachment', either in a single sentence or more extensive. As stated, the idea of 'place attachment' is often associated with that of 'sense of place'. Holloway and Hubbard (2001) as well as Anderson (2010) for instance, conceive place attachment and sense of place as similar ideas, both relating to rootedness, long-term relationships, and emotional and intimate connections with a certain place. Especially the latter point, of the emotional bonds with place can be traced back to several other definitions. Foote and Azaryahu (2009) argue for example that sense of place relates to emotional attachments that people develop in specific environments on different kinds of scales. Moreover, they describe that sense of place explains the uniqueness of particular localities, stemming from their history or setting (p. 96). This definition of sense of place is almost identical to the definition by Manzo and Devine-Wright (2021) on place attachment (pp. 1-2).

Other authors, such as Hernández et al. (2021) notice that a sense of place is an encompassment of different concepts, including place identity, place dependence, but also place attachment. Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) as well suggest that place attachment, together with place identity, is part of the concept sense of place. A meaningful bond with a place is a universal idea, fulfilling basic human needs (Tuan, 1977, p. 4). However, this is not enough, as the fulfilment of needs does not imply that someone is attached to that place. Residents of a place can have their basic needs fulfilled, but still have a negative attachment to the place they inhabit. For instance, one can feel like an outsider, and one does not necessarily have to feel the desire to stay in the place, which, according to Hay (1998), is part of the whole idea of place attachment.

Not only is there ambiguity surrounding 'place attachment' and 'sense of place', but the two concepts, whether interpreted equivalently or not, are also multifaceted and heterogeneous because the terms are used in many different disciplines, ranging from human geography to anthropology to psychology. In principle, the different meanings of the terms that exist come down

to the bonding between individuals and their important environments and meaningful places (Scannell & Gifford, 2010, p. 1). Here, the balance between the objective ‘place’ and the subjective ‘sense’ is visible again. As Pretty et al. (2003) state: “location itself is not enough to create a sense of place. It emerges from involvement between people and between people and place” (p. 274). With this, as well as with the various different definitions of place attachment and sense of place, in mind, Scannell and Gifford (2010) developed a framework to explain the concept of place attachment.

Within this framework, which is explained in more detail later in this chapter, it seems like the authors see a sense of place as part of the bigger concept of place attachment. This is different from what we have seen before, as it mostly is the other way around to some, whereas others interpret the two as the same. The definition Scannell and Gifford (2010) give for place attachment, which this paper continues to hold on to, goes as follows:

According to our person-process-place (PPP) framework, place attachment is a bond between an individual or group and a place that can vary in terms of spatial level, degree of specificity, and social or physical features of the place, and is manifested through affective, cognitive, and behavioural psychological processes. (p. 5)

Sense of place, in their framework, is included in the psychological processes section. Therefore, in this paper, we consider sense of place to be part of place attachment. However, more literature is wished to be written on whether the two are in fact different from each other, or whether they are the same concept. For now, most authors seem to be using them rather interchangeably, which can lead to the occurrence of confusion.

3.3. Relevance of Place Attachment

Place attachment is thus the concept or theory, this paper uses to analyse the relationship between long-term residents of Maastricht and short-term international students. Before the paper dives deeper into the reason why place attachment is relevant for this kind of analysis, it first briefly explains the broader relevance of the concept in the human geography discourse. Place attachment has gained much attention over the years, as people became aware that person-place connections nowadays lost their strength, due to phenomena and processes like globalisation, climate crisis, increased mobility and migration, urbanisation and even pandemics (Manzo & Devine-Wright, 2021; Relph, 1976; Wylie, 2009; Scannell & Gifford, 2010). The moving around of people, thus,

can be argued to have made person-place bonds weaker and more fragile, since more people are in a place for a shorter amount of time, resulting in having less time to bond with it.

These weaker place attachments have led to Relph (1976) arguing for the emergence of a so-called 'placeless' world. He explains that phenomena such as mass production, increasing migration, Disneyfication and museumification have made places less authentic. In turn, this has made the occlusion of the distinction of places possible, so he claims. Relph (1976) explains that in this way places have turned into 'non-places' and that the world has become placeless. It is more difficult to get significantly attached to places if we move around a lot, or to places that look alike.

Other authors, however, argue that the person-place bonds have not necessarily lost their strength (e.g., Lewicka, 2014; Massey, 1991). Places, they argue, have not lost their importance to people, but their meaning actually may have grown. Massey (1991) even argues that places are shaped and constituted by the mobility of people, ideas, and materials. Instead of being bounded, or connected to single identities, places have connections to the rest of the world and through these connections, they produce heterogeneous identities and meaning in the world. This way, a place embraces its connectedness to the cultural dynamics in an increasingly globalising world (Wylie, 2009, p. 676). Massey (1991) calls this 'a global sense of place', or a 'progressive sense of place'.

Thus, whether place attachments and people-place bonds are getting weaker or stronger, the connections to place stay relevant in relation to contemporary processes and phenomena like globalisation and increasing migration. The reason why they remain relevant is that person-place bonds have specific functions, like security and survival, temporal or personal continuity and goal support (Scannell & Gifford, 2010; Massey, 1991). One example is given in Holton's (2015) text on students' place attachment in which he talks about how students from different places hope to experience a similar degree of security and safety in their home environment. The stronger their attachment to the new university environment, the more secure and safe they feel.

In conclusion, even though the idea of place attachment gained attention during the 1970s and 1980s with the introduction of humanistic geography, up until this day it is a relevant concept in relation to global processes. Furthermore, to the individual, attachment to places can be important as it contributes to the creation of a feeling of safety and to personal development.

3.4. Approaches to Studying Place Attachment

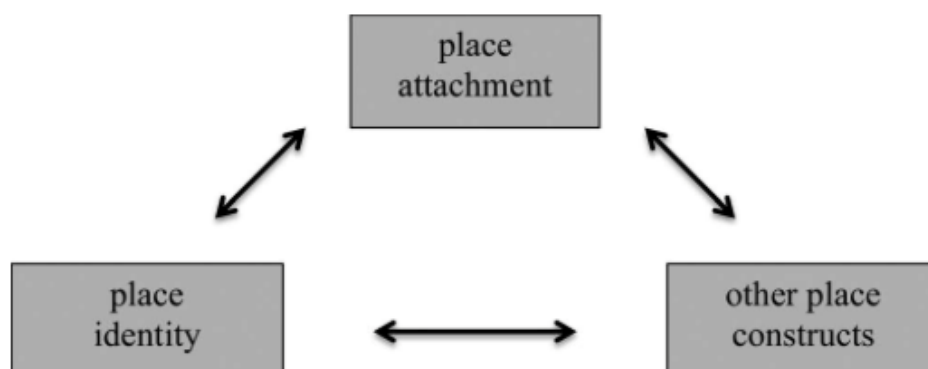
As was discussed in the section on 'defining place attachment', there are multiple definitions of the idea of place attachment, as well as several contexts in which the concept is used. Moreover, there are multiple place-related concepts that are relevant in the discourse on place attachment,

such as rootedness, place identity, place dependence, sense of place, and place satisfaction (Williams & Miller, 2021; Lewicka, 2014). These concepts are all intertwined and interlinked, which means there needs to be a broader theoretical framework that brings them all together. This implies that there are also various ways to study place attachment with more than one framework. In addition, there are several methods that are useful to study place attachment, either rooted in quantitative or qualitative approaches (Lewicka, 2014), resulting in the ways to study the term becoming more diverse and even less coherent.

In their chapter, Hernández and colleagues (2021) list several different theoretical frameworks of which place attachment is a part (pp. 95-98). The first framework they identify is place attachment as a one-dimensional concept (see fig. 1). Here, place attachment is treated at the same level as other concepts like place dependence and place identity.

Figure 1

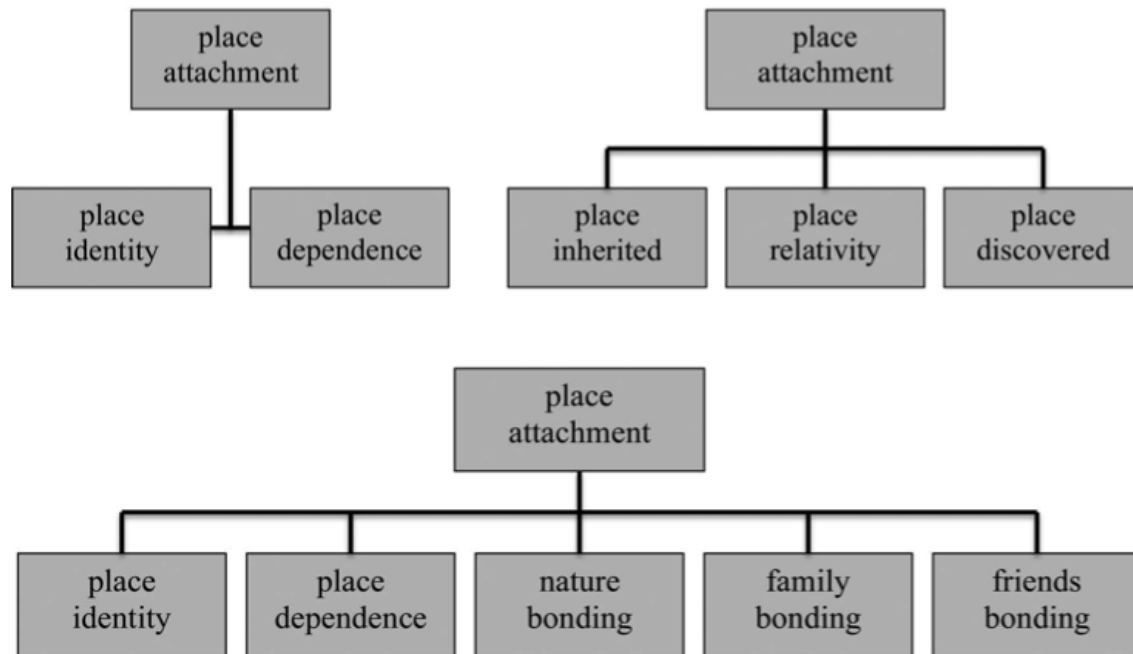
Place attachment as one-dimensional concept (Hernández et al., 2021, p. 96).



The second approach is a multidimensional framework, including different factors, with place attachment being a superordinate concept. It implies that place attachment is the main concept and that it includes several sub-dimensions. The number of sub-factors depends on the author. Three examples are given in figure 2.

Figure 2

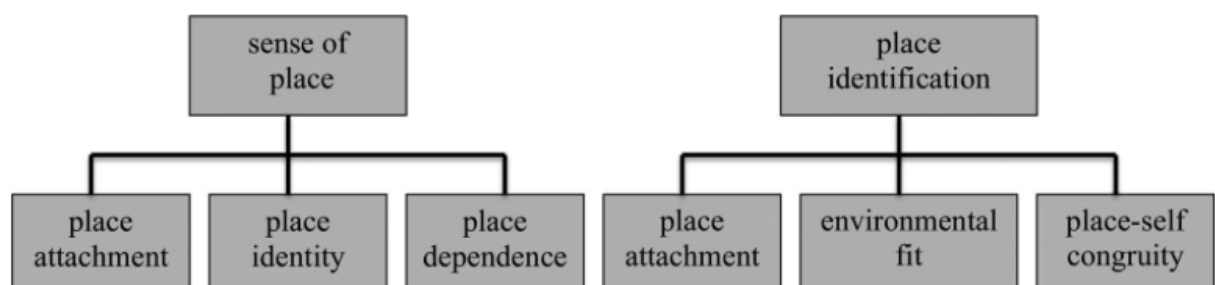
Place attachment as a dimension of a supraordered concept (Hernández et al., 2021, p. 96).



A third framework that Hernández and colleagues (2021) recognise is that of place attachment as a sub-dimension of a more general concept or as a subordinate concept. They visualise it in figure 3, calling it ‘place attachment as a multidimensional concept’.

Figure 3

Place attachment as multidimensional concept (Hernández et al., 2021, p. 97).



These three frameworks show that place attachment is thus either standing on its own, it is part of a bigger theoretical framework, which includes other relevant concepts, or it is the main

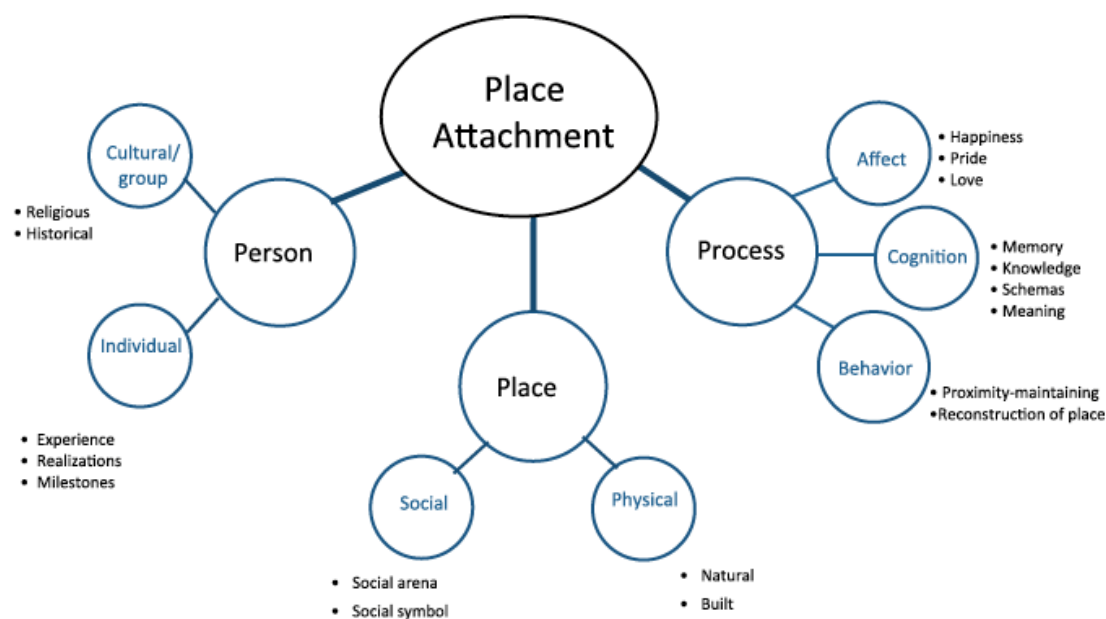
concept in a theoretical framework, superior to other concepts. Hernández et al. (2021) show here once again how the discourse on place attachment is surrounded by heterogeneity and incoherence. Scannell and Gifford (2010) recognised this as well and structured a new, three-dimensional, framework, which is intended to integrate and include a wide variety of related concepts and definitions. Within this framework, place attachment is a multidimensional concept. They call their structure the PPP framework (see figure), stemming from the three dimensions of person, psychological process, and place. Since supposedly all concepts are included in this framework, this paper continues to use this as the main structure of the analysis. The upcoming section investigates this framework more in detail.

3.5. PPP framework

The PPP framework by Scannell & Gifford (2010), also known as the Tripartite model of place attachment (see figure 4), aims to structure all the definitions of place attachment and all relating concepts into one all-encompassing framework. The person dimension looks at place attachment on the individual and the group level. The psychological process part includes place attachment seen from the dimensions of affect, cognition, and behaviour. Finally, the last dimension is the place dimension which is divided into a social and physical approach to place attachment.

Figure 4

The Tripartite model of place attachment (Scannell & Gifford, 2010, p. 2).



3.5.1. Person Dimension

The person dimension of the tripartite model questions who the attached actor is, and how far this attachment is based on individual or collective meanings.

3.5.1.1. *Individual Meanings*

The individual level of place attachment includes the personal bonds one has to a place, which in turn can contribute to a stable sense of self (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996). Personal bonds can occur when people have important experiences in a place. Such meaningful experiences can be personal growth, reaching milestones or realising a dream (Scannell & Gifford, 2010, p. 2). These experiences do not necessarily have to be positive to influence the level of attachment. Negative experiences in a place may cause someone to not feel connected to it. Thus, it is not the place itself that is meaningful and significant, but the experiences that make a place important to someone, the ‘experience-in-place’ as Manzo (2005, p. 74) calls it.

Personal meanings are never fully fixed, but always influenced by or open to different meanings that other people hold (Cresswell, 2009, p. 169). Many people have distinct cultures which influence their behaviour and values and make them unique. This, in turn, results in differing senses of place or place attachments (Tuan, 1977, p. 5). The occurrence of multiple cultures and various attachment bonds to place is enhanced by time-space compression and the increasing internationalisation that results from this (Massey, 1991). More internationalisations can lead to more diversity in race and gender in a place. Factors such as race and gender influence our experience of that particular place too, as Massey (1991) argues that such factors affect the way we walk around streets at night, or how we move between countries.

This last argument, of how for instance the increase in racial diversity could have one reconsider the way they sense the street at night, has quite a negative and stereotypical ring to it. However, it should be noted that, even though such stereotypes to this day are very common, not everyone thinks like that. Lewicka (2014) points out that many people are rather positively affected by more diversity and that they too prefer open places, instead of closed ones (p. 211). And for those who might personally feel less comfortable in their place, Stolle and colleagues (2008) did argue that one might regain trust by talking to their neighbours from time to time.

Not only could increasing diversity influence one’s own place attachment, but also collective senses of place. A relatively homogeneous cultural group, like the Eskimos as Tuan (1977, p. 5) refers to, experiences place very distinctively than other cultural groups. Such groups might

have shared meanings to a place (Cresswell, 2009, p. 169), but just like individual held meanings, this collective importance to a certain place is not fixed and open to other representative meanings. The following section discusses such collective meanings of place and how these come about.

3.5.1.2. Collective Meanings

A collective meaningful attachment to a place is created through the practice and preservation of community cultures in particular areas. Community meanings can emerge from a significant historical event that happened in the place, from the existence of a strong religious following or from other significant group experiences, which are handed down from generation to generation (Scannel & Gifford, 2010, p. 3). In the Dutch province of Limburg, for instance, there is the shared ‘Carnaval’ tradition, which is a symbol for the province, and which has been and will be transmitted to following generations. Such characteristics of a place form a symbolic meaning which is shared among the place’s inhabitants (Low, 1992). Religious connections might also be personal, for example, when someone had an individual divine revelation of some sort. Therefore, it is difficult to cut a clear line between individual and collective meanings to place.

The question of scale plays a role in the discourse of collective meanings as well. Tuan (1977) points out that people in one neighbourhood know this neighbourhood well, but they do not know the other neighbourhoods and their people well and they might even be ignorant of it. However, he argues that all the neighbourhood groups might share common myths on a larger scale (p. 88). An example might be again the ‘Carnaval’ tradition in Limburg. Every city, town, and village in the province has its own traditions and ways of celebrating Carnaval. Every city, town, and village, thus, has its own collective meaning regarding the festivities. However, the story of how Carnaval came into existence is the same in the whole province, as there is one religious story behind the emergence of the holiday. The province shares the myth behind Carnaval, whereas the same festivities have different smaller group traditions.

One could also say that the province of Limburg has one collective means of celebrating Carnaval, which differs from the style that exists in the Dutch province of Brabant. The underlying and shared story here, however, is that both provinces were at least partly occupied by the Spanish during the Eighty Years’ War (1568-1648). During that time, the Catholic Church spread its influence in those areas, whereas the rest of the Netherlands was Protestant. Carnaval stems from this Catholic tradition, which, thus, is shared among the provinces of Limburg and Brabant.

At every level, with any symbolic meaning, there could exist a feeling of ‘we’ versus ‘them’ (e.g., when a citizen of Maastricht says that the only right way to celebrate Carnaval is in Maastricht). Tuan (1977) explains that when people are geographically closer to each other, they are also

intimately closer. So, when talking about Carnaval, people from Maastricht feel emotionally closer to each other when comparing their traditions to other towns in Southern Limburg. When the comparison of Carnaval celebrations goes on, to cities further away, and the geographical distance increases, the intimate distance also grows and the closeness declines. This sense of community, the ‘us’ versus ‘them’ returns later in this chapter.

3.5.2. Psychological Process Dimension

The psychological process dimension of place attachment is about how affect, cognition and behaviour are displayed in attachment. It is about how groups, as well as individuals, relate to a place, which is, according to Scannell and Gifford (2010), called ‘sense of place’. The framework of Scannell & Gifford (2010) outlines three common psychological aspects, namely affect, cognition and behaviour. These three dimensions are recognised by other authors too, as the following quote by Foote and Azaryahu (2009) makes clear:

“Within contemporary cultural geography, place is about what it means to people. These meanings are expressed in terms of values, obligations, intentions, and commitments, as well as emotional and social involvements. Since people define themselves through attachment to particular places, place is important to identity. Place-specific shared experiences and common notions about the past and the future of place are important to a sense of community” (p. 97)

The part on meanings of place relates to the ‘affect’ aspect, defining oneself with place has to do with ‘cognition’, and the place-specific experiences and notions can be linked to the ‘behaviour’ part. It is also the work of Foote and Azaryahu (2009) that links these three dimensions of the psychological process dimension to the idea of ‘sense of place’. They explain that sense of place is connected to placemaking, which entails that people shape their environments, which then reflect their social identities and tastes and leave imprints on their way of living. Therefore, a sense of place, they claim, is a result of human cognition and sensitivity instead of the quality of the place itself (p. 98). Thus, people’s affect, cognition, and behaviours shape the place they live in and their environments, which showcases how they sense their place. The next sections explain more in detail what the dimensions of affect, cognition, and behaviour exactly entail.

3.5.2.1. *Affect*

The affect part of the psychological process dimension of place attachment consists of emotional place belongingness, for instance, what Tuan (1977) describes to be the love that one feels for a place. Emotional attachment to a place can be clearly seen in the literature on displacement, when people for example must leave their homes because of natural hazards or, conversely, want to stay despite these natural disasters (Scannell & Gifford, 2010, p. 3). These feelings towards a place do not necessarily have to be positive all the time, such as feeling love. Emotional attachment also comes in the form of ambivalence, hatred, or fear (Manzo, 2005). These negative feelings can emerge when one has dealt with some traumatic and generally unhappy experiences in it.

The positive emotions one has to a place do not only have to be love. Massey (1991) explains that a sense of place, some feeling of rootedness, in the middle of all changes and movements that are happening in the contemporary world can give a feeling of quiet, safety, peace and stability. This provision of calmness could eventually result in feeling real love for a place. This emotional bond to a place, Lewicka (2014) argues, could be felt in more than one place (p. 209). Moreover, the more experiences one has in a place, the more emotional ties, positive or negative ones, one could have with it (Bricker & Kerstetter, 2000). Students, for instance, might have experienced more on the university's campus than the rest of a city's population, which means that these students may be emotionally stronger attached to the campus than the other citizens. Overall, the literature on affective and emotional bonds to place has a positive tone to it, usually referring to this love of place (Wylie, 2009, p. 676), instead of focusing on the feeling of aversion that people could also develop towards a place.

3.5.2.2. *Cognition*

The second part of the psychological process dimension, which Scannell and Gifford (2010) recognise is the one of 'cognition'. Cognition too, they argue, contributes to the creation of a feeling of closeness to a place and to the creation of meaning to a place. It consists of beliefs, memories, and knowledge associated with people's personal settings. These cognitive aspects can result in the emergence of specific emotions towards a place. Therefore, affect and cognition are closely related to each other. The cognition feature could help to achieve 'place-related distinctiveness' (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996), or the development of place identity, which is the drawing of similarities between one's self-definition and a place's features. It is comparable to the

development of social identity, or a sense of belonging, which occurs when a person draws similarities to in-group members and distinguishes oneself from out-group members.

Differences in people's place identities stem from differences in landscapes and climates, to which they connect when it represents themselves (Scannell & Gifford, 2010, p. 3). Thus, one might say, I am an island person, or we are island people, indicating that they are different from people on the mainland. People in Maastricht, then, could explain they live in the hilly or sunny south of the Netherlands, or that they live in the most Burgundian part of the Netherlands. Especially the latter example might imply that whoever says this, is also defining themselves as someone that is living a Burgundian lifestyle. In conclusion, the cognition aspect of the psychological process dimension consists of memories, beliefs, and the development of 'place-related distinctiveness', which result in people defining themselves through the place's physical aspects and in the creation of affective emotions towards that place.

3.5.2.3. Behaviour

The aspect of behaviour in the psychological process dimension of place attachment is, just like the above two features, a contribution to the creation of closeness and bonds to a specific place. This attachment in the behaviour dimension is achieved through 'proximity-maintaining behaviours' (Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001, p. 274). Such behaviours could be staying in a place for years and not wanting to leave or trying to return to a place one once had left for whatever reason. Another behaviour that expresses someone's connection to a place is the reconstruction of a place (Scannell & Gifford, 2010, p. 4), which is particularly visible in post-war cities, in which people rather rebuild their destroyed city than move to another one.

Scannell and Gifford (2010), however, do explain that, when people are forced to leave their city for whatever reason, they often move to similar cities, or to cities that have a neighbourhood which reminds them of their former neighbourhood. Students, for instance, might move to places which look like their hometowns. More significantly, though, as Holton (2015) points out, is the so-called 'studentification' of place. This is the transformation of university cities' neighbourhoods into places designed for and by students. Houses and apartments are refurbished to students' liking and for more students to be able to live in one house. Moreover, businesses and services are attracted to the city which would not have been there without a university. Moreover, public spaces can increasingly be visited by students, making it an area where mostly only students come.

Other behavioural aspects relating to place attachment can be the visualisation of one's love for a place. Tuan (1977) explains that people might make their attachment to a place visible through

conflict with other places, or through art, architecture, and ceremonies. A significant behaviour of a Maastricht citizen might be the expression of their dislike for other cities and towns nearby. Another example is the existence of the many statues representing Maastricht's myths and habits, such as "T Zaat Hermenieke" ("the drunken concert band/wind orchestra", see fig. 5), which represents Maastricht's love for Carnaval.

To conclude, the second dimension, 'psychological process', relates to the idea of 'sense of place', and can be divided into three aspects. Affect has to do with someone's emotional attachment to a place, which is often referred to as positive feelings rather than negative ones. Cognition then is about people's memories of and knowledge about a place, and about the self-definition through a place's physical characteristics. The third, and last, aspect is behaviour which entails the expression of attachment to a place through 'proximity-maintaining behaviours', such as staying in or returning to a place or reconstructing the place to feel more at home.

Figure 5

"T Zaat Hermenieke, 1993, Han van Wetering.



Retrieved from: [https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bestand:Maastricht - Vrijthof - %27t Zaat Herremenieke - 1993 - Han van Wetering 20110505.jpg](https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bestand:Maastricht_-_Vrijthof_-_%27t_Zaat_Herremenieke_-_1993_-_Han_van_Wetering_20110505.jpg)

3.5.3. Place Dimension

The third, and last, dimension of place attachment is the place dimension, which is concerned with what the attachment is to, what the nature of the place is, and what else it is about the place to which one connects (Scannell & Gifford, 2010, p. 4). The place dimension can be examined at various scales, and it can be divided into physical and social place attachment. Hidalgo and Hernández (2001) for instance measured both physical and social attachment in three spatial levels and concluded that the strength of the connection and attachment to a place differs per scale.

Social attachment, according to Riger and Lavrakas (1981), entails social ties, familiarity with fellow residents, and belongingness to a place. Physical attachment, they explain, is people's rootedness in a place, which is determined by the meaning behind a place's physical aspects and by familiarity with a place's environmental features. Especially social attachment has been researched more than physical attachment (Scannell & Gifford, 2010; Lewicka, 2014), with social attachment facilitating social relationships between people and the emergence of group identity. Physical features, however, play a role in the creation of social attachment, such as proximity to one another, the density of a place, and amenities fostering social interactions.

Physical place attachment is regularly connected with the idea of place dependence because this calls attention to the physical characteristics of a place (Stokols & Shumaker, 1981). Physical attributes of a place provide resources and amenities to help achieve personal goals and support one's process of connecting to a place. It is thus not necessarily the physical features themselves, but the meaning they represent to which one becomes attached (Scannell & Gifford, 2010, p. 5). For instance, a physical feature of a place can be a nice smell that hangs in the air in a particular part of a city, which can remind someone of their childhood. This, then, can result in people feeling more attached to a place because of the to them meaningful smell. Lewicka (2014) argues that these environmental factors play a big role for newcomers and tourists in their development of place attachment, while the aspects of social attachment rather apply to people who have been living in a place for a longer time (p. 215).

The social attachment to place, then, is often compared to a 'sense of community', for instance in the work of McMillan and Chavis (1986). They argue that there are two kinds of community, namely the community of interest and the community of place. The former consists of people who are connected to similar lifestyles and interests, and the latter includes members who share the same geographical location. Individuals who share the same lifestyles and economic status within a city, who thus could belong together to a community of interest, often move to neighbourhoods with like-minded people, which results in the emergence of a community of interest as well as a community of place (Hunter, 1974). A community of interest is also influenced

by someone's length of residence and the number of friends and other acquaintances one has made during this time.

Moreover, both communities of interest and of place are closely related to place identity (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996), as they highlight a group's distinctiveness and a place's specialness. However, it should be noted that communities are not necessarily housed in one single place and that one place can have multiple communities (Massey, 1991). Therefore, places, just like people, can have multiple identities. A city like Maastricht, for example, houses both a large number of students as well as many residents who have lived in the city for many years, or even for their whole life. Thus, one could roughly identify a 'local community' and a 'student community', implying Maastricht has at least two different identities.

Seen from the 'local community', the non-Maastricht students are seen as outsiders. Holton (2015) identified the same in his work, in which he explains how, even though there is more diversity and more mobility in higher education, students who do not come from the town in which they go to university, are seen as not being part of the community (p. 22). The same goes, however, for students who might form their own community and see the university city's residents as outsiders. Relph (1976) explains that there are different stages of such 'insideness', ranging from 'objective outsiders', which entails that one is completely alienated from a place, to 'existential insideness', which implies that one is fully immersed in a place because their family has lived there for generations. Being inside a place feels rather safe and enclosed, and the more inside a place, according to Relph (1976), the stronger one's identity with the place.

Conversely, so-called 'outsideness' might make someone feel unsafe, homesick, and separated from the rest of the place, and thus in turn unsure about their attachment to the place (Relph, 1976). One can thus share different interests, values, ideas, and backgrounds than others, which can lead to becoming an outsider in such a community of interest. These 'outsiders', however, might share similar interests and opinions, or just a high affinity with each other, and form a community of interest for themselves. When these outsiders are in minority, they might as well create a minority identity together (Taylor, 2009, p. 295). The outsiders' sense of belonging and attachment to place result from such a minority identity.

3.6. Concluding Remarks

To conclude, this paper focuses on the tripartite framework of Scannell and Gifford (2010), which divides all papers and texts about the topic into three dimensions with subdivisions. For this paper, especially the social place dimension is useful in explaining town-gown relations in Maastricht from a more humanistic point of view. Moreover, the person and psychological

dimensions too provide some interesting insights, emphasising experiences and the meanings a place can have to a person. Before we come to the analysis, however, it is first useful to give a contextual overview of the city of Maastricht, including its history and the city's unique character, its current university situation and the internship organisation I worked together with, which is very invested in this topic too.

4. Methodology

4.1. Why Qualitative Methods and What Kind?

For this research, we decided to collect data through qualitative methods for several reasons. The aim of this paper is to find out the dynamics between international students and local residents in the city of Maastricht. With humanistic geography and place attachment as the framework, the data collection should exist of people's personal experiences, opinions, and ideas. As seen in the literature on humanistic geography, one of the theory's characteristics was the opposition to the use of quantitative methods and the advocacy for qualitative methods. Rodaway (2006) explains that humanistic geography gave researchers and geographers the chance to highlight the importance of human experience, and the uniqueness it holds because of all the individual subjective ideas, experiences, and emotions felt (p. 263). This is not the case with quantitative methods.

Quantitative methods are mainly objective, and reality is often seen through reason and knowledge, whereas qualitative methods try to understand human experiences and gather information from language and (visual) expression (Manzo & de Carvalho, 2021, p. 112). Qualitative research, in the explanation of Hesse-Biber & Leavy (2011), includes three main methodological approaches; post-positivism, which discovers and tests causal relationships; interpretive, which assumes that the social world is under construction through group interactions and that the social reality can be seen through social actors and meaningful activities; and critical, which too assumes that the social reality is constantly being shaped and that different discourses construct this reality (p. 5). The latter two especially are often used in human geography. Qualitative methods in general question the idea of an independent reality outside observation or investigation.

Using qualitative methods within place attachment too is interesting. It might not measure people's strength of place attachment in a certain area, but it can contribute to understanding the nature of human experiences, as described, and lived by people themselves (Manzo & de Carvalho, 2021, p. 117). Measuring the strength of one's attachment to a place does not say anything about the uniqueness and originality of the attachment and the story behind it. Place attachment does not necessarily have to be positive, it can have negative aspects to it, yet measuring the strength of the attachment only does not show that side. Thus, the use of qualitative methods in place attachment derives from humanistic geography's opposition to quantitative methodologies to be able to understand the social and human world.

Since this paper investigates the dynamics between two broadly defined groups, namely the international students and the local residents, it is interesting to see what kind of qualitative method fits with the aim of the research. My personal experience has taught me that students and residents are more likely to complain about the other group when they are among the people of their 'own' groups. Therefore, it was thought to be interesting to see whether, for this research, it was possible to organise focus groups, in order for people to share their frustrations, but also their more positive experiences. Such focus groups belong to people-centred methodologies, which explore the geographical experience of people in communities, or as individuals, through direct encounter, participation and engagement (Rodaway, 2006, p. 264). Such interactions seek the establishment of an authentic understanding, through shared and interpersonal knowledge (Rodaway, 2006, p. 266), and can thus exist in the form of in-depth interviews as well as group discussions or focus groups.

Focus groups then are useful for a number of reasons. Breen (2006) notes that such groups require a participant to share and compare their experiences, as well as to think of new ideas, and measure the shared importance of specific topics (p. 465). Especially the generating of new ideas is an advantage in focus group research, which is in turn interesting for this topic because it could contribute to forming ideas about what the dynamics between students and locals are and how these dynamics come into play, how negative dynamics can be solved and positive relationships could be sustained. On the contrary, one-to-one interviews might offer some interesting insights into such a topic too, as individual interviews bring personal experiences and self-reflection to the fore (Breen, 2006, p. 466), which in turn might be concealed once people are expected to discuss with other people in a group. One-to-one could, arguably, provide more authentic knowledge.

In both focus groups and individual interviews, however, the data that is eventually obtained, is not always generalisable, since the information is very context-specific (Breen, 2006, p. 467). Other disadvantages that come with focus groups are also practical, such as the logistics of scheduling and getting everyone at the same time in the same place, and the higher time consumption needed to analyse the data. In contrast, focus groups do give deeper insights and understanding of a phenomenon (Breen, 2006, p. 467). Thus, it is a consideration one has to make, whether the advantages of organising focus groups weigh more than the disadvantages. There are, however, some situations in which it is clear to not set up focus groups, such as lack of trust or the impossibility to express oneself (P. Beckers, personal communication, November 18, 2021).

In this paper, the desire exists to organise focus groups, generate new ideas and let people discuss their shared thoughts, whether they are positive or negative. Group discussions might not only encourage people to come up with new ideas but as well remind them of thoughts and experiences they have had in the past, and that they forgot about. The plan is to organise separate focus groups with international students and local residents of Maastricht. Focus groups need to

be homogeneous in the background (P. Beckers, personal communication, November 18, 2021), which is one of the main reasons to not put locals and international students together in one group. Other reasons are language, as international students often speak their native tongue as well as English, whereas the local inhabitants rather speak dialect and Dutch, which holds that it would be difficult to have a good discussion. Moreover, when talking about the relationships between the two groups, it might be best to keep them separated in order for everyone to feel comfortable talking about the other group without feeling like they attack someone.

The aim is to organise four focus groups, two with locals, and two with students, including five to ten people in each group. This should result in seeing and talking to twenty to forty people in total. Moreover, the aim is to also look at Maastricht as a whole and not select participants from one neighbourhood, or several ones. After recruiting participants and seeing in which neighbourhood they live, a location is to be determined that is as easy to be reached as possible for everyone. This location is, in the ideal situation, a location from the municipality, who can be contacted via the internship organisation.

4.2. Organisation and Struggles

There are several aspects to consider when one wants to organise a focus group. Of course, the location where the focus groups are taking place is important, as well as an idea of what one wants to investigate with focus groups. Moreover, it is important to provide all participants with the same information, in order for them to have the same expectations (Breen, 2006, p. 466). All necessary equipment needs to be gathered and questions need to be prepared. Furthermore, one needs to make time to recruit people for the focus groups, which can take longer once the recruitment is more complex and difficult.

For this research, it was planned to recruit at least ten local residents and ten international students. Local residents were tried to be reached via the internship organisation, with help from their contacts with different people in different neighbourhoods and their involvement in different Facebook groups with local members. International students were also reached with help from the internship organisation via social media, and again through participation in several international student-oriented Facebook groups. Moreover, other organisations within the building in which StudentCity is established were asked for help, as well as over 40 student organisations. Other social media platforms on which the recruitment text was shared were Instagram on the page of MyMaastricht and on LinkedIn, shared by Match Maastricht. Additionally, I asked my personal friends and family to share the message as much as they possibly could. Appendices 1 and 2 show the recruitment texts used in English and Dutch respectively.

The recruitment text led the interested people to a short questionnaire on Qualtrics to let me know when people could participate and whether they preferred to meet online or in person. These short questionnaires can be traced back in appendices 3 and 4. The first struggle that we encountered was immediately with the recruitment of participants. Idealistically, the goal was to reward participants with an incentive, to stimulate the willingness of residents and students to participate. Unfortunately, due to time restrictions and no responses from the contacts at the municipality, there was no funding available for such incentives, hence the only thing we could provide was some coffee and/or tea and a piece of Limburg vlaai (regional pie). It is thought that this prevented some people from participating. Another struggle was the time in general. There was simply not enough time to extensively recruit many participants, even though we tried in several ways.

Eventually, the aim to recruit at least ten people from each group was not achieved. Five people from each 'side' were willing to share their experiences with living in a student city like Maastricht. All participants, however, had another preference in date and time, which made us realise that organising focus groups was not fully possible anymore. Eventually, we had five individual interviews, one interview with two people and one semi-focus group with three participants. This resulted in interesting differing dynamics during the interviews. In the little group interviews, it was noticeable that participants inspired each other to say something and come up with ideas, whereas in the individual interviews the interviewer, me, was obliged to ask more (detailed) questions, which would have already been answered when more people discussed it. One advantage, however, was that the participants almost all live in other neighbourhoods, differing from Randwyck and Scharn to Wittevrouwenveld and Boschpoort.

Thus, the given that organising focus groups was not possible anymore, led to a little shift in strategy, and a realisation that more time and effort were needed to organise focus groups. Plans were, fortunately, not greatly affected, since the arranging of rooms for the expected focus groups did not go as smoothly as planned anyway. The one contact person of the municipality who would help with arranging locations was not available anymore due to personal circumstances. With mostly one-to-one and little-group interviews, it was not difficult to do the interviews in the building in which StudentCity is located, the Student Services Centre in Maastricht. One other interview was conducted in a cafe nearby. Thus, overall, there were some struggles seen from a logistical perspective, but it was not too difficult to solve these.

4.3. Questions and Expected Outcomes

Since the disappointment of not recruiting as many participants as wanted came rather late, the questions were already based on what is often done when formulating questions for focus groups. Questions in a focus group generally need to convince people to share their real thoughts (P. Beckers, personal communication, November 18, 2021). This way, the discussions between the participants should also flow naturally. Moreover, it is advised to start the questions off with a more broad and rather easy topic, to get the participants started and to let them get used to the situation. As time goes by, the questions can gradually get more detailed. Breen (2006) adds to this that it is useful to give a good overview at the start of the interview and to ensure all data will be dealt with confidentially (pp. 467-468). People need to get time to get warmed up and get comfortable, after which the moderator or the interviewer can get more involved in asking more specific questions.

The interview guide used for this research does include some questions which relate to the theory of place attachment. However, it was not the intention to make the interviews too scripted, and therefore the questions are just there as a backup when the inspiration would be lost or the discussion about one certain topic was finished. Moreover, we did not have a specific order in which to ask the questions, but rather played into how the situation developed. It might be noteworthy, though, to mention that the questions we often started off with were from the 'behaviour' section, after which it was rather easy to flow to the sections of 'personal and collective meaning'. The English and the Dutch interview guides can be traced back in appendices 5 and 6.

The general expected outcome was that both groups would open up about the experiences they had with each other. Our expectations were perhaps slightly biased towards receiving a lot of negative comments from one group to the other, however positive comments were not excluded from the expectations. The fact that we expected the former does not completely come as a surprise. The following screenshots show the comments under a Facebook post that the municipality of Maastricht (Gemeente Maastricht) published with a survey for international students to let the municipality and the university know what they thought of the student life in Maastricht.

Figure 6

Screenshots of comments under 'Gemeente Maastricht's' Facebook post. Translations:



The screenshot shows a Facebook post from 'Gemeente Maastricht' with three comments. Each comment is from a user whose name is redacted with a black box. The comments are in Dutch and discuss the impact of students on the city. The first comment mentions noise and anti-social behavior. The second comment mentions employment opportunities. The third comment mentions the impact on local residents. Each comment has a date, a 'Vind ik leuk' (Like) button, a 'Beantwoorden' (Reply) button, and a like count.

Gemeente Maastricht 3 d. · 🌐

De studenten zorgen vooral voor veel overlast met hun asociale gedrag. Houden geen rekening met andere medebewoners. De stad is de laatste jaren hard achteruit gegaan. Panden met studenten worden vaak uitgeleefd en overal staan fietsen en afval 🤔

3 d. Vind ik leuk Beantwoorden 32 🍌🍌

en zorgen bovendien voor werkgelegenheid (en dus welvaart).... Je hebt gelijk hoor...maar het is niet allemaal negatief toch?

3 d. Vind ik leuk Beantwoorden 3 🍌

niet allemaal, maar wel veel.

3 d. Vind ik leuk Beantwoorden 7 🍌

De eigen inwoners tellen niet meer mee. Die moeten dure appartementen kopen. Die kl*te studenten krijgen de mooiste woningen haast voor weinig. Ze maken troep overal, denken dat ze alles kunnen permitteren. Spreken de taal niet eens. Gewoon lekker blijven blokken, studie afmaken en wegwezen.

Eigen volk op één!

3 d. Vind ik leuk Beantwoorden 9 🍌

[Gemeente Maastricht](#) misschien is een cursus verkeer op de fiets een optie voor onze buitenlandse studenten, zo is er voor iedereen een veiliger verkeer mogelijk!

3 d. Vind ik leuk Beantwoorden 6 🍌

Belachelijk

3 d. Vind ik leuk Beantwoorden 3 🍌

“The students bring a lot of nuisance with their anti-social behaviour. They don’t take into account other fellow inhabitants. The city has deteriorated heavily over the last couple of years. Dwellings with students are often worn out and everywhere there are bikes and trash.”

“Moreover, they bring employment opportunities (and thus welfare) ... You’re right... but it is not all negative, is it?”

“Not all, but a lot.”

“The own inhabitants don’t count anymore. They have to buy expensive apartments. Those sh*tty students get the prettiest homes for almost nothing. They make a mess everywhere; think they can permit themselves everything. Don’t even speak the language. Just keep studying, finish your studies and get out. Own people on number one!”

“Gemeente Maastricht, maybe a traffic course for cycling is an option for our foreign students, that way safer traffic is possible for everyone!”

“Ridiculous”



Thus, the expected outcome to the questions on how the dynamics are between local residents and international students were rather negative than positive, at least seen from the local population's view. Moreover, we hoped for reasons as to how these dynamics came to be as they are today, to get a better understanding of how the relationships between the two groups can be enhanced, improved, or how they can be left as they are. Such reasons for the dynamics of two big groups in a city could in turn help the municipality in the local politics to come up with the best possible policies regarding locals and students. Before we turn to the analysis, however, let us first take a look at some contextual information, such as the interesting identity of the city and its inhabitants, and the emergence and development of Maastricht University.

5. Context

5.1. Brief History of Maastricht

Maastricht is one of the Netherlands' oldest cities, stemming from Roman times, in which it got the name Trajectum ad Mosam. Even though it is not completely sure whether the Romans actually founded Maastricht or if it had been a settlement for longer, it is certain that the Romans built a bridge, crossing the river the Meuse. This bridge turned out to be a significant link in some important roads between different cities in Germany, Belgium, and France, already manifesting itself as an international city. Fast forward to the early Middle Ages, Maastricht was at the heart of the Carolingian Empire, together with cities like Aachen in Germany and Liège and its surroundings in Belgium. During the high Middle Ages, it also became clear that Maastricht and its Saint Servatius church were of high importance to the Holy Roman Empire.

Figure 7

Maastricht, Model late-Roman Maastricht (*Maastricht, Model laat-Romeins Maastricht*) by F. Schiffeleers.



Retrieved from: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Maastricht_maquette_laate-Romeins_Maastricht_\(F_Schiffeleers,_1992\)_05.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Maastricht_maquette_laate-Romeins_Maastricht_(F_Schiffeleers,_1992)_05.JPG)

Figure 8



Trajectum ad Mosam in 1580, by Braun & Hogenberg in 1583.

Retrieved from:

<https://www.historischekaart.nl/steden/oude-kaart-maastricht-kopen/oude-kaart-maatsricht-trajectum-ad-mosam-in-1580.html>

In the 16th century, Maastricht's significant strategic location led to the building of important defences in the form of fortifications and fortresses. Moreover, the city had been in hands of the Spanish crown from the end of the 1500s until the beginning of the 1600s, after which the Dutch States General took over the Spanish. The Maastricht inhabitants, however, were now not allowed to hold high positions anymore and became lower-class citizens in the Netherlands (Van den Engel, 2022). Having dealt with the Spanish and the Dutch, the city of Maastricht also now and again had been in hands of the French. In 1794, eventually, the French took over the city for the last time, until 1814 with the fall of Napoleon's Empire. From 1815 onwards, Maastricht belonged to the United Kingdom of the Netherlands as the capital of the province Limburg.

However, in 1830 the southern provinces of the Kingdom parted with the rest of the Netherlands to form an independent Belgium. Maastricht's inhabitants were rather loyal to the Belgian revolutionaries, but nevertheless, the city remained in hands of the Dutch. It was however not until 1839 that Maastricht was accepted as a Dutch city by both the Netherlands and Belgium, and before that, the city was rather isolated from both countries. This isolation, as well as the proximity of Belgium and Germany, resulted in a difficult integration of Maastricht into the rest of the Netherlands. Moreover, even though Maastricht was officially part of the Netherlands, the Dutch did not fully include the city in the country's visions and plans for the future (Van den Engel, 2022). Only when the First World War started, the city was, for the first time, really tied to the decisions made by the Dutch government.

Maastricht's development after the Second World War contained a shift from an industrial economy to a services economy, the creation of Maastricht University in 1976, the emergence of more and more European institutions, and the signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, which

formed the basis for the European Union and the new European currency ‘Euro’. This was probably the start of Maastricht becoming a significant European city and the university growing out to become the most international in the Netherlands. The long history, with the Maastricht people, often feeling like outsiders from the rest of the Netherlands and experiencing interactions with occupations from different countries, as well as the current internationalisation of the city, bring about some interesting dynamics to it, leading to the creation of a unique identity of the city.

5.2. Maastricht University

Maastricht University has grown to be the most international university in the Netherlands with 55% of all students coming from other countries than the Netherlands, representing 123 countries in total (Maastricht University, 2020). This development is quite special since the university was only established in 1976, which makes it the youngest university in the Netherlands as well. Maybe it is just the lack of tradition within the university, that opened up the possibilities for more internationalisation.

Fairly early, the university started to provide programmes taught in English. The first English-taught programme in the Netherlands was, ‘International Management’ at Maastricht University, which opened up in the mid-1980s (Wilkinson, 2012, p. 4). It turned out that little Dutch students had real difficulties with the English language being spoken in class. Since the programme was taught in English, the first German, French, and Belgian students started to apply at the university as well. However, as Wilkinson (2012) points out, they had to put more effort into keeping up with the academic English levels (p. 5). Consequently, besides the content courses, the university implemented English language skills courses, focusing on academic writing, and presenting.

In the 1990s, with the European developments and other international trends, the demand for English-speaking professionals increased. Alongside the fully English-taught ‘International Business’, the programme ‘International Economic Studies’ would also be provided in both Dutch and English (Wilkinson, 2012, p. 6). Student numbers started to rise successfully, to which other Dutch universities began to implement English-Medium Instruction (EMI) programmes as well. Other disciplines and faculties in Maastricht too offered English-taught programmes, resulting in the abandonment of fully Dutch-taught programmes in what is today known as ‘the School of Business and Economics’ (Wilkinson, 2012, p. 7). Other programmes that were introduced were in the field of social studies, such as ‘European Studies’, or in the field of health and medicine with the implementation of ‘European Public Health’.

There were several reasons why Maastricht University began to include English options in its list of programmes. Wilkinson (2012) lists three of these, namely, to attract people who would otherwise not enrol in a Dutch-taught programme, to prepare Dutch students for the international, European, or global market, and, last but not least, to sharpen their reputation and to be better able to compete with other English-taught universities (pp. 7-8). However, other factors played a role as well, such as the extra money that comes in with the recruitment of more international students, or simply being able to start new programmes, which are exclusively taught in one specific university, providing a hint of uniqueness to the university.

Overall, Maastricht University was fairly early with the implementation of EMI programmes compared to other Dutch universities. With the international developments over the years, such as the Europeanisation in the early 1990s, and the globalisation starting in the 2000s, the demand for such EMI programmes too increased. Being in the lead already, the development of Maastricht University and its English programmes went hand in hand with the world's internationalisation developments. This eventually resulted in the university becoming the most international one in all of the Netherlands, hosting students and staff from all over the world.

5.3. Internship Organisation - StudentCity

Writing a master's thesis is interesting, but what makes it even more intriguing is that there might be organisations that are actually interested in the outcomes and findings of your research. This thesis is written for, and also with help of, the programme called StudentenStad, which translates to student city, and therefore the English name is StudentCity. StudentCity is a programme which includes four main projects, namely MyMaastricht², Huurteam Zuid-Limburg (Rental team South-Limburg)³, Match Maastricht⁴, and Kaleido⁵. There are five subprojects in the programme, which consist of CityDeal KennisMaken (city deal, to meet), Brighter Futures, HomeSharing, Match Huizen (Match houses), and UMCulture.

StudentCity developed in 2013, when the Municipality of Maastricht, the University of Maastricht and the University of Applied Sciences Zuyd decided to join forces and start new projects that would help turn Maastricht into a real student city. The programme started off as Student and City, instead of StudentCity. The very first development taking place was the

² <https://mymaastricht.nl/>

³ <https://huurteam-zuidlimburg.nl>

⁴ <https://matchmaastricht.nl>

⁵ <https://www.kaleido-maastricht.nl>

organisation of sessions in which councillors, students, and people from the municipality as well as from the University of Maastricht and the University of Applied Sciences Zuyd discussed topics such as sports, culture, living and housing, and public transportation (Gemeente Maastricht, 2013a, p. 1). Consequently, on 18 June 2013, the motion Student and City was accepted and the mayor, as well as the aldermen, were requested to introduce a coherent plan regarding Student and City before the Christmas recess (Gemeentje Maastricht, 2013b, p. 2). In December the action programme for Student and City is, according to plan, introduced and unanimously accepted by the council.

In April 2014 the action programme is further shaped and together with Maastricht University executed, and in June of that same year, five priorities are set for the action programme, namely: 1) Maastricht's branding, 2) exciting and thriving student life, 3) public transportation and accessibility, 4) communication and information, and 5) liveability and integration (Gemeente Maastricht, 2015, p. 1). In 2018 then, with these same five core principles, the decision was expressed to change the programme's name from Student and City ('Student en Stad') to StudentCity (StudentenStad), which eventually happened in 2019. In that same year, a new council proposal was introduced with the new execution programme for StudentCity (Gemeente Maastricht, 2019).

StudentCity nowadays thus includes four main projects with five subprojects. Each of these projects works on topics related to student housing, the interactions between students and inhabitants of Maastricht, and (international) students' integration into the city. MyMaastricht provides information to international students in Maastricht to help them find their way. The information they cover includes Finances, Health, Housing, Media and Community, Transportation, and Sports in Maastricht. Match Maastricht, in turn, tries to help students to contribute to Maastricht's community through volunteering. Some of their projects include Brighter Futures, which focuses on having students tutor high school pupils. Another project is the Match Houses, which are houses located in different Maastricht neighbourhoods in which students live who pay less rent in return for organising activities and projects within their neighbourhood. Two other projects are CityDeal, which emphasises the sustainability and liveability of Maastricht, and HomeSharing, bringing together inhabitants and adolescents in the search for housing.

6. Town-Gown

Before we get to the outcomes of the interviews, let us take a look at what is actually being investigated. Before, the paper discussed the theory of humanistic geography and the idea of place attachment. It has been discussed that universities and cities could perhaps benefit from each other economically and relating to international rankings. The context of Maastricht, as well as the expected outcomes of the interviews, have shown that there are some frustrations about the students in Maastricht and that the local inhabitant has a very proud sense of place. Thus, there might be some distinctions between Maastricht, town, and the university, gown, when it comes to the interactions of students and locals. However, let us first take a look at what town-gown actually entails.

Town-Gown stands for the division of the city and the university, hence town and gown. Already since medieval times, the relations between cities and universities have been a source of frustration and difficulty (Bruning et al., 2006, p. 125). How this came about is discussed further on. Nowadays, however, universities do recognise all the benefits they get from engaging with a city's community for research purposes (Bruning et al., 2006, p. 125). Students inside a city also have the municipality recognise all the economic advantages that they can bring. However, it is not only positives that form the discussion on town-gown. Negative effects, as Brockliss (2000) mentions, could be worries about the expansion of commercial and private rents, and with that finding new space for (student) accommodation, the town's atmosphere as well as infrastructural aspects, such as congestion.

The current way in which universities and cities cooperate, is, according to Brockliss (2000), influenced by how their relationships were in the past (p. 148). Universities started to come into existence around the beginning of the late Middle Ages in Europe. Roughly there have been three significant differences between contemporary universities and universities from earlier times, as Brockliss (2000) points out. He starts by stating that the modern university system is much larger than it was in medieval times, meaning that the number of universities is noticeably higher than it was back then. Moreover, this number is still increasing to this day. The second point Brockliss (2000) makes is that there are increasingly more university students than there were in the Middle Ages, resulting in the emergence of so-called mass universities. Third, he explains, since 1800 there have been major Humboldtian reforms in Prussia, leading to the boom of high-quality research and the increasing importance of a university's status in the world.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, the university system continued to change drastically, with the integration of philosophy as a discipline, and the divisions between humanities and natural sciences, which in turn got divided into more specialised disciplines as well (Brockliss, 2000, p.

150). In medieval times and a while thereafter, theology was the most important discipline within a university, whereas now this has shifted to disciplines such as medicine. Another aspect that has been introduced recently is the emergence of partnerships between universities and the community. Martin and colleagues (2005) claim this is in part caused by a shift from a government to a governance paradigm. The latter emphasises the search for win-win partnerships, in which both the university and the community benefit from the cooperation and the exchange of ideas, but in which also social problems and issues are pointed out. Before this paper further continues with the current situation of town-gown, let us first go back to the history of the term.

6.1. Origins; Questions of Ownership, Property, and Power

With the collapse of the Roman Empire and the start of the Middle Ages, the Church significantly increased its power. Therefore, it is not a big surprise that Mayfield (2001) points out that the linkages between community and university were created through religion. Universities, which were sites of education run by the clergy in the 12th and 13th centuries, were embedded in towns. Here, people were trained to work for the Church, which resulted in the university becoming ecclesiastically important. However, as Brockliss (2000) pointed out, such trained people would often start working for the Church's bureaucracies and end up with important governmental job positions (p. 152). From the beginning, thus, the state too profited from the presence of universities. Moreover, for cities and towns in which a university was established, that same university created economic benefits for the town, which again led to the advocacy to bring more universities to cities (Brockliss, 2000, p. 153). However, the town had little to say about the university.

Universities were rather self-governing institutions, and only when a professor caused problems which jeopardised his teaching and the students' education, either the Church or the prince would intervene, not the city or the town (Brockliss, 2000, p. 154). This rather independent status a university had, caused frictions with the community. An uncommon outcome of such frictions could eventually be violent confrontations between students and masters and the men and women living in the town (Brockliss, 2000, p. 155), such as the Oxford riots from 10 to 12 February 1355, in which some students were killed. The universities were thus rather self-governing, and not only did the Church have the right to step in when it was necessary, but universities also had an imperial grant, which made them privileged institutions (Brockliss, 2000, p. 154). This entails that the university had fiscal privileges and sometimes also judicial ones.

Later, the universities started to lose their privileges, leaving the state in charge of its administration. The city and town, thus, still did not have any influence on the university. This

changed, Brockliss (2000) explains, with the introduction of the Reformation, when the municipality had increasingly more power over the university. The Reformation resulted in an increased number of educated clergy and lawyers (Brockliss, 2000, p. 152), which resulted in larger European towns and cities owning a university by 1700. Most universities, however, were still private, with the most successful institutions attracting the highest number of students. A major shift in the university occurred around 1800, with the reforms introduced in Prussia.

6.2. Development of Town-Gown after 1800

The period from the late Middle Ages up until the late 18th century, roughly 1200 until 1800, marked a university model where “the university was in the city, but not of it” (Brockliss, 2000, p. 164). Most students did not come from the same city, and many would also not stay after their studies, which is rather comparable with the case of Maastricht University, where international students come to study and leave after graduating because there are too few employment opportunities. The years after 1800 marked a change in town-gown relations. Up until the 1800s, students came to the university to prepare for one of the three disciplines church, law, and medicine. The Humboldtian university, as Brockliss (2000) explains, rather encouraged students to follow their own interests and test their intellectual potentials. The university came to be known as an institution of knowledge and teaching, but also as one of research.

As a new centre of the medical and natural sciences, the university put more emphasis on practical learning, which demanded new classrooms and laboratories, and in turn spatial expansion (Brockliss, 2000). Newer buildings were needed, and with the influence of modernist architecture, the number of university buildings in a city increased rapidly. Furthermore, the university saw a drastic increase in the number of students that would come to the city to study. Due to the industrialisation and rising urban populations, the increase of students did not even stand out and students did not have a hard time to blend in with the population (Brockliss, 2000, p. 158). The university and the city grew closer together. The ties between the professoriate of the university and the city got stronger, with professors often being more directly involved in local politics (Brockliss, 2000, pp. 159-160). Moreover, the university was still considered to be very important for the city’s economy.

This economic argumentation might have probably been the reason why universities in Europe did not disappear from the city. Townspeople and women would always keep an eye on students, as they thought of these young adults as suspicious objects (Brockliss, 2000, p. 165). Being adolescents in a new city, living unsupervised and only being policed at university, was reason enough for the local populations to worry. Thus, even though the city profited economically from

the university, the city and town's citizens were not always so happy about the university's presence. Kysiak (1986), for instance, mentions that citizens view universities as non-taxpaying and powerful entities, taking over certain services, rather than institutions that bring prestige to the town (p. 50). Bruning et al. (2006), too, explain that many within a municipal government were frustrated with the non-profit status of the university and the g untaxed buildings resulting from that (p. 126).

Within the university, there were also concerns about the closer ties between town and gown. Martin and colleagues (2005) mention the infiltration of the society's economic and social problems into the campus as a factor in declining relationships between community and university (p. 3). Moreover, university policies insured the protection of students from the 'morally corrupt community' (Bruning et al., 2006, p. 126; Brockliss, 2000). There exists a model that separates the city's population from the university's community, however, this is not a common model in Europe. The campus model was primarily developed in the United States, where university and town were split, and a campus almost became a self-sufficient city (McGirr et al., 2003), often with an informal and invisible frontier. Universities in this model are isolated from the rest of the town, which does not enhance the relationships between students and the town's inhabitants (Brockliss, 2000, p. 166). Especially when such a campus university was a private institution, the town-gown communications were difficult to establish.

Such isolation from the city, causes the regular population to create hostility towards universities, which arguably also led to the expression 'town and gown' (Martin et al., 2005, p. 3). However, growing urbanisation and the accompanying expansion of urban areas caused universities to be surrounded and even swallowed up by the city's community, which in turn resulted in the building of walls and gates around campuses to remain their separation (Martin et al., 2005, p. 3). This happened during the time period 1914-1980 and is described by authors such as Maurana and colleagues (2000) as the 'Ivory Tower' period of higher education in the US. Even though Europe has not been completely untouched by the campus model, Brockliss (2000) points out that, especially continental Europe has been sceptical about the model, because nature would be replaced by concrete and above all universities are places to study and not live.

Consequently, the gap between town and gown might have been small in economic and political aspects, but both the students and the town's citizens were not always content with it. That is also why in the early 1990s universities started to take actions to strengthen the town-gown relations again and to get the community engaged (Bruning et al., 2006, p. 126). That leads us to start looking at the current town-gown situation and its advantages and disadvantages.

6.3. The Situation Now

6.3.1. *Positives – What do university and city gain?*

The engagement of universities in cities and towns has some advantages. Mayfield (2001) for example lists three, namely a better town-gown understanding (1) improves the integration of teaching, services and research functions in the city, (2) it fulfils the purpose of the institution in the wider society, and (3) it could people change their mind on the existing criticism that universities ignore the public's concerns. Moreover, as we have seen before, seen from an economic perspective, bridging the gap between town and gown makes sense (Bruning et al., 2006).

Bruning and colleagues (2006) wrote about strategies to strengthen town-gown relations. One of the most adopted ones, they argue, is increasing the access for students to engage in the community, in the form of volunteering, internships and tutoring. This way the student can go out in the real world and experience practical lessons, complementing the theoretical part in the classroom. Moreover, as Bosnall et al. (2002) rightfully point out, society can also benefit from students' time and talent. However, students bringing expertise to the community and in exchange experiencing the community are not the only two forms of engagement that exist. Less researched, yet just as interesting is giving the community access to the university to see and experience what happens there (Bruning et al., 2006, p. 126).

The bigger a university grows, the more people from the city in which it is located have studied there, meaning more and more people see it as part of their identity. Such a sense of belonging to a university community could be increased once the non-studying population is offered more occasions to visit the institution, as Brockliss (2000, p. 161) argues. In mass culture, the non-academic and the academic population cannot be distinguished in what they wear, how they behave or where their political preferences lie, so why should not everyone have the right to know what happens within the walls of a university? Martin et al. (2005) do explain, however, that university and community leaders are searching for strategies to bridge the gap, and concluded that it all comes down to innovative collaborations between the two.

This is, as was written before, possible because of a shift in paradigms, from a government paradigm to a governance one. The latter promotes and fosters all kinds of alliances, partnerships, and collaborations between the university and the city (Martin et al., 2005, p. 4). Different categories of policies and programmes based on innovation have been introduced by Martin et al. (2005, p. 5) to collectively resolve public problems regarding town-gown. The seven categories they came up with are service learning, service provision, faculty involvement, student volunteerism, community in the classroom, applied research and major institutional change. Of course, there are factors that make it harder to apply these innovative strategies, such as funding, organisational

compatibility, and communication (Martin et al., 2005, p. 9). Thus, what we can take out of this is that university and community can gain a lot from each other, but that there need to be some new innovative strategies to start a successful collaboration and more research on whether the application of such strategies actually brings positive results.

6.3.2. *Negatives – What places universities in tense relationships with cities?*

The previous sections show that historically seen the relations between university and community have fluctuated, meaning they have not always been great. Before, the important questions were about who has the power and ownership, the students' and professors' status within society, and the suspicion toward students living unsupervised in the city. Nowadays such issues might not play a big role anymore, but other aspects emerge which might cause problems. With the emergence and development of globalisation, and consequently the increasing mobility around the world, many universities started to take in international students. Higher education internationalised over the years. "Internationalisation of higher education is the process of integrating an international/intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of the institution" (De Wit, 1999, p. 2). A university wants the best students and staff, with the highest probability of increasing the university's overall research quality and gaining more international status. These students and staff can come from all over the world.

A different kind of town-gown that might emerge then, is the forming of bubbles of international students and domestic students (Cooper & Ho, 2005). Not only can international students have little contact with domestic students, but also with the local population of the city to which the students moved. According to Marginson (2012), there do exist some stereotypes of the host community being superior to the one of the international students, which holds that the latter group is expected to adjust to the host country, whereas the host community does not necessarily adjust to the international students (pp. 4-5). Moreover, international students tend to draw to each other, which stops local friendships from emerging (Marginson, 2012, p. 6). This might only be the view of the local inhabitants of a university city though, as international students might feel like they cannot merge into already existing local friend groups.

Marginson (2012) also questions the potential economic advantage that students provide, which makes the international student an economic object rather than a world citizen. This, in turn, jeopardises the students' political representation and their rights (p. 6). If there is no contact between the government and international students, the latter group is less informed about the political atmosphere of the city they are staying in, resulting in them not taking the effort to vote. International students' voices might just be very important to be heard in local politics for all other

students coming to the city in the future. Not being politically active puts international students in a complex position, as they float in between the political scene of their home country and their country of stay (Marginson, 2012, p. 9), which results in them not having full representation in either one of the countries. Whether or not international students boost a host's economy and increase the quality of the university's research, they remain human beings with human rights.

6.3.3. Potential Solutions

One strategy that has been mentioned before is inviting the city's residents to the university and to let them see what the university and the students actually do on a daily basis and what their reasons are for doing what they do (Bruning et al., 2006). This might as well be a good occasion to explain to people why having students from all over the world is a valuable thing for the provision of different cultural viewpoints both in research as well as on the streets. Bruning and colleagues (2006) did actually ask a city's residents what could be done by the university to decrease the gap between university and city. Many responded by stating they would like to be invited by the university to campus, but also by stating they wish for more parking for students as well as more mutually beneficial projects, and the end of buying houses to renovate into student houses (p. 127). It is important, however, to continuously seek the improvement of town-gown, meaning the university could invest in a programme that organises projects and open days on a regular basis.

Logically this might not be the perfect solution for every university city. Every city has their own struggles or already existing collaborations with the university they host and the students that study there. Moreover, people from one city might perceive the presence of a university more positively than others. Cooper and Ho (2005) have found in their study that various cities in New Zealand responded to town-gown challenges in different manners, adjusting their strategy to their specific situation.

6.4. Linking Town-Gown to Place Attachment

Town-gown is about the relations between university and city, and we have seen that, besides there being a neoliberal side to the debate, there are also social and political issues that emerge in the literature on the topic. By viewing town-gown as an idea which involves humans acting in particular places, the theory of humanistic geography quite quickly came into sight, first only as a theory to support the idea of different bubbles of people being significant place-makers in a university city. Later it became clear that humanism, although currently not widely used anymore, provides a sufficient background to explain and understand the creation of humane and democratic environments. Such environments might lack in university cities, as local inhabitants

could feel overwhelmed by all the international students coming in, and the international students themselves feel like they lack democratic rights in both their home country as well as in the country of residence.

Humanistic geography revolves around people's feelings, experiences, behaviours, and thoughts about a place, which shows a close connection to the idea of 'place attachment'. Place attachment could help explain how both bubbles, the local residents and the international students, feel about the university city and about each other, how they consequently behave and think about the city and each other, and what their overall experiences are. Humanistic geography could explain how a city is one of a kind due to people's experiences, and why every town-gown relation is unique. Unique town-gown dynamics might share some advantages or disadvantages which the main discussions on town-gown set out, however, they have a, to them special, set of other advantages or disadvantages of being a university city.

7. Analysis

At the beginning of this thesis, the place attachment theory has been extensively discussed, with the main focus on the PPP framework by Scannell and Gifford (2010). The PPP framework explains how place attachment can be explained and analysed on the basis of three main dimensions, namely the person dimension, the psychological process dimension, and the place dimension. This analysis aims to find an answer to the research question, which is “How are the dynamics between local residents and international students in the city of Maastricht?” The outcomes of the conducted interviews are compared to the sub-dimensions of the three main P-dimensions. For the person dimension, these two sub-dimensions are personal meaning and collective meaning. For the psychological process dimension, there are three sub-dimensions, which are affect, cognition, and behaviour. The place dimension then consists of physical and social place attachment.

The conducted interviews differed in the amount of time needed. The shortest interview was an individual one and took around 40 minutes, while the two longest interviews, an individual and a group one, took around 1 hour and 15 minutes. The interviewees were different in age, however, quite noticeable was that the local residents were on the older side, starting at roughly 55 and going up, whereas the students were on the younger side, with some first years being around the age of 19 and going up. There were no participants between the ages of 30 and 50, which is already one of many reasons why the outcomes are not generalisable. Moreover, the interviewed people do not represent all local Maastricht residents, nor all the international students in Maastricht. This is because among the local residents, there was only one who was actually born in Maastricht, and the international students consisted of two Italians, two Germans, and one Bulgarian person, whereas Maastricht University has students from 123 countries.

For the interviews, an interview guide was constructed, both in Dutch and in English, with slightly different questions relating to the target groups of international students and local residents. Even though there was an interview guide, the aim was to have the interviews not too scripted to be able to adjust to whatever the interviewee was telling. This means that the questions served as an inspiration rather than an actual guideline for the interviews, as well as a checklist to see whether all topics had been discussed or not. In the following sections, the outcomes of the interviews are discussed on the basis of the PPP framework. Note that the used citations from the Dutch interviews are translated into English. The full Dutch versions are available in the transcripts.

7.1. Person Dimension Analysis

7.1.1. Individual Meaning

The person dimension, as stated, consists of an individual and a group level. The individual meaning part relates to personal bonds to a place, which can be either positive or negative and are influenced by certain experiences one had in a place, meaning they are not fixed. Such experiences might be very significant ones, such as marriage, self-development, meeting new friends, accomplish goals etc. One of the interviewees mentioned indeed such experiences: “That would indeed be my marriage in 1992[...], and of course the birth of my three children[...]”. Another interviewee said similar things: “I do feel connected to the city, but also because my children live here, my grandchildren live here[...]. Yes, your friends, your family, I live in a very nice neighbourhood, you know, nice neighbours[...]. Yes, I would not want to live somewhere else.”

Yet another local resident mentioned a very significant experience: “I am [...] the manager of a community centre. [...] Four weeks ago I received a royal decoration for that.” Thus, local residents have very personal connections to the city, ranging from having loved ones living here as well as being part of a friend group and receiving recognition for the work one does there. The question now is whether international students, who have not been living here for that long, can also pinpoint some individual meanings they relate to the city of Maastricht. For one of the interviewees, meeting new friends has attached her to Maastricht more: “It’s a mix between internationals and Bulgarians, that I wouldn’t have met because they’re not from Sofia, but from different parts, so I would never have met them if they didn’t come to Maastricht[...].”

Similar experiences have been shared by other interviewees. One of them mentioned the following: “I [...] go to an international church here, so I met some people there[...] I’m usually more of an introverted person[...] I kind of had to learn to just also kind of form some contacts, and also try to make Maastricht my home[...].” This shows a level of self-development, as an introverted person stepped out of her comfort zone in a way. Personal developments too play an important role for international students to feel more connected to Maastricht. As one interviewee mentioned when being asked about whether Maastricht people appreciate it if one tries to speak to them in Dutch: “Absolutely, first of all, it’s personal accomplishment for me.” So, stepping out of one’s comfort zone could in a way make Maastricht a very special place for many students.

Students are often around the beginning of their twenties when they move out of their parents’ house. They’re adulting, and for many international students this happens in a completely different city than they are used to. Maastricht too, has been the place in which some of the interviewees mentioned they became adults: “[...] managing my own money. You know like, deciding, uh, uh, cooking, like now I have to cook everyday[...] it’s like, you have to plan all your

life, cause if you don't do it then nobody else does." An exception within the group of international students are the ones that already claim to have developed their personality and their worldview. These people could, however, form personal meanings to the city in other ways: "I do have a close relationship to the city, like I really feel like it's my home[...] this region has represented a lot for me, and[...] I will take it like as a model, almost as something ideal for, for a city[...]". Thus, for the international students it is rather self-development, adulting, meeting new people, and feeling at home that establish an individual meaning to the city of Maastricht.

7.1.2. Collective meaning

Besides individual meanings to a city, collective group or community meanings can too be formed. These often appear as traditions, historical events that make inhabitants proud, or other significant group experiences and cultures which have survived for several generations. In Maastricht, the celebration of Carnaval every year could definitely be called a collective meaning, as well as the specific dialect that is being spoken in the city. Some interviewees comment on this dialect indeed: "[...] I do get that one thinks 'in my own city I should be able to speak my own language[...]" to which another interviewees responses: "And it would be a shame as well if we would lose that." Language as well as other shared factors can determine quickly whether one fits in or not. A local resident commented the following: "[...] look, I am from Venlo [...] I had a 'soft g'⁶, I celebrated Carnaval, I uh, immediately spoke the dialect, I could also understand it, so I came into contact with the Maastrichtian."

Even though this person is from Venlo, which is in northern Limburg, there is also a sense of collectiveness in the city Maastricht itself compared to other cities nearby:

M: "And the folksy nature, I think too. You know[...], Maastricht also has a whole folksy side right."

H: "Yes."

M: "I find that myself also very, uh..."

A: Yes.

M: "Just 'mèh mie lepke'⁷ and so on."

⁶ People in the provinces of Limburg and Brabant speak with a 'soft g' (zachte g), compared to the rest of the Netherlands who have a so-called 'hard g' (harde g).

⁷ Used as an expression of indignation or surprise. Kind of in the way one would say 'oh my god' in English, but with a relatively negative connotation.

H: “A bit cynical I find it too, a bit cynical, I find that also a bit funny. A little bit sarcastic humour.”

M: “Yes, I also find that very uh...”

H: “That is why it also always clashes with people from Heerlen, because they do not have that.”

Thus, the way of living and being in Maastricht, as well as the events that take place in the city, contribute to the creation of this collective meaning. When asked about Carnival and other events in the city, the local residents in general react positively: “I actively participate in Carnival, and uh, and uh, all the events that are happening here, I always uh, take a look there[...] Yes, like a real ‘Mestreechteneer’⁸.” Much of these events have a historical connotation, which makes us think that history too is an important player in establishing a collective meaning. One of the interviewees highlights this too: “[...] in elementary school[...] a lot of time was made free to learn the history of the city[...] This makes the love for the city grow too.” Another interviewee points to a very specific event, namely the signing of the 1992 Treaty of Maastricht, which established the basis of the European Union. This event sparks the proudness of many residents of the city:

“For me that is definitely the name of Maastricht, special too, at least for me, the historical value of Maastricht with the ‘Treaty of Maastricht[...] Because I am very European minded[...] so I conceive that a little proudly that I may live in that city[...]”

To conclude, for the local residents collective meaning is mainly formed by the Maastricht populations’ unique characteristics, as well as the historical events that feed the population’s proudness of the city as a whole. How then, is it for the international students to step into this city with its collective meanings? Maastricht’s lifestyle is known in the Netherlands to be a bit slower and less rushed, which one of the interviewees also recognised: “I was not familiar with the kind of lifestyle, where uhm, work and life, uhm, are so balanced, there are several days in the year or, you could say weeks in the year, where people collectively celebrate something”. Here, the particular interviewee is hinting to Carnival, which is extensively celebrated every year for three days. “Carnaval always looks so collective to me. Like, it’s out of my understanding[...], how people would actually celebrate with strangers on the street, together[...]”, she says.

⁸ Name in Maastricht dialect for a resident of Maastricht.

Of course, when one did not grow up within such a culture, it might be surprising to see such a big event having that great of an influence on a city. Another interviewee, however, did not see it as a culture shock: “[...] I live also on the other side of Cologne[...], there it’s celebrated very much.” Whether unfamiliar or not, the reactions to Carnaval in general were rather positive: “[...] everyone was out, just celebrating being out again, and I felt like home for the first time I think[...], and I felt like part of a community at that moment.” Another comment was: “[...] I didn’t imagine that they could lock the city for three days and just like do so much, so like in this moment I felt like very close to the local population.” Not only Carnaval brought about this sense of community, though, but other events too. Kingsday is another example: “I felt like I really had a connection to local citizens here. Like everyone was just sitting in the park and smiling together[...].”

Where Kingsday can contribute to feeling more connected to Maastricht as well as the Netherlands as a whole, the city Maastricht is also recognised by international students as unique in the country as a very European city:

“[...] you feel like this aura like you know in Maastricht[...], it’s not something Dutch, it’s not something national, it’s something European[...], because of the Treaty, like it is a bit symbolic, so I would say yeah I am sort of living in the shiny jewel of Europe[...].”

It is exactly this European and international atmosphere in Maastricht that leads international students to feel frustrated about other Dutch traditions. Interviewees mentioned they felt shocked in a negative sense when experiencing the tradition of ‘Black Piet’ (Zwarte Piet), which in the traditional celebration is seen as the helper of Saint Nicholas. This part of the tradition results in heavy discussions in the Netherlands every year again, and international students too do not understand it: “[...] my roommate would come home black faced and dressed like Black Piet. I screamed, then I asked why several times[...]. That for example was a tradition for me, something uhm, unacceptable given the Dutch history.” This interviewee was not alone in her condemnation of this racist Dutch tradition. Someone else mentioned the following: “[...] what I still don’t get though, is from Maastricht, which is like an incredibly international city, and also welcoming and everything, still so stuck on, on for example Zwarte Piet.”

In conclusion, the interviewed international students in general are rather positive towards the traditions in which everyone is accepted and can feel like they belong. However, students are critical too, and coming from different backgrounds some traditions do not always come over positively. Especially this latter point is something that local residents, who grew up with such traditions, can find difficult to accept the criticism. Moreover, feeling like a community during Carnaval, with international students, as well as the real Maastrichtian, could just disappear once

the celebration is over. Thus, the extent to which it could actually contribute to feeling like a part of the community is questionable and still to be discovered.

7.2. Psychological Process Dimension Analysis

The psychological process dimension is about the way that groups and communities as well as individuals relate to a certain place. There are three subdimensions within the psychological process dimension; affect, which relates to the emotional belongingness in a place; cognition, which highlights the creation of meaning and identification with a specific place through beliefs, knowledge and memories and results in place-related distinctiveness; and, behaviour, which is all about ‘proximity-maintaining behaviours’ (Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001, p. 274). The following sections show how the psychological process dimension plays a role in the lives of the local residents and the international students.

7.2.1. Affect

The sub-dimension of affect is not easy to recognise in interviews, and a different type of methodology or different kind of questions might have been better to really get this affect part to the fore. There are, however, some expressions of emotion that can still be shared. Some of the interviewees were asked how they feel about Maastricht in general. One of the local residents said: “Very, very positive.” He continued by stating that in his younger years he learned a lot about the history of Maastricht and that this led to the creation of a feeling of love towards the city: “Because of that uh, the love for the city grows too.” Another inhabitant of the city too was very happy about living in Maastricht: “Purely positive[...], I found a very nice place, I live among greenery, uh, almost no neighbours, and the peace I always was looking for, which I also recognised from my par-, parents’ home, I found that again here[...].” It is useful to mention that this latter interviewee grew up in Germany.

Thus, both interviewees relate their positive view towards the city to their youth and their memories, with one really starting to love the city because of its history and growing up there, whereas the other recognised the nostalgic peace and quiet from his childhood. International students, who came to Maastricht only after their childhood and puberty had passed, undoubtedly have a different way in which they are emotionally attached to the city. One of the international students for instance mentioned that she experienced Carnaval as a very positive thing: “[...] Carnaval, uhm, that’s something really positive. I would definitely remember[...] I would definitely

take it home.” So, for her it was rather the surprise of having such a collective festivity that sparked her emotion in a positive sense for Maastricht.

Emotions do not necessarily have to be overly positive to feel attached to a city. One of the interviewees explained the following: “[...] it was an intense and interesting time[...], it’s always busy[...], so it was intense, but it was also interesting because the way of studying was different, but also because I was able to get to know myself a bit differently[...]”. This interviewee’s emotions were related to more personal experiences and developments, whereas the other student above rather talked about the positive emotions towards the collectiveness during Carnival. Another international student, then, expressed her happiness about some of the inhabitants of the city:

“[...] I remember that my first contact was really positive[...], I had this neighbour that saw me struggling cause I couldn’t remember my house number[...]. And he literally said ‘oh no, I saw you, you’re here like’, he was trying to speak English with like little knowledge, but it was really positive for me.”

That same interviewee, however, also shared a rather negative experience she had on her first day in Maastricht, where she was being catcalled and left feeling unsafe. “But my bad feeling was about that man and not about the city. Because, I had like a beautiful day at the city[...]”. This entails that one positive or negative experience in Maastricht does not determine one’s complete feelings towards the city. It is probably a combination of all experiences, and the way one deals with them that determines how one in the end feels about something. For a local inhabitant this may be a sense of positive familiarity that lets one feel positive about their current living situation too. For an international student then, it might be self-development, which undoubtedly include both positive and negative experiences, which can let one feel attached to Maastricht, either positively or negatively.

7.2.2. Cognition

Similar to affect, cognition is not easy to recognise, and other methodologies here too might have better effect in highlighting this sub-dimension. There were some moments in which the interviewees related to place-related distinctiveness and identification with Maastricht. Especially the local inhabitants of Maastricht identify with their own city and not so much with other cities in Southern-Limburg, without even being fully able to explain why that is:

H: “Yes, I would also not in Geleen, I would also not want to live in Geleen, I would also not, really not.”

A: “No, or Kerkrade.”

H: “Oh, oh, haha, that’s what I mean. Yes, but you’re right.”

A: “Nothing against the people who live there, but oh!”

H: “It would not be a place for me.”

Not only do the Maastricht inhabitants feel distinct in a way from their neighbouring cities, but it can also be noticed that the local inhabitants feel different from the rest of the Netherlands. One of them said: “If you[...], look at the North where they’re more reformed and stuff, yes that also doesn’t suit me really well, uh, yeah I don’t know how I should explain that.” One other interviewee mentioned the following: “Uh, but the only thing that contradicts me about the Randstad⁹ is that, is that in general there is a lot of commotion uh, which the Maastricht inhabitant has less.” So, overall, the local inhabitants expressed their satisfaction with identifying as a citizen of Maastricht through distinguishing themselves from other cities and areas.

Whether the international students feel this place-related distinctiveness in Maastricht as well, seems questionable. However, in different senses they do experience some level of identification with living in a different city: “Uhm, and here I had to completely improvise everything[...] But I am this person that really likes this kind of lifestyle, where I don’t think I would feel like myself if I stayed in my hometown for a long time.” This is, however, rather an identification with a lifestyle of not knowing what will come next, instead of identifying with the lifestyle that Maastricht inhabitants experience. It is just that this unknowingness takes place in Maastricht for this student, and that therefore she might feel more attached to the city. What did change, however, for this interviewee, is the level of open-mindedness that increased once she came to Maastricht:

“The Bulgarian society is very monolithic. Uh rarely I would see somebody who is not white in any of the places that I would go. So, for me, even though I, I perceive myself open-minded, of course it is so interesting to come here and to actually meet people from different places, or even Dutch look differently than, uh, another Dutch person for example[...] So I would definitely say that I’m more open culturally.”

⁹ The area around the cities of, Almere, Amersfoort, Amsterdam, Dordrecht, Haarlem, Hilversum, Leiden, Rotterdam, The Hague, Utrecht in the North-West of the Netherlands.

Other internationals did already identify themselves as very open-minded and international people. One of them, however, also recognised that this is not necessarily how the local inhabitants might see them, even though they live in a very European city: “I perceive myself as an EU citizen[...]. Eh, but to them, they see me as an Italian citizen, and non-Dutch citizen, so it means that I don’t have that much, I should have less autonomy.” Thus, international students might feel less attached to Maastricht when it comes to identifying to the city, its inhabitants, and its aura, and creating this place-related distinctiveness. And even when students do identify with the city, they will still be seen as outsiders by the locals, as stated by the interviewee above. It is a sort of place-related distinctiveness too, in which students are perhaps not seen as being part of the ‘authentic’ Maastricht population and the place Maastricht, and therefore distinct to it. These are just assumptions, which need proper investigation to be able to make actual conclusions.

7.2.3. Behaviour

The behaviour sub-dimension entails behaviours by inhabitants that help them stay close to a certain place, or, on the contrary, that has them move out of that place. These behaviours involve staying, or moving, leaving a place as it is, or reconstructing it to make it more to one’s liking. It could also entail the studentification of a city, where students, perhaps unconsciously, transform parts of the city to their liking. It could be, therefore, very interesting to see what students have to say relating to this topic, but first let us take a look at the local inhabitants.

All five of the Maastricht inhabitants expressed their willingness to stay in Maastricht, preferably for the rest of their lives. One of them stated: “And, but I love Maastricht. I mean, yes, and I still live in a very nice neighbourhood and very nice, I mean, I have nothing to, nothing to complain about at all.” This behaviour to stay in the city one loves seems to be very much related to the dimensions of affect and cognition. The reason not to move for one of the interviewees was indeed because places other than Maastricht also have different, and to them less attractive, ambiances: “[...] and Almere is very green[...]. The houses are beautiful and lots of greenery, but when I would walk through it, I thought ‘oooh I want to leave, horrendous[...].’” Another local inhabitant felt similarly about not being in Maastricht:

“[...] it is, and it stays a nice cit., I have uh, I used to work a lot outside of Maastricht, and then you always notice when you drive towards Maastricht, that I, a little, that I drove a little faster haha. It’s some sort of attractive force.”

For the Maastricht inhabitant, who was originally from Germany, it is rather the sense of familiarity to his childhood home that makes him want to stay, and he mentioned that this kind of familiarity is not exclusive to Maastricht: “[...] cause the place we have here now, you could of course have it in a another random city, you could gave it in Aachen, you could have it in Liège[...]”. Thus, for the born and raised Maastricht inhabitant the behaviour is to stay, because of the very specific sphere in the city, whereas for the latter interviewee, the behaviour is to settle in a place with similar aesthetics as his childhood home.

One of the international students mentioned a similar reason she came from Bonn to Maastricht: “[...] they have a similar vibe[...]. Cause Bonn is like a small, it’s smaller than Maastricht of course, but still like if you go through the centre, you kind of have this feeling of fam-, familiarity[...]”. This same interviewee expressed that she does not exclude to return to Maastricht after her studies one day: “[...] I think also it always depends on where you can get a job[...], I definitely can, can uhm imagine also coming back here to live and work here, and these kinds of things.” This particular student, however, might be an exception.

Other interviewees mentioned to not directly see themselves living in Maastricht: “[...] I don’t think that I would actually settle here for long, not because it’s a bad place to live, just because I need to have this more dynamic atmosphere around me and also to experience new things[...]”. In the two-person group, the question was also asked whether the students would want to continue living in Maastricht, to which they responded the following:

M: “[...] I know that I wouldn’t want to stay in Maastricht, so yeah, have fun finding a room in a city in the Netherlands other than Maastricht, so that will probably make me go to another country.”

F: “I would like to stay in the Netherlands, cause it’s really beautiful, but maybe not in Maastricht. Because it’s okay for being in university, I like the city and everything, but maybe not for like stable job and everything.”

Thus, the international students might not necessarily have a problem with Maastricht itself, but rather with the lack of jobs, activities, and just the functioning of housing market right now that make them want to move out of the city, rather than keep living in it. Although some of them did not completely close the opportunity of coming back one day again. The question, then, remains whether there are more job opportunities and whether the city provides enough activities for them to actually return. Moreover, once international students do not feel positively connected to Maastricht in any way, it might be less likely for them to ever return. This is where a challenge

opens up, to keep students satisfied during their time in Maastricht, as well as to hear what the local inhabitants want and need, because they might be the ones moving out otherwise.

7.3. Place Dimension Analysis

The third dimension, the place dimension, is about what people are actually attached to, the nature of the place itself and other factors that contribute to connecting to a certain place. The dimension is divided into the sub-dimensions of physical place attachment and social place attachment. The former kind of attachment relates to the physical characteristics of a place and the meaning they hold to people. The latter sort of attachment, then, is more about the interactions with other residents, belongingness to a place and a 'sense of community' (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Social place attachment probably relates most to the studying the dynamics between international students and local residents in Maastricht, which is the aim of this paper. This dimension was also most talked about during the interviews. First, however, the following section takes a look at the part of physical place attachment.

7.3.1. Physical Place Attachment

Similar to the parts of affect and cognition, the sub-dimension of physical place attachment has not been discussed as extensively as other parts in the PPP framework. However, there are some comments made on the physical differences between Maastricht and other cities. Previously, we have seen that the local residents of Maastricht do not always think as greatly about other cities, whether nearby or further up north in the Netherlands. When talking about the different atmospheres in cities like Geleen and Kerkrade, the physical place attachment dimension showed up in the form of comments made about the buildings there: "That is uh, seventies buildings, the beautiful buildings have been demolished, seventies things have been put there, so it doesn't have atmosphere anymore."

This conversation continued, and the group of three local residents came to the conclusion that some cities are actually worth visiting, because of the sphere there:

H: "And Sittard I do find it a nice city."

M: "I don't know Sittard that well."

H: "But it does have atmosphere, and the market..."

A: "Yes, but that is because there the old city is still, the historical buildings uh, they are..."

H: "They are still there."

A: "... those have been preserved."

H: "Beautiful, pretty, pretty, yes that's really pretty."

A: "Exactly, that's really cosy."

Other than this, there was the comment made by another local resident, which has been discussed above as well, about how the greenery and the rest and peace he experiences reminds him of his childhood. Thus, this interviewee was attracted by this particular place in Maastricht partly due to the familiarity with his previous childhood home. This might too be the case for international students, so therefore it might be interesting to see how they experience Maastricht's physique compared to their hometown. One of the interviewed students explained the following:

"Physically it's very different of course, in Sofia you have big blocks of apartments, and you have a lot of diverse means of transportation. So, I don't live right in the city centre, in Sofia I live right a bit on the outskirts[...], I also studied at a high school in the centre of Sofia, I would commute for one hour, which means that I would switch either to two or three types of transport[...], all of these different things of transportation that here I don't see, only a bus and of course bikes. The big difference apart from just urban structure[...], you can see that it's connected, so then if you live in Randwyck you can really easily come to the centre, whether walking, by bike, or like by bus for example[...]. And it also has this kind of community feeling."

This interviewee thus notices a very big difference in urban structure, commute time, types of transportation, and the vibe that projects on both cities. Because Maastricht is way smaller than Sofia, there is a bigger feeling of community and connectedness, it feels like a whole to her, whereas in Sofia, it would take her an hour to meet up with a friend. During our conversation it became clear that this is something she does like about Maastricht. Different from her experience, is the experience of another international student, who studied in Bonn, Germany, before arriving in Maastricht. Bonn is not that much bigger than Maastricht, and therefore, even though the cities do not necessarily look the same, there is still this feeling of similarity: "[...] you don't really have to think a lot about where to go, you just find everything basically, and I had the same feeling when I came to Maastricht[...]"

Another interviewee too felt a sense of familiarity when coming to Maastricht after living in a small Italian village in the mountains: "[...] Maastricht is pretty much historical, and also my town is pretty much Medieval, literally Medieval. And when I came here, I was so happy that it was not just new buildings[...], you know, it felt more like home, more welcoming." Again, one other

international student, who lived in different places before coming to Maastricht, too explained what she physically likes about Maastricht:

“Like, it’s so cosy, it’s like small-sized, but like at the same time you have a lot of different opportunities to where you can go in the evening, or go for sports, you really like, within a ten minute bike ride you’re in the middle of nowhere, in the nature. Like this really makes me like Maastricht a lot.”

Overall, both the international students as well as the local residents are relatively positive about Maastricht’s physical aspects, and argue it is either a sense of community, because of the city’s small size, or a sense of familiarity that attracts them to it. However, too strict conclusions cannot be made here, since the topic was not discussed in every interview and there are simply too few participants to generalise what has been said. Perhaps the social place attachment dimension provides us with more coherence.

7.3.2. Social Place Attachment

This section aims to find an answer to questions relating how the relationships between local residents and international students are in the city of Maastricht, and whether these relationships improve or deteriorate people’s sense of belonging in the city. Let us take a look at what both ‘groups’ have to say about their interactions with each other, starting with the local residents of Maastricht.

7.3.2.1. Maastricht Population

With a growing international university, as well as the rising tourism, the city itself has become increasingly more international, and with that, some of the interviewees noticed, the languages which are spoken also change:

A: “[...] and uhm, you notice that then in the language right, it’s getting more English everywhere.”

M: “Yes, international. But I think that’s also because, I think that’s also because of the students and because of, but also because of shortage of staff, or, or how should I say it...”

A: “Yes, maybe yes.”

M: "That there is nothing else."

H: "Well, there are of course a lot of international students, who have to save, save..."

M: "Yes, who also have to deliver..."

H: "Save themselves."

A: "Yes, that's right, that's right, who indeed just earn a little extra money and who, yeah logically, don't speak Dutch. And..."

M: "No, no, but then still I think, you know, it doesn't bother me, but I can imagine, there will be people..."

H: "My mother would find it horrible, because she doesn't speak English."

M: "Yeah because she only speaks Dutch when she's being helped. But it doesn't bother me."

A: "Yes, I have a colleague, she is uh, not much older than I am, and uh, she would, she also doesn't like that."

The local residents also recognise that international students often do not even need to know Dutch to live their lives normally in Maastricht. This is also due to the fact that Maastricht University has a lot of studies which are taught in English only. One of the residents commented on this: "Yes, the university should maybe do something about that, I really think that, that it's not English as the main language, that there, that there. Teach courses in English, fine..." The interviewee here tries to explain that English courses are nice to attract international students, but that also offering courses in Dutch would oblige them to study Dutch.

All residents, however, are understanding of the English-speaking students. If they could wish for a change, however, most indicated that indeed it is nicer to just be able to speak Dutch or the Maastricht dialect everywhere one goes: "[...] you can't exclude it. But it is not the case that I, that I find it pleasant to, in my own city, in my own city, to be addressed in German or in English." Another interviewee explained when asked about the increasing English-speaking students:

"I like it to integrate, but that is a point which, especially for the foreign students, I think, is very important, and they have to at least be able to speak a word of Dutch, especially if you work in the hospitality industry[...] it has also something to do with respect for where you live."

Thus, even though the interviewed Maastricht people are not extremely mad about having to talk English or German, but all of them slightly prefer it to speak in Dutch or even dialect. This is not weird or surprising, since one's mother tongue is always the easiest to speak, however it does

show that there exists is a slight frustration, which might be bigger for other people in Maastricht, whose English skills are not as good as the ones of the interviewees: “Yes, I have friends, they just get mad about it[...], they re-, re-, refuse to also just uh speak English in return, whether they are able to or not.”

Another point where the international students and local residents meet, and where frustrations can emerge, is in the housing sector. The housing sector in the Netherlands has been dealing with a crisis lately, with increasing prices for rent and the scamming of people willing to rent a place. With the university still growing, the number of students in the city of Maastricht also increases yearly. Over the years this has already led to the transformation of certain streets into mixed streets, sometimes with more students living there than families, or other local residents. It does not come as a shock that this too has led to some frustrations here and there.

“[...] in our street is, there lived families only, and slowly they have been bought up by uhm, by big investors and they all became student rooms, and I don’t mind it, only the coherence in the neighbourhood disappears because of that.” What she means here, is that she notices that international students, or students in general, do not talk to their neighbours that much, and that even a simple ‘good morning’ often is too much to ask. One other local Maastricht inhabitant noticed the same. He argues that students should be a bit more considerate of their surroundings and the people living next to them:

“[...] I think that if you, if you, as uh student, come to live somewhere, that you should introduce yourself to the neighbourhood where you, where you move in, and uh, then you should also adopt to the rhythm of life and to your surroundings, where you live.”

This phenomenon does of course not have to happen with all students living in streets with many local residents, however, it does create some kind of stereotype surrounding students in general. Another interviewee too indirectly mentioned she has a certain stereotype about students, namely that they are noisy. She talks about student dwellings that were installed in a place where, in the past, they had planned to build a nice campus for students; the Calatrava Campus¹⁰. These buildings are very close to her home, so she said, and therefore she was afraid it might cause too much nuisance: “[...] we thought, when they were building it, ‘oh dear, oh dear, there we go right, done with the quietness’, but it’s better than expected, it’s really better than expected.”

¹⁰ This campus was never realised, because the costs were higher than expected, leaving a big area of vacant land.

Other stereotypes, which the interviewees mentioned are for instance that students like to party a lot: “There are also a lot of students, who just want to party[...]”. One of the interviewees even shared one recent experience he had with students in his street. There are, as he mentioned, two student houses in his block, of which one never causes nuisance, but the other does: “And uh, yes, we had, as I already said, to call the police last week, because at 04:30 am there was still a big party on a uh Monday, in between Monday and Tuesday.” He explained that calling the police is a big step to make, because he does not intend for the students to get kicked out and to have a harsh time finding a new room in this housing market. He hoped for a change in behaviour from the students towards the rest of the neighbourhood, because if one of the student houses can do it, why would the other one not be able to?

Another frustration, which too often leads to the creation of stereotypes around students in general, is the idea that all students make a lot of mess:

H: “Yes, and that I find no problem at all, but I do when, uh, the, the garden, that there are all, that there are all uhm...”

M: “Mess lies around.”

H: “Yes, that the carts uh, carts of the Albert Heijn¹¹ are piled up.”

Such stereotype, however, has been contradicted by another local inhabitant. When asking about the stereotype of students being ‘mess-makers’, he answered: “[...] look at Carnaval, uh, what, what kind of mess they make there with everyone [...]. I also think that people who associate a student with mess-making, or leaving trash behind, that they think that because they don’t really know students[...]”. Thus, even in this small sample of local Maastricht inhabitants, there are certain opinions seen from different perspectives, resulting in one being more negative than the other.

One other idea that the local inhabitants have about international students in Maastricht, is that a lot of them are financially comfortable, with their parents paying for most of their expenses, which results in many international students also not having to work to get by: “Yes, that’s right, there are only a limited number of foreign students who need a side job. I don’t see many Germans.” The point here is not necessarily that they find it annoying that some students do not have a job, but rather the fact that such international students often also have a car, with which they come to Maastricht. The frustration then, is about the parking areas in neighbourhoods, before people’s houses, as well as bigger parking lots, are full of, mostly, German cars: “[...] I happen to

¹¹ The Albert Heijn is a Dutch supermarket chain.

live very close to the hospital so to speak, so when I walk or cycle to my work, you pass that big parking lot there, well, it's just three quarters of German cars."

This interviewee is definitely not the only one who notices this increasingly worsening parking problem in the city of Maastricht, and hopes the university is able to find a solution for this themselves and not leave it to the municipality to take care of it:

"And then, and then you have another form of irritation with uh, with, with, that is the uh parking problem which uh emerges in the neighbourhoods, because foreign students often do have cars and park them uh in a neighbourhood where, uh, no, no parking fee has to be paid[...], because sometimes you see, you just see them not moving from their spots for two, three months."

Not all reactions towards students are negative, however. There are people who do not really notice much from the students in the city, or who are unable to see the benefits of the university. As relating to this latter argument, the following citation fits well: "I think there are quite, quite a group of Maastricht inhabitants who uh, who say like 'well, for me those students may all get out tomorrow uh, tomorrow'. But uh, not realising that that would be a huge loss for the city." The former argument as to why not everyone has problems with students is shown in another citation: "[...] and I have never encountered students as troublesome, but maybe that is because I don't live near, near a student house." This last point made here is a good transition to the following arguments about the idea that students and locals often indeed do not interact, but rather live in their own bubbles.

M: "[...] but I don't think that they mix with..."

H: "With the Maastricht population."

M: "With the normal population."

H: "No."

M: "I mean then, uh..."

H: "Students among themselves do."

Thus, even though there live many students in Maastricht, they live their own lives, just like the local inhabitants. Moreover, they explain that even the local inhabitants often do not interact with people from other neighbourhoods, and that some people also never visit parts in which a lot of students are living their lives, such as the city centre: "[...] so they also don't see what's going on with the students, they really don't see that." In addition to not even meeting, the interviewees too

noticed that there are little overlapping interests between students and locals: “There is also nothing you can share, I would not know what.” This was quickly followed by a comment of doubt about whether or not interactions between the two ‘groups’ are really wanted: “I ask myself if it is necessary, look, yeah if stude-, you would have to ask the students themselves too[...]”.

Instead of interactions, it would already be nice if international students and local inhabitants could just live next to each other in peace: “So that they actually can bother each other as little as possible.” If then, there would already be a way to have locals and students be more integrated in each other’s lives, it could be through something like sports. One of the respondents mentions the following: “Stennis, yes, my husband plays tennis at Ready, and Stennis is the student association, they are there too, so they actually have the park with two clubs, and they work behind the bar[...], but then they do have contact with each other.” A similar comment was made by another local inhabitant:

“[...] I had, during the time that uh, one of my children played football, a lot of contact with local inhabitants, but it was fun that at that football club the student association was also playing football, so then I already had contacts with them, and they have uh, shared the building, they have shared the sports fields, and then you actually say like ‘hey, they can go together’[...]”.

Many sport clubs are either for locals, or are specifically for students, and are in the latter case way cheaper to join for students. Thus, there is indeed the opportunity to work together on a certain sport ground, but there will still be two different teams, or clubs. The same goes for other types of activities, which the students can, justly, join for less fees, and which are often organised by the university or relating organisations. This way, the chance of creating interactions is significantly smaller: “[...] if the university organises that all by themselves, yeah then you keep living in your bubble.” Moreover, it is difficult to merge students and locals together in the same clubs or teams, as students might either find it too expensive, or they have to pay significantly less money than others, which can disappoint local inhabitants.

Other examples that the locals came up with to have international students and the Maastricht population interact more have to do with other things. One interviewee said: “[...] helping in a retirement home and stuff[...], those are also things that I would find nice if you, if you would like there to be more connections uh.” One of the local residents also expressed the desire to once attend an open day of the university for regular people to visit to show what students do there, and why the university is important for the city: “[...] maybe there also has to be once, maybe it also happens, a, I have never seen it, open days made for the population, for the local population,

and that the students then show what they do here[...].” Another interviewee too said that community work could indeed be a way to have students integrate more in the city and with the people living in it:

“It is, it is maybe a step to far, but you could actually every student who starts a study here, should you oblige to do an x number of hours of community work[...]. And then you also get more involved in the city where you live.”

However, local inhabitants remain questioning whether it is really necessary to have the two groups interact and integrate with each other: “[...], and I also don’t know if you really should connect those worlds with each other, if they, what I just said, if they can live pleasantly next to and with each other, then it’s fine.” Moreover, they recognise that students often do not stay for too long in Maastricht, mostly three years, maybe five, and that this also hinders the willingness of students to even integrate in the place where they live.

“[...] if you would take six or eight years, that really didn’t matter right, back then, and now, yes, now it really has to be within three years, plus half a year and then it should be really over, so there, there is also a lot more pressure behind it.”

“[...] that one sometimes already at the start of the study thinks ‘in six years I will be gone anyways, so why would I put effort in finding a connection’, but from the other side it is, for six years you belong to the society where you study, so try to also mean something for it[...].”

Furthermore, the interviewees make clear that if more interactions are wished for, these should not be forced: “It should flow organically, it should flow by itself.” What can be done, however, as the local inhabitants notice, is to try and connect the local youth more with the students, as these are also two groups who do not necessarily meet. “[...] when the INKOM¹² is [...], there is a fantastic ending, with a uh great band[...], just make it big enough so that the youth of Maastricht can also visit.” Who knows, maybe amazing friendships or relationships will find their beginning there, which in a way too will have international students feel connected to Maastricht.

¹² INKOM is an introduction week for new students at Maastricht University and University of Applied Science Zuyd.

To conclude this part, the local inhabitants who we interviewed were all relatively understanding of the frustrations they sometimes feel towards international students, and students in general. They too notice that these two ‘groups’ live in two different worlds, where they barely meet, and they claim that it is enough to be able to peacefully live next to each other. However, when local residents do not necessarily seek interaction with international students, is it, then, fair to complain about certain things, such as for students not to participate in small talk on the street, or causing mess in students’ own gardens? Let us take a look at what the international students themselves have to say about the local inhabitants and whether these feelings are mutual.

7.3.2.2. International Students

The daily interactions with international students, seen from local inhabitants’ perspectives, are through speaking English in shops or in restaurants, or having students living in your neighbourhood, who may cause a lot of nuisances. For international students one would claim these are too the moments when locals and internationals meet. One of the interviewees indeed shares a similar experience: “I would say just in my every day, how I interact with locals, would be through the vegetable market for example.” Another comment she made was that there is of course contact with local residents when it comes to the housing market: “[...] I think the big topic, which brings a lot of problems to a lot of people, including me, are housing agencies, any kind of landlord related person, for example.”

The frustrations of the housing situation in certain street are also recognised by one of the international students:

“[...] some of my roommates are really noisy, that sometimes annoys me as well, let alone if we had a family or elderly people right next to us, I suppose that it would not be good to spend your, your good years where you just can enjoy life, listening to techno and to EDM, that’s definitely not uh fantastic[...]”.

Of course, language plays a role in the everyday lives of international students too. Not all international students speak Dutch or intend to learn it, however, some of the interviewees thought it to be useful: “[...] there is a bakery, there are Dutch women selling there[...] I go constantly, and I speak to them in Dutch, which they receive well, so with the locals I would say, I have good experiences.” Another girl mentioned she too tried to learn Dutch, to be able to better communicate with the local population: “So I started like learning a little bit of Dutch, like to not

always make people speak English with the, with me.” This same interviewee feels this sort of responsibility to talk Dutch to others, since she moved here, to a Dutch-speaking town:

“[...] sometimes I feel like guilty not speaking Dutch with them, because they’re really, they’re at home, they are doing their job, like normally and they speak dialect, and they speak the Dutch language, and I’m coming like as a guest in their country[...] and they have to speak another language with me, so I’m always like, I, I need to learn Dutch[...]”.

The international students do recognise, through these solely short interactions, that they live in separate bubbles: “[...] I don’t have problems with my neighbours, but I also don’t have any specific interaction with them.” Another student said he did not have contact with his neighbours at all, except for one reason: “Other than like, the, the neighbours that I have their phone number, because they need to complain and call me then, otherwise I have not, no contact.” One other interviewee mentioned something similar: “[...] I would say that I didn’t get to know many local people yet, even though I have been here for the whole year[...]”. This same interviewee mentioned something which the local residents also told me, namely the separation of many activities, often sports, for students and locals: “[...] here it’s like every event that you kind of search for is kind of somehow linked to the university, also when looking at sports and these kinds of things that you can do, it’s always connected to the university.”

Bigger festivities, such as Carnaval or Kingsday, do bring the bubbles together in a way. During Carnaval everyone parties and drinks with each other, and there are more interactions between the two ‘groups’, even if they still remain superficial. One of the students mentioned this too, that indeed one might get into contact with new people, but they will rather be other international students than actual local residents: “[...] the reason for which they get together is like, they’re going, the two bubbles are meeting at the same place with the same purpose[...]. But like they still like not concretely interact or merge with each other.”

One of the international students, however, decided to participate in art classes in a local art school, which is not organised through the university, and joined a group of older Dutch people. “[...] since I started that course it made me feel way more welcome than before, because like I remember, after my first class I just called my mom, and I was like ‘There are only Dutch people! It’s so cool!’” Other than festivities like Carnaval or Kingsday, there are thus little opportunities to really merge with the local population, unless one acts themselves by joining activities outside of the university’s spheres.

Interestingly, not only outside of university, but also inside the university, and it is not only one of the international students arguing that, it is often the Dutch-speaking people who stick

together, rather than interacting with the international students, which even causes a separation within university between the Dutch and the internationals: “Oh, I would say it’s more that the Dutch wouldn’t want to interact with the internationals, rather than the opposite.” Another interviewee mentioned:

“Even sometimes in the courses when we had to make groups, they would just talk in Dutch to each other, even though we’re in an English programme and they connect with groups of other people who speak Dutch and so you kind of have those separations, it was kind of difficult to get in there, but at the same time, I met a lot of int-, other international people, so you connect with them of course[...]”.

One other student experienced something very similar: “I had one tutorial¹³ and there like, were five Dutchies I think, and the rest was all internationals. And as soon as the break started, they were sitting all across the classroom, they started having full Dutch conversations[...]”. It should be noted that it is not impossible to have Dutch friends at university, however. One of the interviewees explained she befriended a Dutch girl, who joined her international group of friends, and is able to explain certain things to them: “[...] she was explaining us the difference for example at Kingsday, or during the Carnaval, and, but she also hangs out with Dutch people, because she’s also working, so it’s nice to have her sometimes[...]”.

Another student too became friends with a Dutch girl, and also receives explanations about Dutch cultures when she wants it, because, as she mentions, that is also part of the reason why she came to study in Maastricht: “[...] it just makes me so happy, because I did not only come here to study the international environment, I also wanted to see how the Dutch culture is, and she is like my only proper connection to it.” Making friends, and creating meaningful relationships with certain people, could perhaps help to integrate more with the local culture, and to slowly move out of the student bubble. This is what one of the interviewees also recognised: “[...] I feel like, also having contact to local Dutchies, learning the language, and getting integrated more, would definitely settle you more to the city.”

Making Dutch friends in university is one thing, but there are more young people in Maastricht, who study at for instance the University of Applied Sciences Zuyd. The local residents of Maastricht already mentioned this earlier, but it becomes even more legitimate when an

¹³ Tutorials are part of the Problem Based Learning approach, which Maastricht University adopts. They are some sort of working groups, which consist of around 12 to 15 people. For more info: <https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/education/why-um/problem-based-learning>

international student also expresses his incomprehension of this phenomenon: “[...] I wonder how, because like we, we get drunk in the same street, we dance in the same clubs, we, we, we’re the same age, probably we’re studying very related stuff, but we still don’t know each other.” There is, however, from the international students’ view, a desire to interact more with the Maastricht youth:

“[...] I would like to have, somehow it would be interesting[...], to have a group of friends, that I know are from Maastricht, and I got them to know, and I see them for example once a couple of weeks, but that’s not happening and that’s strange.”

The international students also expressed the willingness to integrate more with the older local population in Maastricht, and opted for a place to meet them and try to learn each other’s languages:

M: “[...] I don’t know, a café or a place where you could exchange help or another offer, or get to know each other, would be really, really lovely.”

F: “Maybe like a café where Dutch people can learn how to speak English, or maybe learn all the languages of the internationals, and you speak Dutch with them. Really like a word, a conversation about Maastricht in Dutch, and the other one trying to speak your language.”

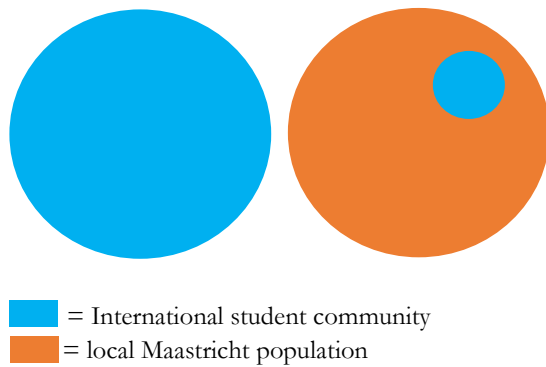
One of the international students talked about politics as a means to bring together the locals and the students, rather than organising informal meetings in a café. “[...] there are like, uhm, uh, M:OED, D66, and Volt¹⁴ are the three parties that basically attract the most votes from international students.” He continues by arguing that it should make sense to involve them more in the parties: “They are a lot on their vote, so like why shouldn’t you include in[...] your party more international members[...], they can still be part of the party, they can assume responsibility, they can be like leaders on something[...].” He continued explaining, through visualising it with hand gestures, that a little part of the student bubble that would be active in the local political parties, find their way into the local residents’ bubble (see figure 9).

Figure 9

Student community active in Maastricht politics, finding a way to the local bubble.

By one of the interviewees who visualised it through hand gestures.

¹⁴ Three political parties active in the local politics of Maastricht. The latter two are also active in the national politics of the Netherlands. All three parties are progressive and centre to left winged.



The interviewee also pointed out that at first it might feel uncomfortable to include more international students in local politics, however, he explains, it is some sort of stepping out of your comfort zone: “[...] why does it feel that they’re taken out of the comfort zone? Because like, it’s just the first time, like, it’s not, like it will be better and better.” This particular student also claims the dialogue between international students and the local population needs to happen indirectly and from above first, before it can reach the level of having direct interactions in a café for instance: “It’s not like the two bubbles are gonna, you know, at a certain point be friends, or like be interactive. It’s like it’s gonna be a top-down development.” He says that it is therefore also important that international students vote more evenly over all the parties, and that more parties are going to include internationals in their activities: “[...] the more political parties you have that attract international students, the better, the better it is[...]”.

Including international students, however, or even get them to vote more in the name of students (and not necessarily from individual perspectives, since many will only be here for a couple of years), requires more communication from the parties towards these students. The student from the latter quotes and citations explained that in one of the university buildings, a debate would be organised between the running parties for students to join. However, many students were not informed enough: “Like the candidates that attended the debate were more than the students that actually came and assist the debate. It was so sad, it was embarrassing.” The university, even though it is an apolitical organisation, could perhaps spread more information as to why voting is important also for students that intend to leave anyways.

Other than a political way of bridging the gap between international students and local residents, it might just be time that is needed to have them interact more: “So like I would expect that like this problem, uhm, between the two bubbles, it’s a bit like generational, and the solution is also gonna be generational.” With that, this student means to say that over time the inhabitants of Maastricht are more used to having international students walking around in their city, which,

currently is still a bit unusual for some people, since Maastricht University is a relatively young university.

The comment made by the local residents then, about students not caring too much about making an attachment to Maastricht, is not necessarily true for all students. As we have seen, there is one international student, who takes art classes at a local art school, and two of the interviewees were really excited they befriended Dutch people, because they give them more insights into the Dutch culture. One expressed the willingness to interact more with the youth of Maastricht, and several came up with potential solutions to increase the interactions with the local population. From informal chats, and offering help in cafés, to including international students in the local politics and aiming for more students to go vote.

As opposed to the local residents, the students not once asked themselves if it was really necessary to improve the relationships between the two groups. Of course, these were only five students that were interviewed, and therefore it is very probable that other students do not see the benefit of integrating in and getting attached to Maastricht. After all, many will leave after several years anyways, to do follow-up studies, to find a job somewhere, to go home, or leave for whatever reason they have. Nevertheless, it is nice to see that there are also students who would like to get to know the city of Maastricht better, including its inhabitants.

7.4. Other Remarks

Related to this idea of more participation of international students in the local politics is the idea discussed in the chapter on town-gown about how international students often float between the political sphere of their home country and of their country of residence. This leads to them not being fully politically represented in either one of the two. Marginson (2012) therefore also opts for more student interaction in local politics, just like the interviewee discussed above advocated. Another international student recognised this issue too, as she notes the following: “[...] we had this panel discussion about how can you include international students in the municipal elections more to make an international student want to vote[...], including students in general in everyday matters, such as garbage collection[...]”. The example of garbage collection in this quote is exactly what two other international students discussed together as well.

M: “Yeah, and I feel like also a lot of the things that the city of Maastricht does is more targeted towards families or people living in like full houses, like for example that they changed uh, the garbage, the trash pickup to every two weeks now. Students that live

in apartments, or like I live in a house full of seven people. That's not manageable! [...]"

F: "I mean we got so confused the first time... and we had a small entrance before the door, it's like a small garden where we park our bike, and I remember that was like ten, or like... trash bags, cause we literally forgot which day they were picking it, they were picking up so it was like literally like ten bags there, and it was smelling of course, cause it was sunny and everything[...]"

It may, therefore, not be a surprise that local residents think of all students as trash making persons, if they see trash bags being piled up in front of student houses. The students, however, do not have any more room to store them, and think it's the municipality that causes such problems, because their policies are not directed towards students. Here, then, we see again the issue of students in general not being represented in the local politics. Topics like these could perhaps be better discussed when students take part in the political process as well, so that there might be actual rules and policies being adopted with the (international) student in mind. Voting, therefore, is very important, but for students it could be communicated better that voting in the municipal elections should be done from a more collective perspective instead of individual. What one does then, is voting for the students coming to Maastricht in the future and hoping that they are better represented in the local politics.

Another critique towards the municipality comes from the local residents. Only recently, new rules have been set up for student housing, relating to the number of students allowed to live in one house and to renovation plans, as well as how many houses are allowed in one street. Because, before these new rules were set up, the number of student houses in certain streets started to outgrow the houses in which locals live. The inhabitants reacted to this issue as well: "The balance is just gone.", the balance between students and local residents. One other interviewee mentioned the following: "People are being driven out of their own street[...]. And then I think 'is it realistic to, eh, keep on growing in a city, which actually already bulging in growth?'" Even the international students recognise this: "I also understand like the unilateral action of the university of just not caring whether there is enough housing and just accepting those members[...]"

The concern of the local residents, thus, relates more to the increasing numbers of students coming in every year, and the desire of the university to still keep growing. There need to be more and clearer agreements between the municipality and the university about whether growth is still relevant, and how this growth can be taken care of. Both sides should take responsibility together, and potential agreements need to be transparently communicated to the public as well.

This concludes this section, in which the opinions and experiences of local residents and international students in the city of Maastricht are discussed, which are divided in the dimensions and the subdimensions of the PPP framework by Scannell and Gifford (2010). The next chapter is the conclusion, in which this section is briefly summarised, as well as the rest of the paper, and in which an answer to the research question is formulated.

8. Conclusion

This section marks the end of this paper. In this conclusion, we aim to answer the research question based on all the information provided above. The research question is: “How are the dynamics between local residents and international students in the city of Maastricht?” And a second question relating to this is: “How can the theory of place attachment be connected to the concept of town-gown?” Before trying to answer these questions, let us first take a look at what has been discussed in this paper.

8.1. Summary

The paper started with a theoretical section, first discussing the theory of humanistic geography, and thereafter explaining the idea of place attachment. Humanistic geography is associated with the geographical orientation of the 1970s and the 1980s and studies the relation of people to nature, as well as their feelings and behaviours relating to places and spaces. Humanistic geography’s critiques of other theories might have just been the reason why these differing viewpoints were bundled into one theory. The most important critique of the humanistic geography theory was the reaction against objective, analytical spatial science, which had been the norm before. Therefore, humanistic geography is an advocate of using qualitative methods. Only these methodologies could capture the uniqueness of places, and show people’s sense of place, or attachment to places. This is why place attachment is seen as an important metatheory of humanistic geography.

Some authors interpret place attachment and sense of place as similar, others rather as two different ideas. Whether interpreted the same or not, both sense of place and place attachments are heterogeneous and multifaceted. It is difficult to find generalisable definitions of heterogeneous concepts, however, in all definitions of place attachment, it became clear that the main idea is about the bonding of individuals with other individuals as well as with the environment and the place in which they live. In this paper, we viewed sense of place as a part of place attachment, rather than the other way around. Thus, place attachment is interpreted differently in relation to sense of place, and therefore there are also several ways in which the concept of place attachment can be studied. The first three figures show some of these ways, and figure 4 then displays the model that is used in this paper, namely the PPP model by Scannell & Gifford (2010).

This framework consists of three main dimensions. The person dimension contains the subdimensions of personal and collective meaning to a place. The psychological process dimension consists of affect (emotional place belongingness), cognition (beliefs, knowledge, and memories of a place), and behaviour (proximity-maintaining behaviours). The place dimension then is about

physical place attachment, or the attraction to a place's physical aspects, and social place attachment. Social place attachment is especially relevant for this paper, since it focuses on a sense of community, and it highlights the attachment to a place through interactions with the people living in it.

After this theoretical section, the used methodologies are explained. This section discusses how we want to investigate the dynamics in the city of Maastricht, between local residents and international students. As highlighted in humanistic geography, qualitative methods suit best for this kind of research. The methodology chapter explained what kind of qualitative method is used, how the organisation of the focus groups/interviews went and what struggles we encountered. The expected outcomes are as well briefly discussed, taking inspiration from figure 6.

The methodology chapter is followed up by contextual notes to better understand the viewpoints of the locals and the internationals. The first part of this chapter highlights Maastricht's rich history of being occupied in turns by different countries, such as France, Spain, and the Netherlands. Maastricht has often taken care of itself, and only when the Netherlands needed the city for strategic reasons it became important to the rest of the country. With so many different cultural influences, and the willingness to belong to Belgium, it is not weird that Maastricht is not the most Dutch-minded city in the Netherlands. It also explains that Maastricht has a unique identity, with proud locals, and later on as an important European place.

The European, and international, identity of Maastricht is partly due to the establishment of the university in 1976, and the early provision of English-taught programmes. These programmes increase in number yearly, and so do the students coming to the city to study. The last part of the context part, then, explains the background of the internship organisation, for whom, and with whom, this research was conducted. StudentCity consists of several projects, which should help improve the relationship between (international) students and local residents.

The final section before the analysis is the chapter on town-gown. This chapter first provides definitions of the concept, as well as the origins, the development, and the current situation. The latter part, about the current discussions on town-gown, is divided into two parts: a positive and a negative part. The positive side discusses what university and city can gain from each other, whereas the negative part explains the emergence of two separate bubbles in a city. Moreover, it highlights some potential solutions to these negative town-gown dynamics, as well as how town-gown relates to humanistic geography and place attachment.

The analysis, finally, connects the sub-dimensions of the PPP framework to the outcomes of the interviews. In the person dimension, we saw that the individual meaning for local residents towards the city of Maastricht relates to marriage, children, and special recognition for their work in the city. For international students things such as meeting new people and making new friends,

as well as self-development and growing into adulthood, and creating a new feeling of home lead to the emergence of personal connections to Maastricht. The collective meaning then is expressed for the locals as a unique way of living in Maastricht, the big events, and historical events, which all together form a feeling of proudness. For the international students, the collective meanings are perceived as rather positive, however, they can also be critical of certain traditions, such as 'Zwarte Piet'. Big events might let students feel like they belong, while after these events end, they are back to being the outsider.

The psychological process dimension is divided into the dimensions of affect, cognition, and behaviour. Affect for local residents is expressed in the form of nostalgia, either by having a positive opinion about Maastricht from the moment they were born there or because they recognise aspects from their own childhood, which they experienced somewhere else, in Maastricht. Students, then, might feel positive or negative about Maastricht, because of their personal developments, which include both positive and negative experiences. These, in turn, could spark a range of different emotions about the city.

The cognition part for the local residents is shown through their identification as a citizen of Maastricht by distinguishing themselves from other areas and cities. The international students, on the contrary, identify less with the city of Maastricht, but more with the international sphere in the city. Moreover, the local residents do see international students rather as outsiders, no matter how much the student identifies him/herself as a Maastricht citizen. The behaviour section shows that local inhabitants are all agreeing on wanting to stay in Maastricht for several reasons. The international students, however, do not necessarily feel the desire to stay in the city, not because they dislike Maastricht, but because there are certain issues that would need to be resolved first, such as the housing market, or the lack of jobs.

The final dimension is that of place. The physical place dimension of local residents is shown through comments about how they are attracted to Maastricht's physique, because of its familiarity and the vibe in the city. The international students were rather attracted to the small size, and the sense of community, but also to a feeling of familiarity with their hometown. Social place attachment, more important and more extensively discussed, is recognised by the local residents through things like the changing spoken languages in the city. More German, French, and especially English can be heard on the streets. The residents interviewed for this paper are understanding of this process, but would rather continue speaking in Dutch or dialect.

The housing sector is another point where international students and local residents meet, and which the locals have some frustrations about. Normal family houses are being transformed into student houses, and locals fear a loss of coherence in the neighbourhood, as well as a lot of nuisance and trash making. A different point of frustration is the international cars parking around

in the city, in places where locals would also like to park their cars. Not all inhabitants have a real opinion of students, as they simply do not interact with them at all. Here, the idea of two separate bubbles comes to the fore, in which students and locals barely integrate with each other. Locals ask themselves whether interaction is really necessary, or whether living next to each other in harmony is enough.

The international students do not have many interactions with locals either. In stores, or on the market they meet. Some of the interviewed students tried to learn Dutch to make such small interactions easier and more pleasant for the local inhabitants. Moreover, the housing market is a point where they meet, and some of the students do recognise that they could cause a nuisance for other residents in the same street. However, here too, the students recognise the two bubbles, which is partly caused by the fact that the university hosts a lot of events and sports clubs for students only, which separates the students from the local population. The students, however, expressed their desire to get to know more Dutch, or Maastricht people of their age, to hang out with and to have the culture explained. Students, do, thus seek more interaction with the local residents, either through more informal events or through local politics.

Other remarks relating to these political interactions are the calling for more information on municipal elections in order for more students to vote in the interest of future students. This way their interests can be better addressed, such as the frustration about the garbage pick-up, which they feel is a policy aimed at families and not at student houses. The local residents also feel like the municipality and the university should act better together to take care of the growth of the university. The city of Maastricht, they claim, is overflowing, and new ideas are needed to spread the increasing numbers of students and tourists in the city.

8.2. Answers, Limitations, and Call for Further Research

The research question of how the dynamics between local residents and international students in Maastricht are does not necessarily have the answer that was first expected. This is because, as indicated by both groups, there are not a lot of interactions, and thus not many dynamics between the two bubbles. There are two separate bubbles, that every now and then meet and briefly interact, but which do not intentionally look the other bubble up to hang out. This does make sense, however, before the research started this had not really been thought through. As for the local residents, they have been living here for a long time, if not their whole life, and therefore they bonded with the city in many different ways.

Having many personal meanings to the city, as well as sharing collective meanings with fellow Maastricht citizens, collecting emotional memories, not wanting to leave the city, and feeling

proud of it are just some of the things the interviewees mentioned. They have lived their lives here and created their own group of friends and contacts. They hear the change in language, they see the increase of internationals in the city, and they notice the students in their neighbourhoods, but because they already have created a stable basis for themselves, they do not feel the need to interact more with the students than is necessary. What they do suggest though, is to introduce the youth of Maastricht and the areas around it and the international students to each other. They probably have more in common anyways. And once the younger Maastricht inhabitants interact with internationals, the increase of interaction between the two bubbles feels less unnecessary and more natural.

The international students develop themselves while studying in Maastricht, and they interact in collective festivities, in which they feel at home too. Their emotions towards the city of Maastricht may be not as deep as the ones of the local inhabitants, but they create memories here with new people and achieve personal goals. They also recognise the existence of the bubbles. The international student interviewees, however, would like to interact more with the local inhabitant of Maastricht. They indicated that they came here not only to study but also to learn about the culture and to meet new people. They explain that to learn the language, they would like to practice with Dutch people, whether young or old. Moreover, just like the local inhabitants indicated, the students too would like it if there was more interaction with the youth of Maastricht.

They also recognise that it might just be a generational issue if one could already call it an issue. Once the youth of Maastricht and its surroundings has been more 'exposed' to international people, they would find it less weird to talk to new students later in life. Moreover, creating local friendships and relationships might just be the reason for an international student to stay in Maastricht. Other aspects that could keep students here have to do with the housing market and the job market, as well as more representation in the local politics. More student-friendly policies can be adopted, once there is more information about elections and parties and communication towards the international students. Students need to know that voting in the local elections may not help them at that moment, but it could help students in the future.

The second question about how the idea of place attachment can be connected to the concept of town-gown has to do with the idea that town-gown dynamics are about the interactions between the city and the university. We claimed that town-gown literature nowadays is too focused on neo-liberal aspects, such as profiting economically from students and achieving higher international rankings. We have also seen that throughout history there have been conflicts between people, making town-gown a social problem back then. When there is a university city, with two bubbles living next to each other, not always in harmony, is this then not also a form of social town-gown? Investigating the dynamics between these bubbles in a city, thus on an urban

level, relates to the place attachment theory in geography, and to the social place attachment dimension in the PPP framework by Scannell and Gifford (2010).

Linking town-gown literature to place attachment theories opens a debate on social town-gown dynamics, and how to improve them. It also opens the debate on the level of attachment students have to their (temporary) hometowns, and what can be done to improve these. This is, of course, very context-specific, as it for instance depends on what a city already has to provide, and what kind of people live in it. This latter comment immediately forms a kind of limitation to this specific study, namely that the outcomes are not generalisable. The international students and the local residents both came up with ideas on how to bring the two bubbles closer together, such as sports events, music events, parties for internationals and the local youth, cafés as a meeting point, or better student representation in local politics. These ideas relate to Maastricht and what could work here and might be completely different in other cities.

Furthermore, it is not only that doing such research in different cities can lead to other outcomes, but also that such research on different geographical scales can majorly influence the findings. Seen from a regional level, for instance, the potential means of bringing the two bubbles closer together could even reach as far as letting students live in areas and cities around Maastricht, among the locals there. On a national level, social town-gown dynamics between international students and local residents might be improved by, for instance, providing free Dutch language courses for all new students. Thus, it should be made clear that this research is very context-specific, and thus not generalisable.

Another reason, why this research would not be generalisable, even not for the city of Maastricht itself, is because we only spoke to ten people in total. The five local residents were rather understanding of the students, and even though they had some frustrations, there was no aversion against them. When one looks at the screenshots in figure 6, however, there are also people who think differently about this. This could also be due to the idea that some people simply do not know what the university actually brings to the city, and what students do there. Giving an insight into university life, through open days for Maastricht's inhabitants could perhaps be a way for Maastricht University to convince people of its importance to the city and the region.

The five international students are also not representable to all students in the city of Maastricht. First, because three of them were first years, and did not have that much time yet to bond with the city. Second, the students interviewed for this research were eager to learn the Dutch culture and were also willing to learn a little bit of the Dutch language. It is safe to say that not all students have this desire, maybe because they expect to leave after their graduation anyways. Another important limitation is that we only interviewed students, whereas there are many more

international people living in Maastricht, such as migrants and expats, who may have similar experiences as the students.

Thus, hearing more students and locals, and perhaps other internationals, could give a more precise and detailed view of what the two bubbles want and need, and whether the dynamics are worse or better than discussed in this research. More precise research could lead to more generalisable and representational outcomes. Furthermore, this is a beginning in studying today's social town-gown dynamics between international students and local residents, which are influenced by current processes such as globalisation and increasing mobility. It cannot be that Maastricht, even though it is such an international city, is the only city in the Netherlands, in Europe, or globally, that sees the number of international students rise, and still has a very proud local population. It would be interesting to see more research being done in other cities, relating to social town-gown dynamics and place attachment.

Finally, this research could perhaps inspire people to see theories and concepts through different lenses. Concepts with neoliberal aspects, such as with town-gown, could turn out so differently when seen from a more social perspective, and in turn, it could open up other research possibilities. This is perhaps also true when one sees it from the other way around and tries to explain social theories from a neoliberal perspective. This is how researchers always find new things to investigate, and how research, therefore, is endless. People with different viewpoints are what keep our lives interesting, and what keep us motivated to continue learning. Eventually accepting each other's points of view would make our lives more pleasurable as well.

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10. Appendices

10.1. Appendix 1 – Recruitment Text

Dear international student.

For my master thesis research on the dynamics between international students and local residents of Maastricht, we, the university and the municipality, are looking for people who are willing to share their opinions with us on this topic. Are you an international student, i.e., not from the Netherlands, who moved here for your studies, and are you unsure whether you will stay in Maastricht after your graduation? Are you interested in this topic, and would you like to share your thoughts? Then continue to read!

My name is Saskia Sinschek, I am 21 years old, and I was born and raised in Maastricht. In June last year I graduated from Maastricht University with a bachelor's degree in European Studies. Currently I am doing a master's degree at the Radboud University in Nijmegen.

Currently I am writing my master thesis on the dynamics between international students and the local Maastricht population, while I am also doing a research internship at Match Maastricht and StudentenStad. I would like to investigate what experiences international students have with the local population. In order to research this, I want to organize focus groups. In a focus group you sit together with other participants to discuss certain question and topics, which I will present to you. The participants will consist of either only international students or only local residents, which means that the meetings can be held completely in English. The meetings will take 1 to 1.5 hours and we will provide coffee, tea, and a piece of vlaai.

The plan is to organize the focus groups sometime in the last three weeks of May. The dates from which you can choose are:

- Tuesday 17 May, between 12:00 and 16:00
- Wednesday 18 May, between 16:00 and 19:00
- Thursday 19 May, between 08:00 and 12:00
- Friday 20 May, between 16:00 and 19:00
- Monday 23 May, between 08:00 and 12:00
- Wednesday 25 May, between 16:00 and 19:00

Are you interested in participating in one of the focus groups? You can confirm your availability here: https://maastrichtuniversity.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_b96hpI587IR2WQC

If you are not able to open the link or if you have other questions regarding the research topic, do not hesitate to send me an e-mail on Saskia.sinschek@maastrichtuniversity.nl or to call me on +xxxxxxxxxxxx (on workdays between 10:00 and 17:00)

I am looking forward to your responses and I hope to see you at one of the focus groups.

Sincerely,

Saskia Sinschek

10.2. Appendix 2 - Wervingstekst

Beste bewoner van Maastricht.

Voor mijn master scriptie onderzoek naar de verstandhouding tussen de lokale bevolking en de internationale studenten in Maastricht, zoeken wij, de universiteit en de gemeente, mensen die hun mening hierover zouden willen delen. Bent u een persoon die al geruime tijd, of zijn/haar hele leven in Maastricht woont en bent u ook van plan hier te blijven? Bent u geïnteresseerd in dit onderwerp en zou u uw standpunten willen delen? Lees dan vooral verder!

Mijn naam is Saskia Sinschek, ik ben 21 jaar oud en ben geboren en opgegroeid in Maastricht. Op dit moment ben ik bezig met mijn masteropleiding aan de Radboud Universiteit in Nijmegen.

Voor mijn afstudeerscriptie wil ik onderzoeken wat de lokale Maastrichtse bevolking voor ervaringen heeft met internationale studenten die in Maastricht komen wonen voor hun studie. Dit doe ik met hulp van Match Maastricht en StudentenStad. Ik zou de verstandhouding tussen lokale bewoners en internationale studenten graag willen onderzoeken door middel van focusgroepen. Een focusgroep is een groep mensen die met elkaar het gesprek aangaat over bepaalde punten die de begeleider voorlegt. In dit geval ben ik de begeleider en verzijn ik een aantal vragen of standpunten die relevant zijn voor mijn onderzoek. Het enige wat u hoeft te doen is uw eerlijke mening geven en uw ervaringen te delen. Een focusgroep duurt 1 tot 1,5 uur en wij zullen zorgen voor koffie, thee en een stuk vlaai.

Het plan is om de focusgroepen ergens in de laatste drie weken van mei te organiseren. De data waaruit u kunt kiezen zijn:

- Maandag 16 mei, tussen 08:00 en 12:00
- Woensdag 18 mei, tussen 08:00 en 12:00
- Donderdag 19 mei, tussen 16:00 en 19:00
- Zaterdag 21 mei, tussen 13:00 en 17:00
- Maandag 23 mei, tussen 16:00 en 19:00
- Dinsdag 24 mei, tussen 08:00 en 12:00

Heeft u interesse om deel te nemen aan een van de focusgroepen? Dan kunt u uw beschikbaarheid opgeven via: https://maastrichtuniversity.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0vIWOU2VTBKqAZw

Kunt u uw beschikbaarheid niet via de bovenstaande website opgeven of heeft u andere vragen over het onderzoek? Schroom dan niet om mij te contacteren via e-mail, saskia.sinschek@maastrichtuniversity.nl of door te bellen op xx-xxxxxxx (elke werkdag tussen 10:00 en 17:00).

Ik kijk uit naar uw reactie en ik hoop u te kunnen verwelkomen in een van de focusgroepen.

Met vriendelijke groet,

Saskia Sinschek

10.3. Appendix 3 – Availability Form Focus Groups

Dear reader,

Before you sign up for one of the focus groups, here are some practicalities:

- The session can be either online or offline
- The session will take about 1 to 1.5 hours
- If you decide to participate on site, we will provide something to drink and eat (probably coffee/tea, and vlaai (pie))
- I, Saskia Sinschek, will lead the session with some questions and/or statements to which you can react. Your opinion matters, so feel free to say whatever you feel.
- The dates you can choose from are:
 - o Tuesday 17 May, between 12:00 and 16:00
 - o Wednesday 18 May, between 16:00 and 19:00
 - o Thursday 19 May, between 08:00 and 12:00
 - o Friday 20 May, between 16:00 and 19:00
 - o Monday 23 May, between 08:00 and 12:00
 - o Wednesday 25 May, between 16:00 and 19:00
- The exact location and time of the focus group will be corresponded to you in time
- If I don't have enough participants to form a group, I would still like to have a shorter individual interview with you
- All information gathered in the focus groups and here in the application form will be dealt with carefully. It is for personal research purposes only.

If you have any remaining questions before you decide to participate, you can contact me via saskia.sinschek@maastrichtuniversity.nl

Q1

What is your first and last name? (All information will be dealt with confidentially)

Q2

To be able to contact you about the specific date, time, and location, we would like to receive your contact information (e-mail address or phone number; all information will be dealt with confidentially)

Q3

How would you rather want to participate in a focus group?

- Online (e.g., on Zoom or Teams, excluding coffee, tea and vlaai)
- Physically (you come to a location yet to be determined, including coffee, tea and vlaai)

Q4

Which day and time would suit you best to join one of the focus groups? (you can choose multiple days) (note: the time slots only indicate the part of the day that you are available, the focus groups do not take 3 or 4 hours, but rather 1 to 1.5 hours)

- Tuesday 17 May, between 12:00 and 16:00
- Wednesday 18 May, between 16:00 and 19:00
- Thursday 19 May, between 08:00 and 12:00
- Friday 20 May, between 16:00 and 19:00
- Monday 23 May, between 08:00 and 12:00
- Wednesday 25 May, between 16:00 and 19:00

Q5

Do you have any remarks regarding the available dates and times? Let them know here:

Q6

In what Maastricht neighbourhood do you live? (e.g. Randwyck, Heer, Binnenstad, Malberg etc.)

10.4. Appendix 4 – Opgaveformulier Focusgroep

Beste lezer,

Voordat u zich opgeeft voor een van de focusgroepen, zijn hier nog een aantal praktische zaken:

- De sessie kan online of fysiek gehouden worden
- De sessie duurt 1 á 1,5 uur
- Als u op locatie meedoet, zorgen wij voor wat te eten en te drinken (waarschijnlijk koffie/thee en vlaai)
- Ik, Saskia Sinschek, leid de sessie met een aantal vragen/uitspraken waarop u kunt reageren. Uw mening telt, dus zeg gerust wat u voelt.
- De data waaruit u kunt kiezen zijn:
 - o Maandag 16 mei, tussen 08:00 en 12:00
 - o Woensdag 18 mei, tussen 08:00 en 12:00
 - o Donderdag 19 mei, tussen 16:00 en 19:00
 - o Zaterdag 21 mei, tussen 13:00 en 17:00
 - o Maandag 23 mei, tussen 16:00 en 19:00
 - o Dinsdag 24 mei, tussen 08:00 en 12:00
- De exacte tijd en locatie zullen op tijd naar u gecorrespondeerd worden
- Mochten er niet genoeg participanten zijn om een groep te vormen, dan zou ik nog steeds een korter individueel interview met u willen houden.
- Alle informatie die tijdens de focusgroep en hier in dit aanmeldformulier verzameld worden, zullen vertrouwelijk worden behandeld. Alle informatie wordt alleen voor individuele onderzoeksdoeleinden gebruikt.

Als u nog vragen heeft voordat u besluit om deel te nemen, dan kunt u mij contacteren via saskia.sinschek@maastrichtuniversity.nl

Vraag 1

Wat is uw voor- en achternaam? (Deze informatie wordt vertrouwelijk behandeld)

Vraag 2

Om u te kunnen contacteren over de precieze datum en tijd hebben we nog een aantal gegevens nodig: uw contactgegevens (een e-mail adres of een telefoonnummer; deze informatie wordt vertrouwelijk behandeld)

Vraag 3

Hoe neemt u liever deel aan een focusgroep?

- Online (via bijv. Zoom of Teams, exclusief koffie, thee en vlaai)
- Fysiek (u komt naar een door ons nader te bepalen locatie, inclusief koffie, thee en vlaai)

Vraag 4

Wat is voor u de meest geschikte dag en tijd om deel te nemen aan een focusgroep? (u kunt meerdere data aankruisen) (let op: de tijden zijn indicaties van dagdelen, de focusgroepen duren geen 3 of 4 uur, maar eerder 1 tot 1,5 uur):

- Maandag 16 mei, tussen 08:00 en 12:00
- Woensdag 18 mei, tussen 08:00 en 12:00
- Donderdag 19 mei, tussen 16:00 en 19:00
- Zaterdag 21 mei, tussen 13:00 en 17:00
- Maandag 23 mei, tussen 16:00 en 19:00

- Dinsdag 24 mei, tussen 08:00 en 12:00

Vraag 5

Heeft u nog opmerkingen over de beschikbare data en tijden? Laat het hieronder weten:

Vraag 6

In welke Maastrichtse wijk woont u? (bijv. Heugem, Scharn, Sint Pieter, Belfort etc.)

10.5. Appendix 5 – Interview Guide

Short round of introduction and explanation of how the focus group will work.

(PERSONAL MEANING)

- What are your personal connections to the city of Maastricht? I.e., Did you meet people here that have become important to you?
- Did you reach milestones here or achieve important personal growth?
- Have you made friends here?

(COLLECTIVE MEANING)

- Are there any traditions, historical events or other shared experiences and cultures that you find particularly interesting in Maastricht?
- And do you participate in these group cultures as well or would you rather create new group experiences significant to Maastricht (with e.g., other students)?

(AFFECT)

- Based on the previous two questions, how do you feel about the city of Maastricht in general?
- Is it a positive feeling or do you feel rather negative about the city and its people?
- Could you explain why you feel what you feel?

(COGNITION)

- Are there any ways in which you link your own identity with the identity of Maastricht? E.g., you might think of yourself as an open-minded person because you met a lot of internationals in Maastricht as it has the university with most internationals.
- Or you might consider yourself as laid back, because the people here are like that too.

(BEHAVIOUR)

- How long have you been living in Maastricht already?
- Are you planning on staying longer, e.g., after your graduation? Why yes or why not?
- Did you come to Maastricht for your studies or because the city might be similar to the city you come from?
- Would you be willing to change the city to your liking? E.g., unconsciously 'take over' parts of the city, like the park, or change houses to student houses for you to live in?

(PHYSICAL PLACE ATTACHMENT)

- Are there particular physical or environmental aspects that attract you to the city of Maastricht (e.g., parks, buildings)?
- Or is the climate to your liking? Why (they might spark some memories)?

(SOCIAL PLACE ATTACHMENT)

- Do you feel like you belong in the local community? Why yes or why not?
- Do locals put effort in including you in their lives? In what ways?
- Do you as international students put effort in meeting locals and integrate in Maastricht? How do you do that? Or do you rather spend time with fellow students?
- Could a potential separation of groups be caused by differing interests, opinions, and traditions?

Are there other frustrations or positive thoughts you have about the Maastricht inhabitants, or just about the place Maastricht in general?

10.6. Appendix 6 – Interview Gids

Kort introductierondje en uitleg over hoe de focusgroep werkt.

(PERSONAL MEANING)

- Wat zijn uw persoonlijke connecties met de stad Maastricht? D.w.z.:
- Heeft u hier iemand ontmoet die belangrijk is voor u?
- Heeft u hier mijlpalen behaald?
- Heeft u vrienden hier?
- Bent u in goed contact met uw burens?

(COLLECTIVE MEANING)

- Zijn er tradities, religies, historische gebeurtenissen of andere gedeelde fenomenen en gevoelens (zoals de bourgondische levensstijl) die ervoor zorgen dat u Maastricht meer waardeert dan andere steden in de omgeving?

(AFFECT)

- Afgeleid van deze persoonlijke en gedeelde betekenissen, wat is uw gevoel over de stad Maastricht?
- Zijn deze voornamelijk positief of heeft u ook wel eens negatieve gevoelens/ervaringen met de stad?
- Kunt u verklaren waarom u dit voelt?

(COGNITION)

- Zijn er manieren waarop u uw eigen identiteit linkt aan Maastrichts identiteit?
- Dat u bijvoorbeeld aangeeft een Bourgondische levensstijl aan te houden, omdat u in het Bourgondische Maastricht woont? Of dat u zegt dat u een gezellig persoon bent omdat de stad ook zo gezellig is? Of dat u misschien wel zegt erg gesteld te zijn op het dialect, omdat dat veel gesproken wordt hier?

(BEHAVIOUR)

- Hoelang woont u al in Maastricht?
- Hoelang bent u nog van plan te blijven? Waarom?
- Zou u ooit in een andere stad kunnen wonen die gelijkenissen heeft met Maastricht?
- Zou u bereid een wijk te veranderen zodat het meer vergelijkbaar is met Maastricht?

(PHYSICAL PLACE ATTACHMENT)

- Zijn er bepaalde fysieke aspecten die u aantrekken in Maastricht (bijv. gebouwen, parken, milieu)?
- En klimaat aspecten die de omgeving speciaal maken? Waarom?

(SOCIAL PLACE ATTACHMENT)

- Ziet u internationale studenten als buitenstaanders? Waarom wel of niet?
- Doet u moeite om studenten erbij te laten horen? Wat doet u dan?
- Doen studenten moeite om zich met de lokale bevolking te mengen? Of dat het misschien andersom is, dat de studenten zich juist afsluiten van de rest?
- Zou een eventuele scheiding tussen studentengroepen en lokale bevolking te maken kunnen hebben met verschillende interesses, tradities, en meningen?

Zijn er andere frustraties of juist positieve gedachten die u heeft over internationale studenten en de universiteit in het algemeen?