

# **Immobility among the highly mobile: University graduates' staying processes, perceptions, and places.**

*Working paper for Population, Space and Place*

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## **Abstract**

Despite frequent and centre-oriented moving behaviour of university graduates, some of their peers remain in peripheral cities upon graduation. From a migration perspective, these 'stayers' are commonly portrayed as passive individuals that are not actively looking for opportunities elsewhere that would ultimately lead to moving behaviour. Yet, the immobility perspective portrays stayers as active participants and valuable assets in the periphery because they constitute the future generations of otherwise declining and ageing populations. Nonetheless, the staying process and the motives for staying have gone largely unexplored in the population literature. Hence, this study explores the staying processes of 'stayers' who have remained in a peripheral city since graduating from university. By means of fifteen life calendar interviews, the study adopts a qualitative, life course approach to staying behaviour and emphasizes three main ideas of the immobility literature, namely: the agency of stayers in the staying process, the perceptions of stayers on staying behaviour, and the spatial dimension of staying. The findings confirm recent ideas proposed from the immobility perspective, namely: stayers play an active role in their personal staying process and reflect and deliberate their staying behaviour in consciously at multiple moments during the life course. The staying process may be active and passive depending on the presence of triggers for moving and staying may have both positive and negative consequences. Finally, motives for staying are intrinsically linked to the staying place but are commonly presented as configurations of preferences based on the individual, the meso context, the physical environment, and the socio-cultural environment.

**Keywords:** immobility; life calendar interviews; periphery; stayers; university graduates

**Disciplines:** cultural geography; demography; population geography

Duration of internship at NEIMED:	09-04-2018 – 31-06-2018 (280 hours; 10 ECTS)
Duration of master thesis:	01-09-2017 – 31-08-2018 (840 hours; 30 ECTS)
Supervisors at NEIMED:	Dr. Nol Reverda & Maja Roçak
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### **Highlights:**

- Staying processes are active and passive, conscious, and never definitive
- Stayers play an active role in their personal staying process and are willing to adapt to place-specific opportunities and constraints in the staying place to facilitate staying behaviour
- Staying may have both positive and negative consequences
- Staying may involve relocation behaviour, and is not merely the opposite of moving
- Motives for staying are configurations of place-specific elements as opposed to isolated motives

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

In a newspaper article from *NRC Handelsblad*, Maarten Huygen states that the city of Maastricht is losing highly educated, young adults to out-migration: “It is the fate of Maastricht: there are 16,000 students at the university, but after graduation most leave elsewhere. Half of them are foreign [...], and will certainly leave, but the Dutch students leave as well, even though a substantive amount originates from the south of the country” (May 26<sup>th</sup> 2017). Indeed, university graduates tend to leave Maastricht at the end of their education careers, but this out-migration pattern is also apparent earlier on in the life course when potential university graduates leave Maastricht to start their academic education elsewhere (Latten et al., 2017). This is demonstrated by Latten et al. (2017), who found that at age 16 individuals who later graduated from university were spread across the country relatively equally in 1995, but at age 35 the same individuals only made up 6 to 10% of the population in Maastricht as opposed to 20% (or more) in the central cities of the Netherlands (i.e. Amsterdam and other cities in the Randstad-area). Moreover, the movement between the periphery and central regions in the Netherlands is strikingly out of balance: “for every 20 students that leave the periphery for the centre, only ten students make the opposite journey” (Venhorst, 2013, p.112).

These out-migration patterns away from Maastricht can be explained by the idea that highly educated individuals move frequently, over longer distances, and towards central regions (Bauernschuster et al., 2013; Brandén, 2013; Latten et al., 2017). Indeed, Latten et al. (2017) found that university graduates from the Netherlands are more mobile throughout the life course and more likely to move to the Randstad-area compared to those with lower levels of education. The moving behaviour over long distances may be explained by the findings of Bauernschuster et al. (2016), who argue that highly educated individuals are less sensitive to the cultural costs that are associated with moving over long distances, such as having to adapt to different habits, norms, and traditions. In addition to being more comfortable with crossing regional cultural boundaries, it has been found that university graduates are attracted to regions where a lot of highly educated individuals have already settled (Berry & Glaeser, 2005; Waldorf, 2009), where the labour market is strong and the wages are high (Chen & Rosenthal, 2008), and where diverse cultural and recreational facilities can be enjoyed (Whisler et al., 2008). Finally, the traditional cost-benefit approach expects university graduates to move as rational migrants; they will move when the benefits in a new location can eradicate the (perceived) disequilibrium at the current location, i.e. through job opportunities, education, better life chances, and higher wages (Sjaastad, 1962; Clark et al., 2006). For these reasons, the Randstad-area is commonly perceived as an attractive destination for highly educated individuals in the Netherlands.

Notwithstanding, university graduates that remain in Maastricht after completing their studies do not follow the out-migration trends that are apparent among their peers. The migration literature has often portrayed stayers and staying behaviour as irrelevant research topics due to the assumed 'absence' of moving behaviour (Hanson, 2005). Conversely, recent calls to reconceptualise residential immobility and staying behaviour and the proposal of a so-called 'immobility perspective' challenge this devaluation of staying (e.g. Cooke, 2013; Coulter et al., 2016; Stockdale & Haartsen, 2018). In short, the immobility perspective emphasizes the agency of stayers in their personal staying process, the various types and complex processes of staying, and the importance of place and structural influences on staying behaviour (Stockdale & Haartsen, 2018). In line with the immobility perspective, this present study simultaneously explores the 'how', 'what', and 'why' of staying behaviour among university graduates who have remained in Maastricht since completing their education. By means of semi-structured, in-depth life calendar interviews the study adopts a qualitative, life-course approach to staying, meaning that the interplay between agency and structure is emphasized

within the context of time and place. Ultimately, the study discusses three main elements of staying, namely: the role of stayers in their personal staying process, stayers' perceptions on staying, and the importance of place in staying behaviour.

## **2. STAYING: PROCESSES, PERCEPTIONS, AND PLACES**

### **2.1. Staying**

In the population literature, internal migration studies explore different types of residential relocation but focus primarily on residential mobility (i.e. short-distance moves) and migration, i.e. long-distance moves (Mulder & Hooimeijer, 1999). The numerous academic attempts to explain the causes and consequences of moving behaviour have created a sense of complexity around the decision-making process and have normalized the event of moving. Compared to moving behaviour, staying behaviour has been devalued and portrayed as negative. Consequently, staying has received insufficient attention within the migration literature. For example, the event of staying has been discussed as a residual to moving (Thomas et al., 2016) or as the 'absence' of a moving event (Hanson, 2005). Additionally, staying behaviour has been regarded as 'simple, unreflected, and non-dynamic' (Tölölyan, 2005) and perceived as a 'failure to move' (Looker & Naylor, 2009) or as 'staying behind' (Ni Laoire, 2001). From a migration perspective, staying is merely the opposite of mobility. In other words, because the staying process does not result in actual moving behaviour there is no 'event' to study. The lack of interest in immobility and staying further reinforces the ideas that mobility has become the norm and is an inherent component of our contemporary society (Sheller & Urry, 2006; Halfacree, 2012; Clark et al., 2017; Barcus & Halfacree, 2018).

Over the past decade and within the context of the "mobility turn" (Sheller & Urry, 2006) a number of population geographers have called for a reconceptualization of residential immobility (e.g. Cooke, 2013; Coulter et al., 2016; Stockdale & Haartsen, 2018). The relatively scarce literature that has covered aspects of immobility suggests that staying is a conscious choice (Barcus & Werner, 2017), an active process (Coulter et al., 2016), and is actively deliberated throughout the life course (Hjälml, 2014). These and other insights have led to the emergence of the 'immobility perspective', which "[...] considers stayers as active participants and staying as an active process. In other words, staying is a conscious and deliberate decision with positive outcomes" (Stockdale & Haartsen, 2018, p.2). To regard staying as an active process challenges the idea that immobility is merely the opposite of mobility. Instead, within the immobility perspective mobility and immobility are perceived as

interrelated and interdependent (Barcus & Werner, 2017; Sheller & Urry, 2006). Furthermore, Stockdale and Haartsen (2018) advocate focusing on the staying process rather than the motives for *not moving* and contest the negative associations with staying behaviour. Answering to these calls for attention to the staying process, this present study focuses on the agency of stayers in the staying process, the perceptions of staying, and place-specific motives for staying.

## **2.2. The immobility perspective**

### ***Stayers and staying: a definition?***

Due to the rigid dichotomy between mobility and immobility in the migration discourse, a simple definition of ‘a stayer’ has prevailed, namely: one who was born and raised in one place and has never moved away, or one who has not moved within a given timeframe (Stockdale & Haartsen, 2018). The work by Anne Hjälms on ‘lifelong sedentary behaviour’ adopts a definition that comes close to the one above but she finds that “staying is as diverse and on-going a phenomenon as moving” (2014, p.579). Barcus and Werner (2017) argue that the fluid and complex nature of staying is further exemplified by the lack of consensus on a definition. Recent studies in the immobility literature acknowledge the diversity of stayer-types and advocate moving beyond simple, ‘non-mover’ definitions. In the words of Stockdale and Haartsen, for a definition of ‘a stayer’ “[...] it is not so much the duration of stay that is important but so too becomes the diversity of stayer types, the processes of staying, the staying place, and the perceptions of stayers” (2018, p.2). Examples of less traditional definitions can be found in the work by Haartsen and Stockdale (2018) on ‘newcomers’ who become “convinced stayers” or “children-led stayers” over time and in a study on young adults by Stockdale et al. who define stayers as “those who never left or who temporarily left but mentally stayed in the home region” (2018, p.1).

The idea that a definition of staying should acknowledge different types of stayers and their perceptions on staying has led several authors to describe distinct types of staying. For example, Mata-Codesal (2018) has proposed a typology of immobility based on an ability- and desirability-approach. She distinguishes between three types of immobility: desired immobility, involuntary immobility, and acquiescence immobility. The first type constitutes both the desire and ability to stay, the second constitutes a desire to move but an inability to move, and the third constitutes those who have ‘lukewarm’ feelings about staying (Mata-Codesal, 2018). Notably, this typology does not include those who desire to stay but are unable to stay. In the works by Thomas J. Cooke (2008; 2013), which focus on family migration, this final category would be referred to as a ‘tied mover’: someone who moved but

would have stayed if he/she were single. The counterpart of a ‘tied mover’ is a ‘tied stayer’: someone who stayed but would have moved if he/she were single. Cooke’s typology thus recognizes the influence of other actors in the household (i.e. partners) on an individual’s moving and staying behaviour. Yet, both typologies hint at the active role of stayers, negative and positive perceptions on staying, and at the interplay between agency and structure in the decision to stay. The latter is one of the main ideas in the life course approach.

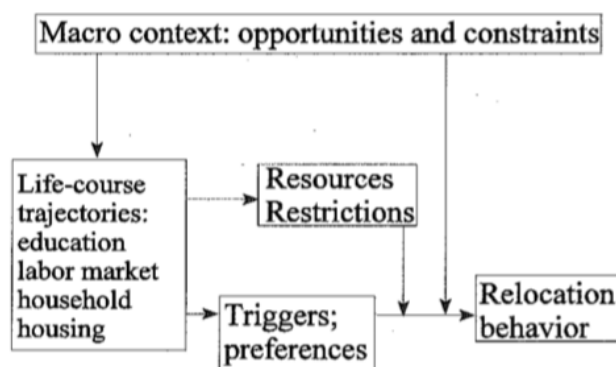
### ***A life course perspective on staying and the staying process***

Staying is as complex as moving: there are different types of stayers, multiple perceptions on staying, various motives for staying, and a universal definition is lacking. Moreover, the different types and definitions that have been discussed are not exhaustive and future research will identify the multiplicity of stayer types further (Stockdale & Haartsen, 2018). We can expect that various types, perceptions, processes, and spatial dimensions are applicable over the course of a stayer’s lifetime. Notably, Hjälmsjö found that staying is the result of an “active and informed choice” (2014, p.577) and the decision to stay “is not a decision that is made once and never renegotiated” (2014, p.579). Staying thus constitutes a process that unfolds over the course of a lifetime and may result in staying or moving behaviour at any point.

As Halfacree and Boyle point out: “a specific migration exists as a part of our past, our present and our future; as part of our biography” (1993, p.337). Dykstra and van Wissen (1999) discuss how this biographical time dimension is taken into account within the life course perspective. In short, personal biographies are made up of various life domains (i.e. education, work, housing, and family) in which events can occur that may impact the events in other life domains. Furthermore, the individual biographies are situated in a historical and a social time that constitute the macro context of one’s life. Finally, personal biographies can be affected by events in another person’s life: a phenomenon commonly depicted as *linked lives*. The afore-mentioned ‘tied mover’ and ‘tied stayer’ typologies of Cooke (2008; 2013) are examples of the influence of ‘others’ on an individual’s life events. The life course approach aims to extend the migration literature by emphasising the agency of the individual, the active process that migration entails, the long-term time-frame in which migration occurs, and the relation between several life events that may cause an individual to migrate (Coulter et al., 2016). Similarly, staying may best be understood by means of a life course approach; it allows an exploration of non-discrete life events (e.g. active processes and reoccurring over one’s life time) and the interrelationships between lives and events across time and space.

In the words of Frans Willekens, life events “shape the pathways of life, and [...] both enable and constrain future behaviour [...] in different but interconnected life domains of life and in different social and historical contexts” (1999, p.24). In the migration literature, moving has been depicted as a major life event that can be costly and disruptive. From an immobility perspective, staying behaviour should also be considered as an important life event that is the result of an active process and requires conscious deliberation. Yet, in the literature this deliberation or decision-making process has focused on explaining migration behaviour and has neglected staying behaviour as the outcome. For example, rational theorists have argued that individuals decide to move based on a cost-benefit analysis: he/she moves to a place that is more beneficial (i.e. providing better life chances) than the current location (e.g. Sjaastad, 1962; Mulder, 1996; Haug, 2008; Rauhut et al., 2008; King, 2012). In traditional cost-benefit analyses, moving was primarily economically motivated but recent studies add non-economic motives to the decision (Bailey & Boyle, 2004; Barcus & Werner, 2017). Mulder and Hooimeijer (1999) add to this understanding that a trigger for moving needs to be present and that the interactions between the micro (i.e. the individual sphere) and the macro context (i.e. the physical or social environment) can either enable or limit the move that is envisioned. Figure 1 presents the theoretical framework by Mulder and Hooimeijer (2018) in which the process that may result in relocation behaviour is visualized. The *enabling* aspects on the micro level and macro level are from here on referred to as ‘resources’ and ‘opportunities’ respectively, whereas the *limiting* aspects on the micro and macro level are referred to as ‘restrictions’ and ‘constraints’ (Mulder & Hooimeijer, 1999). Furthermore, Willekens (1999) stresses that the micro context is susceptible to change by the individual, whereas the individual cannot change the macro context personally, and that the outcome of an event process can never be predicted with certainty.

**Figure 1: Diagram of theoretical framework in Mulder & Hooimeijer (1999).**



Source: Mulder & Hooimeijer, 1999, p.164.

The idea that a trigger for moving is present (i.e. a desire) and that the interaction between the micro and macro context may enable or limit moving behaviour (i.e. ability/disability) resembles the staying-typology by Mata-Codesal (2018). Therefore, a framework similar to that of Mulder and Hooimeijer (1999) may be applied to staying behaviour. The life course approach then allows us to explore the interaction between agency and structure over the stayer's life course, which may uncover the role of the stayer and place in the staying process. Acknowledging that stayers possess agency in their individual life course trajectories shows that stayers are active participants and "much more than non-migrants who simply stay put: those who stay are not passive observers of their own fates" (Stockdale & Haartsen, 2018, p.2).

It should be clear that in order to understand how university graduates have come to stay in Maastricht, their staying process should be placed within their personal life course biographies (Barcus & Halfacree, 2018; Stockdale et al., 2018). The occurrence and timing of specific life events and transitions in the lives of young adults have changed over the past decades (Liefbroer, 1999). Indeed, some life events have been postponed, whereas others are experienced more frequently or less frequently since the 1970's (Liefbroer, 1999). Nevertheless, life events such as leaving the parental home, cohabitation and union formation, starting and finishing education, commencing employment, and parenthood may trigger the decision to stay or move among young adults (Liefbroer, 1999; Feijten et al., 2008; Clark, 2013; Stockdale et al., 2018). In adopting a life course perspective in this present study, it is acknowledged that university graduates have finished their individual education trajectories but that these trajectories are still of importance in their personal life course biographies altogether. Nevertheless, it is found that the staying process of the university graduates in this study are embedded mostly in their labour market-, household-, and housing trajectories.

### ***Place matters***

A number of studies have explored specific motives for staying. Morse and Mudgett (2018) found that the decision to stay may be influenced by multiple, past and future events or experiences and can be motivated by economic as well as non-economic factors. The typology of Cooke (2008; 2013) on 'tied stayers' had already highlighted the influence of a particular non-economic motive for staying: the influence of others (i.e. partners or other members of the household). Similarly, friends and other family members may be taken into account when deciding to move or stay; these relationships will from hereon be referred to as



the meso context. Importantly, the meso context may be located elsewhere, thereby presenting an attraction or deterrent to staying or moving in a specific place (Mulder & Malmberg, 2014; Gillespie, 2016). The current location thus provides these and other place-specific characteristics on which a decision to stay may be based. Clark et al. (2017) have linked the choice to remain in place to strong place attachment, which strengthens over time and can be attributed to local social capital, home-ownership, and a sense of security. However, the values towards these attributes may vary by age and socioeconomic status, and depend on an individual's personal lifestyle preferences and future goals (Clark et al., 2017). Overall, the physical and the social environment play a significant role in the decision to stay (Mellander et al., 2011).

Stockdale and Haartsen critique the existing literature for ignoring such spatial dimensions of staying and argue that 'place matters': "personal place experiences of staying, how these vary across the life course, and their impact on the renegotiation of the decision to stay have not been fully explored" (2018, p.2). In the literature on human geography and environmental psychology, spatial dimensions have been discussed in terms of place attachment, place identity, place dependence, sense of place, belonging, and rootedness (Antonsich, 2010). As a reaction, Antonsich (2010) has proposed 'personal moments of place', which constitutes different 'senses of home' over time based on personal and social meanings of home and personal and social identities. In this view, staying behaviour may also be investigated based on how the individual relates to place. For this reason, Stockdale and Haartsen (2018) focus specifically on rural stayers in their special issue of *Populations, Space and Place*.

Acknowledging that place matters, this present study focuses on stayers in an urban context: on the first of January 2017, Maastricht had 122.753 inhabitants (CBS, 2018), which makes it the largest municipality of the province of Limburg. Despite Maastricht's urban character, the city is considered a peripheral city in the national context. The primary central area in the Netherlands is the Randstad, which includes the four largest cities of the country. However, from an international perspective Maastricht has often been considered a central region, as it is a member of the 'Meuse-Rhine Euroregion' that comprises five large cities in the Netherlands, Belgium, and Germany. Such conflicting identities are a representation of people's perceptions of the *site* and *situation* (Broek, 1966) of Maastricht; the *site* refers to its physical characteristics, which can be measured more or less objectively, whereas the *situation* refers to its 'relative location' in relation to other places. Consequently, anyone may describe the *site* of Maastricht similarly but a local Maastrichtenaar may experience the

*situation* of Maastricht differently (i.e. close to major European cities) than someone from the Randstad (i.e. in the periphery of the Netherlands).

Certainly, university graduates that remain in Maastricht regardless of their high likelihood to move frequently, over long distances, and towards central regions provide interesting research subjects. Staying in a peripheral region with lower availability of jobs compared to central regions challenge notions of traditional cost-benefit analyses that are focused on economic motives for moving. In the present study, the role of the stayers in their personal staying process is explored, the perceptions and consequences of staying are discussed, and the motives for staying in Maastricht are positioned within the individual and meso context as well as the physical and socio-cultural environment of Maastricht.

### **3. DATA AND METHOD**

#### **3.1. Sample and case study**

Data for this study stem from semi-structured, life calendar interviews with 15 ‘stayers’ who have continuously lived in Maastricht since graduating from university. To be included in the study, potential interviewees must: (1) originate from Limburg (LIM), another Dutch province (NL), or Belgium (BE); (2) be between the ages of 20 and 40; (3) possess a master degree or higher at university level; (4) have studied at Maastricht University during (part of) their university career; and (5) live in Maastricht continuously since graduating from university. Indeed, the definition of staying in this present study, *to have lived in Maastricht continuously since graduating from university*, allows interviewees to have lived elsewhere before graduating from university and to have moved within the municipal borders of Maastricht since graduating from university. It should be noted that this definition does not permit exploring the motives of university graduates who wanted to stay but could not, i.e. tied movers.

The author advertised a public post<sup>1</sup> in the *Alumni Maastricht University* group on LinkedIn.com: group members were invited to reply and take part in an interview if they fit the five ‘stayers’-criteria. The *Alumni Maastricht University* group was chosen because it ensured fulfilment of the fourth criterion and because the author herself is a member of this group and therefore received permission of the admin to advertise the request. All fifteen interviewees were recruited through this public request. Eight interviewees are originally from

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<sup>1</sup> Public post on LinkedIn.com: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/37817/37817-6397024362951688192>

Maastricht or elsewhere in Limburg, four originate from another Dutch province, and three from Belgium. The aim of the study was not to find a representative sample of stayers; the recruitment process facilitates the explorative aim of this study and may be affected by self-selection bias. Therefore, the sample is not appropriate for statistical analyses or generalisations.

### **3.2. Life calendar interviews**

In line with the ideas of the immobility-perspective (Stockdale & Haartsen, 2018), this study discusses staying behaviour by means of a life course approach. In essence, the staying processes of university graduates are positioned in time and place; staying behaviour is considered a product of the interaction between personal life course trajectories (i.e. micro context) and the social and physical environment (i.e. meso and macro context). The author produced individual biographies of 15 university graduates by means of semi-structured, life calendar interviews. The interviewees were offered a choice of places to meet; eight chose to be interviewed in the author's temporary home in Maastricht and seven were interviewed at their workplace in the area of Maastricht. All interviews were conducted in Dutch: the native language of the interviewees and the author. The interviews were recorded on a digital audio recorder and took between 50 and 105 minutes. The author has previously lived in Maastricht and is an alumnus of Maastricht University herself. According to Hjälmsjö (2014) this shared identity and location may affect the statements given by the interviewees. For example, the interviewees may have expected the author to share knowledge about the university, the site, and the situation of Maastricht. This shared knowledge may be regarded as an advantage since it certainly helped the author in understanding the interviewees' narratives, but the interviewees may have refrained from stating in-depth experiences in which case the shared knowledge has limited the richness of the data.

During the course of a life calendar interview (LCI), the interviewer fills in a life calendar grid (LCG) according to the interviewee's narrative; a completed life calendar grid is a visual representation of an interviewee's life course based on their retrospective recollection of the events and experiences in their life. The author designed a LCG specifically for the purpose of this study; figure 2 represents a blank LCG translated to English. The LCG in figure 2 was presented across two landscape A3-sheets to enhance legibility and to provide space for extensive field notes. To commence the interviews, the LCG was personalised by filling out the years in the first row corresponding to the interviewees' age. The questions that were asked were primarily open-ended and discussed the places lived, the household composition,

the education trajectory, the labour market trajectory, life events, specific questions pertaining to the context, and future plans. There was also room for field notes about specific experiences, connections, and motives pertaining to moving and staying behaviour over the life course. The author conducted three test interviews before deciding on the final questions (see: Appendix 3) and the final outline of the LCG.

**Figure 2: Life calendar grid**

Year													
Age	0-5	6-11	12-17	18	19	...	...	...	...	38	39	40	
Places lived													
Place/type													
Moved													
Household													
Education													
Level/type													
Location													
Job													
Type													
Location													
Life events													
Type													
Context: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Micro</li> <li>• Meso</li> <li>• Macro</li> </ul>													
Future plans													
Experiences													
Connections													
Primary motive													
Other motives													
Other													

*Sources: author's personal illustration.*

Calendar interviewing was initially developed to provide rich data for quantitative life course research (Belli, 1998; Belli et al., 2001). Barbeiro and Spini (2015; 2017) advocate the LCI-method in qualitative, biographical research after applying it in their study on the motives for migrating to Switzerland among Portuguese immigrants. The LCI-method allowed them to explore moving behaviour over the life course by exploring the links between individual agency and structural influences; in other words, the migration-decision was explored as an active deliberation between the micro and macro context. Barbeiro and Spini (2015; 2017) posit that life calendar interviews improve qualitative interviews by providing rich verbal

data, revealing continuity and change over the life course, and stimulating recollection of life events, experiences, and turning points. According to the same authors, life calendar grids provide direction, some chronological structure to the interviewee's story, and allow for thorough comparable analyses. Acknowledging the afore-mentioned ideas of the immobility perspective, and considering the findings of Barbeiro and Spini (2015; 2017), the author chose to conduct life calendar interviews and employ life calendar grids in the present study on university graduates' staying processes in Maastricht.

### **3.3. Analytical approach**

The interviews and LCGs were transcribed in Dutch by means of Atlas.ti software. The data was then coded by means of a thematic analysis; the interview transcripts were analysed to identify emerging themes, after an initial five interviews those themes started to repeat and become more definite. This process uncovered three main themes: the staying process, perceptions on staying, and the importance of Maastricht as a 'place'. The codes were then processed into an excel sheet in which the columns presented the codes and the rows the interviewees. Finally, relevant extracts and passages from the interviews were translated to English and to account for the interviewees' privacy pseudonyms and abbreviations (i.e. LIM, NL, BE) were connected to the interviewees' accounts. The author performed all steps in the analysis.

## **4. RESULTS**

In this results section, I present the main findings with regard to the staying process. I then proceed by outlining the stayers' perceptions on staying and the consequences of their staying behaviour. Finally, I discuss the importance of 'place' in the staying process. Overall, this results section provides the first accounts of highly educated stayers in Maastricht. Where possible and relevant, differences and similarities between the three target groups (i.e. LIM, NL, BE) are specified.

### **4.1. The staying process**

#### ***To stay or not stay, that is the question***

Levi, who is originally from Maastricht and has always lived in (the proximity of) Maastricht, expressed that he felt no need to leave and wants his future jobs to be in the area of Maastricht so that he can stay:

"I think that I will always try, if possible, to keep [my job] in this area. Again, I have no reason to leave, so I am not going to start looking for [such reasons] actively" (Levi, 26, LIM).

Even more so, Levi would not intentionally look for triggers that would involve moving away. However, the fact that he is currently not experiencing any triggers for moving does not mean that such triggers have never been present or will never be present again. All interviewees have previously considered moving away from Maastricht for various reasons (i.e. for educational purposes, job opportunities, or to be close to friends). Yet, since graduating from university none of these triggers or motivations has led to actual moving behaviour.

“I was contemplating a career switch and to change course completely. So in that moment, we [the interviewee and his partner] seriously considered moving to Amsterdam [...], which meant living close to our old friends again. But when the same job became available in the south of Limburg, I decided [...] to apply here instead” (Rick, 40, NL).

“We [the interviewee and her partner] definitely talked about it: do we want to go to the Randstad, or not? Because [...] practically all of our friends live there. And then we finally decided that we did not want that, so instead we bought a house here, which was in 2011. That’s when we thought: no, we are really staying here for while” (Nina, 37, LIM).

Some interviewees recall specific ‘turning points’ in their lives that involved a deliberate choice to remain in Maastricht or move somewhere else: i.e. when they were offered a job in the Randstad, when deciding whether the partner would move to Maastricht or the interviewee would move to the partner’s place (i.e. abroad or elsewhere in the Netherlands), or while they were travelling abroad and thinking about where they would ‘settle’ next. During such turning points, the interviewees discovered ‘what they valued most in life’. After finishing her master degree, Steffie found out that the company that she was planning to work for went bankrupt. She decided to travel for a few months and used this time to reflect on what she wanted:

“[Travelling independently] was a really pleasant time for me. I asked myself: who are you and what do you want? And well, the answer was that I wanted to contribute to society and [...] working and living in [places in the north of the Netherlands] had been nice, but I valued having my family close so that I could just take the car and within half an hour I could have coffee with my parents or my brother” (Steffie, 33, LIM).

Turning points like the ones above seem to arise around certain life events or transitions. This finding suggests that stayers are likely to reflect consciously on their staying behaviour during some of the following moments: leaving the parental home, cohabitation and union formation, starting and finishing education, commencing employment, becoming a homeowner, and parenthood (Liefbroer, 1999; Feijten et al., 2008; Clark, 2013; Stockdale et al., 2018).

“There have been multiple moments in my career when I had to decide what to do. For example, after graduation I had to decide where I would start working. [...] I have also been asked multiple times to

start working for companies in the Randstad and then you have to at least consider that. [...] I have asked myself such questions on a yearly basis, whether I was in the right place or if I should go somewhere else, and every time I was able to answer that question positively for Maastricht” (Lucas, 38, NL).

Reflecting consciously on one’s staying behaviour thus occurs at multiple moments throughout the life course. Additionally, the outcome (i.e. to move or stay) can vary with every separate deliberation. This became particularly clear by the accounts of some of the interviewees who are not originally from Maastricht. Naturally, they had decided to move to Maastricht at some point in their lives but none of them had intended to stay in Maastricht long-term (see: sub-section 4.1: “Never say never”). The interviewees commonly stated that ‘unforeseen’ or ‘coincidental’ circumstances had made them reconsider their intentions to move away from Maastricht: i.e. meeting a partner or getting a job offer in Maastricht had not played a role in the interviewees lives at the time of moving to Maastricht but suddenly provided motives for staying in Maastricht past their educational careers.

“I came here to finish my education and then to move on: either abroad or elsewhere in the Netherlands. Most probably abroad actually. But somewhere around that time [graduation] I met my partner and then I stayed” (Julia, 29, LIM).

In addition to being coincidental and unforeseen, some interviewees also expressed that these circumstances are arbitrary. The circumstances could have been different, in which case the outcome of their deliberation could have been different.

“If I had not been accepted to [current job], I don’t know if I would have stayed” (Julia, 29, LIM).

“I think that if it had not been possible to work for [current employer] at the time, that by now I would not have lived here anymore” (Karin, 32, NL).

“[...] While I was travelling I realized what was important to me and somewhat later my partner decided to come to Maastricht. Those two things have been very important in my life. [...] Both moments have led me to stay in Maastricht but that choice could have been different if the circumstances had been different at the time” (Steffie, 33, LIM).

### ***“Never say never”***

The interviewees who moved to Maastricht for educational purposes (thus excluding those who were already living in Maastricht) expressed two initial orientations towards their futures in Maastricht, namely: moving away from Maastricht directly after graduating or being open to the future whether that involved a life in Maastricht or not.

“During my time as a student, I always said that I would leave Maastricht when I was done [with university]. I always wanted to go to Utrecht because I knew that area well. But then a friend moved there [...] and when I saw what it meant to live there [referring back to housing prices in cities of the

Randstad], I thought: Maastricht is actually pretty good. And so it changed. After graduating I realized that I would actually like to find a job here [in Maastricht]" (Karin, 32, NL).

None of these interviewees moved with the specific intention to stay in Maastricht for the long-term. Notwithstanding, each of these interviewees has lived in Maastricht since these initial arrivals. It has been argued that certain circumstances can influence moving intentions, even if those circumstances are unforeseen, arbitrary, or coincidental. Similarly, it can be expected that the stayers' current staying intentions are susceptible to change. When asked about their plans for the future, the interviewees expressed three types of future orientations, namely: envisioning their future to be in Maastricht for as long as possible, envisioning a life in Maastricht but being open to moving, and being entirely open to the future whether that involved a life in Maastricht or not. Again, none of the interviewees expressed absolute certainty about staying in Maastricht forever: even if they envisioned their future lives in Maastricht they would always consider opportunities elsewhere, but these would only result in actual moving behaviour if they guaranteed a financial increase or better job security. The second group preferred staying in Maastricht but was open to opportunities elsewhere and expressed that they would move for a variety of reasons, not merely financial or career-related benefits.

"I have always been open to such opportunities [...]. I am willing to move. See, I have everything here, but I am not like: I am tied here and I will never leave" (Levi, 26, LIM).

But the third group expressed being open to moving for any type of reason and even to 'completely change course' in life by moving abroad, travelling, and living their 'dream lives'.

"Well we did talk about that, why we [the interviewee and her partner] would move? I think that if we would move than that would be to completely change course [...]. It hasn't been thought out yet, but it would really be to leave the Netherlands" (Nina, 37, LIM).

Based on these three future orientations, it can be argued that stayers are aware of the influence of unforeseeable and coincidental circumstances and changes in the context on their staying behaviour. The phrases: "Never say never" and "not set in stone" were mentioned during several of the interviews, which indicate that the staying process remains active throughout the life course and its outcomes are never definite.

### ***The agency of stayers***

The afore-mentioned circumstances are, however, primarily external factors. We should not overlook that individual agency, attitudes, and life strategies may help facilitating staying behaviour. Similar to Levi who would actively try to find future jobs in Maastricht, other



interviewees expressed that they intentionally look for job opportunities and housing in Maastricht. They want to remain in Maastricht and thus find ways to facilitate their staying behaviour:

“We [the interviewee and her partner] now think the other way around: do I want to commute this distance or not, otherwise I would not apply for that job” (Nina, 37, LIM).

The interviewees facilitate their staying behaviour by looking at job opportunities in the area, but they also actively invest in individual resources that they deem beneficial within the context of Maastricht. For example, some interviewees retrained or specialised in a specific field that they thought would offer more job opportunities in Maastricht:

“I started this master [...] to find a better job, and when I finished it [...] I could start almost immediately... in the exact field that I wanted to work in” (Sandrine, 35, BE).

Stayers not only invest in their resources, they also attempt to limit triggers and restrictions. For example, some interviewees thought about leaving Maastricht when most of their friends had left. But instead of moving, they started investing in new social networks. Seen in this light, staying is not always an easy decision or process: if there is an intention to stay you must be willing to adapt to the changing opportunities and constraints of Maastricht. This particular finding indicates that stayers play an active role in their personal staying process and are not “passive observers of their own fates” (Stockdale & Haartsen, 2018, p.2).

#### **4.2. Stayers’ perceptions on staying and its consequences**

Each of the interviewees in the sample has lived in a municipality other than Maastricht; these experiences vary from being born and raised in another province, to studying abroad for half a year, to growing up in a municipality near Maastricht. All interviewees have moved at least once within Maastricht, but most moved multiple times. In other words, none of the interviewees has stayed in the same house or block during their entire life, which is the subject of Anna Hjälms (2014) work on ‘lifelong sedentary behaviour’. Instead, the staying process in this present study is framed along a shorter timespan (i.e. continuously living in Maastricht since graduating from university). Nonetheless, the interviewees identified as ‘stayers’ by means of self-selection during the recruitment process, which indicates that their perception of ‘staying’ coincides with the chosen definition in this study. Yet, Rick contrasted his personal staying behaviour with the ‘lifelong sedentary behaviour’ of someone that he knew:

“[Name of acquaintance] was born and raised in [a rural place] and stayed there. He had his friends there and lived with his parents for a long time, and then he moved three streets down from his parents’ house and started his own business there. In the beginning it gave me a ‘stifling’ feeling when I thought about that. But now I see how it can be a beautiful thing [...]. He has always had his network and

friends around; nobody leaves. [...] I did not see that at first, but now I do. [...] My friends are all spread across the country” (Rick, 40, NL).

Rick initially perceived staying in a rural town for one’s entire life as ‘stifling’, but now that he has lived in Maastricht for a long time himself, he can see how his own staying behaviour is similar to that in the example. The main difference between Rick and his acquaintance is the duration of their staying behaviour but in both instances they have remained in one place for a considerable amount of time, which has made Rick realize that staying can also have advantages. Other interviewees also expressed the value of staying in one place. Tom and Anouk expressed that living in one area benefits your social and professional network in the area, which may increase your chances when you are looking for a new job:

“I have learned that it is valuable for yourself to stay in one place” (Tom, 29, LIM).

“...And you start building a network here, so after a while it gets easier to stay when you have worked here already because you may find a new job through that network” (Anouk, 28, LIM).

Some respondents also reflected on what is the norm: moving or staying? Rick and Nina both said that when their friends left to the Randstad they perceived those moves as the ‘easy way out’; their friends moved but were sure to find their usual network in the Randstad again because everyone was moving there. In fact, Rick and Nina experienced the process of staying as more difficult than moving away. It was a demanding task to get to know the city all over again while not having your usual network around you. In other words, ‘stayers’ had to invest in creating new social networks, whereas ‘leavers’ would take their social networks with them. Some interviewees experienced this as a major disadvantage of staying in Maastricht. In some instances, this particular experience had even been a motive to consider moving to the Randstad too.

“In that moment, my best friend left Maastricht. [...] That was a really strange moment [...] but it was also very typical for this city. You get the idea that everyone leaves. And you are really [...] being left behind” (Rick, 40, NL).

“In the beginning, I really had to get used to it, that transition from studying to working, I really had to get to know the city all over again. And the reason for that was that everyone had left. (...) The people who left told me: “staying is easy”. (...) While I was thinking: “well, it is actually really easy to leave to the Randstad, where everybody is going”. Because when I went to visit friends there, I would see all the people that had left Maastricht again” (Nina, 37, LIM).

Stayers also express that in order to keep their relationships with friends and family intact, they frequently have to travel to other places because their social networks are spread across the country. Stayers should thus also be considered as active participants in the staying process with regard to the meso context; they invest in their social networks in- and outside of

Maastricht. Anne, who moved from the Randstad to Maastricht for education and career purposes, used to travel back to her hometown every weekend:

“In the beginning I was afraid to lose my friends. I felt like I was the one who always had to visit them, because you think: “well, I am the one who moved far away”. So I felt responsible for seeing them frequently. But I have set that thought aside lately. Now I think: “well, I live here, and you live there, [...] and the distance between us works both ways” (Anne, 24, NL).

For Anne, another negative consequence of staying in Maastricht is that her family lives far away. She expressed that during certain life events, the distance felt even larger:

“My grandfather passed away during my master, and during the first year of my PhD my grandmother passed away. Those are things that are very unpleasant to have to experience from a distance. [...] And with such a distance between you, [...] you can’t just get up and leave and be there when it happens” (Anne, 24, NL).

Anne also deliberated whether or not she would ever be able to ‘root’ in Maastricht because her family lives so far away and the regional culture is different from the one that she was raised in. For others, staying in one place created a feeling of ‘rootedness’ or connection to the area, which was then provided as a reason why staying became more attractive - and leaving more difficult - over time. However, ‘rootedness’ may also be explained and experienced in negative terms. Julia, who has always lived in southern Limburg, is afraid that if she stays in the area her entire life that her “world might become too small”:

“I fear that, if I stay here in Limburg, [...] would my world become too small? Because then I would start living like all those people who just want to pay their mortgages. That may sound very black and white... going on holidays three times a year... I don’t want to end up in such an environment, and I fear that that might happen by staying here” (Julia, 29, LIM).

As has been argued, it seems common to deliberate one’s staying process from time to time. This deliberation seems to go hand in hand with reflections on the consequences of staying in one place; the interviewees were able to provide both positive and negative aspects of their staying behaviour in Maastricht.

#### **4.3. Place matters, Maastricht matters**

In the theoretical framework by Mulder and Hooimeijer (1999), triggers for moving are motivated by personal preferences (i.e. a mismatch between the current location and a preferred location). Depending on the interaction between the micro and macro context, the actual relocation behaviour is then enabled or limited. As shown in sub-section 4.1, stayers are not exempt from experiencing such triggers but their personal preferences have, at least since graduating, not resulted in relocation behaviour outside of Maastricht. One of the reasons for staying in Maastricht may thus be straightforward: Maastricht has presented an ‘adequate fit’ (Kuhmonen et al., 2016) with the personal preferences of the interviewees. In

this final sub-section, I focus on the interviewees' stated motives for staying in Maastricht since graduating from university. These motives are inherently personal and place-specific but provide meaningful insights with regards to the motives of university graduates for staying in a peripheral city.

The motives for staying prove difficult to disentangle; when asked about the primary motive for staying in Maastricht, the interviewees commonly described a number of elements that - taken together - constitute their motives for staying in Maastricht.

“After a while it is just... you work and you meet friends, you make use of the living environment and you go out in the city or you do sports. And yes, if you have everything within your current living environment, then the need to look for something else becomes less and less over time” (Steffie, 33, LIM).

“We [the interviewee and his partner] both had and have everything in Maastricht: family, friends, sport, and our jobs. [...] So yes, well, [staying] was just... it was an easy decision in that sense” (Levi, 26, LIM).

Despite being difficult to disentangle as single motives, three types of preferences are distinguished: individual preferences, preferences based on the meso context, and preferences pertaining to the physical and socio-cultural environment. It should be noted that in isolation the elements described in this sub-section might not necessarily result in staying behaviour. Rather, configurations of elements present motives for university graduates to stay in Maastricht.

### ***Individual preferences***

Some of the motives for staying in Maastricht are particularly personal: they pertain to personality traits or attitudes and will hereon be referred to as *individual preferences*. It has been shown that stayers play an active role in their personal staying process; they invest in individual resources, have flexible attitudes and are willing to adapt to changing circumstances and place-specific opportunities and constraints. In essence, the stayer attempts to create a better fit between his/her individual preferences and the macro context. At other times, the staying process may be less active; instead, there is already an ‘adequate fit’ between the individual preferences and Maastricht. In other words, when there is an adequate fit stayers do not experience any clear triggers that require reflections on their staying behaviour. According to Mulder and Wagner (1998) the desire to become a homeowner is more likely to occur among people who do not foresee moving soon. Indeed, multiple interviewees expressed that feeling secure and stable in Maastricht had led them to consider becoming a homeowner and eventually buy a house in Maastricht. However, during times

when no triggers are present, some interviewees described the staying process as ‘pragmatic’, ‘comfortable’, ‘going with the flow’, or ‘lazy’. But at other times, as described in the previous sub-sections, the staying process is active and entails conscious reflections. The staying process can thus be passive and active depending on the existence of a trigger.

More specific individual motives for staying in Maastricht pertain to having an enjoyable job and being able to advance personal and regional development. Two-thirds of the interviewees have a job in Maastricht; the remaining five interviewees commute to work on a daily basis (i.e. between 20 minutes to an hour). The current job is often referred to as one of the main factors that ‘keep’ them in Maastricht; not having that job would make them consider moving. Indeed, some interviewees have faced problems finding employment in Maastricht: it took them several months up to a year to find a suitable job. They have also experienced that others in their social networks leave Maastricht because they could not find a suitable job, not because they did not *want* to stay (see: section 4.2). Notwithstanding, Rick, Karin, and Anne, who are all from other provinces than Limburg, point out that the particular labour market situation in Maastricht has also provided personal benefits to them. Rick started his own company with a friend:

"We had the ambition to start a business together, [...] something completely new. [...] Well, we had to fight for it, but in the end we were allowed to do it, and the business has been doing well for a couple of years now. We get a lot of compliments about it and I think that, in the work culture of the Randstad, it would have been much more difficult to stand out with such an idea" (Rick, 40, NL).

"I go to the [department of her company] in The Hague sometimes [...]. I have the idea that at [her current employer in Limburg] it is a little friendlier. A little bit easier, or maybe not easier, but less competitive I think. I would feel more at ease here than in the other location" (Karin, 32, NL).

"In the meantime, I was also applying to jobs in Amsterdam and Utrecht [...]. I received rejection letters for jobs at a university on a lower level [than her current job] in which they said that I fit the profile perfectly but that they had received 500 other applications. So, yes, I realized that the competition was much bigger there and that you have more chances to get picked when you apply for a job here, simply because there are fewer people who want to come here" (Anne, 24, NL).

These personal experiences have created motives for staying in Maastricht. At the same time, these findings show how staying in the periphery can still be career-driven. A number of interviewees, markedly all from Limburg, regard the problems that are associated with the periphery as a challenge; they expressed a personal drive to ‘help’ Maastricht, to contribute to society, and to create a ‘better’ Maastricht for their friends and family and future generations. They work in local politics, government institutions, or the cultural sector and this ‘purpose in life’ creates a motive for staying in Maastricht. Finally, there are also financial incentives for

staying in Maastricht; the home-owning interviewees indicate that they would not be able to have bought a similar house or live in a similar neighbourhood in the Randstad.

### *The meso context*

Steffie and Tom explained that they rely on external pressures and the opinions of others when they need to make big decisions (i.e. about moving or staying); when no external pressure is felt, they tend to ‘go with the flow’.

“I’m the type of person that needs a little external pressure [...]. So I’m taking this time [of being in between jobs] as a chance to look for new opportunities” (Tom, 29, LIM).

“Looking back, I think that my partner and family have had a large impact on my decisions [...]. I have thought about what the outcome of my decision would have been like if I did not let them have that influence, but then I realize that it has always been like this and I cannot ‘turn it off’” (Steffie, 33, LIM).

The social network or meso context (i.e. partners, friends, or family) commonly provides external pressures (or: triggers) by having an opinion on where the interviewees should live. For example, friends of Tom, Nina, and Rick have frequently asked them to move to the Randstad and the parents of Karin and Sara would rather see them live closer to ‘home’.

“Indeed, my mother sometimes says: [...] ‘well it is a pity... it is not around the corner and it is sad that I cannot just come down for a coffee’” (Karin, 32, NL).

“My Belgian parents really did not expect that I would move out at age 18. They thought their children would stay home at least until the age of 21 [...] that is a big cultural difference; I realized that Dutch parents are waiting for their children to leave directly after finishing secondary education. [...] I decided not to move any further away from my parents [than Maastricht]” (Sara, 28, BE).

Leaving the parental home is a major life event that affects the distance to parents, family, and friends and may impact the frequency of contact. Due to the various origins of the interviewees, some interviewees remain in close proximity to their social network while living independently in Maastricht, whereas others live between one and four hours away by car or public transport. For some, being close to family and friends is a major factor in deciding to stay.

“I would not make that decision [to move elsewhere] wholeheartedly, because I would have to leave all my informal relationships, like my family, behind” (Steffie, 33, LIM).

For some, large geographical distances to the meso context can thus be experienced as unpleasant (see: sub-section 4.2). But for others, the distance is not an obstacle.

“We [the interviewee and his partner] knew that if you stay in Maastricht you will have to travel one or two hours to see friends, and if you think that is a problem, well, then maybe you should live in a more central place” (Lucas, 38, NL).

Despite the various distances to the meso context, all interviewees value frequent and face-to-face contact with family and friends. Specific preferences for frequency of face-to-face contact are indicators of the proximity to the meso context; daily contact requires living close, whereas weekly or monthly contact can be upheld at a longer distance. The decision to stay in Maastricht can, therefore, be based on preferences for frequency of face-to-face contact. If these preferences can be met in Maastricht, there is a motive for staying or - at least – no trigger for moving. However, when these preferences can no longer be met, some interviewees state that they will consider moving away.

“Now it is starting to look like 50/50 [in Maastricht and the Randstad] with my group of friends. But if suddenly 80% would move to Utrecht or something, then there is a big chance that I will consider moving too” (Hugo, 27, LIM).

“...We [the interviewee and her partner] both notice that the more people leave the less we are bound to Maastricht or the south in general” (Karin, 32, NL).

In some instances, the partner’s family lives in closer proximity than the interviewee’s family; the family that lives closest is often referred to as the main provider of general support and with whom face-to-face contact is most frequent. As such, even the interviewees who are not from Limburg often have some type of familial connection to the area, i.e. their partner is from the area, in-law family members are from the area, other family members have previously lived in Maastricht, or family members who have holiday homes in the area. The one interviewee who does not have such familial connections to the region is also the one who most securely expects to move away from Maastricht in the future, which may hint at the importance of family ties in migration and staying behaviour (e.g. Gillespie, 2016; Mulder & Malmberg, 2014; Morse & Mudgett, 2018).

A special actor in the meso context is the partner. Of all 15 interviewees, 13 are in a cohabiting relationship. The three of youngest interviewees (between the ages of 24 and 27) are not (yet) living with a partner or don’t have a partner. Eight partners are from Maastricht or Limburg and six partners are from another Dutch province or another country (i.e. Turkey, Italy, and Germany). Meeting a partner has been discussed as an unforeseen circumstance (see: sub-section 4.1) but cohabiting in Maastricht is a conscious joint-decision (i.e. the residential preferences of both partners have to be fulfilled in Maastricht). For the interviewee, this joint-decision resulted in staying behaviour, whereas the partner either stayed or moved depending on his/her location at the time. This joint-decision is mostly based on whether or not both partners can foresee suitable educational and career opportunities for themselves in Maastricht; all interviewees express that both partners need to be happy in

Maastricht. Serge and Steffie state that this joint-decision may have had a different outcome in the existence of other circumstances and that they might still move to the partner's original location in the future. Additionally, cohabitation commonly generates preferences for a bigger home, which may lead to moves within Maastricht and creates a desire for homeownership. Another joint-motive for Maastricht is to start a family; some interviewees want children in the future and three already have children. They express that Maastricht provides a living environment (see upcoming sub-section: the physical and socio-cultural environment) that is safe and child-friendly. The three interviewees that have children express that it is also a 'binding' factor; you cannot just get up and leave, but they are happy to stay. One interviewee shows signs of a 'tied stayer' (Cooke, 2008): Julia would not mind moving away but her partner is very attached to Maastricht (i.e. his parents, education, and social network is in Maastricht) so she is content with staying, but she would have moved if she were single and still wants to move when they get older.

### ***The physical and socio-cultural environment***

Some of the most tangible motives for staying in Maastricht relate to the physical and socio-cultural environment. The physical environment of Maastricht was often described in terms of scale, the natural landscape, landmarks, and accessibility to nature and other places. The interviewees refer to the scale of the city as relatively small, but large enough to provide all the facilities and a feeling of privacy. However, the small scale does entail little diversity:

“I think that everything is here, but I think there are only one or a few [of the same things]. So for going out you go to the same place, [...] and when going for a walk, you tend to make the same rounds” (Anne, 24, NL).

But visiting other places makes up for the lack of diversity in Maastricht. For example, Julia goes to Belgium and Germany for certain groceries, and others frequently make use of the international airports, or they go on city-trips and hikes in the neighbouring countries. The distance to places in Belgium and Germany is smaller than to the large cities of the Netherlands, but still the interviewees express that sometimes it is easier to go to the Randstad because they know people there. Another motive for staying in Maastricht relates to the natural landscape, which allows you to enjoy 'the city life' while being minutes away from nature areas (i.e. the river beds, the hills, and large urban parks).

“What I like about Maastricht is that I can take a bike-route past the 'Gouvernement' or by the river, [...] and I can stop thinking for a moment. [...] It only takes five minutes and you can leave the city, [...] then there is peace and quiet. And I mean taking your bike here is a completely different experience from taking your bike in Amsterdam. [...] You can just cycle through nature.



Most interviewees make frequent use of the natural landscape for recreation, sports, and activities. The interviewees also refer to natural and historical landmarks in the city as unique; they enjoy showing these to friends and family who visit and they feel pride in saying that this is the city they live in. In some instances, they facilitate their friends who moved to the Randstad to ‘come back’ to Maastricht for a couple of days. Some interviewees notice that friends who have previously moved away are now starting to return again, which may relate to a change in preferences among their friends now that they are older.

“I have started noticing that [...] people are slowly returning, which made me realize that Maastricht does have a certain attraction factor” (Hugo, 27, LIM).

“Yes, in my group of friends most have left, but the nice thing is that I also see people returning to Maastricht again” (Thomas, 27, LIM).

Interestingly, some interviewees expressed that the living environment had not played a large role in their decision to stay at earlier ages, but has started to emerge as an important factor the longer they stay and the older they get.

The socio-cultural environment of Maastricht was often described in terms of cultural traditions and experiences with typical Maastricht habits: i.e. the burgundy lifestyle, the local dialect, chauvinistic attitudes, and carnival traditions. None of the interviewees indicated that cultural aspects would be triggers for moving, but among the interviewees from Limburg, the cultural aspects would provide motives for staying in Maastricht. For example, the work-culture was commonly described as ‘more social’ (i.e. compared to the rest of the Netherlands) and ‘less hierarchical’ (i.e. compared to Belgium); these aspects create an atmosphere where colleagues go out together and befriend each other more easily:

“Every month we go on a trip with our colleagues and when it’s carnival, everybody goes out in the city together, [...] where are you going to find a job where that’s normal?” (Anne, 24, NL).

But other aspects of the work-culture, such as the indirect ways of communicating (i.e. not giving feedback or speaking up in meetings), or not being supervised at all times may hinder personal development. Thomas expressed that the scale of Maastricht and the work culture facilitate the creation of beneficial networks:

“Everybody knows each other [in the sector that he works in], so you can easily organize events, you know exactly who to approach [...] and how they can help you” (Thomas, 27, LIM).

However, Hugo mentions that without knowing the ‘right’ people, the community in Maastricht can also be pretty closed. The chauvinistic attitudes of the locals and the local dialect sometimes provide a barrier for interactions with locals (if the interviewee was not from Limburg themselves). Still, the chauvinistic carnival traditions and the local dialect are

also discussed as bringing people together. Some interviewees thoroughly enjoy these aspects about the socio-cultural environment, whereas others may identify against them. The cultural traditions, quality of life, work-life balance, and work culture are subjective matters in life; the experiences at work may be field-specific (i.e. locally- an internationally-oriented companies may have different work ethics and cultures) and each interviewee has different experiences with the cultural aspects that are discussed. Nonetheless, the quality of life and the work-life balance were commonly mentioned as motives for staying in Maastricht.

### ***Comparing places***

It is found that elements in the physical and socio-cultural environment are often discussed in comparison to other places: this aspects is less, more, better, worse, than... in another place. When referring to the motives for staying, the interviewees made three types of comparisons: they compared Maastricht to other places, they compared their current neighbourhood to other neighbourhoods, and compared the current environment of Maastricht to how it was before.

Interviewees that originate from another Dutch province or from Belgium often discussed the motives for staying in Maastricht by comparing experiences in their home-region, whereas all interviewees would compare Maastricht to the Randstad. All interviewees indicated that they preferred living in certain neighbourhoods of Maastricht; some preferred living in the city centre, whereas others preferred living in neighbourhoods that were accessible to both the city centre and surrounding green areas. Interestingly, the interviewees from Belgium expressed a preference for living in the hinterlands of the city, which was less common among the other interviewees. Finally, the interviewees who had always lived in (the proximity of) Maastricht or who had lived in Maastricht for a longer period of time would refer to changes to the physical and socio-cultural environment of Maastricht. For example, the interviewees expressed that the infrastructure and public transport services had improved, there is less criminal activity in the city, they feel like there are more events and activities in the city, the university attracts a diverse and international population to Maastricht, and there are more shops in the city centre. Most interviewees view these changes as positive, but the interviewees from Limburg would sometimes express that certain changes may also affect the authenticity of the city in a negative manner. In essence, these comparisons resemble cost-benefit analyses as found in the migration literature; stayers reflect on their motives for staying by comparing and contrasting the benefits of their current location to another location in time or space.

### ***Feeling at home***

A final discussion around the importance of place pertains to ‘feeling at home’ in Maastricht. When asked whether or not the interviewees felt at home in Maastricht, they all responded with ‘yes’ although to varying extents and relate this feeling to different elements. Some interviewees express that they started to feel at home as soon as they moved to Maastricht. For others, the feeling grew over time; they did not feel at home as a student but started to feel home when they started working in Maastricht. Some interviewees indicate that the feeling is dynamic over time: it decreased when a lot of people left, but it grew stronger again when they had established new networks. Despite the fact that they started feeling at home at different times, all interviewees were able to point out aspects that contribute to this feeling. These aspects again pertain to the individual context, meso context, and the physical and socio-cultural environment, and are usually expressed as configurations as opposed to single elements.

On the individual level, the interviewees refer to their own homes, becoming a homeowner, having a job in the area, growing older and more conscious of your environment, and being born and raised in the area as aspects that contribute to feeling at home. Some interviewees also refer to the meso context as contributing to feeling at home in Maastricht: i.e. having family, children, partners and friends in the area is an important factor, but also building a network is portrayed as creating a foundation in Maastricht that you do not have when you are visiting another place. Most interviewees refer to walking or biking around the city and seeing certain landmarks as physical aspects that contribute to feeling at home. Finally, experiences with the socio-cultural environment of Maastricht make the interviewees feel at home: they have started to ‘get to know the city and its people’ over time through living there and interacting with the locals.

## **5. Discussion and conclusion**

The aim of the study was to explore staying behaviour among university graduates in Maastricht. The results discuss, simultaneously, the ‘how’, ‘what’, and ‘why’ of staying. Overall, the findings in this study contribute to the existing literature by answering to the calls for attention to immobility and staying; the findings confirm, and thereby strengthen, some of the main ideas of the immobility perspective and contest some of the ideas on staying that have dominated the migration literature.

First, the findings pertaining to the staying process suggest that stayers are not exempt from experiencing triggers that complicate their staying behaviour; however, these trigger

have not resulted in moving behaviour outside of Maastricht. Numerous turning points that arise from major life events (i.e. leaving the parental home, starting cohabitation, finishing education, commencing employment, and parenthood) are discussed as conscious moments in which stayers tend to reflect on their staying behaviour. These findings confirm the idea that “staying is a conscious and deliberate decision” (Stockdale & Haartsen, 2018). Additionally, these reflection moments occur multiple times throughout the life course, which is in line with the findings of Anne Hjälml that the decision to stay “is not a decision that is made once and never renegotiated” (2014, p.579). Similar to moving intentions, staying intentions are affected by coincidental, unforeseen, and arbitrary circumstances; these circumstances may provide reasons for staying (or moving for that matter) that had previously not been a factor in the stayers’ lives. These findings confirm that staying is an active process (Coulter et al, 2016) and that the decision to stay is never definitive and its outcome cannot be predicted with certainty (Willekens, 1999). Additionally, stayers play an active role in their personal staying process; they portray flexible attitudes and a willingness to adapt to place-specific opportunities and constraints in their current location by investing in their personal resources and restrictions. Such attitudes certainly challenge common negative and passive associations with stayers and staying that have been apparent in the migration literature.

Second, the rigid dichotomy between mobility and staying (e.g. Sheller & Urry, 2006; Thomas et al, 2016) is challenged by the stayers’ perceptions on staying and reflections on the consequences of their staying behaviour. Regardless of previous residential relocations, the interviewees all identified as ‘stayers’. In Maastricht, and possibly other urban contexts, staying identities and perceptions are not affected by moving within the borders of the municipality. In other words, staying is not merely ‘the absence of moving’ (Hanson, 2005) but may actually involve moving at times. Additionally, stayers assign both positive and negative consequences to staying. They value staying in one place and being ‘rooted’ increases the willingness to stay in Maastricht in the future. But staying is also challenging and demanding because it involves frequent travelling and active investments in the social network in- and outside of the staying place. The statement by Stockdale and Haartsen, “staying is a conscious and deliberate decision with positive outcomes” (2018, p.2), should then be modified by stating that staying may have both positive and negative outcomes.

Finally, staying is intrinsically linked to the staying place. In some instances, staying behaviour may be the result of an ‘adequate fit’ (Kuhmonen et al, 2016) between the personal preferences and the staying place. The place-specific motives for staying in Maastricht prove difficult to disentangle and are commonly expressed as configurations of personal preferences

on the individual level, within the meso context, and related to the physical and socio-cultural environment of Maastricht. In line with findings from Clark et al (2017) and Morse and Mudgett (2018), the staying is motivated by economic as well as non-economic factors. Additionally, in describing their motives for staying, stayers tend to compare Maastricht to other places (i.e. place of birth or the Randstad), they compare their current neighbourhood to other neighbourhoods, and they compare the current situation of Maastricht to what it was previously. These comparisons resemble cost-benefit analyses that are described in the migration literature (e.g. Sjaastad, 1962; Mulder, 1996; Haug, 2008; Rauhut et al., 2008; King, 2012). Furthermore, stayers start feeling at home in Maastricht at different times in their lives and they discuss different aspects of the individual, meso, physical, and socio-cultural environment as contributing to this feeling. These varying aspects and changing nature of feeling at home closely relate to the 'personal moments of place' that have been described by Antonsich (2010).

Differences between the three target groups did not seem particularly extreme; nonetheless, there are some differences and similarities among members of a group as well as differences and similarities between the target groups. For example, interviewees from another Dutch province or Belgium would commonly refer to their place of birth when making comparisons, but all interviewees would compare Maastricht to cities of the Randstad. Interviewees from Limburg attached greater value to the socio-cultural environment of Maastricht by stating that these may be motives for staying. The interviewees who moved to Maastricht (i.e. not being born and raised in Maastricht) commonly lived further away from their family and friends, but all interviewees had different opinions on whether or not the distance presented an obstacle. Instead, preferences for the frequency of contact with family and friends were a more plausible explanation for their staying behaviour. Interestingly, the interviewees from other Dutch provinces were the ones who found personal advantages in the labour market situation of Maastricht; interviewees from Limburg mostly worked in policy or cultural sectors; and, interviewees from Belgium preferred living in the hinterlands of the city as opposed to living in the city centre. However, it should be noted that the sample does not allow for generalisations; the findings thus pertain to sample only.

A final reflection should pertain to the method: conducting life calendar interviews and life calendar grids provided rich qualitative data about the staying processes of university graduates in Maastricht. Markedly, the interviewees would use the life calendar grid as a

guide to their narratives; they would start talking about the upcoming topic or refer back to previous topics by pointing at the LCG. The LCG also enabled interviewees to pinpoint life events or experiences more precisely by being able to position those moments in certain years, at certain ages, or around other relevant moments. The author was also able to ask for specific dates or years and when the interviewee would talk about a certain moment the author had an idea of the situation at the time (i.e. the job and place of residence). As Barbeiro and Spini (2015; 2017) have argued, the LCG thus enhances recollection and provides structure to the interviewer.

The rich data that was collected indicates that future research on staying and immobility may benefit from conducting life calendar interviews and life calendar grids. It was found that a number of interviewees actively contribute to regional development; future research may focus on the actual contributions of ‘stayers’ in their staying place. Additionally, it may be investigated what role peripheral universities play in regional development when acknowledging that “for every 20 students that leave the periphery for the centre, only ten students make the opposite journey” (Venhorst, 2013, p.112). Finally, the literature on staying and immobility remains scarce and the present study thus reiterates recent calls for attention to these phenomena.

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## **APPENDIX 1: Information letter to the interviewees (in Dutch)**

### **Doel van het onderzoek:**

Hoogopgeleide personen verhuizen geregeld en over grote afstanden. Deze mobiliteit wordt geassocieerd met het najagen van kansen, bijvoorbeeld voor het volgen van een opleiding of het zoeken naar een nieuwe baan. Daardoor wordt verhuizen over lange afstanden ook geassocieerd met positieve uitkomsten, zoals hogere inkomens, een goede positie op de arbeidsmarkt, en een sterk professioneel netwerk. Echter, door de nadruk te leggen op de motieven en consequenties van mobiliteit, wordt immobiliteit vaak over het hoofd gezien en zelfs geassocieerd met een ‘luie’ of passieve houding: met andere woorden, blijven ‘gebeurt gewoon’ en de blijver blijft letterlijk en figuurlijk achter (bijv. op sociaal, professioneel, en financieel gebied). Deze assumpties over de motieven en consequenties van ‘blijven’ zijn echter nauwelijks getoetst of bestudeerd. Dit onderzoek gaat daarom over de motieven van hoogopgeleide ‘blijvers’ in Maastricht. Er wordt getracht:

- (1) een beeld te schetsen van de ‘blijvers’ in Maastricht;
- (2) het besluitvormingsproces omtrent het ‘blijven’ te achterhalen;
- (3) een breder spectrum aan motieven aan bod te laten komen (in tegenstelling tot louter economische motieven);
- (4) en waar mogelijk, de impact van het ‘blijven’ te verkennen.

### **Procedure:**

De keuze om te ‘blijven’ wordt verkend door middel van diepte interviews met Nederlanders tussen de 20 en de 40 jaar oud die sinds het behalen van hun universitaire diploma in Maastricht zijn gevestigd. Daarnaast hebben deze individuen een ‘biografische connectie’ met de omgeving: zij zijn opgegroeid in Limburg of hebben gestudeerd in Maastricht. Tijdens de interviews wordt er gebruik gemaakt van een ‘life calendar grid’. Dit is een soort tijdlijn die aan de hand van de verkregen informatie kan worden ingevuld. De ‘life calendar grid’ zorgt voor structuur zowel tijdens het interview als tijdens de analyse. Ook vergemakkelijkt de ‘life calendar grid’ het leggen van verbindingen tussen bepaalde levensgebeurtenissen, en vergroot het de kans op nauwkeurige plaats- en tijdsbepaling van gebeurtenissen.

De deelnemers zal worden gevraagd om over hun woonplaats, studie, werk en andere gebeurtenissen tijdens de levensloop te spreken. Het uiteindelijke doel is om een beeld te schetsen van het besluitvormingsproces dat er toe heeft geleid om in Maastricht te blijven, en om factoren te achterhalen die aan deze keuze hebben bijgedragen. De ‘life calendar grid’

wordt ingezet aangezien er wordt verwacht dat gebeurtenissen in het verleden, heden, en toekomst ten grondslag liggen aan deze keuze. Het interview duurt maximaal 2 uur in totaal.

### **Vrijwilligheid van deelname:**

De deelname aan dit onderzoek is geheel vrijwillig. Het staat aan elke deelnemer vrij om op welk moment dan ook, en om welke reden dan ook, het interview te pauzeren of af te breken. Na afloop van het interview, doch binnen 24 uur, staat het de deelnemer vrij om te bepalen of de verkregen informatie mag worden meegenomen in het onderzoek.

### **Vertrouwelijkheid van de onderzoeksgegevens:**

De verkregen informatie zal anoniem worden verwerkt om uw privacy te waarborgen; uw persoonlijke gegevens zullen alleen bekend zijn bij Jonne Thomassen gedurende het onderzoek. Er worden pseudoniemen gebruikt bij de verdere analyse van de interviews en bij correspondentie over de resultaten. Dit pseudoniem is losgekoppeld van uw persoonlijke gegevens en kan niet tot individuele personen worden herleid.

### **Nadere inlichtingen:**

Mocht u vragen hebben over dit onderzoek, dan kunt deze ten alle tijden stellen. Mocht u achteraf nog vragen hebben dan kunt u contact op nemen met:

Jonne Thomassen

Tel: 0646231209

Persoonlijke email: [jak.thomassen@gmail.com](mailto:jak.thomassen@gmail.com)

Email bij Neimed: [jonne.thomassen@neimed.nl](mailto:jonne.thomassen@neimed.nl)

Adres 1: van Speykstraat 8, 9726BL Groningen

Adres 2: Heimoweg 10, 6214RA Maastricht

Voor eventuele klachten over dit onderzoek kunt u zich wenden tot:

Gerd Weitkamp <i>stage coördinator</i> <i>Rijksuniversiteit Groningen</i> Tel: 0031 50 363 9740 Email: <a href="mailto:s.g.weitkamp@rug.nl">s.g.weitkamp@rug.nl</a>	Maja Roçak <i>stagebegeleider</i> <i>Neimed</i> Tel Neimed: 045 576 2095 Email: <a href="mailto:maja.rocak@neimed.nl">maja.rocak@neimed.nl</a>	Wim Didden <i>zakelijk directeur</i> <i>Neimed</i> Tel Neimed: 045 576 2095 Email: <a href="mailto:wim.didden@neimed.nl">wim.didden@neimed.nl</a>
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## APPENDIX 2: Informed consent (in Dutch)

### GEÏNFORMEERDE TOESTMMING

Ik ..... stem toe mee te doen aan een onderzoek dat uitgevoerd wordt door: *Jonne Thomassen*. Ik ben me ervan bewust dat deelname aan dit onderzoek met als titel ‘*Geboren en getogen met een zachte G: blijvers-motieven onder universitair-afgestudeerden in Maastricht*’ geheel vrijwillig is. Ik kan mijn medewerking op elk tijdstip stopzetten en de gegevens die verkregen zijn uit dit onderzoek laten verwijderen of laten vernietigen.

#### **De volgende punten zijn aan mij uitgelegd:**

1. Het doel van dit onderzoek is:
2. Tijdens het interview worden mij vragen gesteld over:
3. Het hele onderzoek zal ongeveer.....minuten duren.
4. De gegevens die verkregen zijn uit dit onderzoek zullen anoniem worden verwerkt, en dus niet herleidbaar zijn tot mijn persoon.
5. De onderzoeker zal alle verdere vragen over dit onderzoek beantwoorden, nu of gedurende het verdere verloop van het onderzoek.

Datum:

Handtekening deelnemer:

--	--

Datum:

Handtekening onderzoeker, Jonne Thomassen:

--	--

### **APPENDIX 3: Interview guide and Life Calendar Grid (in Dutch)**

#### **Introductie:**

- Aan de hand van document *'informatie over het onderzoek'*
- Introduceer het onderwerp: doel & procedure
- Verwachte tijdsduur van het interview
- Vrijwilligheid van deelname: pauzes/onderbreken
- Confidentialiteit/anonimiteit
- Opname per microfoon: schema hoeft dus ook niet in detail
- Nadere inlichtingen; geïnformeerde toestemming ondertekenen

#### **Onderzoeksvraag:**

Waarom blijven hoogopgeleide individuen na het afronden van hun universitaire opleiding gevestigd in de gemeente Maastricht?

- Wanneer ben je in Maastricht komen wonen? Geboren en getogen of ooit naar Maastricht verhuisd?
- Welke factoren droegen bij aan de beslissing om in Maastricht te gaan wonen? Wat was de voornaamste reden?
  - Micro, meso, macro niveau // in het verleden, nu, en de toekomst
- Welke factoren dragen bij aan de beslissing om er sindsdien te blijven wonen? Wat is de voornaamste reden?
  - Micro, meso, macro niveau // in het verleden, nu, en de toekomst
- Is er de intentie om te blijven voor lange duur?
- Wat is de impact van het 'blijven'? Op welke manier draagt Maastricht bij aan de huidige situatie in het leven?
  - Micro, meso, macro niveau // in het verleden, nu, en de toekomst



## **1. Demografische gegevens**

### **Jaar + Leeftijd aanvullen**

Waar we mee kunnen beginnen, is om aan de hand van je/uw leeftijd, de tijdlijn in het schema te personaliseren.

### **Woonplaats + plek/type + verhuizing**

Waar heb je gewoond tijdens al deze jaren? Ben je vaak verhuisd?

Je bent dus nog nooit/wel eens/erg vaak verhuisd?

Op wat voor soort plekken woonde je? Platteland/Stad

Grote/middelgrote stad of grote/kleine dorpen?

Verschillende buurten in Maastricht?

Heb je in een koopwoning, particuliere huurwoning of sociale huurwoning gewoond?

*Inschatten: of het residentiele verhuizingen of migraties waren*

*Heb je fijne herinneringen aan vorige woonplaatsen? Waar lag dat aan?*

### **Gezinssituatie**

Zou je me ook kunnen vertellen hoe je gezinssituatie was op de verschillende plekken waar je woonde? *Bijvoorbeeld: met gezin (wie precies); alleenstaand; samenwonend; met kind(eren).*

### **Opleiding + niveau/type + locatie**

Welke opleidingen heb je gevolgd? *Basisschool, middelbaar, hbo, universiteit*

Welk niveau had je opleiding? *HAVO/VWO, bachelor of arts, bachelor of science, master of arts of master of science, PhD?*

Waar volgde je deze opleiding?

### **Werk + type + locatie**

In welke periodes werkte je, of was je werkloos?

Wat voor type werk heb je gedaan, in wat voor soort branche?

In welke gemeente deed je dit werk?

## **2. Levensgebeurtenissen**

Kun je me vertellen welke (of wat voor soort) gebeurtenissen of momenten belangrijk of kenmerkend zijn geweest voor jou in je leven.

*Bijvoorbeeld: op jezelf gaan wonen, het ontmoeten van belangrijke partners in je leven, samen gaan wonen, een nieuwe baan starten, trouwen, kinderen krijgen, maar ook ziekten of het overlijden van geliefden, of zorg voor anderen.*

- Je gaf bijvoorbeeld al aan dat...
- We kunnen er altijd nog nieuwe bijvoegen als ze later aan bod komen...

### **3. Context**

Ik zou graag een soort schets maken van de situatie, oftewel de context. De context kan, zeer sterk gegeneraliseerd, op drie niveaus worden besproken, namelijk: het micro, meso, en macroniveau.

#### **Micro**

Onder het microniveau, of de individuele context, vallen de meeste van de elementen die we al hebben besproken, zoals: *waar je woonde, waar je op school zat, waar je werkte, hoe de gezinssituatie eruit zag, en welke memorabele of belangrijke momenten je hebt meegemaakt.*

- Herhalen wat er al besproken is...
- Vragen of er nog andere dingen zijn waar waarde aan wordt gehecht in het individuele leven. *Speelt geld of gezondheid nog een rol? Wat was een belangrijke levensfase/situatie?*

#### **Meso**

Onder het mesoniveau vallen de netwerken relaties die je met anderen hebt, ook die hebben we gedeeltelijk besproken tijdens het bekijken van de gezinssituatie. Maar natuurlijk zijn er ook andere *mensen buiten het gezin die een belangrijke rol spelen in je leven, zoals: vrienden, familie buiten het gezin, collega's of bijvoorbeeld verenigingen of clubs waar je bij aangesloten bent.*

- Welke mensen spelen in belangrijke rol in je leven?
- Kun je de relatie met die mensen beschrijven
- Is dat altijd hetzelfde geweest, of verschilt dat per plek/fase?
- Wonen zij dicht in de buurt of juist ver weg? Woonde je vroeger dichterbij die mensen in de buurt, of juist nu?
- Zou je voor bepaalde mensen willen verhuizen of juist blijven om er dichterbij in de buurt te zijn? Vind je het belangrijk om face-to-face contact te hebben, of is digitaal contact ook goed?

#### **Macro**

Op het macroniveau spelen grotere vraagstukken een rol, bijvoorbeeld: religie en cultuur, maar ook bijvoorbeeld de omgeving en het milieu, en of er veel voorzieningen zijn of openbaar vervoer beschikbaar is.

- Zit je bij een vereniging of een club? Zijn er voorzieningen voor de verenigingen of clubs in Maastricht, of moet dat elders of kan het misschien helemaal niet terwijl je dat wel zou willen? Zou je willen dat er bepaalde voorzieningen dichterbij zouden zijn?

- Wat doet de omgeving van Maastricht (Zuid-Limburg) met je, en maak je er op een bepaalde manier gebruik van (wandelen en fietsen)?
- Speelt religie of cultuur een grote rol in je leven (denk aan carnaval of andere Limburgse gewoontes)?
- Kinderen op lokale school?
- Betrokken in welke activiteiten/evenementen: lokale bedrijfjes en diensten gebruiken, deelname aan lokale activiteiten, enz.?
- Zijn belangrijke plekken voor jou goed te bereiken (met het openbaar vervoer of met de auto/fiets)?
- Zou je er voor willen verhuizen om dichterbij bepaalde voorzieningen te kunnen zijn? Of ben je misschien juist in Maastricht gaan wonen omdat het die voorzieningen biedt?
- Heb jij ook iets aan Maastricht te bieden (zoals middels vereniging, sport, of werk)?

#### **4. Toekomstplannen**

Zijn er bepaalde levensgebeurtenissen waarvan je verwacht die mee te maken in de komende periode? *Zoals de gezinssituatie; werk; nog een opleiding; trouwen; kinderen.*

Waar verheug je je op in de toekomst?

Denk je dat je in Maastricht kunt blijven als deze dromen uit komen? Wat kan Maastricht je beiden?

Verwacht je om in Maastricht te blijven (hoe lang)?

Wat zou een andere gemeente of regio je kunnen bieden, en verwacht je dus misschien ergens anders heen te gaan (waar heen)?

Waarvan zou dat alles afhangen? Wat is belangrijk voor je om dromen waar te maken (wat wil je in de buurt houden, welke overwegingen maak je als je naar de toekomst kijkt).

#### **5. Ervaringen**

Als je naar de verschillende levensfasen, gebeurtenissen en situaties kijkt, kun je me dan vertellen in welke mate je deze periodes als prettig of juist onprettig hebt ervaren? Waren er specifieke momenten waar je plezier van hebt gehad, of waar je het moeilijk mee hebt gehad? Voel je je thuis in Maastricht? Wat doet Maastricht met je? Voel je een bepaalde trots of juist niet bij de stad? En waar ligt dat aan?

Heb je meegemaakt dat anderen het vreemd vinden dat je in Maastricht woont? Wat zijn de reacties van anderen als je verteld dat je in Maastricht woont? Wat doet dat met je?

Wat biedt Maastricht dat een andere gemeente niet kan bieden, of wat mist er juist in Maastricht wat je in andere gemeentes wel hebt ervaren?

*Indien van toepassing: wat zijn de grote verschillen die je hebt ervaren tussen Maastricht en andere woonplaatsen waar je hebt gewoond? Wat vond je prettig, en mis je dat nu? Wat biedt Maastricht nu wel, dat je eerder niet had?*

## **6. Connecties**

Ik zou nu graag alvast kijken of bepaalde levensgebeurtenissen met elkaar in verband staan. *Zo kan trouwen en kinderen krijgen natuurlijk met elkaar te maken hebben, of je verhuist voor een nieuwe baan of gezinsuitbreiding, of een relatie wordt verbroken waardoor je ergens anders naar toe verhuist.*

We kunnen dergelijke connecties aangeven door pijltjes of lijntjes te trekken, of in bepaalde kleuren te schrijven.

## **7. Motieven**

Ik denk dat we inmiddels een behoorlijk, doch schematisch beeld hebben geschetst van belangrijke personen, plekken en gebeurtenissen. Ik vermoed dat sommige van deze factoren in sterke mate kunnen bijdragen in de keuze om te verhuizen of te blijven.

Zou je me kunnen vertellen wat de belangrijkste reden was bij elke verhuizing?

Waarom het vorige huis verlaten? Waarom naar dit huis verhuist? Waarom naar deze buurt en deze gemeente?

### **Andere, uitgebreide vragen:**

Wat denk je dat belangrijke factoren zijn voor jou waarom je voorheen in Maastricht woonde?

En waarom je nu in Maastricht woont?

Denk je dat economische motieven voor jou een grote rol spelen om in Maastricht te wonen?

En wat dan met de niet-economische motieven?

Spelen gebeurtenissen uit het verleden een grote rol, of juist je toekomstplannen?

Zijn er andere specifieke overwegingen die je hebt gemaakt, in de keuze om te blijven?

Zijn er momenten waarop je er aan dacht om te verhuizen, maar dit toch niet hebt gedaan?

Waarom? Wat heb je tegen elkaar afgewogen (andere plaats, ander werk, afstand tot sociaal netwerk, of afstand tot belangrijke plek)?

*Misschien is het wel niet zo specifiek, en heb je gewoon nog niet eerder nagedacht over een andere plek. Juist dan lijkt het me dat Maastricht je veel te bieden heeft.*

Zijn er dingen veranderd, sinds je in Maastricht woont?

### **Verwachtingen vooraf:**

Was de verhuizing naar Maastricht in eerste instantie bedoeld voor de korte of lange termijn? (doorvragen naar verwachtingen en redenen)

Wat wist je over Maastricht voordat je er ging wonen? (hun perceptie)

Wat waren je verwachtingen? (levensstijl, stedelijk, sociaal/gemeenschap, voorzieningen/faciliteiten) Probe: welke faciliteiten, welke sociale kenmerken, welke levensstijlaspecten etc.

Wat beïnvloedde deze verwachtingen? Waren ze gerelateerd aan de levensfase? (vb. verhuisd om gezin te starten of na pensionering).

Waren verwachtingen geïnformeerd door ervaringen in een vorige woonplaats?

Terugkijkend, waren deze verwachtingen realistisch? Op verschillende niveaus: individu & stel, levensstijl, economisch, sociaal/gemeenschap enz.

### **Ervaringen met het verhuizen:**

Verken de daadwerkelijke ervaringen en (on)tevredenheid met de verhuizing op verschillende niveaus – *individu vs stel/gezin, levensstijl/levenskwaliteit, economisch (werk, woning), sociaal/gemeenschap*. *Probeer deze te verbinden aan de verwachtingen vooraf.*

Zijn de verwachtingen en mate van tevredenheid gedurende de tijd veranderd (of anders in verschillende levensfasen)?

Hoe beoordeel je (achteraf) de beslissing om hierheen te verhuizen? Waarom?

*Indien er kinderen in het gezin zijn: wat zijn hun ervaringen, tevredenheid (en wat beïnvloedde dit, misschien leeftijd) en hebben de ervaringen van de kinderen de algehele tevredenheid met de verhuizing van het stel beïnvloed?*

### **Toekomstige verhuizingen:**

Waar gaat de voorkeur naar uit als: hier blijven of verhuizen (waarnaartoe, wat voor omgeving, waarom)?

Wat zijn hun verwachtingen van het gebied (waar ze nu wonen) voor de volgende levensfase van het stel/gezin?

Kan het nodig zijn om in de toekomst te verhuizen (en waarom?) - vb. jonge stellen: is het gebied geschikt voor het beginnen aan een volgende fase (vb. gezin starten, ouder wordende kinderen, enz.)?

Zijn verwachtingen verschillend tussen de partners en wat kan dit verklaren?

Waardoor zou een toekomstige verhuizing waarschijnlijk gedreven zijn? (werk, levensfase, fysieke of sociale kenmerken)

Is het stel aan het plannen en voorbereiden voor een volgende levensfase? Denken ze serieus aan verhuizen op dit moment? Waarnaartoe zouden ze dan waarschijnlijk verhuizen (incl. soort omgeving)?

## **8. Overig**

We hebben heel veel besproken, zijn er nog dingen waar je aan denkt, die we niet hebben besproken vandaag maar wel zijn gebeurd of die invloed hebben gehad op je keuze om in Maastricht te gaan/blijven wonen?

### **AFRONDEN:**

Zullen we een paar dingen samenvatten?

Kun je me een voorbeeld geven van?

Klopt het dat?

Wil je me nog iets meer vertellen over ... ?

Wat je met me deelt is belangrijk, kun je er meer over vertellen?

Hoe zijn de twee ervaringen met elkaar te vergelijken?

Als je iets zou kunnen veranderen, wat dan?

Wat betekend Maastricht voor jou?

Waar denk je aan, wat vind je mooi, en wat vind je minder fijn?

*Probeer te reflecteren op dingen die zijn gezegd, hoe staan bepaalde dingen in verbinding met elkaar.*

*Bedanken voor de tijd die is vrij gemaakt om dit interview af te nemen/geven van bedankje.*

**LIFE CALENDAR GRID:****Respondent #****Datum:**

JAAR														
LEEFTIJD	0-5	6-11	12-17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	
WOONPLAATS														
PLEK / TYPE														
VERHUIZING														
GEZINSSITUATIE														
OPLEIDING														
NIVEAU/TYPE														
LOCATIE														
WERK														
TYPE														
LOCATIE														
LEVENS- GEBEURTENISSEN														
TYPE														
CONTEXT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MICRO</li> <li>• MESO</li> <li>• MACRO</li> </ul>														
TOEKOMST- PLANNEN														
ERVARINGEN														
CONNECTIES														
HOOFDREDEN														
MOTIEVEN														
OVERIG														

**LIFE CALENDAR GRID (CONTINUED):      Respondent #      Datum:**

YEAR														
AGE	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	
WOONPLAATS														
TYPE														
VERHUIZING														
GEZINSSITUATIE														
OPLEIDING														
NIVEAU/TYPE														
LOCATIE														
WERK														
TYPE														
LOCATIE														
LEVENS- GEBEURTENISSEN														
TYPE														
CONTEXT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MICRO</li> <li>• MESO</li> <li>• MACRO</li> </ul>														
TOEKOMST- PLANNEN														
ERVARINGEN														
CONNECTIES														
HOOFDREDEN														
MOTIEVEN														
OVERIG														



## **APPENDIX 4: Reflection on the Master Thesis: theory and methodology**

### ***Why this topic?***

During my Research Internship at NEIMED I talked about a number of topics that my supervisors thought to be relevant to the south of the Netherlands; one of the topics was ‘stayers’ because the focus has always been on movers (i.e. why do they move away). At the same time, I was working as a student-assistant for Prof. Dr. Clara Mulder in the FamilyTies-project in which I had also heard about the topic of immobility. Finally, I knew that Prof. Dr. Tialda Haartsen was also working on immobility and staying. I thus recognized that I knew researchers in the field and that if I would take the opportunity to work on this topic during my Research Internship that I could possibly extend the topic to my Master Thesis, and so I did. After these initial motives for working on staying and immobility, I started reading the literature and found that this was relatively scarce in comparison to the migration literature. Therefore, I thought that doing research on staying would be of particular academic relevance and could certainly contribute to the literature.

### ***Why this journal?***

Simply put, I choose *Population, Space and Place* because most of the literature that I have read on staying and immobility was published in this journal. This means that the editors and audience of the journal is familiar with the topic, which in my point of view would increase the chances of being published.

### ***Other possible theories/literatures/methods. Why these theories? Why this method?***

I could have focused on the human geography and environment psychology literature that focuses on phenomena such as ‘sense of place’ and ‘place attachment’ and find out whether or not these place meanings relate to staying behaviour; or to see which one is present most commonly among stayers. I could also focus on the literature on university graduates or on the literature on peripheral regions more specifically, but I took an immobility perspective because I was drawn to the ‘newness’ of this perspective and felt like I could contribute to this literature in a more meaningful way.

I have contemplated doing quantitative research on stayers, but I found that the data that is needed for such research is very limited. Instead, I focused on qualitative research strategies because the topic is still scarcely explored and, therefore, I thought I could contribute to the literature more if I would talk about the qualitative experience of stayers as

opposed to the quantitative statistics on stayers. In addition, I chose to conduct life calendar interviews because these seemed to fit well with the ideas of the life course approach and the immobility perspective simultaneously. The interviews have indeed provided me with such rich data that it was difficult to select just a number of themes to talk about in my results.

### ***Other possible results***

During the coding process, I found that there were different motives for moving to Maastricht than there were for staying in Maastricht. It would be interesting to see how these motives changed. Similarly, I received rich data on the motives for moving within Maastricht but was unable to include these in my results due to the limited amount of words. A lot of interviewees also talked about the local dialect in Maastricht and provided rich accounts of experiences with locals; these did not seem relevant for staying behaviour but it is interesting that these themes did reoccur in every interview. I could have taken a different perspective and approach the interviews with different theories, i.e. I could have also gone much deeper into ‘feeling at home’ or the cost-benefit analysis. Overall, fifteen life calendar interviews just provide a lot of information that was now not relevant to my theories or perspectives, but with the data I would be able to do much more (i.e. create entire biographies or stayer-profiles).

### ***Ethical issues***

One of the main ethical issues in qualitative research is the privacy of the respondents. The interviews provided me with rich, in-depth data on the lives of the interviewees. Some respondents would talk about emotional moments in their lives. It was my job to talk about ‘turning points’ in their lives without detailing their personal lives. Additionally, the life calendar grid produces a schematic overview of the interviewees’ lives; at the end of the interview some interviewees commented on the fact that I had created a timeline of their entire lives. In those instances, the interviewees would comment that it had been a fun exercise and that they enjoyed seeing their lives visualized on paper. But I can imagine that it may also be confronting to see your timeline being produced in front of you. As a researcher you want to find out about the lives of the interviewees, but you also have to keep asking yourself what is relevant to the study and leave out details that are personal or could be harmful. For example, statements on personal health or experiences at work are interesting, but I did not want to include them in my results. If my research would have pertained to those topics more specifically then I would have to find a way to still talk about those, but luckily I could leave out the personal stories and focus on the broad staying process instead.

### ***Research process, my own role, and the role of my supervisor***

I enjoyed being able to combine my Research Internship and Master Thesis. I was able to work with three supervisors, who all contributed to my research process in a different manner. I have the feeling that the supervisors at NEIMED guided me towards more qualitative accounts of stayers instead of quantitative research, and Tialda Haartsen was able to guide me specifically on the topic and literature of staying because she does research on the topic herself. At Neimed, I focused on the interviewees from Limburg, whereas in my Master Thesis I focused on three different target groups. The supervisors at Neimed were particularly interested in all of the sentimental and social aspects of stayers. The results were geared more towards the public debate on ‘stayers’. In my Master Thesis I looked at stayers from a more academic point of view: the results had to be positioned within a relevant theoretical framework and not so much just ‘say what I found’, but instead ‘say what I found in relation to the literature’. This difference between professional and academic work was new to me because I had never worked in a ‘professional’ environment before and as used to the ‘academic’ ways of doing research. Furthermore, the research process was very challenging. First, because I had not done any qualitative research in years; I had focused on statistical research. I had to get used again to doing interviews and the process of coding and writing out the results. In quantitative research you ‘now’ what your results mean once you have run the models, whereas in qualitative research you transcribe the interviews but that does not automatically generate the results for you; it is a much longer process to analyse and report your results. Finally, I have put a lot of work, hours, and effort in this document; I started (intensively) working on the master thesis by April 2018, and thus had five months to complete both my Research Internship and Master Thesis. I am confident that I can work well on my own, but I have also realized that I should ask for help when I am stuck, instead of staring at my work for days and then finally solving the problem. Asking for help may solve the issue faster.

### ***Other reflections and discussions***

I have kept a journal throughout the entire research process, which I will include here for an overview of my research process (see: next pages). It shows the different topics that I have considered, the steps that I have taken, the thought-processes that I went through, notes on some of the articles that I read, and tips on ‘how to write a method/result section’. I have also created multiple excel files: an entire literature overview and codebooks. I am willing to provide those on request, but the files are too big to include here.

Wanneer is men een 'blijver'?

1. Tijdsdimensie (1 of 10 jaar)
2. Plaatsdimensie (km, geboorteplek)
3. Wat is de natuurlijke staat?
4. Legtinvoerbegrijp of component van migratie?
5. immobiliteitsspecifiek
6. actieve participanten
7. drie types (Mata-radesal, 2018)

**DEFINITIE?** (Diddereen)  
 \* omtegens te "willen" blijven met het gebied  
 \* nieuwe aanwinsten op maar  
 \* constante/vergevend keuze  
 \* fluide sociale tussen  
 \* mensen / benodigdheden  
 \* "achterblijvers" maken het mogelijk voor migranten om connectie te behouden (Hjorthin)  
 \* lange familie-geschiedenis in het gebied (kapitaal)  
 \* sociale/familie-banden in het gebied zijn steek  
 \* aankruiser (Hjorthin)  
 \* Kyrn-hander (Muldus) en migranten status  
 \* actieve mensen op de arbeidsmarkt (Diddereen)

**ACTIEF PROCES**  
 \* constante/vergevend keuze  
 \* fluide sociale tussen  
 \* mensen / benodigdheden  
 \* "achterblijvers" maken het mogelijk voor migranten om connectie te behouden (Hjorthin)  
 \* lange familie-geschiedenis in het gebied (kapitaal)  
 \* sociale/familie-banden in het gebied zijn steek  
 \* aankruiser (Hjorthin)  
 \* Kyrn-hander (Muldus) en migranten status  
 \* actieve mensen op de arbeidsmarkt (Diddereen)

**BEWUSTE KEUZE**  
 \* wordt telkens opnieuw gemaakt  
 \* of: de marktelijke keuze → geen investering nodig in nieuw kapitaal (Kothari)  
 \* fluide tussen blijver en migranten status  
 \* OF: involuntary tied stayer (Cooke, 2018) (Mata-radesal, 2018)

**POSITIEVE GEVOLGEN**  
 \* verhuizen kost "kapitaal"  
 \* is het sterkst voor men al lang woont.  
 \* impact van blijven/oorzaak van blijven: het hebben van geen kapitaal  
 \* kans op blijven vergroot  
 \* OF: veelloop van tijd.  
 \* infrastructuur maakt het mogelijk om te wonen op een ander plek als waar men werkt

**ACTIEVE PARTICIPANTEN**  
 \* "achterblijvers" maken het mogelijk voor migranten om connectie te behouden (Hjorthin)  
 \* lange familie-geschiedenis in het gebied (kapitaal)  
 \* sociale/familie-banden in het gebied zijn steek  
 \* aankruiser (Hjorthin)  
 \* Kyrn-hander (Muldus) en migranten status  
 \* actieve mensen op de arbeidsmarkt (Diddereen)

**BEWUSTE KEUZE**  
 \* wordt telkens opnieuw gemaakt  
 \* of: de marktelijke keuze → geen investering nodig in nieuw kapitaal (Kothari)  
 \* fluide tussen blijver en migranten status  
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**POSITIEVE GEVOLGEN**  
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 \* impact van blijven/oorzaak van blijven: het hebben van geen kapitaal  
 \* kans op blijven vergroot  
 \* OF: veelloop van tijd.  
 \* infrastructuur maakt het mogelijk om te wonen op een ander plek als waar men werkt

**NO CAPITAL YES CAPITAL**  
 \* immaceen blijven  
 \* viciere artei  
 \* van regio-inhoud  
 \* positieve gevolgen  
 \* "berg stuk"  
 \* sterk sociaal kapitaal  
 \* opgebouwd

**DESTEP-methode Maastricht/Limburg**

Om de geografische en demografische context beter te illustreren van de case-study:

DESTEP-methode

- Demografisch
- Economisch
- Sociaal-Cultureel
- Technologisch
- Ecologisch
- Politiek-juridisch

\* hangt samen met de macro-niveau factoren die worden onderzocht in het artikel

**binnenlandsmigratie saldo = negatief**  
 ↳ behaue 15-20; 65-85

afgestudeerden = 20+  
 ↳ 20-65 = uitmigratie hoger dan in-migratie  
 ↳ grootste verschil in-/uit = 20-40 jaar  
 + verschil tussen de sexes

**Doelgroep:**

- \* 20 tot 40 jaar
- \* afgestudeerd van de universiteit
- \* sindsdien woonachtig in Maastricht (en niet wegverhuisd tot op heden).

1. geboren in Limburg
2. gestudeerd in Maastricht (hoeft niet)
3. afgestudeerd, woonend in Maastricht

**GEOGRAFISCHE CONTEXT**

1. Corop Zuid-Limburg
1. Beek
2. Brunssum
3. Eijsden-Margraten
4. Gulpen-Wittem
5. Heerlen
6. Landgraaf
7. Maastricht
8. Meerssen
9. Nuth
10. Kerkrade
11. Onderbanken
12. Schinnen
13. Simpelveld
14. Sittard-Geleen
15. Stein
16. Vaals
17. Valkenburg a/d Geul
18. Voerendaal

2. Provincie Limburg: 10 stedelijke gemeenten
1. Brunssum krimp Z-L Parkstad
2. Heerlen krimp Z-L Parkstad
3. Kerkrade krimp Z-L Parkstad
4. Landgraaf krimp Z-L Parkstad
5. Maastricht groei Z-L
6. Roermond groei Z-L
7. Sittard-Geleen krimp Z-L
8. Venlo groei Z-L
9. Venray groei Z-L
10. Weert groei Z-L

Om een artikel/blog te schrijven:

- \* belangrijk om een duidelijke boodschap te formuleren
- \* niet slechts een samenvatting *inhalen met*
- \* de kunst van het weglaten *onderzoek*
- *presentatie, artikel + blog op master niveau*
- ↳ *samenwerking met betrokkenen als dat gebied wordt genoemd. Context sociaal-economisch*
- ~~How to reach interviewees? ↳ jongeren / ambities~~
- \* ~~Have you graduated from university and since then lived in Maastricht?~~
- \* ~~Are you between the ages 20 and 40?~~
- \* ~~Kom jij uit Limburg en woon je, ten minste sinds het afstuderen, aan de universiteit, in Maastricht? Ben je tussen de 20 en de 40 jaar? En heb je ervaren dat vrienden en mede-afgestudeerden hun dromen na wilden jagen in 'De Grote Stad/Randstad'?~~
- \* ~~Vertel mij erover, ~~verhaal~~ en help me in een onderzoek naar de aantrekkingskracht van Maastricht onder universitaire-afgestudeerden.~~
- \* ~~Wat hebben we / wat bieden we~~
- \* ~~Life course: fertility~~
- \* ~~kader: dynamiek / Cop / brain drain~~
- ~~MAAR TOCH GELEVEN!~~

Feedback:

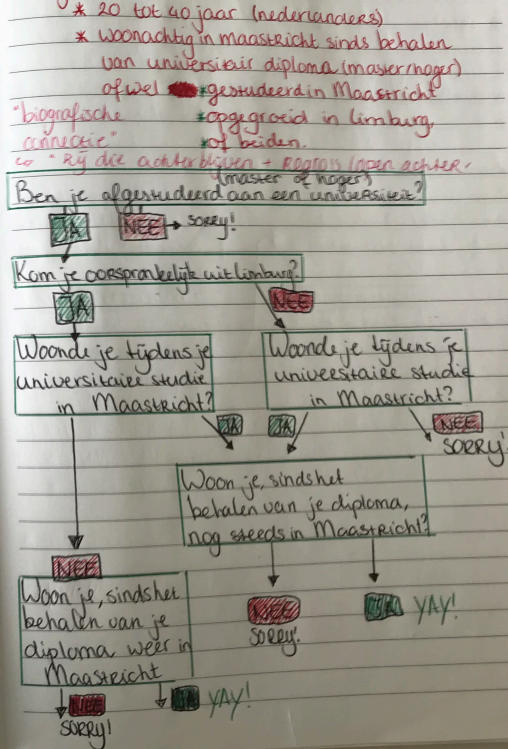
- \* duidelijk afbakenen (definitie) *binnen keerpunt gebied*
- \* duidelijke frames (explanatie)
- \* maatschappelijke en wetenschappelijke relevantie
- \* denk na over de boodschap (doelgroep)
- \* onthoud de hoofdvraag / keer terug
- \* format bepaakt het uiteindelijke rapport, maar niet het onderzoek
- \* de discussie op de "locals"!
- immobiliteit**
- analytisch ≠ normatief
- doel ≠ meer mensen**
- ↳ inzicht verkrijgen in immobiliteit en verandering en de mindset
- concepten etc.*
- \* place attachment
- \* economische factoren + discussie non-ec
- \* levensloop / life course (look: fertility)
- \* agency/structure
- Wat te doen met het kwantitatieve deel?**
- \* wat is de dynamiek van deze groep nou echt?
- \* beschrijvende / feitelijke statistieken.
- \*  **motiveer de keuzes:** probleem in Zuid-Limburg met mobiliteit
- BLYVERS:** de échte blyvers = met een biografie in Limburg/Maastricht
- mindset; partners, het leven gebeurt gewoon
- keuze; gebrek aan ambitie
- arbeid; studie en werk *Wat is de definitie*

(21)

Mogelijkheden om te interviewen:

- facebook*
  - \* Gabe Adams ✓
  - \* Nick Feijns ✓
  - \* Paul Pinxten ✓
  - \* ~~Evan Madsen~~ ✓
  - \* Benal Vanraes ✓
  - \* Dorcen Ewalds ✓
  - \* Charlotte Peters ✓
  - \* Maureen van Brandenburg ✓
  - \* Nize van der Peet ✓
- linkedin*
  - \* Esther Steenaert ✓
  - \* Nicol van Eldik ✓
  - \* Melissa Berards ✓
  - \* Simon Kindlyck ✓
  - \* Lotte Meurkens ✓
  - \* Doreen Ewalds ✓
  - \* Charlotte Peters ✓
  - \* Maureen van Brandenburg ✓
  - \* Nize van der Peet ✓
  - \* Jil Schreurs ✓
  - \* Kay Foutijn ✓
  - \* Peggy Muijters ✓
  - \* Floortje Bekius ✓
  - \* Sophie Thijs ✓
  - \* Marianne Schophuizen ✓
  - \* Kathleen Mertens ✓
  - \* Esmeralda Hendrix ✓
  - \* Geerke van der Meijden ✓
  - \* Ingrid M. Borty ✓
- \* eerste 10 mogelijk

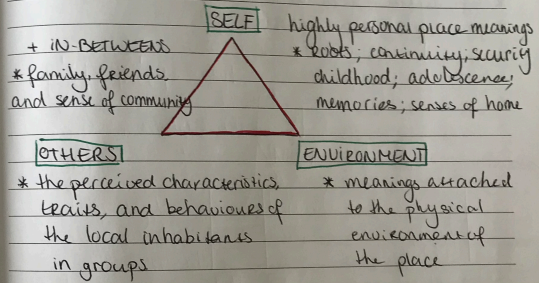
Doelgroep:



## Micro Meso Macro niveau

- \* Barcus & Weener 2017
- \* Gustafson 2002
- \* Barbeise & Spini 2015, 2017
- \* Coulter et al 2016

found first in ~~Stadler~~ Haarczen (success-failure)  
↳ Gustafson 2002: meanings of place



- \* conscious choice // passive
- \* active process // passive
- \* active participants // passive
- \* non-discrete // ~~non~~
- \* economic and non-economic
- \* life course → reoccurring
- \* past and future events

## Theory

- \* highly educated are highly mobile
- \* frequent long distances, during the life course, and towards the bigger cities
- \* reasons for migrating
- \* university graduates in Maastricht
  - \* 50% from outside of the Netherlands and thus very likely to move back
  - \* 50% Dutch, of which a large amount moves to the Randstad
- \* reasons/motives explained in economic terms but also non-economic motives are becoming apparent. micro meso macros
- \* life course provides good framework
- \* considers agency and structure
- \* still aspects unexplored: 2 causes + 2 education
- \* current focus on mobility: international migration is external (King & Skeldon) and internal is residential migration perspective neglects immobility.
- \* immobility perspective
  - \* multiple types and contexts
  - \* no definition
  - \* active process; conscious decision, reoccurring throughout the life course
- ↳ life course approach: agency / structure
- \* reasons/motives. ↳ methods.

## Methods

### CID:

- \* a life calendar + life stories/trajectories through open-ended interviews
- \* an interview guide
- \* a socio-demographic questionnaire
- \* a presentation document

### Beste

aan de hand van uw reactie op mijn bericht op LinkedIn, zou ik graag met u in contact komen. Op basis van een aantal diepte-interviews onderzoek ik de motieven van 'blijvers' in Maastricht.

De interviews vinden plaats in de loop van

melissa.gerards@outlook.com MG  
lottie.meurkens@hotmail.com LM

\* introductie: methode te uitgebreid

\* laatste

question naar boven.

- subquestions aims psychic.

- methods.

tenzij heel nieuw.

→ goed aanleiding; niet te veel detail.

→ Venhorst, zeker refereren.

→ tweede begeleider

assistent professor

ruraal, externe begeleider

Stockdale → geografisch context.

family roots: rootedness  
place attachment.

\* "blijvers".

Bijker e Maastricht

theory: life course and immobility,  
dieet het immobility onderzoek.

b. "eerst just happened

lazy negative

NMP // migration discourse

↳ immobility ≠ event

Halfacree: "just happened

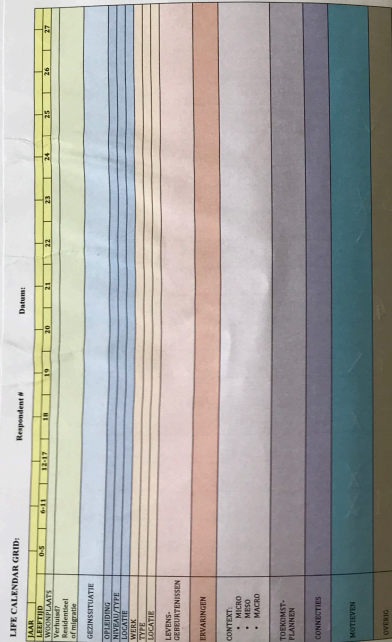
tegenover elkaar zetten van mobility  
en immobility → scherper.

"ted".

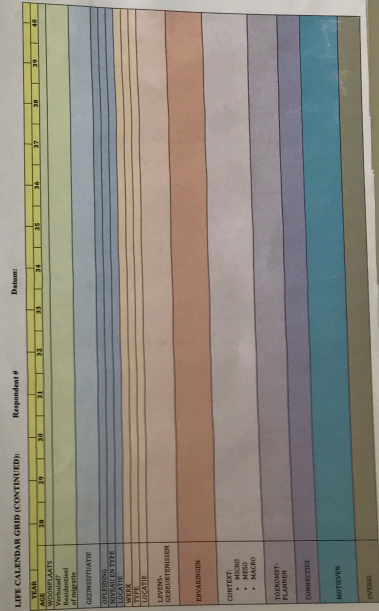
EVA: blijvers in het noorden gebieden.

Marsk. schalen ruraal/

# Life Calendar Grid.



# Life Calendar Grid (continued)



31-05-18

## Immobility among the highly mobile

\* Why do university graduates stay in Maastricht

- ① Internship: Limburgers, Maastricht
- ② thesis outsiders, Maastricht
- ③ PhD

What is the main reason for staying

how do the following factors influence the decision

\* past and future life events

\* micro, meso, macro influences

how do stayers employ the place-specific resources in Maastricht, to develop their own individual talents

Motivations for questions: non-economic motives

agency/structure

life course: linked lives and life events

contribute to "immobility perspective"

↳ active ~~stayers~~ participants

positive outcomes

deliberated throughout the life course

method: life calendar interviews

results: stayer-profiles



- \* everything has been transcribed / coded
- \* Simburgers have been analysed
- \* Rest needs to be analysed

- \* differences between members of the three target groups
- \* differences between three target groups + similarities!

## Immobility among the highly mobile

RD: Why do highly educated individuals stay in Maastricht after completing their university degrees?

subquestions:

- ① demographic background: How many people OR university graduates stay in Maastricht annually? Do these stayers have similar characteristics? Do the out-migration and stay trends vary over time?
- ② To what extent are the lives of stayers situated in Maastricht itself? (micro/meso/macro)
- ③ At what points during the life course do stayers decide to stay? Is it a conscious choice? What factors influence this decision? Primarily economic or social? Was it their intention?
- ④ What are the motives for staying in Maastricht? Are these motives primarily found on the micro, meso, or macro level? Are they fixed or do they change over time?
- ⑤ Do stayers intend to stay in Maastricht in the future? Why/Why not?
- ⑥ What is the impact or consequence of staying? On the micro, meso, macro level?

## ① Clerge et al.

### SAMPLE/DATA COLLECTION

- \* data introduction
- \* author/team approach
- \* case study justification
- \* target group / inclusion criteria
- \* recruiting
- \* test interviews
- \* interview questions → I need to elaborate because of LCG's
- \* recording etc
- \* demographic characteristics of sample

### ANALYTICAL APPROACH

- \* approach and steps
- \* excel

## ② Hjälm

### DATA AND METHODS

- \* no relative disclaimer

### SAMPLE, SAMPLING, RECRUITMENT

- \* opportunistic sampling
- \* explorative / validity
- \* recruiting (influence)
- \* inclusion justification
- \* sample/dem. char. city

### THE INTERVIEWS

- \* setting
- \* open-ended a+LCG
- \* digital/recording
- \* all done by author (influence)
- \* steps + translation
- \* thematic narr. analysis method
- \* limits / strengths

## How to write a method section/chapter

- \* based on journal articles in my literature review!

## ③ Preece

### METHOD

- \* data introduction
- \* case study justification + characteristics
  - ↳ declining/history/physiome/demographic
- \* retrospective data (but how else?)
- \* recruitment
- \* redress → also outcomes
- \* recorded, transcribed, analysed
- \* interview topics
- \* open / themes.

\* means that it is described in more than one article!  
\* specific for that article

## ④ Stockdale et al.

### METHODOLOGY

- \* data / case study introduction
- \* social constructivist definition
- \* recruitment
- \* influence: who wish to stay but couldn't
- \* limits of narratives
- \* native (Dutch) → setting + time of interviews
- \* semi-structured in-depth → LCG
- \* steps in analysis
- \* pseudonyms.

### How to write a results section?

- \* has to contain JUST the findings, without interpreting or placing them in the literature yet → that is supposed to happen in the discussion.
- \* most of the articles that I've read have around three subsections, each outlining a major overarching theme that was found in the respondents' narratives. The themes are explained by numerous quotes and a small story about the respondent or the context.
  - \* 3 themes
  - \* 3 types of people/respondents

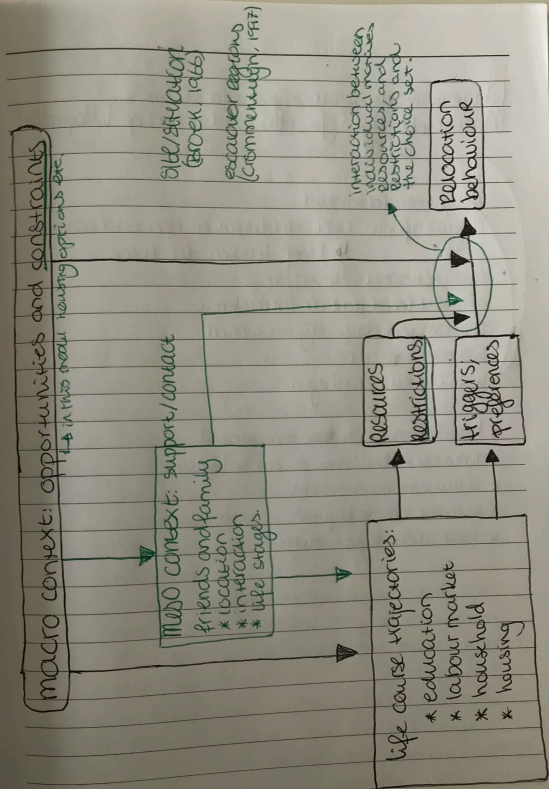
### make distinction between

- \* cohorts
- \* transitions
- \* trajectories
- \* life events
- \* turning points

micro context deals with their own macro context (opportunities and constraints) and life course trajectories.

but they can provide support and are either kept close or being visited.

→ specifically asking about how they play a role in 'staying'.



Waarom ik als recent afgestudeerde in Maastricht blijf? Ja, dat vind je niet op Wikipedia (lacht)

jonge studentenstad  
demografisch: veel studenten en veel ouderen  
↳ kloof tussen die twee

interviews met 24-40 jarigen  
afgestudeerd aan de universiteit  
sindsdien daar blijven wonen.  
Waarom?  
Wat zijn hun ervaringen?

- \* hoe leven ze in ~~aan~~ maastricht
- \* wanneer beslissen ze om te blijven
- \* waarom maastricht
- \* intentie om te blijven?
- \* wat doet blijven metje?

## BLOG

13 augustus interview  
14 augustus publicatie  
info: maja op vakantie van 2 tot 28 augustus

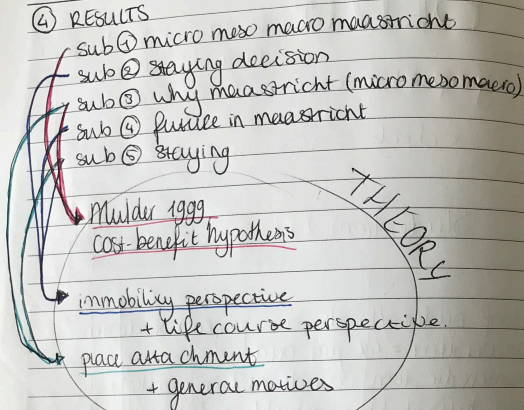
\* check sabine meijer over nieuwkomers

Student(en) Stad "Heinlimbos"

kloof ouderen/locals en jongeren/studenten  
universiteit = 42 jaar oud  
mensen die toen door de rust en gezelligheid  
een huis hebben gekocht in Maastricht  
die balen vast

- huisfeesten, straten met voornamelijk  
studenten drukke binnenstad ook brede  
door het toerisme dat steeds meer  
aan trekt.
- in andere studentensteden kun je ook niet  
meer "oud" worden in het centrum,  
daarvoor ga je naar een buitengebied  
van de stad.
- maarja dat wisten zij niet toen
- we zijn die switch nog aan het maken  
in Maastricht, om ~~er~~ een studentenstad  
van te maken, het is nog jong, dat heeft tijd nodig  
→ en dan ook nog cultureel verschillend!

### ④ RESULTS



### ⑤ DISCUSSION

- \* what does it all mean?
- \* use of life calendar grid?

### ⑥ CONCLUSION

- \* answer to the research questions
- \* further research
- \* implications?

## ● Outline Master Thesis!

### ① INTRODUCTION

- \* problem of out-migration in Maastricht
- \* but some stay (NL, BE) + lim
- \* research questions

### ② THEORY / LITERATURE

- \* move if better elsewhere  
↳ so, stay if current place is good?
- sub ① \* place attachment
- sub ② \* staying ≠ immobility ≠ opposite of mobility  
= active process / choice  
≠ absence of movement
- sub ③ \* motives  
\* future intentions  
\* staying impact  
\* life course perspective

### ③ METHODS AND DATA

- \* sample and case study
- \* life calendar interviews
- \* analytical approach

## New outline for THEORY

### ① immobility and staying processes

1.1 The immobility perspective versus the mobility perspective

1.2 Stayers and the staying process

A. the decision-making process

B. a life course perspective

C. place matters.

## RESULTS

### ① results

1.1 the staying process

A. the decision

B. the future

C. the consequence

1.2 the life course in Maastricht

1.3 Maastricht of all process



## RESULTS

### ① the decision / the staying process

\* not looking actively

for opportunities elsewhere

\* no triggers to leave

\* enough resources in current place

\* these have existed

↳ all have considered leaving

for different reasons

but they have not led to actual

moving behaviour since graduating

\* coincidental circumstances

\* moving/staying motives may vary

\* could've been different

→ and may change over the life course

no triggers to leave (now)

possibly triggers in the future

have experienced triggers in the past

→ now no moving behaviour

but could be in the future

conscious deliberation at specific

moments in time

multiple times

can have different outcome

"unforeseen" coincidental arbitrary

- micro: triggers  
 preferences motives
- macro: ① resources  
 ② restrictions  
 ③ opportunities  
 ④ constraints

**MAASTRICHT MATTERS**

- spatial dimension to staying
- \* periphery site
- \* urban
- \* macro/maastricht starts to matter more over time/grows → rooting/home
- \* micro education ①
- job ②
- housing ③
- households
- \* meso context is difficult.
- Comparison to other places.
- place matters in the life course
- ↳ different over time

**Results section 4.3**

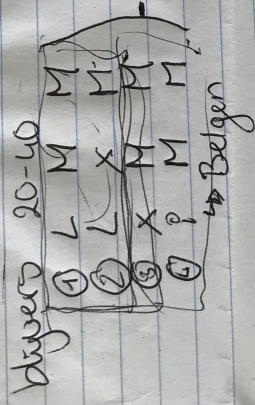
"Place matters, Maastricht matters"

- ① D&S between target groups.
  - ↳ origin matters. SITUATION
  - \* limburgers work in politics/policy/culture less pronounced ↳ very local attitude among Belgium and others.
  - \* rooting/feeling at home?
- ② Place-specific characteristics
  - ↳ Physical environment SITE
- ③ MESO context inclusion?
  - ↳ social environment
  - \* friends: a reason to move?

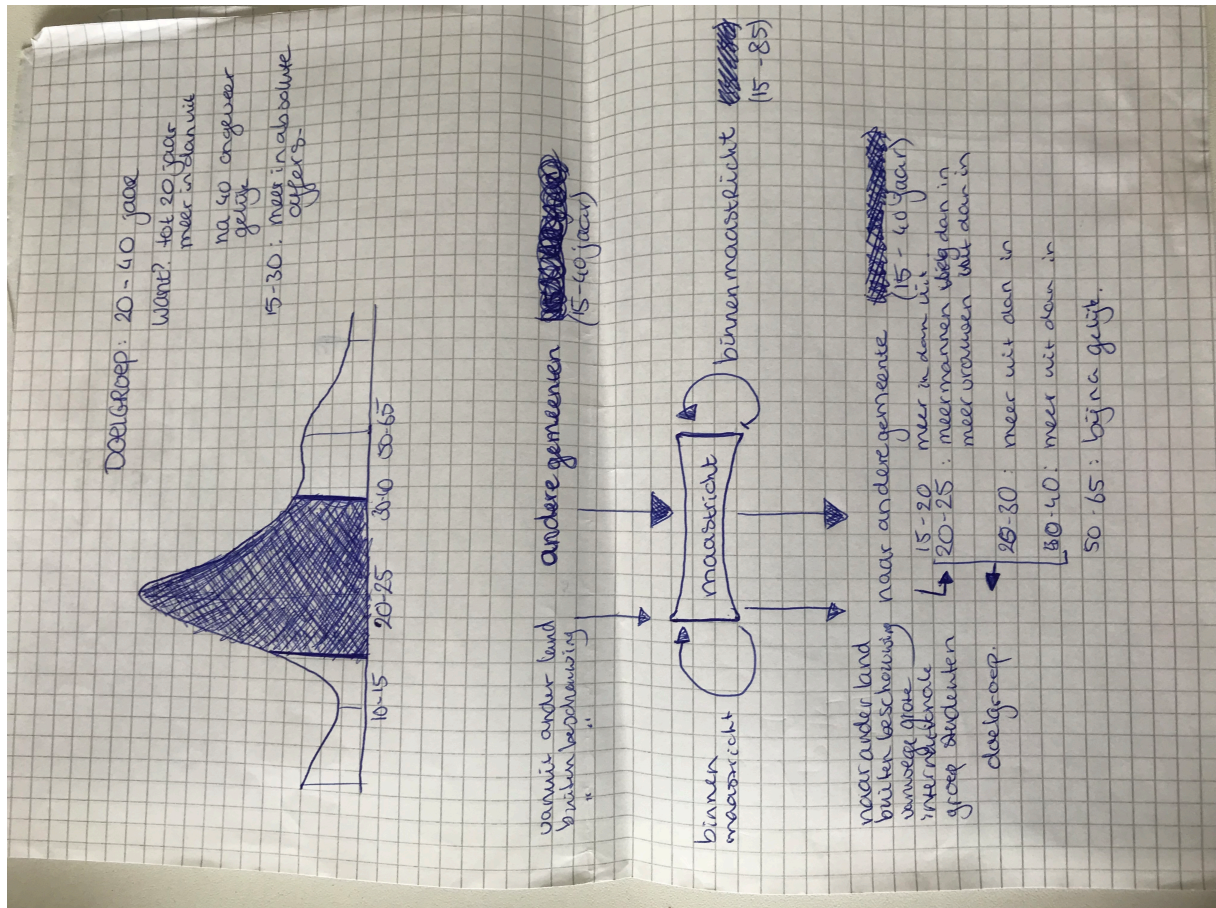
90 min.

over de tool:

- \* als intervieweer in vullen
- \* mee denken = heel prettig
- \* aanwijzen + aivast over het volgende-onderwerp.
- \* zeer specifiek: herinneringen
  - ↳ terug rekenen, ook als men het niet meer wist
  - ↳ op basis van jaren of tussen momenten in.
- \* overzichtelijke voor beide partijen
- nu nog zien hoe het van pas komt in de analyse.
- leren atlas. i.

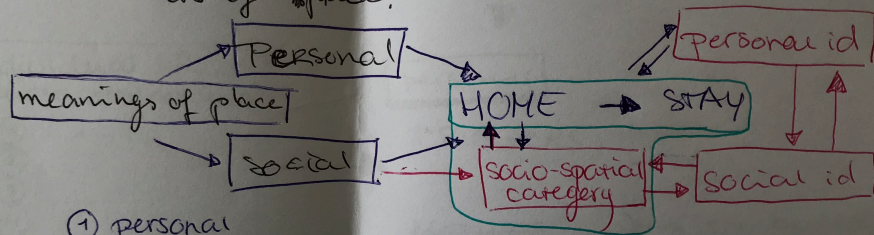


houd het bleen := open coderen.  
 open en theoretische codes.

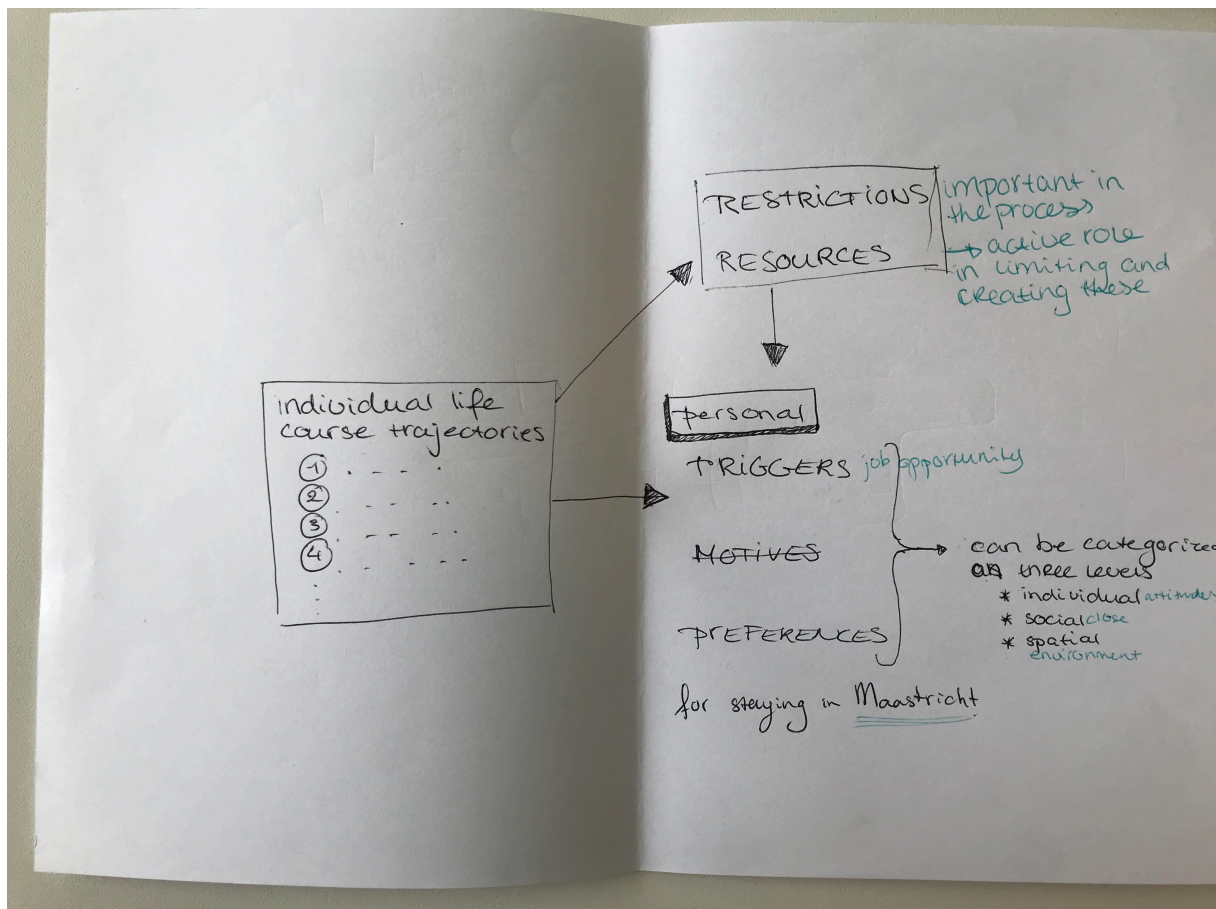
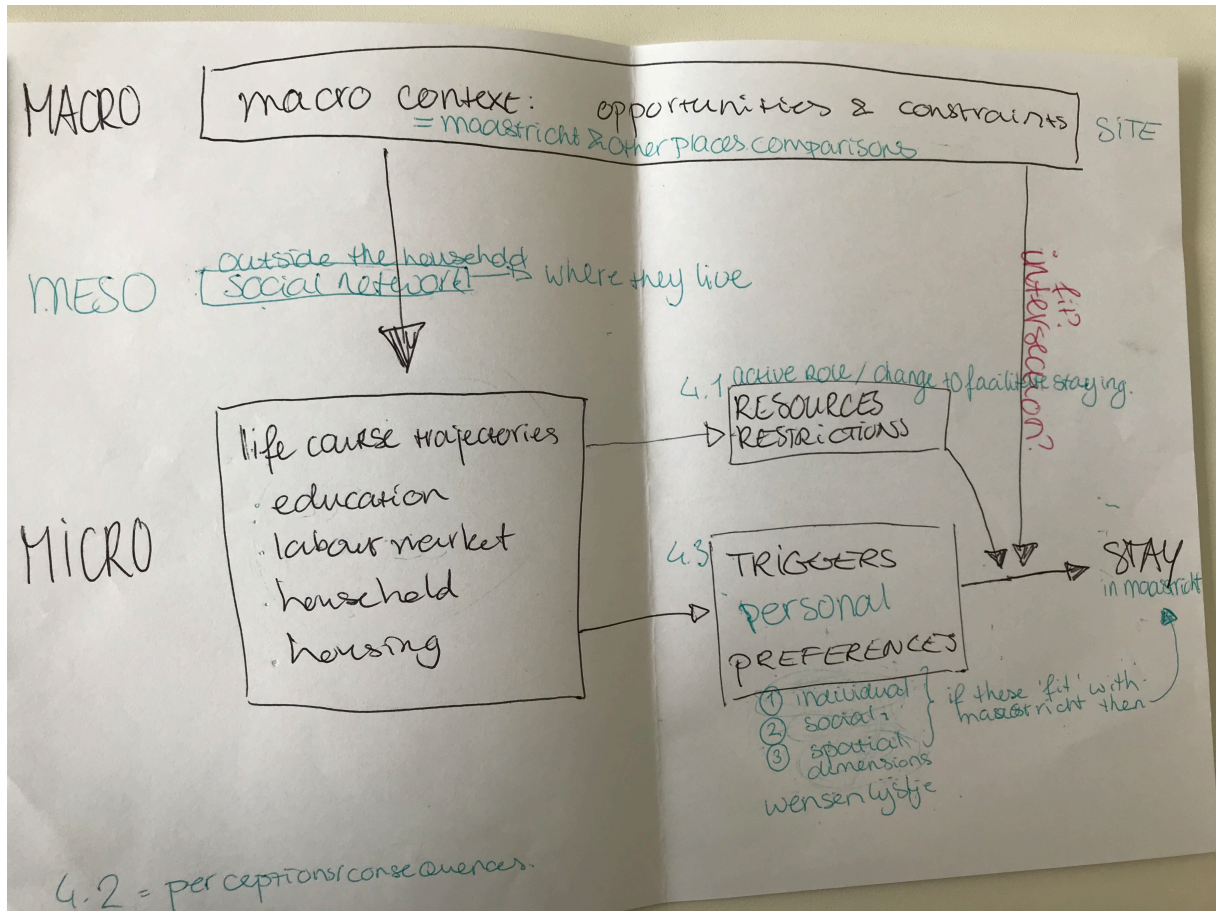


What is absent from this literature is how aspects of place interact with the staying process

↳ What are the stayers' personal moments of place?



- ① personal
- ② social
- ③ both.



## APPENDIX 5: Logbook

Week	Main activities
Week 15	<p>First week at Neimed; start thinking about the research questions and setting up a start-document/proposal</p> <p><b>Skype with Tialda Haartsen</b></p> <p>Looking up demographic statistics to find a good case study</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Deciding on the topic</b></li> <li>• <b>Deciding on the case study (Maastricht)</b></li> <li>• <b>Deciding on the research question</b></li> </ul>
Week 16	<p>Work on proposal for Master Thesis</p> <p>Meeting with supervisors at Neimed</p>
Week 17	<p>Work on proposal for Master Thesis</p> <p>Meeting with supervisors at Neimed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Deciding on the research question</b></li> <li>• <b>Choosing the criteria for inclusion</b></li> <li>• <b>Choosing the correct recruitment process</b></li> </ul>
Week 18	<p>Finished proposal</p> <p>Recruiting interviewees via public post on LinkedIn.com</p> <p>Designing the Interview Guide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Deciding on the type of interview</b></li> <li>• <b>Deciding on an interview guide, information letter, and informed consent form</b></li> <li>• <b>Designing the life calendar grid</b></li> </ul>
Week 19	<p>Designing the Interview Guide</p> <p>Reaching out to potential interviewees</p> <p><b>Skype with Tialda Haartsen</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Deciding on the type of interview</b></li> <li>• <b>Deciding on an interview guide, information letter, and informed consent form</b></li> <li>• <b>Designing the life calendar grid</b></li> </ul>
Week 20	<p>Planning interviews with respondents</p> <p>Designing the Interview Guide</p> <p>Designed the Informed Consent letter</p> <p>Designed the Information letter</p> <p>Did some test interviews</p> <p>Meeting with supervisors at Neimed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Deciding on an interview guide, information letter, and informed consent form</b></li> <li>• <b>Designing the life calendar grid</b></li> </ul>
Week 21	<p>Prepare for interviews</p> <p>Conduct interview #1 to #5</p> <p>Transcribe interviews</p>
Week 22	<p>Transcribe interviews</p> <p>Reflect on the method based on meeting with supervisor at Neimed</p> <p>Reflect on some of the preliminary results</p> <p>Evaluate Research Internship with Gerd Weitkamp</p>



Week 23	Transcribe interviews Conduct interview #6 to #9
Week 24	Transcribe interviews Conduct interview #10
Week 25	Transcribe interviews Conduct interview #11 and interview #12
Week 26	Transcribe interviews Conduct interview #13 <b>28<sup>th</sup> of June:</b> Graduate Research Day. Presented my preliminary findings by means of a PowerPoint presentation.
Week 27	Transcribe interviews Last week at Neimed
Week 28	Transcribe interviews
Week 29	Transcribe interviews Conduct interview #14 & interview #15 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Once the interviews had been conducted and transcribed; starting the coding process</b></li> </ul>
Week 30	Transcribe final two interviews Write results section <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Once the interviews had been conducted and transcribed; starting the coding process</b></li> <li>• <b>Deciding on the final themes for the results</b></li> </ul>
Week 31	Write results section and edit methods section
Week 32	Write results section and edit theory section
Week 33	Write results section <b>13<sup>th</sup> of August: my blog was published</b> (including some of my findings) on the website of Neimed
Week 34	<b>20<sup>th</sup> of August: handed in draft to Tialda Haartsen</b> Write results section and edit entire document
Week 35	Writing final sections (4.3 and conclusion) <b>28th of August: I presented some of my findings at the ‘Krimplezing’</b> in Heerlen. This conference was organized by Neimed. The supervisors of my internship had asked me to provide the final reflection at the end of the afternoon. <b>Handed in my final draft to Tialda Haartsen</b> Edited the entire document <b>31st of August: FINAL DEADLINE</b>