

From Segregation to Stakeholder Collaboration

The relationship between students and local residents influenced by studentification



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Abstract

A recognized phenomenon in student cities is studentification, which is seen as the process of more incoming students into local communities. It is argued that these students have little interest in the local residents which can cause tensions that influence the student-local resident relationship due to different expectations. This study investigates how studentification influences this relationship in Groningen and how it can be improved utilizing stakeholder participation. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 11 participants. The results indicated that tensions indeed arose between the students and local residents. This paper concludes that stakeholder collaboration between governmental and non-governmental parties is needed to improve the student-local resident relationship, and thereby the social cohesion.

Outline

1.	Introduction.....	3
	1.1 Studentification introduced	3
	1.2 Studentification in Groningen	3
	1.3 Research problem.....	4
	1.4 Structure of the thesis.....	4
2.	Theoretical framework.....	5
	2.1 Impacts of studentification	5
	2.2 The student bubble	5
	2.3 Local authorities	6
	2.4 Stakeholder collaboration	7
	2.5 Conceptual model	8
3.	Methodology	9
	3.1 Data collection and sample strategy	9
	3.2 Data analysis.....	9
	3.3 Research ethics.....	10
4.	Results	11
	4.1 Problems, experiences, and interests	12
	4.2 Stakeholder participation.....	13
5.	Discussion	16
6.	Conclusion	18
	6.1 Studentification	18
	6.2 Limitations and future research recommendations.....	18
7.	References.....	19
8.	Annex.....	22
	A. Interview guides	22
	B. Informed consent	25
	C. Code tree.....	26

1. Introduction

1.1 Studentification introduced

The number of students enrolled at Dutch universities have increased more in recent years. The academic year of 2018-2019 saw an increase of 5%, which is higher than the expected 2%. This growth can be explained by an increased intake from VWO and HBO, additionally increasing numbers of international students (AD, 2018; NOS, 2018). Not only are more students joining universities, Dutch students also take longer on average to complete their studies (Oosterbeek and van den Broek, 2009). Fincher and Shaw (2009) argue that from the mid-2000s onward people are realizing that students are becoming key actors of change in which they can act as triggers and consumers of urban regeneration. Due to the increase in the number of students, universities are often unable to provide sufficient institutional accommodation. As a result, more often it can be seen that students must find their accommodation in the private rental sector (Munro and Livingston, 2012). According to Goddard and Vallance (2013), regular disagreements between universities and local communities usually concern the number of students who live in the city's residential areas. This high number of students who live in local neighborhoods can cause tensions between students and permanent residents. The phenomenon of more incoming students in local communities is referred to as studentification. In this paper, studentification will be defined as the process through which traditional residential neighborhoods are transformed by a growing and more concentrating student population (Goddard and Vallance, 2013; Lager and Hoven, 2019).

Kenyon (1997) states that it is important to keep an eye on students. If the social impact of this subgroup is not considered, the community relationship is in danger of neglecting. These changes in the composition of the population in university cities can cause a negative student-local resident relationship which significantly impacts the cultural climate. As a result, barriers to communication are build which creates a catalyst effect for conflict and thereby impact the city's social cohesion (Foley, 2016). Russo et al. (2003) argue that the challenge lies in finding the right balance between the needs and ambitions of students and the policy targeting the local population. However, literature is focused on the social effects of students living in local neighborhoods but lacks understanding of the issue of social segregation between students and local residents (Goddard and Vallance, 2013). Therefore, research requires more information about the impacts of the mass student population and how to improve the quality of living together for every citizen.

1.2 Studentification in Groningen

Groningen is a city known as a thriving university city with over 50 thousand students (Groningen, 2020). One in four residents is a student, making Groningen one of the youngest cities in the Netherlands with an average age of 36 (RUG, 2020). However, this popularity has its downside. Students are scattered all over the city which leads to annoyance among the traditional residents. In some areas, this has even led to requests for a stop on students in local neighborhoods and asking the municipality to intervene. In Groningen students partly determine the street scene and housing market (Broekema, 2010). An earlier study showed that although people in Groningen generally enjoy living in their street, tensions between students and local residents do indeed arise. Usually, these arose from the different needs. Local residents, for example, were more in need of a green and clean street, while students shared the wish for more bicycle parking facilities. Having little contact together with clashing needs makes it difficult to take each other into account, which can reduce the enjoyment of residence (Rauws and Meelker, 2019).

Although traditionally, Groningen is a city where everyone lives together, measures are needed. Pleasant cohabitation of students and local residents is not self-evident. It requires commitment from these two groups themselves, but commitment from the municipality and the university is also desirable (Rauws and Meelker, 2019). Although the councilors of Groningen are happy with the

students as they contribute to the urban economy and atmosphere, their main concern is to keep the supply of rooms equal to the large influx of students. Thereby, it is important to guarantee the quality of living for every resident by identifying the needs of each involved party and working together (Broekema, 2010).

1.3 Research problem

As mentioned before, research about creating optimal coinciding living conditions for students and local residents is minimal. Both stakeholders, students and local residents, will have conflicting interests, but also local authorities may have regulations to handle these kinds of issues. This is important to consider when addressing this problem. It is important to look at this relationship by bringing these stakeholders together and to ultimately look at how this relationship can improve. In this paper, the relationship between the students and local population of Groningen will be studied to see what the influence is of more incoming students on this relationship, thereby focusing on stakeholder participation. Stakeholders will include interested and/or affected independent parties, including both governmental and nongovernmental representatives (Horangic et al., 2016). To research this issue the following main research question is asked:

'How does studentification in Groningen influence the student-local resident relationship and how can this relationship be improved?'

Three sub-questions are studied in order to find answers that can help to resolve the main research question:

1. Why and which problems are arising between students and local residents when living together?
2. Which role do students, local residents, local authorities, and other organizations have and how do they deal with these conflicting interests?
3. How can one mitigate the conflicting interests of the students and local residents?

1.4 Structure of the thesis

This paper is structured into four sections. In the first part, the theoretical framework is explained where multiple aspects and theories about studentification will be analyzed. The second part describes the methodology used in the research which includes the data collection, data analysis and ethical considerations. In the third part, the main results of the collected data are presented. The fourth part will discuss the results with the presented literature from the theoretical framework. In the fifth part, the results are concluded next to discussing the limitations and further research considerations.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Impacts of studentification

Groups of students cluster because of the concentrating effect of the time and space framework of the university. This means that the university regulates spatially based on the academic calendar and campus which ensures that students cluster in a community (Chatterton, 2000). In some cities, this meant that parts of neighborhoods were devoted to student facilities only (Wright, 1994) and this can have consequences for the local community. Allinson (2006) states that the more students come, the greater the desire of families to eventually move. Therefore, universities cannot ignore their involvement in the city where they are located (Goddard, 1997); stakeholder participation between these two parties is important for the student-local resident relationship. Therefore, this relationship will be seen as an interaction that is mutual dependent. Chatterton (2000) states that traditional universities and students are often viewed separately from the community in a town; the university is seen to be 'in' a city rather than 'of' a city. Therefore, the students and local residents need to add value to each other to improve their relations and to deal with conflicting interests when living next to each other (van der Sijde et al., 2002). Stakeholder participation is mostly seen as a general acceptance in these kind of situations; however, it is not always clear what it means and can do.

Foley (2016) makes a distinction between two types of conflict: the institutional conflict and the student conflict. The institutional conflict refers to the overarching problems of the relationship between the city and the university. Universities claim that they give back to the community more than they could express in taxes, however, town officials do mostly see the negative impacts of having a university in town. The student conflict refers to the problems that occur due to the individual student behaviors in their own type of community relations.

The consequences of studentification on neighborhoods can be noticed on multiple areas: economic (e.g. inflation of property prices and restructuring of the housing stock due to demand for student housing), social (e.g. local residents are displaced by the students resulting in social concentration and segregation), cultural (e.g. clustering of students lead to facilities linked to young people and loss of physical environment), and physical (e.g. houses are converted to student housing which can lead to late nights with noise, alcohol use, litter, and anti-social students) (Allison, 2016; Smith, 2005). When this happens, multiple authors refer to the invasion of students, student ghettos, or even devastating effects on the community (Benjamin, 2001; Curtis, 2005; Taylor, 2003; Harris & McVeigh, 2002). However, students can also cause positive impacts, these include: spending power effects, injecting value to the housing market, creating a thriving community and city, fulfilling jobs and volunteer work. This mixed behavior of students to communities is a common thread in literature (Chatterton, 2000; Hubbard, 2008; Melfi, 2008; Schofer and Meyer, 2005; Smith et al., 2014). However, one must keep in mind that the student-local resident relationship can be complex and the effects of studentification can take different forms depending on various components (Anvi and Alfasi, 2018).

2.2 The student bubble

Avni and Alfasi (2018) refer to the current situation that is created by students as the 'student bubble'. This describes an area with high concentrations of students gathering where they engage little with local residents and the city and quickly leave after graduation. This is seen as a vicious circle; the more student-oriented an area becomes, the more students will be attracted to this vibrant and safe environment, and the fewer students will integrate into the local community. It is then argued that when students take this permanent form when shaping the urban space by not investing in the local environment, the city itself does not have interests anymore in these student-oriented areas. In this way, students get excluded and their needs are overlooked. This will then reduce the chance of positive contacts between students and local residents and maybe in an even worse relationship (Avni and

Alfasi, 2018). Therefore, it is important to look at the perspectives and desires of both stakeholders and the social gaps between them.

Students usually isolate themselves from the city and residents to increase ease and accessibility to the university (Holdsworth, 2009). In a stakeholder survey by Allinson (2006) asking where students like to live, the most common answer was in close proximity to the university. Next to this, students prefer to live in purpose-built housing in neighborhoods already populated by other students, but also want to have space, freedom and enjoy neighbors with the same lifestyle. Meanwhile, students often do not worry about maintaining their rented house, paying bills separately or making noise (Hatch et al., 2015). However, students are often seen as a social actor. They are expected to revitalize an environment because they are young and highly educated and can therefore produce meaningful changes (Hubbard, 2008; Smith 2005). However, this overlooks the residents' perspectives.

Local residents are ambivalent about the presence of students. Therefore, it can be seen that local residents do not always form a united front against the arrival of students (Avni and Alfasi, 2018; Hubbard, 2008). Local residents attach great importance to privacy, personal choice, control, and security when it comes to expectations of their home and neighborhood. These values can be undermined by the presence of students. Locals also find the social and economic value and the general image of the neighborhood important, which often extends beyond the immediate surroundings. Residents who have invested socially in their neighborhood and financially in their home are therefore often concerned about the problems that arise with the arrival of students. These concerns are expressed in the presentation of properties and in the local reputation of the neighborhood. It is therefore important to resolve these feelings of dissatisfaction and concerns of local residents together with the students (Kenyon, 1997).

2.3 Local authorities

This growing divide between students and local residents when living together is facing serious challenges especially at administrative level (Hatch et al., 2015). The question remains who should be responsible for maintaining the student-local resident relationship and the associated problems in student-oriented areas (Foley, 2016). The reluctance of the term studentification in central government has to do with the negative undertone of the word that is perpetuated by the national media. However, for many other stakeholders, such as local councilors, local government, university officials, local community activists and private-sector actors, it has a social and cultural significance (Smith, 2008). According to them, it shows a process of urban change by one sub-group. More specifically, Aalst et al. (2014) has shown that residents believe that not only the municipality, policymakers, and administrators but also the owners of student residences should be involved in tackling student nuisance. Reciprocal efforts by all stakeholders are required to take advantage of the present students (Avni and Alfasi, 2018).

Attracting students is seen as an understandable policy goal for urban renewal (Avni and Alfasi, 2018). However, policymakers should focus more on the needs of existing residents. This makes the city indirectly more attractive for students to come and possibly to stay long-term. This can break the vicious circle. However, the impression remains that students are only temporary residents and cannot be part of the local community. But when they become part of the local community, they can act as driving forces of urban development and change (Russo et al., 2003). This raises the question of how students themselves, or together with other organizations, can contribute to improving the relationship between them, the city and its local residents. According to Russo et al. (2003), to establish empathy between students and local residents, students can organize events or activities alongside organizations.

2.4 Stakeholder collaboration

The process of studentification has a growing understanding in the literature but can not be seen as a homogenized phenomenon. When focusing on the neighborhood level a different range of factors might occur, therefore, studentification is seen as context-specific (Avni and Alfasi, 2018; Hubbard, 2008). This makes a general approach for mitigating between conflicting interests of students and local residents more difficult. According to the stakeholder theory, there should be a relationship between, in this case, the university and all stakeholders. All interested parties that interact with students are seen as stakeholders. It can be seen that all stakeholders are mutually dependent on one another (Foley, 2016). Local residents do not want students to cause a nuisance, while students expect education and a safe living environment. The university and policymakers are the ones who are responsible for the well-being of both groups. According to Foley (2016), it is crucial for the relationship to solve time-sensitive problems as quickly as possible.

Aderinto (2014) found communication among stakeholders to be the most important for creating success. Collaboration strategies are therefore seen as most successful in solving problems between different stakeholders. Creating common and compatible goals that align priorities can be seen as a win-win situation. One of the cooperation strategies is collaborative communication, such as having regular contact and setting up joint projects (Foley, 2016). Personal relationships and open communication can, therefore, ensure a positive relationship between the city and the university (Burns, 2002).

However, Bowen (2005) goes a step further concerning stakeholder collaboration at community level. It can be seen as a strategy that can be used in the process of social change to improve the community bond and addressing social problems when using an integrative approach. Collaboration is also seen as more than just communication and knowledge sharing. The goal of collaboration must provide a shared vision to create common strategies that help tackle problems that cannot be solved when acting alone. It is important that each party in this mutual relationship shares responsibility, values, norms, and authority.

Bowen (2005) identifies four steps in what he calls development-focused collaboration:

1. *Identifying the community problems and setting priorities* based on existing conditions and interests of the stakeholders.
2. *Motivating and mobilizing stakeholders* for the proposed joint projects.
3. *Working together* when implementing the project.
4. *Creating an enabling environment* where local stakeholders will be heard in the future.

The underlying idea of this model states that collaboration between stakeholders increases the productivity of resources and thereby creates a foundation for community-driven development. This development is based on a people-oriented approach whereby local stakeholders jointly set up projects that ensure social change. Involvement of each stakeholder is therefore considered important.

2.5 Conceptual model

Based on the theoretical framework, this study expects that students can positively influence the relationship between them and the local residents. When all stakeholders work together this will lead to an improved student-local resident relationship and social cohesion between all residents. In figure 1, the conceptual model is visualized in which the main concepts and relationships regarding this research are presented. It displays the student bubble which can be seen as a vicious circle. When the process of studentification continues to occur, the integration of students with local residents will not be achieved. This can have economic, social, physical, and cultural consequences. In order to escape from this vicious circle and to improve the student-local resident relationship effective stakeholder collaboration is needed.

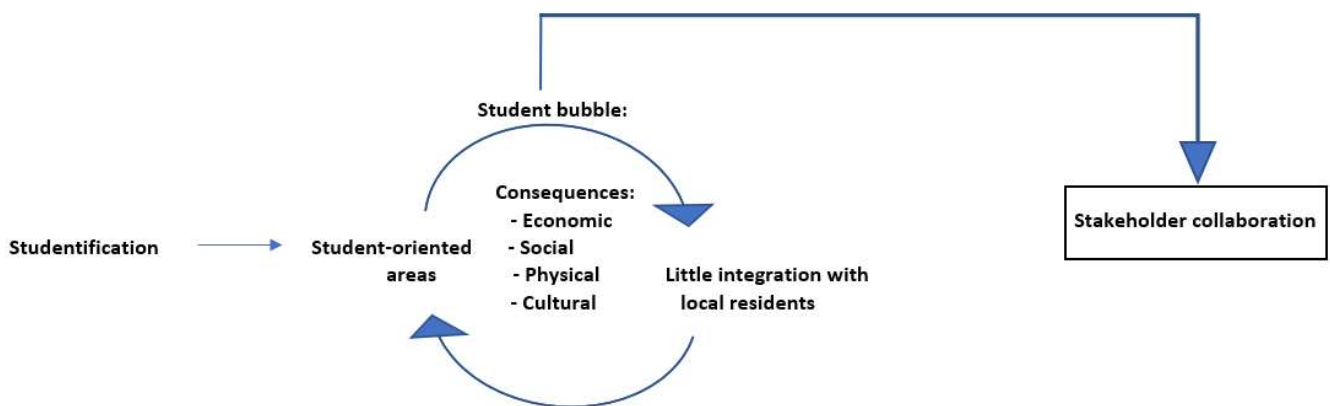


Figure 1. Conceptual model

3. Methodology

3.1 Data collection and sample strategy

Based on the above-mentioned research questions and literature this study conducted a qualitative research method with the help of in-depth semi-structured interviews. This qualitative method helps to explore the interpretations and meanings of the stakeholders regarding the subject without imposing a prior categorization (Punch, 2014). Due to the semi-structured form of the interviews, there was left some space to talk freely about related subjects which gained a greater amount of detail. This increased the validity of the research (Punch, 2014). Also in this way, the interviewer had the option to expand on certain questions to clarify particular points and to go further into depth.

A total of 11 in-depth interviews were conducted which lasted between 20 and 90 minutes and took place between March 25th until July 2nd, 2020. Selecting participants took place online or by directly sending an email to the stakeholder concerned. Due to the current circumstances (i.e. COVID-19) meeting in person was not an option, therefore all interviews were done by telephone. The interviews were done with purposefully selected participants, considering that certain stakeholders are specific to the research problem and therefore a non-probability sampling strategy is used (Burt et al., 2009).

To get deeper information, special attention was paid to the primary stakeholders. Students were selected based on two criteria: attending higher education and living in a neighborhood alongside local residents in the city of Groningen. Local residents were selected based on three criteria: not attending higher education, living in a neighborhood along students in the city of Groningen, and living there or wanting to live there for a longer amount of time. Multiple of these primary stakeholders were interviewed to get a broader perspective of these groups. The secondary stakeholders included WIJS, Student & Stad, and the municipality of Groningen.

The answers to the interview questions helped to gain further insight into the student-local resident relationship and the problem of studentification in Groningen from the perspectives of multiple stakeholders. The data gathered from the interviews included experiences and opinions from people living in a mixed neighborhood. But also included information about studentification from different stakeholders that helped to strengthen the relationship or wanted to solve the problems of studentification in Groningen.

3.2 Data analysis

After conducting the interviews, the recordings of the interviews were transcribed. After the transcribed documents were scanned and checked, relevant information was coded and grouped in relevant themes using predefined codes based on existing academic literature and expectations. The type of analysis that was used was grounded theory (Punch, 2014). The codes were made prior to the in-depth interviews, however, some of the codes were adjusted based on the information gained from the interviews making it inductive codes instead of deductive codes (Appendix C). By using these codes and associated themes, it became easier to make theoretical comparisons. The conceptualization and examination of the results were done with the help of Atlas.ti. To report the most important findings of the conducted data, quotes of the interviews were used. To guarantee the privacy and anonymity of the participants when using quotes, pseudonyms were used throughout the whole paper.

3.3 Research ethics

Before conducting the interviews, the participants received an informed consent that contained information about the interview (Appendix B). In this way, the participant had time to think about participating and could ask questions about the research. In the informed consent the purpose of the research, how the data will be used (i.e. educational purposes), and that the data will not be shared or published was clearly stated. In addition, participation was always voluntary and anonymous. Furthermore, participants could stop the interview or not answer a particular question, without giving an explanation, when unexpected emotions came up or sensitive topics are discussed. Also, an additional question was asked to record the audio of the interview. Before starting the interview, the informed consent was signed by the participant and researcher to ensure confidentiality and trust (Clifford et al., 2016).

The interviews were conducted objectively, to ensure that participants were not influenced by the researcher. The researcher was considered an outsider of the participant's story. And to ensure the reliability, all interviews followed the same procedure (Punch, 2014).

Another important factor that was taken into account when working with private information is data storage (Clifford et al., 2016). The participants were assured that all the collected data will remain locked during the whole process and that the audio will be deleted after the research is finished.

4. Results

The following section will be based upon the main results gathered using the in-depth interviews. In total eight primary stakeholders (students and local residents) and three secondary stakeholders (WIJS, Student & Stad and the municipality of Groningen) were interviewed. WIJS (Wijk Inzet Jongeren en Studenten) is a project that tries to connect students and local residents through the efforts of students. Student & Stad is a political party in Groningen that stands up for the interests of students. In tables 1 and 2 (page 15), one can see the main results and characteristics of all participants, which will be further elaborated on in the next paragraphs. Figure 2 shows the residential neighborhood of the primary stakeholders. In these neighborhoods the students and local residents live in the same community. One can see that all primary participants came from a different neighborhood except two students who both live in the Oosterparkwijk, although in a different street.

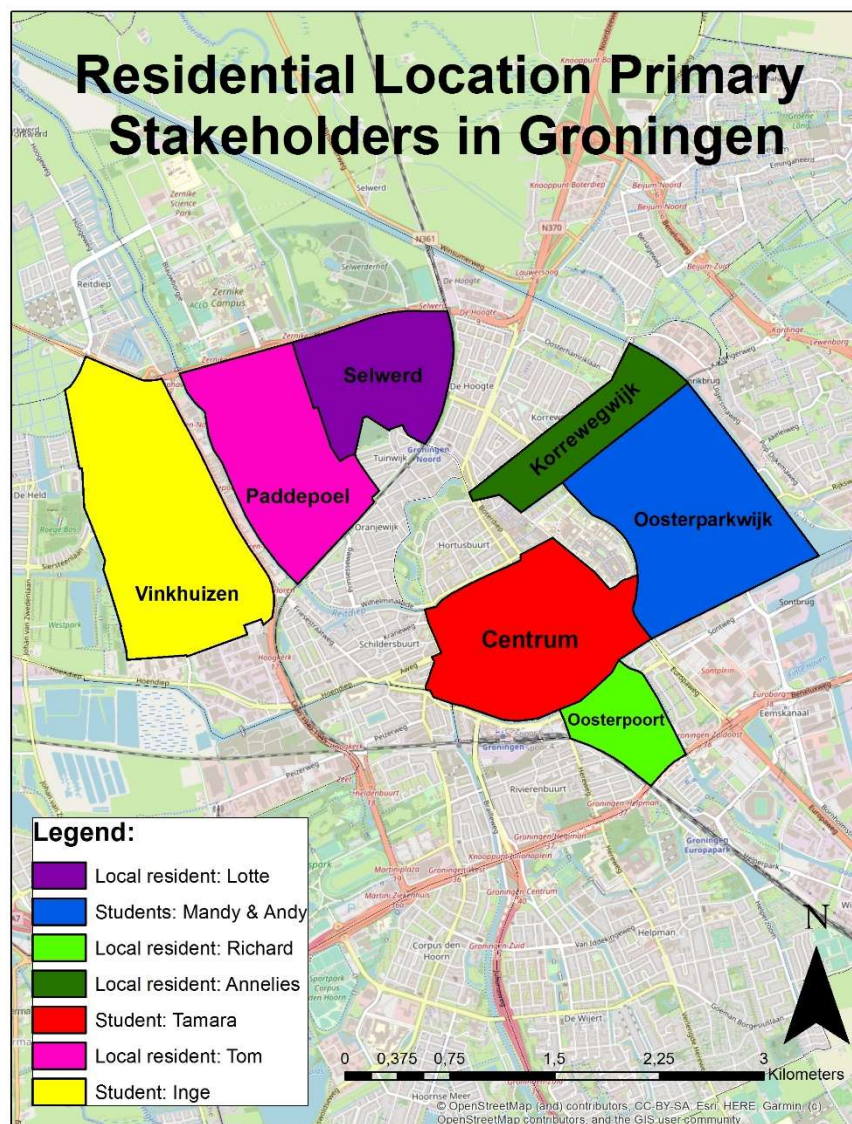


Figure 2. Residential neighborhoods of the primary stakeholders

4.1 Problems, experiences, and interests

Firstly, it was analyzed what the participants thought about studentification in Groningen. Opinions about this differed and often there were two sides to the story. This was expressed by both the students and local residents. Although all primary participants agreed with the fact that students do not have to live in a huddle, however, because of that they also found that it is becoming increasingly crowded in the city. It has been mentioned three times that it seems that students are taking over certain places in the city and that as a result the atmosphere in the residential areas deteriorates. Additionally, the primary stakeholders did think that living together in the same neighborhood can be fine if the number of students, the behavior of students, and the design of a neighborhood were taken into account. Students bring buzz to the city if it does not get overcrowded. The municipality also sees studentification as a problem and at the same time as a challenge (Levi, 02-07-2020).

Student & Stad emphasized that the relationship between students and local residents works in two directions and would consider it a shame if prejudices about students hinder their relationship. According to Matthijs (02-06-2020), it is easy and simple to blame students for the nuisances, but that is not completely fair.

Nevertheless most primary stakeholders were positive about living in a mixed neighborhood. Positive impacts such as creating a thriving community or vibrant city were mentioned by all stakeholders. A local resident pointed out that due to the arrival of students that there is often something to do and certain locations are being improved. As an example, she mentioned that city beaches were being made (Lotte, 11-06-2020). One local resident indicated that more attention should be paid to facilities where students can fulfill jobs which should ultimately lead to more integration and less polarization (Richard, 09-06-2020).

Four primary stakeholders mentioned that Groningen has changed a lot in recent years due to the more incoming students, this mainly related to the atmosphere, waste, and student housing. Next to that, many of the primary participants said they had experienced noise nuisance or late nights at some point, but some did not know whether this necessarily came from students and was not always a big problem. Inflation of property prices due to the increase in buying up houses by slumlords was mentioned four times. There were very exceptionally negative experiences such as throwing down a cigarette in an apartment building (Tom, 03-06-2020; Annelies 09-06-2020) or that you are obligated in restaurants to order your food in English (Lotte, 11-09-2020). The municipality added that local residents also suffered from bicycle nuisance and the degeneration of houses was also discussed (Levi, 02-07-2020).

According to most stakeholders, these problems arise due to the different living rhythms of students and local residents which is seen as difficult to combine. The overall thought was that it is important to take each other into account and being able to talk to each other when experiencing nuisance. WIJS and Student & Stad state that this has to do with different expectations of people which can also be felt by looking at different neighborhoods in Groningen. This is shown in the next example:

Jeroen (WIJS, 05-06-2020): "People in the city center and the Korrewegwijk are already used to living next to students and they also live there because of the buzz, but if you are planning to live in Vinkhuizen because of the peace and quietness and students are living next to you, the perception of nuisance is much faster and higher. The actual objective nuisance may be less than in various neighborhoods in the Korrewegwijk, but the subjective nuisance is higher because you know all those negative student stories."

Following that, students mainly state that they hardly know what is happening in their neighborhood or the community. Often, they do not know their neighbors and are usually not interested in activities together with other residents. This is reflected in table 1, where the majority of the students seem to have non or occasional contact with the local residents. Three students said they would only

participate if it suits them or if they are at home. Additionally, these students would like to have more contact with their neighbor or at least say hello to each other, knowing each other's names or seek contact when the other person needs something.

On the other hand, the local residents are more open to joint activities with neighbors, and see the benefits of this for both the neighborhood and themselves. This may explain why the local residents have contact on a more regular basis with students (table 1). All local residents mentioned that if you build a connection with each other, you automatically keep account of each other and grow some mutual respect. One local resident highlighted a benefit of having joint activities:

Tom (03-06-2020): "During such an activity, for example, you get to know a neighbor who works at a very cool company or who sells something you want, so in that way, you could also get things out of it, next to less noise nuisance."

Student & Stad emphasized that it is beneficial for students and local residents to live together in the same street to avoid loneliness. Meanwhile, the municipality Groningen advocates for social inclusion by ensuring that students are more dispersed throughout the city which improves the distribution of students per neighborhood causing the pressure to drop (Levi, 02-07-2020). They do this by building more residential complexes for young people. However, according to Student & Stad, loneliness is encouraged in this way. Therefore, they advocate for the campaign '*Leven in Stad*' to set up projects that are aimed at getting students and local residents involved in each other using a subsidy. However, this requires a certain attitude when trying to understand each other's frustrations. Maintaining a good relationship between students and local residents has benefits for everyone, so one should not focus on one group only (Matthijs, 02-06-2020).

4.2 Stakeholder participation

The municipality of Groningen has made significant efforts in recent years to reduce the housing shortage for students and nuisance of students; by tackling slum landlords and restoring the balance in neighborhoods, thereby reducing the pressure on the existing housing stock (Levi, 02-07-2020). The tense housing market in the city puts more pressure on the student-local resident relationship. However, the municipality does expect that residents also put their own energy into living together pleasantly. In this, the municipality will continue to cooperate with every stakeholder and continue to use the talents of students from the university, Hanzehogeschool and MBO institutions to contribute to social life (Gemeente Groningen, 2015). This is emphasized by Richard (local resident, 09-06-2020), he sees that students ask for internships and experiences and sees the advantage of that. In this way, students and local residents can make use of and help each other.

The current policy of the municipality regarding this subject is focused on more connection, more student participation in society and how residents can find each other. The interests of all residents are considered through conversations held with students and resident associations. To tackle the above mentioned specific negative impacts, the municipality has taken several measures and set up projects. First, when student nuisance is reported, student contact (police) officers can be sent who then try to talk to the students and try to solve the nuisance. Second, in the past the municipality has invested in organizing meetings between students and local residents. The purpose of these meetings was to get to know each other, to develop understanding and to see if a joint activity could be organized. According to Levi (02-07-2020), this works better in one neighborhood than in another. Third, the aforementioned campaign '*Leven in Stad*' is also one of the things that the municipality organizes to connect students and local residents. Every year, 10 to 15 applications are made for this, however, this also has minimal effect (Levi, 02-07-2020).

The largest project that the municipality is committed to is WIJS which is the most effect project, especially in the neighborhoods Paddepoel and Korrewegwijk (Levi, 02-07-2020). WIJS is a collaboration between the municipality, Hanzehogeschool, University of Groningen and WIJ Groningen, and are also financed by these parties. This project originated from student problems and mobilizes around 1000 students per year that help local residents from various support centers. Students conduct research, give advice, organize all kinds of activities for and with local residents and set up projects to improve the city and neighborhoods. The activities are conducted with the main goal of connecting students and local residents. According to project leader Jeroen (05-06-2020), each stakeholder has different interests that come together in this project (table 2). It is important for the municipality to establish a connection between students and local residents, while showing that students are also involved in society. For both colleges, it is important that students learn something in practice from their curriculum and do something for society. And for the WIJ-team it is important that citizen initiatives are set up where certain groups do something for another group. Despite the short existence of WIJS and being active for only 3 years, the effect of the projects can already be seen; the tolerance of residents towards students and the image of students has improved.

Although the university thinks along and works together with projects such as WIJS, several stakeholders, especially local residents and two students, indicated that the university should contribute more to the society in Groningen. Especially taking into account hiring new students, but also showing that as a student you can also invite or get to know your neighbors.

Annelies (local resident, 09-06-2020): "I think the RUG can do something about that, it should perhaps look at how many people it actually can place, because it is of course also very financial because they think the more students the better."

Additionally to cooperating with WIJS, the university is also part of the 'Akkoord van Groningen'. This is a cooperation agreement between the municipality, all educational institutions in Groningen (i.e. Hanzehogeschool, University, Noorderpoort college, Alfa-College), the UMCG and the province. This agreement must ensure that all involved parties cooperate well to strengthen and promote the city and region and contribute to solve social issues such as studentification. In this way, future development can be taken into account through participation (Levi, 02-07-2020).

Regardless of gender, age or residential area, all primary stakeholders agreed on the fact that some communication and knowing your neighbors is of importance when mitigating between different interests and working on the student-local resident relationship. In table 1, one can see how each stakeholder thinks about how to strengthen the student-local resident relationship. In contrast to this, none of the primary participants are aware of the abovementioned measures taken by the secondary stakeholders. Also, when asking about how contact or cooperation between students and local residents can best be established, especially students and two of the local residents were unable to give a clear answer. Above all, all students indicated that they would not seek contact themselves but would be interested if local residents came to them for a chat. According to Student & Stad (02-06-2020), it will take years to bring about these kinds of changes and the threshold may be higher for some residents than for others.

	Mandy	Andy	Tamara	Inge	Tom	Annelies	Richard	Lotte
Gender	Female	Male	Female	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Age	21	23	21	20	23	28	39	33
Stakeholder	Student	Student	Student	Student	Local resident	Local resident	Local resident	Local resident
Contact with neighbors	No contact	Occasional contact	No contact	Occasional contact	Occasional contact	Regular contact	Regular contact	Occasional contact
Idea of how to strengthen the relationship between students and local residents	The need for contact is very personal, but it is important to take each other into account.	Neighborhood must be self-gathering, but it is important to know who your neighbors are to keep an eye on each other.	A close relationship is not necessary, but it would be useful if everyone knows each other a little. In this way neighbors are more approachable.	Communication is key. However, it remains difficult to deal with this properly, but making clear agreements and respecting each other's expectations is important.	It is best to avoid problems, through communication and to build a relationship in advance.	Knowing who lives in your immediate environment and just starting a conversation; addressing each other about nuisance but also getting to know each other.	The municipality should focus more on the local citizens itself instead of on tourists. So in this way, students and local residents can take more advantage of each other.	Connecting with each other, in this way you gain mutual respect and take each other into account.

Table 1. Primary stakeholders

	Matthijs	Jeroen	Levi
Gender	Male (Group chairman and city councilor)	Male (Co-founder and project leader on behalf of the municipality)	Male (Department: area affairs and housing)
Stakeholder	Student & Stad	WIJS	Municipality of Groningen
Interests	Commit to the interests of students and thereby improve their position. In addition, ensure that students and non-students start living together in stead of living side by side.	Show society that students do good things and can also give something back to society.	Ensuring that every resident can live happily, healthy and in green areas.
Resolve interests	Ensure that the student to non-student ratio in residential areas is in proportion and actively encourage people to get in touch with each other.	Students helping non-students and collaborating with other stakeholders from their own field/study.	Focusing on living together with the help of WIJS, narrowing the gap between residents and solve abuses of room rental.

Table 2. Secondary stakeholders

5. Discussion

It has been suggested that students cluster because of the time and space framework of the university (Goddard and Vallance, 2013). However, this does not appear to be the case. There is no campus in Groningen and students are therefore allowed to live in local neighborhoods which was once decided by an old council of the municipality. In contrast to earlier findings, no evidence was found that parts of certain neighborhoods were devoted to students' facilities only (Wright, 1994).

As stated by Goddard and Vallance (2013), high numbers of students in local neighborhoods can cause tensions and disagreements. In this research tensions did arise between students and local residents. Problems such as noise nuisance, late nights, litter, and problems with student housing were frequently mentioned. These problems were not always seen as a big problem, therefore, a student conflict, as described in the theoretical framework (Foley, 2016), was not always present. However, this could differ per neighborhood and person, which highlights that the process of studentification is not linear and context-specific (Avni and Alfasi, 2018; Hubbard, 2008). Students were also experienced as pleasant as long as the number of students remained in proportion. Students brought excitement to the city and created a thriving community (Allinson, 2006).

Problems did arise due to the different living rhythms of students and local residents. This is consistent with the literature, where it was shown that these two groups have very different perspectives and desires (Allinson, 2006; Kenyon, 1997; Hatch et al., 2015). Although, this study has been unable to find out what specific desires students and local residents have when living in mixed neighborhoods. Both, students and local residents, did mention quietness at night would be pleasant.

There seems to be little contact between students and local residents, but there also seems to be little need for this. Although local residents are more open to this and also see the advantage of it, this is less the case with the students. This highlights the importance that local residents attach to a neighborhood; social value and the general image (Kenyon, 1997). However, the interviews showed that some local residents are more ambivalent about the presence of students than others (Avni and Alfasi, 2018; Hubbard, 2008). Next to this, it seemed that the chance of a so-called student bubble (Avni and Alfasi, 2018) in Groningen was less likely because of the absence of a residential campus, but students seem to barely integrate into the local community. This makes it even harder to become aware of each other's needs, making it more difficult to take each other into account.

It was stated by the primary stakeholders that the university should contribute more when it goes about solving the problem of studentification in Groningen. The university is seen as a university 'in' the city rather than 'of' the city by these participants (Chatterton, 2000). It can thus be suggested that the involvement of the university is of importance for improving student-local resident relationship by stakeholder participation (Goddard, 1997) and should not be overlooked. However, Foley (2016) spoke about an institutional conflict which refers to the problems about the relationship between the city and the university. This finding is contrary to the research results which shows that the university is involved in several projects to improve the student-local resident relationship and is in close contact with the municipality to prevent and/or solve the studentification problems.

Although, according to Levi (02-07-2020), not everyone within the municipality knows the term studentification itself, nevertheless the student problem is taken seriously by local councilors (Smith, 2008). As a result of research conducted by Levi himself into the student problems in 2013/2014, the political stance within the municipality has changed. This research has brought more attention to problems that were mainly reported by local residents at the time. As a result, the municipality is now seen as a cooperating party. Anvi and Alfasi (2018) argued that when students cluster in the student bubble, the city itself does not have interests anymore in these student-oriented areas. This differs

from the findings presented here. The municipality has shown that they want to cooperate by the means of the different projects. Additionally, from an economic point of view students are important and therefore remain attractive as a student-city is seen as a policy goal (Avni and Alfasi, 2018). Although it was suggested in the theoretical framework that policymakers should focus more on the local residents to make the city more attractive for students, this is not directly what the municipality of Groningen does. By cooperating with multiple parties, the municipality tries to show local residents with WIJS that students not only cause problems but can also contribute to society. This should ultimately ensure that all residents start living together instead of living side by side and thereby improving the student-local resident relationship.

At WIJS, students are seen as a social actor who provide meaningful changes (Hubbard, 2008; Smith, 2005). These results are consistent with the study by Russo et al. (2003), which suggested that students can create empathy between them and the local residents by organizing activities or with the help of an external party. On top of that the residents' perspectives are considered and feelings of dissatisfaction and concerns towards students are resolved (Kenyon, 1997). This observation supports the expectation that students can positively influence the student-local-resident relationship.

Based on the different projects and outcomes mitigating between conflicting interests seems difficult and that time-sensitive problems should be solved in time (Foley, 2016). Aderito (2014) stated that communication among stakeholders are key in solving problems and creating success. However, it turned out that much more is needed to connect students and local residents, since seeking contact often did not come from the primary stakeholders themselves. Therefore, an integrative approach with the help of the secondary stakeholder is needed, such as Bowen (2005) suggested. Collaboration should lead to a shared vision that will enable residents to understand each other and to solve problems which can not be solved alone. Additionally, it is important that each stakeholder takes their own responsibility and have a role in which he or she can optimally contribute. This is reflected in WIJS, in which the larger stakeholders, such as the university and the municipality, ensured for the legal and institutional framework. And in which students and local residents were expected to exchange knowledge, expertise and time. This is a people-oriented approach.

The process of development-focused collaboration (Bowen, 2005) was also reflected in the founding of WIJS. The project was founded in response to community problems (i.e. identifying problems and setting priorities), as a result of which multiple parties have started working together (i.e. mobilizing stakeholders and working together) and want to continue this and expand it for the future (i.e. creating an enabling environment). The results have already shown that community-driven development is already happening in neighborhoods such as Paddepoel and Korrewegwijk. These results provide further support for the expectations that when all stakeholders work together than it will lead to an improved student-local resident relationship and social cohesion. It is suggested to expand the effort of WIJS further to several other neighborhoods in Groningen. Still, one should keep in mind that the student-local resident relationship is complex and the effects of studentification differs per neighborhood (Anvi and Alfasi, 2018).

6. Conclusion

6.1 Studentification

This research aimed to identify how the relationship between students and local residents in Groningen is influenced by studentification and how this relationship can be improved when focusing on stakeholder participation. It was found that the student-local resident relationship should be taken seriously, as this relationship is important for achieving an equitable living experience for every resident. The study showed that both the city of Groningen and the student-local resident relationship suffered from the process of studentification. Studentification in the neighborhoods of Groningen especially coincides with the impacts of noise nuisance, late nights, litter, and student housing. These tensions between students and local residents mainly arose from having a different rhythm of life, needs, and expectations. This can cause these two groups to hinder each other in which the relationship can deteriorate.

Although there is little contact between students and local residents and there seems to be little need for a close bond, the growth in the number of students in Groningen can cause changes in the social cohesion of society. On the one hand, the conflicts that arise between students and local residents will undermine this cohesion, on the other hand, a good student-local resident relationship can boost the city. However, this not only depends on the efforts of students and local residents. The university and the local government will also benefit from a better student-local resident relationship. Both stakeholders can play a role in this by maintaining close contact with each other, tackling student housing problems, and supporting external projects such as WIJS. Programs of WIJS show that students can contribute to the society and not only cause nuisance. As students help other residents with requests for help from their own discipline and organize activities for and with local residents, the prejudices about students will slowly disappear and social contacts in neighborhoods will increase. Next to this, increased interaction between students and local residents can also improve negative attitudes.

Although communication remains important to become aware of the needs and interests of other residents to avoid conflicts, more is needed. Everyone must be able to address one another to his or her responsibility, and thereby generating mutual respect. In line with the development-focused collaboration model, all stakeholders need to have a central role in a balanced collaborative process. Stakeholder collaboration is a tool for social change and building community competencies. In this way, more can be achieved than if each party acts alone. Additionally, it is possible to respond effectively to the needs of various stakeholders. Groningen remains a large student city, so applying collaboration strategies and continue to respond adequately to developments remains necessary.

6.2 Limitations and future research recommendations

When doing this research some limitations occurred. Due to the current pandemic, selecting participants went online, therefore it was harder to find older local residents of Groningen. More of these stakeholders would have ensured a broader understanding of the subject. Also, other stakeholders such the University of Groningen or housing corporations would have provided a deeper understanding. Next to this, since it was not possible to conduct the interviews face-to-face, non-verbal communication was excluded. Therefore, at some point, this influenced the conversation between the participant and interviewer.

Based on the results and conclusion of this research and to better understand the implications of the study, future studies could address the longitudinal effects of studentification. By conducting systematic and longer research into the effects of studentification and the student-local resident relationship, it is possible to better estimate the impact it will have on the city in the future. More attention should be paid to the arrival of more international students and which changes this entails. Also, spatial implications concerning new development plans in student cities could be examined.

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8. Annex

A. Interview guides

Algemene introductie:

Met dit project ga ik onderzoeken hoe de relatie tussen inwoners en studenten van Groningen wordt beïnvloed door studentification en hoe deze relatie kan verbeteren door meerdere stakeholders/belanghebbenden te laten samenwerken. Studentification is het proces waardoor woonwijken worden getransformeerd door een groeiende, concentrerende studentenpopulatie. Bij dit onderzoek focus ik me dus voornamelijk op stakeholder participatie/participatie van belanghebbenden. Daarom heb ik dus vrijwilligers nodig die in dit onderzoek als stakeholder/belanghebbende wordt gezien.

Ik ben blij dat u bereid bent mee te werken aan mijn onderzoek, aangezien dit een mooie bijdrage zal zijn aan mijn onderzoek. Voordat we het interview starten wil ik u vragen om het toestemmingsformulier in te vullen en vragen om toestemming om het interview op te nemen. Op deze manier kan ik het interview terug luisteren en geen waardevolle informatie verliezen. Deze opname en resultaten van het onderzoek zullen nooit worden gedeeld met derden en ook nooit wordt gepubliceerd, het is alleen bedoeld voor educatieve doeleinden. Ook uw deelname zal anoniem blijven. Als u na het lezen van het toestemmingsformulier nog vragen heeft over het onderzoek of uw participatie hoor ik dat graag.

Introductie vragen studenten, lokale bewoners, gemeente en Student & Stad:

- Kan je me iets over jezelf vertellen?
 - ➔ Wie ben je, leeftijd, wat je doet in het dagelijks leven, leefsituatie.

Introductie vragen WIJS:

- Kan je me iets over jezelf vertellen?
 - ➔ Wie ben je, leeftijd, wat je doet in het dagelijks leven
- Wat is WIJS? Wat doen jullie precies?
 - ➔ Wie heeft het opgericht, wat doet het, met wie werk je samen, wat zijn jullie doelen, wat hopen jullie te bereiken?
 - ➔ Wat is jouw rol binnen het project?
 - ➔ Welke rol hebben studenten binnen het project? Welke rol hebben bewoners binnen het project?
 - ➔ Kent u andere projecten en/of organisaties binnen de stad die ook proberen om bewoners met studenten te verbinden?
 - Zo ja, hoe verschillen ze? Hebben ze een andere effect?
 - Zo nee, is er dan behoefte aan meer van dit soort projecten?

Hoofdvragen studenten & lokale bewoners:

- Wat vind u van de trend dat steeds meer studenten in lokale wijken gaan wonen, dus in de lokale gemeenschap?
 - ➔ Denkt u dat de universiteit hier invloed op heeft/kan hebben?
 - ➔ Denkt u dat de gemeente hier invloed op heeft/kan hebben?
- Hoe vindt u het om samen met studenten/lokale inwoners in dezelfde wijk te wonen?
 - ➔ Wat is u relatie met studenten/lokale inwoners en wat zijn u ervaringen?
 - ➔ Indien negatief, welke problemen ziet u ontstaan tussen studenten en bewoners?
 - Hoe zou dit opgelost kunnen worden?
 - Welke rol kan u hierin spelen om de relatie te verbeteren?
 - Welke rol kunnen andere hebben om de relatie te verbeteren?
 - ➔ Indien positief, wat zijn de voordelen van samenleven in dezelfde wijk?

- Waar denkt u dat deze voordelen vandaan komen?
 - Hoe houdt u de relatie tussen studenten en inwoners goed?
 - Denkt u dat deze aanpak/techniek ook in andere wijken in Groningen zou kunnen werken?
- Denkt u dat uw of de buurt er baat bij zal hebben als de relatie tussen studenten en lokale inwoners goed verbeterd?
 - ➔ Wat voor voordelen zal dit voor uw opleveren?
 - ➔ Wat voor voordelen zal dit voor de buurt en lokale inwoners/studenten opleveren?
 - Welke rol vindt u dat de lokale autoriteiten zou moeten hebben om tegenstrijdige belangen op te lossen tussen inwoners en studenten en de relatie tussen beide te verbeteren?
 - ➔ Bent u op de hoogte van welke maatregelen de gemeente neemt om deze problemen op te lossen? En hoe zouden ze dit kunnen verbeteren?
 - Kent u projecten die proberen studenten en bewoners bij elkaar te brengen en de relatie tussen hen te verbeteren?
 - ➔ Ja: Wat vindt je van deze projecten en denk/zie je dat het effect heeft?
 - Moeten er meer van deze projecten zijn?
 - ➔ Nee: Waarom denk je dat de bekendheid van zulke projecten erg laag is?
 - Moeten er van deze projecten komen?
 - Wat denk je dat het effect zal zijn?

Hoofdvragen WIJS:

- Wat vinden jullie van de trend dat er steeds meer studenten in lokale wijken gaan wonen, dus in de lokale gemeenschappen? Kent u de term studentification?
 - ➔ Zo ja, hoe merk je dat?
 - ➔ Denk je dat de universiteit hier invloed op kan uitoefenen?
 - ➔ Denk je dat de gemeente hier invloed op kan hebben?
- Wat voor belangen hebben jullie en hebben jullie er baat bij om de relatie tussen studenten en niet-student inwoners goed te houden?
- Kunnen jullie een rol spelen in het oplossen van tegenstrijdige belangen tussen niet-studenten en studenten en het verbeteren van de relatie tussen deze 2 groepen?
 - ➔ Zo ja, welke rol hebben jullie?
 - Werken jullie hierbij samen met andere betrokkende partijen? Waarom niet, waarom wel?
 - ➔ Zo nee, waarom niet? En kan dit in de toekomst wel?
 - ➔ Welke rol kunnen studenten en lokale inwoners hebben om deze tegenstrijdige belangen tussen elkaar op te lossen?
- Welke rol zouden lokale autoriteiten volgens u moeten hebben bij het oplossen van tegenstrijdige belangen tussen bewoners en studenten en het verbeteren van de relatie tussen beide?
 - ➔ Zijn jullie op de hoogte van welke maatregelen de gemeente neemt om deze problemen op te lossen of die relatie te verbeteren? EN hoe zouden ze dit kunnen verbeteren?
- Wat willen jullie in de toekomst bereiken?

Hoofdvragen gemeente en Student & Stad:

- Zijn jullie bekend met de term studentification of het proces zelf?
 - ➔ Zo nee, leg uit Studentification uit. Nu u dit zo gehoord hebt, herkent u dit?
 - ➔ Zo ja, zien jullie dit duidelijk terug in de stad? En hoe merken jullie dit?
 - Is het een groot probleem? (Zo ja, voor wie dan en wat voor invloed heeft het op deze mensen?)

- Denkt u dat doordat het steeds meer studenten in lokale wijken komen wonen dit frictie met zich mee kan brengen tussen niet-student inwoners en studenten? En kan het ook voordelen met zich mee brengen?
 - ➔ Zo ja, wat voor problemen/frictie?
 - Was dit vroeger anders dan nu?
 - Wat verwacht u in de toekomst?
 - ➔ Zo nee, waarom niet?
 - Kan dit wel een probleem worden wanneer er nog meer studenten komen?
 - Wat verwacht u in de toekomst?
- Wat voor belangen hebben jullie en hebben jullie er baat bij om de relatie tussen studenten en niet-student inwoners goed te houden?
 - ➔ *Student & stad: Verschillen jullie hierin met andere partijen? Of zijn er ook overeenkomsten?*
- Hebben jullie een beleid wat betrekking heeft op steeds meer inkomende studenten in lokale wijken en waarbij ook wordt gekeken naar de relatie tussen studenten en bewoners om deze te verbeteren?
 - ➔ Zo ja, wat houdt dit beleid in en heeft dit beleid effect? (*Gemeente: Kijken jullie daarbij naar verschillende soorten wijken of het beteren van het algemene beeld van een wijk?*)
 - ➔ Zo nee, waarom niet en zou er wel een beleid moeten zijn?
 - Wat zou er in het toekomstige beleid moeten staan?
 - ➔ *Student & stad: Verschillen jullie hierin met andere partijen? Of zijn er ook overeenkomsten?*
- Op welke manier worden de belangen van studenten en lokale inwoners meegenomen in jullie beleid en besluitvorming daarin?
 - ➔ Zit er verschil tussen het betrekken van Nederlandse studenten en internationale studenten?
- Wat voor rol hebben jullie om tegenstrijdige belangen tussen bewoners en studenten op te lossen of juist samen te brengen? Hebben jullie überhaupt hier een rol in?
 - ➔ Werken jullie hierbij samen met andere betrokkende partijen? Waarom niet, waarom wel?
 - ➔ Heeft de universiteit hier ook een rol in en zou de universiteit hier in een rol in moeten hebben?
 - ➔ Wat voor rol vind je dat studenten en niet-studenten hierin zouden moeten hebben?
- Bent u op de hoogte van projecten die studenten en bewoners samen probeert te brengen?
 - ➔ Wat vind u van deze projecten en denkt/ziet uw dat het effect heeft?
 - ➔ Zouden er meer van dit soort projecten moeten zijn volgens jullie?

Algemene afsluiting:

- Heeft u nog opmerkingen, toelichtingen of overige uitspraken die u nog zou willen delen of toevoegen aan het interview?

Dan wil ik u graag bedanken voor uw tijd en deelname aan mijn onderzoek. Ik hoop dat u het gevoel hebt dat u uw verhaal hebt kunnen vertellen. Als uw nog vragen heeft, kunt uw mijn altijd een mail sturen (i.zomerdijk.1@student.rug.nl).

B. Informed consent

Consent form for the research project '*relationship between residents and students in Groningen influenced by studentification*' from a Bachelor's project at the University of Groningen, faculty Spatial Sciences (Study: Human Geography and Urban and Regional Planning).

This project is about how the relationship between the local population and students is influenced by the process of more incoming students into residential neighborhoods in Groningen and how this relationship can be improved by bringing different stakeholders together. Therefore, I am looking at the different perspectives of multiple stakeholders. For that reason, information about current policy, opinions and points of view are needed to research how to mitigate between stakeholders and eventually improve the resident-student relationship.

Participant:

I am informed about the research project. I was able to ask questions and my questions were answered to my satisfaction. I had enough time to decide to participate in the research. My participation is completely voluntary and anonymous. I can withdraw from the research at any time, without having to give a reason. And I know the data will be locked and not shared with third parties or published.

I give my permission for recording the interview:

- Yes
- No

I give my permission for using the interview data for the following educational purposes: educational exercise and presentation. I agree to participate in this interview.

Name participant:

Signature participant:

Date:

Researcher:

I declare that I have informed the research participant about the research. I will notify the participant about matters that could influence his/her participation in the research.

Name researcher:

Signature researcher:

Date:

C. Code tree

Topic: Studentification

Main code	Sub-codes
Positive experiences living together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vibrant city - Spending power effect of students - Injecting value to the housing market - Thriving community - Fulfilling jobs and volunteer work - Other positive experiences
Negative experiences living together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Noise nuisance - Litter - Inflation of property prices - Segregation (living separate) - Polarisation (Tensions between groups) - Loss of physical environment - Anti-social - Late nights - Other negative experiences
Existing relationship between students and local residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No contact - Occasional contact - Regular contact
Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Roll students - Roll local residents - Roll municipality - Roll university - Roll projects (WIJS, Wij-teams, etc.)
Way of addressing the challenges and strengthening the relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication - Cooperation - Extern project - Other