Experiences of Dutch students who moved back to their parental home during the Covid-19 crisis in The Netherlands

ABSTRACT

The Covid-19 pandemic showed to cause a shift in everyday practices of the lives of people. Some students that lived on their own made the choice to move back to their parents during this crisis. This research deals with the question: How do Dutch students who moved back to their parental home during the Covid-19 crisis in The Netherlands, experience their parental home? The aim of this research is to investigate the experiences of Dutch students that returned to their parental home during the Covid-19 crisis in The Netherlands. Life course theory and the concepts of home, identity and sense of place are used to investigate these experiences during a crisis. A qualitative research method using semi structured in-depth interviews was used to collect the data. A deductive code tree was used to analyse the data. Results indicate that students struggle at first, but find their way the longer they are at their parental home. Since the parental home is already a familiar and secure place to students, and they can truly be themselves at their parental home, they have little problem adapting to the new reality. Taking a familiar step back to a place that they know, and is secure to students, is something they can get used to.

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INTRODUCTION

At the end of 2019 in Wuhan, China, the first reports came in about the Covid-19 virus. With the virus spreading over the world, the World Health Organization (WHO) during a media briefing characterised the situation as a global pandemic in March 11, 2020 (UN News, 2020).
All over the World and also in The Netherlands various measures were taken. This included a nationwide lockdown in The Netherlands (*intelligente lockdown)* on 23 March 2020, which eventually would last for at least 3 months (NOS, 2020). These so called 'stay-at-home measures' that were taken by the Dutch government, included that people needed to work at home for the time being, which some found difficult at times (Bogosavac, 2020).
Not only working, but also studying shifted to the home and online environment. Following most of their lectures online and making exams from home is something University students in The Netherlands had to adapt to since the beginning of this crisis (DvhN, 2020). Even towards the end of 2020, most people in The Netherlands still work and study at home because of the Covid-19 crisis.
The Covid-19 pandemic showed to cause a shift in everyday practices of the lives of people. Therefore we could conceive it as a transition in the life course of the population and the individual.
Some students that previously made the choice to move out of their parental home to study in another part of the country and live on their own, made the choice to move back to their parents during this time of crisis (Jager, 2020; Vorwald, 2020). When University students move out to go to college, in The Netherlands they usually move to special assigned student housing. This can be apartments, small houses, or studios in and around the city where they are attending college. They then pay rent to the landlord that owns the place. Dutch students live in, and are part of, the city where they attend college.

The choice of students of moving back to the parental home has been studied by various researchers (Stone et al., 2013; Olofsson et al., 2020; Tomaszczyk & Worth, 2020). And the motives for this can have different reasons: unemployment, stopping full-time education, partnership dissolution. In addition, in the case of the pandemic: safety and the fact that it is financial beneficial to live with your parents, are also important (Vorwald, 2020). Living with their parents during their studies is enabled by technological developments in online education.
But what does it mean to come back to your parental home? When they return, students return into the role of son, daughter or child because they are back at their parents. These are roles they are not used to anymore, since they already lived on their own (Jager, 2020).

With regard to the life course, home is especially important for young adults. It is a place where they construct their lives and it is often seen as a positive place (Hopkins, 2010). Which means that it is a place that gives certainty and security.
Previous research has already looked into what 'home', 'sense of place' and 'identity' means to people and young adults (Blunt, 2005; Blunt et al., 2003; Hopkins, 2010; Meijering et al., 2016).

To clarify, a young adult is someone who is at the end of their teens, beginning of their twenties. A student is someone who studies at a place of higher education. In The Netherlands, most often students are in the age category of young adults. Life course theory is also important in this research and the discipline of cultural geography which has thoroughly studied in what it is and means (Bailey, 2009).

Home is a place that can provide stability during the life course of people (Meijering et al. 2016). Therefore it is important for these students to also feel at home and comfortable during a time of crisis in a place where they have not lived for a while.

However, no studies have investigated the experiences of home for students that moved back to the parental home during the Covid-19 crisis in The Netherlands. Students are adapting to this new reality during this transition of their lives. Therefore it is important to understand how these students feel, what they experience and how it effects their life course during their time back at their parents. Investigating this adds perspective to the impact of the Covid-19 crisis and that it can impact students in various different ways, besides the health and economic issues. This study also contributes to the existing academic literature by investigating life course impacts on students, but from a cultural geography angle. It is important to try and understand a crisis from multiple scientific disciplines. Then, the impact on society can be brought to light, understood and it can be acted upon by policy makers and governments. How is it for these students to come back, after living on their own for a while? In other words, the aim of this research is to investigate the experiences of Dutch students that returned to their parental home during the Covid-19 crisis in The Netherlands. Therefore, this research deals with the research question:

How do Dutch students who moved back to their parental home during the Covid-19 crisis in The Netherlands, experience their parental home?

To answer this question, the following sub questions are constructed:
- What do Dutch students who moved back to their parental home during the Covid-19 crisis in The Netherlands define as 'home' in general?

- In what ways do Dutch students who moved back to their parental home during the Covid-19 crisis in The Netherlands have a sense of home in their parental home?

- How do Dutch students who moved back to their parental home during the Covid-19 crisis in The Netherlands perceive their identity in their parental home?

First, in the next section the concepts used in this research are going to be discussed and how they will be applied in this research, followed by a conceptual framework. After that, the methods used in this research will be outlined. This includes the qualitative research paradigm, participant recruitment and data collection, research instrument, qualitative data analysis, and research ethics. Then the results will be presented and discussed, divided in three different chapters: 'Life course and a definition of home', 'A sense of home' and 'Home and identity'. These are themes that were identified during the data analysis. Lastly, the main research question will be answered in the conclusion. Followed by the discussion with the strengths and weaknesses of this research, a reflection on the methods, and policy recommendations.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The importance of home during the life course
As described before, the Covid-19 crisis has impacted society on a scale that is not often seen. This "transition" in the lives of people will thus also effect the life course of a lot of them. Life course theory is something that has been extensively studied in the past and can be defined as: 'to describe the structures and sequences of events and transitions through an individual's life' (Bailey, 2009, p.407). Life course theory can be about biographies and how certain life choices, transitions and events are affected by the times and spaces they are made in (Bailey, 2009). In addition, the choice to move to another dwelling, can be

considered a turning point in someone's life and be very stressful and is thus part of someone's life cycle (Clark & Lisowski, 2016). During the crisis, they decided to move back to their parental home for various reasons. This research tries to investigate how these students experience their parental home after and during the transition of this crisis (Figure 1, page 5).

In this study, the focus is on students that decided to return (or move) to the parental home for a consecutive period of longer than 2 weeks during the Covid-19 pandemic in The Netherlands. Extra explanation was given to this concept because the term 'moving' is used in this study to describe what is mentioned above. And therefore not only the "normal" and definitive definition of moving, of relocating all of your belongings from one home to the other and moving in.

Home can be considered a viable concept during the life course and is the focus of this study. With regard to the life course, home is important especially for young adults, since it is a place where they can be themselves, construct their lives and it is often seen as a positive place (Hopkins, 2010). However, as part of life course issues, at some stage they cannot be themselves anymore, meaning they are ready to move to next stage in their lives. Therefore they make the choice to move out of the parental home in the first place. In line with Hopkins (2010) is that the concept of home in cultural geography, the lived experiences, emotional significance and social relations of domestic life are very important (Blunt, 2005). Blunt said in another article that '(…) "home" is a highly fluid and contested site of human existence that reflects and reifies identities and values' (Blunt et al., 2003, p. 512). This emphasizes the importance of home during the life course. Because this means that "home" can be different for every human being, since the meaning of the concept can also change over the life course.

Moreover, Meijering et al. (2016) says that the meaning of home changes throughout someone's life course. Consequently, the role of home changes and three dimensions of home can be distinguished: the material, the social, and the personal home.
The material home consists of the design, built environment and layout. Through function, history and culture, the space gains meaning. The material dimension, outcomes of the interactions between people and their bodies in the home are the rituals situated in places, such as getting ready for bed. The social, consists of the relationships with relatives, partners and children in the home. Lastly, the personal home is where the material and the social come together. This is where the home gains meaning and is a secure, familiar point in someone's life. This is because with the material space, the routines in everyday live, meaningful objects and the social relations between people, the personal home gains meaning (Meijering et al., 2016). Therefore, in this research, 'home' can be defined as: 'a material as well as affective space, shaped by people's everyday practices, experiences, social relations, memories and emotions' (Blunt, 2005, cited by Meijering et al., 2016, p. 36). For the students that decide to return to their parental home during the Covid-19 crisis, their 'home' abruptly changes. They have to get used to their new reality and family dynamic, whilst simultaneously focus on their studies. It is possible that the feeling of home then completely changes.

Home and a sense of place
Home has meaning, and this meaning can include emotional security, social status, physical security and self-expression (Hopkins, 2010). Thus everyone invests their home with meaning and through this attachment to place, people can develop a sense of home. Furthermore, humanistic geographers back in the 1970s and 1980s claimed that what people

made human was their intense attachment to place (Blunt et al., 2003). Therefore, the concept of 'sense of place' is important to think about when we talk about the concept of home. In this research, sense of place can be defined as 'a concept used to describe the particular ways in which human beings invest their surroundings with meaning' (Williams et al., 2012, p. 258). In line with this is a study from Blunt & Varley (2004), and they conclude that home is an important geographic site to study. Furthermore, it helps to make a broader understanding of sense of relations to place. As mentioned before, the material and social home come together in the personal home and home is shaped by someone's everyday practices, experiences and social relations. Young adults shape their surroundings with meaning by using the relationships with one-another, like family, places and spaces. And this is how they construct their social-identity (Hopkins, 2010). Looking at the (social) relationships of young adults have, could be an indication of how students attach meaning to their home, and in what ways they have a sense of home.

Home and Identity

Home is thus part of our identity (Meijering et al., 2016). In this research, identity is defined as 'how we make sense of ourselves, in relation to others, in everyday and local places' (Meijering et al., 2016, p. 36). The specific places and locations that students find themselves in have an influence on the identity of students and are an important marker of identity (Hopkins, 2010). According to the same source, identity is about the ways in which individuals and groups are distinguished in the social relations they have with other individuals and groups (Hopkins, 2010). According to Blunt & Varley (2004), sense of place, belonging or alienation are invoked by the ideas of home and are tied to a sense of self. This is in line with Meijering et al. (2016) stating that home is part of our identity. This means that the home and how someone forms and develops their identity are closely linked. Identity can be social relations, places, expressions and personalities that define who or what that person is. Since identity and the home are closely linked to each other, it is important to see what the students experience in their parental home and if they can be themselves. All the concepts mentioned in the theoretical framework, are captured in a conceptual model below (Figure 1).
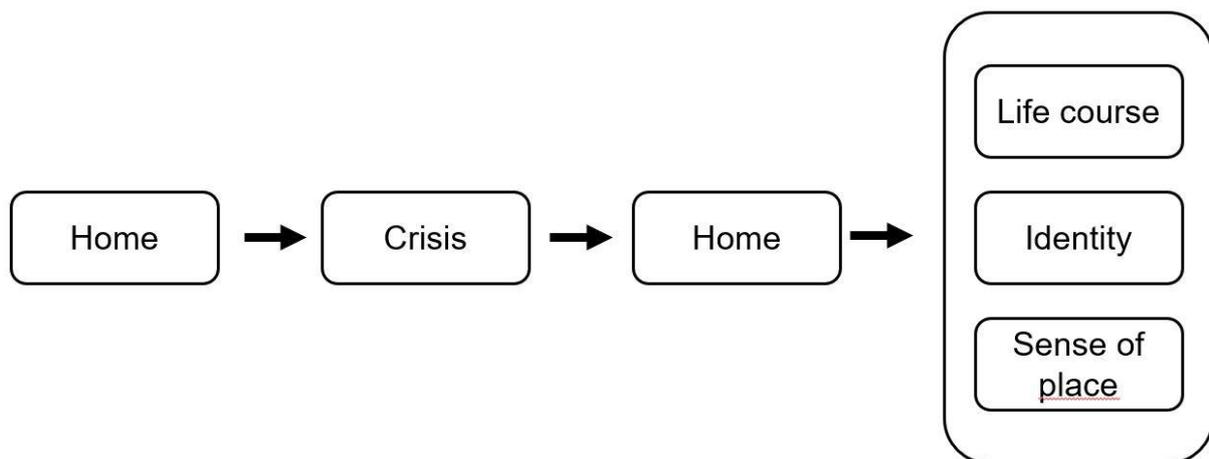
Figure 1: Conceptual model
Source: Author of source: Dallinga (2020)

As explained before, how these students experienced their own home before the Covid-19 crisis in The Netherlands is important to understand. During the crisis, they decided to move back to their parental home for various reasons. This research tries to investigate how these students experience their parental home after and during the transition of this crisis. To investigate how students experience home, the concepts 'life course', 'identity', and 'sense of

place' are used. This is because these concepts are closely connected to the concept of home, according to the existing literature.

Expectations
Expectations are that some students will struggle with the decision to move back to their parental home. Hopkins (2010), points out that attachment to home is likely to increase when the individual resides longer at the house. Jager (2020) and Vorwald (2020) are newspaper articles in which students that fit the purpose of this research were interviewed by journalists of said newspaper. It is suggested that some students find it difficult to adapt to the new situation and they struggle to find their way. However, on the other side, there are also students that mention that they do not have a problem living at the parental home for this time.
With Hopkins (2010) in mind, the point is that students will go back to their parental home, so it is already a familiar place to them. This study includes both students that already visit and stay at their parental home on a weekly to by-weekly basis whilst living on their own, and those who do not. The experiences of students that already visit and stay at their parental home on a weekly to by-weekly basis whilst living on their own, is therefore expected to be better. This is because they are already used to being at their parental home more often, than those that are not.

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research paradigm
For this study, a qualitative research method was used. This is because qualitative research investigates the detailed and complex understanding and explains underlying mechanisms of the object of study (Punch, 2014). Qualitative research allows for the exploration of meanings, experiences, emotions and intensions. To understand the research problem, the emic point of view was of importance for this research. Investigating the experiences of students at their parental home, a qualitative research method best fits the purposes of this research.

Participant recruitment and inclusion criteria
The research population for this study are Dutch students that decided to move out of their student home and return to their parental home during the Covid-19 crisis in The Netherlands for more than 2 consecutive weeks. This study includes both students that already visited and stayed at their parental home on a weekly to by-weekly basis whilst living on their own, and those that do not. This research identified students as individuals that study at a University or University of applied sciences in The Netherlands.

Research instrument
A semi-structured in-depth interview guide was developed by the researcher and was used to collect the data (Appendix 1). Semi-structured implies that the researcher can change the sequence of questions or topics during the interview (Clifford et al. 2016). This is to gather as much information as possible. The interview guide was constructed based on a deductive code tree (Appendix 2) The deductive code tree was based on the Theoretical Framework. The interviews were conducted via video calls using the online software Skype. This method of online interviewing was used to adhere to the Covid-19 rules that were in place in The Netherlands by the Dutch government at the time of the data collection (Rijksoverheid, 2020). These rules stated that face-to-face contact with people outside of your own household, should be limited.

Data collection method
The goal of the qualitative data collection was to obtain primary in-depth information up to saturation level about the definition of home, sense of place and identity of the research population. A purposeful sampling strategy was used, to ensure that the collected data comes from individuals that best served the purpose of the sample in this research. Purposeful judgement was thus used to decide which individuals of the population were going to be included in the sample (Burt et al., 2009). The researcher used the social media site Facebook to reach out to potential participants. This is because Facebook is a common way for the target population to communicate with one another. Participants who were recruited by the researcher, were asked if they knew other potential participants. This is called snowballing, where one participant helped the researcher recruit another potential participant (Valentine, 2005, cited by Clifford et al., 2016).

Qualitative data analysis
The goal of the analysis was to investigate what the participants were experiencing and then explain this using the concepts mentioned in the Theoretical Framework. The interviews were transcribed using the software program *Microsoft Word*. After that, the interviews were analysed using the software program *Atlas.ti*, using a deductive code tree (Appendix 2). In this way, it became possible for the researcher to analyse the interviews and to separate useful information from less useful information. The four main groups in the code tree were: Home, Lifecourse, Identity, and Sense of Place. The central concept in this research was home. This concept was divided into three parts: the material home, social home and the personal home (Meijering et al., 2016), explained in the Theoretical Framework. To best capture the experiences of students in their home, the concepts sense of place, and identity were used. The concept of life course was used, to put this transition of home for students in perspective of their life course. Grounded Theory was used to find inductive codes (Punch, 2014). This was done by finding substantive codes in the data, which are categories that were generated from the empirical data.

Research ethics
The participants of this research were asked to fill in and sign an informed consent form before they were going to be interviewed. Due to the Covid-19 rules that were in place (Rijksoverheid, 2020), this form had to be sent to the participant by email. This way it was ensured that all participants were well informed about the purpose of the research, were aware of the risks and benefits and felt free to participate or not. This research was conducted with teleological and deontological ethics approaches in mind (Clifford et al., 2016). The teleological approach means that the action that creates more 'good' than 'evil' will be chosen. The deontological approach means that an action is based on whether that action itself is based on underlying ethical principles (so is it right or wrong?), rather than based on the consequences of said action. These two approaches were chosen to make sure a response to an ethical dilemma was well considered, informed and defensible (Clifford et al., 2016).

Since participants were asked about personal information and experiences, which is sensitive and private information, all participants were asked to provide their information anonymously. Unless the participant specifically requested not to. Moreover, the researcher was part of the research population. This means that the researcher was aware and familiar to certain experiences the participants might mention during the interviews. The researcher was aware that these feelings and experiences are from the participant, and not his own. Because of this positionality, participants might be inclined to share more information. This is because the researcher is a person they could feel comfortable with for this reason. Since

the interviews were recorded, participants might have felt uncomfortable sharing this data. However, participants were ensured by the researcher that all the information that was shared during the interviews, would be safely stored and only be seen by the researcher. When the research project was finished, this data would be deleted.

All interviews took place in an online environment. Thus, the researcher and the participant were both in a physical environment, chosen by themselves. During this research, the three principles of ethical behaviour (justice, beneficence, and respect) were kept in mind (Clifford et al., 2016). All participants were asked beforehand if they agreed to the virtual place and the time of the interview. When there was disagreement about any of the points mentioned above, no data that was collected was used, regardless of the situation.

RESULTS

This study investigated the experiences of Dutch students, studying at Dutch Universities, that returned to their parental home during the Covid-19 crisis in The Netherlands. All of the eight participants that were interviewed during this research can be viewed in table 1. Within table 1, age and gender show the diversity of the sample within this research. The column 'Parental home visited', the answer to a question that was asked to every participant during the interviews can be found. They were asked if they visited their parents often during the time they lived in their student homes. This could indicate that students could still be very connected and involved in their parental home before they decided to move back for a longer period of time.

Table 1: Participant characteristics

Participant	Gender	Age	Parental home visited
Anne	Female	20	Every week, the whole weekend
Ben	Male	21	About 2-3 days a week
Cas	Male	25	Almost every week for multiple days
Diana	Female	22	About 1-2 times a week, but did not stay there overnight
Erika	Female	23	Every week, the whole weekend
Ferdinand	Male	23	2-3 times a month, for multiple days
Gerard	Male	21	Every week, the whole weekend
Hendrik	Male	20	Every week, the whole weekend

Source: Author of source: Dallinga (2020)

By analysing the transcripts, three themes were identified: 'Life course and a definition of home'; 'A sense of home' ; 'Home and identity'. The themes are based on the deductive code tree (Appendix 2). These themes are illustrated by presenting quotes from the participants and are divided into three sub-headings.

Life course and a definition of home
It is important to know how moving back to their parental home, has impacted the students. This could have implications on how it affected their life course. Participants were asked how they looked back on moving back to their parental home. Looking at how this turned out, participants reacted mostly positive. Participants gave information labelled to codes like 'change' and 'choice', in combination with the fact they had to get used their new home in the beginning. When asked how the decision to move back to her parental home had impacted her life, Anne answered:

'Yeah let's say, I struggled with the fact that I had to give up that piece of independence or even freedom. That feeling of taking care of your own stuff, that I had to give that up was

very difficult for me.'

According to Hopkins (2010), with regard to the life course, home is important especially for young adults, since it is a place where they construct their lives and it is often seen as a positive place. However, as part of life course issues, at some stage students cannot be themselves anymore and therefore they make the choice to move out of the parental home in the first place. They are ready to move to next stage in their lives. Home is an important part in the life course of students. In addition, life course theory is about 'the structures and sequences of events and transitions through an individual's life' (Bailey, 2009, p.407). It was therefore important to know how this change in their lives, affected the students, and how they experienced it.

The concept of home in cultural geography, the lived experiences, emotional significance and social relations of domestic life are very important (Blunt, 2005). Blunt said in another article that '(…) "home" is a highly fluid and contested site of human existence that reflects and reifies identities and values' (Blunt et al., 2003, p. 512). Especially for students, who sometimes make the choice to move multiple times to different places. Their home is highly fluid since their house and accordingly their home, changes throughout time.

Furthermore, in line with Blunt et al. (2003) is that the meaning of home changes throughout someone's life course. The role of the home changes. Students in this research talked about different feelings, objects and emotions when they were asked to describe both their parental home and their student home. Participants answered differently to these questions, indicating that some dimensions could be more important to some participants than other dimensions. However, participants gave information labelled to codes like 'relationships' within the home or 'emotions' of feeling at home. After first analysis, it was found that the feeling of 'warmth' also was very important to students. Therefore, 'warmth' was added as an inductive code, because of its importance. When Ben was asked to describe his parental home, he answered:

'Yeah, you always feel welcome when you come in and it is fun to go their and everyone is always happy to see you, so that feels really pleasant fast. Yeah, it is a feeling of warmth that feels like coming home, you know, that is how I feel it.'

In addition, during the interviews the researcher and the participants talked about the concept of home. The dimensions mentioned by Meijering et al. (2016) implicitly came back during the interviews. When the participants were asked to mention about five words that they associate with the word 'home'. This was a probe question, to make them think about the concept of home. Answers were different, but had a lot of overlap between them. Participants mentioned that having their own physical place in the house is important to them. Furthermore, the relationships within the house, especially for the cosiness, was proven to be an important point when the concept of home was discussed. This is in line with Hopkins (2010), who said that young adults shape their surroundings with meaning. They use the relationships with one-another, like family, places and spaces, and this is how they construct their social-identity. Participants gave information labelled to codes like 'relationship'; 'meaning'; 'secure'; and 'social relations'. When asked to come up with a definition of home, using the words she mentioned before, Erika answered:

'Okay, uhm, home is something where I feel fine, and where I experience warmth and cosiness, and where I can be myself.'

A sense of home
Participants in this research mentioned various aspects when they were asked to describe their parental home. Participants gave information labelled to codes like 'surroundings'; 'attachment'; and 'places'. What participants had in common was that they mentioned social aspects, and/or a description of objects, or the physical location of the house.

After first analysis, it was evident that students valued the feeling of 'freedom'. It is something that came back multiple times during interviews, and was mentioned by multiple participants. Therefore, 'freedom' was added as an inductive code during the analysis.

Thus, this means that participants give meaning to their home. They do this through the people they have around them and the physical objects, or location of the house in space and place, when they think about that place. When asked to describe their parental home, Erika and Gerard answered respectively:

'Uhm, well, I think cosiness, freedom, openness. Yes, I think those are the most important things I can think of when I think of home.'

'Okay, well, anyhow, I would describe the location, that it is located between meadows and nature. Yeah, and it is a small detached house, (…).'

Humanistic geographers back in the 1970s and 1980s claimed that what people made human was their intense attachment to place (Blunt et al., 2003). However, this place attachment is different for every human being. The aspects of life that people value are different for everyone. According to Hopkins (2010), young adults shape their surroundings with meaning. They do this by using the relationships with one-another, like family, places and spaces, and this is how they construct their social-identity.

Sense of place can be defined as 'a concept used to describe the particular ways in which human beings invest their surroundings with meaning' (Williams et al., 2012, p. 258). Participants said they still feel connected or attached to their parental home. This can be because of a memory to the place, because it feels trusted/secure or because of the social relationships they have at their parental home. All of these aspects were mentioned by participants. This indicates that home helps to make a broader understanding of sense of relations to place (Blunt & Varley, 2004). This explains why participants did not struggle much when they made the decision to move back to the parental home. When asked if he still feels connected to his parental home, Ferdinand answered:

'Uhm, I think so yes, yeah, you come to the place you grew up in. At that moment, a feeling of trust comes back. It feels trusted to be back there for a longer period of time. You do not have to get used to that. It is a little bit different of course, but it feels trusted of course, yes.'

Participants were asked specifically about their social relationships. According to Meijering et al. (2016), home is shaped by someone's everyday practices, experiences and social relations. When asked about their social relationships, participants mentioned a difference between family relationships and relationships with friends. Also, the difference between current friendships and close friendships of the past. Some participants were still really close with the friends and family they have in and around the parental home. Whilst others had built an active social network in and around their student home. They viewed the social network at their parental home as good friends, but not people they still see on a daily to weekly basis. Participants had different answers to these questions and it really came down

to the personal situation. However, participants stated that the relationships they have at their parental home, are still very close and important to them.

Home and identity
Participants in this research indicated that they did not struggle much with the transition of going back to their parental home. However, they did mention a difference between their student home and their parental home. They had to take into account that they were not the only people in the house. Unlike in their student home, participants indicated they had to account for other household family members when they want to do something. Participants often gave information labelled to codes like 'role' and 'social relations'. Going back into the son/daughter or even child role when going back, could be difficult. When Cas was asked if he could be himself during his stay at his parental home, he answered:

'(…). You can be yourself, however you can not always decide what you want yourself. You have to make consessions and that is why I am more or less doubting right now. But you can be yourself, that is what I have experienced.'

According to Hopkins (2010), the specific places and locations that young adults find themselves in, have an influence on their identity and are an important marker of identity. This means that the home, and how someone forms and develops their identity, are closely linked. Identity in this research is defined as 'how we make sense of ourselves, in relation to others, in everyday and local places' (Meijering et al., 2016, p. 36). Furthermore, participants indicated that they like having a place of their own within their home. They value a place for themselves, something that is theirs. This can thus not only indicate the home itself, but maybe even a particular place within the home.

Lastly, participants were asked if they thought they were able to be themselves within their parental home. Each participants started answering this question differently. However, they all arrived at the same answer: yes. And this can be because students can truly be themselves. Participants gave information labelled to codes like 'secure' and 'meaning' during the interviews. They feel secure and their parental home is familiar place. This is in line with Meijering et al. (2016) and the dimension of the personal home. This is where the material home and the social home come together. The home gains meaning and is a secure, familiar point in someone's life. It is taking a step back, but it is taking a familiar step back and students can get used to that. When Ferdinand was asked about if he could himself during his stay in his parental home, he answered:

'I have the idea that can be myself at my parental home. It is actually quite doable. But you can notice, (…), your parents will go back into their parent-role. And actually, without me noticing, I am also stepping back into that child-role. So yeah, I can really be myself, however you can see that it is different than being in (student home). (…). There are differences, because you have other expectations from each other. Or because you approach each other differently. But you can be yourself.

Expectations of this study were that students who already visited their parents on a weekly to by weekly basis, would have a better experience when returning for a longer time. Looking at table 1, we see that all participants already visited their parents on a weekly to by-weekly basis, whilst living on their own. Results shown and discussed in this section, thus confirm these expectations.

CONCLUSIONS

In general, the aim of this research was to investigate the experiences of Dutch students that returned to their parental home during the Covid-19 crisis in The Netherlands. This has been done by using a qualitative research method, using a semi-structured interview guide to collect data from participants that best fit the purpose of this research. The main question to answer in this research is: *How do Dutch students who moved back to their parental home during the Covid-19 crisis in The Netherlands, experience their parental home?*
Thus, participants indicated that they struggled at first when they were moving back. However, when they looked back at the decision they made, they were positive about their decision to move back to the parental home for a longer time during this period of crisis. When participants described their parental home, they mostly described the relationships within the home, feeling at home and the feeling of warmth. Participants also talked about feelings, objects and emotions when they were asked to describe their home. Since all participants went back to their parental home on a regular basis whilst they lived on their own, this outcome is line with the expectations of this research and in line with Hopkins (2010), which points out that attachment to home is likely to increase when the individual resides longer at the house.
Humanistic geographers back in the 1970s and 1980s claimed that what people made human was their intense attachment to place (Blunt et al., 2003). Participants indicated that they still feel connected to their parental home. This was because of a memory to the place, because it feels familiar or because of the social relationships they have at their parental home.
Concluding, the parental home is already a familiar and secure place to students, and they can truly be themselves at their parental home, they have little problem adapting to the new reality. This is in line with Meijering et al. (2016) and the dimension of the personal home. The decision is taking a familiar step back to a place that they know, and is secure to them and students can get used to that.

DISCUSSION

Strengths and weaknesses
This paper was limited due to the Covid-19 regulations that were in place during all phases of this research. Therefore, participant recruitment and data collection were conducted online. Participants were asked and reflected on the fact that they were interviewed using online software, reacting positive. It is not believed that conducting the interviews in an online environment has influenced the results in any way.
When a participant mentioned a certain topic, and the researcher asked further question regarding that topic, answers towards other questions and concepts could be automatically applied by the participant to explain certain phenomena. However, these are aspects the participant deemed important, so they would be relevant to the research nevertheless.
The Covid-19 regulations also have an influence on the places and social relations of the participants, since it was not allowed to meet a lot of people outside your own household at the time (Rijksoverheid, 2020). Participants explained that their choices made regarding visiting places like University or the gym, were influenced by the Covid-19 regulations, and not specifically by their decision to move back to their parental home.
In addition, interviews were conducted in Dutch instead of English, since the Dutch was the first language of all participants. This choice was made so the participants would feel more comfortable when talking about the topic and could more easily elaborate on certain topics. The risk in this is that all transcribed quotes had to be translated from Dutch to English for

this paper. However, it is believed that that there was little to no information lost due to this. Lastly, most of the literature found was not specifically on the topic of this research. Reason for this is that the Covid-19 crisis is relatively new. However, concepts used to the describe the situation of the participants in this research, were well applied based on previous academic literature.

Reflection on methods

Quality criteria for qualitative research will be used to reflect on the methods on this research. Credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and saturation will be reflected upon and if it was achieved.

Credibility deals with the question whether how congruent the findings are with reality (Shenton, 2004). Concepts of home, sense of place and identity were used to explain these experiences, based on academic literature. Operationalising these concepts was difficult. However, regarding the definitions that were used and comparing them to the operationalisation of the concepts used in the interview guide, the proper data collection and analysis were followed. Therefore credibility was achieved.

Transferability deals with the question whether the results of the study are an indication for other groups in society (Shenton, 2004). Sufficient contextual information about the fieldwork sites is provided, so others are able to make the transfer, and relate the findings of this research, to their own positions. The situation in which the participants are in, is made clear in this research. Also, the description of the participants is specific to this research, but general enough to apply to other contexts. Therefore transferability was achieved.

Dependability deals with the question that if the work was repeated with the same techniques, context, methods and participants, similar results would be obtained (Shenton, 2004). Methods used during the data collection and the analysis are clearly outlined in the method chapter of this research. Since a semi-structured interview guide was used, the line of questioning for each participant was different. However, all participants were asked the same questions. Thus all the topics of this research were covered during the interviews. Interviews always started with questions about the concept of home. This is because that concept is central to this research. A certain bias towards the other concepts could be the case, since the questions were asked in a different order. However, the participants mentioned what they think is important to them. So for the overall results, this would not matter. Therefore, dependability was achieved.

Confirmability deals with the question whether the findings are the results of the experiences of the participants of the research, rather than the preferences and the characteristics of the researchers (Shenton, 2004). Since the researcher is part of the research population for this research, experiences showed by participants could reflect on his own judgement of the situation. Decision made in this research by the researcher were tracked during the supervisor meetings by the supervisor and other students. This way, the researcher always had objective opinions on how he should progress his work, without clouding the research with his own judgement on the subject. Therefore, confirmability was achieved.

It is also believed that saturation level about the concepts and topics in this research was reached. This is based on the fact that no new information was given by new participant of this research after already having interviewed other participants.

Policy recommendations and further research

Lastly, in terms of policy recommendation, further research is recommended concerning students that were not able to go back a safe and familiar home environment. It would help to investigate the experiences of these students, to get a broader understanding of student experiences during this crisis as a whole. And it will create a better understanding of the consequences this crisis has on this group of students.

In this way, when a certain crisis would hit again, or during this same crisis, it is possible for policy makers and government officials, to take the experiences of students during these times into account.

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<u>APPENDICES</u>

Appendix 1: Interview guide

Hello, thank you for participating in my research project. Before we begin, do you have any questions for me? I would like to remind you that if you have any questions during the interview, please ask them. If you are not able to answer a question or you do not want to answer a question, please let me know, because your participation iis on a voluntary basis. I also want to remind you that if you want to stop with the interview, we will, and you do not owe me an explanation for that. If this is all clear, I suggest we start with the interview?

What University do you currently go to and what are you studying at the moment?

What is your gender?

What is your age?

Lifecourse
Why did you make the decision to move to your parents during the Covid-19 crisis?

How did this decision impacted you and make you feel?
        - How would you describe this decision in your life?

Home
When do you feel at home?
        - Could you maybe elaborate on that?
        - What do you do to make yourself at home?

Do you feel "at home" during your stay at your parents?
        - Why or why not?

How would you describe your parental home?
        - Think about social relationships, what does the house look like, routines, how does it make you feel?
        - Would you describe it differently than your own student home?
        - Why or why not?

What words come up in you when you think of the word 'home'?
        - Could you write them down for me?
        - Looking at these words, could you come up with a definition of the word 'home'?

Sense of place
How would you describe your social network and social relationships at your parental home?
        - Did these relationships differ from the relationships at your own student home?
        - How then?
        - Why do you think this is the case?

Do you feel connected to your parental home?
        - Why or why not?
        - Does this connection with your parental home differ from earlier life stages?
        - Why or why not?

- How does this connection differ?

Identity
How has the move to your parents' house impacted your social relations with your friends and parents?
  - Can you elaborate on that?

How has the move to your parents impacted your daily activities and the places you go to?

Would you say you can be yourself right now at your parents' house and 'do what you want to do'?
  - Why or why not?

How does this differ from being at your student home?

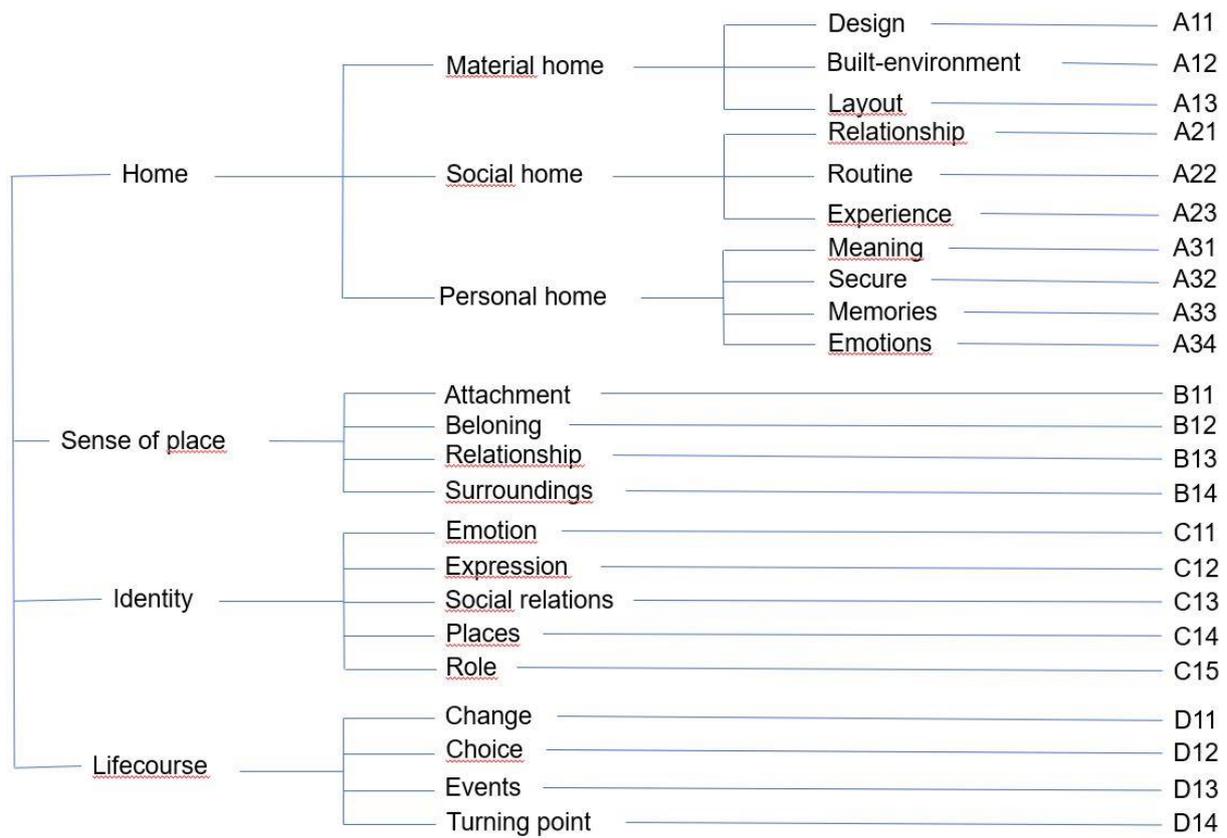### Concluding
Do you have anything else to add on this topic or to this interview?
- Comments, remarks, criticism, something else?

Do you happen to know anyone else who is or was in the same situation as you were and fits my participant description?

Appendix 2: Deductive code tree

Home	Material home	Design	A11
		Built-environment	A12
		Layout	A13
	Social home	Relationship	A21
		Routine	A22
		Experience	A23
	Personal home	Meaning	A31
		Secure	A32
		Memories	A33
		Emotions	A34
Sense of place	Attachment		B11
	Beloning		B12
	Relationship		B13
	Surroundings		B14
Identity	Emotion		C11
	Expression		C12
	Social relations		C13
	Places		C14
	Role		C15
Lifecourse	Change		D11
	Choice		D12
	Events		D13
	Turning point		D14

Appendix 3: Information letter

Hello!

My name is Karsten Dallinga and I am a student from the University of Groningen. Currently, I am finishing my studies for the Bachelor programme *Human Geography & Planning,* which requires me to write a Bachelor thesis and thus conduct my own research. In this research I have to show that I can conduct empirical academic research, under supervision, in the area of human geography, and apply all of the skills that I have learned over the past 3 years.

My research topic is about the 'Experiences of Dutch students in their parental home during the Covid-19 crisis'. During the Covid-19 crisis in The Netherlands, some Dutch students made the choice, or had to make the choice, to (temporarily) move back to or stay at their parental home. This of course has an impact on the students themselves as well on the people around them. And everybody experiences this change differently.

After reading about and talking to various students who had made this decision, I was interested in how this actually affected their lives and how they experienced their long (temporary) stay at their parents.

Consequently, I would like to interview students who have made this decision during the Covid-19 crisis in The Netherlands and would I like to ask about their experiences during this time at their parental home. This is why I contacted you, and I want to ask if I have permission to interview you. Below this letter, you can find a consent form. If you are willing to participate in my research project and are willing to be interviewed, I kindly want to ask you to carefully read and sign the consent form and send it back to the same email address you received this email on.

if you have any questions for me, please contact me via:
Mail: k.dalling@student.rug.nl
Phone: 06-83096672

Thank you for your time!

Kind regards,

Karsten Dallinga

Appendix 4: Informed consent form

Consent form for the research project 'Experiences of Dutch students in their parental home during the Covid-19 crisis'.

This consent form adds validity to the data collected and causes a more equal relation between researcher and participant.

I have read the information letter about the research project, I was able to ask questions and my questions were answered to my satisfaction. I had enough time to decide whether or not I wanted to participate in this research project.

My participation in this research project is completely voluntary, I can withdraw from the research at any time, without having to give a reason for my withdrawing.

Collected data for this research will be stored no longer than the final submission date of the research report. For this research this will be February 12th 2021 at 17:00.

Please ==highlight== the answer that applies to you:
I give my permission for audio recording during the interview: YES/NO
I give my permission for video recording during the interview: YES/NO

Participants will remain anonymous when mentioned in the
research report, please indicate whether you agree with this or not: YES/NO

I give my permission for using the interview data for the following purposes:

- Scientific presentation and/or Educational purposes.

I hereby agree to participate in this interview:

Name and signature of research participant.   *Date.*
:   :

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 and signature of researcher.   *Date.*
:   :

Appendix 5: E-mail message send to participants (Translated)

Hello!

I am excited that you want to participate in my research project. At this moment our interview will be conducted at (Date).

In the attachments below this email you will find a Word document called 'Information letter and consent form'. In total that is two pages where you can find information about the research project, followed by a consent form where the terms of agreement for both the researcher and the participant are mentioned.

I would like to ask you to read this document carefully, and I you have any questions to send them to me. When everything is clear for you, I would like to ask you to sign the document. A signature in Word can be drawn in the following steps: 'Insert'; 'Shapes'; 'Scribble'. You can also print the document, sign it and scan it. But I leave that up to you.

Then, I would like to ask you to save the document and send it back to me, to the same email address as you received this email on from me.

Trusting to have provided you with sufficient information.

Kind regards,
Karsten Dallinga

Appendix 6: Message shared on Facebook (Translated)

Hello!

My name is Karsten Dallinga and I am a fourth year student Human Geography and Planning at the University of Groningen.

At the moment I am working on a research project where I am interested in the experiences and living situation of Dutch students during the Coronacrisis in The Netherlands. Some students have made the choice to live with their parents again during this crisis. And everyone has different experiences with this.

Do you study at a Dutch University of University of Applied Sciences, do you live on your own (or did you live on your own) and did you make the decision to live with your parents again, for a consecutive period of 2 weeks, during the Coronacrisis? Then I would like to invite you to participate in my research project.

You can contact my via Facebook Messenger, and then I will give you more information about the research. Consequently, you could be invited to share your experiences, and you would help me out a tonne.

Have you have not experienced this situation, and you still want to help me out?
Sharing and Liking will be appreciated.