

Not only the students are to blame

How the COVID-19 pandemic caused an increase in noise nuisance for the long-time residents of the Schildersbuurt in Groningen



Colophon

Title: Not only the students are to blame

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Date: January, 2022

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Cover Page: (Dagblad van het Noorden, 2021)

Abstract

The topic of this research is the change in attitude of long-time residents of the Schildersbuurt neighbourhood in Groningen as a consequence of the increase in noise nuisance that was caused by student residents during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is researched by doing in-depth interviews with 7 long-time residents of the Schildersbuurt, the project leader dealing with the student nuisance and with the head of the hotline for nuisance of this neighbourhood.

The results show that in some cases the attitude of the long-time residents towards the student residents did in fact worsen due to the situation in the pandemic. Interestingly enough though, the increase in noise nuisance during the pandemic was not the most important factor that caused their attitudes to worsen as there was sympathy for the student residents who had to cope with a lot of restrictions. The studentification that has happened and still is happening in this neighbourhood is considered as the biggest factor for the increase in nuisance by the interviewees. The municipality's policy of the last decade gets more blame than the actual student residents.

Keywords: Studentification, COVID-19 pandemic, noise nuisance, neighbourhood, attitude, Schildersbuurt, Groningen

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The COVID-19 virus has kept the world in its grip since December 2019 and the situation in Europe became significantly worse in March 2020. From this period on a lot of measures were taken by the Dutch government as an attempt to stop the spreading of the virus. The so-called 'intelligent lockdown' started in March and this 'intelligent lockdown' was designed to make the Dutch inhabitants stay at home as much as possible and to make them only leave their houses for essential things such as groceries, walking the dog or certain essential jobs (Rijksoverheid, 2021).

As a direct result from these restrictions imposed by the Dutch government there was a big increase in students having parties at their own houses up till very late hours. In a normal situation the students would have gone to the city or their student association to continue their partying after midnight. This, however was impossible in this period of time (Koop, 2020).

Because of this development it was inevitable that an increase in the noise nuisance experienced by non-students living in the same neighbourhood would occur. An accurate description of neighbourhood noise is: "Noises caused by activities of private persons in the neighbourhood that are disruptive or annoying are referred to as neighbour noise. This includes, for example, loudlytuned televisions, a party, home improvement work in the home or garden, or the operation of vehicles or lawn mowers on private property" (Umweltbundesamt, sd).

This increase in noise nuisance caused by students was also experienced by a big group of non-student inhabitants of the Schildersbuurt in Groningen. This neighbourhood has seen a growth in the number of students in the last decades, which resulted in a relatively big share in student residents. This process is called 'studentification' (Anderson, 2006). This neighbourhood is especially interesting as it is known to have been influenced by the negative effects of the process of studentification (Rauws & Meelker, 2019). A map of the Schildersbuurt and its' different quarters (kwartieren) is shown in figure 1.

The non-student inhabitants reached their limit of nuisance and thus they wrote a letter of emergency to the municipality as a scream of help (DVHN, 2020). The municipality noted the seriousness of the letter and drew up a list with 135 student houses in Groningen that had caused noise nuisance multiple times already in the past. These houses were labelled as the 'nuisance houses'. The municipality of Groningen gave the police the instructions to give the inhabitants of these houses fines and to take away their music installations if the nuisance would occur again in the future (DVHN, 2020).

This attempt didn't have the wished result. The non-student inhabitants were still exposed to a lot of noise nuisance and therefore they decided to write a second letter of emergency to the municipality. The municipality realised that something else was necessary to keep the relationship between the students and non-students in the Schildersbuurt bearable. And so, a project leader was appointed specifically to try to improve this relationship (Ukrant, 2021).

After a few months the measures and restrictions related to COVID-19 were almost entirely lifted (Rijksoverheid, 2021). The research started during this period in September 2021. It is valuable to research if the relation between the students and non-students in the Schildersbuurt has changed. By studying multiple parameters the research can contribute to a larger understanding of the impact of noise annoyance on the relationship between neighbours.

This is very relevant to policy-makers of this area for the upcoming period and also if a potential next pandemic happens or if a potential new COVID outbreak occurs. And the findings of this research can also be helpful in designing future sustainable cities in a manner in which acoustic nuisance is prevented. And domestic noise such as this can severely disrupt the lives of those affected, reducing the quality of life and having adverse impact on mental and physical wellbeing, causing annoyance, and disturbing sleep and daily activities (Stanfeld, et al., 2000).

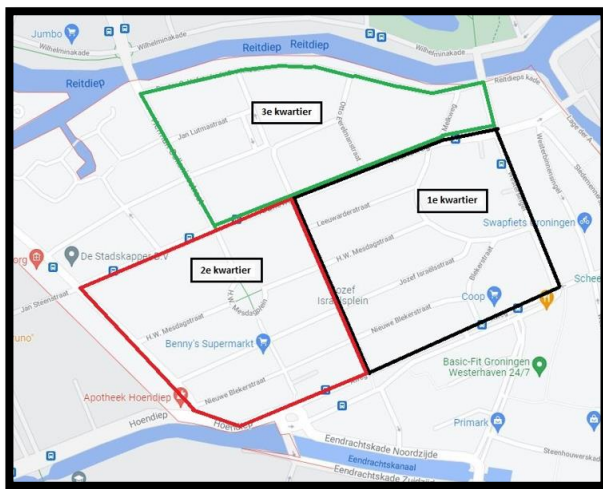


Figure 1. The Schildersbuurt, Groningen. (Author, 2021)

1.2 Research Problem

During the pandemic there has been an increase in noise nuisance caused by students living in the Schildersbuurt in Groningen. The level of annoyance that is experienced because of this, based on two studies, it is expected that it is influenced mostly by two factors. The one factor is the nature of noise nuisance (Levy-Leboyer & Naturel, 1991). The other factor is the attitude towards one's neighbour (Park & Lee, 2019).

The aim of this research to find out how these factors have been of influence on the attitude of the non-students towards the students in the neighbourhood.

This results in the following Research Question: **In what way has the increased noise nuisance caused by students in the Schildersbuurt in Groningen during the pandemic changed the attitude of non-students towards students in the Schildersbuurt?**

To support this Research Question a couple of Sub-Questions have been formulated:

1. In what way was the nature of noise nuisance caused by students in the Schildersbuurt in Groningen different during the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. How can the annoyance experienced by the non-student residents during the COVID-19 pandemic best be described?
3. How can the change in attitude of non-student residents towards students caused by the COVID-19 pandemic best be described?

The increased noise nuisance is seen as a factual development during the pandemic in this research. It may appear as if a quantitative measure would be needed to prove this increase. However, Levy-Leboyer & Naturel (1991) state that complaints are not a reliable index of noise annoyance, because only a small percentage of people exposed to noise and who suffer from it actually complain. Moreover, the newspaper articles used in the background section also demonstrate this increase in noise nuisance.

1.3 Structure of Thesis

This thesis consists of 8 sections. The core concepts on which this research is based are discussed in the theoretical framework section. Then, in the conceptual model section, the used theories are visualised and it is shown how they are linked together. In the hypotheses section, the expectation of the outcome of the research is described before any actual research was performed. Next comes the methodology section in which the research method is described. Subsequently comes the results section, which discusses the results following from the collected data. Based on these results some conclusions are drawn in the next section. In the last section there is a reflection on the way the research is conducted and some potential further researches are suggested.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Theoretical Framework

2.1.1 Noise nuisance and the effects

This research focusses on a neighbourhood that has been exposed to studentification. This process of studentification can best be described as: the process by which specific neighbourhoods become dominated by student residential occupation. The development of studentification brings both positive and negative effects for these areas. A positive effect is the economic opportunities that arise. Yet there are also negative effects that arise in the form of social conflict with existing residents, as well as visual and noise pollution (Anderson, 2006).

A cause of this is adequately described by Rauws & Meelker (2019). They describe that it is often the case that students have a very different rhythm of life compared to the non-student inhabitants (such as the elderly and working families). This can cause a negative tension between the two different groups of inhabitants.

Furthermore there is generally a gap between the connectedness the students feel with their neighbourhood and the connectedness the non-students feel with their neighbourhood. The student residents generally feel less connected to the neighbourhood. This feeling can be explained by the fact that the average student will only live here for some years. Whereas the non-student inhabitants could be living there for their entire life so they approach it from another perspective (Rauws & Meelker, 2019). One of the biggest effects of studentification on a neighbourhood is a rise in noise nuisance (Mosey, 2017). Sage et al. (2012) similarly states that noise nuisance is one of the biggest effects as a consequence of the in-migration of student residents to a certain neighbourhood.

Noise nuisance can have some serious effects on a humans' health both mentally as well as physically. Loud and/or rude neighbours are an under-appreciated cause of misery and, apparently, health problems for many urban residents (Weinhold, 2015). Similarly this was stated by (Jensen, et al., 2019), "On a population basis, the most prevalent and immediate response to noise is annoyance, which is an individually experienced phenomenon that may activate physiological stress-responses and result in both physical and mental symptoms."

Based on these theories it can be stated that noise nuisance is because of its' impact on physical and mental wellbeing a consequence of studentification that should be considered seriously.

An important insight is given by Levy-Leboyer & Naturel (1991), they mention that it is not only the level of the volume of the noise but above all the characteristics of the sound, that determines the level of annoyance that is experienced. Their research has shown that the most annoying noises are those which are judged as being not normal, possible to avoid, happening during the night, and are described as being loud.

2.1.2 Noise nuisance in the COVID-19 Pandemic

In the pandemic it became more significant how crucial neighbourhoods are for a humans' wellbeing both positively and negatively. Research has shown that feeling connected to family members was most important for the well-being of people during the lockdown, followed by sense of connectedness to friends and neighbours (Landmann & Rohmann, 2021). There are several case studies that have displayed that the pandemic made people from the same neighbourhood feel more connected as a result of certain pandemic initiatives, such as bear hunts and WhatsApp groups (Davern, et al., sd). These initiatives contribute to the sense of community. This is described as the feeling of belonging to a group of people who matter to one another and share a common fate (Landmann & Rohmann, 2021).

While on the other hand the pandemic resulted in some negative developments in the neighbourhood. For example the growth in nuisance caused by neighbours.

During the COVID-19 pandemic a big rise of noise nuisance was evident. Lee & Jeong (2021), wrote that there was a significant increase in tweets in the city of London regarding this topic. In particular, talking/shouting was the most frequently heard noise during the lockdown. Compared to before the lockdown, the mean annoyance ratings of neighbour noise increased and talking/shouting and TV/music were most annoying (Lee & Jeong, 2021). A study by Tong et al. (2021) provides a comparable insight; neighbourhood noise was the main trigger for noise complaints during the lockdown and it experienced a dramatic increase.

It is evident that the pandemic has had a real impact on neighbourhoods in either negative and positive ways. A manner to describe the relationships in neighbourhoods is described by Park & Lee (2019) in the form of a model, which is shown in figure 2, “Residents may consider the neighbours (i.e., noise source) as an enemy, friend, or stranger/acquaintance, depending on the strength of the positive or negative affect towards them. The affect towards the neighbours can be located between negative and positive, while the intensity ranges from weak to strong. Neighbours can be strangers/acquaintances if the intensity of the affect is not strong. Strangers/acquaintances can be felt as negative, positive, or somewhere in between based on various conditions. The neighbours can be seen as an enemy if the residents feel a negative affect with strong intensity. On the other hand, residents can see the neighbours as friends when the affect is strongly positive.” (Park & Lee, 2019)

These three dimensions to describe the overall attitude of the non-students toward the students can be used to describe the state of the relationship between the two groups before and after the COVID-19 measures.

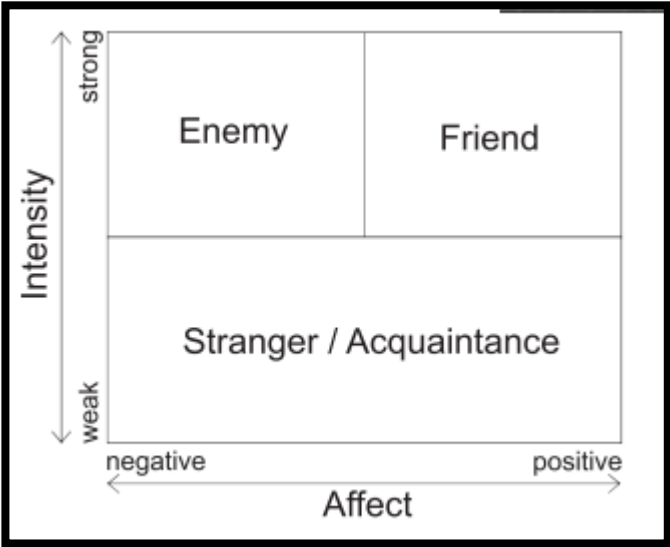


Figure 2. Residents’ attitudes towards the neighbours in terms of affect and its intensity. (Park & Lee, 2019)

2.2 Conceptual Model

This conceptual model is designed to visualise the possible change in attitude from non-student residents towards student residents in the Schildersbuurt as a result of the **Increase** of noise nuisance. There are two main factors that influence the level of noise annoyance experienced by the non-student inhabitants: **Nature of noise nuisance** and **Attitude of non-students towards students**.

The research that claims that attitude is of essence for the experience of noise annoyance divides three types of relationships: Stranger/Acquaintance, Enemy and Friend. However, the **Level** of noise annoyance also influences the way the **Attitude** of non-students towards students develops. In other words, **in first instance Attitude** is one of the factors that has an effect on the perceived nuisance, but **Attitude** is also the outcome of the process (Park & Lee, 2019).

Levy-Leboyer & Naturel (1991) state in a different theory that the four most annoying noises are judged as being Not normal, Possible to avoid, During the night or Loud.

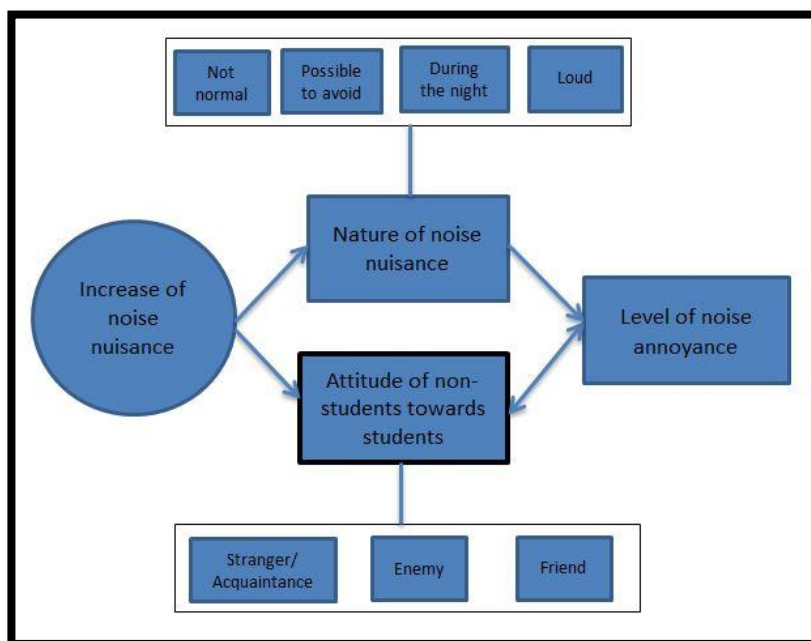


Figure 3. Conceptual model. (Author, 2021)

2.3 Hypothesis

In this section the most likely outcome of this research before any research has been performed will be discussed. This means that it is **just** based on expectations resulting from theories and news articles on the topic.

A logical result from the increase in noise nuisance by students in the Schildersbuurt would be that the attitude from the non-students towards the students has changed for the worse. And this **will** potentially mean that the non-student residents will become less tolerant and accepting towards the student residents, and call **in** the police more often for instance. This is stimulated by the fact that the nature of the noise nuisance that caused a lot of complaints belongs to the noises that are judged as being most annoying. Furthermore, the attitude from non-student residents was already not that positive towards student residents due to the studentification that **happened** in the Schildersbuurt.

3. Methodology

In this section the methodology of the research is discussed. For this **Research Problem** a qualitative approach is most fitting. This is because the aim of this research is to find out if the attitude of non-student residents towards student residents has changed due to the pandemic. **In social sciences** it has been widely accepted that qualitative research is most appropriate for providing rich contextual subjective information about people's feelings, emotions and perceptions (Carrasco & Lucas, 2015). **For this research** this technique was the most appropriate because the experienced nuisance is a highly subjective matter. To get the best possible understanding of this **feeling** it is necessary to allow the interviewees to use their own words and expressions. In that way qualitative research makes it possible to describe situations "from the inside out", from the **point of view of people** that are being interviewed. It visualizes the subjective and collectively shared ideas. Hence, a qualitative research method is the best manner to answer the main **RQ**, which reflects on a changed attitude shared by residents of the Schildersbuurt (Scheunpflug, et al., 2016).

With **an** qualitative approach the tool to answer the **RQ** is in-depth interviews with a small group of participants (a group between 6 and 12) (Longhurst, sd). These interviews serve as a tool to highlight the change in attitude. **By doing in-depth interviews it is a possibility to ask open questions to the interviewees which makes them able to answer in their own words and describe the change in attitude without any suggestion towards a certain direction.** This is **the** done in the same manner in Pinkster & Boterman (2017), which reflects on the changing relationship between a particular **group Amsterdam** residents and their neighbourhood as a result of an increase in tourism. Asking these types of open questions provides a deeper insight in the perspective of the interviewees. This type of qualitative research is called **narrative research**. Narrative research can be best described as collecting stories contributed by interviewees but also evaluating and analysing those stories. This is done by systematically looking for themes or other details. For this **technique** a coding tree was created as shown on the next page in figure 4,5 and 6. The majority of the codes were deductively **created so that means** that they were predefined before the analysis of the data from the interviews. A small share of the codes were inductively created, **this means** that they were derived from the data and not predefined like the deductive codes.

To ensure to not miss the most important theories of the research, a few questions regarding the theories mentioned in the theoretical framework were asked (e.g. nature of noise annoyance and attitude). Therefore, narrative research is not **simply storytelling but** a process like any other research methodology. It is also valuable to convey realism or a sense of experience with **narrative** in the raw form of the individual's story. This will be done in the style of direct quotes from the interviews (Overcash, 2003).



Figure 4. Part 1 of the coding tree. (Author, 2021)

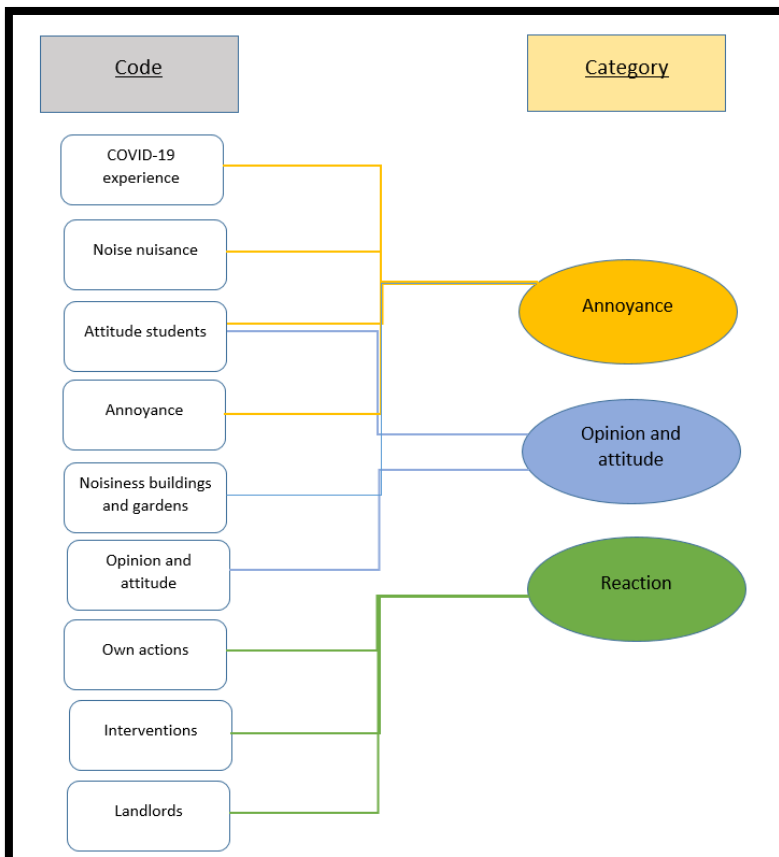


Figure 5. Part 2 of the coding tree. (Author, 2021)

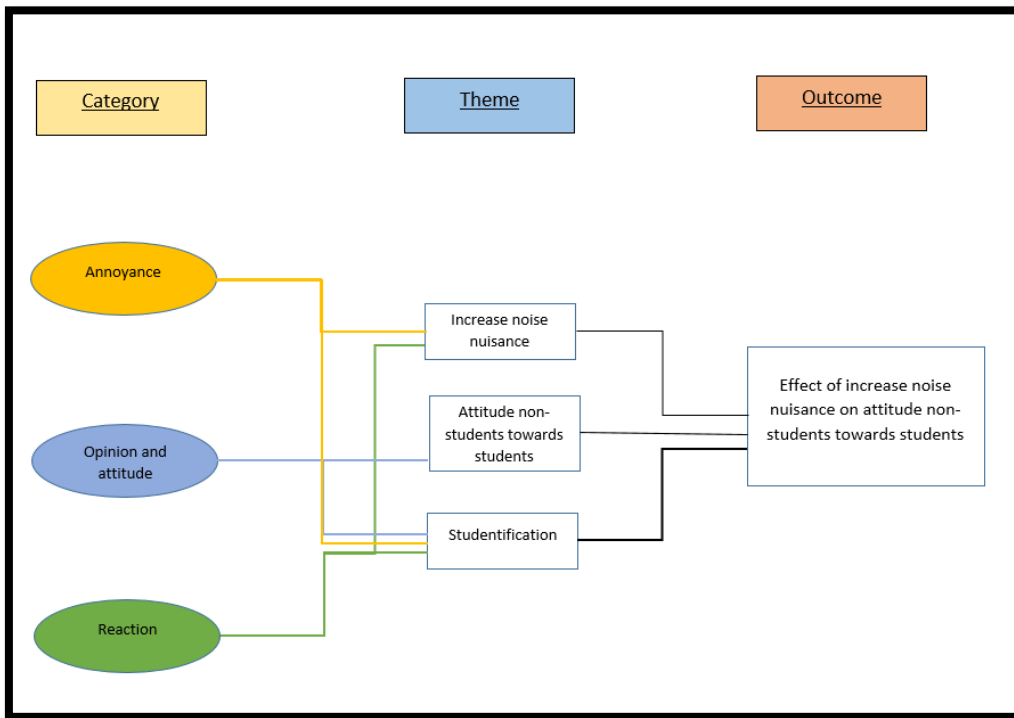


Figure 6. Part 3 of the coding tree. (Author, 2021)

The interviews were held with 7 non-student long-time residents of the Schildersbuurt. They were selected through a convenience sample as the interviewees of the research sample are the most convenient for the researcher because the researcher already was in touch with some people with the right characteristics (Waterfield, 2018). These characteristics consisted of being a non-student resident of the Schildersbuurt for at least two years and being an adult.

Besides the interviews with the non-student residents, two interviews with other key actors were also held. These other key actors are the head of the nuisance hotline for the Schildersbuurt and the appointed project leader for the relationship between the non-students and student residents. Both of these key actors have contacts with a wide range of residents in the neighbourhood. This gives them a broader overview of the whole situation and hence they gave some interesting outside perspectives.

All the interviews were held through Google Meets. This way the interviews could be recorded and transcribed. It was also better to do the interviews online because the subject matter is quite personal and therefore it was important to do the interviews in the most neutral environment which generally is online. The COVID situation was also considered and thus it was decided that unnecessary physical contact was better to avoid.

Before actually conducting the interviews a framework was made. This made the interviews more structured and the data that is collected is more suitable to process. The interview guide can be found in Appendix 8.2. The results were processed using coding schemes to easily recognize trends in the answers of the respondents. These trends in the result section were used as much as possible to draw conclusions. Because the factor annoyance is a highly subjective emotion there was a need to use a standardised measure to appoint this feeling. Therefore, the five-point annoyance scale as recommended by the International Commission on Biological Effects of Noise (Fields, 2001). This scale is solely used to strengthen the narrative told by the interviewees as it in no way could be used for an statistical analysis. This is because the size of the research population is not large enough and the sample is not a valid representation of the population.

An ethical consideration that has to be made is the fact that the researcher (me) is a student in Groningen himself. However, he **doesn't** live in the Schildersbuurt and **doesn't** have any relation with the neighbourhood which makes him totally objective so a fair and unbiased research can be produced. Another consideration is the anonymity of the interviewees. It is important to always provide the option for the interviewee to stay anonymous when using the interview in the research project (Longhurst, sd). All the interviewees are referred to as Interviewee 1 or Interviewee 2 and no actual first or last names are used. All of the interviewees signed a digital consent form beforehand. In this form the conditions and terms were stated. This consent form can be found in Appendix 8.3.

4. Results

4.1 Introduction results

In this section the results of the in-depth interviews with the long-time residents and the other key actors will be analysed. But first it is important to reflect on the quality of the collected data. All of the interviewees had the right characteristics. For **instance** the timespan in which the interviewees were resident in the Schildersbuurt varied from 4 years to 41 years. **Besides this** a good balance between male and female interviewees is existent.

This section will broadly follow the structure of the theoretical framework. It starts with a description of how the long-time residents have experienced the studentification process the selected neighbourhood has undergone. **Then** the aspect of an increase in noise nuisance during the pandemic will be highlighted, resulting in a change of attitude of the long-time residents towards the students. **And lastly** conclusions will be drawn based on the results. **Furthermore** the opinions and the views on the situation of the other key actors that have been interviewed will be used to validate the analysis of the data.

4.2 Experienced studentification

The research opens with the fact that the Schildersbuurt is subjected to studentification. Almost all long-time residents confirm in the interviews that they experienced this process in the last decade. This is illustrated nicely by interviewee 1: *"It is said more often that we live in a 'student neighbourhood', when I started living here however it was a neighbourhood with also students living there but it was not a 'student neighbourhood'"*. (Long-time resident, 2021, Interview 1)

They also mention that this process has caused some social conflict. Some of the interviewees feel this happens due to the different life rhythms they have opposed to the student residents. This is in line with the theory of Rauws & Meelker (2019), who also stated that these different rhythms can lead to negative tension.

When the interviewees were asked about what annoyed them the most about the student **residents** the majority named noise nuisance. Noise nuisance being the biggest effect of studentification is in accordance with Mosey (2017). The study by Weinhold (2015) claims that the effects of noise nuisance can be problematic for both mental and physical health of the people that suffered from it. An example of how noise nuisance can lead to sleepless nights by one of the interviewees in the Schildersbuurt is: *"... that loud bass that booms through everything and keeps you up at night."* (Long-time resident, 2021, Interview 2)

The head of the nuisance hotline for the municipality of Groningen gives a good insight of the effects with the following quote: *"That irritation started to become more emotional and I really felt that because I had crying people calling me about nuisance."* (Head nuisance hotline, 2021, Interview) This quote displays **what** impact the noise nuisance had on certain residents.

4.3 Change in nature of noise nuisance

This research specifically zooms in on the COVID-19 pandemic period when the bars and clubs were all closed and there was a restriction on the number of visitors at people's houses. The first sub question is as follows: In what way was the nature of noise nuisance caused by students in the Schildersbuurt in Groningen different during the COVID-19 pandemic?

The data from the interviews provides a good insight on this question. Some of the long-time residents expressed how they felt that the parties were much more frequent and also continued much longer. Interviewee 1 explained: *"... but there are much more parties at home right, normally we don't have that as much, normally they will go to the city at around midnight and then we can go to sleep."* (Long-time resident, 2021, Interview 1)

A different long-time resident stated that: *"Because they were not allowed to have too many people over at their house, they stood on the sidewalk with 30 or 40 people on several occasions."* (Long-time resident, 2021, Interview 4)

This tendency is confirmed by the head nuisance hotline: *"There has always been noise nuisance in this neighbourhood. But this past year has been the worst it has been in the 23 years that the hotline exists."* (Head nuisance hotline, 2021, Interview)

The quotes in this paragraph show that the nature of the noise nuisance definitely did change during the pandemic: the noise nuisance continued till later hours than before, the noise nuisance was occurring from different locations and the noise nuisance happened more often. From the interviews with the project leader and the head nuisance hotline can be derived that the architecture of the Schildersbuurt also is a part of the issue. As the gardens are surrounded by high built houses, residents describe it as an echo well. And some of the houses are more densely inhabited than before, so students have smaller rooms and this means that the general living area gets used more intensely.

4.4 Experienced annoyance

The second sub question is: How can the annoyance experienced by the non-student residents during the COVID-19 pandemic best be described?

The most apparent point of annoyance that is mentioned by the interviewees is quite obviously the noise nuisance: *"... I think the noise nuisance is the thing that annoys me the most. And the attitude of the student residents, because it doesn't matter how old you are, you should always be considerate of the people living around you."* (Long-time resident, 2021, Interview 1)

As shown in this quote the noise nuisance is the biggest point of annoyance. However the attitude of the student residents towards their neighbours also gets mentioned often by the long-time residents. This answers the second sub question.

4.5 Change in attitude of long-time residents

Onto the third sub question, which goes as follows: How can the change in attitude of non-student residents towards students caused by the COVID-19 pandemic best be described?

The experienced increase in noise nuisance had a clear effect on some of the long-time residents' attitude towards the students. A quote by an interviewee nicely demonstrates this: *"You experience things faster as nuisance due to the fact that it has bothered you previously and because the nuisance was just too much during the pandemic period, I think."* (Long-time resident, 2021, Interview 5)

One of the interviewees stated: *"It changed now from very nice and friendly with the students to a situation in which I always think 'please no party tonight' whenever I see them."* (Long-time resident, 2021, Interview 7). This statement corresponds with the theory of Park & Lee (2019), and shows how her relation with her student neighbours has shifted from acquaintances to enemies.

There were however also some interviewees who stated that their opinions and attitudes remained the same even though they did experience the increase in noise nuisance during the pandemic. Interviewee 2 explained why his opinion didn't change: *"Because I understand the motives of the students and the way they behaved during the pandemic."* (Long-time resident, 2021, Interview 2)

The project leader made a similar statement: *"It surprises me how nuanced the long-time residents remain towards the student residents, even after a year of COVID. I have noticed that there is a lot of compassion for them being young and I even doubt if their attitudes really changed."* (Project leader, 2021, Interview)

4.6 Other findings

A different interesting thing the data showed is the low trust in the interventions the municipality and the city of Groningen have taken to counter the problem of noise nuisance caused by students in the Schildersbuurt. Some of the interviewees even say that they didn't notice the effect of the interventions and that they have almost no to no trust in the effects that the interventions will have in the future. An example of this: *"Because me and a lot of others in this neighbourhood get the feeling if you have complaints and try to get in contact with the municipality you are knocking on a closed door."* (Long-time resident, 2021, Interview 4)

Multiple interviewees expressed how they have the feeling that their own actions had more effect, such as getting in contact with the landlord of the house that caused the nuisance and direct communication through text messages with the students. When the noise nuisance of certain student houses decreased it was due to their own initiatives.

An unexpected result following from the collected data is the fact that the majority of the long-time residents called the studentification process that has been going on for the last decade in their neighbourhood the most important factor for their change in attitude towards the students. In their own words, the neighbourhood is out of balance at this point because there are too many student residents. This has had a bigger impact on their attitudes and opinion than the increase in noise nuisance during the pandemic. *"I would like a better balance in student residents to non-student residents in the neighbourhood, because it is not normal that it has come this far. I find it especially bad that the municipality has let this happen."* (Long-time resident, 2021, Interview 1)

The data also illustrates how some of the long-time residents that were interviewed have the feeling that the student residents became less polite and more obnoxious in the last decade. Whereas before this wasn't as much of a problem. A quote from interviewee 4: *"I feel like that gradually, and only the Dutch students, are becoming more and more bad behaved."* (Long-time resident, 2021, Interview 4)

The trend that students are becoming more bad behave was also noticed by the head nuisance hotline: *"... but it is not only corona, it is more so the behaviour of the students. They express to non-student residents how they feel that it is a student neighbourhood with which the others have to cope. But it is the other way around, because it is a neighbourhood in Groningen in which you get to live as a student."* (Head nuisance hotline, 2021, Interview)

5. Conclusion


In this section the key findings will be discussed. This research focused on the way the increased noise nuisance caused by students in the Schildersbuurt in Groningen during the pandemic changed the attitude of non-students towards students in the Schildersbuurt. The hypotheses was that the attitude from the non-students towards the students would change for the worse.

One of the first assumptions of this thesis was that the rise in noise nuisance **cause** by students in Groningen during the pandemic, which was elaborately described in news articles, was also experienced by long-time residents of the Schildersbuurt. The collected data from the interviews justified this assumption. The head of the nuisance hotline even explicitly stated that there had never been this many noise complaints in the Schildersbuurt before this period.

The nature of this noise nuisance strengthens the level of annoyance experienced, since it was more frequent, at very late hours and **not normal**. A frequent mention by the interviewees is that this happened because the students were not able to attend bars and clubs in the city centre.

Surprisingly though, the opinions and attitudes of the long-time residents remained relatively nuanced due to the compassion they express for the situation of being a student during a pandemic. And thus, it cannot be convincingly stated that this attitude **did generally** worsen which is in contrast with the hypothesis.

In contrary to the nuanced opinions about the student residents, the feelings about the municipality are more negative and outspoken. The data from the interviews shows that these negative feelings towards the municipality have two main reasons. One of these is that the municipality have allowed that this neighbourhood was subject to studentification too much in the last decade. **And** the second one is that some of the long-time residents get the feeling that the municipality did not react proportionally to the situation that arose during the pandemic. The general negative feeling about the municipality was not considered as crucial based on the theoretical framework beforehand.

As a reaction to the increased noise nuisance in this **neighbourhood** the municipality has appointed a project leader. This project leader stated that he considers it his most important task to make an approach  **how to handle future similar escalating situations. So that it is clearly described for municipality and residents what to do when there is another revival of nuisance.**

From this research, however, it seems advisable to tackle the underlying factor of the current misbalance of students to non-students as a result of studentification. There is not one obvious solution for this, but it can be helpful in regaining the trust of the long-time residents to acknowledge this factor **and have** a long term perspective.

A different unexpected insight that the data offers is the fact the long-time residents describe that a share of the student residents are seemingly more bad behaved than they used to be. This bad behaviour can potentially be explained by the reality in which the students are becoming the most dominant group in the Schildersbuurt. **And** this makes them feel as if they do not have to attune to the rhythms and lifestyles of the other population groups that also live there. **Therefore** an improvement in the behaviour and awareness of the students could be stimulated by the municipality.

6. Reflection & Further Research

In this part there will be **reflected** on the methodological complications of the research and on the implications of the current developments surrounding COVID-19.

The data from the interviews could have been improved if the interviewees were divided more evenly between the three parts that make up the Schildersbuurt. The first Schilderskwartier is the epicentre of the student residents in the neighbourhood. Only one out of the seven long-time residents that was interviewed actually lived in this part. If more people from this part were interviewed the outcome of the research could have been more negative.

A different point of improvement is the formulation of the interview questions. If the interview questions were more concise and shorter, it could have potentially stimulated the interviewees to give even more elaborate answers and express their actual feelings even more.

It is also important to realise that currently (13-12-2021), there are new COVID measures in the Netherlands. The bars and shops need to close at 5 pm every day. This will most likely mean that the noise nuisance caused by students is currently rising again in the Schildersbuurt. **Therefore it is important to realise when the interviews were held and that the research provides results solely for that moment in time.** All of the interviews were held in October and November 2021 when there were almost no COVID restrictions.

Interesting researches following from this research could be about solutions for the **(over)** studentification of neighbourhoods in Groningen. There seems to be a big need for a campus with dorm rooms in Groningen for both the problem of the **(over)** studentification and the international students who are unable to find housing in Groningen (NOS Nieuws, 2021).

Besides this, it seems very relevant for the municipality to regain some trust and understanding of the long-time residents. Building on a better relationship seems to be more important than concrete actions to decrease the noise nuisance by students. It should be investigated how this can be done on short term and also on long term.

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8. Appendix

8.1 Table overview interviews long-time residents

Data analysis interviews												
Number of respondent & Date of interview	Period they lived in the neighbourhood for & Age	Like and dislike about the neighbourhood	Change in neighbourhood during the pandemic	Noise nuisance by students before and during pandemic	Change in nature of noise nuisance during pandemic	Description of experienced irritation during pandemic	Ranking of experienced irritation before and during pandemic	Change of opinion and attitude about/towards students	Effect and trust of interventions municipality	Most irritating and something positive about the student inhabitants	Number of kwartier & Important extra narratives	
1 & 26-10-2021	Period: from 1994, so 27 years / Age: rather didn't say	Like: near the city, nice houses and good looking / Dislike: ratio students to non-students	Students had their entertainment more at home	Before: yes / During: yes, more parties at home	Yes, more regular and later hours	Waking up at very late hours due to noise nuisance and more obnoxious attitude by students (trend of longer period)	Before: 3 (medium) / During: 4 (bad)	Opinion: didn't change / Attitude: not fundamentally but it worsened	Effect: the 'black list' had some effect, project leader didn't / Trust: minimal	Irritating: their obnoxious attitude and the noise nuisance / Positive: some minor initiatives	-1e kwartier -Self-taken actions more effective than municipality	
2 & 1-11-2021	Period: 27 years / Age: 52 years old	Like: very near the center / Dislike: in some degree the noise nuisance	A lot more parties at home	Before: yes there has been noise nuisance for many years / During: not personally, but heard a lot of stories	Yes, much later hours	Noise nuisance, tables and benches on the sidewalk, wrongly parked bikes and trash bags next to the container	Before: 4 (bad) / During: 5 (really bad) (Now back to 4 again)	Opinion: still mainly positive / Attitude: didn't change	Effect: a little bit but disappoints / Trust: little bit	Irritating: the loud bass from the music in the evening / Positive: lots of life and activity and some nice initiatives	-2e/3e kwartier -The contact between the students and the non-students is the most important factor and afraid of polarisation due to negativity media	
3 & 4-11-2021	Period: 7 years / Age: 72 years old	Like: very lively, near the city and good accessibility / Dislike: minor noise nuisance in the summer due to kids playing	The streets were much emptier	Before: almost non-existent / During: still almost non-existent	-	Really minor noise nuisance, sidewalk full of parked bikes and biking on the sidewalk	Before: between 1-2 (nothing-little bit) / During: between 1-2	Opinion: didn't change / Attitude: didn't change	Effect: didn't notice / Trust: -	Irritating: when the noise nuisance goes on for too long and the sidewalk full of bikes / Positive: lots of life and activity and the talks	-3e kwartier	

Table 1. Overview interviews. (Author, 2021)

4 & 4-11-2021	Period: 4 years / Age: -	Like: nice houses and architecture, feels like small village, good contact with neighbours and near the centre / Dislike: occasional behaviour students	Change in behaviour students	Before: yes, occasionally / During: increase in noise	Later hours and more regular	Noise nuisance due to parties and sometimes obnoxious behaviour by students	Before: 3 (medium) / During: 3 (medium)	Opinion: not really / Attitude: not really	Effect: not entirely / Trust: not really	Irritating: the unnecessary shouting / Positive: different age categories and enjoys the conversations and a drink	-3e kwartier -The more obnoxious behaviour is a longer ongoing trend and rates it highly when informed about a party
5 & 4-11-2021	Period: 10 years / Age: 48 years old	Like: old, authentic neighbourhood with nice, big houses and different age categories / Dislike: ratio students to non-students	Streets were very empty and quiet at times but also very busy around certain times	Before: yes / During: yes, more often	More regular and later hours	Waking up more regularly late at night due to noise nuisance	Before: 3 (medium) / During: between 4-5 (bad-really bad)	Opinion: worsened a little / Attitude: worsened too, calls police faster	Effect: not so much / Trust: not much	Irritating: the noise nuisance and the role of the municipality / Positive: has become much less evident	-3e kwartier -Certain things are experienced much faster as nuisance due to the situation in the pandemic
6 & 11-11-2021	Period: from 1980, so 41 years / Age: didn't say	Like: spacious buildings with loads of light / Dislike: -	Nothing mentionable	Before: yes / During: not a mentionable increase	-	Student houses were very loud during the summer due to windows being open and students arriving back home from the pubs at late hours that are very loud	Before: - / During: -	Opinion: didn't change / Attitude: didn't change	Effect: not really / Trust: not really	Irritating: too many students while the neighbourhood and the buildings aren't designed for this capacity and some of the student buildings aren't maintained properly / Positive: lively	-3e kwartier -Thinks a campus at Zernike is the solution

Table 2. Overview interviews (Author, 2021)

Z & 13-11-2021	Period: 6 years / Age: 45 years	Like: near the city, relatively quiet and diversity / Dislike: -	A lot of renovations to buildings were happening and this also made the street full with big trucks	Before: once every few months / During: several days a week, big increase	Yes more regular and later hours	The noise nuisance	Before: 5 (really bad) / During: 5 (really bad)	Opinion: worsened significantly / Attitude: worsened significantly, calls police faster than before	Effect: minor / Trust: not too much	Irritating: the noise nuisance and the sidewalks full of bikes / Positive: the nice conversations and diversity	-3e kwartier
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Table 3. Overview interviews. (Author, 2021)

8.2 Interview guide

(In-depth interviews with non-student residents)

Introduction by interviewer

Thank you very much for willing to cooperate with my research. I will start the recording now.

Introduction section

1. Did you read and did you sign the form of consent?
2. Can you introduce yourself? (Name, age etc.)
3. How long have you been living in the Schildersbuurt, Groningen?
4. What do you like and dislike about your neighbourhood?

Topical questions

5. Did there change a lot in your neighbourhood (The Schildersbuurt) during the pandemic?
 - If so, what exactly?
6. Was there a lot of noise nuisance caused by students before COVID-19 happened?
7. Did you experience the increase in noise nuisance caused by students during the pandemic?
8. Did the nature of this noise nuisance change during the pandemic?
 - E.g. the hours, the volume, the regularity
9. Did you experience annoyance? And if so: How would you describe the annoyance that you experienced from the student residents before the COVID-19 pandemic?
 - How would you indicate this on the following scale: not at all, slightly, moderately, very, extremely?
10. How would you describe the annoyance that you experienced from the student residents during the COVID-19 pandemic?
 - How would you indicate this on the following scale: not at all, slightly, moderately, very, extremely?
11. What was your opinion on the student residents in your neighbourhood before COVID-19?
12. Do you feel like this opinion about the student residents has changed in the period of the pandemic?
 - Would you say that your attitude toward them has changed due to the increase in noise nuisance during the pandemic?
13. Did the interventions that so far have been taken by the municipality (e.g. the appointed project leader and the list with 'nuisance houses') have the wished effects from your perspective?
14. Do you have any trust in these interventions taken by the municipality?
15. What annoyed/annoys you the most about the student residents in the Schildersbuurt?
16. Do the student residents bring something positive to the Schildersbuurt?

Closing questions

17. Would you like to add something to this?
18. Do you have any questions for me?

Closing section

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation. I will stop the recording now.

(Nederlandse vertaling interviews met niet-studenten inwoners)

Introductie door interviewer

Heel erg bedankt voor het willen mee werken aan mijn onderzoek. Ik begin nu met de opname.

Introductie sectie

1. Heeft u de Overeenkomst van Deelname gelezen en ondertekend?
2. Kunt u zichzelf voorstellen? (Naam, leeftijd, etc)
3. Hoe lang woont u al in de Schildersbuurt, Groningen?
4. Wat vindt u fijn en minder fijn aan uw wijk?

Aan het onderzoeksonderwerp gerelateerde vragen

5. Is er volgens u veel veranderd in de Schildersbuurt tijdens de pandemie?
 - Zo ja, wat precies?
6. Was er veel geluidsoverlast door studenten in uw wijk voordat de COVID-19 pandemie begon?
7. Heeft u de toename in geluidsoverlast door studenten in de COVID-19 pandemie ervaren?
8. Is de aard van de geluidsoverlast door studenten tijdens de COVID-19 pandemie veranderd?
 - B.v.b. de uren, de regelmaat, het volume
9. Heeft u irritatie door de studenten inwoners ervaren voor de COVID-19 pandemie? En zo ja, hoe zou u die irritatie veroorzaakt door studenten het beste omschrijven?
 - Wat voor score zou u die irritatie geven op de volgende schaal: helemaal niet, een beetje, gemiddeld, erg, heel erg
10. Hoe zou u deze irritatie beoordelen tijdens de COVID-19 pandemie op de volgende schaal: helemaal niet, een beetje, gemiddeld, erg, heel erg?
11. Wat was uw mening over studenten inwoners in de Schildersbuurt voor de COVID-19 pandemie?
12. Heeft u het gevoel dat deze mening is veranderd tijdens de COVID-19 pandemie?
 - Zou u kunnen zeggen dat uw houding tegenover de studenten inwoners in de Schildersbuurt is veranderd als een gevolg van de toename in geluidsoverlast veroorzaakt door studenten?
13. Hebben de tot dusver genomen interventies door de gemeente (b.v.b. de aangestelde projectleider 'studentenoverlast' en de lijst met overlasthuizen) het gewenste resultaat gehad in uw ogen?
14. Heeft u enig vertrouwen in de interventies genomen door de gemeente?
15. Wat irriteerde/irriteert u het meest aan de studenten inwoners van de Schildersbuurt?
16. Brengen de studenten inwoners iets positiefs voor de Schildersbuurt?

Afsluitende vragen

17. Wilt u hier nog iets aan toevoegen?
18. Heeft u nog vragen voor mij?

Afsluiting

Heel erg bedankt voor uw medewerking. Ik zal de opname nu stoppen.

(In-depth interviews with other key actors (neighbourhood police officer and project leader))

Introduction by interviewer

Thank you very much for willing to cooperate with my research. I will start the recording now.

Introduction section

1. Did you read and sign the form of consent?
2. Can you please introduce yourself? (Name, age and job etc.)
3. Where do you live yourself?
4. What do you like and dislike about the Schildersbuurt, Groningen?
 - And what is your relationship/connection with the neighbourhood?

Topical questions

5. Did there change a lot in the neighbourhood (The Schildersbuurt) during the COVID-19 pandemic?
 - If so, what exactly?
6. What do you know about noise nuisance caused by student residents before the COVID-19 pandemic?
 - And during?
7. Do you think this noise nuisance caused by student residents changed in nature during the pandemic?
 - E.g. the hours, the volume, the regularity and the possibility to avoid it
8. Do you think that the level of annoyance experienced by the non-student residents changed during the COVID-19 pandemic?
9. Do you feel like the opinion of non-student residents about the student residents has changed during the COVID-19 pandemic?
 - Did the attitude of the non-student residents towards the student residents change due to the increase in noise nuisance during the pandemic?

Closing questions

10. Would you like to add something to this?
11. Do you have any questions for me?

Closing section

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation. I will stop the recording now.

(Nederlandse vertaling interviews met andere key actors)

Introductie door interviewer

Heel erg bedankt voor het willen mee werken aan mijn onderzoek. Ik begin nu met de opname.

Introductie sectie

1. Heeft u het Overeenkomst van Deelname formulier gelezen en ondertekend?
2. Kunt u zichzelf voorstellen? (Naam, leeftijd, etc.)
3. Waar woont u zelf?
4. Wat vindt u fijn en minder fijn aan de Schildersbuurt in Groningen?

- Wat is uw connectie met deze wijk?

Aan het onderzoeksonderwerp gerelateerde vragen

5. Is er veel veranderd in de Schildersbuurt in de tijd van de COVID-19 pandemie?
 - Zo ja, wat precies?
6. Wat weet u over de geluidsoverlast veroorzaakt door studenten in de Schildersbuurt van voor de COVID-19 pandemie?
 - En tijdens de COVID-19 pandemie?
7. Denkt u dat de aard van deze geluidsoverlast veroorzaakt door studenten is veranderd tijdens de COVID-19 pandemie?

8.3 Consent form

Onderzoeksproject: Bachelor scriptie Human Geography & Planning, Dirk van der Pol

Onderzoeksonderwerp: Houding niet-studenten inwoners tegenover studenten inwoners in de Schildersbuurt, Groningen

Universiteit: Rijksuniversiteit Groningen

Geachte Meneer/Mevrouw,

Bedankt dat u mij wilt helpen met mijn onderzoek naar de veranderende houding van niet-studenten inwoners tegenover studenten inwoners als een gevolg van de COVID-19 pandemie. In het bijzonder door een toename in geluidsoverlast veroorzaakt door de studenten inwoners van de Schildersbuurt. Met deze brief wil ik u informeren over het verloop van het interview en de specificaties rondom uw anonimiteit etc.

Het interview zal online plaatsvinden via skype of google meets. Waarschijnlijk zal het interview tussen de 15 en 30 minuten duren. Echter kan het interview wel uitlopen door de open structuur of als u een verdere toelichting wil geven voor een bepaald antwoord. U kunt op elk moment aangeven te willen stoppen met het interview, of een vraag niet te willen beantwoorden.

Het interview wordt opgenomen via het programma waarin het wordt gehouden (skype of google meets). Hierna wordt het getranscribeerd en heeft u de mogelijkheid om het transcript aan te passen op feitelijke onjuistheden. Het transcript zal worden gebruikt om de data te analyseren om vervolgens een antwoord te kunnen geven op de onderzoeksvraag. De opname van het interview zal worden verwijderd zodra het onderzoek is afgerond. De gegevens die tijdens het onderzoek worden verzameld zullen vertrouwelijk behandeld worden. De gegevens, evenals het transcript, zullen worden gedeeld met mijn supervisor Professor Dimitris Ballas. Daarnaast zal de scriptie worden opgenomen in het archief van de Rijksuniversiteit Groningen. Het transcript zal niet in de scriptie worden opgenomen.

Met het ondertekenen van deze overeenkomst geeft u aan dat:

- Het duidelijk is voor u waar het onderzoek over gaat.
- Dat het duidelijk is dat de deelname vrijwillig is en dat u het recht heeft vragen niet te beantwoorden.
- Dat het duidelijk is dat uw deelname vertrouwelijk is en dat materiaal uit het interview gebruikt kan worden voor de scriptie in het algemeen of in de vorm van quotes maar dat dit dan anoniem gebeurt.
- Dat het duidelijk is dat uw interview en alle informatie die daaruit voortkomt vertrouwelijk wordt bewaard op een pc beveiligd met een wachtwoord.

Voor verdere vragen kunt u mij of mijn supervisor contacteren via:

Dirk van der Pol

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Mail: d.t.s.van.der.pol@student.rug.nl

Supervisor Professor Dimitris Ballas

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