
International student mobility to the Netherlands & Utrecht

A study on the formation of motives
and expectations of academic
mobility to the Netherlands & the
attractiveness of the city of Utrecht
among international students

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Acknowledgements

The international movement of academic students has been the subject of many academic studies and has been approached from many different perspectives. This type of movement is also interesting to the fields of human- and development geography and therefore is subject to the bachelor thesis that lies before you. The bachelor thesis is part of the undergraduate curriculum of human geography at Utrecht University and is required to all bachelor students that wish to graduate. Although I was not obliged to write a full bachelor thesis of a minimum of 20.000 words, since I myself am originally a Liberal Arts and Sciences student majoring in human geography, I found that the subject of international student mobility to the Netherlands deserved a extensive study of at least 20.000 words. Since this study needed to be conducted in only nine weeks, I was not able to be as extensive as I wanted to be. Still, the findings on the movement of academic students to the Netherlands and the city of Utrecht elaborated on in the next 50 pages or so are a step in the right direction to complement the literature already existing on international student mobility and can be seen as a start to extent the literature on this type of movement to the Netherlands.

Although I conducted this study on my own, I could have not done this without the help of several people. Therefore, these people deserve some attention and recognition in this thesis. I would like to thank my supervisor Maggi Leung who came up with the theme of this thesis and has guided and advised me throughout this process. A special thanks goes out to all the 103 international students who have been so kind to participate in the questionnaire. Without them this study would have not been possible. I would also like to thank Hedwig Leijten of the City Promotion Bureau Utrecht for taking the time to be interviewed. Her insights have really contributed to the way the subject of international students mobility can also be studied. And of course, Gery Nijenhuis, Henk Huisman, Jan Prillwitz and Kees Terlouw for letting me interrupt their lectures to spread some of the questionnaires among their international students.

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Abstract

This bachelor thesis provides insights into academic student mobility to the Netherlands and the city of Utrecht. It analyses the way motives and expectations of academic mobility to the Netherlands are formed among international students and the reasons behind the choice of these students to study in the city of Utrecht. By combining concepts often used in the literature on international student mobility, like push and pull factors, with concepts that are new to the subject of international student mobility, namely city marketing, this study offers a new approach how to study international academic mobility. Therefore, the aim of this bachelor thesis has therefore not only been to gain more understanding in the situation of international students that come to the Netherlands and the city of Utrecht, but also to extend the literature on international student mobility in general and to the Netherlands in specific. By conducting a qualitative face-to-face questionnaire and an in-depth interview, this study has provide the literature on international academic mobility with new results that provide better insights into the situation of international students. Not only is the overall level of knowledge and awareness students have on the Netherlands important on their motives to undertake academic mobility to the Netherlands, the attractiveness of the Dutch education also plays an important role. These and other findings are essential for the Netherlands and its institutions of higher education (the institutions in the city of Utrecht in particular) to keep attracting international students.

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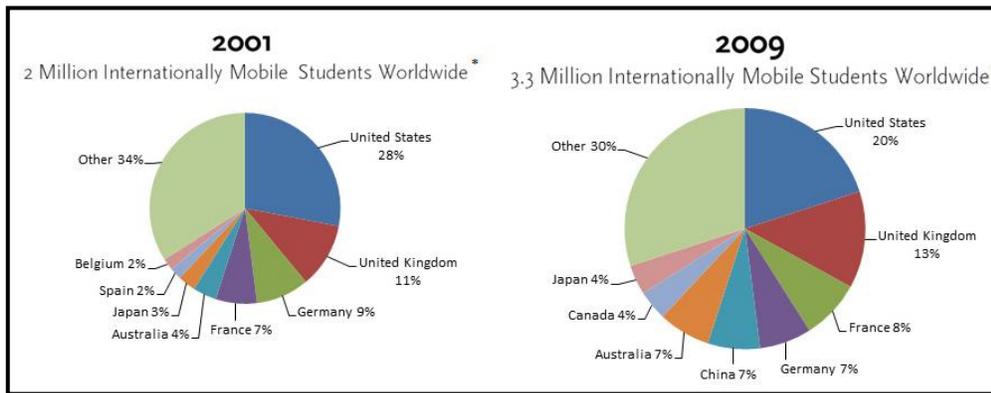
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Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The time a student is enrolled at an institution of post-secondary education knows various aspects. Not only is this a time where studying until the break of dawn and partying with fellow students go hand in hand, but this is also a time that offers opportunities to explore the world and broaden personal horizons. Of course, when going abroad on a holiday one also gets to learn about different cultures and gets to explore the world, but it seems that most students nowadays are looking for a bigger experience. As Figure 1.1 clearly shows, taking one's study to another country is clearly rising in popularity.

Figure 1.1: Global destinations for international students at the post-secondary level of education for the year 2001 and 2009.



Source: Atlas of International Student Mobility, 2011.

When looking at the graphs in Figure 1.1, it becomes clear that the international mobility of students enrolled in higher education grew from 2 million in 2001 to 3.3 million in 2009. It seems that students from the United States with 20 percent in 2009 are the biggest group of students that is internationally mobile, followed by students from the United Kingdom and France. It seems that the students that go to these three countries are mainly from the two upcoming economies in the world, namely China and India: in the academic year of 2009-2010 127,628 students from China and 104,897 from India were enrolled at institutions of higher education in the United States (Atlas of International Student Mobility, 2011). The phenomena of students of higher education moving internationally is also known as international academic mobility (Findlay et al, 2006, p. 296).

Since international academic mobility is an upcoming phenomena with a variety of aspects, the literature written on it is various. Most scholars try to analyze international academic mobility by focusing on individual aspects, like the motives to undertake international academic mobility; factors that might be of influence on the decision to undertake international academic mobility and the impact of the 'abroad

experience' (King & Ruiz-Gelices, 2003, Shen, 2005; Papatsiba, 2005). Also, the work written on international academic mobility is either concerned with the mobility of students to and from the already mentioned three top countries or with the mobility of students from the so called 'peripheral South' to the North (Sen, 2005; Park, 2008; Yang et al., 2010; Li & Bray, 2007). Unfortunately, no substantial literature was found on academic mobility to the Netherlands which is strange, since the rising popularity of undertaking international academic mobility is also witnessed in the Netherlands. Between 2000 and 2008 the number of international students that undertook academic mobility to the Netherlands has grown from 43,200 in 2005 to almost 60,000 in 2009 (Nuffic, 2010). In comparison, other European countries like Belgium, Germany and Sweden, have witnessed a decrease in the total enrollment of international students in higher education in the same years (OECD, 2010). It seems that the Netherlands is becoming more and more popular among international students. This can be explained by the numerous factors that make the Netherlands likeable among possible international students.

Although its relatively small geographical size the Netherlands has a lot to offer to international students. The country has fourteen research universities and 39 universities of applied sciences with a total enrollment of 634,048 students in the academic year of 2009-2010. The large amount of English-taught programs, almost 1540, have resulted in a total of 76,750 international students in the year 2009-2010 (Nuffic, 2010). Of course, this number is nothing compared to that of the United States and the United Kingdom, but the attractiveness of the Netherlands on international students should not be underestimated. Not only does the large amount of English-taught programs offer students from all over the world an opportunity to enroll at a Dutch institution of higher education, the Dutch are also known for their global outlook on the world and their long history of interaction with other cultures. This makes the Netherlands an ideal country for the international student that wishes to gain more academic knowledge and at the same time interact with the local culture (Nuffic, 2011). Also, a student that wishes to come to the Netherlands has a variety of cities to choose from, since the Netherlands has a lot of typical 'student cities', like Amsterdam and Utrecht, which are not only known for their internationally recognized universities, but also for the vivid student life they offer (Nuffic, 2011). It seems that the Netherlands has everything to make the international academic mobility of a student a success. Still, the 'gap' in the literature on academic mobility to the Netherlands makes it difficult to analyze the process of academic mobility to this country. Since the amount of international students to the Netherlands is likely to grow in the coming years, it is needed that such an analysis is made to better understand the situation of the international student that comes to the Netherlands. The necessity of such an analysis will be further elaborated on in the next section.

1.2 Aim and research questions central to this study

In order to better understand the reasons why international students come to the Netherlands as part of their curricula, this study will focus on the factors that are of importance when studying academic mobility to the Netherlands. As has been said, most of the literature on international academic mobility treats every aspect of it as separate from the other: it does not provide a causal framework. Therefore, this study sees that the decision to undertake academic mobility to the Netherlands is not only a case of wanting to gain more knowledge and learning about a different culture, but is also one in which the motives to do so are also influenced by factors that stimulate a student to move away from the own country. Also, it is believed that the attractiveness of the city where the student is going to stay and study is part of the decision to undertake international academic mobility. For this reason, this study has been conducted not only to get more insights into the factors that are of importance in the process of undertaking international academic mobility, but also to provide a different manner to study this subject. This study has tried to connect the various aspects of international academic mobility together and has integrated the importance of the student city into the study of international academic mobility. In order to do so, a central research question has been designed which puts the motives and expectations together with the attractiveness of student city to undertake academic mobility to the Netherlands at the core of this study:

How are motives and expectations of academic mobility towards the Netherlands formed among international students and why do international students choose to study in the city of Utrecht?

The reason for putting the motives and expectations of academic mobility to the Netherlands central in this study has been done for a number of reasons. As will be clear in Chapter 2, the literature on international academic mobility has addressed a number of concepts that are essential in studying international academic mobility, like 'motives', 'expectations' and 'push and pull factors'. As said, the existing literature does not provide a causal framework, while this study believes that the concepts of international academic mobility are of influence on each other. For example, a student that feels that the own institution of higher education does not provide enough interesting courses might undertake international academic mobility in order to gain more knowledge. In other words, the motive of the student to undertake international academic mobility is formed by the unattractiveness of the own institution of higher education.

The second part of the central question is focused on the city of Utrecht. As said Utrecht has internationally recognized universities, both on research and applied sciences, and also is known for its attractive historical city. Since this study is conducted for the faculty of Human Geography at Utrecht

University, putting Utrecht central to the study was a logical step in order to better understand international students that choose to study in Utrecht. Also, the actual attractiveness of Utrecht among international students is questionable, since the institutions of higher education in the city of Utrecht are not mentioned in the Dutch ranking of popular institutions for international students to go to (Nuffic, 2010). In order to fully study the different elements of the central question three subquestions were designed that each have helped to answer the central question.

To understand how motives and expectations of academic mobility to the Netherlands are formed, subquestion 1 addresses which motives are most important among international students that come to the Netherlands: **1) What are the most important motives to undertake academic mobility to the Netherlands?** Since expectations are vary and are difficult to divide into types this study has not focused on the different expectations international students might have had. The second question addresses which possible factors might influence the formation of motives and expectations of academic mobility to the Netherlands among international students: **2) Which factors are of influence on the formation of motives and expectations of academic mobility to the Netherlands?** The final question has provide more insights into the reasons why international students have chosen Utrecht as the city to stay and study in: **3) Why do students choose to study in Utrecht?** The answers to these three questions and the overarching answer to the central question are not just pointless answers, since they are all of academic and social relevance. Section 1.3 will elaborate more on this.

1.3 Academic and social relevance of this study

This study not only has tried to contribute to narrowing the gap in the relatively non-existent literature on academic mobility to the Netherlands, but also has provided a new framework from which international academic mobility should be studied. The focus on the influence of the city in which an international student resides, is an unexplored concept in the field of international academic mobility. The academic relevance goes hand in hand with the social relevance of this study, since the framework should give more insights in the reasons of international students to come to the Netherlands. By analyzing their motives and expectations of academic mobility to the Netherlands and looking at the reasons for choosing a particular city, the international student will be better understood. This is important, since Figure 1.1. showed that academic mobility to the Netherlands is becoming more popular and both the Dutch students and the Dutch institutions of higher education are likely to interact more with international students. The insights provided by this study should make this interaction easier. The way the new insights have been obtained will be discussed in the following section.

1.4 Methods used in this study

Initially, this study aimed at using only one method, namely a quantitative face-to-face questionnaire, because this method could have provide this study with representative and valid results. Since no adequate sample frame was available from which a operational population could be drawn, a shift was made from using a quantitative method to a qualitative one. For this reason a qualitative face-to-face questionnaire consisting of seventeen questions on motives, expectations, push and pull factors and personal characteristics was conducted among 103 randomly chosen international students in the city of Utrecht providing this study with data on the situation of the international students currently studying in the city of Utrecht. Still, an extension on this data was needed in order to get more insights in the attractiveness of the city of Utrecht among international students. Therefore, an in-depth interview with an expert on the attractiveness of Utrecht was thought to be needed in order to make this study as extensive as possible. The expert in this study has been Hedwig Leijten of the City Promotion Bureau Utrecht who has complemented this study with her experience and opinions on the attractiveness of Utrecht.

1.5 Outline of this study

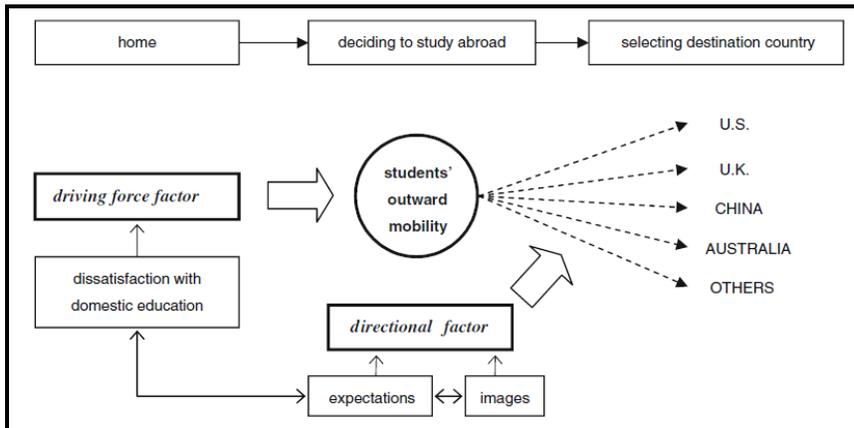
This chapter has broadly set out the focus of this study and the methods used from which results have been drawn. The next four chapters will take a deeper look at the other components of this study. Like every academic study, this study started with a review of the existing literature on international academic mobility. Therefore, Chapter 2 will be considered with the concepts that were thought to be of importance to this study. These possible relations between the different concepts have schematically been set out in a conceptual model from which several hypotheses were drawn. Since the hypotheses have been used to answer the three subquestions, the manner in which results were obtained will be set out in Chapter 3. This chapter will be concerned with the methodological choices that were made during the process of this study. The type of sample and operationalization of the concepts are important elements of this methodological chapter. The results drawn from the data will be elaborated on in Chapter 4 by presenting them in different graphs. Finally, Chapter 5 will conclude this study with an answer to the central question. Also part of this final chapter is some future recommendations to scholars that want to study the subject of academic mobility to the Netherlands and international academic mobility in general.

Chapter 2 – Literature review

2.1 Introduction

To study the subject of academic mobility to the Netherlands this study needed a theoretical basis. Often, such a theoretical basis consists of one or more theories which explain the subject of the study. Since the available literature on international academic mobility does not provide in such theories, another approach was formed from which academic mobility to the Netherlands could be studied. The combination of concepts often used in the study of international academic mobility and concepts not directly related to this subject have functioned as the building blocks of this study. The work of one particular scholar can be seen as the starting point of this study. The work of Elisa L. Park (2008) on the international mobility of Korean students has been most helpful to this study. In this work Park presents a model from which the process of international academic mobility of Korean students can be understood by looking at two factors that are of influence on the choices students make before undertaking international academic mobility (Park, 2008, pp.741-755).

Figure 2.1: The 2-D model for understanding the process of international academic mobility.



Source: Park, 2008, p.242.

As the model shows (Figure.2.1) a student is influenced by a driving force factor and a directional factor, in which the former can be called a ‘push factor’ and the latter a ‘pull factor’ (Park, 2008, p.742). Also, the model makes clear that a student that wants to undertake international academic mobility is influenced by expectations and images on the country he or she is going to. This model has contributed to this study in that it has provided an insight into the elements that are seen as important in studying international academic mobility. The model of Park has determined the course of this study, since it is from the 2-D model that the decision was made to focus on the causal relations between the different elements of international academic mobility. It should be mentioned that the work of Park has only functioned as a

starting point and has not functioned as the all-ruling theory on which this study is built, since Park does not fully elaborate on the individual aspects of each element. Therefore, the work of other scholars has been drawn upon to create a more solid theoretical basis.

To understand the use of the theoretical concepts and the outline of this chapter, the next paragraph will first set out the contribution of each concept to this study. Second, this chapter will turn to the meaning and function of each individual concept to this study, but has also tried to make connections between the concepts. This interlinking will become more clear in the conceptual model at the end of this chapter. In this model, the concepts described will be related to each other, creating hypotheses which have enabled the analysis of the possible relationships between the concepts. It is to the contribution of each concept to this study that this chapter will now turn.

2.1.1 Explaining the use of the concepts

Since no specific literature on academic mobility to the Netherlands was found, the work on international academic mobility has been used to create a general basis. It has been necessary to get behind the meaning and function of international academic mobility to define academic mobility to the Netherlands. For this reason, the work of several authors on international academic mobility has been consulted in order to get more insight into this concept. Another concept that often is used in the literature on international academic mobility of students, is the international students themselves. Since it is thought that the students of higher education that undertake international academic mobility have certain characteristics, these characteristics are thought to be important in the study of international academic mobility.

Two other concepts important to the study of international academic mobility which are also mentioned in Parks' work, are the concepts of 'push'- and 'pull factors'. It seemed that unattractive (push) factors and attractive (pull) factors function as an instrument for explaining why students choose to leave their own country and go to live and study in another country (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). Although most of the work interchangeably used the two factors with the concept of 'motives of international academic mobility' to explain the process of international academic mobility, the work of Mei Li and Mark Bray made clear that the concept of 'motives' is something different than 'push and pull factors' (Li & Bray, 2007). For this reason, the different motives a student can have to undertake international academic mobility is also incorporated into this framework.

Since the work of Park also incorporates the concept of 'expectations' as an important factor in the process of international academic mobility, this study found it necessary to further elaborate on this concept. For this study it was important to decide how expectations were formed: this explanation was best found in a theoretical approach from which behavior can be studied, the behaviorist approach. It is

through this approach that expectations of academic mobility to the Netherlands will be explained. The last two concepts that will be discussed are related to the second part of the central question. By incorporating the concept ‘attractive Utrecht’ into the framework, this theoretical basis has tried to extend the model Park (Figure 2.1). The model of Park stops after the decision of the host country is made and does not pay attention to the decision of the host or student city. For this reason, this theoretical framework has incorporated the host city into the study of international academic mobility by focusing on two concepts. The first is the concept of ‘attractive Utrecht’ which sets out the elements that make a city attractive to outsiders, like international students. The second is the concept of city marketing which is a concept that describes the way in which cities promote themselves in order to attract new people to the city. This chapter will now turn to the elaboration of each individual concept.

2.2 International academic mobility

The subject of this study is concerned with the movement of students of higher education from their own country to the Netherlands. To understand the decisions that were made by these students it was necessary to get a feel of what this international movement exactly encompassed. For this reason, this section will set out the aspects of international academic mobility that were important to this study. In order to do so the findings of two studies on international academic mobility have been used to get a broader insight into the concept of international academic mobility.

In ‘Ever reluctant Europeans: The changing geographies of UK students studying and working abroad’ Allen Findlay et al. give the following definition of academic mobility: “[...] *student migration/mobility is defined as international movement from a country of usual residence to enroll in a higher education institution abroad or to pursue some other academically or vocationally recognized activity for at least a term within a student’s overall program of study [...]. This definition therefore covers moves of different durations from exchanges of as little as three months to more enduring engagements of a year or more. It encompasses a diversity of mobility schemes from large inter-institutional moves to individually organized visits for study[...]*” (Findlay et al, 2006, p. 296).

Findlay et al. use the concepts of ‘migration’ and ‘mobility’ interchangeably, since the duration of the movement can range in time. In ‘International student migration and the European ‘Year’ Abroad’: effects on European identity and subsequent migration behaviour’, Russel King and Enrique Ruiz-Gelices also see ‘migration’ and ‘mobility’ as both defining concepts of the international movement of students (King & Ruiz-Gelices, 2003, p.230). King and Ruiz-Gelices have characterized students that undertake academic mobility as migrants of free will that move between countries to realize their life ambitions (King & Ruiz-Gelices, 2003, pp.230-231). Findlay et al. also see the international movement of students

as part of a bigger individual goal: “[...] the greater the diversity of places that students have experienced, the greater their agency in terms of self-identification. The mobile student can stand out from the routine modernities of a traditional student life by celebrating the transnational stages on which their biography has developed [...]”. A student that undertakes international academic mobility will return home not only with more knowledge, but also with newly obtained personal qualities. This international movement is not only a result of a students’ individual motivation, but also from institutions of higher education that underline the importance of the abroad experience: “[...] the interlinking of institutions of higher education in the world has made it easier for students to go abroad and come back with newly obtained knowledge and skills”(Findlay et al, 2006, pp. 293-294). In this light, international academic mobility can also be seen as a product of the globalizing world we live in, since every part of the world is now connected to each other which makes moving to another country easier.

The relevance of the insights provided by Findlay et al. (2006) and King & Ruiz-Gelices (2003) on the concept of international academic mobility to the subject of this study has been most important. Firstly, although both authors use migration and mobility interchangeably, they see the international movement of students as temporary. For this reason this study has decided to stick to the concept of mobility, since migration might indicate a permanent stay. Also, the international mobility is undertaken in order to serve a higher personal goal, namely to enrich oneself with knowledge and experience. Both insights have provided this study with a clear definition of what academic mobility to the Netherlands entails, namely that international students that come to the Netherlands will do so for a temporary duration and to enrich their lives. Now that is clear which elements of the concept of ‘international academic mobility’ are important to this study, the next section will look at the importance of the personal characteristics of the students to this study.

2.3 International students

The model of Park (Figure 2.1) has failed to incorporate the influence of the personal characteristics of the students on the process of undertaking international academic mobility. Instead of looking at the usual characteristics of the international student, like age and gender, this study also needed other characteristics to gain more insight as to how motives and expectations of academic mobility to the Netherlands have been formed. The actual act of undertaking academic mobility is not only dependent on the personal skills of a student, but also on the financial means to which this student has access to. In the work ‘International students migration and social stratification’ Xiang and Shen have made a distinction in two types of finance: students that finance their stay by themselves or by parents and students that get a scholarship from their own institution to undertake academic mobility (Xiang & Shen, 2009, p.515). Also, the host institution can distribute scholarships to honour students, like the Huygens Scholarship in

the Netherlands (Nuffic, 2011). Besides the means of finance, the country of origin of the international student might also play part in the process to undertake international academic mobility. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) states that: *“Providing higher education to all sectors of a nation's population means confronting social inequalities deeply rooted in history, culture and economic structure that influence an individual's ability to compete. Geography, unequal distribution of wealth and resources all contribute to the disadvantage of certain population groups. Participation tends to be below national average for populations living in remote or rural areas and for indigenous groups”* (UNESCO, 2009, p.7).

Who gets to attain higher education is dependent on the economical status of the country a student lives in. Therefore, students from the well-known poorer regions of the world, like Africa, will have more difficulty to undertake international academic mobility than students from a wealthy region, like Western Europe. The economical status of the country of origin will also have an influence on the different types of motives a student might have to undertake international academic mobility. Another characteristic of an international student is the duration of the stay abroad. As said in the previous section, international academic mobility is temporary. The Dutch organization for international cooperation in higher education (Nuffic) has distinguished two periods of academic mobility in the Netherlands: an international student can come to the Netherlands to participate for the entire curriculum, both Bachelor and Master study or as part of the curriculum to earn study credits (Nuffic, 2010, p.11).

Of course, other characteristics of the international student are also important when studying the academic mobility of international students to the Netherlands, like the economical status of the parents, but the characteristics described in this section were believed to provide this study with the most necessary information this study could use. Still, the personal characteristics of the international student are not the only factors thought to be of influence on the formation of motives and expectations of academic mobility to the Netherlands. Therefore, the next section will set out the different ‘push’-and ‘pull factors’ essential to this study.

2.4 Push and Pull factors

In the model of Park the driving force- and directional factor are the two stimuli for students to undertake international academic mobility. These two factors can be seen as push and pull factors which are traditionally used to explain the migration of people. A push factor is usually seen as unbeneficial to an individual's well-being, like political instability, civil conflict, unemployment and famine. These factors ‘push’ the individual away from its home country. A pull factor is the opposite of a push factor, since the former is usually beneficial to the well-being of an individual like good education opportunities,

employment and a stable political climate (Daniels et al., 2008, p. 100). The work of Tim Mazzarol and Geoffrey N. Soutar (2002) has provided this study with the necessary push and pull factors to study the formation of motives and expectations of academic mobility to the Netherlands.

In ‘Push- pull’ factors influencing international student destination choice’ Mazzarol and Soutar combine the stages of decision making to undertake international academic mobility with related push and pull factors that are of importance in this process. According to Mazzarol and Soutar the first stage of the decision process is fully influenced by push factors in the home country: the student is not happy with the situation in the home country and decides to study in another country. The second stage in the decision process is concerned with choosing a host country: this stage is fully dependent on the attractive pull factors of the host country. The final and third stage of the decision process is concerned with the selection of the host institution of higher education, which is also concerned with pull factors (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002, p.83). The distinction of three stages in the process of undertaking international academic mobility is useful to this, since the division of the decision process has made clear distinction which levels should be studied, namely the home- and host country and the host institution and the different push and pull factors that go with them. The Boxes 2.4.1-2.4.3 give an overview of the push and pull factors each applicable to a different level.

Box 2.4.1: Push factors in the home country of influence on international academic mobility.

- ❖ A better understanding of a different culture and/ or country since the student feels the home country unable to provide the insights into other cultures.
- ❖ A lack of job opportunities in the home country which drive the student away to seek for better educational opportunities in the host country
- ❖ The availability of a scholarship at the home institution that enables the student to undertake international academic mobility to another country
- ❖ The discontent with the own institution of higher education characterized by high tuition fees, uninteresting courses and unavailable courses which are considered desirable to the student.

Source: Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002, p.82-90.

All the push factors in Box 2.3.1 are thought to be unbeneficial to the students well-being. The students that participated to the study of Mazzarol and Soutar, found that overseas academic courses were better than the one’s the home institution offered. To these students the so called ‘discontent with the home institution’ was the most important factor to leave the home country. This was followed by the fact that participating in an overseas education was found to contribute to a better understanding of the Western culture (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002, p.84). Since push factors do not work alone, the pull factors that attract international student to a certain country are presented in Box 2.4.2.

Box 2.4.2: Pull factors in the host country of influence on international academic mobility.

1. The cost issues that make a host country attractive to the student, like lower living and travel costs, but also the absence of certain social costs like crime and discrimination were incorporated into this pull factor.
2. The environment of the host country in which not only a favourable natural climate is specified, but also a political and economical stability.
3. The geographical proximity from the own country to the host country.
4. The overall level of knowledge and awareness the student has of the host country which is influenced by the information available on the host country in the home country of the student.
5. The personal recommendations of friends and family on the host country the student receives.
6. The social links the student has with the host country when he or she has friends and family living in the host country.

Source: Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002, p.83.

As Box 2.4.2 presents, Mazzarol and Soutar have distinguished six pull factors at the level of the host country that have an influence on the decision to undertake academic mobility to a particular country. The overall level of knowledge and awareness available on the possible host country to international students, was thought to be the most influential factor that attracts student to another country (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002, p. 88). When looking back at the introduction, the popularity of the USA, the UK and France can be explained by this factor, since these countries are all influential and general knowledge on these country is big. After the decision has been made to go to a particular host country, the student has to make one more step, namely the decision of the host institution. Box 2.4.3 gives an overview of the possible pull factors at the level of the host institution.

Box 2.4.3: Pull factors of the host institution of influence on international academic mobility.

- ❖ The international learning environment present at the host institution of higher education.
- ❖ The qualifications of the host institution of higher education are internationally recognized.
- ❖ The tuition fees of the host institution of higher education that are attractive to the student.
- ❖ The reputation of the host institution of higher education that is attractive to the student.

Source: Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002, p.87-88.

The reputation of the host institution (Box 2.4.3) was thought to be the most important factor at the level of the host institution (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002, p. 89). Since a host institution is often located in a typical student city, the influence of this city at the level of the host institution should not be forgotten. The sections 2.7 and 2.8 will set out the influence of the ‘host city’ on the decision to undertake academic mobility to this city.

The work of Mazzarol and Soutar has provided this study with the essential push and pull factors from which the formation of motives and expectations of academic mobility to the Netherlands should be studied. The presence of push factors in the own country make studying in another country more favourable in that the well-being of the student is enhanced when undertaking international academic mobility. Also, a student is not only influenced by the pull factors of the host country, but also by the favourable characteristics of the host institution. Also, push and pull factors have been believed to influence the formation of motives and expectations of academic mobility to the Netherlands among international students, since a student that feels that the own country does not provide enough insights into other cultures (push factor) will undertake academic mobility to the Netherlands based on a cultural motive etc. Therefore, the study of Mazzarol and Soutar has not only provided this study with indicators to measure the attractiveness of the Netherlands among international students, but has also been used to indicate the influence of these factors on the motives and expectations of academic mobility to the Netherlands. The following two sections will elaborate on the concepts of motives and expectations.

2.5 Motives

The works of Findlay et al (2006) and King & Ruiz-Gelices (2003) have made clear that students undertake international academic mobility in order to enrich their lives. As this section will show, there are several types of motives that help to enrich the lives of students. To categorize the motives of academic mobility to the Netherlands, this study has relied upon two earlier studies on motives of international academic mobility. In 'Cross-border flows of students for higher education: Push-pull factors and motivations of mainland Chinese students in Hong Kong and Macau' Mei Li and Mark Bray have made a categorization of the motives for a student to undertake international academic mobility in : 1) academic motives which include the pursuit of qualifications and professional development, 2) economic motives which are concerned with access to scholarships, economic returns of study and prospects for employment and 3) social and cultural motives which include the desire of the student to obtain experience and understanding of other societies (Li & Bray, 2007, p.795). An overlap exists between the different motives, since academic motives might also incorporate economic motives and social and cultural motives can also be used separate from each other. Li and Bray stated that Chinese students value the academic outcomes of their stay in another regions as most important, followed by social and cultural outcomes (Li & Bray, 2007, p.802). This can be related to the academic, social and cultural motives a student might have had. For this reason it is logical to think that academic motives are most important for a student to undertake international academic mobility. The work of Min Yang et al. (2011) has been drawn upon to extent the motives already mentioned.

In ‘Travelling a thousand miles: Hong Kong Chinese students’ study abroad experience’, Min Yang et al. distinguish three goals or motives for students to undertake international academic mobility: 1) intercultural development goals which incorporate the motivation to learn other cultures, 2) disciplinary/ career development goals which are concerned with knowledge-based motives and 3) personal development goals which consider the personal development of the student as a motive to undertake international academic mobility (Yang et al, 2011, p.75). The personal motive to undertake international academic mobility is an important one, since both Findlay et al. and King & Ruiz-Gelices have demonstrated that international academic mobility is about enriching one’s life. Therefore, the personal motive has been incorporated into this study.

A clear understanding of the motives international students have had to undertake academic mobility to the Netherlands has been useful to this study, since this is linked to the push and pull factors and gives a better understanding why international students come to the Netherlands. The different push and pull factors might have been thought to lead to certain expectations, since the attractiveness of the Netherlands will most certainly have created expectations about the stay and study in this country. The way expectations in general are formed will be discussed in section 2.6.

2.6 A Behaviorist approach

The model of Park has showed (Figure 2.1) that expectations of international academic mobility are influenced by different factors. Park states that expectations are influenced by different factors: *“Students who have decided to study abroad begin to compare possible destination countries and eventually select one in particular. In this process, various elements, such as opinions from parents and friends, information from media and websites about student visa processes, feasibility of admissions, educational environments, and economical and political conditions of each country, are all integrated in forming images and expectations on each country’s universities. Among these, the preferred set of images and expectations of a certain country influences students’ choice and leads them to decide their mobility direction toward that country”* (Park, 2005, p.742). Park talks about the formation of ‘the preferred set of images and expectations’, which implicates that student may possibly form images and expectations that are not objective or real. Since Clark does not elaborate on this aspect of expectation forming, more insight was needed in the general formation of expectations. This insight was found in the behaviorist approach. To set out the aspects and perspectives of the behaviorist approach the work of Ben de Pater and Herman van der Wusten has been consulted.

De Pater and van der Wusten see the behaviorist approach as an instrument from which the spatial behaviour and activities of people can be explained by looking at the cognitive and emotional processes which underlie the human behavior (de Pater & van der Wusten, 1996, p.182). In the light of this study, this means that the decision to undertake academic mobility to the Netherlands is the result of different personal emotional and cognitive perspectives which as Park stated, are influenced by opinions,

images and information the student receives on the host country. The results of these different types of information are preferred images and expectations. 'Preferred', since from a behaviorist point of view people adjust the information they receive to their own lives: they act on a subjective truth instead of on the objective truth (de Pater & van der Wusten, 1996, p.177). In the light of this study, the expectations students might have on their host country or institution are not the result of objective information of this country or institution, but more on the way the student experiences this information. The information of the host country or institution distributed by friends and family that have been to the host country or institution will therefore shape different expectations than the information distributed by the Internet, since the former speaks more to the emotions of the student than the latter. The channels of information distribution on the host country and institution are therefore important tools in shaping the expectations of international academic mobility.

The use of the behaviorist approach together with the model of Park (Figure 2.1) has provided this study with the tools from which expectations of academic mobility to the Netherlands could be explained. Push and pull factors are not the only factors of influence on the expectations of international academic mobility since this relation is interacting with the information international students receive. Since the way the city of Utrecht is promoting itself among international students, is also part of the formation of expectations, the next two sections will set out the influence of the student city, in this study the city of Utrecht, on the decision to undertake academic mobility to this city.

2.7 Attractive city Utrecht

The decision to study at a particular host institution is not only dependent on the attractive pull factors this institution has to offer, but also on the city in which the institution is located. To study whether the so called 'student city' is really of relevance in the process of undertaking international academic mobility, this study has focused on several characteristics of the city of Utrecht that make this city attractive to the outside world. The work of Gerard Marlet (2009) has been helpful to this study in that his work has provided this study with the indicators to study the attractiveness of a city.

In 'De aantrekkelijke stad' of Gerard Marlet (2009), Marlet sets out which cities in the Netherlands are attractive to live in and which characteristics help to make this city attractive to outsiders. In order to decide which Dutch city is most attractive to live in, Marlet focused on four elements which were thought of interacting with each other to create the most favourable conditions to live in a city, namely the city's economy, its agglomeration, its population and the residential sites available in the city (Marlet, 2009, p.352). A city that has many residential sites, like a vivid nightlife with cultural activities and qualitative good restaurant placed in the historical center of the city, is likely to attract a successful population, like highly educated people (Marlet, 2009, p.369). Also, a favourable geographic location which is measured

by the favourable agglomeration benefits, like the connection to the highways and public transport, is needed in order to become an attractive city (Marlet, 2009, p.353). Box 2.7.1 shows which Dutch cities incorporate all mentioned four elements in the most favourable manner.

Box 2.7.1: Top-5 of the most attractive cities in the Netherlands.

1. Amsterdam
2. Utrecht
3. Haarlem
4. Den Bosch
5. Den Haag

Source: Marlet, 2009, p. 352.

When looking at the ranking of Marlet (Box 2.7.1.) Utrecht is the second most attractive city of the Netherlands. This ranking is helpful to this study in that it gives more insight into the reason why international students come to the city of Utrecht. To students the 181 bars and cafés, the seven cinemas, 15 museums, seven institutions of higher education and its centrality in the Netherlands make of Utrecht one of the most favourable Dutch student cities to live in (City of Utrecht, 2010). The fact that Utrecht is an attractive city to live in, is not enough to attract people. Since international students have to become aware of the attractiveness of their possible host city, the city has to be active in promoting itself. For this reason, the next section will also look at the role city marketing plays in attracting students to the city of Utrecht.

2.8 City marketing

To understand how the city of Utrecht promotes itself, it is necessary to understand what the concept of city marketing encompasses. The work of Erik Braun (2008) on the concept of city marketing has been helpful to this study. In ‘City Marketing, Towards an Integrated Approach’ Braun argues that the concept of city marketing can take many forms, but the definition most applicable to this study is the following: *“City marketing is the coordinated use of marketing tools supported by a shared customer-oriented philosophy, for creating, communicating, delivering and exchanging urban offerings that have value for the city’s customers and the city’s community at large”* (Braun, 2008, p. 43). City marketing aims at promoting the best a city has to offer in order to satisfy the needs of the people that live in a city and to possible visitors. Since the promotion of a city usually aims at a different target group, like tourist, Braun states that city marketing also incorporates basic local economic development policies to adequately reach the target group (Braun, 2008, p.33). When linking the definition of city marketing and its policies to the

study of the city marketing of Utrecht, it can be said that Utrecht is actively promoting itself and has a clear policy on attracting more people to the city. The city's key goal is to: *“Present Utrecht at national and international level as a city with an attractive and competitive environment in which to dwell, work, study, live, visit and invest”* (City of Utrecht, 2009). The city marketing of Utrecht focuses on the cities favourable characteristics as stated by Marlet, like the geographical centrality of Utrecht in the Netherlands and its dynamics of a knowledge and cultural based city. These characteristics should therefore not only attract tourists, but also international companies and other groups to come to Utrecht. Therefore the city aims to promote itself not only as an attractive tourist city, but also as the number one city in the Netherlands, when it comes to education and science (City of Utrecht, 2009). For this reason, Utrecht is an attractive city, not only for Dutch people, but also for international businesses and students.

The fact that Utrecht is the number one knowledge- and science city in the Netherlands is attractive to students that want to undertake academic mobility to the Netherlands, since it is attractive to study in a city that is known for its knowledge based economy and academic research capacity. The factors that make Utrecht attractive to stay and study in and the way Utrecht places itself in the ‘market’ has been helpful to this study, since these concepts have given insight into the reason why international students should choose Utrecht as their host city. Now that all the theoretical concepts have been elaborated on, it is necessary to draw upon the expected relations between them. Section 2.9 will set out the conceptual model and the hypotheses that have been drawn from it.

2.9 Linking it all together: the conceptual model and hypotheses

Now that all the building blocks on which this study is rested are discussed, it is time to present the relations that were thought to exist between the individual concepts. This has been done by putting the concepts in a conceptual model in which the arrows indicate causal relations between two or more concepts. These causal relations are based on the literature as presented in the previous sections and on own knowledge on the subject of academic mobility to the Netherlands. To see whether the assumed causal relations really existed, these relations have resulted in several hypotheses. These hypotheses have enabled a structural descriptive analysis of the results. Not all of the concepts mentioned have been transformed into hypotheses, like the concept of ‘City marketing’ and some personal characteristics of the concept of ‘International student’, since the former required a different method and the latter have been used to give additional information on the composition of the sample. Still, these concepts have contributed to this study in that a general analysis of these concepts in relation to this study has also been incorporated into the results.

Figure 2.9: The conceptual model.



When looking at the conceptual model (Figure 2.9) it can be said that the model has a clear hierarchical structure in which the concepts of ‘International student’, ‘Push factors home country’ and ‘Pull factors Netherlands’ were all thought to have a direct influence on the concepts of ‘Motives’ and ‘Expectations’ and an indirect influence on the concepts of ‘Academic mobility to the Netherlands’ and ‘Attractive Utrecht’. The direct relations that have been thought to exist between the three ‘main’ concepts and the concepts of ‘Motives’ and ‘Expectations’, are the result of the findings as presented in the literature in which the three ‘main’ concepts have been thought to be the most influential when studying international academic mobility. The model of Park (Figure 2.1) has shown that the driving force factor (push factor) and the directional factor (pull factor) are of influence on a students’ decision to undertake international academic mobility. Also, section 2.3 incorporated the work of Xiang and Shen who stated that the

personal characteristics of the international student, like the means of financing one's stay and study abroad, are also of importance when studying international academic mobility. Further, the interaction of the concept of 'Behaviorism' on the direct relation between the three 'main' concepts and 'Expectations' has been thought to exist, since the latter stated that the power of information- or image distribution is of influence on the formation of expectations on the host country. Therefore when studying the relation between the concepts of 'International student', 'Push factors home country' and 'Pull factors Netherlands' and 'Expectations, the process that forms expectations in general should not be left out, since it will possibly alter the mentioned direct relation.

When moving down from the concept of 'Academic mobility to the Netherlands' the direct relation between this concept and that of 'Attractive Utrecht' is thought to be interacting with the concept of 'City marketing'. A student that has decided to come to the Netherlands, will also have to choose a host institution. In this study the host institutions are located in the city of Utrecht. As the literature has mentioned a host institution has several pull factors, but the pull factors of the city in which it is located is usually not incorporated in the decision. Therefore, this study has assumed that an international student in the Netherlands has chosen for a certain city to stay and study in, because of its attractiveness (both of the host institution as of the city itself). This decision is altered by the way in which the city of Utrecht promotes itself to the outside world, the so called 'city marketing'. The way in which Utrecht promotes itself under possible international students is thought to be of influence on the decision to live and study in Utrecht.

The relations that were thought to exist between the different concepts have resulted into several hypotheses which each have been used to answer the three subquestions of this study. The three boxes below (Box 2.9.1-2.9.3) present the hypotheses linked to each subquestion and the results on these hypotheses will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Box 2.9.1: Hypothesis drawn from the conceptual model used to answer subquestion 1.

- ❖ Professional motives are more important for a student to undertake international mobility to the Netherlands than are other motives to undertake international mobility to the Netherlands.

Box 2.9.2: Hypotheses drawn from the conceptual mode used to answer subquestion 2.

- ❖ Discontent with the own institution of higher education in the host country is more important for a student to undertake academic mobility to the Netherlands than is the lack of job opportunities in the home country.
- ❖ Personal recommendations of friends and family about the Netherlands are more important on the formation of expectations about academic mobility to the Netherlands than has the overall information distributed of the Netherlands by other channels.
- ❖ Pull factors in the Netherlands are more important on the motives of academic mobility to the Netherlands than push factors in the home country
- ❖ The overall level of knowledge and awareness a student has of the Netherlands is the more important for a student to undertake academic mobility to the Netherlands than is the geographical proximity of the

Box 2.9.3: Hypotheses drawn from the conceptual model used to answer subquestion 3.

- ❖ Characteristics of the host institution in Utrecht, like the reputation of the host institution, the reasonable tuition fees, internationally recognized qualifications and the international learning environment are more important in the decision to come to Utrecht than are attractive characteristics of the city of Utrecht.

2.9.1 Conclusion on Chapter 2

This chapter has set out the theoretical basis on which this study has been build. This basis has not only incorporated concepts that are often used in the study of international academic mobility, but also concepts that are used in other fields of the academic world. Also, the conceptual model as presented in figure 2.9. and the hypotheses as presented in Boxes 2.9.1-2.9.3 can be seen as the references points from which this study took off: they are at the base of the methods that were used and have contributed to the answering of the three subquestions. In order to analyze the results, the theoretical concepts had to be transformed in to operational variables. This transformation and the methods that were used are set out in the next chapter.

Chapter 3- Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In order to collect the data that was needed to test the hypotheses, several steps have been taken. This chapter will set out these steps in order to get a better insight in the composition of the data and the results. The face-to-face questionnaire and the in-depth interview with an expert in the field of city marketing have both contributed to gaining more insights into the subject of this study. Initially, this study was set out to be a combination of quantitative- and qualitative methods, but since the unwillingness of the institutions of higher education in the city of Utrecht to provide this study with secondary data on the composition of their institutions, no sample frame was available from which the operational population could be drawn. For this reason, the choice has been made to shift to the use of qualitative methods which has limited this study to a descriptive analysis of the results. This choice and others of the methodological process will be set out in this chapter. Section 3.2 will set out the important elements of the research plan, like the type of sample and the time and place of conducting the research. The section (3.3) will elaborate on the transformation of the theoretical concepts into operational variables which has been necessary to define this study. The final section (3.4) of this chapter will be concerned with some general characteristics of the sample, like the ratio of men and women and the geographical region the participants came from. These characteristics have been useful to this study, since they provide background information of the participants which has helped to better understand the results that were drawn from the questionnaire.

3.2 Plan of research

This paragraph will be concerned with setting out the exact steps that have been taken in the research process. Firstly, the methods of data collecting will be elaborated on. Secondly, the type of sample, its size and representativeness will be discussed.

3.2.1 *Face to face questionnaire and in depth interviewing*

This study is based on two methods of data collecting, namely the face-to-face questionnaire and the in-depth interview. The choice of these two methods has several reasons. In order to test the hypotheses a method that could capture every element of the hypotheses and conceptual model was needed. Also, the method of data collecting needed to be fast with a high response rate, since this study had to be completed in nine weeks. The method that captured this best was the face-to-face questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of seventeen questions divided into two sections conducted among 103 randomly chosen international students (see Appendix 3). The first section of the questionnaire was concerned with the motives and expectations of academic mobility to the Netherlands, while the second section focused on

the personal characteristics of the participant, like the gender and the country of origin. Before the questionnaire was conducted, it was tested among four randomly chosen international students at Utrecht University. After some changes were made, the face-to-face questionnaire was conducted at four institutions of higher education, both universities of applied sciences and research universities, in the city of Utrecht. Initially, a list was made of all the institutions of higher education in the city of Utrecht which incorporated Hogeschool Utrecht, Hogeschool TIO, Tias Nimbas Business School, University for Humanistics, Utrecht University, University College Utrecht, Utrecht School of the Arts, but eventually only Hogeschool Utrecht, Utrecht University, University College Utrecht, Utrecht School of the Arts were willing to participate in the questionnaire. The institutions were visited during week 10 of the year 2011 during three days, namely on March 8, 9 and 10. Each institution was visited between 90 and 120 minutes in order to give all international student enrolled at the different institutions an equal chance to be questioned. The questionnaire has been conducted during lunch breaks, since this increased the chance of meeting international students.

The results drawn from the face-to-face questionnaire have provided results useful to the answering of the subquestions. Still, a need existed to gain more insights as to why international students come to the city of Utrecht. For this reason, an in-depth interview with an expert on the attractiveness of the city of Utrecht has been held to provide this study with the essential insights into this subject. With the help of the website of the municipality of Utrecht an expert on the city marketing of the city of Utrecht was found. Hedwig Leijten of City Promotion Bureau Utrecht has been interviewed. Since Leijten is a project manager at City Promotion Bureau Utrecht concerned with the promotion of Utrecht internationally, interviewing her was thought to contribute to this study in that she could tell more on the way Utrecht is attracting international students and why international students come to Utrecht in the first place. Leijten was approached by e-mail and the actual appointment took place on the 28th of March 2011. The interview consisted of six questions related to subquestion three and lasted for about 20 minutes. The interview was recorded and later converted to a transcript (see Appendix 4). The interview was then analyzed on useful findings that could contribute to the answering of subquestion 3. These findings extend the results on the attractiveness of Utrecht, since they are an addition to the results drawn from the questionnaire. The way the results from the questionnaire were analyzed will be discussed in the following paragraph.

3.2.2 Type of sample and representativeness

Essentially, this study aimed to generate results that were based on probability sampling since this would have led to representative results that could have been generalized on the whole population of international students enrolled at institutions of higher education in the Netherlands in the academic year

of 2010-2011. Due to the unwillingness of mainly Utrecht University to provide this study with secondary data on the number and characteristics of international students enrolled, no sample was available from which an operational population could be drawn. Therefore, a shift was made in the type of sampling which has led to the use of purposive sampling which is a type of non-probability sampling. Since, non-probability sampling generates results that are mainly unrepresentative, this study has been limited to a descriptive analysis of the results. Therefore, the findings from this study cannot be generalized onto the whole population of international students of higher education in the Netherlands and only say something about the small population of international students that has been interviewed in the city of Utrecht. A benefit of the use of non-probability sampling is the detailed information on international students of higher education in the Netherlands that has been collected, which has deepened the understanding of these students. The questions on the questionnaire have helped to gain more insights into the situation of the international students enrolled at institutions of higher education in the city of Utrecht.

3.3 Operationalization of the theoretical concepts

In order to use the theoretical concepts they had to be transformed into operational variables. For this reason this section will give an alphabetical overview of the used variables with their definition and if necessary the scale of measurements.

Academic mobility to the Netherlands

The temporary movement of the study of the participant from the own country to the Netherlands as part of the curriculum or for the full duration of a higher education study. The duration of the movement has been divided into categories:

1. 3 months
2. 6 months
3. 12 months
4. Full Bachelor study (3-5 years)
5. Full Master study (1-2 years)
6. Both Bachelor and Master study

Age

The age of the participant.

Attractive Utrecht

The attractiveness of Utrecht is dependent on six characteristics which are a combination of pull factors of the host institution as mentioned by Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) and the residential sites as mentioned by Marlet (2009).

1. Attractive & historical city
2. Favourable geographical location
3. International learning environment
4. Qualifications of host institution of higher education in Utrecht are internationally recognized
5. Host institution of higher education in Utrecht has reasonable tuition fees
6. Host institution in Utrecht has a good reputation

The importance of these characteristics has been measured with a five-point scale:

1. Very unimportant
2. Unimportant
3. Not unimportant/ not important
4. Important
5. Very important

City marketing

The promotion of a city with the help of marketing tools in order to highlight the attractiveness of this city to pull new people to this city (Braun, 2008).

Country of origin

The country the participant comes from.

Duration of stay

The time the participant is studying in Utrecht. The duration of stay has five dimensions:

1. 3 months
2. 6 months
3. 12 months
4. Full Bachelor study (3 years)
5. Full Master study (1-2 years)
6. Both Bachelor and Master study

The participant could only choose one answer.

Expectations

The expectations that the participant may have had before undertaking academic mobility to the Netherlands. The way the expectations were formed has been divided into three categories:

1. Information distributed on the Netherlands (Internet, television, own institution)
2. Stories of family and friends that have been to the Netherlands
3. Other

The participant could choose only one answer

Gender

The gender of the participant, male or female.

Geographical region

The region where the country from the participant lies in as decided by the United Nations (2011):

1. Africa
2. Asia
3. Central America
4. Eastern Europe
5. European Union
6. Middle East
7. North America
8. Oceania
9. South America
10. The Caribbean

Home country

See Country of origin.

Host city

The city where the participant lives and studies in the academic year of 2010-2011. In this study, the host city is Utrecht.

Host country

The country to which the participant has undertaken international academic mobility and temporarily lives and studies. In this study the host country is the Netherlands.

Host institution

The temporary institution of higher education, both universities of applied sciences and research universities, where the participant is enrolled in the academic year of 2010-2011. In this study seven host institutions of higher education in the city of Utrecht were visited for conducting the face-to-face questionnaire:

1. Hogeschool Utrecht
2. Hogeschool TIO
3. Tias Nimbas Business School
4. University for Humanistics
5. Utrecht University
6. University College Utrecht
7. Utrecht School of the Arts (HKU)

International student

A bachelor or master student that comes from another country to study at an institution of higher education in Utrecht in the academic year of 2010-2011. The participants either be bachelor or master students, not both.

Means of finance

The means by which the stay and study of the participant in the Netherlands is financed. The means of finance of the stay has been divided into four categories:

1. Scholarship
2. Financed by parents
3. Financed by participant
4. Other, namely (filled in if none of the above means of finance are applicable to the participant).

The participant could only choose one answer.

Motives

The reason why the participant has undertaken academic mobility to the Netherlands. Four types of motives have been distinguished:

1. Cultural motives (= create more understanding of other countries and cultures).
2. Personal motives (= gain experience on a personal level, like gaining more life experience).
3. Professional motives (= gain more academic knowledge and create better job opportunities).
4. Social motives (= make new friends and create an international social network).

The participant could choose two answers.

Pull factors in the Netherlands

Pull factors in the Netherlands are factors that attract the participant to come to study in the Netherlands.

The pull factors used in this study are established by Mazzarol and Soutar (2002):

1. Cost issues (lower tuition travel cost, lower cost of living)
2. Environment (favourable natural-,political- and economic climate)
3. Geographic proximity (distance with home country)
4. Overall level of knowledge and awareness (available information on the Netherlands, quality of education in the Netherlands)
5. Personal recommendations (recommendations of family and friends that make the Netherlands desirable to stay and study)
6. Social links (friends and family that already live in the Netherlands that make the Netherlands favourable to stay and study)

The importance of these pull factors have been measured with a five-point scale:

1. Very unimportant
2. Unimportant
3. Not unimportant/ not important
4. Important
5. Very important

Push factors in home country

Push factors in the home country are factors that drive the participant away from the country he or she comes from. The push factors used are established by Mazzarol and Soutar (2002):

1. Available scholarship at home university for studying abroad
2. Better understanding of a different country
3. Discontent with own university (desired courses not available/ not interesting/ tuition fees too high)
4. Lack of job opportunities

The importance of these push factors have been measured with a five-point scale:

1. Very unimportant
2. Unimportant
3. Not unimportant/ not important
4. Important
5. Very important

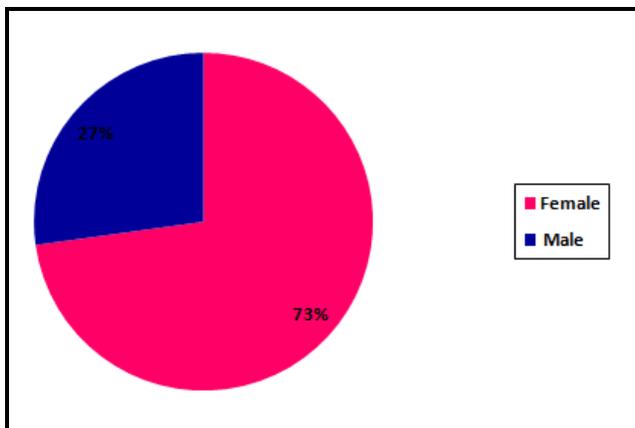
3.4 General characteristics of the sample

In order to better understand the results that are going to be discussed in the next chapter it is necessary to first set out some general characteristics of the participants from the sample. For this reason the following paragraph will set out the composition of the sample for a number of personal characteristics. Due to the non-representativeness of this study, the results presented in this section cannot be generalized to the total population of international students currently studying in the Netherlands. Still, these characteristics have provided this study with additional information on the situation of the international students currently residing in the city of Utrecht.

3.4.1 The age, gender geographical location of the participants

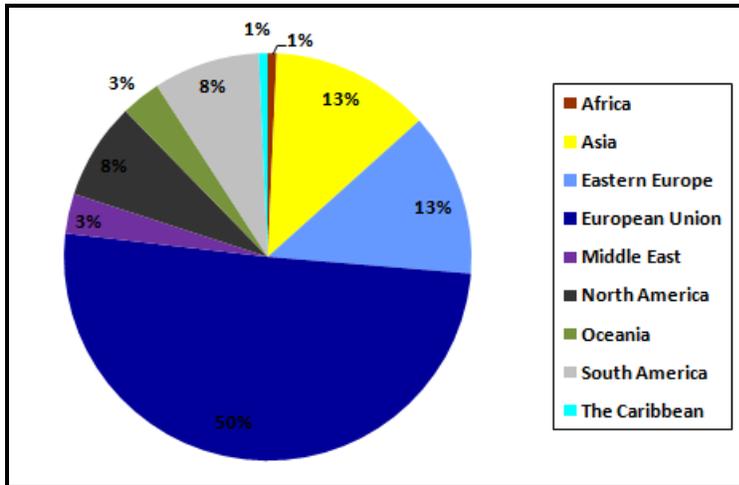
Although the age and the gender of the participants are not very relevant to this study, both characteristics have been analyzed to get a better idea of the composition of the sample. The average age of the participants was 22.1 years. The oldest and youngest participants were respectively 36 and 17 years of age, while most of the participants were between 20 and 24 years old (see Appendix 1, table 3.4.1 & figure 3.4.1). When looking at figure 3.4.1.2, it can be said that the women in the sample were in the majority with 73 percent compared to only 27 percent of the male international students (see also Appendix 1, table 3.4.1.2). This does not mean that more international female student stay and study in the city of Utrecht, since this study is not representative. Therefore, the underrepresentation of the males has had no influence on the results.

Figure 3.4.1.2: Relative distribution of the 103 participants by gender.



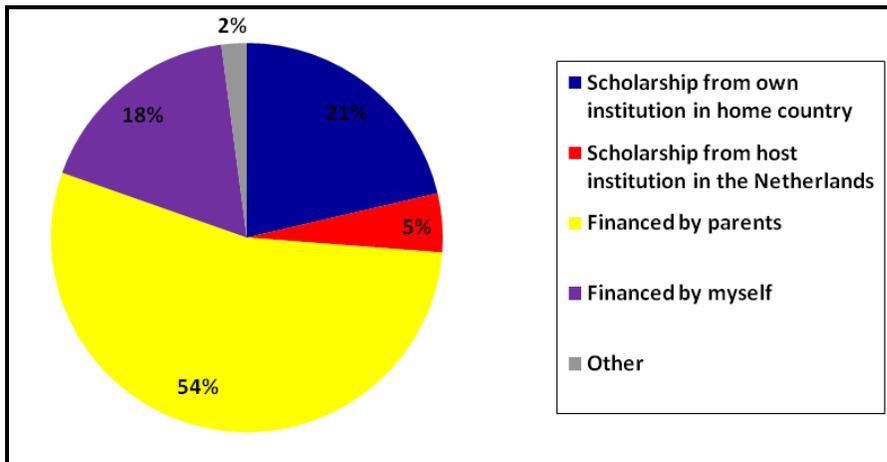
As said in section 2.3 the geographical region the participants come from has been expected to be of influence on the motives and expectations of the international students to undertake academic mobility to the Netherlands. Figure 3.4.1.3 presents the relative distribution of the participants by geographical location.

Figure 3.4.1.3: Relative distribution of 101 participants by geographical region.



It seems that half of the participants came from countries within the European Union, namely 50 percent. Also, a majority of the participants came from Asia (13 percent) which is in line with the global trend of Asian students being the biggest group of internationally mobile students (see Figure.3.4.1.3 and Appendix 1 table 3.4.1.3). Chapter 4 will elaborate more on the role of the geographical region in this study. Another important personal characteristic that has been considered to be important to this study is the way the participants are financing their stay and study in the Netherlands. This is presented in Figure 3.4.1.4.

Figure 3.4.1.4: Relative distribution of the 103 participants by means of finance.



As Figure 3.4.1.4 shows, more than half of the participants said to finance their stay and study in the Netherlands with the help of their parents, namely 54 percent. Also, a relatively large part of the participants said that the academic mobility to the Netherlands has been made possible with the help of a scholarship from the home institution (see also Appendix 1, table 3.4.1.4). The next chapter will give more information on the means of finance in relation to the subject of this study.

3.4.2 Conclusion on Chapter 3

This chapter has tried to set out the decisions that have been made in the research process to get a better understanding of the methods used in this study. Although the use of non-probability sampling has prevented this study from being representative, it has supplied this study with useful background information on the situation of the international students in the city of Utrecht. This information is particularly necessary to make the interaction (between international students on the one hand and Dutch students and Dutch host organizations on the other hand) easier. In this way, the background information has contributed to social relevance of this study. Still, the general characteristics of the sample have also been incorporated in the results, since they can be seen as an addition to the results of the hypotheses. Therefore, the next chapter will give an overview of the results which have helped to provide this study with answering the subquestions.

Chapter 4 - Results

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will present the results drawn from the face-to-face questionnaire and the findings from the in-depth interview. The results from the questionnaire have mainly contributed to the answering of subquestions 1 and 2 and partly subquestion 3, while the latter has also been answered by the findings from the in-depth interview. This chapter has combined the results on the several hypotheses with the general findings from the sample to get a broader view on the subject of this study. Since the hypotheses presented in this chapter are based on theoretical concepts, the results have been linked back to these theoretical concepts to see whether the results are in correspondence with the literature. The outline of this chapter is divided into three sections each corresponding to a subquestion, which have then been subdivided into separate paragraphs each concerned with setting out the results on the hypotheses.

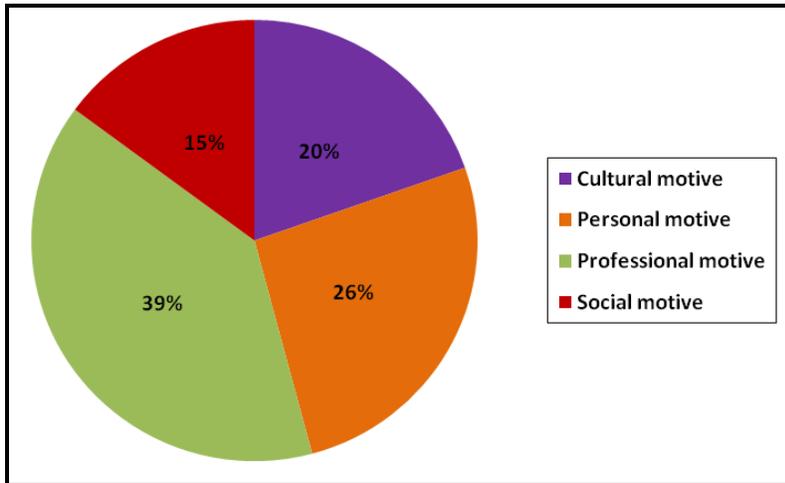
4.2 The motives to undertake academic mobility to the Netherlands

This section will be concerned with setting out the results on subquestion 1: **What are the most important motives to undertake academic mobility to the Netherlands?** The hypothesis used has helped to define which motives are most important for international students to undertake academic mobility to the Netherlands. When looking back at the literature, the most important motive for Chinese students to undertake international academic mobility was an academic one (Section 2.5). For this reason, the hypothesis has looked it the same is true for international students that come to the Netherlands. The next paragraph will discuss which motives have been most important among the participating students from the sample.

4.2.1 Hypothesis on the motives of academic mobility to the Netherlands: Professional motives are more important for international students to undertake international mobility to the Netherlands than are other motives.

In order to test this hypothesis, the questionnaire incorporated a question concerning which motive the international students found most important to undertake academic mobility to the Netherlands. The participants could choose two from the four motives, namely cultural-, personal-, professional- and social motives (see Appendix 3). The absolute number of participants that said to have one or two of the motives has been used to create a pie chart (Figure.4.2.1 and Appendix 2 table 4.2.1).

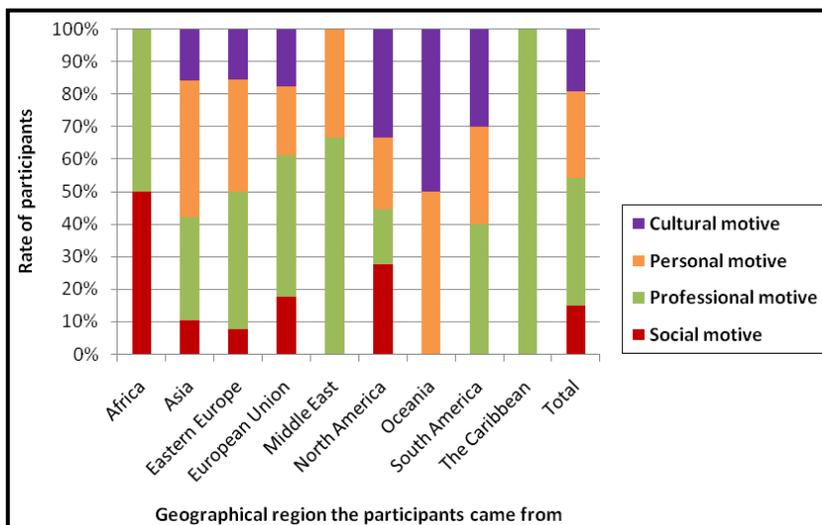
Figure 4.2.1: Relative distribution of type of motives among the 103 participants.



As Figure 4.2.1 shows, 39 percent of the participating international students said that their most important motive to undertake academic mobility to the Netherlands was a professional one, followed by a personal motive (26 percent). The fact that the professional motives have been most important, to undertake academic mobility to the Netherlands among the participating students, is in line with the findings from the study of Li and Bray (2007). This might indicate that the Netherlands is a country that offers good education to international students that want to obtain more knowledge and skills. This is also in line with the characteristics of the Netherlands as described in the introduction of this study (see section 1.1).

Although the results have confirmed the hypothesis, it is also interesting to see whether certain personal characteristics result into different motives. For this reason, the geographical region has been incorporated to see whether participants from different geographical regions have different motives to undertake academic mobility to the Netherlands. Figure 4.2.1.2 presents the different geographical regions and the different motives related to them.

Figure 4.2.1.2: Relative distribution of the motives in relation to the geographical region of the 103 participants.



First, it should be mentioned that some geographical regions only had one participant coming from that region, like The Caribbean and that therefore the results of the bars are not representative (see also Appendix 2, table 4.2.1.2). Still, when looking at the different bars, it seems that participants from Africa had overall social and professional motives to undertake academic mobility to the Netherlands. The professional motives of these participants might be the result of the less developed position of Africa in the world: these students might have wanted to gain more knowledge to obtain a better future for themselves. Still, this is all based on assumptions and when looking at, for instance, a developed region, like the European Union, the professional motives have also been the most important motives to undertake academic mobility to the Netherlands. Remarkable, is that participants from Asia have undertaken academic mobility to the Netherlands based on personal motives which can be put in the light of the literature of Findlay et al (2006) and King & Ruiz-Gelices (2003) who stated that academic mobility is being undertaken partly to enrich the own life.

Another remarkable characteristic of the sample, is that participants who originally live in a geographical region far away from the Netherlands, like North- and South America, have a tendency to undertake academic mobility to the Netherlands on behalf of cultural motives. This might be explained by the geographical distance between these regions and the Netherlands, since students from North-and South America might have found it interesting to study in a country of which the culture is unknown to them. This can also be related to the work of Findlay et al. (2006) in which international academic mobility is seen as a means to broaden the personal horizons of students. The factors of influence on the motives and expectations of this broadening of the personal horizon will be discussed in section 4.3-4.4.

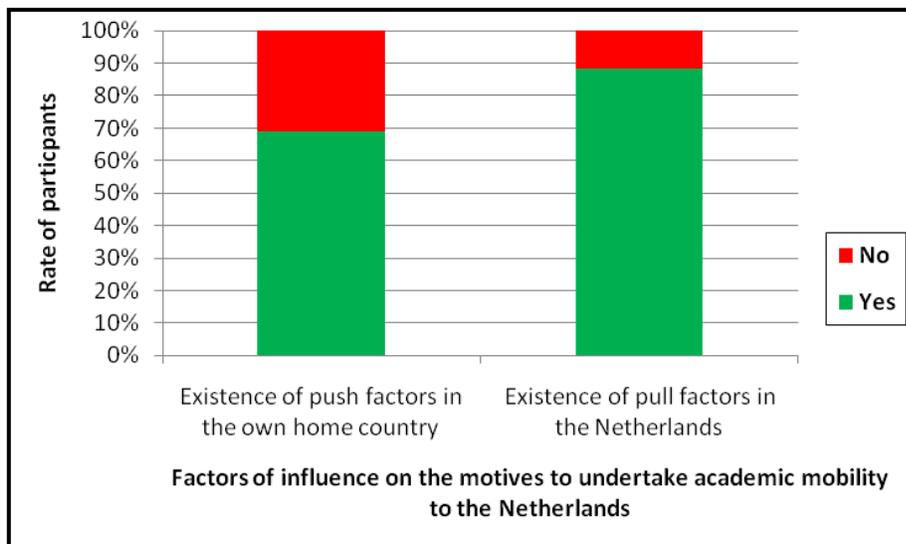
4.3 The factors of influence on the formation of motives and expectations

Now that is clear which motives are important for international students to undertake academic mobility to the Netherlands, this section will set out the results related to subquestion 2: **Which factors are of influence on the formation of motives and expectations of academic mobility to the Netherlands?** As the model of Park (Figure 2.1) and the work of Mazzarol & Soutar (2002) have set, push and pull factors are of influence on the expectations and motives students have of international academic mobility. This section therefore will be concerned with giving an overview of the actual influence of the different push and pull factors on the motives and expectations of academic mobility to the Netherlands.

4.3.1 Hypothesis on the importance of push and pull factors: Pull factors in the Netherlands are more important on the motives of academic mobility to the Netherlands than are push factors in the home country.

Since the work of Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) did not provide a comparison of the importance of push and pull factors, this study has made an attempt to do so. In order to test which factors are more important, push or pull, participants had to fill out two questions, namely if there existed push factors in their own country and if there existed pull factors in the Netherlands that were of importance on their motives to come to the Netherlands (see Appendix 3).

Figure 4.3.1: Relative distribution of the influence of push and pull factors among the 103 participants.

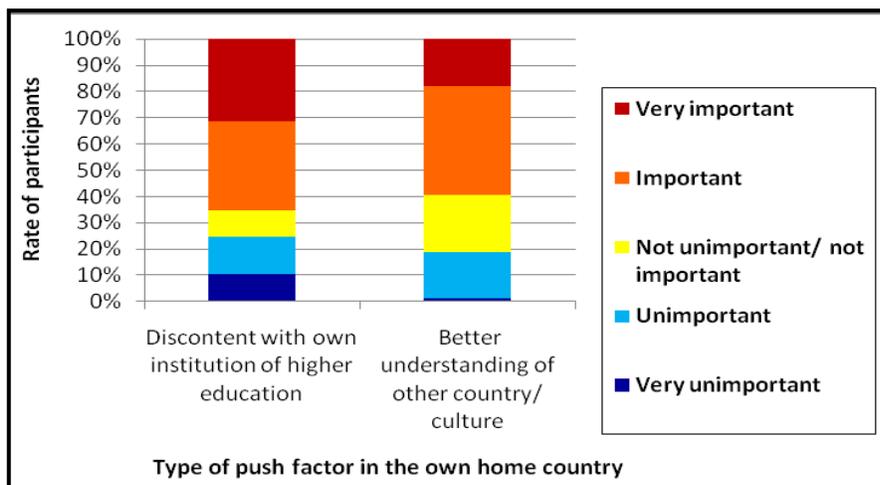


When looking at Figure 4.3.1 it is directly clear that the majority of the participants (88 percent) said that their motives of academic mobility to the Netherlands have been influenced by the existence of pull factors in the Netherlands in comparison to 70 percent of the participants said that their motives have been influenced by push factors in their own country (see also Appendix 2, table 4.3.1). This being said, it can be concluded that among the international students that participated, the pull factors of the Netherlands had more influence on the motives to come to the Netherlands than the push factors in the home country. In other words: international students are more driven by the attractiveness of the Netherlands than by the unattractiveness of their own country. Still, the differences between the rates of participants that said to be influenced by push factors and participants that were influenced by pull factors is relatively small. For this reason, the next two paragraphs will make clear which particular push and pull factors were of influence on the decision to come to the Netherlands.

4.3.2 Hypothesis on push factors in the own home country: Discontent with the own institution of higher education in the home country is valued as being of more importance to international students in the decision to undertake academic mobility to the Netherlands than is the factor of better understanding a different culture.

In the study of Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) the discontent with the own institution was the driving force for most students to leave their home country and study abroad. This factor has been compared to the second most important factor in the study of Mazzarol and Soutar, namely the factor to better understand a different culture. The above hypothesis has been used to test if the same is true for the participating international students. Figure 4.3.2 gives an overview of the level of importance participants have given to each of the two factors.

Figure 4.3.2: Relative distribution on two types of push factors among the 103 participants.

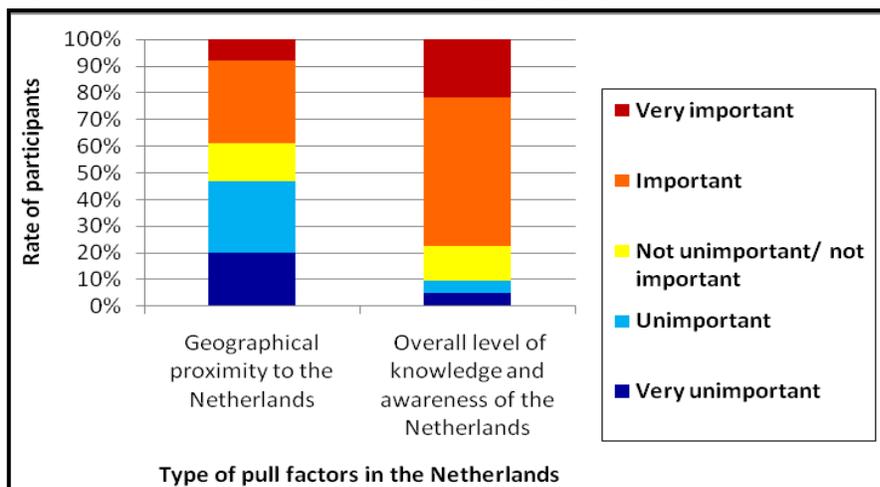


When looking at the levels of ‘very important’ and ‘important’ it can be said that most participants found the non-existence of an understanding of other cultures in their own country an important push factor to move to another country, namely 26 percent in comparison to 22 percent for the discontent with the own institution of higher education (Figure 4.3.2). Still, relatively more participants found that the discontent with their own institution of higher education has been very important in their decision to undertake academic mobility to the Netherlands, namely 20 percent. Although, Mazzarol and Soutar have used different scales to measure the importance of each factor and, it can be said that for this sample the discontent with the own institution of higher education has relatively been a very important factor to come to the Netherlands (see also Appendix 2, table 4.3.2). The next paragraph will elaborate on the importance of the existing pull factors in the Netherlands on the decision to undertake academic mobility to this country.

4.3.3 Hypothesis on pull factors in the Netherlands: The overall level of knowledge and awareness a student has of the Netherlands is valued as being of more importance to undertake academic mobility to the Netherlands among international students than is the geographical proximity to the Netherlands.

Since hypothesis 4.2.1 has made clear that pull factors in the Netherlands have had more influence on the decision to undertake academic mobility to the Netherlands among the participating international students than the push factors in the home country, the above hypothesis was concerned with determining which particular pull factor has had the most influence on this decision. Since Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) determined that the overall level of knowledge and awareness a student has on the host country is the most important pull factor, this study has focused on this factor. This study has compared the overall level of knowledge and awareness with the geographical proximity from the own home country to the Netherlands. Figure 4.3.3 gives an overview of the level of importance participants have given to each of these two factors.

Figure 4.3.3: Relative distribution on two types of pull factors in the Netherlands among the 103 participants.



When looking at the different levels of importance Figure 4.3.3 shows that the majority of the participants said that the overall level and awareness they had on the Netherlands was more important than the geographical distance (26 percent) between the Netherlands and the home country. Also, the difference between the two factors when looking at the label of ‘very important’ is relatively large, since more participants found that the overall level of knowledge and awareness of the Netherlands has been very important in their decision to come to the Netherlands (see also Appendix 2, table 4.3.3). These results are again in line with the findings as presented by Mazzarol & Soutar (2002). Also, this might indicate the Netherlands is internationally well known which makes the academic mobility to this country less

‘scarier’. Since the hypothesis only compared two of the six pull factors, it has been useful to this study to incorporate yet another pull factor in the analysis. The pull factor of ‘Cost issues’ as been analyzed in the light of how the participants have financed their stay and study in the Netherlands. It seems that participating international students who have financed their academic mobility to the Netherlands themselves or with the help of their parents find the factor of ‘Cost issues’ more important than participating international students that have financed their stay with the help of a scholarship (see Appendix table 4.3.3.2). This might indicate that the education in the Netherlands is affordable and accessible to international students with different economic backgrounds. Now that is clear which push and pull factors have been of influence on the motives of the participating students, the next paragraph will give an overview of the results on the formation of expectations of academic mobility to the Netherlands.

4.3.4 Hypothesis on expectations: Personal recommendations of friends and family about the Netherlands are more important on the formation of expectations about academic mobility to the Netherlands than has the overall information distributed on the Netherlands.

As the conceptual model showed, the relation between push and pull factors on the one hand and expectations on the other, was believed to be interacting with aspects of the behaviorist approach. In order to study this interaction, the influence of the behaviorist approach on the expectations of academic mobility to the Netherlands among the participating students has been analyzed. It should be mentioned that not all of the participants had expectations on their academic mobility to the Netherlands: only 65 participants said to have had expectations about their stay in the Netherlands (see Appendix 2, table 4.3.4) Figure 4.3.4 presents the results on the hypothesis.

Figure 4.3.4: Relative distribution on the type of information distribution on the Netherlands among 65 participants.

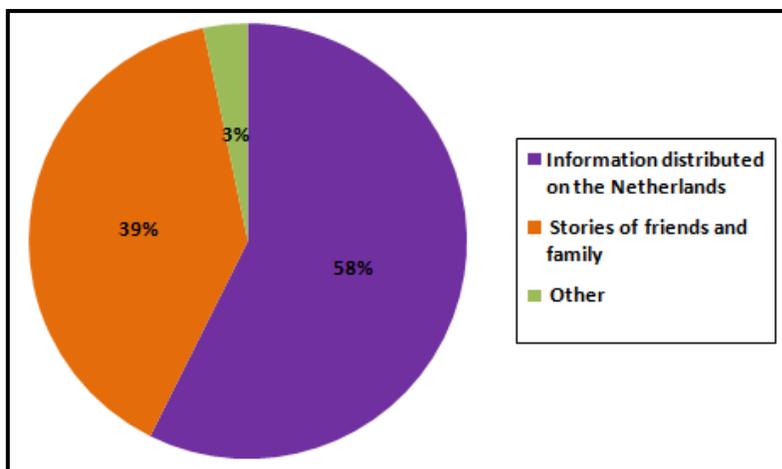


Figure 4.3.4 shows that of the 65 participants that had expectations about their stay in the Netherlands, 58 percent said that their expectations were formed by the information distributed on the Netherlands through the Internet, television and own institution of higher education. Almost 40 percent of the participants said to be influenced by stories of friends and family, while only three percent said to be influenced by other factors. The results indicate that the way and the type of information students receive on the Netherlands is of influence on their expectations about the academic mobility to the Netherlands. This is in line with the model of Park (Figure 2.1) since Park stated that the expectations are being influenced by the images and information people receive on the host country. In the light of the behaviorist approach, the fact that most participants said that their expectations were formed by information distributed on the Netherlands by the Internet and other channels might mean that these participants formed objective expectations about their stay in the Netherlands instead of subjective one's formed by the stories of friends and family. This might mean that the Netherlands has actually lived up to these expectations. Although the actual expectations have not been analyzed in relation to the two influencing factors of the behaviorist approach, it is interesting to see which expectations some of the participants had on their movement to the Netherlands. Box 4.3.4 presents some of the expectations of the participating students.

Box 4.3.4: Expectations on academic mobility to the Netherlands of 9 participants.

“I expected to learn a different language, make contact for better jobs” (Participant nr.4 from Germany).

“I expected to be in a very international environment” (Participant nr.7 from Sweden).

“I expected to meet many international students from all over the world” (Participant nr.20 from South-Korea).

“I expected the quality of education to be very high” (Participant nr. 47 from Switzerland).

“I expected to learn more about Utrecht and to explore Netherlands” (Participant nr.49 from Canada).

“I expected to go to a world famous university in the Netherlands” (Participant nr.56 from China).

“I expected to experience a different learning environment and overcome personal and academic challenges but also I expected a specific Dutch culture and environment” (Participant nr. 65 from United Kingdom).

“I expected on a major lifestyle experience: I have never lived in a city, away from the beach or in place where it snows” (Participant nr.71 New Zealand).

“I expected to increase my social and professional networks and receive a high-quality international education” (Participant nr. 78 from the United States).

As can be read in Box 4.3.4, the expectations of the academic mobility to the Netherlands among some of the participants have been diverse. Although each expectation is an individual one, they range from expectations on the culture of the Netherlands to the education these students were hoping to receive. Even though the relation between expectations and motives has not been tested, it is still interesting to see that the expectations in some way are in coherence with the motives of academic mobility to the Netherlands. Since all of the hypotheses on the formation of motives and expectations have been set out, the last section of this chapter will turn to second part of the central question, namely the attractiveness of the city of Utrecht.

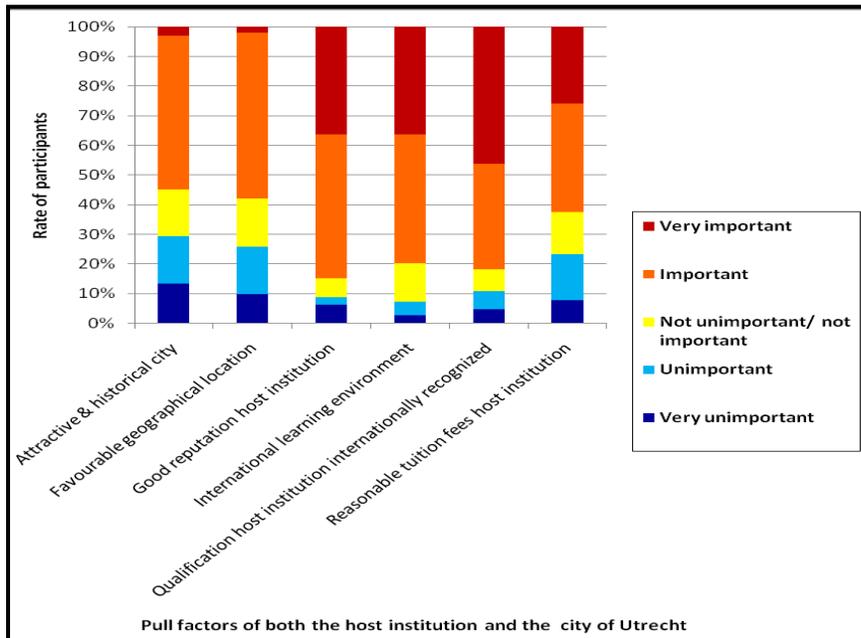
4.4 The reasons for choosing Utrecht as the city to stay and study in

It is now time to look at the final subquestion: **Why do students choose to study in Utrecht?** As said, this question has been answered by a combination of the two methods used in this study. In order to see whether the hypothesis linked to subquestion 3 is true or false, the results from the questionnaire were combined with the findings from the in-depth interview on the attractiveness of Utrecht.

4.4.1 Hypothesis on the attractiveness of Utrecht: Characteristics of the host institution in Utrecht, like the reputation of the host institution, the reasonable tuition fees, internationally recognized qualifications and the international learning environment are valued as being of more importance in the decision to come to Utrecht than are attractive characteristics of the city of Utrecht.

The above hypothesis has studied whether the participating international students in Utrecht come to this city for the attractiveness of the city, like the geographical location and the historical center or that these students only have come for the reputation of the host institution in Utrecht. According to Hedwig Leijten Utrecht is attractive to people from outside the city of Utrecht and the Netherlands for several reasons: “[...]The history and the monuments are very attractive, the canal and the wharfs, are on the World Heritage List and Utrecht is very small and compact. We have a nice shopping area and it is really a meeting place of young people. We are the youngest city in the Netherlands, so that is a big proposition we should work with and want to work with since we are a meeting place of young talent [...]” (Leijten, 2011). The fact that Utrecht is the youngest city in the Netherlands should attract young people from other countries as well. In this lies one of the reasons why the participating international students might have chosen for Utrecht as their student city, since they are surrounded by their peers. Also, the characteristics mentioned by Leijten are in line with the study of Marlet, which also mentioned that a city with historical characteristics is more attractive than a city without (Marlet, 2009). Figure 4.4.1 gives an overview on the level of importance of each characteristic to the participating international students.

Figure 4.4.1: Relative distribution of pull factors in Utrecht among the 103 participants.



When only looking at the different levels of importance several conclusions have been drawn. Almost 40 percent of the participants found that the favourable location of the city of Utrecht has been important in their decision to come to this city. This might imply that international students like the centrality of Utrecht which makes travelling to other parts of the Netherlands (and Europe) easy. The attractive and historical city of Utrecht was found to be less important in the decision to come to the city of Utrecht (9 percent). Both the characteristics of the city of Utrecht have a relatively high rate of participants that found that these characteristics were unimportant in their decision to come to Utrecht, both 11 percent in comparison to only 2 percent that found that the reputation of the host institution was unimportant. When looking at the level of ‘very important’ the differences between the characteristics of the city and those of the host institution are more visible. At this level all of the characteristics of the host institution have a relatively higher rate of participants than the characteristics of the city. Of the participants 31 percent said that the internationally recognized qualifications of the host institution have been very important in their decision to come to Utrecht, followed by the good reputation of the host institution and the international learning environment with both 24 percent of the participants. In comparison, both the attractive and historical city and the favourable geographical location lack behind at this level with respectively 2 and 1.5 percent of the participants that found these two characteristics very important in their decision to come to the city of Utrecht.

It can be concluded that to the participating students the characteristics of the host institution in Utrecht have been more important to come to the city of Utrecht than the attractive characteristics of the city itself. Yet, Leijten has mentioned that the importance of the characteristics to international students

varies: “[...] Some might say that they only come for the city and how well known the city is, how nice and attractive the city is, but I also heard about an enquiry where top talent just looked at the quality of the studies and the quality of the institutions. The city is less important than [...]” (Leijten, 2011).

Therefore, it can be said that the importance of the mentioned characteristics differs per student. Also, the decision to come to Utrecht is influenced by a combination of factors: both those of the city and those of the host institution. According to Leijten, this combination of factors is what makes Utrecht attractive to both international students and others: “I think Utrecht is attractive for more reasons than that, but that is an important reason. It is also an important reason to work together, because for students the reputation of the university is very important, but for visitors the attractiveness of Utrecht is more important and for the inhabitants the housing quality is important and these are all target groups for city promotion. So our field is very broad. If you look at the students the quality of the university is important so then it should mean that university and city should strengthen each other” (Leijten, 2011).

The characteristics of the city of Utrecht and the host institutions in Utrecht should not be seen separately: to make sure that more international students that undertake academic mobility to the Netherlands chose Utrecht as their student city, the city and host institutions should work together to attract new international students. Also, it should not be forgotten that the way in which Utrecht promotes itself to the outside world plays a big part in the attraction of new international students. Therefore the next paragraph will elaborate on the way Utrecht promotes itself to the outside world, to understand why international students come to the city of Utrecht.

4.4.2 City marketing of Utrecht

Utrecht wants to profile itself as a city of knowledge and science to attract a diverse spectrum of visitors. In order to make sure that these ‘new’ people come to Utrecht instead of Amsterdam, the most attractive city of the Netherlands (see Box 2.7.1), Utrecht has to actively promote itself. According to Leijten: “Utrecht needs to capitalize on its success factors and become a strong brand, because Utrecht is a quite modest city until now and we, sometimes it looks like we are in the shadow of Amsterdam, but we have a lot to offer, so we say Utrecht should capitalize its potential. We should strengthen our competitive position, because all the city do city marketing and try to attract the best students, the best inhabitants, the best firms to their city. So if we don’t do anything we will lose our competitive position” (Leijten, 2011). Utrecht has to make sure to stay ahead of other cities, especially when it comes to attracting international people. This is in line with Utrecht’s international ambitions to attract more businesses and academics to turn Utrecht’s attractiveness around: from a tourist city to a city of knowledge and science.

In order to attract these new international people the Utrecht Convention Bureau was founded: “We have started Utrecht Convention Bureau, and that is part of the touristic organization. We have

Utrecht Tourism. This is not the local government, but a foundation, that exercises touristic policies and this Utrecht Convention Bureau is purely made to attract business wise tourism and it is there to attract conferences and international conferences to attract people to Utrecht. So once they are here for a conference they meet the quality of the educational institutes and they see Utrecht how attractive it is. So the Utrecht Convention Bureau is one of the important measures that we took to attract international people” (Leijten, 2011). By organizing international events and conferences in Utrecht, the city hopes to promote itself internationally and attract more international people to the city. Also, the city cooperates with international student organizations in Utrecht to create a virtual students hospitality desk to provide new international students that come to Utrecht with the information they need. The active international outlook of Utrecht can play a big role in the decision of international students to come to stay and study in Utrecht. Still, the city does not actively internationally advertise itself, but relies upon the internationally recognized Shanghai-ranking in which Utrecht University is recognized as one of the best universities in the world (Leijten, 2011). It can be concluded that the city of Utrecht is still searching for a way to promote itself among international students in Utrecht, but has all the potential to attract these students to the city.

4.4.3 Conclusions on Chapter 4

The results presented in this chapter have helped to answer the three subquestions central to this study. When looking at subquestion 1, it will be clear that the participating international students have decided to undertake academic mobility to the Netherlands on behalf of professional motives and that differences exist in the type of motives when looking at the geographical region the participants originally came from. On the subquestion of the formation of motives and expectations of academic mobility to the Netherlands, the answer has several aspects. The participating international students have been more driven by the attractive characteristics of the Netherlands than by the unattractive characteristics in their own country. Still, the discontent with the own institution of higher education has turned out to be the most important factor to undertake academic mobility to the Netherlands among the participating students and these students found that the overall level of knowledge and awareness they had on the Netherlands was what has attracted them most to undertake academic mobility to the Netherlands. On the part of the expectations, the participants found that the information distributed on the Netherlands have formed their expectations and not the stories of friends and family, which might indicate that the expectations are objective images of the Netherlands. When looking at subquestion 3, it can be concluded that the reasons for international students to stay and study in the city of Utrecht are mostly influenced by the attractiveness of the host institution and not by the attractiveness of the city. Still, the attractiveness of Utrecht to outsiders lies in the combination of characteristics and is personal. The way Utrecht currently

promotes itself internationally is not enough to keep attracting new international students, but for now the city relies upon its international reputation as a result of the Shanghai ranking. Therefore, no conclusions can be drawn on the influence of the current city marketing of Utrecht among international students, since the city does not use a specific promotion instrument to attract new international students.

Both the results on the several hypotheses and the general results of the composition of the sample presented in this chapter have provided this study with insights on how to study the subject of academic mobility to the Netherlands and the city of Utrecht. The answers to the subquestions elaborated on in this chapter, have provided enough information to formulate an adequate and overarching answer to the central question of this study. Therefore, the final chapter of this thesis will recapitulate some of the main findings of this study, but will also provide a critical eye how to further study academic mobility to the Netherlands.

Chapter 5 - Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

The previous four chapters have given an overview of the steps that have been taken in the research process and the results that have provided this study with the necessary answers to formulate an overarching answer to the central research question. It will be clear by now that this study has some limitations. Fortunately, these limitations have not resulted in a less relevant study, but actually have provided this study with useful insights on the academic mobility to the Netherlands and the city of Utrecht. Also, the results that were presented in Chapter 4 have not only helped to answer the central research question, but have indicated that further research on the subject of academic mobility to the Netherlands and the city of Utrecht is needed. The reflection of these and other aspects of the research process will be elaborated on in this chapter. Before doing so, it is necessary to formulate an adequate answer to the central research question. Therefore, this chapter is divided into two sections. Firstly, section 5.2 will set out the answer formulated on the central research question, since this is what this study has evolved around. The second section will be concerned with the aspects of the research process that have not worked out the way they were supposed to be. Also, this section will set out some recommendations for future studies on academic mobility to the Netherlands in general and the city of Utrecht in particular.

5.2 The answer to the central research question

How are motives and expectations of academic mobility towards the Netherlands formed among international students and why do international students choose to study in the city of Utrecht?

With this question the research process took off nine weeks ago and since then a lot of insights into this question have been found. Since Chapter 4 fully elaborated on the results drawn from the in-depth interview and the face-to-face questionnaire, there is no need to repeat all the answers to the three subquestions. Therefore, it is more useful to highlight some of the most remarkable and important findings that have provided this study with an overarching answer to the central research question.

One of the most important findings of this study is certainly the fact that academic mobility to the Netherlands is being undertaken, not for the unattractiveness of the higher education in the home country, but because the Netherlands has so many attractive aspects to offer to international students. This might indicate that the academic movement to another country, is driven by free will and not by the constraints the home countries are putting on the well-being of the students. Still, the fact that most of the participating international students came to the Netherlands based on professional motives, might indicate that these students felt that the education in their home countries could not fulfill their interests and knowledge. This has not been studied, since this study has not been concerned with the situation in

the home countries of the students. Yet, it seems that the type of motives the international students have differs per geographical region. Also, the fact that the Netherlands has been said to be attractive to international students is a positive thing, since this means that the Netherlands might be able to compete with other ‘giants’ in the international student mobility world, like the United States and the United Kingdom.

Another important finding from this study has been that the expectations of the participating international students mostly were the result of objective information they received on the Netherlands. This is also a positive outcome, since this might mean that the Netherlands can actually live up to these expectations. In other words: the chance that academic mobility to the Netherlands results in a disappointment is less likely to happen. Still, this study has not paid attention whether the expectations on the academic mobility to the Netherlands have been lived up to.

Also, it seems that the city of Utrecht has been chosen among the participating students, since they have been drawn to this city because of the favourable characteristics of the host institutions located in this city. Still, the findings from the in-depth interview indicate that no conclusions can be drawn whether the attractiveness of the city itself has had an influence on the decision to come to the city of Utrecht, since international students are different from one another and have people have different opinions on what attracts them to city of Utrecht.

It can be concluded that the motives and expectations of academic mobility to the Netherlands among international students are formed by multiple factors, the pull factors being the most important. Also, the formulation of expectations differ, since the way in which information on the Netherlands is being distributed is an important factor of influence on the objectiveness of those expectations. The fact that the participating international students have decided to stay and study in the city of Utrecht, is also influenced by various factors. Still, it seems that Utrecht is mostly chosen for its international reputation on providing students with proper higher education, but the high ranking of the attractiveness of the city itself should not be underestimated in the decision to undertake academic mobility to the city of Utrecht. Although the answer to the central question is fulfilling to the aim of this study, the subject of academic mobility to the Netherlands in general and the city of Utrecht in particular deserve more attention than this study could provide. Therefore, the next section will elaborate on the aspects of the research process that could have been done differently and will also give recommendations how to study the subject more efficiently in the future.

5.3 Discussion and recommendations

As has been said many times before throughout this study the results of this study are not representative. This has resulted in the fact that the actual aim of this study to tell something about the academic mobility

to the Netherlands in general has not been realized. Eventually, the use of only qualitative methods has turned out in favour of this study, but in order to get a full insight into the situation of international students in the Netherlands a quantitative study is needed. The unwillingness of the host institutions in the city of Utrecht to provide this study with the necessary secondary data from which a sample frame could have been drawn, is the most important reason this study was limited to non-probability sampling. It is in the interest of these institutions to provide scholars that want to study academic mobility to the Netherlands with this data, since these studies will eventually benefit the institutions as well. These future studies will provide insights that will help to better understand the decisions of international students which will function as an instrument for Dutch institutions to attract more international students.

Since this study only had nine weeks time to complete the research, the opinions of the different institutions of higher education in the city of Utrecht on their policies to attract new international students have not been incorporated. For future studies that want to extend the subject of this study, these opinions should be incorporated in that they will provide new insights into the subject of both academic mobility to the Netherlands and the city of Utrecht. Also, a comparative study between the different student cities in the Netherlands is needed to see why certain student cities are more attractive than others. This is also interacting with the city marketing of these cities. As the findings from the interview showed, the city of Utrecht has no specific marketing instrument to attract international students, but this is believed to be necessary for the city to become more popular among students that consider to undertake academic mobility to the Netherlands. Further, an analysis of the different expectations on academic mobility to the Netherlands is recommended, since this study has not incorporated such an analysis.

Although the findings from this study are contributing to a better understanding of academic mobility to the Netherlands, the subject of this study needs further exploration. This is not only in the interest of the international students that come to the Netherlands every year in order to broaden their horizons, but it is also important for Dutch host institutions in order to stay attractive to international students.

Appendix 1 – Chapter 3

Table 3.4.1: Descriptive statistics of the distribution of the age among the 103 participants.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age participant	103	17	36	22.12	2.915
Valid N (listwise)	103				

Figure 3.4.1: Boxplot showing the absolute distribution of the age among the 103 participants.

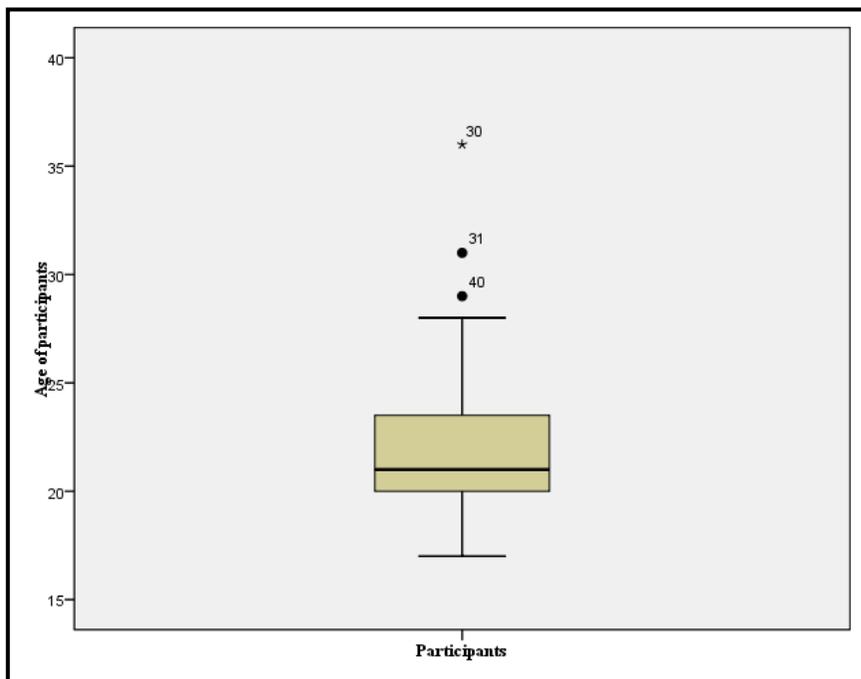


Table 3.4.1.2: Frequency table of the gender among the 103 participants.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	28	27.2	27.2	27.2
	Female	75	72.8	72.8	100.0
	Total	103	100.0	100.0	

Table 3.4.1.3: Frequency table of the geographical regions where the 103 participants come from.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Africa	1	.7	.7	.7
	Asia	13	12.4	12.6	13.3
	Eastern Europe	13	12.8	13.0	26.3
	European Union	51	49.7	50.5	76.8
	Middle East	3	3.1	3.2	80.0
	North America	8	7.6	7.7	87.7
	Oceania	3	3.1	3.2	90.9
	South America	9	8.3	8.4	99.3
	The Caribbean	1	.7	.7	100.0
	Total	101	98.3	100.0	
Missing	System	2	1.7		
Total		103	100.0		

Table 3.4.1.4: Frequency table of the means of finance among the 103 participants.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Scholarship from own institution in home country	22	21.0	21.3	21.3
	Scholarship from host institution in the Netherlands	5	4.8	4.9	26.2
	Financed by parents	55	53.4	54.2	80.4
	Financed by myself	18	17.3	17.5	97.9
	Other	2	2.1	2.1	100.0
	Total	102	98.6	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.4		
Total		103	100.0		

Appendix 2 – Chapter 4

Table 4.2.1: Frequency table of the different types of motives among the 103 participants.

Cultural motive of academic mobility to the Netherlands					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	33	32.0	32.0	32.0
	No	70	68.0	68.0	100.0
	Total	103	100.0	100.0	
Personal motive of academic mobility to the Netherlands					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	44	42.7	42.7	42.7
	No	59	57.3	57.3	100.0
	Total	103	100.0	100.0	
Professional motive of academic mobility to the Netherlands					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	66	64.1	64.1	64.1
	No	37	35.9	35.9	100.0
	Total	103	100.0	100.0	
Social motive of academic mobility to the Netherlands					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	25	24.3	24.3	24.3
	No	78	75.7	75.7	100.0
	Total	103	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.2.1.2: Crosstab of the geographical regions in relation to the type of motives among the 103 participants.

		Type of motive of academic mobility to the Netherlands * The geographical region the participant comes from Crosstabulation																Total			
		The geographical region the participant comes from																			
		Africa		Asia		Eastern Europe		European Union		Middle East		North America		Oceania		South America		The Caribbean			
		Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Cultural motive	Yes	0	.0%	3	25.0%	4	28.6%	15	29.4%	0	.0%	6	54.5%	1	33.3%	3	50.0%	0	.0%	32	31.4%
	No	1	100.0%	9	75.0%	10	71.4%	36	70.6%	3	100.0%	5	45.5%	2	66.7%	3	50.0%	1	100.0%	70	68.6%
Total		1	100.0%	12	100.0%	14	100.0%	51	100.0%	3	100.0%	11	100.0%	3	100.0%	6	100.0%	1	100.0%	102	100.0%
Personal motive	Yes	0	.0%	8	66.7%	9	64.3%	18	35.3%	1	33.3%	4	36.4%	1	33.3%	3	50.0%	0	.0%	44	43.1%
	No	1	100.0%	4	33.3%	5	35.7%	33	64.7%	2	66.7%	7	63.6%	2	66.7%	3	50.0%	1	100.0%	58	56.9%
Total		1	100.0%	12	100.0%	14	100.0%	51	100.0%	3	100.0%	11	100.0%	3	100.0%	6	100.0%	1	100.0%	102	100.0%
Professional motive	Yes	1	100.0%	6	50.0%	11	78.6%	37	72.5%	2	66.7%	3	27.3%	0	.0%	4	66.7%	1	100.0%	65	63.7%
	No	0	.0%	6	50.0%	3	21.4%	14	27.5%	1	33.3%	8	72.7%	3	100.0%	2	33.3%	0	.0%	37	36.3%
Total		1	100.0%	12	100.0%	14	100.0%	51	100.0%	3	100.0%	11	100.0%	3	100.0%	6	100.0%	1	100.0%	102	100.0%
Social motive	Yes	1	100.0%	2	16.7%	2	14.3%	15	29.4%	0	.0%	5	45.5%	0	.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	25	24.5%
	No	0	.0%	10	83.3%	12	85.7%	36	70.6%	3	100.0%	6	54.5%	3	100.0%	6	100.0%	1	100.0%	77	75.5%
Total		1	100.0%	12	100.0%	14	100.0%	51	100.0%	3	100.0%	11	100.0%	3	100.0%	6	100.0%	1	100.0%	102	100.0%

Table 4.3.1: Frequency table of the influence of push and pull factors on the motives of academic mobility to the Netherlands among the 103 participants.

Existence of push factor in home country					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	71	68.9	68.9	68.9
	No	32	31.1	31.1	100.0
	Total	103	100.0	100.0	
Existence of pull factor in the Netherlands					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	91	88.3	88.3	88.3
	No	12	11.7	11.7	100.0
	Total	103	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.3.2: Frequency table of the importance of the different push factors in the home country on the decision to undertake academic mobility to the Netherlands among the 103 participants.

Available scholarship at home institution for studying abroad					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very unimportant	20	19.4	29.4	29.4
	Unimportant	11	10.7	16.2	45.6
	Not unimportant/ not important	12	11.7	17.6	63.2
	Important	15	14.6	22.1	85.3
	Very important	10	9.7	14.7	100.0
	Total	68	66.0	100.0	
Missing	System	35	34.0		
Total		103	100.0		
Better understanding of other country					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very unimportant	1	.7	1.1	1.1
	Unimportant	11	11.0	17.6	18.7
	Not unimportant/ not important	14	13.8	22.0	40.7
	Important	27	25.8	41.2	81.9
	Very important	12	11.4	18.1	100.0
	Total	65	62.7	100.0	
Missing	System	38	37.3		
Total		103	100.0		
Discontent with own institution of higher education: desired courses not available/ not interesting, tuition fees too high					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very unimportant	7	6.6	10.5	10.5
	Unimportant	9	9.0	14.3	24.7
	Not unimportant/ not important	6	6.2	9.9	34.6
	Important	22	21.4	34.1	68.7
	Very important	20	19.6	31.3	100.0
	Total	65	62.7	100.0	
Missing	System	38	37.3		
Total		103	100.0		
Lack of job opportunities in own country					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very unimportant	9	8.7	12.7	12.7
	Unimportant	15	14.6	21.1	33.8
	Not unimportant/ not important	15	14.6	21.1	54.9
	Important	21	20.4	29.6	84.5
	Very important	11	10.7	15.5	100.0
	Total	71	68.9	100.0	
Missing	System	32	31.1		
Total		103	100.0		

Table 4.3.3 (1): Frequency table of the importance of the different pull factors in the Netherlands on the decision to undertake academic mobility to the Netherlands among the 103 participants.

Cost issues: lower travel cost, lower cost of living in the Netherlands					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very unimportant	16	15.5	18.0	18.0
	Unimportant	16	15.5	18.0	36.0
	Not unimportant/ not important	27	26.2	30.3	66.3
	Important	17	16.5	19.1	85.4
	Very important	13	12.6	14.6	100.0
	Total	89	86.4	100.0	
Missing	System	14	13.6		
Total		103	100.0		
Environment: favourable natural, political and economic climate in the Netherlands					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very unimportant	11	10.7	12.4	12.4
	Unimportant	14	13.6	15.7	28.1
	Not unimportant/ not important	25	24.3	28.1	56.2
	Important	33	32.0	37.1	93.3
	Very important	6	5.8	6.7	100.0
	Total	89	86.4	100.0	
Missing	System	14	13.6		
Total		103	100.0		
Geographical proximity: favourable distance with own country					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very unimportant	17	16.5	19.1	19.1
	Unimportant	22	21.4	24.7	43.8
	Not unimportant/ not important	16	15.5	18.0	61.8
	Important	26	25.2	29.2	91.0
	Very important	8	7.8	9.0	100.0
	Total	89	86.4	100.0	
Missing	System	14	13.6		
Total		103	100.0		
Overall level of knowledge and awareness of the Netherlands due to available information on the Netherlands, quality of education in the Netherlands					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very unimportant	3	2.9	3.4	3.4
	Unimportant	4	3.9	4.5	7.9
	Not unimportant/ not important	10	9.7	11.2	19.1
	Important	50	48.5	56.2	75.3
	Very important	22	21.4	24.7	100.0
	Total	89	86.4	100.0	
Missing	System	14	13.6		
Total		103	100.0		

Table 4.3.3 (2): Frequency table of the importance of the different pull factors in the Netherlands on the decision to undertake academic mobility to the Netherlands among the 103 participants.

Personal recommendatons of family and friends that have been to the Netherlands					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very unimportant	8	7.8	9.0	9.0
	Unimportant	11	10.7	12.4	21.3
	Not unimportant/ not important	14	13.6	15.7	37.1
	Important	38	36.9	42.7	79.8
	Very important	17	16.5	19.1	98.9
		1	1.0	1.1	100.0
	Total	89	86.4	100.0	
Missing	System	14	13.6		
Total		103	100.0		
Social links with family and friends that already live in the Netherlands					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very unimportant	20	19.4	22.5	22.5
	Unimportant	21	20.4	23.6	46.1
	Not unimportant/ not important	20	19.4	22.5	68.5
	Important	18	17.5	20.2	88.8
	Very important	10	9.7	11.2	100.0
		Total	89	86.4	100.0
Missing	System	14	13.6		
Total		103	100.0		

4.3.3.2: Cross tab of the means of finance in relation to the pull factor 'Cost issue' among 88 participants.

		Means of finance of stay and study in the Netherlands										Total	
		Scholarship from own institution in home country		Scholarship from host institution in the Netherlands		Financed by parents		Financed by myself		Other			
		Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Cost issues: lower travel cost, lower cost of living in the Netherlands	Very unimportant	3	16.7%	1	14.3%	8	17.4%	2	13.3%	1	50.0%	15	17.0%
	Unimportant	5	27.8%	0	.0%	9	19.6%	2	13.3%	0	.0%	16	18.2%
	Not unimportant/ not important	6	33.3%	4	57.1%	12	26.1%	5	33.3%	0	.0%	27	30.7%
	Important	1	5.6%	1	14.3%	11	23.9%	4	26.7%	0	.0%	17	19.3%
	Very important	3	16.7%	1	14.3%	6	13.0%	2	13.3%	1	50.0%	13	14.8%
Total		18	100.0%	7	100.0%	46	100.0%	15	100.0%	2	100.0%	88	100.0%

Table 4.3.4: Cross tab of the formation of expectations in relation to the existence of expectations among 62 participants.

		How expectations of academic mobility to the Netherlands were formed						Total	
		Information distributed on the Netherlands (Internet, television, own institution)		Stories of family and friends		Other			
		Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent		
Expectations about academic mobility to the Netherlands	Yes	35	97.2%	24	100.0%	2	100.0%	61	98.4%
	No	1	2.8%	0	.0%	0	.0%	1	1.6%
Total		36	100.0%	24	100.0%	2	100.0%	62	100.0%

Table 4.4.1 (1): Frequency table of the importance of the different pull factors in the city of Utrecht on the decision to come to the city of Utrecht among the 103 participants.

Attractive and historical city of Utrecht					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very unimportant	7	6.8	9.7	9.7
	Unimportant	11	10.7	15.3	25.0
	Not unimportant/ not important	11	10.7	15.3	40.3
	Important	40	38.8	55.6	95.8
	Very important	3	2.9	4.2	100.0
	Total		72	69.9	100.0
Missing	System	31	30.1		
Total		103	100.0		
Favourable geographic location in the Netherlands					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very unimportant	5	4.9	7.0	7.0
	Unimportant	11	10.7	15.5	22.5
	Not unimportant/ not important	14	13.6	19.7	42.3
	Important	39	37.9	54.9	97.2
	Very important	2	1.9	2.8	100.0
	Total		71	68.9	100.0
Missing	System	32	31.1		
Total		103	100.0		

Table 4.4.1 (2) Table 4.3.1 (1): Frequency table of the importance of the different pull factors in the city of Utrecht on the decision to come to the city of Utrecht among the 103 participants.

Good reputation host institution in Utrecht					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very unimportant	3	2.9	4.2	4.2
	Unimportant	1	1.0	1.4	5.6
	Not unimportant/ not important	6	5.8	8.5	14.1
	Important	35	34.0	49.3	63.4
	Very important	26	25.2	36.6	100.0
	Total	71	68.9	100.0	
Missing	System	32	31.1		
Total		103	100.0		
International learning environment in Utrecht					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very unimportant	1	1.0	1.4	1.4
	Unimportant	3	2.9	4.2	5.6
	Not unimportant/ not important	8	7.8	11.3	16.9
	Important	30	29.1	42.3	59.2
	Very important	29	28.2	40.8	100.0
	Total	71	68.9	100.0	
Missing	System	32	31.1		
Total		103	100.0		
Qualifications of host institution in Utrecht internationally recognized					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very unimportant	3	2.9	4.2	4.2
	Unimportant	3	2.9	4.2	8.5
	Not unimportant/ not important	4	3.9	5.6	14.1
	Important	27	26.2	38.0	52.1
	Very important	34	33.0	47.9	100.0
	Total	71	68.9	100.0	
Missing	System	32	31.1		
Total		103	100.0		
Reasonable tuition fees of host institution in Utrecht					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very unimportant	6	5.8	8.5	8.5
	Unimportant	10	9.7	14.1	22.5
	Not unimportant/ not important	9	8.7	12.7	35.2
	Important	29	28.2	40.8	76.1
	Very important	17	16.5	23.9	100.0
	Total	71	68.9	100.0	
Missing	System	32	31.1		
Total		103	100.0		

Appendix 3 – Questionnaire

Introduction

This survey is part of a bachelor thesis which is being conducted in the discipline of Human Geography at Utrecht University. The aim of the thesis is to get a better insight in how motives and expectations of academic mobility towards the Netherlands are formed. Therefore, the following question is central to the study: **In which ways are motives and expectations of academic mobility towards the Netherlands formed among international students and why do international students choose to study in the city of Utrecht?** For this reason, this questionnaire has to be completed by international students that are currently studying at institutions of higher education in Utrecht city. This questionnaire will take approximately 5 minutes of your time and is anonymous. Thank you for your time and participation!

Part A: This part of the questionnaire is concerned with your motives and expectations of academic mobility to the Netherlands and Utrecht.

1. What were your motives to take your study to the Netherlands? (Maximum 2 answers possible)

- Cultural motive (learn a different culture)
- Personal (grow as an individual)
- Professional motive (gain more knowledge, skills and better job opportunities)
- Social motive (make new friends, create an international social network)
- Other, namely.....

2. Were there any factors in your own country that were of influence on your motives to study in the Netherlands?

- Yes (Go to question 3)
- No (Go to question 4)

3. To what extent of importance were the following factors in your own country of influence on your decision to study in the Netherlands? (Mark each factor with an x)

	Very Unimportant	Unimportant	Not unimportant/ Not important	Important	Very important
Available scholarship at home institution for studying abroad					
Better understanding of other country					
Discontent with own institution of higher education (desired courses not available/ not interesting/ tuition fees too high)					
Lack of job opportunities					

4. Were there any factors in the Netherlands that were of influence on your motives to study in the Netherlands?

- Yes (Go to question 5)
 No (Go to question 6)

5. To what extent of importance were the following factors in the Netherlands of influence on your decision to study in the Netherlands? (Mark each factor with an x)

	Very Unimportant	Unimportant	Not unimportant/ Not important	Important	Very important
Cost issues (lower travel cost, lower cost of living)					
Environment (natural climate, political&economical climate)					
Geographical proximity (distance with own country)					
Overall level of knowledge and awareness (available information on country, quality of education)					
Personal recommendations (friends & family that have been to the Netherlands)					
Social links (friends & family that live in the Netherlands)					

6. Were there any characteristics of the city of Utrecht and institution of higher education in Utrecht that were of importance in your decision to study in Utrecht?

- Yes (Go to question 7)
 No (Go to question 8)

7. Which of the following characteristics of the city and institution of higher education were important for your decision to study in Utrecht? (Mark each characteristic with an x)

	Very Unimportant	Unimportant	Not unimportant/ Not important	Important	Very important
Attractive & historical city					
Favourable geographical location					

Table continues on next page!

International learning environment					
Qualifications of host institution of higher education in Utrecht are internationally recognized					
Host institution of higher education in Utrecht has reasonable tuition fees					
Host institution in Utrecht has a good reputation					

8. Did you have any expectations about your stay and study in the Netherlands?

- Yes (Go to question 9)
- No (Go to question 11)

9. Name the most important expectation you had of your stay and study in the Netherlands? (For example: I expected that I would make a lot of friends during my stay in the Netherlands).

.....

10. How were your expectations formed? (1 answer possible)

- Information distributed of the Netherlands (Internet, television, own institution)
- Stories of family and friends that have been to the Netherlands
- Other, namely.....

Part B: This part of the questionnaire is concerned with questions related to your personal characteristics

11. What is your age?

.....

12. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

13. From which country are you? (1 answer possible)

.....

14. Are you a bachelor or master student?

- Bachelor (Undergraduate)
- Master (Graduate)

15. At which institution of higher education are you enrolled in Utrecht?

- Hogeschool Utrecht
- Hogeschool TIO
- Tias Nimbas Business School
- University for Humanistics
- Utrecht University
- University College Utrecht
- Utrecht School of the Arts (HKU)

16. What is the duration of your stay in the Netherlands?

- 3 months
- 6 months
- 12 months
- Full Bachelor study (3-5 years)
- Full Master study (1-2 years)
- Both Bachelor and Master study

17. How do you finance your stay in the Netherlands? (1 answer possible)

- Scholarship from own institution in home country
- Scholarship from host institution in the Netherlands
- Financed by parents
- Financed by myself
- Other, namely.....

Appendix 4 – Interview

Interviewer: What is the function of City Promotion Bureau Utrecht, namely what are the aim and the goals?

Interviewee: City Promotion Bureau Utrecht was founded for these four reasons in short: Utrecht needs to Capitalize on its success factors and become a strong brand, because Utrecht is a quite modest city until now and we, sometimes it looks like we are in the shadow of Amsterdam, but we have a lot to offer, so we say Utrecht should capitalize its potential. We should strengthen our competitive position, because all the city do city marketing and try to attract the best students, the best inhabitants, the best firms to their city. So if we don't do anything we will lose our competitive position. We have to remain attractive in a period of growth, because you know, Leidsche Rijn is building and the area of the Central Station is rebuild and you will see, I have to look at the numbers, Utrecht is growing very fast, because of Leidsche Rijn and all the buildings uhm it says that uhm we have about 50.000 or 100.000 more inhabitants over 30 years or so, so that's uhm why we have city marketing.

Sabrina: Because of the growth

Interviewee: Yes, to make sure that Utrecht remains attractive and we want to achieve are international ambitions. What are the international ambitions? Ah it's here you see, in 2020 50.000 more inhabitants and 30.000 more houses.

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: but the international ambitions are along this route. We say, in 2013 we want to celebrate the 300 years Treaty of Utrecht, that is the peace treaty, and in 2018 we want be cultural capital of Europe.

Interviewer: of Europe okay

Interviewee: so if have you have these international ambitions you should do something about your international profile.

Interviewer: ok about the profile.

Interviewee: and then it is good to work together, for example, with the universities, to strengthen this profile and to attract more international visitors, but also more students.

Interviewer: How do you try to strengthen or promote this international outlook on the world?

Interviewee: uhm we, what we are doing, the first step is that we sit together, with the players in the fields, so the university, but also the university of applied sciences, the Hogeschool

Interviewer: Hogeschool yes

Interviewee: and tourist organizations and we sit together and we look and of course companies and firms, were are the chances to strengthen the profile of Utrecht. It is a whole process: talking to each

other, looking where the chances are, we make an agenda of uhm important events where we can work together, so that we don't do all our things separately, we see the chances and we work together. For example, the 375 anniversary of the university was celebrate partly here, as I told you with the laser beams going from the Uithof to the Dom tower, uhm on Friday there was a row and there were more than 1000 people watching every evening last week and it is in The Washington Post, I just saw a picture of this, so that is a simple way of attracting people.

Interviewer: So if there is an event you try to attract media and international people to Utrecht?

Interviewee: Yes, the second thing is, as a City Promotion office, you also have an, you are a messenger. If you want to attract international students, you need housing, good housing, good facilities, but that is not something city promotion does. There are other people that build the houses.

Interviewer: Like SSH.

Interviewee: Yes right and the city department of housing in Utrecht. So you talk to them and say we can look at these event, like the laser beam event, but there are also other things that should be taken care of, because you want the whole package of measures.

Interviewer: yes

Interviewee: you want an attractive city with events, but you also want housing, and good infrastructure and you need a good services for the students that come. About all these things you should talk with each other to address the right company or the right person or department, so that they know that they should do that. One of the things that we found out is that the students need a hospitality desk, a digital one.

Interviewer: a digital one.

Interviewee: a virtual one yes. Have you heard of I Stip?

Interviewer: Yes, when I wanted to collect participants for the survey I was looking online for for a where I could like approach the students and then I found I Stip.

Interviewee: Yes

Interviewer: It is a cooperation of ESN the student organization for international students, like several organizations working together on this forum.

Interviewee: Yes, and we participated in the sense in that we for the part of Utrecht, gave information on Utrecht, that there is the right information of Utrecht on this site for example. So I think that is enough for now on the promotion.

Interviewer: Yes, oke, you already talked about that the city has got to have attractive elements. In my thesis I talk about De aantrekkelijk stad van Gerard Marlet and he has studied these attractive aspects of each city in the Netherlands and he ranked these cities and Utrecht is ranked second, because of these attractive elements, like attractive residential sites, its geographical location, the housing part. What are in your opinion are the attractive elements of Utrecht?

Interviewee: Well the attractive elements you already told, one of the attractive things of Utrecht is its central position. There were Chinese visitors here one's and they said: 'Utrecht is a beautiful city in a beautiful garden'. Don't know if you have heard that, but the green surroundings are very attractive for the wellbeing of the people who live in the city.

Interviewer: the Groene Hart

Interviewee: Yes, the green surroundings. The housing, we are building a lot of housing, so talent and students in Utrecht can stay even when they build a family, like Leidsche Rijn, the can stay. Well there are more houses. The history and the monuments are very attractive, the canal and the wharfs, are on the World Heritage List and Utrecht is very small and compact. We have a nice shopping area and it is really a meeting place of young people. We are the youngest city in the Netherlands, so that is a big proposition we should work with and want to work with since we are a meeting place of young talent. If we manage to keep the talent in the city it will attract more talent from outside and that is also what we tried to do. These are very attractive things for also the students in the city and we have a lot of events and festivals. Last year we were second, there is a price a competition which city is the most attractive city for festivals and events and we were second.

Interviewer: Ok, you also talked about like combining forces with the universities of applied sciences and research universities. On the website of NUFFIC, I don't know if you know this..

Interviewee: Yes

Interviewer: The characteristics of Utrecht are said to be an international learning environment and they talk about the institutions. How do you think these can be used to attract new international students, not new visitors, but international students.

Interviewee: Yes, ehm well the question is 'What does attract international students'? When you look at top talent then the difficulties that you have different messages. Some might say that they only come for the city and how well know the city is, how nice and attractive the city is, but I also heard about an enquiry where top talent just looked at the quality of the studies and the quality of the institutions. The city is less important them. So that is one thing we first have to find out, what is the truth about this. What attracts students, do you know?

Interviewer: Yes, I asked a question in the questionnaire about, there were several characteristics about Utrecht and I combined those with the characteristics of the universities here, so both research and applied sciences, and there was a ranking of 'very unimportant' to 'very important'. So students had to mark which characteristics was important in their decision to come to Utrecht and I just recently looked at the results and most of the students, I don't know the exact number, found the reputation of the universities they are going to more important than the historical city of Utrecht and other attractive elements.

Interviewee: So ok, that is interesting, if your thesis is finished I would like to have one.

Interviewer: I have to say it is not a representative study, since I did not have a sample frame of all the international students in Utrecht, it was really difficult to find one.

Interviewee: that is why I say, I have seen more inquiries, and sometimes the output is different. So we are still looking for the truth.

Interviewer: this is only a descriptive study.

Interviewee: it is still interesting, so if you want to send it.

Interviewer: Of course. So you think Utrecht is attractive because of the reputation of the universities we have here and not because of the attractive city?

Interviewee: I think Utrecht is attractive for more reasons than that, but that is an important reason. It is also an important reason to work together, because for students the reputation of the university is very important, but for visitors the attractiveness of Utrecht is more important and for the inhabitants the housing quality is important and these are all target groups for city promotion. So our field is very broad. If you look at for the students the quality of the university is important so then it should mean that university and city should strengthen each other.

Interviewer: you said that Utrecht is always in the shadow of Amsterdam.

Interviewee: It seems like, yes

Interviewer: Seems like, but still when you look at universities in Amsterdam they are also internationally recognized, so why do they come to Utrecht, why do they pick Utrecht?

Interviewee: Because of the reputation of the University Utrecht, the place in the Shanghai-ranking.

Interviewer: Of course

Interviewee: From an educational point of view, Utrecht is more interesting than Amsterdam, but Amsterdam is so much more known, because it is the capital of Holland and Amsterdam is also an attractive city. There is no need to deny that, but Utrecht has its own attractive things we can in comparison to Amsterdam: Utrecht is much more quiet and smaller and more central, less problems.

Interviewer: Well, the last question, you already talked how Utrecht is promoting itself, but do you have an example of how the city of Utrecht is attracting or wants to attract international students, like advertisements or certain events, also internationally?

Interviewee: We, this is also in cooperation with the local government and educational institutes. We have started Utrecht Convention Bureau, and that is part of the touristic organization. We have Utrecht Tourism. This is not the local government, but a foundation, that exercises touristic policies and this Utrecht Convention Bureau is purely made to attract business wise tourism and it is there to attract conferences and international conferences to attract people to Utrecht. So once they are here for a conference they meet the quality of the educational institutes and they see Utrecht how attractive it is. So

the Utrecht Convention Bureau is one of the important measures that we took to attract international people. It is a good example.

Interviewer: Oke, this was it. You gave me a lot of information on the promotion of Utrecht. I will send you a copy of the thesis. Thank you for your time.

Interviewee: You are welcome and good luck with your thesis.

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