Aging in Place amid Studentification:

Seniors’ Place Attachments in a University Town

by

Telina Debly

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

ABSTRACT

Since its formal recognition by the World Health Organization in 2005, the age-friendly planning movement has gained traction and shifted attention towards the diverse needs and experiences of seniors. There is growing acknowledgement that well-being in later life is closely related to one's physical and social environment, and age-friendly planning now incorporates increasingly sophisticated conceptions of place.

Examining seniors' place attachments is a corresponding evolution within the literature. Place attachments are emotional bonds that people form to particular physical and social environments. These bonds positively impact older adults' sense of personal identity, memory, and health. However, place attachments can be negatively impacted by changes in the local environment. One such change is studentification; a process by which a large student population affects an area's economy, social atmosphere, and physical environment. However, very little existing research examines how a transition towards student-dominated urban public spaces impacts the place attachments of senior residents.

This study addresses the gap in literature by answering the research questions: What place attachment bonds to a city district are demonstrated by long-term senior residents; and how does a large student population affect seniors' experiences of a city district? Semi-structured long form interviews were conducted with eleven seniors who have lived in the City of Waterloo for

the majority of their lives, and photo-elicitation was utilized to prompt participants to reflect on their experiences amid the growing student population.

Results of this study highlight the importance of long-standing third places for seniors’ affective place attachments, and provide insight into broader senior-student relationships in a city district versus residential neighbourhoods. These findings contribute to establishing a more robust theoretical understanding of older adults’ place attachments, and help to inform the urban planning and engagement practices undertaken by planners and policy makers in university towns.

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines how studentification affects seniors' place attachments and experience of aging in a city district. Age-friendly planning has long acknowledged that older adults typically desire to 'age in place' by staying in their own homes and communities as they age. One facet of successful aging in place is the presence of place attachments—the bonds that people form to particular social and physical environments. Research suggests these bonds have mental and physical health benefits for older adults. However, because place attachments are tied to certain environments, processes of geographic or urban change can alter places and impact attachments. One such process of urban change is studentification—a process by which a large student population alters the economy, social atmosphere, and physical environment of an area. Existing literature has not yet examined seniors' place attachments to the place scale of a city district, or how studentification affects seniors' place attachments. This study fills these gaps by answering the research questions:

1. What place attachment bonds to a city district are demonstrated by long-term senior residents? and,
2. How does a large student population affect seniors' experiences of a city district?

This chapter provides a brief introduction to existing background research, the approach taken and study location selected, as well as an overview of the thesis' structure and objectives. It is

the intent of this thesis to fill the aforementioned gap in planning knowledge, and in doing so, help inform attempts to enhance student-senior relationships in university towns.

1.1 RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Since its formal conception by the World Health Organization in 2005, the age-friendly planning movement has gained traction and shifted attention towards the diverse experiences, needs, and interests of seniors.[1] Age-friendly planning incorporates respect for people across the age spectrum and targets the creation of supportive neighbourhoods that promote the security and independence of older adults. This area of planning is especially important in the Canadian context, as the country is in the midst of a major demographic shift. By 2024, an estimated one-fifth of Canada's total population will be aged 65 and older (Statistics Canada, 2015), and by 2063, seniors are projected to comprise nearly a quarter of the Canadian population (Bohnert et al., 2015). This 'silver wave' of retiring baby boomers is anticipated to have significant impacts on individuals and their families, as well as on Canadian communities at large.

Generally, older adults desire to remain in their own homes and communities for as long as possible, referred to as *aging in place* (Versey, 2018; Lecovich, 2013). Well-being in later life is closely related to the physical environment, and the nature of the neighbourhood has a significant impact on the mobility, independence, and quality of life of older people living in the community (Lui et al, 2009; citing Phillipson, 2007; Scharf & Smith, 2004; Abbott, 2005; Scharf, Phillipson & Smith 2007). Facilitating successful aging in place can help to delay or prevent the

[1] Defined as those aged 65 and older. Also referred to as 'older adults' in this thesis.

institutionalization of older adults, and has been linked to increased lifespan (Van Hees et al., 2018; Morita et al., 2010). As such, this is an important area of study for age-friendly planning, a field that has moved beyond direct health care considerations to include "increasingly sophisticated" conceptions of place (Lui, 2009: 116). Foundational research on seniors and place attachment indicates that older people who have lived in one locale for a long time develop a *physical* and *psychological* attachment to their environment (Smith, 2009; citing Rowles 1978, 1980, 1983a, 1983b, 1984, 1993).

Physical attachment is physical-spatial knowledge gained through years of residence in a location. This acute physical awareness of one's environment is valuable as health declines with age, as it enables maximal physical function and maintenance of independence (Smith, 2009). Increased familiarity and perceived control over one's environment have been found to be related to a decrease in stress, and increased psychological well-being and coping (Smith, 2009; Francis, 1989). Aging in place entails a level of useful physical knowledge where one resides in a familiar location, is fully aware of and integrated within a local service network, and can receive practical assistance from friends and neighbours (Smith, 2009; Rowles, 1993: 68). This often makes aging in place a convenient and cost-efficient option (Smith, 2009; Rowles, 1978; Lawton, 1985; Rubinstein, 1986).

Research also indicates that there are psychological benefits to aging in place, primarily in reference to the more emotive and sentimental bonds that tie people to their environments (A. Smith, 2009). This is an experience known as *place attachment*, which can be defined as "a set of

feelings about a geographical location that emotionally binds a person to that place as a function of its role as a setting for experience" (Rubinstein & Parmelee, 1992: 139) In other words, place attachment is the affective bond or link between people and specific places (Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001). Place attachment can be affected by a variety of factors, including length of residency; access to services and amenities; neighbourhood satisfaction; public spaces; and location (Rowles, 1978; Kasarda and Janowitz, 1974; Francis, 1989; Fried, 2000). Research suggests that people with place attachments demonstrate a higher sense of coherence, are more satisfied with life, and have stronger social capital and neighbourhood ties (Lewicka, 2011).

Place attachment is regarded as particularly important for aging because development and maintenance of identity is believed to be contextually situated in place (Smith, 2009: 18). For older people who have lived in their neighbourhoods for a long time, persons and place can become important sources of self-identity and support (Smith, 2009). Place provides an individual with a 'tapestry' of experiences and memories that re-enforce one's identity and life, even in the face of aging and possible health problems (Rubinstein & Parmelee, 1992). This relates to what Rowles calls 'autobiographical insideness,' whereby older people's attachment to place helps to reaffirm their identity through recall of specific memories in that location (Rowles, 1983a; 1993). Place is envisaged to provide the backdrop against which life events can be remembered and replayed; attachment to long-ago places keeps the past 'alive' and provides continuity of identity in the face of functional decline (Smith, 2009). This recall and intimate recollection of the past may help seniors maintain an 'ageless sense of self,' contributing to psychological well-being (Kaufman, 1986). In sum, place attachment encourages interactions with the environment by

improving older people's perceptions of a place, which are functionally important to seniors' daily life routines (Sun et al., 2020; Rowles, 1993).

A definitional feature of place is its concentric character: smaller places are incorporated within larger ones (Lewicka, 2011; citing Low & Altman, 1992; Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1974). Accordingly, place attachment can be explored on various scales, including the home, city, neighbourhood, and country. The majority of place attachment research has focused on the home and neighbourhood, particularly in rural areas (Rowles, 1980; cited in Smith, 2009). The role of place attachment in urban areas is more unclear, as some studies identify a greater sense of place attachment (Fried, 2000; Parkes et al., 2002), while others report challenges to place attachment (Smith, 2009; Corcoran, 2002; Brown et al., 2004). Within the urban context, recent research suggests that buildings and surroundings, community facilities and amenities, and the 'social attributes' of a place are the primary predictors of place attachment for older people (Sun et al., 2020).

The role of certain buildings and facilities in older adults' comfort and attachment relates to the literature on *third places*. Ray Oldenburg (1999) coined the term "third place" to denote places other than a person's home (first place) or work (second place) that "host the regular, voluntary, informal and happily anticipated gathering of individuals beyond the realms of home and work" (Oldenburg 1999: 16, cited in Rosenbaum et al., 2009). Examples of third places include cafes, clubs, public libraries, and parks (Lee & Tan 2019). The informal social interactions within third places foster social connectedness with friends and neighbours, helping to prevent social

isolation and loneliness. This is especially important for seniors who typically have retired and no longer inhabit second 'work' places, potentially reducing their options for locations with social interactions. A lack of social support and isolation can be correlated with mental illness, distress, dementia, suicide, and premature death (Fratiglioni et al., 2000, cited in Lee & Tan, 2019). Besides serving an important community role, third places can also be the subject of place attachments for older adults when patrons receive life-enhancing social support from customers and employees in the establishment (Rosenbaum et al., 2009).

However, the evolution of urban spaces, particularly changes brought about by commercial development, can lead to the gradual alienation of older people from third places as newer urban places are perceived as being aimed at a younger population (Finkelstein et al., 2008; cited in Hockey et al., 2013). Existing literature also notes that conditions in urban environments where change is more prevalent might challenge place attachment to those locations (Smith, 2009). One process of urban change currently changing the urban landscape is *studentification*. First coined in 2005, studentification is the distinct social, cultural, economic and physical transformations within university towns, which are associated with the seasonal, in-migration of higher education students (Smith, 2005: 74). As cities absorb increases in student population, entire areas of cities often become devoted to residential and entertainment facilities for students (Wright, 1994; cited in Allinson, 2006). Student infrastructure has a distinctive identity which is heavily marketed to the traditional student population (Chatterton, 1999). As students 'take over' certain areas of cities, they can drive out long-time residents and introduce new service mixes and behaviour (Allinson, 2006). This process creates economic, social, and cultural disruption in urban areas

(Smith, 2006; Allinson, 2006). Effects of studentification may include a decline in seniors' ability to socialize in third places, feeling unsafe in neighbourhoods, a decline in place attachment, and a general sense of being excluded by new student-oriented residential and commercial developments. For instance, pubs and bars are popular among young people but can be intimidatingly loud and chaotic places for seniors. At the same time, choosing not to take advantage of students' buying power can put businesses in a challenging financial situation. When third places close—either due to financial hardship or at the owner's discretion—the seniors who frequented these places can become disconnected from previously established networks of friends and acquaintances, contributing to social isolation. As such, the social and physical changes brought about by studentification risk isolating seniors from third places, and may disrupt place attachments as the fabric of the physical and social urban landscape rapidly changes.

Existing research makes clear that place attachments are beneficial for seniors aging in place, and are correlated with a positive effect on one's identity, mental health, and physical well-being. Older adults also benefit from third places in the community as locations for socialization and support. However, processes of urban change such as studentification can disrupt place attachments and make seniors feel unwelcome in certain areas. Despite the implications of this issue for seniors in cities with a large university student presence, also known as 'university towns,' studentification has rarely been discussed in reference to aging in place or place attachment. Only one 2019 study out of the Netherlands appears to have explicitly attempted to detail the relationship between the impact of studentification and aging in place (Lager & van

Hoven, 2019). Furthermore, as noted by Smith (2009) and Lewicka (2011), urban areas outside of the home have not as frequently been the site of studies exploring place attachment. As such, there is a dearth of relevant literature exploring how studentification affects senior residents' attachment to their community while aging in place. Considering the rapidly growing number of seniors in Canada, place attachment and the decline of third spaces for seniors are important considerations for planners and policy-makers alike.

1.2 RESEARCH CONTEXT AND APPROACH

To help address the gap in existing literature, this research project takes an exploratory, qualitative approach to examining how seniors experience studentification in a city district, and what the implications may be for place attachment and aging in place. The study focuses on Uptown Waterloo as an urban neighbourhood in the City of Waterloo that has changed considerably over the years, at least partially in response to the residential, retail, service, and cultural interests of students.

The Uptown neighbourhood has been highlighted by the province as Waterloo's Urban Growth Centre as an area for targeted residential and job densification which also provides services to the surrounding region (Ontario Ministry of Infrastructure, 2006; cited in Chase, 2015). It is also considered the City of Waterloo's commercial and cultural core, with a mix of business, institutional, cultural, residential, and recreational spaces (Chase, 2015; City of Waterloo, 2020a). Uptown also sits in the middle of Waterloo's central transit corridor, occupying a central location in the regional transportation networks (IBI Group, 2011; cited in Chase, 2015).

The City of Waterloo promotes its Uptown as an 'urban escape' acting as a gathering space for the community, and the City's Official Plan highlights "the need to retain Uptown's sense of community and identity" (City of Waterloo, 2020b; City of Waterloo, 2020a: 30). In recent years this identity has been shaped in part by the City's considerable student presence. The City of Waterloo is the only mid-sized city in Ontario with two universities - Wilfrid Laurier University and the University of Waterloo. It is estimated that over 56,200 students reside in the Waterloo Region (Region of Waterloo, 2019). A small existing body of work has explored studentification in the City of Waterloo but has focused primarily on the nature and availability of student rental housing (Charbonneau et al., 2006; Revington et al., 2018).

Uptown is a particularly popular student social gathering place due to its concentration of clubs, pubs, and restaurants. However, it is unclear whether long-time senior residents also regularly visit Uptown or feel connected to this area. Like much of Canada, the Waterloo Region has a steadily aging population, largely driven by the aging baby boomer generation (Region of Waterloo, 2016). Estimates suggest that by 2031, one in five people in the Waterloo Region will be over the age of 65 (Region of Waterloo, 2019). The combination of growing student and senior demographics makes Uptown Waterloo an ideal urban location to explore the effects of studentification and its potential impacts on place attachment and aging in place.

To understand seniors' perspectives on how Uptown has changed over the years, interviews were conducted with eleven seniors who have resided in the City for the majority of their lives. These one-on-one interviews involved asking open-ended interview questions and employed the use

of photo-elicitation to guide discussion. Photo-elicitation entails interviewing participants based on researcher-provided photos (Manzo et al., 2014). Because place attachments are forged through experience and engagement with the local environment and social actors, photographic methods are well suited to understanding place attachment (Manzo et al., 2014). As such, this study utilized photos of locations around Uptown Waterloo between 1960 and 2020, primarily obtained via archival images. Participants were shown these photographs as a prompt and asked questions designed to encourage place-related dialogue. This semi-structured interview structure allowed for an on-topic, yet organic, conversation about studentification, place attachment, and change.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION AND OBJECTIVES

This study examines how studentification affects seniors' place attachments and experience of aging in the city district of Uptown Waterloo. Specific research questions include:

1. What place attachment bonds to a city district are demonstrated by long-term senior residents?
2. How does a large student population affect seniors' experiences of a city district?

By exploring these questions, this study hopes to paint a more thorough picture of aging in student-dominated communities. Older adults' experiences of studentification may have implications for aging in place, as third places and place attachment are important for seniors' well-being and overall health.

1.4 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The remainder of this thesis is organized into four parts.

Chapter Two reviews relevant literature defining place attachment, especially in reference to seniors and aging in place. Research on aging in place among processes of urban change is examined to contextualize studentification as a disruptive process of change. The effects of studentification are also explored, with particular focus on seniors' relationship to studentified areas. The literature review concludes by outlining existing research on these themes in the Waterloo context.

Chapter Three outlines the methodology, methods, and specific qualitative research design. An overview of the study location is presented, as well as a description of the participant sample. The interview process, including the use of photo-elicitation and interview transcription, is explained in detail.

Chapter Four presents the research findings and analysis. Each of the two research questions is explored in reference to the data collected during participant interviews. This section will highlight and analyze overarching themes with regard to existing literature, helping to contextualize participant responses and identify key findings.

Chapter Five summarizes key themes and findings for planners and policy-makers, and provides a discussion on the limitations of the study. Concluding remarks and recommendations are provided, with an emphasis on age-friendly initiatives and areas for future research.

CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

Three subjects will be further examined in the context of this literature review: place attachment; the relationship between aging and place; and studentification. These are individually expansive topics, with considerable variety and disagreement both in theory and practice. Furthermore, there is very little existing research specifically documenting the effects of studentification on older adults' place attachment. To better contextualize this research project, the first section of this literature review explores the definition of place attachment in reference to its social and physical dimensions, as well as under what conditions this attachment arises. The second section provides an overview of how place attachment relates to older adults and aging in place, with specific reference to third places. The third section defines studentification and reviews how studentification may affect older adults. The concluding section outlines the theoretical framework for the research project by analyzing the gaps in literature with respect to this study's primary research questions. The research questions are then further separated into specific inquiries which this study aims to address.

2.1 PLACE ATTACHMENT

2.1.1 DEFINING PLACE ATTACHMENT

This section outlines several of the common debates and discussions that occupy the field of place attachment studies. These are presented to contextualize where this research project fits in the literature. In their reflections on place attachment, Shumaker and Hankin (1984) note that "few fields of inquiry are so clearly interdisciplinary in nature" as the study of human feelings

about places (cited in Hummon, 1992: 253). Indeed, a central challenge associated with examining place attachment is the fact that for many decades—notably from the 1970s to 1990s—there was no consensus around its name or definition. Many similar terms exist, such as community attachment, sense of community, place identity, place dependence, and sense of place (Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001). It was often unclear whether these terms referred to the same concept as place attachment or a different concept altogether. These discrepancies in conceptual understanding and nomenclature had, to a degree, blocked advances within the field (Giuliani & Feldman, 1993; Lalli, 1992; Unger & Wandersman, 1985; all cited in Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001).

Although sense of place and place attachment are often conflated in the literature, they are perhaps best understood as closely related but distinct ideas. As a starting point, space is transformed into 'place' when humans give it bounds and assign it value (Tuan, 1977; cited in Wolf et al., 2014). This construction of place is dynamic and influenced by human perception, cognition, self-concept, social dynamics, economies, cultures, and histories (Bott et al., 2003; cited in Wolf et al., 2014). Acknowledging a 'place' as such is linked to a place's *identity*, a concept that Relph (1976) describes in his seminal work *Place and Placelessness* as "persistent sameness and unity which allows that [place] to be differentiated from others" (Relph, 1976: 45; cited in Seamon & Sowers, 2008). Relph goes on to describe this persistent identity in terms of three components: (1) the place's physical setting; (2) its activities, situations, and events; and (3) the individual and group meanings created through people's experiences and intentions in regard to that place (Relph, 1976; cited in Seamon & Sowers, 2008). Put otherwise, it is the unique actions

and sentiments which are tied to a place that creates its identity and distinguishes it from other places.

A sense of place can be further contrasted with non-places and placelessness. Case studies on non-places focus on connectivity; freeways, bridges, and parking lots; whereas studies on placelessness note locations with a lack of meaning, typically as a result of standardized developments with 'cookie-cutter' buildings (Arefi, 2004). By contrast, work examining sense of place tends to emphasize identity, history, a sense of attachment, and memory (Arefi, 2004). Indeed, attachment to place likely arises as a consequence of space being transformed through a sense of place. Although how to best present and understand the relationship between sense of place and place attachment is far from settled, a useful articulation comes from Shamai (1991). As depicted in *FIGURE 1*, Shamai finds that there are three major phases in people's attachment to place: belonging to a place, place attachment, and commitment toward a place.

FIGURE 1: Place Relationships

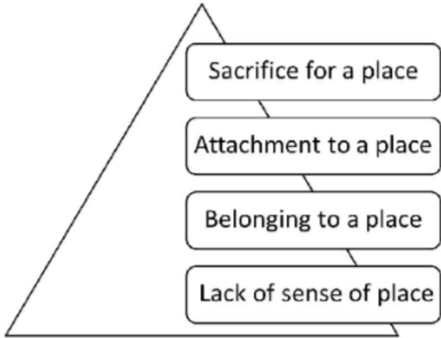


Image from Hashemnezhad et al., (2013), referencing Shamai (1991)

While this is not a definitive articulation of place relationships, it is nevertheless useful to conceptualize sense of place as being a precursor to place attachment. In fact, the scholarship around sense of place underlies several definitions of place attachment in the literature; after all, it is a locale's unique sense of place and identity that distinguishes it as a 'place' to even be attached to. This implicit assumption may also explain why the terms place attachment and sense of place are so often used interchangeably; attachment to place is incomprehensible without the context of place as a distinguishable locale with a unique identity.

Fortunately the confusion around place attachment as a distinct field of study has been somewhat resolved in recent years, due in part to improved distinctions between various scholars' disciplinary origins, and place attachment is now fairly consistently defined. Brown et al. (2003) describe it as dynamic, yet enduring, positive bonds between people and prized socio-physical settings that help cultivate group and individual identity. For Degnen (2016), it is an emotional sense of deep connection that people experience with particular places. Place attachment can also be articulated as the desire to maintain closeness to the object of attachment (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970; Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1980; all cited in Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001). A foundational, oft-cited definition, comes from Rubinstein & Parmelee (1992), who describe place attachment as "a set of feelings about a geographical location that emotionally binds a person to that place as a function of its role as a setting for experience" (Rubinstein & Parmelee, 1992: 139). The common thread throughout these definitions is the understanding that place attachment is a bond between people and experiences in specific places.

Other concepts used to describe attachment to one's home and community are 'rootedness' and 'insideness.' Tuan (1980) suggests that rootedness implies "being at home in an unself-conscious way," where much of the landscape is taken for granted (Tuan, 1980: 4; cited in Kyle & Chick, 2007). Similarly, Rowles's (1983a) work on the concept of 'insideness,' largely influenced by Relph (1977), has been extensively referenced by authors working on place attachment and identity (Dengen, 2016: 1949). Rowles studied the elderly population of an Appalachian community and noted that insideness can facilitate the development of close bonds between elderly residents and their places. Rowles describes three elements of insideness: physical insideness, social insideness, and autobiographical insideness (Rowles, 1983a: 302-8). He notes that insideness as a concept supports an overarching, largely unconscious identification with a locale, and can explain elderly people's desire to stay in familiar places.

Therefore, a succinct, if perhaps simplified, definition of the concept is to say that place attachment is a bond between an individual or group and particular social or physical environments. 'Insideness' and 'rootedness' are aspects of this attachment, and are expressed through deep bonds to places. A physical environment may be the mature trees in a neighbourhood, and a social environment may be the friendly neighbours. Although many scholars agree that place attachment encompasses both physical and social dimensions (see, for example, Billig, 2005; Brown et al., 2003; Alidoust et al., 2015; Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001), there exists some debate as to whether place attachment is predominately a bond to physical places or the social experiences within those places.

Determining whether place attachment is best understood as a predominantly social or physical phenomenon is challenging, in large part due to place attachment's ambiguous relationship with other aspects of place (Seamon, 2014). Seamon (2014) notes that factors such as geographical and cultural qualities, rootedness in place, personal and social involvement, quality of life, environmental aesthetics, and individual/group identity all "reciprocally impel and sustain each other" in a lived synergy (Seamon, 2014: 12). Thus far, the precise role of place attachment relative to this 'synergistic dynamic' has proven difficult to isolate. The multi-faceted construction of place is also noted by Montgomery (1998), who observes that places are constructed by some combination of physical space, sensory experience, and activity.

Early perspectives on place attachment focused strongly on the physical elements of attachment, such as geographical proximity to particular shops and places. For example, the 'linear development model' of community attachment hypothesized that as population size and density increased, attachment to community would diminish (Toennies, 1887; Wirth, 1938; cited in Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974). This theory was premised on the idea that as the physical landscape of cities changed through processes of urbanization and industrialization, attachment to one's community would inevitably decline since attachment was theorized to be a product of physical characteristics. Scholars adhering to the 'systemic model' took the opposite stance, and instead theorized attachment to local community as being characterized by complex systems of friendship and kinship networks, as well as formal and informal associational ties (Thomas 1967, Park and Burgess 1921,1925; cited in Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974). To compare these models, Kasarda & Janowitz (1974) undertook a quantitative study of research data collected by large-

scale surveys on community attachment in England. Their research found significant statistical support for the systemic model, and in particular, noted that length of residence is the key factor influencing local community attachment, not density or population growth (Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974: 335). Furthermore, long-standing networks of friends and family relationships were correlated with greater attachment, irrespective of population size, density, social class, or stage in life-cycle (Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974: 338).

This now classic study was part of a larger shift in the field away from earlier models that prioritized places' geographical characteristics. For many years now, interest in the social dimensions of place attachment has been stronger than interest in its physical dimensions (Lewicka, 2011: 213-14). Indeed, in a popularly cited analysis of place attachment, Low & Altman (1992) observe that the "social relations that a place signifies may be equally or more important to the attachment process than the place quo place…Places are, therefore, repositories and contexts within which interpersonal, community, and cultural relationships occur, and it is to those social relationships, not just to place qua place, to which people are attached" (Low & Altman, 1992: 7). In a similar vein, Kyle & Chick (2007) interviewed visitors to an agricultural fair and found that specific place experiences shared with family and close friends were embedded in spatial contexts that encapsulated visitors' fair experience. These authors contend that places are "symbolic contexts imbued with meaning," and that the meaning behind place attachment emerges through interactions with people and the environment (Kyle & Chick, 2007: 211).

Of course, this is not to say that physical geography and specific places do not play an essential role in place attachment. Other authors argue that an at times overwhelming academic focus on socially constructed meanings obscures the way in which these constructions are also physical (Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001; Stedman, 2003). For instance, in a widely cited study, Stedman (2003) found that certain landscape attributes were predictive of meanings related to attachment and satisfaction, demonstrating that physical attributes may underpin both place attachment and satisfaction (Stedman, 2003: 682). Although the social constructivists contend that physical spaces only have meaning insofar as they have been socially constructed, the vast majority of place attachment researchers assume that both dimensions of place are worth distinguishing and may play different roles in attachment processes (Lewicka, 2011: 213). Social dimensions of attachment may include close ties to neighbours and generational rootedness, whereas others may feel attached to a place's physical assets, such as beautiful buildings or pleasant outdoor spaces (Lewicka, 2011).

2.1.2 PLACE SCALES

The physical and social dimensions of place can exist on a variety of geographic scales. The most studied target of place attachment research is the neighbourhood, followed by the home, city and less frequently, national regions and continents (Lewicka, 2011). There is a largely unanimous opinion that the prototypical place is home (Porteous, 1976; cited in Lewicka, 2011). People tend to prefer places where their own houses are located, and on mental maps, one's home serves as the main spatial anchor (Foland & Lewicka, 2007; Golledge & Stimson, 1997; cited in Lewicka, 2011). Home is a reference point that helps people to structure reality, and places are often

expressed through a ‘home’ and ‘not home’ dichotomy (Lewicka, 2011). Cities are similar to homes insofar as they are easily visualized and have relatively stable delineated borders. In contrast, neighbourhoods are often understood to have more arbitrary, flexible borders. As Tuan (1975) notes, “As definable spatial and social units, neighbourhoods have existed primarily in the minds of urban sociologists and planners,” (Tuan, 1975: 158). Neighbourhoods are composed of concentric places and zones, such as micro-settings, street blocks, walking distance, and enclaves (Kusenbach, 2008; cited in Lewicka, 2011). Even though neighbourhoods have unclear borders, approximately 75% of all work that deals with residential place attachment concerns attachment to neighbourhood (Lewicka, 2011: 212; see also Hidaldo and Hernández, 2001; Billig, 2005; Brown et al., 2003; Kamalipour, 2012).

Although the most frequently examined environment appears to be residential neighbourhoods (Billig, 2005; Brown et al., 2003; Kamalipour, 2012), work has also been done on the scale of entire communities (Degnen, 2016; Stedman, 2003) and of commercial urban areas (Ujang, 2012). It is important to note that attachment to place can develop to different degrees within different spatial ranges and dimensions (Kamalipour et al., 2012; Hidaglo & Hernández, 2001). People can hold different levels of attachment to their home, their neighbourhood, and their city; and these attachments often depend on that specific environment. Unfortunately, there are few studies that compare place attachment across different place scales. However, one finding that has been replicated across several studies is that the neighbourhood tends to evoke less attachment than home or city (Lewicka, 2011; citing Hidaldo and Hernández, 2001; Lewicka,

2010). This finding may relate to Tuan's (1975) thought that places which are better geographically defined are more likely to become a target of attachment.

By contrast, there has been almost no research into the place attachment relationships of residents to specific city districts which are distinct from their residential neighbourhoods. Although 'neighbourhood' is often examined as a scale of place attachment, and occasionally the 'city' more generally, little attention has been paid to city districts, particularly commercial or mixed-use areas. City districts can be understood as administratively, culturally, socially, or economically distinct sectors of cities. They occupy a distinct place between the larger city and the more intimate scale of the neighbourhood (Lewicka, 2010). The literature that does examine place attachment in a distinctly commercial urban setting, such as downtowns, tends to focus on identifying customers' willingness to shop at certain places and uses store loyalty as a proxy for place attachment (see Kim et al., 2015). This type of commerce-based analysis is insufficient when examining place attachment in reference to its social and physical dimensions. In one of the few studies on place attachment which included the district place scale, Lewicka (2010) performed a quantitative analysis of survey results and found that attachment was greatest to one's building, followed by the neighbourhood, district, city, and apartment. However, this study's findings have not been replicated in the literature, due to the scarcity of work on city districts. Additionally, because the study took place in four cities located across Poland and Ukraine, there may be unique socio-cultural and geographical characteristics that prevent the findings from applying in the context of other locations, particularly in less historic North American cities. Therefore, it is unclear whether the place attachment trends found in studies

examining residential neighbourhoods and the city as a whole are replicated in the more nebulous space of a city district.

2.1.3 PREDICTORS OF PLACE ATTACHMENT

There are several characteristics that existing research suggests predispositions people to develop place attachment. These 'predictors' do not guarantee a place attachment relationship, but do increase the likelihood of people exhibiting place attachment. Lewicka (2011) suggests that these predictors can be best summarized in three broad categories: socio-demographic, social, and physical.

Many socio-demographic factors have been studied in relation to place attachment, including residence length, age, social status, education, home ownership, size of the community, and mobility (Lewicka 2011, 216). Of these variables, residence length has repeatedly been found to be the single strongest factor in fostering place attachment (Lewicka, 2011; Lewicka, 2010; Brown, Perkins, & Brown, 2003; Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974). Length of residence typically fosters attachment to one's permanent home, recreational spaces, and increases the strength of local ties (Harlan et al., 2005; Lewicka, 2010; cited in Lewicka, 2011). Notably, some studies suggest that the most rapid increase in attachment and neighbourhood ties occur in the first few years of residence but tend to level off with time (Lalli, 1992; Harlan et al., 2005; cited in Lewicka, 2011). However, not all studies distinguish between the rate of attachment at various points in residents' lives, and this finding has not been widely replicated.

Another significant socio-demographic predictor of place attachment is home ownership (Lewicka, 2011; citing Bolan, 1997; Brown et al., 2003; Mesch & Manor, 1998; Ringel & Finkelstein, 1991). Brown et al. (2003) similarly observed that overall place attachment is higher for home owners and long-term residents. However, this relationship was true for individuals who perceived fewer incivilities on their block, had fewer observed incivilities on their property, had lower fear of crime, and who had a higher sense of neighbourhood cohesion and control (Brown et al., 2003: 259). This suggests that although socio-demographic factors such as length of residence and home ownership are sometimes used as a proxy for place attachment, social and physical predictors must also be considered.

The primary social predictors of place attachment are community ties, typically expressed as the strength and extensiveness of local friendships, neighbourhood ties, and involvement in informal social activities in the neighbourhood (Lewicka, 2011). Research indicates that local social connections—particularly those involving friends, family, organization membership, and local shopping—are consistent and significant sources of sentimental ties to a locale (Gerson et al., 1977; Guest & Lee, 1983; Goudy, 1982; Hunter, 1974; Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974; St. John et al., 1986; all cited in Hummond, 1992). A study by Sun et al. (2020) similarly found that—along with buildings and community facilities— the 'social attributes of a place' predicted place attachment for older adults (Sun et al., 2020: 1). Notably, a multi-year study of twenty-six U.S cities that interviewed 43,000 people found people are "more likely to develop strong connections to communities that are attractive and aesthetically pleasing, offer ample opportunities for socializing, and are 'open' and receptive to people with diverse backgrounds and interests"

(Gallup and Knight, 2010; cited in Smith & Cartlidge, 2011: 531). The centrality of social ties to place attachment is practically unanimous within the literature; no sources reviewed found social predictors to be insignificant. Underscoring the importance of positive social environments in place attachment is research indicating that social ills—such as increased levels of crime and a decrease in community-based activities—lead to decreased place attachment (Kamalipour, 2012; see also Brown et al., 2003). Considered together, length of residence and the prevalence of local community ties are the best, and most common, predictors of place attachment.

Although length of residence and social factors are the most consistent predictors of place attachment, physical predictors have also been examined. Environmental features known to affect neighbourhood place attachment are quiet areas, aesthetically pleasant buildings, and the presence of green areas (Bonaiuto et al., 1999; cited in Lewicka, 2011), close walking distance to useful locations and neighbours (Sugihara and Evans, 2000; cited in Lewicka, 2011), neighbourhood stability, and a lack of pollution and disorder (Harlan et al., 2005). Interestingly, in a study of four European cities Lewicka (2010) found that physical features—such as building size, upkeep, presence of greenery, type of housing—predicted attachment to the building and neighbourhood more than to district and city. However, Hidalgo & Hernandez (2001) and Scannell and Hifford (2010) found the opposite: physical factors predicted attachment to the city, but social factors affected attachment to home and neighbourhood. While at first puzzling, this discrepancy can be explained by considering the place scales used in the different studies. For example, whereas building and yard size attachment applies only to specific neighbourhoods, factors such as the general green space in a city may affect city-wide attachment, rather than

developing attachment to certain neighbourhoods (Lewicka, 2011). The tension between these findings highlights the ways in which variations in study location and selected criteria for analysis can complicate the relationship between physical and social factors of attachment.

Other physical factors that can influence place attachment are features that bring a unique identity to a place (Shamsuddin & Ujang, 2008; cited in Kamalipour et al., 2012). What is perceived as contributing to a 'unique' identity will vary from one place to another, and will largely depend on residents' subjective attachments to the area. This is important to consider when considering processes of urban change which alter the physical landscape of cities; residents may be wary of development or renovations that are seen as threatening to a place's perceived longstanding unique identity. The effort made by a person or community to maintain a place and its main activities has the potential to increase the level of personal attachment (Kamalipour et al., 2012). This suggests that members of groups concerned with change, such as neighbourhood association groups, are especially likely to have place attachments, as they demonstrate physical and social predictors of attachment. Similarly, Brown & Werner (1985) argue that place attachments are nourished by daily encounters with the environment and neighbours (Brown & Werner, 1985; Werner et al., 1993; cited in Brown et al., 2003). Therefore, a gradual loss of the public realm can erode memories of a place, and diminish attachment along with a sense of belonging (Shamsuddin & Ujang, 2008; cited in Kamalipour et al., 2012). Physical predictors of attachment are often the most visible to researchers and residents alike; the demolition of a favourite landmark is more readily apparent than an individual's social network slowly dispersing. That being said, socio-demographic, social, and physical predictors can

combine and culminate in attachment to place, making the influence of one specific predictor difficult to pinpoint.

2.1.4 IMPORTANCE OF PLACE ATTACHMENT

Although it is well established that place attachments exist, there exists a separate question of *why* place—and more specifically, place attachment—is important. In general, place attachments are conceptualized as being indicators of positive relationships between people and places. As Tuan (1976) stated, "we find ourselves attached to places because they help fulfill basic human needs (Tuan, 1976; cited in Smith & Cartlidge, 2011: 539-40). Indeed, some authors note that place attachments may simply develop when a place is able to fulfill its user's functional needs and support their behavioural goals better than known alternatives (Williams, Patterson, Roggenbuck and Watson, 1992; cited in Ujang, 2012). These authors point to a *functional* relationship with environment, arguing that individuals' competences enable them to make rational choices with respect to their environments (Van Hees et al., 2018).

Problematizing this characterization of place attachment is a Dutch study from Van Hees et al. (2018), who found that people attach to neighbourhoods even if the place no longer suits their needs. Regardless of whether an area is objectively deemed to be suitable or safe, studies have found that subjective feelings about a neighbourhood can be a significant source of satisfaction in later life (La Gory, Ward, & Sherman, 1985; cited in Wiles et al., 2012). This would suggest that there can be a predominantly *affective* or *emotional* relationship between people and their environments, rather than a logical or rational one. This may explain why place attached

residents tend to perceive their city as being more pleasant and less polluted than non-place attached people (Félonneau, 2004; cited in Lewicka, 2011). Emotion plays a role in the human experience of place, and these attachments often operate in the background of awareness (Brown & Perkins, 1992).

Indeed in a deeper sense, certain places can act as an anchor in our lives by offering a level of stability, security, familiarity, and control in an otherwise chaotic world (Smith and Cartlidge, 2011; Brown et al., 2003). The aforementioned sense of 'insideness' within a community is thought to support a coherent, overarching sense of personal identity (Hummon, 1992: 258). This is in part because places can remind us of interpersonal relations and emotional connections with others, such as family, friends, and even ancestors (Smith and Cartlidge, 2011). The idea of place attachment as a kind of social memory is explored in Dengen's (2016) work, where it is suggested that place attachment is a collective, social, and historical sense that spans decades and bonds people together (Degnen, 2016: 645, 1662). Having ancestral and generational ties to certain locations may foster place attachment through a sense of having access to one's 'roots.'

The anchoring effect of place attachment is particularly salient for older adults, as long-term residence substantially increases sentimental ties to an environment/locale (Hummon, 1992: 257, see also Goudy, 1982; Sampson, 1988). As Hummon (1992) points out, the community environment surrounding long-time residents is likely saturated with significant life experiences, as well as local social ties (Hummon 1992: 257). Additionally, the meanings individuals and groups ascribe to a place are reflections of cultural and individual identity, which can in turn result in

places reinforcing group and individual identity (Brown et al., 2003; Kyle & Chick, 2007: 211). This perspective follows Lee's (1972) work, suggesting that subjective definitions of place, and the attributes contained within that place, reflect meanings influenced by one's cultural and individual identity (cited in Kyle & Chick, 2007). As Cochrane (1987) notes, [There is a] "reciprocal relationship between individuals and place, an interlocking system in which the people and place define one another" (Cochrane, 1987: 7; cited in Brown & Perkins, 1992). Indeed, it can be fairly said that place attachments can help to cultivate one's identity, insofar as meaning and identity are the primary outcomes of place attachment (Kamalipour et al., 2012: 462). The relationship between older adults' place attachments and their sense of identity through the lifespan is largely a complementary one. However, attachments can change as individuals/households develop, environments age, or the processes supported by a particular environment are altered (Brown et al., 2003).

2.1.5 AGING, PLACE, AND THIRD PLACES

The relationship between place attachment and urban change is particularly complex for seniors who are long-time residents of a locale, as they are likely to have place attachments. An individual's level of attachment to their environment has a direct impact on how changes are experienced and perceived (Burns et al., 2012). This is especially true for older people, because the immediate environment becomes more important with age, and older people develop a sense of "self-attachment, personal identity, and social differentiation through the relationship they construct and maintain with daily, 'ordinary' spaces" (Burns et al., 2012: 1). Therefore,

understanding older people's relationships with place is integral to understanding how they are impacted by neighbourhood change.

Generally, older adults desire to remain in their communities for as long as possible, referred to as 'aging in place' (Versey, 2018; Lecovich, 2014). Although the literature predominantly focuses on the home as an environment for aging in place, there is growing recognition that neighbourhoods and community connectedness are crucial factors in seniors' ability to age in place (Van Hees et al., 2018; Versey, 2018; Wiles et al., 2012). Older adults may be particularly sensitive to change in local neighbourhoods, due to their longevity of residence and changes to their level of independent functioning (Glass & Balfour, 2003; Howden-Chapman et al., 1999; cited in Wiles et al., 2012). Research suggests that activities with family, friends, and neighbours are significant predictors of 5-year survival of senior citizens, independent of the baseline demographics, lifestyle, and health status (Morita et al., 2010). The same study found that a sense of attachment to neighbourhood enhances the survival benefits of neighbourhood activities and activities with friends (Morita et al., 2010). Aging in place is thought to foster place attachment, health, and overall well-being in later life (Smith et al., 2018: 27). Therefore, facilitating successful aging in place requires a multifaceted approach which considers factors such as "transportation, recreational opportunities, and amenities that facilitate physical activity, social interaction, cultural engagement, and ongoing education" (Wahl & Weisman, 2003; cited in Wiles et al., 2012: 358). Adequate service in these realms helps to support seniors' place attachments to local neighbourhoods and communities, which may in turn enhance their health and sense of identity through the aging process.

Since place attachments are related to specific physical and social environments, they can be affected by processes of urban change such as changing housing and neighbourhood conditions (Brown et al., 2003). Weakening of place attachment has also been linked to economic globalization, standardized products, and generic urban environments with little authentic connection to local landscapes, ecosystems, history, culture, and community (Kamalipour et al., 2012). These disruptive processes of urban change can lead to "disjunctions…between the aging individual and their changing neighbourhood environment," whereupon individuals or groups become 'dis-embedded' from community life (Smith et al., 2018: 27; Phillipson, 2007). For example, older people staying in a neighbourhood undergoing gentrification may experience social exclusion, economic exclusion, and insecurity (Fänge et al., 2012; Burns et al., 2012). Understood broadly, gentrification is a process of urban change through which low-income neighbourhoods become higher income, typically in conjunction with the in-migration of new residents that bring physical, social, economic, cultural, and political changes (Burns et al., 2012; Smith et al., 2018). Smith et al. (2018) found that both economically vulnerable and higher-income older adults in gentrifying neighbourhoods had more depression and anxiety symptoms than those living in more stable and affluent areas. Versey (2018) further examined how older adults 'staying put' in a gentrifying neighbourhood perceive changes in their social networks and the larger community, and that found major themes included disruption of social ties, lack of intergenerational social cohesion, and a lack of social spaces for older adults.

The lack of social spaces for older adults outside of their own home has elsewhere been identified as a decrease in *third places* (Gardner, 2011). Oldenburg (1999) distinguishes three key places

where older people make social connections and experience informal public life: near the home (first place), work (second place), and in several third places (Oldenburg, 1999: 16; cited in Rosenbaum et al., 2009; and Gardner, 2011). Third places are social meeting places that ultimately contribute to the strength of the community, such as a park, a community centre, or a shop (Yuen & Johnson, 2017; Alidoust et al., 2019; Gardner, 2011; Van Hees et al., 2018). An example of the importance of third places comes from Smith & Cartlidge (2011), who spoke with older residents in the aftermath of an EF-5 tornado that leveled 95% of their town of Greensburg, Kansas. As part of the rebuilding process the town surveyed older residents to learn what features were most important to them moving forward. The main features identified were recognizable landmarks, a space in which to socialize, and age-specific businesses (Smith & Cartlidge, 2011). This study highlights the importance of third places for older adults as places that fulfill social and physical needs.

As previously noted in Chapter 1, older adults can form place attachments to third places (Rosenbaum et al., 2009). Alidoust et al. (2015) found that third places play a significant role in providing older people opportunities to engage in the social lives of their local communities, thus contributing to their social health and overall wellbeing (Fratiglioni et al., 2000; cited in Lee & Tan, 2019). In this way, third places can foster social connectedness and may help to prevent social isolation, loneliness, and the negative mental and physical ailments associated with a lack of social support (Fratiglioni et al., 2000; cited in Lee & Tan, 2019). However as urban locales develop and grow, these third places may disappear as local tastes change. Processes of urban change can erode places—in reference to physical and social environments—that older adults

frequent. This can manifest in a variety of ways, potentially ranging from unfamiliar new coffee chains to a lack of public benches to rest. A particularly salient process of urban change that may affect place attachment and third places is *studentification*.

2.2 STUDENTIFICATION

2.2.1 DEFINING STUDENTIFICATION

First coined by Smith (2005), studentification "engenders the distinct social, cultural, economic and physical transformations within university towns, which are associated with the seasonal, in-migration of [higher education] students" (Smith, 2005: 74). Studentification has been academically documented in the United Kingdom, Australia, Ireland, Canada, Georgia, Spain, Malaysia, and China (Revington, 2018).[2] It is characterized by students clustering in areas that they regard as convenient for university life (Hubbard, 2008), creating exclusionary 'student enclaves' (Smith & Hubbard, 2014) which are typically highly residentially concentrated and show a high degree of segregation from non-students (Munro et al., 2009).

This seasonal migration of adolescents also impacts and prompts the growth of segregated entertainment and commercial provisions (Chatterton, 1999). Students first engage in the 'informal colonization' of venues that are close to student residential areas, and this demand in turn prompts local businesses and venues to provide student-focused environments (Chatterton,

[2] A related idea has emerged in recent years, coined 'youthification' (Moos, 2016). Youthification is a process that results in higher density areas remaining 'forever young' over time as new young adults move into neighbourhoods where there is already a significant young person population. The youthification process arguably occurs alongside gentrification, and some degree of studentification (Moos, 2016). However, it is outside of this research project's scope to detail the exact relationship between these concepts, as others have discussed these relationships at length (see Hubbard, 2008; Moos, 2016; Moos et al., 2019; Munro et al., 2009; Revington, 2018; Revington et al., 2018).

1999). Traditional students tend to have a fluid allocation between work and leisure time, as Bourdieu and Passeron (1979) observe: students “live and mean to live in a special time and space. Their studenthood momentarily frees them from family life and working life” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1979: 29; cited in Chatterton, 1999). This fluidity means that students have fewer distinctions between weekends and weekdays than the typical working population, providing them with non-traditional leisure time that can bolster businesses on otherwise ‘slow’ days. For instance, popular student venues are often open on Tuesday and Wednesday nights (Chatterton, 1999). The relationship between students and residential/entertainment venues is an interdependent one; students are prone to cluster in areas perceived as convenient for their lifestyle, and local businesses that target the student demographic can become popular and attract more students to that area. These student-centric areas create ‘pathways’ of activity through city centres (Chatterton, 1999), enabling a high level of spatial segregation between students other urban residents (Munroe et al., 2009).

2.2.2 IMPACTS OF STUDENTIFICATION

The most commonly cited positive impact of studentification is the spending power students bring to local shops and services (Allison, 2006). This can create a sense of increased ‘buzz’ and help to revitalize an area (Smith, 2005; Allison, 2006). Students also tend to be willing to work flexible shifts at entry-level service jobs, supporting businesses that may otherwise struggle to find staff for irregular hours (Munro et al., 2009). Additionally, communities that are home to a college or university are particularly attractive to well-educated and more affluent retirees (Shih-Ming et al., 2008; cited in Powell, 2016). However, the documented negative effects of

studentification largely outnumber the positive. For instance, there are *economic* impacts through the inflation of property prices as housing stock becomes targeted towards students; *physical* changes as houses are converted for multiple-occupancy; *social* impacts as permanent residents are displaced by an often disruptively transient, middle-class youth population; and *cultural* impacts as service provision restructures to reflect the popular tastes and lifestyles of a student population (Smith, 2005; Allison, 2006; Chatterton, 1999; Munro et al., 2009). People living in and around studentified areas often report lifestyle conflicts (ex. noise, late nights), burglaries, non-student population being driven out, vacancies in the summer months, litter and garbage, visual disrepair and clutter, 'student ghetto' monoculture, and a lack of sufficient street parking (Allison, 2006: 88; Hubbard, 2008: 332-3). Studentification may also entail the displacement of local services for families, a reduction in community events, and a fragmentation of community cohesion (Sage et al., 2012: 1068-69). Additionally, the age segregation enabled by studentification could contribute to ageism, reinforce prejudices, and hinder socialization (Revington, 2018). Sage et al., (2013) also note that studentification may produce social divides along age demographics, and could result in an age-divided city.

2.2.3 STUDENTIFICATION AND AGING

Because studentification can be a disruptive process of urban change, it has the potential to affect place attachment, as well as the ability of seniors to comfortably age in place. However, the literature has not yet examined how studentification can affect place attachment, and only two studies appear to have examined the relationship between studentification and aging in place: Powell (2016), and Lager & van Hoven (2019).

Powell (2016) performed a year-long ethnographic study of a campus-adjacent neighbourhood in a small American college town and highlighted the majority-minority relations, threat of displacement, and the impact of transience on local residents in studentified areas. Powell found that the process of studentification leaves many older residents feeling vulnerable as a minority in campus-adjacent neighbourhoods where year-round residents were once the majority (Powell, 2016: 543). In this circumstance, aging in place was a source of stress for older adults who felt trapped in their homes, leading to a variety of social, economic, and psychological effects (Scharlach & Lehning, 2016; cited in Powell, 2016). This finding supports the suggestion that aging in place has perhaps been romanticized, and its challenges minimized (Golant, 2015; cited in Powell, 2016).

Lager & van Hoven (2019) also explored the experienced impact of studentification on aging in place in an urban neighbourhood in the Netherlands by interviewing older adults residing in studentified areas. The authors found that the influx of students negatively affected older adults' feelings of residential comfort; nevertheless, none of the participants wished to move. Residents expressed a "sense of familiarity and valued the proximity of shops, public transport, and health services, which allowed them to live independently" (Lager & van Hoven, 2019: 96). This study highlights a tension between older residents' attachments while trying to age in place and the changes brought about by students: the benefits of aging in place presume an amenable social and physical local environment for senior residents, but studentification may negatively affect

seniors' environments (Lager & van Hoven, 2019). Therefore, studentification may pose a risk to seniors' ability to successfully age in place.

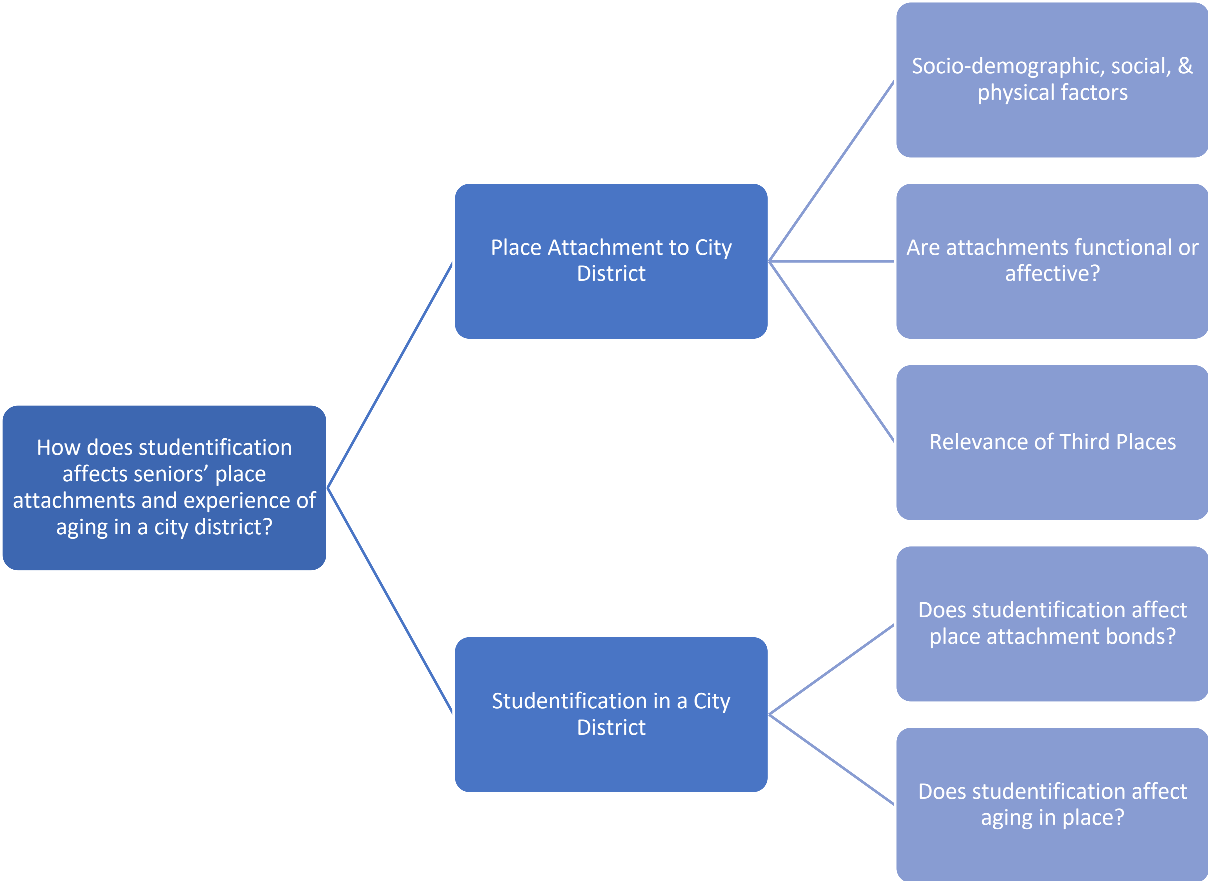
These two studies primarily focused on the relationship between studentification and aging in place in residential environments. However, these studies did not delve into how place attachments can be affected when students and seniors do not have the same attachment to a shared place, or the effects of studentification outside of residential neighbourhoods. Given that studentification often results in specific patterns of commercial and residential development, it has the potential to impact place scales beyond the neighbourhood, such as the city district. The aforementioned problems associated with studentification and aging in place may translate to the city district scale, making seniors feel excluded from the shared public realm. The pressure of change exerted by studentification may also deteriorate place attachment to the city district, thereby affecting the health and social benefits associated with seniors' place attachments. As of yet, however, the relationship between studentification and place attachment, particularly in city districts, is not addressed within the literature.

2.3 CONCLUSION AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The field of place attachment studies has benefited from increased attention in recent years, particularly from interest generated in the age-friendly movement. Although the role of place attachment in the aging process has been examined, the literature is only recently starting to analyze and conceptualize the relationships between aging in place, place attachment, and disruptive urban processes such as studentification (Lager & van Hoven, 2019). The results of this

literature review suggest two considerable gaps in existing literature: *1) What place attachment bonds to city district are demonstrated by long-term senior residents?,* and *2) How does studentification affect seniors' experiences in a city district*? The following section will discuss these two overarching research questions in greater depth by outlining the theoretical framework and relevant subsidiary questions informing the study. A visual representation of the conceptual framework can be seen in *FIGURE 2* below.

FIGURE 2: Conceptual Framework



2.3.1 RESEARCH QUESTION 1: PLACE ATTACHMENT TO CITY DISTRICT?

The concept of place attachment is consistently defined as a bond between an individual or group and particular social or physical environments. 'Insideness' and 'rootedness' are elements of this attachment and are expressed through deep bonds to places. Place attachments are beneficial insofar as they can create an 'anchoring' effect that helps an individual or group maintain a coherent sense of identity. This is especially true for older people, because the immediate environment becomes more important with age, and older people develop a sense of "self-attachment, personal identity, and social differentiation through the relationship they construct and maintain with daily, 'ordinary' spaces" (Burns et al., 2012: 1). Therefore, understanding older people's place attachments is integral to understanding how they are impacted by urban change.

The vast majority of place attachment researchers assume that physical and social dimensions of place are worth distinguishing, and may play different roles in attachment processes (Lewicka, 2011: 213). The physical and social dimensions of place can exist on a variety of geographic scales, with the most studied target of place attachment research being the neighbourhood, followed by the home, city and less frequently, national regions and continents (Lewicka 2011). Approximately 75% of all work that deals with residential place attachment concerns attachment to neighbourhood (Lewicka p.212, see also Hidalgo and Hernández 2001, Billig, 2005; Brown et al., 2003; Kamalipour, 2012). However, there has been almost no research into the place attachment relationships of residents to specific city districts. City districts can be understood as administratively, culturally, socially, or economically distinct sectors of cities. They occupy a distinct place between the larger city and the more intimate scale of a residential neighbourhood

(Lewicka, 2010). Only one study appears to have examined place attachment to the city district, and it merely found attachment to district to be greater than attachment to city but less than attachment to neighbourhood (Lewicka, 2010). This paucity of information, particularly qualitative data, pertaining to city districts is a significant gap in the literature. More specifically, there is no research examining seniors' place attachments to city district, despite the fact that place attachments are a valuable source of stability and happiness throughout the life course. City districts can play an essential role in the everyday life of senior residents, but the nature of place attachment bonds to these locales—if these bonds are even present— is largely unknown.

That being said, across all place scales, length of residence has repeatedly been found to be the single strongest factor in fostering place attachment (Lewicka, 2011; Lewicka, 2010; Brown, Perkins & Brown, 2003; Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974). This finding is especially pertinent to older adults, who are more likely to have lived in a particular area for an extended period of time and developed sentimental ties (Hummon, 1992: 257, also see Goudy, 1982; Sampson, 1988). This suggests that senior long-time residents *may* have some place attachment to city district, although the specific nature of that attachment is unclear. As such, the first major inquiry of this study is: *What place attachment bonds to a city district are demonstrated by long-term senior residents?* This question will be examined in reference to three key gaps in existing literature: which socio-demographic, social, and physical factors seem to influence attachment at the city district level; whether any attachment to city district is functional or affective in nature; and whether third places play a role in attachment to district.

2.3.1 (A) WHICH SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC, SOCIAL, AND PHYSICAL FACTORS INFLUENCE ATTACHMENT AT THE CITY DISTRICT LEVEL?

Because the city district has so rarely been studied as a scale of place attachment, little data exists suggesting which specific socio-demographic, social, and physical factors are likely to influence attachment at this geographical scale. However as noted above, residence length is the most studied and best-established socio-demographic predictor of place attachment. Despite the lack of data specific to this place scale, it is expected that long-term residents will describe *some* level of place attachment to city district.

Additionally, many studies have found that a significant socio-demographic predictor of place attachment is home ownership (Lewicka 2011 citing Bolan, 1997; Brown et al., 2003; Mesch & Manor, 1998; Ringel & Finkelstein, 1991). In the context of city districts, it may be the case that homeowners residing within the district, or directly adjacent to the district, will exhibit place attachment to the district more generally. In reference to social predictors of attachment, the literature broadly suggests that local social connections—particularly those involving friends, family, organization membership, and local shopping—are consistent and significant sources of sentimental ties to a locale. It is therefore likely that residents who describe frequent interactions with social networks in the city district will be place attached to the area. However, it is necessary to attempt to distinguish between attachment to specific venues for socialization versus attachment to the city district as a whole. Finally, the literature on physical predictors of attachments suggests that quiet, walkable, stable, and clean neighbourhoods with green areas tend to foster place attachment. These criteria may prove relevant insofar as they apply to

residents' self-described experience of the city district (Harlan et al., 2005 cited in Lewicka, 2011; Lewicka, 2010). The prevalence of landmarks and unique features perceived as contributing to the district's unique 'identity' may also be linked to place attachment in an urban environment. When considering physical and social predictors of attachment together, it is likely that groups concerned with change, such as neighbourhood association group members, will describe attachment; the effort made to maintain a place and its main activities has the potential to increase the level of personal attachment (Kamalipour et al., 2012). Accordingly, this research project will highlight which socio-demographic, social, and physical predictors appear to affect place attachment to city district.

2.3.1 (B) IS ATTACHMENT TO CITY DISTRICT FUNCTIONAL OR AFFECTIVE?

There are two primary standpoints in the literature explaining why place attachments develop. The *functional* perspective argues that place attachments simply develop when a place is able to fulfill its user's functional needs and support their behavioural goals better than known alternatives (Williams, Patterson, Roggenbuck and Watson, 1992; cited in Ujang, 2012). This is a functional relationship between people and their environment which assumes that individuals' competences enable them to make rational choices with respect to their environments (Van Hees et al., 2018). Conversely, the *affective* perspective argues that human emotions play an important role in attachment, rather than logic or reason. This stance is supported by studies finding that people often take satisfaction in their local neighbourhoods and attach to the neighbourhood, even when it is objectively unsafe or no longer suits their needs (La Gory, Ward, & Sherman, 1985; cited in Wiles et al. 2012; Van Hees et al., 2018). It is worth noting that the vast majority of

studies describing affective place attachment focus on local neighbourhood and home, not city district. Because ‘home’ is the locus of many people’s lives, the local environment around one’s home may be especially ripe with memories and social connections. As such, it is unclear to what degree an affective bond may also be present in attachment to city district, or whether the relationship between people and districts is primarily a functional one. Additionally, the literature suggests the ‘neighbourhood’ is often inconsistently defined by its residents, so people may include different areas within their understanding of what comprises their local neighbourhood. Depending on the location of the city district in reference to one’s residence, the nebulous boundaries of ‘the neighbourhood’ may include the city district, more readily aligning the question of place attachment in the city district with the plentiful research on place attachment within neighbourhoods. Keeping all this in mind, this study will examine whether seniors describe a primarily functional or affective relationship with the city district.

2.3.1 (C) WHAT IS THE RELEVANCE OF THIRD PLACES TO PLACE ATTACHMENT?

Third places are locations where older adults make social connections and experience informal public life outside of the workplace or home. They are social meeting places that ultimately contribute to the strength of the community, such as a park, a community centre, or a shop (Yuen & Johnson, 2017; Alidoust et al., 2019; Gardner, 2011; Van Hees et al., 2018). Third places can play a significant role in providing older people opportunities to engage in the social lives of their local communities, thus contributing to their social health and overall wellbeing (Alidoust et al., 2015). Identifying third places depends on individuals or groups’ subjective experiences of an area, and whether they perceive certain areas to be valuable social hubs. Since older adults can

form place attachments to third places (Rosenbaum et al., 2009), it is possible that place attachment to specific areas *within* the city district will affect their overall attachment to a city district. Likewise, a lack of third places may correlate with a diminished sense of attachment to the district. Therefore, as part of examining place attachment at the city district level, the study aims to identify third places within the city district and will outline the relationship(s) between attachment to third places and attachment to the city district as a whole.

2.3.2 RESEARCH QUESTION 2: STUDENTIFICATION IN A CITY DISTRICT?

The literature notes that place attachments to physical and social environments, including to third places, can be affected by processes of urban change (Brown et al., 2003). While gentrification has been linked to changes in place attachment, another similarly disruptive process of change is studentification. Studentification is defined by largely segregated concentrations of students in particular areas, leading to a variety of physical, social, and cultural impacts. While some effects of studentification can be positive, such as the increased buzz and spending power students bring, these are largely outweighed by the documented negative effects. Negative effects include displacement of local families, an increase in noise, and 'student ghetto' monoculture whereby the housing and services available in an area primarily target the student demographic. Much in the same way that gentrification has been linked to diminished place attachment, the changes brought about by studentification may affect place attachment.

As part of attempting to discern what place attachment bonds to a city district are demonstrated by long-term senior residents, it is important to consider relevant processes of urban change

currently shaping the social and physical landscape of the study location. In this case, studentification is a prominent concern.[3] However, the literature is silent on the ways in which studentification may affect place attachment, and correspondingly studentification has not yet been studied in reference to older adults' place attachment at the city district scale. Considering that studentification is often problematic for seniors aging in place, it may affect seniors' experiences of the city, including city districts. As such, the second major inquiry of this study is: *How does a large student population affect seniors' experiences of a city district?* This question will be examined in reference to two key questions: whether studentification appears to affect place attachment bonds in the city district; and how a studentified city district may affect seniors' ability to access that area as they age in place.

2.3.2 (A) DOES STUDENTIFICATION AFFECT PLACE ATTACHMENT BONDS IN THE CITY DISTRICT?

As part of considering the role of seniors' place attachment(s) to city district, it is beneficial to consider how processes of urban change—such as studentification—affect place attachment. There is presently no literature that speaks to how studentification may affect the place attachment of residents who are not students themselves (Holton, 2015). As such, the degree to which an increased student presence affects seniors' place attachment, if at all, is unknown. Furthermore, while studentification has been noted in university towns and cities around the world, the effects are typically analyzed in reference to residential neighbourhoods. If the broader literature on studentified residential neighbourhoods applies to the city district scale, one would expect studentification to have a negative impact on residents' experience of the

[3] Chapter 3 details the case study location in greater depth.

district. This negative relationship may correlate with decreased place attachment, or potentially prevent the development of attachment to begin with. Studentification could also affect the availability of third places for seniors, as local businesses and service providers instead target the burgeoning student presence. By considering the role students play in seniors' described experiences and attachment to the area, the study aims to provide a preliminary look at how studentification may affect place attachment.

2.3.2 (B) DOES STUDENTIFICATION IN A CITY DISTRICT AFFECT AGING IN PLACE?

Studentification has the potential to affect many aspects of a city district, beyond possibly impacting place attachment. Indeed, regardless of whether studentification has any bearing on place attachment, studentification can still affect seniors' experiences of aging in place. It is clear that many seniors want to age in place, and ensuring adequate access to physical, social, and cultural spaces in the city can help to maintain health and self-identity throughout the aging process (Van Hees et al., 2018; Versey, 2018; Wiles et al., 2012; Morita et al., 2010). However, despite the growing interest in the role of the urban landscape outside of the home in facilitating aging in place, the vast majority of aging in place studies focus solely on residential neighbourhoods (Lewicka, 2011: 212). In a similar vein, the literature on studentification and aging in place has primarily focused on the effects noted in residential environments (Powell, 2016; Lager & van Hoven, 2019). As such, there is an incomplete understanding of how studentification may affect seniors' experiences of areas besides their immediate residential neighbourhood, such as city districts, while aging in place. It is unclear how studentification, as a process of urban change, affects seniors' ability and willingness to access the public realm of a

city district. The public realm contained within a city district can be a valuable source of social connections and functional utility to seniors, but studentification as a process of urban change can be disruptive to seniors’ experience of the public realm. By considering how seniors describe their experiences with students in the city district, this study outlines how studentification may impact aging in place beyond the scope of one’s immediate local neighbourhood.

CHAPTER 3 – RESEARCH METHODS

This thesis takes a qualitative, exploratory approach to the question of how studentification affects seniors' place attachments and experience of aging in a city district. Specific research questions posed are:

1) What place attachment bonds to a city district are demonstrated by long-term senior residents?; and

2) Does studentification affect seniors' experiences of a city district?

The data analyzed to answer these questions is produced from in-depth semi-structured interviews with eleven seniors who are long-time residents of the City of Waterloo. Photo-elicitation was employed during the interviews to prompt meaningful place-related dialogue and jog participants' memories of specific places in the city district of Uptown Waterloo. The semi-structured interview format encouraged natural conversation and reflections of lived experiences, but also allowed the interviewer to ensure the conversation largely focused on the city district. Interview data was then analyzed using thematic analysis, with relevant themes originating both from the conceptual framework and empirical data. A detailed description of this study's methodological approach and research methods is presented in the following chapter.

3.1 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Because this research is interested in identifying individuals' thoughts, feelings, and experiences of a phenomenon, a qualitative approach was selected to answer the research questions.

Qualitative research is a form of inquiry that analyzes information conveyed through language and behavior in natural settings. It is often used to capture expressive information about beliefs, values, feelings, and motivations that underlie behaviors (Berkwits & Inui, 1998), and to identify potential antecedents and factors about which little has been known and explored (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; cited in Khan, 2014). Qualitative research starts from a fundamentally different set of beliefs—or paradigms—than those that underpin quantitative research. While quantitative research is based on positivist beliefs that there is a singular reality that can be discovered with the appropriate experimental methods, qualitative research generally draws on constructivist beliefs (Teherani et al., 2015). Constructivist researchers believe that there is no single reality, but that the researcher elicits participants' views of reality. The belief that there are many different views of reality depending on one's perspective is a basic tenet of qualitative research (Pascale, 2011).

In other words, qualitative research is premised on the idea that humans generate knowledge and meaning from their lived experiences and accordingly focuses on experience, meaning, and perspective (Creswell, 2003, as cited in Frank, 2010). Qualitative approaches are useful when attempting to understand the thoughts and experiences of a particular group of individuals that share common characteristics (Creswell, 2014, as cited in Donato, 2019). A qualitative approach allows for broad information gathering, lending itself to unrestricted responses and exploratory research projects. Accordingly, qualitative research is a well-established approach to place-attachment studies in urban planning (see Lager & van Hoven, 2019; Lewicka, 2011 citing Van

Patten & Williams, 2008; Fishwick & Vining, 1992; Devine-Wright & Howes, 2010; Stedman, 2003).

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design of this study is exploratory in nature, as it aims to produce data and contribute to a research question of which little is known. Exploration is not a synonym for qualitative research, as the former emphasizes the development of theory from data, and the latter emphasizes methodology and the actual collection of data (Stebbins, 2001). A research design paradigm that reflects the qualitative, exploratory nature of this study is naturalistic inquiry, or naturalism. Naturalistic inquiry is an approach to understanding the social world in which the researcher observes, describes, and interprets the experiences and actions of specific people and groups (Armstrong, 2010). Naturalistic researchers often draw on observations, interviews, and other sources of descriptive data to create interpretations of social phenomena (Armstrong, 2010). In-depth interviews were employed in the case of this study. The naturalism approach aims to develop "interpretations and local theories that afford deep insights into the human experience" (Armstrong, 2010: 880). As such, naturalistic research is typically conducted in the field, engaging participants in 'natural' environments—as opposed to the clinical lab settings of many traditional studies. Language is considered a key source of insight into individuals' or groups' socially constructed worlds, and researchers record participants' words/actions with minimal interpretation (Armstrong, 2010). This reflects the approach's interest in gaining in-depth insight into individual meanings, motives, and multiple complex understandings of phenomena. The findings of studies in this paradigm often lead to new

questions, which in turn lead to improved observations and interpretations. This process is a central goal of naturalistic inquiry (Armstrong 2010: 881).

3.3 STUDY LOCATION

The location selected for this study was the city district of Uptown Waterloo, located in the City of Waterloo. The City of Waterloo is one of three urban municipalities and four rural townships that comprise the Region of Waterloo, an upper-tier municipality west of Toronto in southern Ontario (see **FIGURE A** in Appendix 1).

3.3.1 REGION AND CITY OF WATERLOO

The Region of Waterloo is an example of the dispersed city form, whereby the area developed around five distinct cores instead of one original settlement area: Uptown Waterloo, Downtown Kitchener, and the three towns of Galt, Hespeler, and Preston (Revington et al., 2018). The majority of the Region's growth came in the wake of World War 2, when there was a proliferation of suburban retail, industrial, and low-density housing development, a transformation "aided and abetted" by the obsolescence of inner-city industrial sites and deindustrialization more generally (Filion, Bunting, and Curtis, 1996; cited in Revington et al., 2018: 4).

Today, the City of Waterloo (hereafter 'Waterloo' or the 'City') is a midsized city with an estimated 2019 population of 146,010 permanent and temporary residents (Waterloo, 2020c). The City is rapidly growing: from 2011 to 2016, Waterloo's permanent population grew by 6.3%, considerably outpacing Regional growth (5.5%) and the overall Province of Ontario growth rate

(4.6%). Furthermore, between 2016 and 2041, the City is forecasted to grow by 26% to reach a total population—comprising permanent residents and students—of 160,183 (Waterloo, 2020c).

The City of Waterloo, as well as the Region more generally, has undergone a transformation from manufacturing to the knowledge economy and high-tech industry (Revington et al., 2018). As part of an effort to curb urban sprawl and increase density, a light rail transit (LRT) transit system connecting Uptown Waterloo and Downtown Kitchener was approved in 2011 and opened in 2019. As Revington et al. (2018) note, this reflects a desire in the area to create a more 'urban' feel and attract skilled workers and professionals within the knowledge economy. The City has particularly benefitted from the reputation of the University of Waterloo as a high-quality industry-friendly and innovative university, especially in the areas of engineering and computer science (Bathelt, Kogler, and Munro, 2011; Bramwell and Wolfe, 2008; Bramwell, Nelles, and Wolfe, 2008; as cited in Revington et al., 2018).

3.3.2 STUDENT AND SENIOR DEMOGRAPHICS

The City of Waterloo is home to three post-secondary institutions: The University of Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier University, and a Conestoga College campus. Notably, the City of Waterloo is the only mid-sized city in Ontario with two universities. Students at these institutions comprise a significant portion of Waterloo's total population. An estimated 14% (18,035) of Waterloo's 2019 population were students living in off-campus housing (Waterloo, 2020c). The number of students in the City has increased in recent years; there was a rapid rise in local university

enrolment from roughly 23,000 students in 2000 to approximately 40,000 by 2012 (Revington et al., 2018).

Although university students live throughout the entire Region, Revington et al. (2018) notes that they are notably concentrated in City of Waterloo neighbourhoods around the main UW and WLU campuses and particularly in an inner-suburban area known as Northdale, located between the two campuses (See **FIGURE A**, Appendix 1). The concentration of students around the universities has created unique housing demands that have been explored by several authors.[4]

Today, the University of Waterloo reports 35,875 full-time students (University of Waterloo, 2021), while Wilfrid Laurier University reports 16,415 full-time students (Wilfrid Laurier University, 2021). It is estimated that over 56,200 students reside in the broader Waterloo Region (Region of Waterloo, 2019). The vast majority of students rent their accommodations, and a 2017 survey of students found that the majority (86%) lived within 1-5 km from campus (Waterloo, 2020c. See **FIGURE B** in Appendix 1 for a visual representation of this geographical area). This means that a majority of students live in the City of Waterloo and partake in its social, economic, and cultural life.

[4] A small body of work has detailed studentification-related processes in Waterloo. Charbonneau et al. (2006) examined the nature of student rental housing in Waterloo from a demand-based perspective, and explores the implications of these findings for downtown revitalization. More recently, Revington et al. (2018) examined student housing in Waterloo, and argues that the City has been more experimental and forward-thinking in policy and planning pertaining to student housing than elsewhere in Canada. See also: Moos, M., Revington, N., Wilkin, T. and Andrey, J. (2018). The knowledge economy city: Gentrification, studentification and youthification, and their connections to universities. *Urban Studies* 56 (6). 1075-1092.

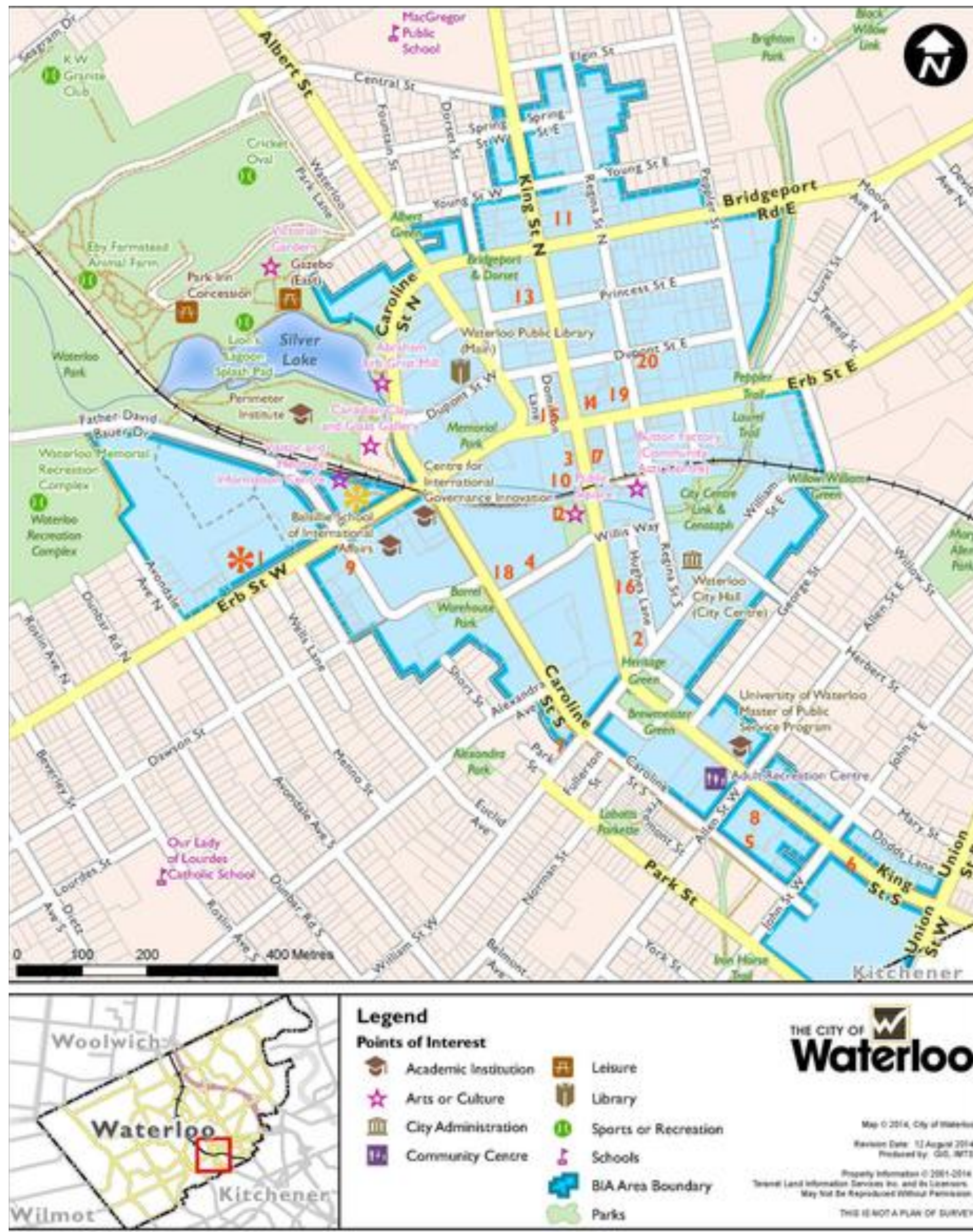
Although Waterloo is a relatively youthful city, there is an increasing number of seniors residing in the City. At the time of the last census, seniors (65+) constituted 16.6% of the population (Statistics Canada, 2017). Like much of Canada, Waterloo's senior population growth is outpacing other age groups, and that trend is expected to continue as Baby Boomers advance further into their senior years (Waterloo, 2020). The number of Waterloo's older seniors (70+ years) is expected to grow and will comprise a greater proportion of the City's permanent population: 10% in 2016 as compared to 17% by 2041 (Waterloo, 2020). In the Waterloo Region more broadly, estimates suggest that by 2031 one in five people in the Waterloo Region will be over the age of 65 (Region of Waterloo, 2019). The City of Waterloo is a member of the World Health Organization's (WHO) Global Network on Age-friendly Cities and Communities, and has made several commitments towards being an age-friendly city (Waterloo, 2018). The City has an active Mayor's Age-friendly City Advisory Committee, and in March of 2018, the City received the 2018 Ontario Age-Friendly Community Recognition Award from the Province of Ontario. Communities selected for the award demonstrate a "strong commitment to key principles of creating age-friendliness, including engagement with local seniors, collaboration with a diversity of community partners and significant impact on the local community" (World Health Organization, 2018).

The combination of a growing senior and student population makes the City of Waterloo an appropriate location to study the question of how students, and the process of studentification, may affect seniors' experiences and place attachment. In particular, the findings of this study can be used to support and inform Waterloo's ongoing commitment to being an age-friendly city.

3.3.3 CITY DISTRICT: UPTOWN WATERLOO

The city district selected for this study in the City of Waterloo is Uptown Waterloo, as defined by the Uptown Waterloo Business Improvement Area (BIA); see **FIGURE 3** below.

FIGURE 3: Boundary of Uptown Waterloo BIA



Source: City of Waterloo. (2014). Uptown Waterloo. Retrieved from: https://uwaterloo.ca/science-technology-society/restaurants

The Uptown neighbourhood has been identified by the province as Waterloo's Urban Growth Centre: an area for targeted residential and job densification which also emphasizes providing services to the surrounding region (Ontario Ministry of Infrastructure, 2006; Chase 2015). It is also considered the City of Waterloo's commercial and cultural core, comprising its business and employment lands complemented by cultural and institutional services, medium-density residential areas, and recreational space (City of Waterloo, 2020b; cited in Chase, 2015).

As depicted in **FIGURE A** (Appendix 1), Uptown is adjacent to several mature neighbourhoods. It is bordered by the Westmount residential neighbourhood to the Southwest and the MacGregor/Albert neighbourhood to the North. The MacGregor/Albert Neighbourhood was designated as a heritage conservation district in 2006 in recognition of its cultural heritage value and status as the oldest residential area in the City (Waterloo, 2006). Uptown is also bordered by the City of Kitchener neighbourhoods of Breithaupt Fairfield to the East and Mount Hope to the South.

The City of Waterloo promotes its Uptown as an "urban escape" acting as a gathering space for the community, and the City's Official Plan emphasizes "the need to retain Uptown's sense of community and identity" (City of Waterloo, 2020b; City of Waterloo, 2020a: 30). There are over 475 businesses in the BIA (Uptown Waterloo, 2021), and Uptown also occupies a central location in the regional transportation networks, sitting in the middle of Waterloo's central transit corridor (IBI Group, 2011; cited in Chase, 2015). Uptown has a rich mix of services and amenities, including access to the Region's light-rail transportation system (LRT), a small commercial mall,

numerous local shops and restaurants, health services, a public library, recreation complexes, and many office spaces (Uptown Waterloo, 2021).

Recognizing the importance of this city district, in 1992 the City of Waterloo formed an 'Uptown Vision Committee' to create a 'Vision for Uptown' in the form of a white paper. Updates have been made periodically to this paper, with the most recent made in 2021 looking ahead to 2030. The new iteration makes several key recommendations, including developing a strategy for city-owned lands for affordable housing and flexible multi-use buildings; sustainability and climate change mitigation; balanced parking and active transportation opportunities; and additional amenities such as seating, public art, and drinking water stations (Jackson, 2021).

The city district of Uptown Waterloo has been positioned as a long-standing fixture in the City, and is in many ways at the heart of Waterloo. As a centrally located and mixed-use district, Uptown is an ideal city district for the purposes of this study. It is located within 2 km of both the University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University, making it a convenient area for students. Waterloo is also a city with a growing senior population, and identifies "addressing the needs of an aging population" as an objective in its most recent Strategic Plan (City of Waterloo, 2019: 9). As **FIGURE 3** in Appendix 1 depicts, the Uptown and surrounding areas have a higher proportion of older adults than the Region at large (City of Waterloo, 2017).[5] The combination of student and senior demographics in a defined and well-established city district that is "growing young

[5] It should also be noted that there are three retirement homes and/or assisted living facilities within the Region's core area. This may contribute to the higher percentage of older adults residing in the Uptown and surrounding areas (City of Waterloo, 2017).

and growing old" makes the study location suitable for this research project (City of Waterloo, 2017: 21).

3.4 DATA COLLECTION

To reflect the exploratory, naturalistic approach of this study, in-depth semi-structured interviews were performed with a sample of 11 participants. These participants were all older adults (aged 65 and older) who had lived in the City of Waterloo for at least the past 30 years. A portion of the interviews utilized a photo-elicitation approach to encourage place-related dialogue. The participant recruitment and interview process are discussed in further depth in the following section.

3.4.1 PARTICIPANT SAMPLE

Naturalistic researchers employ purposive, rather than representative or random, sampling methods. Participants are selected based on the purpose of the study and the questions under investigation (Armstrong, 2010: 881). As such, this study employed a purposive recruitment strategy. Purposeful sampling is a technique widely used in qualitative research that involves identifying and selecting individuals that are especially knowledgeable about, or experienced with, a phenomenon of interest (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011; cited in Palinkas et al., 2015). It is also important that these participants be available and willing to communicate experiences and opinions in an "articulate, expressive, and reflective manner" (Palinkas et al., 2015: 2). With this in mind, the specific inclusion criteria for this study were that participants be aged 65 or older; have lived in the City of Waterloo for at least the last 30 years; be capable and willing to

view photographs and speak about their experiences; not have any cognitive and/or memory impairments that would affect their ability to recall memories and thoughts; and be capable of providing independent consent. These criteria were selected to ensure the participant sample would be able to speak to the lived experience of seniors in the City of Waterloo coherently and reflectively.

The participants for this research project were 11 seniors (65+) who had lived in the City of Waterloo for the majority of their lives, or at least the past 30 years. The average combined age of participants was 75. The literature suggests that this demographic is likely to have place attachments, as age and long-term residence are associated with bonds to place. The timeframe of at least 30 years was selected so that participants would be able to speak to the changes the City has undergone over the years as the student population has grown. It was not a requirement to have lived in or adjacent to the Uptown city district. A profile of participants is presented in **TABLE 1** below.

TABLE 1: Participants Profile

Participant Code	**Sex**	**Age**	**Years lived in City**
P1	Female	87	59
P2	Female	65	65
P3	Male	77	51
P4	Female	67	40

P5	Male	72	33
P6	Male	75	46
P7	Female	77	51
P8	Female	87	54
P9	Female	73	38
P10	Female	76	53
P11	Female	73	42
		Median: 75	Median: 48

The sample size of 11 is supported by McCracken (1988), who suggests a sample size of at least nine participants for semi-structured interviews. Guest et al. (2006) found that for research enterprises in which the aim is to understand common perceptions and experiences among a group of relatively homogenous individuals, a maximum of twelve interviews should suffice. As such, 11 in-depth interviews provided sufficient depth and content saturation.

Participants were recruited to the study via community and academic contacts. The researcher attended a meeting of the Age-Friendly Waterloo Committee, explained the research project, and shared contact information. Many seniors sit on the Committee who are engaged in age-related issues and active in their respective local neighbourhoods. Additionally, there are political and academic actors on the Committee who are connected with various organizations and groups throughout the City. Members of the Committee were asked to consider participating, and/or to share the word of the study through their information networks. This was an instance of snowball

sampling- a well-established qualitative method for producing information-rich key informants (Patton, 2002). The process begins by asking well-connected people who are known to have relevant social networks if they can recommend someone who may be interested in the study (Patton, 2002). These initial key informants are ‘gatekeepers’ that can provide access to certain populations a researcher is trying to reach (Mendez, 2020). The method assumes that members of a certain population will know each other, so as these key informants spread the word, the ‘snowball’ of possible participants grows larger. This recruitment method produced 11 participants who confirmed their eligibility to participate.

The interviews took place between February 15th and February 26th, 2021, and ranged from 45 minutes to 90 minutes in length. Although naturalistic research prefers conducting interviews on-site and in-person, this was prevented by Covid-19 pandemic health restrictions. Instead, interviews were conducted remotely with participants in their homes via the teleconferencing application Zoom or by telephone.

3.4.2 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Naturalistic, exploratory research often employs in-depth interviews as a means for the researcher to gather from the informant, in their own words, their experiences and attitudes towards the research problem (Walker, 1985; cited in Frank, 2010). A semi-structured research approach was selected to allow open-ended questions that explored participants’ thoughts and feelings, but which also provided the interviewer with the opportunity to keep the conversation focused. The interview was comprised of open-ended questions designed to encourage

conversation, as well as questions focused on the photo-elicitation technique. The interview prompt questions and interview script can be found in **Appendix 2**, and the photographs and images are presented in **Appendix 3**.

Photo-elicitation is a common data collection method within qualitative research as an aid to semi-structured interviews which allows subjects to discuss visual stimuli according to their own personally or culturally relevant conceptual categories (Harper, 2002; cited in Frank, 2010). Photo-elicitation has emerged as a useful means to understand sense of place (Briggs et al., 2014: 154). Visual approaches for studying place attachment have been under-utilized, relative to their potential contribution; most place attachment research has emphasized text or numbers (Manzo et al. 2014: 113). However, since place attachments are forged through experience and engagement with the local environment and social actors, photographic methods seem particularly well suited to the understanding of place attachment (Manzo et al., 2014: 112-114)

Photographs can be used to obtain knowledge beyond that provided through direct analysis (Collier & Collier, 1986: 99). When 'native' eyes interpret and enlarge upon the photographic content, the potential range of data enlarges beyond that contained in the photographs themselves (Collier & Collier 1986: 99). Photographs can function as expressive—yet explicit–reference points for discussion, and invite people to take a lead in inquiry; as opposed to interviews where conversations become stilted due to the researcher probing for explicit information (Collier & Collier, 1986: 99; 105). Photographs sharpen the memory and allow people to tell their own stories spontaneously, through eliciting a flow of information about places,

personalities, processes, etc. (Collier & Collier, 1986: 106). Some of the earliest research pairing place attachment and photo-based methods pertained to age, and examined how place attachment is affected by the aging process (Norris-Baker and Scheidt, 1994; Ponzetti, 2003; Rubenstein and Parmelee, 1992; cited in Manzo et al. 2014: 114)

Due to the limitations imposed by Covid-19 pandemic health restrictions, participants were provided with photographs in digital PDF form. A total of 21 photos were selected which depicted locations around Uptown at various points in time, presented chronologically from 1960 to 2020. Photographs for the study were primarily obtained via archival library data. The images were emailed to the participants at least one week in advance of their respective scheduled interview date, and participants were encouraged to reflect on the photographs. During the interview, the researcher asked participants to discuss their impressions of the photographs and posed open-ended questions designed to encourage place-related dialogue. The combination of general questions and specific photo-elicitation based questions facilitated on-topic, yet organic, conversations about place, attachment, and change.

3.4.3 INTERVIEW PROCESS

The interviews were conducted by following the open-ended questions outlined in the interview script (see **Appendix 2**). The basic structure of each interview was comprised of six sections of questions: 1) A consent overview; 2) biographic information; 3) experiences in present Uptown Waterloo; 4) photo-elicitation based questions; 5) student-related questions; and, 6) Uptown as a place for seniors. The interview script was followed as closely as possible to provide participants

with the same opportunity to answer each question. However, because the primary interview questions were open-ended, the exact sub-questions (i.e. prompts) posed to each participant varied depending on the level of detail provided in a participants' initial response. While some interviews required prompts to be asked directly to start the conversation, other participants shared responses to those sub-questions unprompted as part of the participant-driven conversation. In general, the interviews followed the structure outlined below.

First, the consent script section reviewed the intent of the study and provided participants with an opportunity to ask any unanswered questions regarding the interview process. It was reiterated that the participants could refuse to answer any questions and could stop the study at any point by informing the interviewer. Participants were reminded of the interview protocols, including audio-recording and the use of anonymous quotations in the thesis, and were asked to provide verbal consent.

Once consent was obtained, the interview proceeded to a brief biographical question section. These questions were intended to get a sense of how long participants had lived in the City of Waterloo, as well as their general background. This information helped to contextualize whether participants lived in or around the city district of Uptown.

The third section was considerably more substantive and attempted to gain insight into participants' attachments to Uptown as a district, as well as specific places within Uptown. The central question posed to participants was, "Would you say that Uptown is a special place in

Waterloo?" Based on their responses, various prompts were used as conversation starters. The discussion focused on lived experiences, such as where participants enjoyed spending time, socializing with friends, and what places were identified as 'favourite' ones.

The fourth section employed the aforementioned photo-elicitation technique to garner further insight into participants' sense of attachment to the city district. See **Appendix 3** for the photographs utilized in this study. Participants were asked, "Do any of these images bring to mind any special memories for you?" In some cases, participants had many thoughts to share on specific photographs and drove the conversation independently. In other interviews participants did not have much connection to specific photographs, and the conversation instead shifted to a more general discussion about the changes depicted in the photographs when considered as a 'timeline' of Uptown Waterloo over the years.

The fifth section transitioned into a discussion about what demographics visit Uptown, and what kind of impact, if any, seniors perceive the student population as having on the area. These questions addressed the overarching studentification research question, as participants were encouraged to reflect on their personal experiences with students across the City.

Finally, the sixth section asked participants to evaluate their personal experience of Uptown as a senior resident and encouraged them to articulate an 'ideal' vision of the city district. Participants were also given an opportunity at the end of the interview to re-visit or elaborate on any of the

topics discussed. Participants were also encouraged to elaborate on or clarify any of their statements when later provided with a transcript of the conversation.

In general, the majority of the interviews stayed closely on-topic and addressed all of the main open-ended questions listed in the interview script. There were many occasions when participants wished to elaborate on a related idea or mention a relevant topic as an aside. These tangents occasionally took the conversation in an interesting and novel direction. In these scenarios, the interviewer fully pursued that separate line of questioning by asking the participant to elaborate and further explain their thoughts. Throughout the interview process, a conscious effort was made to ensure a friendly, non-judgemental, and encouraging tone.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS METHODS

3.5.1 TRANSCRIPTION

The first step in qualitative data analysis involves transforming experiences and conversations into text (data) (Armstrong, 2010: 881). The interviews were recorded with the participants' permission and transcribed in March of 2021. Every effort was made to accurately transcribe the entirety of the conversation, with minimal editorial adjustments. Notes were made in-text to denote laughter, while repetitive verbal tics (such as 'um' and 'ah') were removed for clarity, and any extraneous conversations (e.g. a participant talking to someone in their home) were edited out of the transcriptions.

3.5.2 THEMATIC ANALYSIS

To analyze the content of the research data, this study employed the common qualitative analytic process known as *thematic analysis*. This approach involves “immersing oneself in the data in order to identify common ideas or themes that emerge based on the phenomenon under investigation and that resonate with the research question(s) posed in the study” (Peterson, 2017: 1). Thematic analysis is a foundational method for qualitative analysis that is not tied to any one theoretical camp, making it a flexible and useful research tool (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In a foundational article on understanding and utilizing thematic analysis, Braun & Clark (2006) define thematic analysis as a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. Notably, similar urban planning studies investigating the effects of studentification on aging in place have utilized thematic analysis of in-depth interview data to gain valuable insights into seniors’ experiences and attitudes (see for example Lager & van Hoven, 2019)

Thematic analysis is considered most appropriate for any study that seeks to discover using interpretations of data, as it provides a systematic element to data analysis (Ibrahim, 2012). Good qualitative research must be able to draw interpretations and be consistent with the data collected, so thematic analysis is a preferred approach to detect and identify concepts and factors across multiple participants’ accounts of a phenomenon. Thematic analysis allows the researcher to move beyond merely counting the incidences of certain words or statements to identify overarching themes that connect multiple pieces of data (Joffe and Yardley, 2004: 67; cited in Ibrahaim, 2012).

Within thematic analysis, a *theme* captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Researcher judgement must be used to determine what a theme is, as there is no quantitative requirement defining what 'counts' as a theme in thematic analysis. What is more important than quantifiable measures is whether a theme "captures something important in relation to the overall research question" (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 86). Themes are not solely produced from the interview questions, as identifying themes involves searching across a data set to find "repeated patterns of meaning" (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 86).

Thematic analysis can be performed either inductively or deductively. While inductive analysis is a process of coding data without trying to fit it into a pre-existing conceptual framework, the deductive, or 'theoretical' approach was utilized in this study. A 'theoretical' thematic analysis is driven by the researcher's pre-existing analytic interest in the topic, and data is coded in reference to specific research questions. This form of thematic analysis tends to provide a less rich description of the data overall but a more detailed analysis of some particular aspect(s) of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This approach is well suited to this study because the data is being examined in reference to concepts identified in the conceptual framework, informed by the literature review. Indeed, Braun & Clark (2006) note that a theoretical approach requires engagement with literature prior to analysis (p.86). However, it is worth noting that deductive or inductive analytic processes can exist on a continuum, rather than a dichotomy (Braun & Clark, 2020).

Furthermore, thematic analysis also typically exclusively focuses on data at either the semantic/explicit or the latent/interpretive level. At the semantic level, analysis involves a progression from descriptions of exactly what a participant has said to an attempt to theorize the significance of patterns and their broader meanings and implications (Patton, 1990; cited in Braun & Clarke, 2006). Conversely, at the latent level analysis seeks to identify underlying ideas, assumptions, and ideologies that are perceived as shaping the semantic content of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This research project utilizes the latent/interpretive approach to thematic analysis. Participants were asked about components or aspects of place attachment based on the literature, rather than explicitly asked if they were place attached or how they would define place attachment. This choice was made to make the interview more accessible for participants who may not have been familiar with place attachment as a distinct concept. Place attachment was instead inferred by the researcher from participants' statements about favourite places, frequently visited places, and places that were meaningful to them; all lines of inquiry closely associated with place attachment in existing research. It is therefore possible that participants may not have 'actually' been place attached to locations they described with great fondness and appreciation. At the same time, a participant who did not describe places with any identifiable language or indicators of attachment may have been place attached in their own way. These differences are to be expected and are not substantially impactful in the context of an exploratory analysis. Indeed, this study was approached with a constructivist lens that acknowledges these different articulations and perspectives of reality.

In terms of performing thematic analysis, the Braun and Clarke approach is the most widely used (Braun & Clarke, 2021). This approach, also known as 'reflexive' thematic analysis, was selected to analyze the data for this study. Braun & Clark (2006) identify six phases of thematic analysis: 1) Data familiarisation and writing familiarisation notes; 2) Systematic data coding; 3) Generating initial themes from coded and organized data; 4) Developing and reviewing themes; 5) Refining, defining and naming themes; and 6) Writing the report.

Accordingly, interview data was transcribed, re-read, and general initial ideas were formulated based on the conceptual framework (Phase 1). Next, interesting features of the data were coded systemically across the entire data set using NVivo coding software (Phase 2). Codes identify a semantic feature of the data that is pertinent to the research questions at hand, and can be understood as 'the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon' (Boyatzis, 1998: 63; cited in Braun & Clarke, 2006). The codes identified are listed below in **TABLE 2**. These codes were developed using a deductive (top-down) coding approach based on the conceptual research framework identified in Chapter 2.

TABLE 2: Data Coding Categories

General Code Category	Coding Subcategories
Aging in Place Uptown [General]	• Senior Presence in Uptown • Social Experience of Uptown • Aesthetic Experience of Uptown • Usefulness of Uptown • Opinion of Uptown as a location for seniors
Change [In Uptown]	• Outlook on change: Positive, neutral, negative • Identified factors of change • Main perceived changes: In Uptown, in student behaviour
Attachment	• Functional • Affective
Place Attachment [General]	• To neighbourhood • To Uptown [city district] • To Uptown [specific locations] • To locations in City [outside Uptown]
Sense of Community	• In Uptown • In residential neighbourhood • Elsewhere
Third Places	• Social Experience • Personal value
Predictors of Attachment	• Sociodemographic [length of residence, age] • Physical [landmarks, surroundings] • Social [involved in local groups]
Studentification [General]	• Positive opinion of students • Neutral opinion of students • Negative opinion of students • Students and community interactions • Student presence in Uptown • Student presence in local neighbourhood • Student presence elsewhere in City • Notable experiences with students

Subsequently, codes were collated into potential themes by gathering all data relevant to each potential theme (Phase 3). Codes serve to organize data into interesting groups, whereas the

units of data analysis are the broader overarching themes. The potential themes were then reviewed in relation to the coded extracts, and then in reference to the entire data set (Phase 4).

Braun & Clarke (2006) note that themes may be identified solely from the data, or the researcher can investigate for themes identified in the broader literature/conceptual framework. Although several themes originated from the theoretical framework in this study, new themes emerged from coding during analysis. As such, the analysis moves between empirical data and theory as new findings are contextualised and interpreted using theory. This approach to coding is distinct from grounded theory as it is more pre-structured as a result of the theoretically informed interview scheme and conceptual framework which leads the analysis (Lager & van Hoven, 2019). The interaction between empirical data and theory is also called 'analytical generalisation' (Lager & van Hoven, 2019 citing Baxter, 2016). Themes were then refined by generating the specific definitions and names, keeping in mind the overall 'story' the data analysis tells (Phase 5). Finally, the report was produced by selecting compelling extracts, and relating the analysis back to the research questions, relevant literature, and conceptual framework (Phase 6). The findings of this thematic analysis are presented in Chapter Four.

3.6 QUALITY CHECKS

Noble & Smith (2015) observe that demonstrating rigour when undertaking qualitative research is challenging because there is no accepted consensus about the standards by which such research should be judged. Although the tests and measures used to establish the 'validity' and 'reliability' of quantitative research can be applied to qualitative research, there are ongoing

debates as to whether these quantitative-dominated terms are appropriate to evaluate all qualitative research (Rolfe, 2006; Sandelowski, 1993; Long & Johnson, 2000; both cited in Noble & Smith, 2015). These terms are applicable in the broad sense, with validity referring to the "integrity and application of the methods undertaken" and reliability describing the "consistency within the employed analytical procedures" (Long & Johnson, 2000; cited in Noble & Smith, 2015: 34). However, because qualitative methods are different from quantitative methods in terms of philosophical positions and purpose, alternative frameworks for establishing rigour are appropriate (Sandelowski, 1993; cited in Noble & Smith, 2015). Lincoln and Guba (1985) offer alternative criteria for demonstrating rigour within qualitative research: truth value, consistency/neutrality, and applicability. Researcher reflexivity will also be addressed as an important consideration in the study. The following section addresses these four criteria in reference to this study.

3.6.1 TRUTH VALUE

Truth value refers to the effort made by the researcher to avoid methodological bias and to clearly and accurately present participants' perspectives (Noble & Smith, 2015). Every effort was made to avoid bias during data analysis by closely following the steps involved in Braun & Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis method. Additionally, participants were provided with a copy of their respective interview transcripts and invited to make edits, corrections, or additions. This process, sometimes called respondent validation, ensures that participants' thoughts are accurately captured and conveyed in-text (Bloor, 1978; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; both cited in Torrance, 2012).

3.6.2 CONSISTENCY / NEUTRALITY

Consistency refers to the 'trustworthiness' by which methods have been undertaken (Noble & Smith, 2015). The researcher's decisions should be clear and transparent, and an independent researcher should be able to arrive at comparable findings with a similar data set. To achieve this criterion, this study includes a clear description of the research process, methods, and techniques employed to identify and report findings. Furthermore, the findings incorporate rich and detailed verbatim descriptions of participants' accounts to support the study's conclusions.

3.6.3 APPLICABILITY / GENERALISABILITY

This criterion considers whether findings can be applied to other contexts, settings, or groups (Noble & Smith, 2015). It is functionally identical to generalisability, which is the transferability of the findings to other settings and contexts. Because this study employed a qualitative naturalistic approach, statistical generalizations cannot be made with the findings. However, the findings are analytically generalizable. Analytical generalization is an approach where a researcher judges the extent to which the findings in one study can be generalized to another under similar theoretical, geographical, or social contexts (Kvale et al., 2009; cited in Leung, 2015). This study identifies general themes that aim to answer the research questions posed, and as such, results are intended to apply to other similarly situated city districts. The inclusion of rich detail and context supports the transferability of the study's findings in this regard.

3.6.4 RESEARCHER REFLEXIVITY

Researcher reflexivity refers to 'turning [the] researcher lens back onto oneself to recognize and [take] responsibility for one's own situatedness within the research and the effect that it may have on people being studied" (Berger, 2015: 220). By considering how the researcher has affected the study, reflexivity challenges the concept of knowledge production as being independent of the researcher and makes the "processes of knowledge production…the subject of investigation" (May & Perry, 2014: 2). A researcher's positioning can include characteristics such as race, age, personal experiences, linguistic tradition, and sociopolitical stance (Berger, 2015). These researcher positions can impact research in three major ways. First, a researcher's positioning can affect the field because respondents may be more willing to share their experiences with a researcher who they perceive as sympathetic (De Tona, 2016; cited in Berger, 2015). Second, they can impact researcher-participant relationships; for instance, a woman may feel more comfortable discussing experiences of sexual harassment with a woman. Third, the researcher's worldview and life experiences shape the way the researcher poses questions, construes meaning from responses, and filters information; all factors that shape the findings and conclusions of a study (Kacen & Chaitin, 2006; cited in Berger, 2015). While these researcher effects exist in all research, qualitative researchers tend to recognize and address them as part of the research process (Drake, 2010; cited in Berger, 2015).

The researcher's positioning has affected several elements of this study. First, I am an 'outsider' among the study population, insofar as I am 24 years old and not an older adult. As such, I could not relate to the lived experiences of seniors and was unable to draw upon relatable experiences

or anecdotes to foster an ‘insider’ rapport with participants. Additionally, I am not a permanent resident of the City of Waterloo, having only lived there for seven months. Not having lived in the City prior to attending graduate school means that I lacked the lived experience and depth of personal knowledge that comes with being a long-time resident of a locale. This also meant that I likely approached the study location with less emotional bias than would a researcher who has life experiences and place attachment in the City of Waterloo.

Secondly, I am a graduate student researching topics related to students. Despite not having attended local universities in Waterloo for undergraduate education, I have a personal familiarity with general student experiences which impacts how I conceptualize and understand the student dynamics in Waterloo. However, it is also important to note that graduate students are generally perceived as having less of an impact than the undergraduate student population in Waterloo; for instance, the University of Waterloo reports 4,857 graduate students in Winter of 2021 versus 33,090 undergraduate students (University of Waterloo, 2021). Therefore, despite being a student, there is some degree of separation between my identity as a graduate student and the undergraduate students often discussed in the interviews. Because graduate students live a different lifestyle and are typically older than the majority of undergraduates, I suspect that interview participants saw a distinction between my identity as a graduate student and the undergraduate student population.

Importantly, I was positioned as a sympathetic and engaged participant in seniors’ issues in Waterloo. A key feature of my role in this study was my pre-existing affiliation with the Waterloo

Age-Friendly Committee and the snowball sampling method employed for participant recruitment. Because I had met some participants directly through attending Age-Friendly Committee Meetings, and participants were primarily referred to the study by Committee members, there was likely a perception that I understood and would be supportive of seniors' interests. Indeed as the Chapter 4 analysis demonstrates, participants were quite forthcoming with their experiences of aging and opinions of students. While my identity as an out-of-province graduate student had the potential to influence participants' responses, great effort was made to ensure that study participants felt respected and that this thesis accurately reflects the sentiments expressed in the interviews.

3.7 CONCLUSIONS & METHODS LIMITATIONS

A qualitative, naturalistic, and exploratory approach was used to answer the research questions for this thesis. This approach is suitable due to the study's interest in ascertaining participants' thoughts, feelings, and experiences of a phenomenon. In-depth interviews incorporating a photo-elicitation element were conducted with 11 seniors who are long-time residents of the City of Waterloo, which encompasses the city district of Uptown Waterloo. These seniors were able to speak to the processes of urban change influencing the city district, as well as their own experiences and place attachment to the city district. Thematic analysis was utilized to identify overarching themes from the interview data that spoke to the research questions.

Although this study's limitations are discussed more broadly in Chapter 5, it is worth mentioning that a primary limitation of this study's methodology is that interviews had to be conducted

remotely in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. Typically, naturalistic interviewing benefits from conducting interviews in the study locale whenever possible. Additionally, photo-elicitation is often conducted in-person with the researcher presenting the participant with a variety of physical photographs to inspect. Although this study adapted the photo-elicitation method for the virtual interviews, the experience of remotely viewing and discussing images could have impacted the method's efficacy. However, since there is no evidence that this altered method negatively affected the interview data-gathering process, it is fair to assume that this portion of the interviews did not significantly impact the overall analytical generalizability of the findings.

CHAPTER 4 – FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results of the study, organized by the questions posed in the theoretical framework laid out in Chapter 2. This framework integrated research from the literature review to develop specific topics of discussion as part of answering the two guiding research questions: What place attachment bonds to a city district are demonstrated by senior residents; and whether studentification affects seniors' experience of the city district.

4.1 WHAT PLACE ATTACHMENT BONDS TO A CITY DISTRICT ARE DEMONSTRATED BY LONG-TERM SENIOR RESIDENTS?

To better understand what place attachment bonds seniors demonstrate to a city district, interview data was analyzed in reference to three major questions. First, which socio-demographic, social, and physical factors seem to influence attachment at the city district level; secondly, whether attachments to city district are functional or affective; and finally what role third places play in seniors' attachment(s). Each of these topics will be discussed at greater length in the following sections.

4.1.1 WHICH SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC, SOCIAL, AND PHYSICAL FACTORS INFLUENCE ATTACHMENT AT THE CITY DISTRICT LEVEL?

As discussed in Chapter 2, a variety of socio-demographic, social, and physical elements have been identified as possible 'predictors' of place attachment. However, since attachment at the scale of city district has rarely been examined, it is useful to conceptualize these elements as

simple 'factors' that may influence attachment for the purposes of this study, rather than frame them as being predictive in nature. Analysis of interview data, expanded upon below, found that the common factors of attachment were most strongly associated with participants' residential/home environment, rather than the city district. This suggests that these common factors may not reliably apply when examining attachment at the city district scale.

i. SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

Length of residence is a common socio-demographic element of place attachment, and research suggests that long-time residents are more likely to be place attached. However, as a criterion for participation in this study all participants had to have lived in the City of Waterloo for at least the past 30 years. Notably, no significant differing themes emerged from participants who had lived in Waterloo longer. This suggests that varying lengths of residence past a certain threshold may not contribute to significantly different attachment levels among seniors.[6]

The socio-demographic factor more applicable to this study was home ownership. Although many studies have found that home ownership is a significant socio-demographic indicator of place attachment (Bolan, 1997; Brown et al., 2003; Mesch & Manor, 1998; Ringel & Finkelstein, 1991; all cited in Lewicka, 2011), it was unclear whether homeowners residing near or within the district would exhibit place attachment to the district more generally. Although this study did not directly collect information regarding participants' home ownership status, a majority of

[6] It is worth noting that the majority of research noting different attachment levels on the basis of residence typically compare newcomers to long-time residents, and does not perform comparisons between long-time residents (See Lewicka, 2011).

participants had lived in their current homes and/or neighbourhoods for several decades. Therefore, they can be assumed to have a vested interest in the local area typically associated with homeowners. A clear theme that emerged from the interview data in this regard is that place attachment to local residential environment is far more prominent than attachment to city district. This was true even for participants residing in, or directly adjacent to, the Uptown district.

For instance, when asked broadly if they consider the Uptown District to be a special place, several respondents pivoted directly to discussing their residential neighbourhoods adjacent to the Uptown:

> INTERVIEWER: Do you think Uptown is a special place in Waterloo?
> P10, FEMALE, 76: I think our neighbourhood, the [MacGregor Albert Conservation Area] neighbourhood is a special place. […] It has closely knit community, it's a heritage district, and the people have been here for quite a while felt strongly about that.

This jump from the Uptown district to the residential neighbourhood may relate to Tuan's (1975) assertion that neighbourhood boundaries tend to be loosely defined by those who reside in them. Nevertheless, the immediate association between a 'special place' and one's residential environment suggests close attachment. Similarly, when participants were asked if they found there to be a sense of community in the Uptown district, many noted that their residential neighbourhood was their primary source of community:

> INTERVIEWER: Do you think there's a sense of community in Uptown Waterloo?
> P2, FEMALE, 65: Yeah, I would say I don't think so, for me there isn't […] And I think as I've said before, the community I live in is really a strong community, and it's drawn together by a great volunteer group of people who have kept the community running for years.

There was a strong sense among participants that one would have to live in the Uptown district to feel a sense of community there. This was an assumption that the sense of community, attachment, and warmth participants felt towards their own residential environment would be expressed by a hypothetical ‘other’ who perhaps lived directly in the Uptown district:

> INTERVIEWER: Do you think there's a sense of community in Uptown?
> P5, MALE, 72: Um, I'm not sure about that as I don't live in Uptown Waterloo. Like you know, have you interviewed anybody who lives in one of those new apartment buildings or anything in Uptown? […] They would have a better idea, like as far as community […] But I can't actually say if I think there's a sense of community there.

…

> INTERVIEWER: Do you think there's a sense of community in Uptown Waterloo?
> P4, FEMALE, 67: I can't speak to the people who visit, but certainly for the people who live there.

Interestingly, one participant did live in one of the newer apartment developments located in the Uptown district. She self-identified as a life-long ‘Uptown person,’ and had lived in houses Uptown for most of her life before moving into a newer development as a senior. Based on the assumptions from other participants, one would expect her to have a deep sense of community and attachment to the city district. However, when asked if she felt there was a sense of community around Uptown, she responded in the following way:

> INTERVIEWER: Yeah, do you think there's much of a sense of community around Uptown?
> P11, FEMALE, 73: I don't know, I don't know.
> INTERVIEWER: Do you feel one, do you feel a sense of community?
> P11, FEMALE, 73: I feel my, well I'm not sure that I associate my community with Uptown. My community, like I feel a sense of community here, at the [apartment complex in Uptown]. […] So yeah, the community, the community is here, rather than on the streets of Uptown Waterloo.

Despite living directly in the Uptown district, this participant still felt closer to her own residential environment. The smaller scale of apartment floor neighbours played a larger role in her sense of community. She went on to say;

> P11, FEMALE, 73: …It feels, you're not walking along a huge long hall, you're walking into community when you get off the elevator.

This participant is, of course, not necessarily representative of every senior living in the Uptown district. However, it is nevertheless interesting that attachment to one's local residential environment, even if located *within* the city district, does not guarantee a similar sense of community or attachment for the surrounding district as a whole. Participants' preoccupation with their small-scale residential environments challenges the idea that city districts become targets of attachment merely through proximity to people's homes.[7]

II. SOCIAL FACTORS

The literature on social factors of place attachment suggests that local social connections—particularly those involving friends, family, organization membership, and local shopping—are consistent and significant sources of sentimental ties to a locale. It was therefore thought likely that residents who describe frequent interactions with social networks in the city district would be place attached to the area. Similarly, research suggests members of groups concerned with

[7] Although this finding does not implicate any of the possible economic implications of home ownership as a factor of attachment, it does parallel with the social responsibilities conferred through home ownership (i.e. long-time residence in a home or certain neighbourhood).

change—such as neighbourhood associations—are considered more likely to describe attachment to a locale due to the effort made to maintain the place.

Analysis of the interview data supports the role of these social factors in fostering attachment at the city district scale, to a degree. Participants with local social connections did describe attachment, but primarily to their residential environment or specific places in the community rather than to the city district. Similarly, organization membership and activism tended to occur at the neighbourhood level rather than in the Uptown district.

When asked about their social connections and experiences, the vast majority of participants indicated that they preferred to socialize and entertain at their homes, and/or the homes of their friends. As a result, these seniors' social connections tended to be rooted at a neighbourhood scale, rather than in the city district:

> INTERVIEWER: If you were to socialize with people around Uptown, where would you probably do it?
> P7, FEMALE, 77: Oh if we were going, well we'd probably go to somebody's house.

This affirms the thought that 'the home' increases in importance as people age (Lewicka, 2011). There were several possible reasons for this focus on the home, articulated by the participants themselves. For instance, one individual noted:

> P6, MALE, 75: [A]s you get older you're more reliant on your existing friends and there are few opportunities to make new ones. So you tend to do more entertaining at home.

The convenience afforded by entertaining with pre-existing networks of friends in familiar environments may explain why seniors social connections tended to center on the home.

Furthermore, seniors as a group may be more likely to have mobility needs that are better accommodated in certain residential environments. This participant relayed a story about her friend group changing their typical meeting spot from an Uptown location to a friend's nursing home:

> P1, FEMALE, 87: We had a member of our group found it difficult getting into the building so, yeah she just couldn't do it […] So anyway, we live with these changes, and sometimes disappointments but they all work out okay.
> INTERVIEWER: Did you find a new place to socialize, since your friend couldn't get into the café?
> P1, FEMALE, 87: Our friend moved to the big nursing home I call it, on the corner of King and […] when she moved in to there then we started to go there. There's a little café there.

In this case, the participant's social circle needed to re-locate from an Uptown café to one member's nursing home due to mobility challenges. The convenience and accessibility of socializing with friends and family in one's local neighbourhood or home make these environments especially attractive to seniors.

Furthermore, a theme emerged of participants being involved with organizations or activism at a local residential neighbourhood scale, rather than in the city district. A thread of local activism ran through several participants' accounts of their neighbourhoods, with some expressing pride at having banded together with neighbours to prevent changes perceived as undesirable:

> P10, FEMALE, 76: We prevented [the street] from being widened. So I'm not sure what year that was, so that was significant, and that of course helped us to bond with the neighbours.

…

> INTERVIEWER: Do you think that Uptown is a special place in Waterloo?
> P7, FEMALE, 77: Yes, I certainly do! And this particular place [MacGregor Albert Heritage District] because such a lot of energy has gone into preserving it.

The communal sense of having fought and been successful suggests care and concern for preserving a certain 'rootedness' or 'way of life' in residential environments. These interactions readily came to mind for several participants in residential neighbourhoods adjacent to the Uptown district, perhaps pointing to the increased development pressure in the area. Membership in local community groups tended to be centered in local communities—particularly in the form of neighbourhood associations—rather than the Uptown district:

> P2, FEMALE, 65: Yeah, [Waterloo neighbourhood] is a really great community, and […] we've always had neighbours associations. So we have a neighbourhood newsletter, and we have a community market, so there's three or four volunteers who go to the food outlet in [neighbouring township] every week and they enter the auction and bring all of the produce back to our little community centre. So that when I think about where we gather, we gather within our neighbourhood a lot.

Many participants mentioned having annual gatherings with neighbours that promoted a sense of community. When asked about whether they attended public social events in Uptown—such as the buskers, the Jazz Festival, Oktoberfest—participants either had not attended for years, or attended with pre-existing groups of family or friends. Although these events may play a secondary role in place attachment, the local community was at the forefront of most participants' experiences.

A few participants had been more engaged with projects in the Uptown district and were advocates for initiatives such as age-friendly changes or heritage protection. Although these participants agreed that Uptown was a special place, there was still a sense that local residential community was more important:

> INTERVIEWER: What do you think is special about Uptown?
> P9, FEMALE, 73: Well to me the history is the most important thing to me. And those stories. And it used to be that there was a great variety of businesses in it, like when I moved here there were a lot of little tiny ones, and like Jane Jacobs says, new ideas need old buildings […]
> INTERVIEWER: For sure. Do you think there's a sense of community in Uptown?
> P9, FEMALE, 73: Um, yeah I think, yes. […] yeah there definitely is, because **there's definitely a good sense of community in my neighbourhood**, and I think there is a sense of community among the business people. *[Emphasis added]*

In the account above, the participant implies that they connect more with their own residential area, and suggests that perhaps business owners in Uptown would have closer ties to the city district. It is worth noting that no participants in this study were current business owners in Uptown, so it is possible that active members of the local business community would have different attachments to the city district. The participants in this study all share the perspective of being patrons of Uptown establishments. As residents first and customers second, participants were more connected to the scale of their local residential areas. One participant summarized this relationship nicely:

> P5, MALE, 72: [I]f you've got your local community where you're living, you [don't] also have another community in Uptown Waterloo, unless you're there an awful lot, I don't think that you would necessarily feel 'part' of that community. Not that they ostracize you or treat you badly or anything like that, but it's not a place where well, it's not a place where we hang out.

This distinction between taking part in one's local neighbourhood versus in the Uptown district community complicates the typical social elements of attachment. Because the residential environment is the most prominent place of attachment, most participants' social connections centered on their homes and neighbourhoods. As such, there is a sense of having an additional distinct community in the Uptown district as being redundant or not particularly desirable. Group

efforts to maintain an area and frequent interactions with social networks by large took place in neighbourhoods, rather than the city district.

III. PHYSICAL FACTORS

The literature on physical factors of attachments suggests that quiet, walkable, stable, and clean neighbourhoods with green areas tend to foster place attachment (Harlan et al., 2005 cited in Lewicka, 2011; Lewicka, 2010). Furthermore, the prevalence of landmarks and unique features perceived as contributing to the district's unique 'identity' may also be linked to place attachment in an urban environment.

Of these potential influences, the physical characteristic most commonly associated with the Uptown district was walkability:

> INTERVIEWER: Would you say that Uptown is a special place in Waterloo?
> P11, FEMALE, 73: I like it, I think it's special. For all kinds of reasons […] for me it is, it's very special, cause I can walk Uptown, though, and before Covid, I mean I walked for all of my errands, everything. Banking, my dentist, my family doctor, the library, my optometrist, everybody is in walking distance.

Besides the physical presence of large clear sidewalks, the walkability of the Uptown district was also linked to its identity as clean and respectable by several participants. There were some direct comparisons made to neighbouring downtown Kitchener:

> P5, MALE, 72: One of the things that Uptown Waterloo has going for it is that it's not downtown Kitchener […] [Y]ou don't see that level of poverty in Uptown Waterloo, and you know, it's partly because of the demographic I guess, we are a more affluent City, but that doesn't mean that there aren't poor people here as well. But you know, they, I think Waterloo has worked quite conscientiously to maintain its Uptown and make it attractive and make it enticing for people to go there.

Uptown was also characterized as being quite safe (P2), both in general and for the senior population in particular. Based on the presence of these physical factors, one would expect there to be strong levels of attachment to the city district. However, the existence of landmarks and/or unique features may also affect a sense of place attachment in an urban environment.

The most commonly cited landmark of the city district was Uptown Waterloo Town Square. Located in the centre of the city district, the square was renovated in 1977 and saw a facelift in 2009. The square features a primarily concrete landscape and a public art installation, and is often used for public events that take place throughout the year. Town Square as a landmark proved divisive among the participants. Several participants expressed pleasure at its change from a parking lot to a more usable public space:

> P11, FEMALE, 73: I certainly like it better [now that] it's not a parking lot. I really like that, and I like the use of it for music and jazz, and I don't sit there and have coffee so often, I find it kind of noisy, but it is a place where people can gather, have a cup of coffee.

…

> P8, FEMALE, 87: I like what they've done to the [Uptown] mall […] and I like the fact that they have cultural things happening right there, and I like the Jazz Festival that we have now, every year.

However, despite a general sense that its current use is better than its past as a parking lot, many participants were critical of the relatively empty concrete aesthetic of the Town Square:

> P2, FEMALE, 65: The public square it…it doesn't seem to have any lust or personality to me, it's a square piece of cement. I know the skating rink goes in there and that's lovely, but there's just, there's not, there's not a lot of life in [Uptown] Waterloo.

…

> P6, MALE, 75: Well, I wish they would try and build up the central square better, and get rid of that bell, put in, tear up some of the concrete on the sides and have some things of natural beauty. Shade trees. The skating rink in the winter is a lovely thing to have there, well used.

Because participants expressed a variety of attitudes towards these physical factors—for instance, finding Uptown walkable while still being critical of the Town Square—it remains unclear how applicable physical factors of place attachment are to the city district. The central issue seems to be that attitudes towards physical characteristics are more mixed in a city district than one might find in a neighbourhood- possibly because people may tend to eventually move away from residential areas they find unattractive.

The fact that so many participants are critical of the Town Square, and the Square is considered a focal point of the Uptown city district, means that this physical factor may negatively affect seniors' place attachments. However, this hypothesis is complicated by the strong walkability of Uptown, which could offset the mixed attitude towards the physical Town Square landmark. Ultimately, physical elements of attachment are quite varied in the city district and seem to be largely reliant on individuals' personal preferences.

It is challenging to determine whether the socio-demographic, social, and physical factors work in tandem to create place attachments or separately contribute to place attachment. This is why it may be more appropriate to consider these 'predictors' as merely 'factors' in the context of city district scale attachment, bearing in mind the mixed findings from this analysis.

4.1.2 IS ATTACHMENT TO CITY DISTRICT FUNCTIONAL OR AFFECTIVE?

As discussed in Chapter 2, the two main stances in the literature towards place attachments describe them as being either functional or affective in nature. Functional attachments develop

as a result of a place's ability to fulfill an individual or group's needs and support their goals better than known alternatives (Williams, Patterson, Roggenbuck and Watson, 1992; cited in Ujang, 2012). This stance assumes that people make rational choices with respect to their environments (Van Hees et al., 2018). Conversely, affective place attachments are rooted in emotion, rather than reason or pure functionality. These attachments tend to be linked to memories and social connections that 'tie' an individual to a location, even if that location is not the most objectively convenient, safe, or otherwise desirable. Affective attachments have primarily been identified in reference to residential environments (i.e. 'the home'), but the vast majority of place attachment literature studies 'the home,' possibly skewing this understanding.

With this in mind, it was unclear whether any attachment to city district would be functional, affective, or some combination of the two. Analysis of the interview data revealed two major themes in this regard; that attachment to the district *as a whole* tends to be functional, but attachment to *specific* locations and third places tends to be affective. Accordingly, this section will discuss the functional attachment to district, and section 4.1.3 will address affective attachment and the role of third places.

The level of attachment to the Uptown district as a whole was mixed. Several participants did describe a level of attachment to the Uptown district that was functional in nature. The area was repeatedly described as a place that meets participants' needs by being convenient and providing a location to walk. However, other participants reported feeling less of a connection to the

Uptown district, primarily due to changing needs. These factors will be discussed in further detail in the following section.

i. CONVENIENCE

The convenience of the Uptown district was a common theme among interviews. ‘Convenience’ for some participants was described in reference to the Uptown’s ability to meet their needs:

> P1, FEMALE, 87: Well there are cafes, there's a wonderful bookstore, which has always been a great bookstore there. There's some clothing stores, I think […] all my needs can be, if I so desire, can be filled with the shops on King Street.

For a majority of participants, Uptown’s convenience was inextricably tied to its walkability. This was particularly true for residents of Uptown and adjacent neighbourhoods, who deeply valued the ability to walk to access daily needs:

> P10, FEMALE, 76: I just hopped down there to mail a letter. It's a half an hour to walk down there and back, down to the drugstore where the post office is, and [the grocery store] and all that. So keeping up with the idea that places should be 15 minutes to walk to, it's perfect.

…

> P6, MALE, 75: I don't like to have to get in the car all the time and drive great distances to get to places. Also as someone committed to living more sustainably, I. feel a little bit guilty if I'm using my car for many of the things I can do in the [Uptown] area without having to resort to that.

These statements reflect a sentiment that as a whole, the Uptown district was perceived to be a convenient place to meet participants’ needs. These were not sentimental or personal ties to the district, but rather an expression of a rational relationship; some seniors prefer to walk for daily needs, and Uptown is a desirable location to exercise that preference. When asked about their

relationship to Uptown, many participants mentioned using it as a place they would go "with a purpose" such as running errands or visiting specific destinations (P4).

ii. WALKING DESTINATION

Similarly, Uptown was a valued and preferred destination for walking due to its flat geography, wide sidewalks, and central location in the City. Rather than walking Uptown for the experience or because of personal attachments, participants seemed to walk in Uptown because it was a convenient place to do so:

> INTERVIEWER: What would bring you to Uptown?
> P2, FEMALE, 65: Uh yeah, just a place to walk to.

…

> INTERVIEWER: Are there any particular destinations around Uptown that would draw you in?
> P7, FEMALE, 77: If I went out? Probably, the destination would be wherever we decided to walk, because it really is a pleasure to walk…

There was a common thread of an almost utilitarian relationship with the Uptown district, whereby participants would describe a 'coming and going' through the area as a means to access particular businesses, but largely without descriptions of warmth or social connection—language often associated with affective attachment. The largely functional relationship most participants described with the Uptown district is further supported by some participants' articulations of why they do not visit Uptown:

> P5, MALE, 72: I think a lot of people, like us, it's a special event or special reason to go to Uptown Waterloo. […] I think people are buying things online, and they're not frequenting the small shops which is, I think, probably why a lot of the shops have become restaurants. People eat out more, and if you want a camera you go to the mall and get something. So, like a lot of that has changed over the years. So in many ways, there's not the same reason for going Uptown Waterloo.

This participant observes that with the growing convenience of online shopping and the malls, Uptown may not meet the needs of people better than known alternatives, eroding attachment or preventing attachment in the first place. Similarly, another participant notes that other places are more convenient and accessible than Uptown, so they have largely stopped interacting with the district:

> P1, FEMALE, 87: So for grocery stores, there are so many grocery stores that one doesn't have to put oneself out to do this grocery store...Waterloo Town Square. So anyway that's that. And our church that we attend is up on Westmount, so the whole area there doesn't affect us.

These comments speak to the inherent risk associated with functional place attachment: even if an individual was once attached, changing needs mean that attachment can shift to a better known alternative. One participant summarised this relationship to place when asked about the Uptown of today, remarking:

> P9, FEMALE, 73: […] to be honest, I don't spend enough time up there [Uptown] to really know. I do know, I mean I'm not a good shopper anyway, so I never was, so but for me there's less and less reason to go there.

Indeed, unlike affective attachments which are often characterized by attachment to a place despite inconvenience or risk factors, the decision to visit the general city district of Uptown seems to be tied to functional attachment. When residents deem the area a suitable fit for their needs, they are more likely to report positive attachment and regular interaction with Uptown. Conversely, when residents find the district no longer suits their needs, they are more likely to stop visiting the Uptown altogether. It is also possible that participants who describe a weakened or nonexistent functional relationship with Uptown simply do not have any place attachment to the district.

4.1.3 WHAT IS THE RELEVANCE OF THIRD PLACES TO ATTACHMENT?

Third places are locations where older adults make social connections and experience informal public life outside of the workplace or home. They are social meeting places that ultimately contribute to the strength of the community, such as a park, a community centre, or a shop (Yuen & Johnson, 2017; Alidoust et al., 2019; Gardner, 2011; Van Hees et al., 2018). These places can play a significant role in providing older people opportunities to engage in the social lives of their local communities, thus contributing to their social health and overall wellbeing (Alidoust et al., 2015). Third places are deeply personal, and what may be a third place to one individual may not be for someone else. People have been known to form place attachments to third places (Rosenbaum et al., 2009), but existing research is unclear as to how attachment to these places relates to any attachment at the city district level.

As previously discussed, this study found that any attachments at the city district level tended to be functional in nature. However, when discussing smaller place scales in the city district, an interesting theme emerged. Whereas participants often described the general district as a well-liked and useful place to run errands or complete tasks, a majority of participants described more affective attachments to specific locations and third places *within* the district. These affective attachments were rooted in more abstract descriptions of feeling welcomed, having community, and wanting to preserve and support certain places in the Uptown. A common theme amongst the places identified as sources of attachment is that they are all long-standing fixtures of the community. The two major specific locations and third places identified in this study were Waterloo Park and local Uptown businesses.

i. WATERLOO PARK

The vast majority of places identified as sources of affective attachment were third places, however, one oft-cited significant location, despite not being a third place, is worth noting: Waterloo Park. Waterloo Park sits on 111 acres in Uptown Waterloo and is described as the “jewel of the city” (City of Waterloo, ‘Waterloo Park’ n/d). It features Silver Lake, forests, trails, picnic areas, a farmstead with animals, historic properties, sports fields, and Victorian-style gardens, among other amenities. Notably, Silver Lake is undergoing renovation from 2019 to 2021. Changes include dredging and reconfiguring the lake to improve circulation and water quality. A portion of Waterloo Park is being reconstructed as part of the overall project, which has required some trees and greenery to be removed (Engage Waterloo, 2021).

Several participants highlighted Waterloo Park as a much-loved spot in the City and used language suggesting emotional (i.e. affective) attachment. A participant encapsulated this sentiment nicely when asked about her favourite places in Uptown:

> INTERVIEWER: What would you say your favourite places are around Uptown?
> P10, FEMALE, 76: Oh the Park. Yeah different areas of the Park, although its changed a lot too.
> INTERVIEWER: What is it about the Park that makes it so attractive to you?
> P10, FEMALE, 76: Well I just have to cross the street and go into the Park and it's a different life [laughs], it's a different, you know. I think trees are so important. Trees, and there's always things happening. Every time I go to the Park there's something special happens, or I see something, a surprise or, yeah.

This idea of the Park representing a beautiful escape from city life was strong throughout many participants’ accounts of Uptown. When discussing the changes taking place at the Park, the same participant highlights her emotional connection with the place:

> INTERVIEWER: And do you approve of those adjustments happening right now?
> P10, FEMALE, 76: Erm [laughs] I've come to accept it, more like it. Yeah a lot of people were upset about how many trees they chopped down to do this project, we knew this project was coming but they chopped down hundreds of trees […] Yeah, so yeah they say they're finished chopping trees now, so. That's really hard, **I couldn't go there and look at it, at the beginning**. *[Emphasis added]*

The sense of connection with the Park was most frequently mentioned by participants residing in or around the Uptown area, with some individuals expressing a sort of quasi-ownership over the area:

> P11, FEMALE, 73: For me, that area was, I just loved walking through there, and I was so sad when they demolished trees and like, this has been a hard fall and winter. Because you just, my favourite paths were just, the trees were just taken down, it was...yeah. So I hope- and there was a boardwalk, and I loved walking on the boardwalk. And that's gone, of course. […] And there was a Gazebo there, and **my heron visited me regularly there**, and I hope that the heron, and we've got a peregrine falcon that nests on the perimeter institute. I just hope they haven't destroyed so many trees that they don't come back. *[Emphasis added]*

Although the Park is a public place, several participants felt very closely attached to the area and its natural inhabitants. That individuals would be closely attached to a Park is not particularly surprising, as a growing body of place attachment literature has explored the enduring attachments people can form to recreational and natural green spaces (See Fishwick & Vining, 1992; Kaltenborn & Bjerke, 2002; Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Williams & Van Patten, 1998; all cited in Lewicka, 2011). No other areas in Uptown Waterloo, besides those locations characterized as third places, were distinctly identified by participants as being of as special importance to them as the Park.

ii. UPTOWN BUSINESSES

Although some participants with a functional relationship with Uptown admit to considering going to malls for convenience's sake, this stands in contrast to those with affective attachments to specific Uptown businesses. Several participants explained that they make a point to come to Uptown to support their favourite shops. These businesses were described as being valued both for their excellent services, but particularly because of the social dynamics present. In some cases, these social ties manifested in customer-staff relationships, and in others, customer-customer relationships flourished. It is participants' emphasis on the *social* aspect of visiting these establishments that suggest their status as third places.

The third places identified by participants were diverse, but all shared the common themes of being sources of positive social connection, gathering places, locations of community building, and were long-standing fixtures in the community with a more personal touch than big-box stores.

For instance, this participant identified a local jazz room as being an important place in her life:

> P11, FEMALE, 73: Well one spot that I love is the jazz room at the [Uptown venue], […] to me, that's a very special community, actually. […] It's a community that cares, and we've had a couple people die and we've had special events for them, and it's just a caring community. And wonderful music.

Interestingly, however, during the same interview this participant stated that the Uptown district is not where she identifies her community as being located:

> P11, FEMALE, 73: In terms of Uptown, like it's not where my community is. It's not my community, per se, like I don't look to the Uptown for my community.

This suggests that affective attachment for certain places within a city district may not translate to attachment at the district scale. Part of the reason for this may be that communities and relationships tend to be developed at more intimate place scales than the district, and the familiarity between like-minded individuals becomes diluted at a larger scale. This idea is supported by a comment from a participant explaining why a local independent cinema is a favourite place:

> P2, FEMALE, 65: Yeah, a lot of foreign films and stuff. So when you're in the theatre you're feeling a little sense of community again, you know there's people there, they're there for their personal interests or whatever, so that's good.

Many participants identified this local cinema as being important to them and a source of local community building. Because this theatre often shows smaller productions and foreign films, it draws a more niche audience. These types of films may be more appealing to older adults, as this participant observed:

> P5, MALE, 72: The [independent cinemas Uptown], that is a real draw, or at least it was before the pandemic, for older adults. They didn't seem to have a lot of films that were for younger people, I guess they're all at the mall.

Although cinemas are often considered a place to silently watch a film, it is clear that the intimate and local nature of these cinemas made the venues attractive to some local seniors.

Similarly, the close-knit atmosphere of certain businesses that had long been a part of the Uptown community was important to many participants. The local Uptown hardware store, which first started operating in the 1880s, is a prominent example of this phenomenon. Several participants spoke with great enthusiasm of their affection for the store and included anecdotes

of humorous or memorable interactions there. For instance, these excerpts from participants reveal what they like best about this place:

> P3, MALE, 77: The hardware store, which is from the 1880s as well. We're regulars to the point where my children think I should have a job there […] I said to the publisher of the Kitchener paper one day, who had moved into Uptown Waterloo, I said, 'do you want to know what should be in the [local paper]? You should just go down to [local hardware store] on a Saturday cause you'd meet everybody who knows anything Waterloo there anyway.' And he kind of laughed, but he used to be there regularly. So it's sort of a small town. It's a small town, old fashioned hardware store […] And I felt guilty about going to the big volume discount stores.

…

> P6, MALE, 75: My very favourite store in all of Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge, Guelph, is the [Uptown hardware store] […] It's a sort of old-fashioned place inside, it's narrow aisles and crowded, but the staff are so much fun. I remember one time going in and I got into three conversations with other customers […]
> INTERVIEWER: How often would you say you go there?
> P6, MALE, 75: Oh, couple times a month, sometimes more often.
> INTERVIEWER: How does that compare to other places you visit around Uptown? Is that kind of your number one spot?
> P6, MALE, 75: Yes, for buying things and doing so in a really convivial manner, I mean it's something that would never happen if you're at [big box stores]

While participants found the services and selection of merchandise to their liking, what seems to make this location special to so many participants is the social aspect of visiting the shop. Chatting with employees and other customers fosters a sense of familiarity and enjoyment that is deeply associated with affective attachment. Another notable theme that emerges from these third place businesses is the deep loyalty customers feel towards them. Several participants proudly stated that they made a point to shop locally. Among those that shopped locally, their primary motivations seemed to be a combination of wanting to support their favourite long-standing local businesses, as well as a preference for the social aspect of a local shop:

> P11, FEMALE, 73: […] I don't like going into mall either, I prefer like, one of my vows for Christmas shopping is not to go into the mall, just shop Uptown […] I like to shop locally.

…

> P6, MALE, 75: Ah, yeah! I like being [Uptown], I like the sort of, retail stuff. It's so much nicer than being anonymity of malls and Costco and that sort of stuff. I do appreciate that.

This sense of loyalty to certain Uptown businesses suggests an affective attachment, and stands in contrast to participants' more functional relationships with the general district. For instance, when asked if she would consider shopping for jewelry at the mall instead of a local Uptown jeweler that had been in business for decades, one participant succinctly stated:

> P11, FEMALE, 73: Oh I wouldn't even consider going there [to the mall]. No, no. [local jeweler] is part of this community, and I certainly would go Uptown to deal with them, yup. And they've treated me well, and I support their business. […] They support whatever they do and stand behind it. And if there is a problem, they just replace it, whatever, that's mostly around watches. **So it's just a, it's a community place, and you chat with them when you go in.** *[Emphasis added]*

Even at a beloved local bookstore, a sense of community and conversation was a major root of the affective relationship to the spot described by several participants:

> P11, FEMALE, 73: So now [I'm] walking to [Uptown bookstore], cause I'm intent on keeping them in business, so I order books even though I promise myself I wouldn't buy any more books [laughs]. […] Yeah, and the people in [Uptown bookstore], my God, long conversations there [laughs]. Political and all. So that's another [social] hub. Yeah, that's another hub.

Aside from the aforementioned locations, participants also described attachment to their local churches and recreation centres in Uptown. One common theme among all of these places is their status as long-standing fixtures of the community, and places for frequent and enjoyable social interaction. The seniors interviewed largely did not describe the same level of affective attachment to newer businesses. A second common theme is that participants who described

strong affective attachment to third places within the district were *not* more likely to describe attachment to the city district scale. This puzzling phenomenon is summed up by a participant who notes that the Uptown seems to lack 'life,' but goes on to describe some of their favourite places that they make a point to support:

> P2, FEMALE, 65: There's just, there's not, there's not a lot of life in [Uptown] Waterloo. Uh now that being said, I do make a real point to go to [Uptown bookstore], you know, to go there because that's the book store that's been around for years. The service is amazing and it feels good being there, it's a nice little store, you know? So I do, but other than that...oh! And the other one is probably [Uptown hardware store] because it's been a landmark store for all these years. Uh, and it just, it's sort of, it draws me. The other thing that probably draws me is the cinema.

The question of how and why participants may describe attachments to certain places *within* a city district but not the same kind of attachments to the district itself is explored at greater length in Chapter 5.

4.1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION ONE CONCLUSION

Several themes have emerged in response to the research question, **"What place attachment bonds to a city district are demonstrated by long-term senior residents?"** It is clear that the typical elements of place attachment at the residential scale do not apply as reliably to the city district scale. In response to questions aimed at gauging socio-demographic, social, and physical elements of place attachment, participants tended to focus on their residential environments. Even when considering the city district scale, the typical factors of attachment vary wildly from person to person. It is worth keeping in mind that these 'predictors' were developed primarily in reference to residential place attachment studies; it is possible that different factors of attachment would apply at the city district scale.

Although participants described a notable degree of place attachment to their residential environments, the literature emphasizes that it is possible to have place attachments to multiple places. In other words, strong place attachment to district does not preclude attachment at the district scale (see Kamalipour et al., 2012; Hidaglo & Hernández, 2001). Indeed, this study found that a majority of participants did report some attachment at the district scale, although it was largely functional in nature. Affective attachments were reserved for specific places in the district, such as Waterloo Park, and most notably for third places in the Uptown. Interestingly, even participants who described clear and powerful attachments to third places in Uptown tended to see their relationship with the general district as functional. It appears as though attachment at local, specific third places may not translate to attachment for the broader district which houses those third places. This lack of transferability between attachment at different place scales may be problematic for urban places, a dilemma further discussed in Chapter 5.

4.2 DOES STUDENTIFICATION AFFECT SENIORS' EXPERIENCES OF A CITY DISTRICT?

To better understand the relationship between studentification and seniors' experiences of a city district, the interview data was analyzed in reference to two major questions: whether studentification seems to affect place attachments to the city district; and whether studentification in a city district affects aging in place. Each of these topics will be discussed at greater length in the following sections.

4.2.1 DOES STUDENTIFICATION AFFECT PLACE ATTACHMENT BONDS IN THE CITY DISTRICT?

Studentification is understood as a process of urban change characterized by largely segregated concentrations of students in particular areas, leading to a variety of physical, social, and cultural impacts. While studentification has not yet been studied in respect to seniors' place attachments at the city district scale, it was expected that the negative impacts of 'studentified' residential neighbourhoods would also be present in a city district with a large student population. Specifically, it was thought that studentification could correlate with decreased place attachment as seniors were slowly 'forced out' of the city district, or that studentification would affect the availability of third places for seniors as local businesses instead targeted the student demographic.

Instead, this study found that studentification had little impact on seniors' experiences in the city district, and accordingly, to any place attachment bonds in the district. Participants' experiences can be summarized into three overall themes: students and seniors living parallel lives; a university town character; and residential influence. The following section will explore these themes in further depth.

i. PARALLEL LIVES

Generally speaking, the Uptown city district was acknowledged to be well used by seniors and students alike. As has been observed elsewhere, communities that are home to a college or university are often particularly attractive to well-educated and more affluent retirees (Shih-

Ming et al., 2008; cited in Powell, 2016). This seems to be true in the case of the Uptown district, as participants highlighted the desirability of Uptown for students and seniors alike:

> INTERVIEWER: [W]hat do you think it is about the Uptown that draws students?
> P10, FEMALE, 76: Oh it's close to the University, and the Park, and Albert St. is nice. And I think it's a great area to live in so they can walk everywhere.
> INTERVIEWER: Do you think many seniors [also] visit Uptown?
> P10, FEMALE, 76: I think it's full of seniors.

…

> INTERVIEWER: Do you feel like Uptown serves both demographics equally?
> P5, MALE, 72: I would say that a lot of older adults are giving up their houses and moving into accommodation like that [apartments]. But, they're also very attractive to the student population.

Indeed, many of Uptown's desirable characteristics mentioned by seniors—convenience, walkability, a variety of shops and services—are also prized by students who often attend university without the convenience of a personal vehicle. The assortment of shops, restaurants, and services provided in the Uptown were typically seen as amenable to a variety of lifestyles:

> INTERVIEWER: Who do you think is going to Uptown?
> P6, MALE, 75: Um, it would be the going place for different sorts of people. I think that there's a number of places that younger people either in the workforce like to go to […], graduate students, and older folk too.
> INTERVIEWER: So there's a good mix of things for everyone?
> P6, MALE, 75: Yeah, pretty well.

However, there was a pronounced sense among the majority of participants that existing businesses and future entrepreneurs are very aware of the student population:

> INTERVIEWER: Do you think that Uptown is maybe is more attractive to the student population, or do you think it kind of caters to everyone?
> P8, FEMALE, 87: **I think they try to cater to everyone, but I think the students make their choices.** *[Emphasis added]*

…

> P10, FEMALE, 76: I think the entrepreneurs have enjoyed their economic benefits […] because students need things, and they need food, so they shop. So I think that if the

> students weren't here or aren't going to be here, some would be a lot different for shops.

Many participants readily acknowledged that students have “everything a merchant needs” (P1), and were happy that local businesses were succeeding. However, despite businesses paying close attention to the student market, a theme emerged of seniors not being particularly impacted by the student presence in Uptown.

The majority of participants of this study reported few interactions with students in the Uptown city district. Despite noting that both seniors and students visit Uptown, participants seemed to rarely have meaningful or notable encounters with students:

> INTERVIEWER: How would you characterize your interactions with students around Uptown?
> P3, MALE, 77: Nonexistent. They see me, I see them, they sometimes know who I am, […] but on the whole I'd say it's anonymous.

Several participants even stated that they did not find the impact of students in Uptown noticeable, while others suggested that they would have to visit Uptown to intentionally observe students before deciding whether the student presence was larger than any others. These comments suggest that, at least for some participants, students minimally impact their experience of the city district. Similarly, participants noted that students seem to visit Uptown for different reasons than seniors, and as a result, the two demographics visit different locations:

> INTERVIEWER: Do you think that the students go to Uptown more in general than other members of the community?
> P4, FEMALE, 67: I'm not sure the answer to that actually, I'd have to really think about it. Do they use it more...I don't know. It's a variety of things, they would probably go for

> different reasons right? They probably go more for pubs, I would go more for a restaurant or the stores, you know?

Because students and seniors rarely visit the same businesses at the same times of day, there are fewer opportunities for conflict or tensions. For instance, while discussing students visiting bars and pubs on Thursday evenings, this participant said:

> P4, FEMALE, 67: Certainly like I said, Thursday night you didn't go Uptown. But you see because again I'm in a different demographic, you know, it didn't interfere that much really. We weren't normally going out on a Thursday night.

Few participants could think of instances where students negatively impacted their experience of Uptown in any significant way. On the contrary, a majority of participants reported that students increased their enjoyment of the Uptown district:

> INTERVIEWER: Have you found that your experience of Uptown has changed with the students, or do find that you can kind of still just live your life, go to the places you want, and that's not really impacted?
> P5, MALE, 72: Exactly, no we can do what we want here. I mean, the kids, the university students do not hamper us from doing anything that we would otherwise do. And some cases they enhance what we do.

This is a somewhat surprising finding, as a large part of the literature on studentification emphasizes its disruptive character. In the case of the Uptown city district, it appears as though students and seniors are living somewhat 'parallel lifestyles.' Although both demographics use the space, the time and location of their visits do not coincide in any meaningful way.

ii. UNIVERSITY TOWN CHARACTER

Another reason that participants may find the presence of students unremarkable is due to a perception of Waterloo as being a 'university town.' Several participants made comments identifying the 'character' of Uptown as somehow being linked to the student presence:

> P5, MALE, 72: I mean what would we be without the 50,000 students? You know, this place would lose its character completely.

Since the University of Waterloo was founded in 1957 and Wilfred Laurier University was founded in 1960, the presence of university students has undoubtedly played a role in the development of the City as a whole. As one participant who had lived in Waterloo for 40 years succinctly noted,

> P4, FEMALE, 67: […] But it's always funny kind of when the students were coming and moving in, the beginning it was kind of like a huge change from one day to the next in the City. Especially along University there. Because you know, but anyways, but having grown up with it here like literally lived with it here all those years**, it was just part of being in Waterloo**! *[Emphasis Added]*

There seems to be a general acceptance and understanding that students play a central role in the life of the city, and as a result, the city district of Uptown. The characterization of Waterloo as a "university town" was common throughout the interviews, and even besides recognizing the economic benefits of students, participants often expressed quite positive attitudes towards students in the Uptown district. Participants frequently noted that students "bring youth to the community" (P5) while adding a 'good energy' (P11) and 'vitality' (P7) to the Uptown district, and expressed a sense of loss at the 2020-2021 school year situation:[8]

[8] The vast majority of courses at the universities and colleges in Waterloo were offered remotely during the 2020-2021 academic year due to restrictions associated with the COVID-19 global pandemic. This resulted in an anecdotally smaller number of students than normal choosing to live in the City of Waterloo.

> INTERVIEWER: What kind of impact do you think students have had on Uptown?
> P2, FEMALE, 65: I don't think bad at all. I don't feel that it's been a negative, I think it feels lively when the students are- I felt sad this year when the students weren't having their orientation […] it's fun, it's lively and I love it. I actually miss the students. Yeah, I do, I miss them.

The student population appears to enrich some seniors' experiences of the city district. This tentatively suggests that some attachments to the district may be positively correlated to the student presence, rather than being negatively impacted by it. While this was not true for all participants, many seniors in this study highlighted their overall enjoyment of the unique oddities of life in a university town:

> INTERVIEWER: Do you think that students have had an impact on the Uptown?
> P11, FEMALE, 73: I mean you can feel that, come Fall. And you feel it again in the Spring. The influx of the students, how does that change? Well, students are quite different than someone who's 73, and I enjoy that. […] When the students roll in, I think that's enriching, I don't view it as an inconvenience. I smile at some of the antics [laughs]. I see the cars rolling in with mattresses on the roof, God knows well, everything else, well the students are back. And you just wish them well.

A common theme throughout participants' accounts of interactions in this 'university town' is that of a 'student bubble' where students largely keep to themselves. As a result, despite some instances of direct interactions with students, a large number of participants related to students in a more second-hand, passive way. Participants see students going about their days, but do not have many opportunities to directly engage with them in the city district. There was a sense from participants that students understand themselves to exist outside of the Waterloo community:

> INTERVIEWER: Do you think the students are responsible City residents?
> P4, FEMALE, 67: I think they're maybe, you know, university citizens, right? I don't think they really consider themselves part of Waterloo, the City of Waterloo.
> INTERVIEWER: Why do you think that is?
> P4, FEMALE, 67: It's not home. Right? They're there to go to school, and then they go home. So, I don't know if they ever really feel that this is home.

Participants acknowledged that students and the broader community demographics, particularly the senior population, aren't a "natural mix" (P11), and that students' attempts at integration into the larger community are limited by the fact that their lives are "taking place on campus" (P7). One reason for this separation between students and the larger community was suggested to be the University of Waterloo's cooperative education program. Many departments at the university now have co-op programs where students rotate between classes one term and working at a company the next term. These are typically considered to be intense, competitive programs that may lend themselves to more strict 'campus-centred' routines:

> P3, MALE, 77: [T]he University of Waterloo's co-op program drives these students to work so hard that you can tell when term ends because there will be a party, there will be one party. […] but basically the Waterloo system is like a boot-camp. Students are in and out, in and out, and there's no time.

While students do visit the Uptown district outside of their class schedule, their presence does not appear to play a major role in participants' enjoyment or attachment to the district. If anything, the presence of students seems to obliquely strengthen attachments to the district due to the characterization of Waterloo as a 'university town.' Having these indirect experiences with students Uptown may explain some participants' positive views towards students, despite infrequent direct interactions with them. This separation between seniors' day-to-day lives and students' lives is evident in the Uptown city district. However, these differing lifestyles experience considerably more tension at the residential scale.

iii. RESIDENTIAL EXPERIENCE

Outside of the Uptown district, participants reported a wide variety of residential experiences involving students. These interactions ranged from jack-o-lanterns thrown through windows to students showing up to participate in a neighbourhood arm-knitting class (P9). However, the majority of residents who reported a positive relationship with students either did not live near students, or had no residential issues with the students. In contrast, the most negative account of studentification came from a participant who lived in an area adjacent to Uptown, in the "only non-student house on the block" (P10). This participant has had an especially negative residential experience with students:

> P10, FEMALE, 76: [W]e've had a very quiet year since Covid, students haven't been around, so I don't know if I can cope with the…I'm getting older, and you know. We put up with a lot of crap […] from students. But students are young people and they need to have parties and they need to be yelling and they need to be, they need to have their lives, and I'm tired of telling them to be quiet. So they said back to me, "what are you- you shouldn't be living here, what are doing living here?" […] So what do you say to that. Like we, I guess we feel we've been here for a long time, we've taken care of the neighbourhood, the students come and go, they don't give a shit about lots of things. And so I guess I'm kind of bitter, sounds like.

This quote summarizes a central tension between students and seniors; the former cannot fully understand the way of life their presence inherently disrupts. Students come to the City of Waterloo to attend university and live in Uptown because there are houses and apartments available to rent. As such, students have no context for what life in Waterloo was like years before they arrived; the nature of their relationship with the City is a temporary one bounded by orientation and convocation. Conversely, most senior homeowners in this study bought their homes decades ago when the neighbourhood was full of young families and children. They raised their children in these houses while neighbours gradually moved away, being replaced by

transient students who have little to no stake in the community. As the student population grows, students perceive these neighbourhoods as ‘student neighbourhoods’ where a certain student lifestyle dominates and where ‘normal’ residents do not belong. Some students likely feel entitled to be disruptive and overly rambunctious simply because the perceived consequences are low; what incentive is there to be on friendly terms with neighbours who you will never see again after graduation? This participant expressed that although she loves her property and home, she regrets not moving 20 years ago before the area became more student-dominated.

Furthermore, this participant also discussed the troubles associated with living in close proximity to the infamous Ezra street St. Patrick’s Day party, an unsanctioned street party that has drawn crowds of up to 33,000 to a small residential street near the Uptown (Neilson, 2019). Almost every participant highlighted this “day of idiocy” (P9) as the worst example of student behaviour in the City at large:

> INTERVIEWER: Do you think that students are—as a group in Waterloo— responsible City residents?
> P5, MALE, 72: Well, mostly except on St. Patrick’s Day [laughs] […] And you know the thing is, a lot of the kids are people who show up are from out of town, and they come by bus to go to that event […] I mean, and kids will be kids, I mean that's fine. But that one day is upsetting, I think, for a lot of residents.

Notably, a key distinction between participants who expressed a positive relationship with students and those who did not – even when considering the St. Patrick’s Day party – is whether the participant’s current residential experience with students is a good one. Regardless of the interactions around the Uptown district, interactions with students near one’s own home and property is a major factor in seniors’ reported like or dislike of students. Accordingly, seniors who

reported having no residential issues with students were likely to say students enhanced their experience of Uptown than seniors who dealt with student-related noise and disruptions in their local neighbourhoods:

> INTERVIEWER: Do you think the students are responsible City residents then?
> P3, MALE, 77: Yeah I do. I do, […] they don't really, even after the St. Patrick's Day events in March, **they never get as far as my street**. *[Emphasis added]*

…

> INTERVIEWER: Yeah, what kind of impact do you think the students have had?
> P4, FEMALE, 67: Well when it comes to the street party on Ezra I would say a bad one. You know when those things happen, it's brutal. Um, you know, otherwise, and we live close to the university right, so I think it's good for the economy of the city right? It's really important. **As long as you know nobody wakes me up while I'm sleeping I don't really care [laughs]** *[Emphasis added]*

These excerpts emphasize the sense of the Ezra Street party being 'someone else's problem' because participants were not directly impacted. Participants who stated that it hadn't "affected us that much where we live" (P4) or that they "don't have property over there" (P2), tended to perceive the overall student influence on the city to be either neutral or positive. In contrast, participants who had a negative residential experience, or lived near the Ezra Street party, reported that students did not enhance their experience or attachment to Uptown. Students largely seem to have parallel lives to seniors in Uptown, and there is a 'student bubble' whereupon students tend to keep to themselves. As such, interactions between students and seniors in the city district tend to be indirect or limited to pleasantries; where tensions arise is at the residential scale, particularly in neighbourhoods.

This tension between the indirect experiences of students in the Uptown district versus the sometimes unpleasant lived reality of direct interactions with students in the residential realm

points to an interesting problem. On the one hand, many seniors who had a pleasant residential experience unaffected by students expressed a desire for increased social 'mixing' and geographic diversity between students and seniors:

> P10, FEMALE, 76: It's not healthy to have just one demographic living in an area. We should have families mixed in, and older people

…

> P2, FEMALE, 65: In the high rises, there's a loneliness I think to that kind of living. You know the wretched old university frat houses and stuff, but I in some ways I think, I in a silly sort of way I miss that.

A large number of participants said they "enjoy seeing young people" (P1), and abstractly missed students living amongst the larger community. There was a sense that Uptown is "probably is a better place [than years ago], because you're not just looking around at people like yourself" (P7). Other participants highlighted how interactions between seniors and students are desirable from a social standpoint:

> P11, FEMALE, 73: Are there tensions? I think there are, and I think that some people in my cohort would view them as 'the other,' and not understand them, and people on the student cohort would view seniors as 'the other,' and have very ageist views. And so in order to break down those ageist views, we need to have conversation. We need to interact.

This desire for increased interactions and need to "get involved with [students] and see who they are" (P5) was an oft-cited suggestion from participants who had infrequent or indirect interactions with students in the Uptown district.

On the other hand, participants who had that lived experience of 'mixing' with students in the residential sphere found that lifestyle conflicts made the relationship a fraught one. Students' impacts in residential areas were more pronounced, with participants reporting a wider variety

of positive and negative experiences that impact attachment at the residential scale. For the majority of participants who did not experience student-related residential issues, students did not seem to negatively impact their attachments and relationships with the Uptown district. In some cases, students were even identified as sources of amusement, energy, and enjoyment. Therefore, while interactions with students in the city district seem to largely support or simply not affect place attachment, residential experiences with students have a higher likelihood of being sources of conflict and tension. This presents an interesting dilemma: how can social mixing be facilitated while minimizing the negative aspects of student versus senior lifestyle conflicts? This dilemma is discussed at greater length in Chapter 5.

4.2.2 DOES STUDENTIFICATION IN A CITY DISTRICT AFFECT AGING IN PLACE?

Existing literature has explored the ways in which studentification can negatively impact seniors' quality of life in a university town (Powell, 2016; Lager & van Hoven, 2019). However, the results of this study suggest that studentification likely does not affect place attachments to city district in the same ways as residential place attachment. In general, seniors expressed functional place attachments to the city district as a whole, but more affective attachments to certain long-standing businesses and third places. Participants also reported few issues with studentification or students in Uptown, likely due in part to the more indirect nature of student/senior interactions in the district.

Similarly, when considering how studentification may affect the more general process of aging in and around the city district, participants tended to not *directly* mention students. That being said,

studentification can be inferred as a contributing factor to some of their concerns, particularly high-rise development. The majority of comments about the experience of aging in Waterloo focused on three major themes: a sense of anxiety over the changing physical landscape; a sense of loss for a former way of life; but happiness and gratitude to have lived in Waterloo nonetheless. The following section will discuss these three themes in greater depth.

i. ANXIETY OVER CHANGING PHYSICAL LANDSCAPE

Many participants expressed anxiety over the changing physical landscape of Uptown and Waterloo in general. In particular, there was concern over the increasing number of high and mid-rise apartment buildings. The majority of the concerns around high-rise development spoke to how increased density could affect the experience of seniors. The potential effect on walkability was particularly pronounced; a trend that is not surprising when one considers section 4.1.1's discussion of walkability as a prized physical characteristic of Uptown:

> P3, MALE, 77: My worry is when you have too many high rises and they flood right through the old district […]and how do you deal with the traffic pouring out of there, you destroy the grid pattern which is where the seniors like to walk and talk and meet their neighbours and friends.

This concern for walkability is not surprising, considering section 4.1.1's identification of walkability as a central physical factor of place attachment in Uptown. Students were often cited as a driving force behind the development of these high-rise buildings, with some participants describing the proliferation of apartments near the universities a "scourge on the landscape" (P2). Although Uptown has not yet seen the same level of intensification as the neighbourhoods

directly adjacent to the two universities, there seemed to be a sense of students impelling developers to build:

> P5, MALE, 72: Yeah, I mean it's, every week in the [local paper] there's another notice from the City that a developer wants to put up another high-rise around the Universities. Where are the people coming from?

Interestingly, all of the participants who were concerned about high-rises had also expressed quite positive general attitudes towards students. This points towards a nuanced aspect of seniors' attitudes to students; although students are largely appreciated, there is an underlying anxiety about students becoming "the dominant life-force of the community" at the expense of other demographics (P3). This anxiety is most prominently expressed when discussing high-rises, and particularly the desire for more diverse and affordable housing not targeted at students:

> P11, FEMALE, 73: I'm a little concerned about the number of high-rise buildings that are going up here, accommodations that certainly won't accommodate families you know, geared towards students […] so I hope that there is a measured response to development of the [Uptown] core.

However, some residents did argue that the problem is not the students' fault, but rather the result of developers and landlords taking advantage of high student demand to build larger buildings:

> P3, MALE, 77: the problem isn't so much the students as it is the landlords just piling in one after the other after the other. And destroying any sense of the community, but it's hard to say that the students themselves have really caused social issues.

The issues seem to go hand in hand: the number of students at local universities and colleges continues to grow, incentivizing developers to build one-bedroom or dorm-style apartments. A recent report argues that designing high-rises in this way "creates opportunities for landlords to

capitalize on this 'niche' market and charge higher rents to students" while fueling anti-student attitudes among community members who feel alienated from these buildings (Revington & McCulley, 2020). While not a problem unique to the Uptown district, the stresses created by a tight housing market and high student demand mean that participants are worried about student purpose-built housing further changing their City's skyline and way of life.

ii. SENSE OF LOSS

Alongside the concerns around high-rises affecting seniors' experiences was a desire to preserve existing places, accentuated by a mixed sense of loss for a somewhat intangible former way of life. Most specific to studentification was concern about the proliferation of pubs in the Uptown district. Although the Uptown as it currently exists appears to meet the needs and interests of students and seniors alike, some participants worried that student-oriented spaces would eventually dominate:

> P11, FEMALE, 73: I want [local bookstore] there. I don't want another pub. Because there have been a lot of new pubs coming and going in the [Uptown] core, […] I think we need mixed merchants in the core, and not all pubs.

This anxiety relates to the finding that seniors tend to visit long-standing locations and third places in the community, and are less likely than students to visit pubs and bars. Because certain staples of the community often end up serving as social hubs for seniors, as well as repositories for memories such as raising children and visiting old friends, the loss of those spaces is more keenly felt by seniors. When viewing the photographs of Uptown during the photo-elicitation segment of the interview, one participant remarked, "So many things really...I recognized, and

gone forever…replaced" (P1). Another participant, who notably still loves the current Uptown, also summed up a feeling of loss:

> P9, FEMALE, 73: There's a sense of loss in the Uptown and feeling, just the range of options that it offered. And some of that is come from gentrification, so like, affordable shops have been replaced […] all kinds of little places like that, that just vanished, partly because the rents, but and now they'll never come back because of just retail generally having such a hard time. So yeah I feel a sense of loss for that, and it's not an easy thing to fix.

Although studentification does not appear to be negatively impacting the present experience of aging Uptown in a significant way, there is a concern that it could in the future. Notably, no participants exclusively attributed the changes in Uptown to students, but instead named students as one of many factors affecting the urban landscape of Uptown. For instance, there has been a growing technology and business sector in the City which has drawn professionals to the Uptown. As some authors have already noted, studentification often takes place alongside similar processes of urban change, such as gentrification and youthification (See Hubbard, 2008; Moos, 2016; Moos et al., 2019; Munro et al., 2009; Revington, 2018; Revington et al., 2018). While students have played a role in changing the social and physical landscape of the city district, there is general acknowledgement that they have not done so in isolation.

iii. ENJOYING UPTOWN AND THE CITY OF WATERLOO

Despite some concerns about physical changes to the landscape in the form of high-rises and worry about the future of certain businesses, participants overwhelmingly had a positive outlook towards aging in and around the Uptown. For instance, when it came to grappling with the changes occurring around them, some participants made a point to adjust their frame of mind:

> P1, FEMALE, 87: Yes, yes, you see I'm certainly at the age where either you make adjustments and, you know, live happily, or you don't make adjustments and, you know, you're miserable.

As a result of this choice to view change in a positive light, these participants were generally pleased with the ways in which Uptown has developed. For other participants, the increased development and student influence have improved their experience of Uptown over the years:

> P8, FEMALE, 87: I prefer how [Uptown] is now. It was boring at first. […] And I like this place so much, I wouldn't want anything to deteriorate too much in this community.

Notably, all of the participants expressed how happy they were to have lived in Waterloo, whether they agreed with recent developments or not. Irrespective of functional or affective attachment to Uptown, or a lack of attachment, participants all made a point to emphasize their affection for the lives they've created for themselves in the City:

> P4, FEMALE, 67: I do feel a sense of pride actually, with how Waterloo has developed, and, especially in Uptown. So, but I guess cause I've lived here for so many years, but I guess I, and I like what they've done, I like the thought that's gone into it. I love living in Waterloo, I think it's an awesome, awesome place.

Furthermore, many of the participants were quite invested in the future of Uptown and were interested in seeing its continued success. Students were not targeted as a scapegoat for perceived ills in the Uptown or City at large; rather, there was acknowledgement that students play a central role in the life and character of the City:

> P7, FEMALE, 77: Instead of thinking that [students are] changing my space, my thinking has always been we're all responding to the zeitgeist of the moment.

The idea of Uptown growing and changing to meet the needs of seniors and students was noted by several participants, which may help to explain its enduring popularity among both

demographics. Despite the changes that have occurred over the years, and the changes that are yet to occur, there is a sense of optimism for Uptown's future:

> INTERVIEWER: Do you think that Uptown is a good place for seniors?
> P11, FEMALE, 73: I do. I absolutely do. […] it was good for me when I was in middle life, and now it's good for me now.

Uptown is facing a variety of pressures from processes of urban change, including but not exclusively limited to studentification. While the changes that have occurred are accompanied by a sense of loss for some seniors, the city district in its current state nevertheless appears to be meeting their needs. This makes the city district a pleasant and desirable area to visit or reside in while aging in place. The majority of participants in this study still interact and engage with Uptown on a fairly regular basis, and expressed a desire to do so well into the future.

4.2.3 RESEARCH QUESTION TWO CONCLUSION

A variety of themes emerged in response to the research question, "Does studentification affect seniors' experience of a city district?" Although studentification was noted as a presence in the City, it did not significantly affect most participants' place attachment to the city district or local businesses. This can likely be attributed to the 'parallel lifestyles' students and seniors typically live in the Uptown district. While seniors often visit certain long-standing establishments for socialization with business owners/staff and to run errands, students are more likely to visit pubs or restaurants during hours when many seniors are not interested in visiting Uptown. Additionally, there is a perception that a majority of students live in a 'bubble' of student life that centres on the university campus and extends to certain establishments for socializing. This phenomenon has been well-documented in studentification literature, as student-centric areas

often create ‘pathways’ of activity through city centres (Chatterton, 1999) that can enable a high level of spatial segregation between students other urban residents (Munroe et al., 2009).

As a result of these differing daily schedules and the student bubble, there are few direct interactions between students and seniors in the Uptown city district. Seniors do enjoy the indirect student presence though, such as the energy students bring to the city and their humorous antics. Participants understood the long-standing character of Waterloo in general to be a ‘university town,’ perhaps adding to the sense of students being an inherent and unremarkable part of the community. That being said, residential experiences between seniors and students are where tensions started to become apparent. For seniors who lived near a disruptive student presence, studentification was a noticeable and negative part of their living experience. However, for seniors who did not have property near disorderly students or the infamous St. Patrick’s Day street party, students were viewed in a considerably more positive light. The difference between these accounts of students suggests that students can have a positive or neutral impact on place attachment in the city district, provided that one’s residential experience with students is a positive one. If an individual has residential issues with students, they are more likely to have their Uptown experience and attachments negatively impacted by the student presence.

Studentification in the Uptown district was tangentially linked to a major concern of seniors aging in place: high-rise development. While students were not blamed for all the recent developments, many seniors lamented the changing landscape as developers try to house a

bourgeoning student population alongside a growing workforce. Participants also expressed a sense of loss for certain third places and locations within the City over the past several decades. This anxiety over a changing physical landscape and the loss of favourite places seem to be different articulations of the same issue; both are explicit markers of change at a regional and local level. A desire for stability ran through many participants' accounts of their hopes for Uptown Waterloo; hopes for a balanced housing mix, for fewer high-rises, for the preservation of old businesses and buildings in the face of development pressure. Despite these stressors, all of the participants interviewed expressed gratitude and happiness at having lived, and being able to continue to live, in Waterloo. Uptown was a valued location for many participants, and several individuals expressed pride in Uptown's growth. In general, the seniors who took part in this study were invested in seeing the Uptown succeed and grow in the coming years.

CHAPTER 5 – SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

This chapter presents a summary of the research questions and suggests what the implications of the study's findings may be for theory and practice. Possible solutions and options for planners and policy-makers are presented. Both of the two overarching research questions are discussed in turn: What place attachment bonds to a city district are demonstrated by long-term senior residents; and does studentification affects seniors' experience of a city district? Finally, the limitations of this study are identified and possible areas for future research are presented.

5.1.RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS: WHAT PLACE ATTACHMENT BONDS TO A CITY DISTRICT ARE DEMONSTRATED BY LONG-TERM SENIOR RESIDENTS?

Employing the generally accepted definition of place attachment as a bond between an individual or group and particular social or physical environments, this study focused on the city district scale of attachment. While existing literature is clear that place attachments can bring about an 'anchoring effect' for seniors that supports a coherent, overarching sense of personal identity (Hummon, 1992: 258) as well as a variety of physical and social health benefits (Morita et al., 2010), studies have rarely examined seniors' attachments at the city district scale. Lewicka (2011) notes that approximately 75% of all work that deals with residential place attachment concerns attachment to neighbourhood (Lewicka, 2011: 212; see also Hidaldo and Hernández, 2001; Billig, 2005; Brown et al., 2003; Kamalipour, 2012). Only one study identified in the scope of this literature review appeared to have examined place attachment to the city district, and merely found attachment to district to be greater than attachment to city, but less than attachment to

neighbourhood (Lewicka, 2010). Due to this paucity of information, it was unclear if seniors would be place attached to the city district, and if so, what the nature of those attachments would be. The answer to this overarching research question is presented in three sub-sections: the socio-demographic, social, and physical factors influencing attachment at the city district level; whether attachment to city district is functional or affective; and what the relevance is of third places to attachment. An overview of the findings in regard to these three topics is presented in the following sections.

5.1.1 SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC, SOCIAL, AND PHYSICAL FACTORS

This study found that the typical socio-demographic, social, and physical 'predictors' of attachment largely did not apply to the city district scale.

i. SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

The prototypical socio-demographic factors influencing attachment are the length of residence and home ownership. Since having lived in the City of Waterloo for at least the last 30 years was a prerequisite to participate, and many participants had resided there for longer, length of residence was not a significant factor in this study. No differing themes emerged from participants who had lived in Waterloo longer, perhaps suggesting that varying length of residence past a certain threshold may not contribute to significantly different attachment levels among seniors. It is also worth noting that the majority of existing literature which finds attachment levels to differ based on residence typically compares newcomers to long-time residents, and does not perform comparisons between long-time residents (Lewicka, 2011).

Similarly, this study suggests that beyond a certain length of residence and/or age, attachment may be relatively similar between individuals.

In terms of home ownership; although this study did not directly collect information on participants' home ownership status, a majority of participants had lived in their current homes and/or neighbourhoods for several decades. Despite many participants living in or adjacent to the Uptown district, there was not a close relationship between attachment to city district and home ownership. Rather, place attachment to local residential environments was far more prominent than attachment to city district. Even participants who lived directly in the Uptown district identified a stronger sense of attachment and affection to their own homes, apartment buildings, and immediate residential environments than to the broader Uptown district. This study therefore aligns with the prevailing view in the literature that one's home, and the intimate place scales of one's local neighbourhood or apartment building, are the primary sites of attachment for most people. As was the case in Lewicka (2010), the results of this study suggest that city districts tend to evoke less immediate attachment than home or immediate local residential environments. This finding may support Tuan's (1975) thought that places which are better geographically defined are more likely to become a target of attachment; city districts can be geographically ill-defined, with their borders existing primarily on paper rather than in the minds of residents.

ii. SOCIAL FACTORS

The literature on the social predictors of place attachment suggests that community ties—typically expressed as the strength and extensiveness of local friendships, neighbourhood relationships, and involvement in informal social activities in the neighbourhood—are consistent and significant sources of attachment (Gerson et al., 1977; Guest & Lee, 1983; Goudy, 1982; Hunter, 1974; Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974; St. John et al., 1986; all cited in Hummond, 1992; see also Lewicka, 2011). Participants in this study did describe heightened attachment in reference to social factors, but tended to experience these social ties in their residential environments or specific places in the community rather than to the city district. Participants often preferred to socialize with friends in their own homes, or as guests in a friend's home, rather than visit the Uptown city district. While some participants did indicate long-standing traditions of meeting certain friends at Uptown coffee shops, personal homes were often selected for socializing due to their accessibility, convenience, and quiet atmospheres.

Similarly, organization membership and activism tended to occur at the neighbourhood level rather than in the Uptown district. This may be due in part to more opportunities for engagement existing at the residential scale (i.e. neighbourhood association groups), and people having a greater sense of protectiveness over their home and immediate residential neighbourhood. Perceived threats to a neighbourhood's existing environment seem to spur greater interest and anger than the more abstract changes in a city district; for example, the difference between an apartment building being proposed next door versus a new leasehold at an Uptown commercial location. The former presents a clear opportunity for activism, whereas the latter is less

controversial by nature of its transactional nature; businesses commonly come and go, but new developments in residential areas are perceived as more permanent changes. Although some participants had been involved in Uptown organizations, they did not describe a stronger attachment to city district than participants who were not involved in these Uptown groups. It is worth noting that the participants in this study were not intimately involved in the Uptown district business association scene- it is possible that current Uptown business owners, rather than patrons, would exhibit the expected link between local group involvement and place attachment. This study therefore supports the existing literature's sense of local social ties being important to the development of place attachment. Because participants were predominately socially involved at the residential scale, deep social ties at the overall city district scale were uncommon.

iii. PHYSICAL FACTORS

The primary physical factors in the literature expected to facilitate attachment are green space, walkability, and features that bring a unique identity to a place (Bonaiuto et al., 1999; Sugihara and Evans, 2000; cited in Lewicka, 2011; Shamsuddin & Ujang, 2008; cited in Kamalipour et al., 2012). During analysis of the socio-demographic, social, and physical factors, physical factors most readily corresponded with the features of the city district scale of attachment. Participants had explicit opinions on the physical characteristics of the city district and rarely deferred to discussing the physical aspects of their residential neighbourhoods.

In terms of walkability, the city district was described quite favorably. Participants generally found the Uptown quite walkable and reported seeing many other seniors using the various sidewalks and paths. The City was praised for its snow removal and efforts to keep the area walkable even during the winter months. However, Uptown was described less favorably in reference to its landmarks, the most commonly cited of which was the Town Square. A polarizing feature in the centre of the Uptown district, participants praised its redevelopment from a parking lot and bemoaned its concrete aesthetic and public art installation in equal measure. The need for a water feature, greenery, or additional shade in the Square was cited by many participants as a desirable future improvement.

Considering walkability and unique landmarks as two constituent parts of physical predictors of attachment yields conflicting results. The literature would expect participants to be attached due to Uptown's walkable nature, but the deeply mixed opinions on the Town Square, a central and defining feature of the urban district, may detract from overall attachment. It is telling that some participants describe how much they love living in Waterloo and their intentional efforts to buy local from Uptown, but still deride the appearance of the Square—albeit not in the winter when the skating rink is highlighted as a pleasant feature. This study therefore identified quite varied attitudes towards the physical features of the city district, making the relationships between personal aesthetic preferences, accessibility, and physical elements of attachment difficult to extricate from each other.

5.1.2 FUNCTIONAL VS. AFFECTIVE ATTACHMENT

The prevailing two stances in existing literature characterize place attachment as being either functional or affective. Functional attachments develop as a result of a place's ability to fulfill an individual or group's needs and support their goals better than known alternatives (Williams, Patterson, Roggenbuck and Watson, 1992; cited in Ujang, 2012), whereas affective place attachments are rooted in emotion. The latter tend to be linked to memories and social connections that 'tie' an individual to a location, even if that location is not the most objectively convenient, safe, or desirable (La Gory, Ward, & Sherman, 1985; cited in Wiles et al., 2012).

A clear theme that emerged from the interview data is that place attachment to local residential environment is far more prominent than attachment to city district. Participants predominately selected their residential neighbourhoods and homes as being their locus of attachment. This was true for participants residing in, or directly adjacent to, the Uptown district. Even a participant who resided directly within the Uptown district expressed feeling closer to her apartment floor neighbours, rather than district as a whole. While neighbourhoods foster a distinct sense of community and attachment in relationship with people's homes, the same does not seem to be true at the city district scale. Attachment to small-scale residential environments, even if these environments were located within the city district, did not translate to attachment to district.

Although affective attachments to the home and residential scales were pronounced in this study, it has been previously established that people can hold various attachments at multiple

place scales. (Kamalipour et al., 2012; Hidaglo & Hernández, 2001). This study's findings indicate that in the context of a city district, attachments to the district as a whole tended to be functional, but attachment to specific locations and third places in the district were affective.[9] This is a unique finding, which departs from existing literature by specifically identifying the discrepancy between attachment to specific locations in a city district and the overall scale of the city district.

When discussing the general city district, many participants identified Uptown as a convenient place that met their needs. This was primarily true for participants who lived in and adjacent to the Uptown district, which comprised the majority of participants. Part of this convenience is linked to Uptown's walkable nature, which relates to the 'walkability' physical predictor of attachment. As a flat area with wide sidewalks and regular maintenance, Uptown is a preferred destination for seniors to simply walk around for exercise or pleasure. Although many participants described a general coming and going to the district, they rarely spoke with excitement, warmth, or affection when describing these experiences. This suggests that the nature of their attachment to the Uptown city district is functional; Uptown meets their needs, so these Waterloo residents make a rational choice to visit. Of course, the inherent risk of functional attachment is this element of rational choice, insofar as a better (i.e. more convenient) alternative could readily replace Uptown's role in people's lives. Indeed, participants who found Uptown challenging to access due to mobility concerns, the perception of insufficient parking, or who preferred the selection of goods at larger malls or shopping plazas closer to their homes, did not describe much attachment to the city district scale.

[9] Accordingly, affective attachment is summarized in the following section 5.1.3 on third places.

5.1.3 THIRD PLACES AND AFFECTIVE ATTACHMENT

Although attachments to the city district seemed primarily functional, attachments to specific locations and third places within the district were affective. These locations were described with warmth, passion, and participants often expressed a fierce desire to protect the place in its current state. The two major specific locations and third places identified in this study were Waterloo Park and local Uptown businesses. A common theme amongst the places identified as sources of attachment is that they are all long-standing fixtures of the community.

That many participants felt a strong sense of attachment to Waterloo Park is unsurprising, as many studies have explored and confirmed the attachments people form to recreational and natural green spaces (Fishwick & Vining, 1992; Kaltenborn & Bjerke, 2002; Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Williams & Van Patten, 1998; cited in Lewicka, 2011) Likewise, many participants described a close and enduring sense of fondness and loyalty to an eclectic selection of long-standing Uptown businesses, including cinemas, a bookstore, a hardware store, and a live jazz venue. The third places identified by participants were diverse, but all shared the common themes of being sources of positive social connection, gathering places, locations of community building, and had been in business for many years. Participants often proudly stated they made a point to support these local businesses, even if prices were lower at big box stores, major malls, or online. These businesses were valued not only for their services but for the social aspect of socializing with the staff and other customers. Accordingly, this study supports the existing literature which suggests that third places play a significant role in providing older people opportunities to engage in the social lives of their local communities (Alidoust et al., 2015).

5.2 PLACE ATTACHMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are two primary implications from this research questions' findings, one relating to the broader theoretical understanding of city districts as a scale of attachment, and the other in regard to the risk of disappearing third places.

5.2.1 CITY DISTRICTS AS PLACE SCALES FOR ATTACHMENT

A unique finding of this study is that participants expressed affective attachment to third places, but a simultaneous functional—or simple lack of—attachment to the city district those third places are located within. While people can hold differing levels of attachment to various place scales, it is curious that participants would have attachment to the smaller scale of a business, but little or no attachment to the larger district scale. Part of what makes this finding surprising is that this discrepancy between place scales is not a feature of place attachment at the place scale of residential neighbourhoods. In the accounts of local neighbourhoods provided in this study, as well as the broader literature, there is a fairly consistent relationship between people's attachment to their homes and their residential neighbourhoods. Put otherwise, there is a disconnect between the place scales of businesses/district that is not replicated in the home/neighbourhood place scale relationship.

It is clear that at some emotional, psychological, and social level, participants' affective attachment to certain places in the city district develops separately from their attitudes towards the district as a whole. While it is beyond the scope of this study to fully explore why this is the case, it is worth drawing a connection between a lack of district place attachment and the issue

of place identity. As discussed in Chapter Two, a sense of place and an acknowledgement of place identity are necessary precursors to forming place attachment bonds. While a sense of place and place identity does not guarantee the development of place attachment bonds, it is intuitive that people must recognize a 'place' as such before bonds can form. When exploring place attachment to a locale, or the lack thereof, it is therefore reasonable to question whether these underlying conditions—sense of place and place identity—are being met.

The fact that the majority of participants described attachment to their homes or specific third places but not the Uptown city district may suggest that the district lacks a distinct 'place identity' outside of specific businesses, the Park, and the Town Square. Although the name branding of 'Uptown Waterloo' itself may help to foster a specific place identity, it is likely unclear for some residents what to then 'attach to' at the district scale. Participants did describe some level of functional attachment to the district as a whole, particularly around walkability and public spaces, but an effort to diversify the image of what people consider to be the district of Uptown Waterloo would likely require deliberate place-making exercises and expanded branding initiatives. This would be an example of 'destination branding;' the strategic use of branding techniques for places aimed at enhancing their social and economic development, reframing their image, and fostering a sense of pride and identity among residents (Kotler and Gertner, 2002; Anholt, 2005; Gilmore, 2002; cited in Campelo et al., 2014). The development of this branding and place-making technique draws upon local histories and interests—for example, historical events, landscape, ancestry, and community features—to creatively highlight features important to residents and visitors alike.

That having been said, the fact that Uptown as a city district lacks a clear framework for development may not be a problem that needs solving; whether this is even an issue depends on the desired vision for Uptown Waterloo. Considering the challenges associated with attempting to facilitate attachment to this place scale, one may be tempted to ask whether the city district is even important as a scale of attachment. After all, this study supports the finding that place attachment is occurring at local residential scales in Waterloo as well as to specific third places within the Uptown. To be sure, city districts are more geographically, socially, and politically complicated than the majority of smaller-scale residential neighbourhoods, which tend to be fairly homogenous in their land uses and social environments. By nature of spending a great deal of time in a residential setting people are apt to develop attachments. Furthermore, residential neighbourhoods are typically built around common shared physical spaces, such as parks and playgrounds, and often have neighbourhood associations that organize activities. Even in the absence of a formal neighbourhood association, during the interviews participants frequently discussed gathering with neighbours at holiday parties and barbecues.

Considering the existing bonds to local neighbourhoods and residential environments, it may be the case that planners and policy-makers should focus on supporting these associations and activities which exist at smaller places scales than the city district. This would be a more segregated approach to social interactions and place attachment, as the city district would be conceptualized in reference to its economic goals while social interactions and attachments would continue to occur primarily at the residential neighbourhood scale. Though this is not

necessarily a faulty approach, it does come with some risks. Namely, there could be an over-reliance on these residential spaces as targets of place attachment.

Imagine, for instance, an individual who has a strong place attachment to their home and residential neighbourhood. They are aging in place, and all of their social ties are linked to the neighbourhood place scale. However, they choose to sell their house when faced with declining mobility and move to an assisted living facility in a different area of town. Very suddenly, the mental, social, and physical benefits of place attachment are threatened because the individual can no longer access the place to which they are attached. They have lost their home as a centralizing tie to the neighbourhood, and with it, the neighbourhood association's planned activities as well as informal activities such as impromptu conversations with long-time neighbours. In this scenario, the resident is left without access to the place that 'grounds' them in their community, and as a result loses the benefits of place attachment while simultaneously being at heightened risk for social isolation.

However, the situation could be very different if this same senior had place attachments to place scales besides their residential environment, such as city district or third places. Regardless of whether people sell their homes, move neighbourhoods, or undergo any number of other life-altering experiences that could affect their residential place attachment, they would still be able visit the city district/third places and reap the benefits of place attachment and social interaction. This is a compelling reason as to why place attachments should not only be nurtured and supported at the residential scale. The possibility of residents having attachments to multiple

place scales in a city has great potential to enrich the aging experience for all residents, regardless of where they live or work, by providing diverse geographical options for attachment and social interaction throughout the life course.

5.2.2 AN ACTION PLAN FOR THIRD PLACES

The benefits of maintaining place attachments in places besides the home and local neighbourhood also speak to why the decline of third places is problematic. It is well established that third places—key places where older people make social connections and experience informal public life outside of work or home—are integral to the social, mental, and physical health of seniors (Yuen & Johnson, 2017; Alidoust et al., 2015; Alidoust et al., 2019; Gardner, 2011; Van Hees et al., 2018; Smith & Cartlidge, 2011; Fratiglioni et al., 2000). These places are social meeting places that ultimately contribute to the strength of the community, such as a park, a community centre, or a shop. Third places also play a significant role in providing older people opportunities to engage in the social lives of their local communities, fostering social connectedness and helping to prevent social isolation, loneliness, and the negative mental and physical ailments associated with a lack of social support (Fratiglioni et al., 2000; cited in Lee & Tan, 2019). As outlined in Chapter 4, this study found that third places in the Uptown city district tended to be long-standing establishments that were predominately frequented by residents other than students. Participants in this study were often place attached to third places in the Uptown city district.

Participants of this study emphasized fears of these third places permanently closing as a result of changing tastes or the Covid-19 pandemic. Besides the economic impact the loss of these businesses would present, decision-makers should be aware of the impact the closure of these locations may have on senior residents. When third places close, older adults are presented with fewer opportunities to leave their homes, socialize with friends and acquaintances, and potentially informally seek assistance for any issues in their lives. Since seniors are typically retired, third places play an important role in providing a predictable, friendly, and socially accessible location to visit outside of the home. This study's participants highlighted that alternatives to third places are hard to come by; old businesses and close relationships with fellow patrons and staff cannot be readily replicated with new businesses. Without third places, seniors are more easily socially isolated, which can bring about a variety of negative impacts at the personal and societal scales.

As such, the loss of third places is an important consideration for the social health of communities, particularly in the context of an aging population. There is a need for cities to explicitly identify third places in their communities and examine what role these locations play in the lives of their growing senior population. If and when these locations close, there may be a large number of seniors who have suddenly been left without an essential link to their larger community and networks of friends and social support. However, the fact that the vast majority of third places identified in this study are private businesses—with the notable exception of Waterloo Park—poses problems for planners and policy-makers wishing to address the problem of disappearing third places. While cities have limited tools at their disposal to mitigate the loss

of a privately-owned third place, there are some options available to planners to potentially address the loss of third places and enhance the character of an urban district.

One way that planners can shape the character of a district and increase the stock of essential third places is to encourage or require that new developments include 'Privately Owned Public Spaces' (POPS). First introduced in New York City in the 1960s as a zoning tool, the POPS program encouraged private developers to provide and manage publicly accessible spaces in exchange for extra floor bonuses (Kayden et al., 2000; cited in Lee, 2020). POPS are fundamentally hybrid spaces that straddle the line between public and private space; they are owned and managed by private developers but are required by the government to follow certain regulations and encourage public use (Huang and Franck, 2018; cited in Lee, 2020). Over the years POPS have become a popular means of producing public space because they are inexpensive to create and maintain from a municipal standpoint, are an efficient way to optimize land use within set geographical limits, and provide increased space for relaxation and social interaction (Lee, 2020). A POPS program can help to balance the distribution of the public spaces throughout the city by covering the locations where publicly owned public spaces are sparse (Yoon & Srinivasan, 2015).

Cities will often allow developers to increase density in return for POPS, the rationale being that the benefit of these public spaces helps to offset the negative impacts of congestion, pollution, and loss of sunlight associated with increased density (Rahi et al., 2012). This is similar to the present situation in Waterloo, as the City encourages developers to provide POPS on larger

developments through a variety of means, including site plan review, bonusing applications, and parkland dedication opportunities (Waterloo 2019, POPS Guidelines).

However, POPS can be more specifically designed to provide additional third places; a particularly salient opportunity amid Uptown Waterloo's landscape of largely private commercial retail, offices, and apartment buildings. Since municipal urban design staff have considerable input into how new developments design and implement POPS, it is worth examining whether the City's current POPS design criteria facilitate the social interactions and intimate place scales characteristic of third places.

Some key issues often identified with POPS are the exclusion of certain groups of people deemed 'undesirable' by the private owners, as well as a sense of the place being uninviting (Zhang, 2017; Lee, 2020). In some cases people are unaware the space is even intended to be privately owned public space because developers—either intentionally or unintentionally—make the space as "private looking as possible" (Smithsimon, 2008; cited in Lee, 2020: 4). Cities must develop ongoing processes to monitor POPS and evaluate if the program is creating well-used public space, or simply providing a bonus to the developer with no realized public benefit. To pivot towards an understanding of POPS as potential third places cities should carefully consider how to make the public aware of these privately owned public spaces, and also consult with the public to determine if existing guidelines are sufficient to make places desirable locations for formal and informal social gatherings.

Privately owned public spaces are therefore a key tool for municipalities to address streetscape character, provide community amenities, and increase the stock of potential third places. Pursing a more robust and intentional POPS program may also help to transform the Uptown experience away from the largely functional experience described by participants in this study by providing more defined, unique places for people to 'attach to' in the Uptown outside of certain private businesses, the Park and the Town Square. By adding open amenity spaces that are available to the public throughout the district and which could be used for social gathering and/or passive recreation, planners and policy-makers could further define and enhance the overall character of the city district.

5.3 RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS: DOES STUDENTIFICATION AFFECT SENIORS' EXPERIENCES OF A CITY DISTRICT?

Having explored what place attachments exist between participants and the Uptown district, this study also examined whether the large student population impacts seniors' experiences in the city district. The large student presence in Waterloo is linked to the three universities and colleges and has resulted in a degree of studentification around the City, particularly in the neighbourhoods directly adjacent to the universities. Studentification is a process of urban change characterized by social, cultural, economic, and physical transformations within university towns, which are associated with the seasonal, in-migration of higher education students (Smith, 2005). Although studentification can bring about some positive effects, namely economic buzz and liveliness, it is generally considered to bring about disruptive, negative changes. These include inflating property prices as housing stock becomes targeted to students;

lifestyle conflicts such as noise, partying, and litter; and a 'student ghetto' monoculture that sees the provision of goods and services disproportionately target student demographics, sometimes at the expense of permanent residents. Scholarship on studentification tends to focus on the residential impacts of students, and less on the cultural or social changes brought about by students in shared public spaces. Although studentification has been documented around the world, it has rarely been examined in reference to aging in place, and never explicitly in respect to seniors' place attachments. Accordingly, this study aimed to address two topics in regard to this overarching research question: whether studentification affects seniors' place attachments in the city district, and whether studentification in a city district affects aging in place.

5.3.1 DOES STUDENTIFICATION AFFECT PLACE ATTACHMENT IN THE CITY DISTRICT?

Considering the abundance of existing literature documenting the negative effects of studentification, it was expected that studentification would be linked to a decreased sense of place attachment for seniors since Uptown is a popular student destination. However, on the contrary, this study found that studentification had little impact on seniors' experiences in the city district or on any place attachment bonds in the district.

The majority of participants indicated that they had few interactions with students in Uptown, and either found the student presence there unnoticeable or beneficial. Participants were keenly aware of the spending power students bring to local businesses, and often expressed affection for the liveliness students bring to the area. Many participants also highlighted the character of Uptown, and the City of Waterloo as a whole, as being a 'university town.' Although the number

of students has increased over the years, students have been a regular presence in Waterloo for decades. As such, the presence of students does not appear to play a major role in participants' enjoyment or attachment to the district. If anything, the presence of students may strengthen attachment to district due to the common characterization of Waterloo's identity being linked to students.

Despite this positive characterization of students in the city district, there was a striking sense of students and seniors living parallel lives in Uptown; both demographics frequent the area but visit different businesses at different times. This finding supports existing literature that has found students to have irregular schedules due to a fluid allocation between work and leisure time (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1979) and a high level of spatial segregation from other urban residents (Munroe et al., 2009). Students and seniors rarely visit the same businesses at the same times of day, and students often stay in a 'student bubble' near the campuses, creating fewer opportunities for conflict and tensions to arise in the city district. As a result, both demographics are able to co-exist in the city district without many of the negative effects typically reported in student-dominated cities. No participants could recall a particularly negative experience with students within the Uptown city district.

However, participants who reported a positive relationship with students had no notable residential issues with the students. While almost all participants criticized the infamous unsanctioned St. Patrick's Day street party, the key distinction between participants who nevertheless expressed a positive relationship with students and those who did not was whether

that individual had a pleasant residential experience with students. Regardless of interactions around the Uptown city district, interactions with students near one's own home and property are a critical factor in seniors' reported like or dislike of students. Unsurprisingly then, seniors who reported having no residential issues with students were more likely to say students enhanced their experience of Uptown than seniors who deal with student-related noise and late-night disruptions at their homes. This finding is in line with other studentification studies, which have found residential conflicts to be a frequent negative impact of a large student population (Allison, 2006; Hubbard, 2008).

This study finds that, at least at the city district scale, studentification plays a minimal role in seniors' place attachments. It is also worth noting that this finding may be due, at least in part, to the types of interactions seniors and students have in the city district of Uptown Waterloo. Since students and seniors seem to live parallel lives in Uptown, the affective bonds to specific third places may be unaffected by students simply because not many students visit those businesses to begin with. Attachment to district is more functional; the occasional presence of students venturing outside their 'student bubble' during the hours when seniors visit Uptown largely does not affect the convenience or walkability of the district. Therefore, while this study has found studentification to play a minimal role in affecting seniors' place attachments, it is possible that a City with a different student culture may have different results.

5.3.2 DOES STUDENTIFICATION IN A CITY DISTRICT AFFECT AGING IN PLACE?

Having found that studentification and the presence of a large student body do not significantly affect seniors' place attachment to city district, the study then examined whether studentification affects seniors' general experience of aging in place Uptown.

Two previous studies on studentification and aging in place found that seniors in studentified neighbourhoods felt vulnerable amid the threat of displacement from a large student body (Powell, 2016), and that the influx of students had negatively affected older adults' feelings of residential comfort (Lager & van Hoven, 2019). While these studies were performed in explicitly studentified neighbourhoods, as opposed to a city district with varying degrees of studentification, it was expected that the large number of students would similarly impact seniors' experiences of the city district in this study.

Instead, participants tended to not directly mention students when reflecting on the changes in Uptown, although studentification seems to be a contributing factor to some of their concerns. The most frequently cited anxieties centered on the changing physical landscape of Waterloo, particularly in reference to the proliferation of high-density apartments near the universities. While individual students themselves are not directly to blame, the growing student body in the City is certainly helping to drive demand; Waterloo has almost half of all purpose-built student housing in Canada (Jackson, 2020). Participants largely have positive attitudes towards students but are nevertheless concerned about students becoming the dominant population of the community. This fear of demographic change relates to a generalized sense of loss expressed by

participants for a long past way of life, and a desire to preserve existing buildings and businesses. This point speaks to participants' affective attachment and fondness for specific locations and third places in the Uptown. Participants are concerned that once long-standing businesses close in Uptown, there is a fair likelihood of student-focused businesses taking their place. Seniors do not visit newer pubs and bars in the same way they visit bookstores, cinemas, and music venues; there is no straightforward replacement for the void left by the closure of these third places in Uptown.

Despite these concerns, all the participants expressed gratitude and happiness at their choice to live in the City of Waterloo, and a general sense of pride at how the community has developed. Although there are certainly entertainment and commercial provisions targeted to students (Chatterton, 1999), participants largely felt as though there was an adequate variety of services and businesses in the Uptown city district for people of all ages. While there is an acknowledgement that Uptown currently meets the needs of many seniors and has third places that are important to that age demographic. Participants are largely invested in ensuring Uptown continues to be a balanced destination and experience for people across the life spectrum. Rather than pulling away from the Uptown city district with age, participants expressed their care and continuing interest in helping to shape Uptown and the broader City of Waterloo.

5.4 STUDENTIFICATION IMPLICATIONS

Two primary implications stem from the study's findings with regard to studentification, both of which will be discussed in turn. The first addresses the question of how to facilitate

intergenerational socialization in the face of ongoing lifestyle conflicts between students and seniors, and the second section highlights the tension between different age demographics' conflicting visions of a 'livable' city.

5.4.1 LIFESTYLE CONFLICTS

An intriguing issue that emerged from this study is the finding that a participant's residential experience of students is a key determinant of their interest in increasing socialization between the senior and student age demographics. On the one hand, participants who have a positive relationship with students expressed a desire for increased social mixing between students and seniors, arguing that not engaging with difference is bad for society. However, the opportunities for interaction between students and seniors in the city district of Uptown are rare and do not seem to occur organically. Students tend to stay in a 'student bubble,' and exist in parallel to seniors in Uptown; sharing the space, but rarely crossing paths.

At the same time, however, participants who live near students are more likely to experience lifestyle conflicts and have a negative perception of students as a result. There is a curious sense in which the idea of a lively student presence may be romanticized; participants enjoy the life and energy students bring to the City, but often dislike living near parties and other similarly disruptive student events. Of course, an individual's residential experience of students depends extensively on luck; for instance, whether a student rental house next door is respectful and quiet, or aggressive and loud. The indirect but positive relationships between seniors and

students in Uptown stand in stark contrast to the seniors who describe being woken up at all hours of the night in their homes and having confrontations with rowdy, intoxicated students.

This tension poses some challenging questions for planners and policy-makers. Social diversity and intergenerational dialogue are championed in cities across Canada, but age segregation can contribute to ageism, reinforce prejudices, and hinder socialization (Revington, 2018). When faced with fundamental lifestyle differences, how can seniors and students co-exist in the residential sphere? Furthermore, how can social interaction between these demographics be facilitated in the city district, if the mix is not an organically occurring one? Can positive student/senior interactions in the city district supersede negative residential experiences of students? There is a general acknowledgement that students are simply passing through the City as a setting for their university experience, so what role can—and should—they play in general community life? While the 'parallel lives' phenomenon of Uptown reduces conflicts in the city district sphere, it also complicates efforts to engage both demographics in meaningful dialogue.

These are complicated questions that lack a single solution from any single actor, and there is no clear location where intergenerational dialogue between students and seniors would intuitively take place in Uptown or the City more broadly. As such, there is a need for the City of Waterloo to explore facilitating productive and meaningful dialogue between seniors and students. There is the possibility of the Town and Gown committee heading this effort, as this committee has an interest in enhancing "relationships, communications and policies among the universities, college, students, city, police and the community" (City of Waterloo, 2021: 1).

While the overarching issue of social cohesion versus lifestyle conflicts is not a new tension unique to students and seniors, it is a tension that is likely to be at the forefront of the 'growing pains' Waterloo will experience as its resident population continues to age while the student population grows. University towns are in a unique position to lead intergenerational dialogue and facilitate novel approaches to some of the common issues facing seniors and students alike, such as affordable housing and transportation solutions. However, without a concentrated effort to reconcile lifestyle differences and minimize conflicts at the residential scale, there is the risk of animosity growing between students and the general population. Similarly, the lack of a clear or defined means by which to facilitate dialogue between seniors and students in the community risks leaving voices unheard, opportunities for change missed, and social cohesion weakened.

5.4.2 CONFLICTING VISIONS FOR THE CITY

The issue of facilitating meaningful dialogue and opportunities for socialization between seniors and students also points to the larger question of whether it is even possible to reconcile the differing views seniors and younger generations have for 'their City.' Seniors' place attachments rely on certain aspects of an environment staying the same over time, but a city must accommodate growth and development to be successful. How can stasis and change coexist? An excellent example of this dilemma in the Waterloo context is the question of where students should live. Participants in this study expressed a variety of conflicting opinions, with single individuals sometimes holding contradictory views. For instance, a majority of participants disapproved of the 'high-rise' student-oriented apartment buildings near the universities, but also did not want students as neighbours in their residential neighbourhoods. Increased density

was seen as undesirable by participants, but an increased student presence in existing residential homes was also disliked and associated with lifestyle conflicts. This begs the question, where are students then expected to live, if not in apartments or existing houses?

While seniors are concerned about the character and physical environment of the City changing, students are increasingly desperate to find suitable living accommodations. In October 2019, the rental vacancy rate reported by CMHC in the Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge Census Metropolitan Area was 2.1%. This figure falls to only 1.6% for the City of Waterloo. As a result of this tight supply of housing, rents rose over the same period by an estimated 2.8% in Waterloo and 5.0% in the metropolitan area as a whole (Revington & McCulley, 2020; citing CMHC, 2020). There is an apparent need for more housing, particularly in 'Built-Up Areas' established by the Region of Waterloo in urban areas such as Uptown Waterloo, Downtown Kitchener, near light rail transit stations, and in designated nodes and corridors (Regional Municipality of Waterloo, 2015: 11-12; cited in Revington & McCulley, 2020). The development projects required to address this housing demand will necessarily change the landscape of the City, potentially frustrating senior residents.

This friction between urban change driven by younger demographics and senior populations is part of a larger well-documented tension between younger urban residents, including students, and the aging 'baby boomer' population. Millennials—and now, their Gen Z counterparts—tend to blame Baby Boomers for the lack of affordable housing and rental accommodation because of resistance to higher density construction in neighbourhoods with single-family homes,

characterising these seniors as having a 'Not in My Backyard' (NIMBY) mindset (Holleran, 2021). While the 'generational framing' of housing and development issues is often critiqued for obfuscating the question of economic class that arguably sits at the heart of the issue, it is nevertheless the case that public hearings on new developments tend to be disproportionately attended by disapproving senior homeowners (Holleran, 2021; citing Martin, 2015). In turn, younger housing activists are frustrated by the refusal to allow additional residential units in desirable areas with existing public transit and access to public services (Holleran, 2021).

Therefore, although this study has focused on the ways studentification can impact the place attachments and experience of aging in place for older adults, it is also important to note that place-attached long-term residents can be a major source of opposition towards necessary urban changes relating to density and access to services. Differing answers to central questions—such as how many apartment buildings to build, where they should go, and how tall they should be—suggests that seniors and younger generations not only disagree over urban growth but also more fundamental questions of what makes a liveable city (Holleran, 2021).

While it is outside of the scope of this study to detail what a 'livable city' looks like for different demographics, it is important to consider this context of ongoing urban changes and competing 'visions' for a city when facilitating student-senior dialogue or intergenerational bonding. Planners and policy-makers should keep in mind that understanding whether opposition to urban change is rooted in place attachments, a fear of the unknown, or simply a NIMBY mindset may help to explain some seniors' trepidation and resistance to urban change. Concerns expressed

pursuant to these three attitudes are not synonymous and may require different approaches from policy makers and community leaders to be addressed in a meaningful way.

5.5 IMPLICATIONS SUMMARY - NEXT STEPS

The research implications presented throughout this chapter can be summarized as a need to maintain a balanced Uptown city district now and into the future. Facilitating aging in place requires recognition of the challenges facing seniors, but also being ready to take action and successfully tackle these challenges. This study highlights the importance of place attachment for seniors, particularly in reference to third places, as well as the challenges associated with engaging seniors and facilitating social mixing between student and senior populations. As it currently stands, the participants in this study are largely pleased with the Uptown district and believe that it has something to offer people across the lifespan. However, political actors, planners, and policy-makers must keep a careful eye on the gradual 'wave' of studentification, and consider what impact a shift towards a student-centered culture can have on long-time residents. That being said, studentification is not a process that is doomed to inevitably and irrevocably change the cultural, social, and physical characteristics of the Uptown as students continue to choose to study in Waterloo. The City has a role to play in engaging students, seniors, landlords, developers, and local associations to develop rapports, facilitate strong communication, provide clear avenues for resolving complaints, and ensure transparent communication for decisions that affect shared public spaces. This study has emphasized the importance of place attachment and third places in the broader community for seniors' aging in

place and overall well-being, and the study's implications therefore correspond with the City of Waterloo's stated interest in advancing an age-friendly agenda.

5.6 FUTURE WORK AND STUDY LIMITATIONS

This qualitative, exploratory study has produced findings that provide a preliminary look at seniors' place attachments at the city district level and the effects of a large student presence. Due in part to unavoidable characteristics of certain research methodologies, as well as disruptive global events, there were several limitations to this study, as well as questions that arose outside the scope of this research project. The study's limitations, as well as opportunities for future research, are discussed below.

5.6.1 PARTICIPANT SAMPLE

Qualitative approaches are well-suited to understanding the thoughts and experiences of a particular group of individuals who share common characteristics (Creswell, 2014). As such, this study employed a naturalistic, purposive sampling method that targeted seniors who had lived in the City of Waterloo for at least the last 30 years. The key common criteria among these participants were their age, length of residence, and ability to recall memories and convey opinions. Perhaps in part due to the participant recruitment facilitated through the City of Waterloo's Age-Friendly Committee, the seniors who participated in this study tended to have similar professional and academic backgrounds. These participants are seniors who had existing social networks who could refer them to the study, and in some cases had personally been involved in Uptown Waterloo business or government initiatives. It is therefore possible that

seniors who are socially isolated or who come from different socio-economic backgrounds would describe a very different account of place attachment and aging in place than presented in this study. While the goal of naturalistic and exploratory studies is not to identify a representative account of a phenomenon, it is essential for research to consider how different life experiences can affect diverse populations' experiences and articulations of various phenomena. Indeed, seniors are a heterogeneous group; factors such as one's cultural background, gender, class, race, and lifestyle impact where one forms attachments and socializes. While it is beyond the scope of this research to explore how an individual's life history influences their propensity to attach—or not attach—to different locales, one's personal attributes and background undoubtedly influence their preferred places to spend time and socialize.

Furthermore, it is important to note that many of this study's participants had engaged with students as part of their professional careers. Because Waterloo has arguably been a university town for decades, the student presence helped to shape the economic and professional opportunities available in the City. It is therefore possible that this sample of participants had more reverence or sympathy for students than would be common among the general population. Indeed, although 'studentification' is a fairly new term that describes a particular process of students influencing a locale, students have long influenced the social and physical environment of Waterloo. Taking these factors into account, future studies may wish to specifically target seniors with a greater variety of backgrounds and life experiences to more closely examine how those varied lived experiences affect seniors' place attachments and experience of aging in place in a city district.

5.6.2 COVID-19 GLOBAL PANDEMIC

The outbreak of the respiratory disease Coronavirus Disease 2019 (Covid-19) in December of 2019 led to the declaration of a global pandemic and widespread lockdowns/mandatory quarantine measures around the globe that continue into 2021 (Fauci et al., 2020). As a result of these public health efforts, this study's interviews had to be conducted remotely with participants via online teleconferencing platforms or telephone. As a result, Covid-19 must be considered as a factor that affected the methods employed and participants' responses.

In terms of methods, the change from in-person interviews to an online format meant that the photo-elicitation element of the project was impacted. Photo-elicitation is typically conducted in-person, with the researcher presenting participants with photos as prompts for immediate discussion. This study instead provided participants with digital versions of the images and allowed a week for reflection before the interview. On the one hand, this extended time for reflection may have yielded better results than if had participants been presented with photographs with no time to collect their thoughts. On the other hand, some participants likely forgot their impressions of the images in the time between first viewing them and participating in the interview. This inability to gain a sense of participants' initial impressions in-person could have affected the success of the photo-elicitation technique. Indeed, the photo-elicitation element was not as effective as the existing literature suggested. Participants generally had little to say in response to the photographs. While part of this may be due to the technology element, it may also simply reflect participants' lack of affective attachment to the district scale. Photographs of the general Uptown district comprised the majority of the photographs, and the

findings suggest that seniors are more attached to modern specific places in the Uptown. Since not all participants' third places were pictured in the photographs, participants may not have had much to say about the general district to which they primarily have a functional attachment, if any attachment at all. There is opportunity for future studies to consider the possible impacts of technology on the data collection process, and perhaps conduct a similar study with an in-person photo-elicitation technique. It is possible that when applied in-person, photo-elicitation would be a particularly effective tool to facilitate place-based dialogue on city districts.

Furthermore, COVID-19 may also have affected some participants' responses, since lockdowns have prevented people from visiting their usual venues and locations over the past several months. Many participants mentioned rarely leaving their homes for anything besides essentials when community spread of the virus was rampant. While a conscious effort was made by the researcher to encourage participants to reflect on their experiences and impressions of Uptown during more 'normal' times, the dramatic and challenging changes brought about by the pandemic may have nevertheless impacted participants' responses. Hopefully, future studies can re-visit the question of place attachment in the Uptown city district once the Covid-19 pandemic has subsided, and gain a sense of how this study's findings translate to a post-pandemic world.

5.6.3 PREDICTORS OF ATTACHMENT

Finally, it is important to note that the 'predictors' or 'factors' associated with place attachment and discussed in this study were developed from themes in existing literature, which has primarily focused on homes and residential environments. For the purposes of this study, these

existing predictors were evaluated in reference to their applicability at the city district scale. Although some of these predictors seem to apply to the city district, there was a more obvious link between the predictors and the participants' immediate residential environments. This discrepancy suggests that there may be yet unknown separate 'predictors' of attachment that specifically apply at the city district scale. It is possible that, if analyzed in reference to predictors tailored for the specific place scale of a city district, a future iteration of this study would have different results. However, there is not yet sufficient place attachment scholarship at this place scale to identify city-district-specific predictors of attachment.

Another possible explanation for this discrepancy is that city districts are not intuitive place scales for attachment, or perhaps seniors are simply less likely to be attached to a city district than other demographics. It may even be the case that city districts do not have an identity outside of their constituent parts, and that by their very nature they are best understood as a combination of the smaller place scales of home, work, third places, and leisure spaces. This line of inquiry prompts many questions: what makes the Uptown city district, or any city district for that matter, a defined 'place'? How do planners, policy-makers, and citizens understand the place identity of a city district? Is a city district an entity unto itself, or merely the sum of its constituent businesses, parks, and services? To what degree does an 'Uptown district' exist for people outside of their personal experience of going to and from their homes and third places? These are in part philosophical questions that affect how we conceptualize the city district as 'place,' but they also carry implications for real-world practice. The way that planners and policy-makers answer these questions affects the overall vision and goals of the city district.

Delving further into the question of place attachment at the city district scale is a clear area of future study that requires additional scholarship. Understanding why people do, or do not, form place attachments at different scales of attachment will help academics and place-makers alike better understand how people interact with their environments, and accordingly make informed decisions to ameliorate citizens' experience of place.

5.7. FINAL REMARKS

This study took a qualitative, exploratory approach to examine what place attachment bonds seniors demonstrate at the place scale of a city district, and how studentification affects seniors' experiences of aging in place in a city district. These questions were approached via a conceptual framework developed from an analysis of existing literature. This analysis helped to inform the scope of the project by identifying common themes and gaps in existing knowledge. Data collection took the form of semi-structured long-form interviews conducted with eleven seniors who have lived in the City of Waterloo for the majority of their lives. Photo-elicitation and open-ended questions were utilized to prompt these participants to reflect on their experiences in and around Uptown Waterloo amid the growing student population. The goal of this study was to provide insight into how older adults' place attachments and experience of aging in place in a city district are impacted by a large student population.

The study found that the typical predictors of place attachment do not readily apply at the city district scale of attachment, and that attachment to specific third places in a city district tends to

be affective in nature while attachment to the general district scale is functional. Seniors' homes and residential neighbourhoods feature prominently in their descriptions of attachment, as do long-standing local businesses which act as third places. It was also noted that studentification minimally affected place attachment at the city district scale, largely due to seniors and students living 'parallel lives' by not frequenting the same Uptown locations at similar times of day. However, students can impact seniors' residential experiences by creating neighbourhood disturbances. This results in a tension between the desire to improve intergenerational socializing in the city district and the lifestyle conflicts experienced by seniors at home. In general, studentification was found to not significantly impact the experience of aging in place in the city district itself. Although there is a sense of loss and anxiety over the changing physical landscape of the City and city district, participants are grateful for their lives in Waterloo and take pride in how Uptown and the Waterloo community have developed over the years.

This study's findings have several implications for planners and policy-makers, as well as helping to nuance and inform existing understandings of place attachment and studentification. As an age-friendly community, the City of Waterloo must incorporate respect for people across the age spectrum and target the creation of supportive neighbourhoods that promote the security and independence of older adults. In the context of a university town, seniors' ability to successfully age in place cannot be considered in isolation from the impacts of a growing student population. It is therefore hoped that this study will further scholarship in the fields of seniors' place attachments and aging in place amid studentification, as well as inspire initiatives to ameliorate the relationships between students and seniors in university towns.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1- Supplementary Figures

Appendix 2- Interview Questions and Interview Script

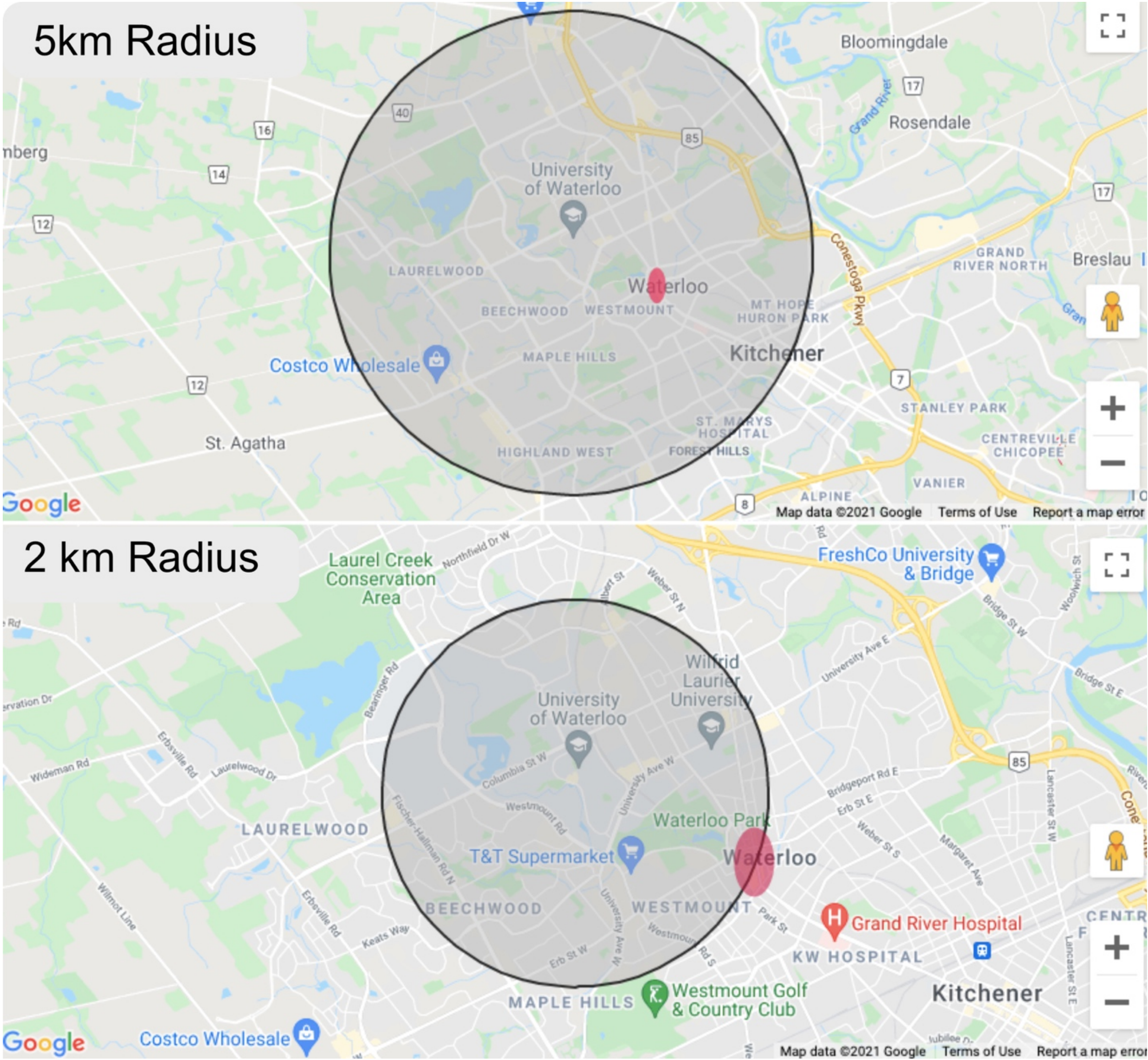
Appendix 3- Photo Elicitation Images

APPENDIX 1- SUPPLEMENTARY FIGURES

FIGURE A- Map indicating the location of the City of Waterloo, as well as several central features including the Uptown city district.

Source: Revington, N., Moos, M., Henry, J., & Haider, R. (2018). The urban dormitory: Planning, studentification, and the construction of an off-campus student housing market. *International Planning Studies*, 1–17.

FIGURE B – Images of an approximate 5km and 2km distances from the University of Waterloo. A red oval represents the approximate location of the Uptown city district.



Source: Developed by the author with data from Google Maps utilizing the Map Developers program. Accessed at: https://www.mapdevelopers.com/draw-circle-tool.php)

FIGURE C – Percentage of Total Population Age 55 Years or Older, by Census Tract in the Region of Waterloo. Uptown is marked with a star.

Source: Statistics Canada Census Profile, 2011. In City of Waterloo, Perkins & Will (2017).

APPENDIX 2 – INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND SCRIPT

SECTION 1. CONSENT SCRIPT

Before we begin the interview, I would like to review a participant consent form with you. You will just need to answer 'yes' or 'no' to each question I'll ask. You are also free to stop participating now, or at any time throughout the study.

1. Have you had an opportunity to read the information presented in the information letter about this study?

[If No, Summarize: This research project is interviewing older adults who have resided in the City of Waterloo for the majority of their lives, or at least 30 years, to understand their perspective on how places have changed because of the increasing student population

- *The interview process will involve answering questions, looking at pictures of Uptown Waterloo, and sharing your thoughts, opinions, and experiences.*
- *Participation in this study is voluntary. It will involve an interview of approximately 1-2 hours in length*
- *You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you wish.*
- *You may decide to withdraw from this study at any time*

2. **Do you have any questions related to this study that have not yet been answered?**

3. **I would like to audio record the interview to ensure an accurate recording of your responses. Do you agree to have this interview audio recorded?**

4. **Excerpts from the interview may be included in the thesis and/or publications to come from this research. These quotations and excerpts will be anonymous. Do you agree to the use of anonymous quotations and excerpts in any thesis or publication that comes of this research?**

If Further Clarification Needed: "I will send you a transcript of our conversation afterwards, to give you the opportunity to clarify or edit any of your statements."

5. **Do you understand that you can withdraw your consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher?**

6. **Do you agree, of your own free will, to participate in this study?**

[If the answer to any of the questions is no, end the interview. If full consent is obtained, proceed]

SECTION 2. BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

[Interviewer Introduction]

Q1. Can you tell me a bit about your background. Where were you born, and where did you grow up?
If not shared, ask:
- How many years have you lived in Waterloo?
- What is your current age?

Q2. Why did you decide to return to Waterloo / why did you choose to stay in Waterloo?

SECTION 3. MODERN UPTOWN WATERLOO

Q3. Would you say that Uptown is a special place in Waterloo?
Prompts:
- Q3.1- Do you have any 'favourite' places in Uptown Waterloo? Why/ why not? Did you ever have a favourite place there?
- Q3.2- How often would you say that you visit Uptown Waterloo?
- Q3.3- What do you do there/where do you go?
- Q3.4- Do you socialize with friends in Uptown? If not, where in the City?
- Q3.5- Do you attend public events (such as Culture days, Art markets, live music, Lumen, Octoberfest, Winterloo, etc.)? Why/why not?
- Q3.6- Do you think there is a sense of community among people who visit Uptown?
- Q3.7- If you had to move away from Waterloo, would you miss Uptown? [Photo-Elicitation Section]

Now I'd like to talk about the photographs I sent you a week/few weeks ago. I hope you enjoyed looking at them.

Q4. Do any of these images bring to mind any special memories for you?
Prompts:
- **Q4.1-** Why is this place special to you?
- **Q4.2-** What kinds of changes have you seen in this place? What do you think about those changes? *(i.e. like them, hate them, etc.)*
- **Q4.3-** Do you still visit this place? More or less regularly, and why?
- **Q4.4-** Do you find this place welcoming to senior residents of the community? Why/why not?

SECTION 4- CHANGE IN UPTOWN & STUDENTS

That's all of the photos. Thank you for discussing them with me, that was very interesting. Now, we've seen that there have been many changes in Uptown Waterloo over the years.

Q5. Do you prefer the Uptown of, say, 30 years ago, or how Uptown is today?
Prompts:

- **Q5.1-** What kind of people do you think visit Uptown most frequently? Has that changed from 30 years ago?
- **Q5.2-** Do you visit Uptown more or less than you used to?

We've discussed how Uptown has changed over the years. At the same time we've seen student enrollment increase at the local universities and colleges such as the University of Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier University, and Conestoga college.

Q6. Do you think that Uptown has changed as a result of the student population?
Prompts:

- **Q6.1-** What kind of impact do you think students have had on Uptown Waterloo? *(i.e. Good, bad etc.)*
- **Q6.2-** Do you have examples of positive or negative experiences involving students in Uptown?
- **Q6.3-** Have you noticed changes in student behaviour over the years?
- **Q6.4-** How do you feel around the students in Uptown?
- **Q6.5-** Do you think that students are responsible city residents?
- **Q6.6-** Do you think that students visit Uptown more than other members of the population?

SECTION 5- UPTOWN & SENIORS

Q7. Do you think Uptown has become a better or worse place for seniors over the years?
Prompts:

- **Q7.1-** Do you think many seniors visit Uptown? Why/why not?
- **Q7.2-** Do you think Uptown could be made more welcoming for seniors?
- **Q7.3-** Is it important to you how Uptown develops in coming years?
- **Q7.4-** What would be your vision for an ideal Uptown Waterloo?

[Outro & Goodbye]

APPENDIX 3 – PHOTO ELICITATION IMAGES

Image 1

1960

Part of Texaco station at 105 King Street South on left, also Snyder's Furniture Company factory on right.

Image: 1

Source: Ellis Little Local History Room, Waterloo Public Library. 1960. Texaco Station, Waterloo, Ontario. [Photograph]. Accessed at https://images.ourontario.ca/waterloo/29972/data?n=3

Image 2

1972

The shopping mall at Waterloo Town Square. Seagram's Distillery can be seen on the right-hand side of the photo, and the Labatt Brewery in the background (at the corner of King and William Streets).

Image: 2

Source: Rowell, Bob. 1972. Waterloo Town Square 1972. Ellis Little Local History Room, Waterloo Public Library. [Photograph]. Accessed at https://images.ourontario.ca/waterloo/details.asp?ID=3394864

Image 3

1972

King Street between Dupont Street and Princess Street. Visible locations include the old Post Office clock tower, B.L. Hayes Ltd., Capri Hair Styles, Alan Rigby's House of Furniture, Honest Sam's Ltd., White Star Barber Shop, Kingsway Apartments, Delnita's Boutique, and the Orange Tree Coffee Shop.

Image: 3

Source: Rowell, Bob. 1972. Dupont, King and Princess Streets 1972. Ellis Little Local History Room, Waterloo Public Library. [Photograph]. Accessed at https://images.ourontario.ca/waterloo/details.asp?ID=3400847&n=59

Image 4

1972

King Street between Erb Street and Dupont Street. Visible businesses include the Orange Tree Coffee Shop, Waterloo Theatre, Waterloo Meats, Truemner, N.P. dentist, Fly Front Boutique, Men's Wear, and Hotel Waterloo.

Image: 4

Source: Rowell, Bob. 1972. Erb, King and Dupont Streets 1972. Ellis Little Local History Room, Waterloo Public Library. [Photograph]. Accessed at https://images.ourontario.ca/waterloo/3400034/data?n=1

Image 5

1972

King Street and the intersection of Weaver Street (now Willis Way). The City Hotel can be seen at this intersection, and the Ali Baba Steakhouse on the far right of this photo.

Image: 5

Source: Rowell, Bob. 1972. King Street South 1972. Ellis Little Local History Room, Waterloo Public Library. [Photograph]. Accessed at https://images.ourontario.ca/waterloo/3427920/data?n=47

Image 6

1972

Caroline Street and Silver Lake. Waterloo Park and the Memorial Arena can also be seen in the photo.

Image: 6

Source: Rowell, Bob. 1972. Silver Lake and Memorial Arena 1972. Ellis Little Local History Room, Waterloo Public Library. [Photograph]. Accessed at https://images.ourontario.ca/waterloo/3427867/data?n=1

Image 7

1973

Silver Lake with the Marsland Centre in the background, in Waterloo Park. This photo shows a swimming pool that was replaced with Lion's Lagoon in 1994.

Image: 7

Source: Ellis Little Local History Room, Waterloo Public Library. 1973. Marsland Centre over Silver Lake. [Photograph]. Accessed at https://images.ourontario.ca/waterloo/3433864/data?n=35

Image 8

1977

The renovation of the Waterloo Town Square in progress.

Image: 8

Source: Ellis Little Local History Room, Waterloo Public Library. 1977. Waterloo Town Square Expansion. [Photograph]. Accessed at https://images.ourontario.ca/waterloo/details.asp?ID=3433854&n=5

Image 9

1980s
View looking north on King Street from Willis Way by Waterloo Town Square.

Image: 9

Source: Ellis Little Local History Room, Waterloo Public Library. 198-. King Street, Waterloo, Ontario, Waterloo, Ontario. [Photograph]. Accessed at https://images.ourontario.ca/waterloo/29959/data?n=262

Image 10

1988
View of building at 4 King street south, site of the Buy the Yard store circa 1988.

Image: 10

Source: Ellis Little Local History Room, Waterloo Public Library. 1988. 4 King Street south, Waterloo, Ontario. [Photograph]. Accessed at https://images.ourontario.ca/waterloo/details.asp?ID=2664260&n=1

Image 11

1988

The Seagram buildings with a large stack of barrels in front.

Image: 11

Source: Ellis Little Local History Room, Waterloo Public Library. 1988. Joseph E. Seagram & Sons Distillery, Waterloo, Ontario. [Photograph]. Accessed at https://images.ourontario.ca/waterloo/2473216/data?n=19

Image 12

1990

Exterior of the 'Clothing Wearhouse' building at 10 King street north, just north of Erb street.

Image: 12

Source: Ellis Little Local History Room, Waterloo Public Library. 1990. 10 King Street North, Waterloo, Ontario. [Photograph]. Accessed at https://images.ourontario.ca/waterloo/2506672/data?n=4

Image 13

1992

Exterior of the Marsland Centre building located at Erb and Albert streets during the addition of a parking lot at the north side in 1992.

Image: 13

Source: Ellis Little Local History Room, Waterloo Public Library. 1992. Marsland Centre, Waterloo, Ontario. [Photograph]. Accessed at https://images.ourontario.ca/waterloo/2472316/data?n=7

Image 14

2001

Exterior of Waterloo Town Square with the Shopper's Drug Mart signage.

Image: 14

Source: Ellis Little Local History Room, Waterloo Public Library. 2001. Waterloo Town Square. [Photograph]. Accessed at https://images.ourontario.ca/waterloo/details.asp?ID=2673573&n=43

Image 15

2001

Erb and Caroline streets area showing the Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery, Seagram's museum and lofts and a view west on Erb street.

Image: 15

Source: Ellis Little Local History Room, Waterloo Public Library. 2001. Erb and Caroline streets, Waterloo, Ontario. [Photograph]. Accessed at https://images.ourontario.ca/waterloo/2673805/data?n=3

Image 16

2001

East side King Street South and Erb Street.

Image: 16

Source: Ellis Little Local History Room, Waterloo Public Library. 2001. Aerial View of King Street South, Waterloo, Ontario. [Photograph]. Accessed at https://images.ourontario.ca/waterloo/2678310/data?n=5

Image 17

2001
View of the intersection of King and Erb streets showing the Hotel Waterloo.

Image: 17

Source: Ellis Little Local History Room, Waterloo Public Library. 2001. King and Erb Streets, Waterloo, Ontario. [Photograph]. Accessed at https://images.ourontario.ca/waterloo/2673674/data?n=2

Image 18

2010
The exterior of the Huether Hotel.

Image: 18

Source: Ellis Little Local History Room, Waterloo Public Library. 198-. King Street, Waterloo, Ontario, Waterloo, Ontario. [Photograph]. Accessed at https://images.ourontario.ca/waterloo/2261932/data?n=2

Image 19

2019
Aerial view of Waterloo Town Square.

Image: 19

Source: KWBeforeandAfter. Courtesy of Google Earth, 2019. Retrieved from: https://www.reddit.com/r/OldPhotosInRealLife/comments/fh015d/uptown_waterloo_ontario_rooftop_view_1977_2016/

Image 20

2020
Waterloo Town Square.

Image: 20

Cushman & Wakefield. 2020. Waterloo Town Square. Accessed at https://cushwakewr.com/property/waterloo-town-square-retail-spaces-for-lease/