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# Neighbourhoods in Transition: Space, Place, Gentrification, and Social Inequality

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Spaces available for this project: 2

## Project description

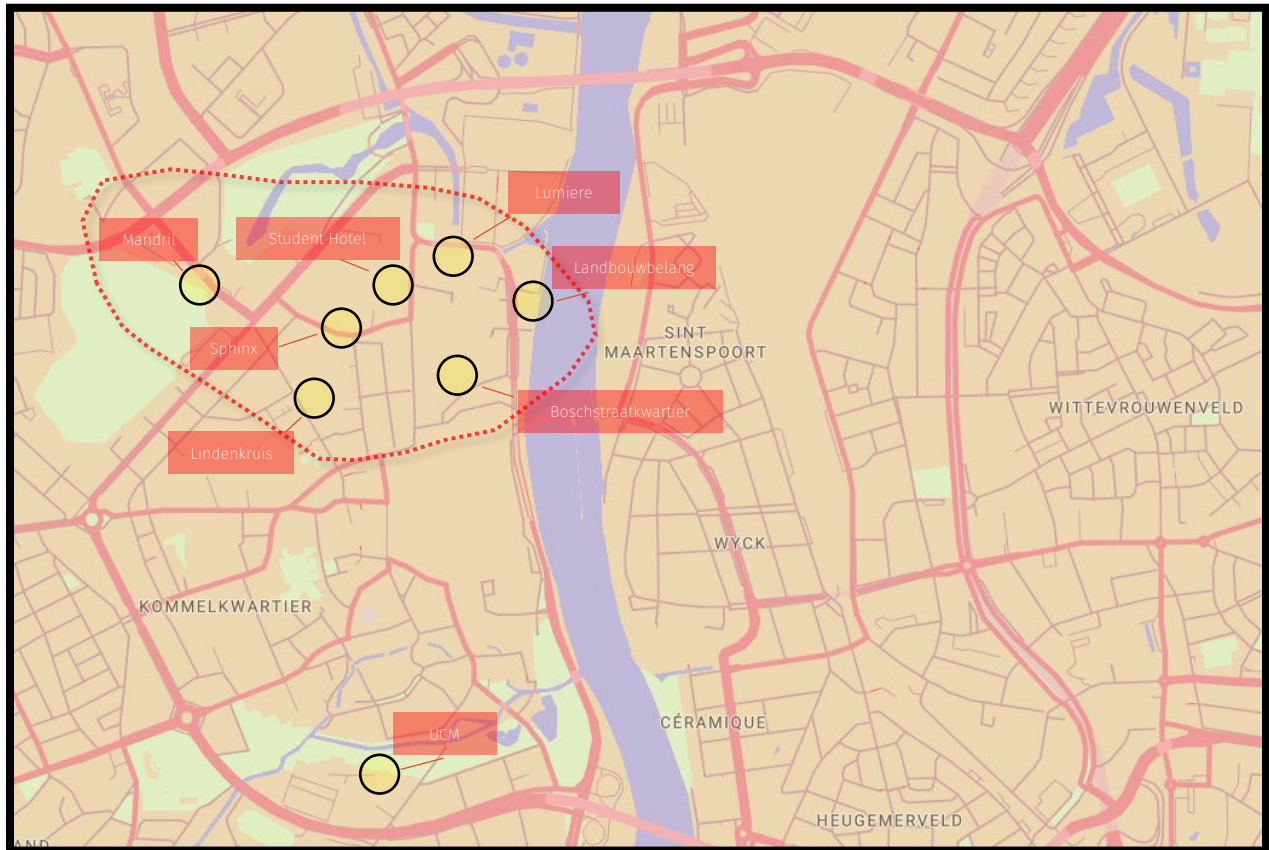
The Neighbourhoods in Transition (Dutch: Buurten in Beweging) project broadly speaking aims to study specific neighbourhoods in Maastricht that are in some form of transition due to pressures resulting from changes in composition (migration, student populations), changes in space & place (urban developments and infrastructure), or both.

The project is in its third phase, meaning that we have identified some key areas and are working from a list of interviewees. Nonetheless, the project is still very flexible in its focus, so students will have a real impact on how the research will develop over the coming years. Importantly, the ambition now is to move towards publishable output. For this we are already working on journal articles and a chapter in an edited book. Students in this project will of course be involved in these attempts.

To illustrate the intent of the project, three specific examples are discussed here that have been studied in this project, though the project is not necessarily limited to these. The first is Wittevrouwenveld, on the eastern side of the city. Recently, Maastricht built a tunnel for the main highway (A2) crossing the city. This has radically changed the accessibility and quality of living of some surrounding areas. Historically, Wittevrouwenveld is one of the socially weakest neighbourhoods in the Netherlands (relatively high crime rates, low levels of education). Now that the urban space around it has changed, so have the social dynamics of the area. It is also an area with a relatively high number of both immigrants and students living there, which sometimes clashes with the very local 'native' population.

The second area, and currently the focus of the project for the students working on it, is the urban developments happening in the northern part of Maastricht's city centre. This formally includes the neighbourhoods Boschstraatkwartier (where the Landbouwbelaag also is located),

Sphinxkwartier (Student Hotel, Lumiere, new housing developments etc.), Statenkwartier (an old area of town with new additions to it like *Lindenkruis*), and the wider Belvédère (which includes the former Mandril and the Lage Fronten). This area is very much in the process of gentrification efforts by the municipality, but has historical roots that are deeply post-industrial. Here, a new and diverse group of inhabitants have moved into an area where there were no 'established insiders' (Elias) before. How do social networks and dynamics develop here?



The third neighbourhood that has thus far been examined in this project also draws from the collaboration with Match and City Deal Maastricht, where we looked at the quality of life of inhabitants and how this might be improved. Like Wittevrouwenveld, this area has long been a socially more vulnerable part of the city. Also like the areas above, there are now relatively major urban redevelopment plans being developed in a context of a city that has a long history with such redevelopment projects.



**City Deal**  
**Kennis Maken**  
**> Maastricht**

There are more neighbourhoods similar to the three above, where social tensions, social inequalities, space/place, social networks, and gentrification intersect. This project aims to understand these transitions in their context by employing a diverse array of methodologies, such as in-depth interviewing, social network analysis, visual methods (photography, film), and secondary data analysis.

## **Prerequisites**

There are no strict requirements for this project other than a healthy dose of imagination and creativity. It certainly helps to have taken courses in qualitative methods (e.g. Ethnography & Qualitative Interviewing) or in visual methods (e.g. Documentary Project), but these are not required. An affinity with, or interest in concepts like social inequality, social networks, gentrification, and space / place is helpful. We may organize interviews with prospective students for this project depending on the amount of interest.

Students who speak Dutch and/or a local dialect are especially encouraged to apply, but those who don't can certainly also contribute in the project in a deeply meaningful way.

## **Tasks and expectations**

*What will you be doing in this project, and what are the supervisor's expectations?*

Students will be deeply involved in research, qualitative (and possibly visual) data collection, and in particular analysis and publication. There will be a lot of room for individual initiative and ideas for development. Data collection activities may involve any number of the following (in consultation between student and supervisor): in-depth interviewing, visual methodologies (film, photography, audio, etc.), secondary data analysis (quantitative and/or qualitative), breaching experiments.

## **Research phases**

*Withing the UCM MaRBLe framework, we distinguish 5 general research phases in any project. Students are expected to contribute to at least 2 of these 5 phases. Below are the main ones that apply to this project:*

- 2 - Developing Methodology
- 3 - Gathering Data
- 4 - Analysing Data
- 5 – Presenting Analyses (publishing)

## **Assessment**

*At UCM, you will have to present your research plan in the form of a poster (ungraded), and in a presentation at the end (20% of the final grade). The supervisor (in this case Dr. Jeroen Moes) determines the remaining 80% of the grade based on an assessment that fits the students' responsibilities in the project. Here are the details for the remaining 80%:*

This will be agreed upon at the start of the project. While there are certainly alternative formats conceivable, the default option is a research paper / report at the end of the semester based on data collected / used within the project. The data collection and research design contributions will also be taken into account for assessment. If possible, we will organize a photographic / film output in the form of a screening and/or photographic exhibition.

## Context

*MaRBL*e students are expected to genuinely contribute to on-going research or the research agenda of the supervisor or her/his department. Below is a description of the context for this project, and the background of the supervisor:

The Neighbourhoods in Transition (Dutch: "Buurten in Beweging") is a project that has been running for about two years now, and is intended to expand further in the coming years. This MaRBL project is the first building block to lay the foundation for this. Nonetheless, the project exists within a wider context of research done by the supervisor (Jeroen did PhD research at the European University Institute in Florence on the social dimensions of European integration, and people's identities), as well as his current research on the social dimensions of the Euroregion for ITEM (Institute for Transnational and Euregional crossborder cooperation and Mobility), his plans for a Maastricht Monitor (a longitudinal study on social attitudes in Maastricht), and his work for the Politics from Below research project which is one of the flagship projects currently ongoing at UCM. Finally, the link between research and undergraduate learning is emphasized in his teaching as well as his involvement in the CREATES project, which aims at mapping best practices in active learning in interdisciplinary contexts.

Furthermore, this project incorporates insights from earlier collaborations with the Match Foundation and City Deal Maastricht.

The project is situated at UCM. There will be regular meetings (bi-weekly or more regular when necessary) with the supervisor. Students will be working on location for data collection. These locations will be various areas within the city of Maastricht.



Note that for help with your research you can also [get in touch with the Methods Lab](#).