

The *Circle* of Place Spirituality: A Study of the African Diaspora in the Netherlands

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A link between
heaven and
earth?



Defining **place spirituality**

An attachment bond established between an individual, a divine attachment figure, and a place.

Two important **keywords**:

- ***Place attachment***
- ***Attachment to God***

ATTACHMENT THEORY

- **Parental attachment**
Starts from a parent-child bonding experience.
- **Internal working models**
Model of for exploring self, others, and the world around us.
- **Substitute attachment figures**
They replace our primary caregivers and are perceived as reliable sources for our emotional attachment, care-giving needs, and security.
- **Non-traditional application of attachment theory**
Attachment to divine; attachment to place; attachment to romantic partners etc.





Place Attachment Attitudes

#EnvironmentalPsychology

- Place attachment is the positive emotional connection to a place.
- Also known as **sense of place**.
- There are three attitudes/responses to place
- Namely: **place attachment; place dependence; place identity**

THE ABCs of PLACE: THREE PLACE ATTACHMENT ATTITUDES



PLACE AFFECT

At this dimension, individuals are drawn to the physical, material elements of a place. This is known as the physical **place attachment** in the **Sense of Place Scale**.



PLACE BEHAVIOUR

At this dimension, individuals are drawn to activities, events, career opportunities, among others, that are in a place for their life- survival and continuity. This is known as **place dependence** in the **Sense of Place Scale**.



PLACE COGNITION

Involvement at the first two dimensions (Affect + Behaviour) lead to place identity. This is where the individual starts picking up certain attributes of a place, e.g. accent, lifestyle etc. This is also known as **place identity** in the **Sense of Place Scale**.



Attachment to God Behaviours

#PsychologyOfReligion

- Spirituality is defined as an emotional attachment to God, who is perceived by the believer as a substitute attachment figure.
- A believer perceives God this way, depending on the wiring of their internal working models used in exploring the self, others, & the world around them
- When God is perceived as an attachment Figure, He becomes a **safe haven, secure base, target for closeness, response to pain/loss of a primary caregiver.**

ATTACHMENT TO GOD BEHAVIOURS



SECURE ATTACHMENT TO GOD

Secure attachment with God simply means that the believer perceives God as a reliable caregiver. This means that there is a positive attitude towards God who is meeting a set of caregiving goals in the life of the believer, such as being a safe haven, secure base, stronger & wiser, response to separation from previous partner, and a target for proximity-seeking behaviours.



INSECURE ATTACHMENT TO GOD

Insecure attachment with God suggests that the believer perceives God to be abandoning them, or unavailable. This could result to anger with God, being anxious with God, and even avoiding a relationship with God so as to cope with the trauma of such negative experience.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

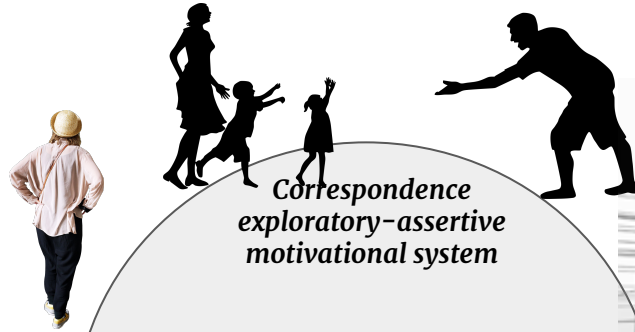
*Investigating place as a product of an
emotional attachment to God.*

*The relationship between place
attachment attitudes and attachment to
God behaviours*

THE CIRCLE OF PLACE SPIRITUALITY

Whether because the individual is experiencing a secure or insecure relationship with God, at some point they might want to explore a place either to enhance their security or to meet their other care-giving needs. They are only attracted to the physical elements of a place (e.g. nature, buildings etc) at this point.

The attached individual is here lost in excitement about the activities in a place. They depend on place for their pleasure, career ambitions, and for other advantages. At some point they start copying the characteristics of such place(s) (e.g. the fashion sense, lifestyle, language, or place identity etc).



**Correspondence
exploratory-assertive
motivational system**

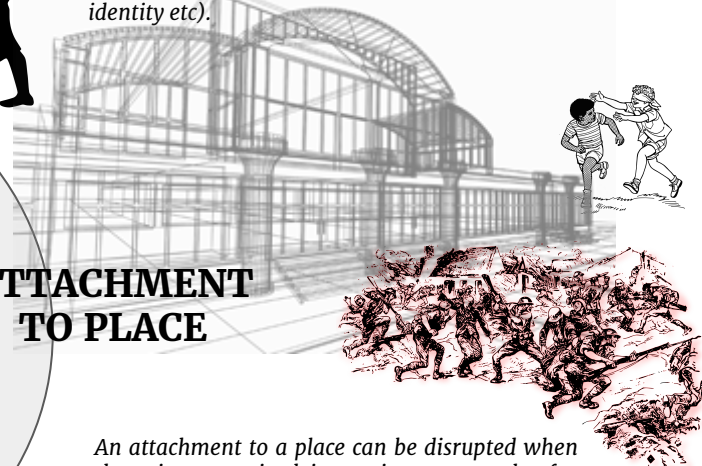
**ATTACHMENT
TO GOD**

The Circle of Security Model describes this re-initiating circular pattern of movement between attachment figures within a place (Marvin et al. 2002)

**ATTACHMENT
TO PLACE**

**Compensatory
attachment-affiliation
motivational system**

An attachment to a place can be disrupted when there is a perceived insecurity as a result of a range of place inequities, insecurity, or disruptions leading to a stimulation of attachment to God.



tip

The compensation and correspondence models of attachment to God theory also recognise the relation between one attachment figure and another.



Reading religious texts, praying, involvement in religious participation or gathering like going to church or mosque can be channels of maintaining and sustaining attachment to God

tip

The attachment-affiliation and exploratory-assertion motivational systems allow for an oscillation of behaviours between two antithetical poles, i.e. between place and God

METHODS

Cross-sectional survey; 353 (n=175) members of the African diaspora in the Netherlands; measures of place attachment and attachment to God dimensions

Measures and Variables

- *Place Attachment Attitudes*
- *Attachment to God Behaviours*

- **Sense of Place Scale** (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001);
 - *Place attachment*
 - *Place dependence*
 - *Place identity*
 - **Attachment to God Measure** (Sim & Loh, 2003);
 - *Proximity to God*
 - *God as a safe haven*
 - *God as a secure base*
 - *God as a response to loss*
 - **Attitudes Toward God Scale** (Wood et al., 2010);
 - *Positive attitudes toward God*
 - *Anger and disappointment with God*
 - **Attachment to God Scale** (Rowatt & Kirkpatrick, 2002);
 - *Divine Anxiety*
 - *Divine Avoidance*
-

Demographics of sub-Saharan African Diaspora in the Sample

Denominational affiliation

0.6% Angolese, 0.6 Botswana, 1.1% Burundi, 2.9% Cameroun, 2.3% Congo, 1.7% Eritrea, 0.6% Gambia, 36% Ghana, 1.7% Kenya, 0.6% Lesotho, 20.6% Nigeria, 3.4% Sierra Leone, 2.3% South Africa, 0.6% Sudan, 2.3% Tanzania, 2.9% Uganda, 1.1% Zambia, 1.7% Zimbabwe, and 17.1% did not identify their countries of birth or nationalities

Locations in the Netherlands

Amsterdam (32%), Groningen (28.6%), Utrecht (2.9%), Rotterdam (10.9%), Drenthe (1.7%), Almere (2.9%), The Hague (12%), Assen (0.6%), Gelderland (0.6%), Veldhoven (0.6%), and 7.4% who did not identify their place of location in the Netherlands.

Education Level

5.2% had Primary school education, 38.5% High/Secondary school education, 24.7% Undergraduate or tertiary education, 26.4% Graduate school education/Master degree, and 5.2% had their Doctoral degree.

Relationship Status

50.6% married, 43.1% single, 1.7% separated with their partners, 4% divorced, and 0.6% widowed

Religious Background/Upbringing

94.2% - Christians
3.5% - Muslims
1.2% - Traditional African religionists
1.2% - 'Others'

Gender

52% - Females
48% - Males

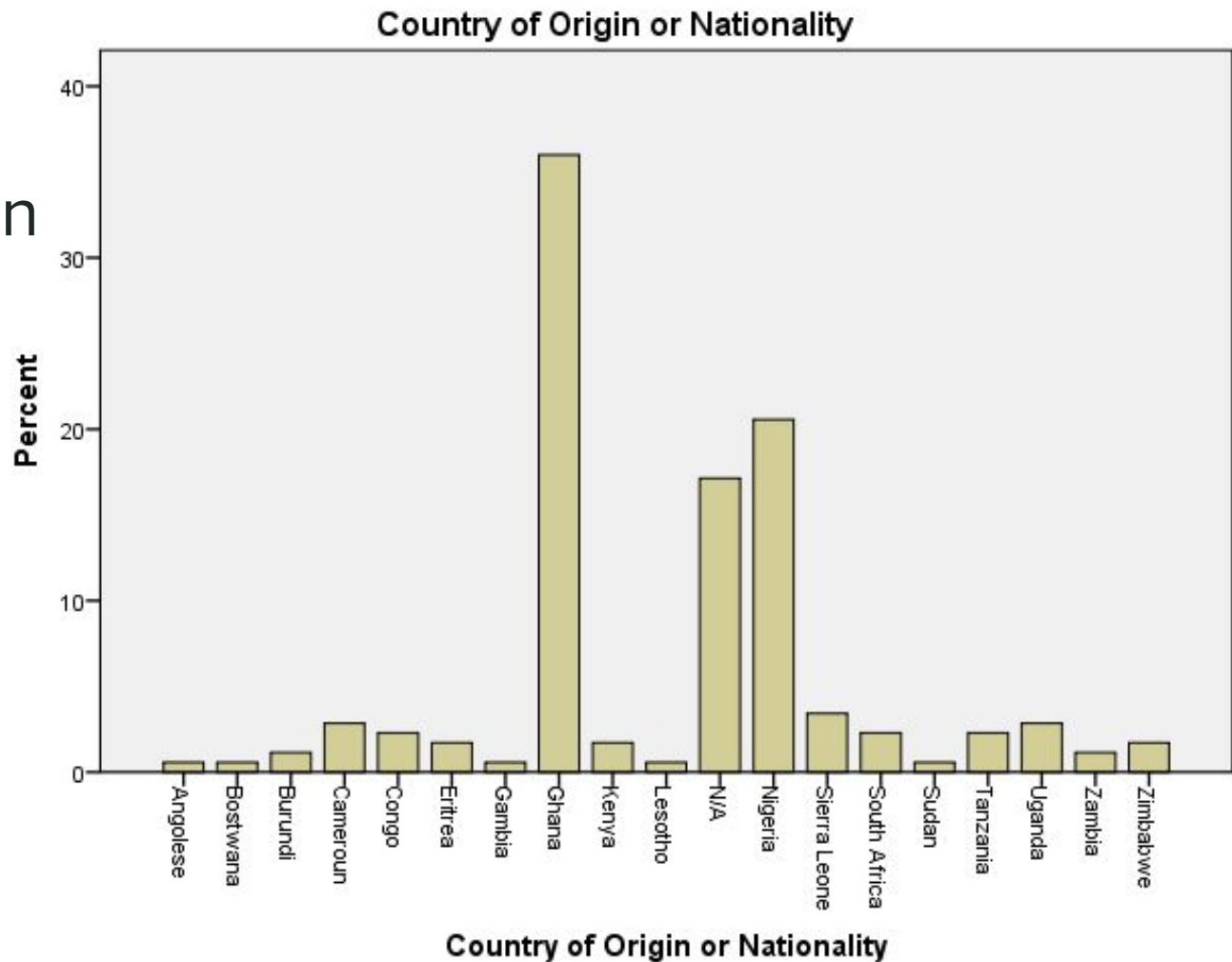
Age range

18-25 (19.5%), 26-35 (22.4%), 36-45 (30.5%), 46-55 (14.9%), 56-65 (11.5%), and 66-110 (1.1%)

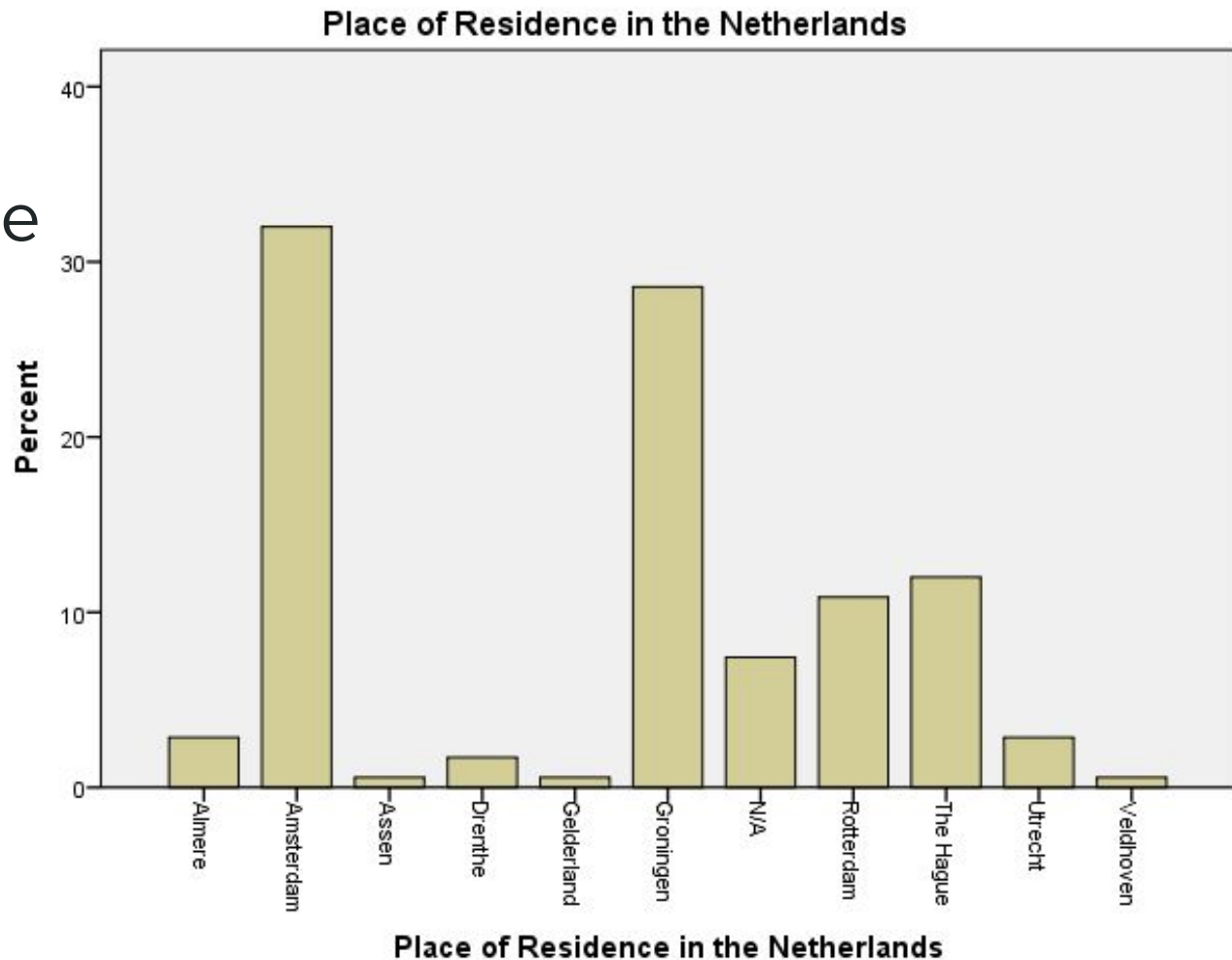
353 175

PARTICIPANTS

Demographics: Country of Origin

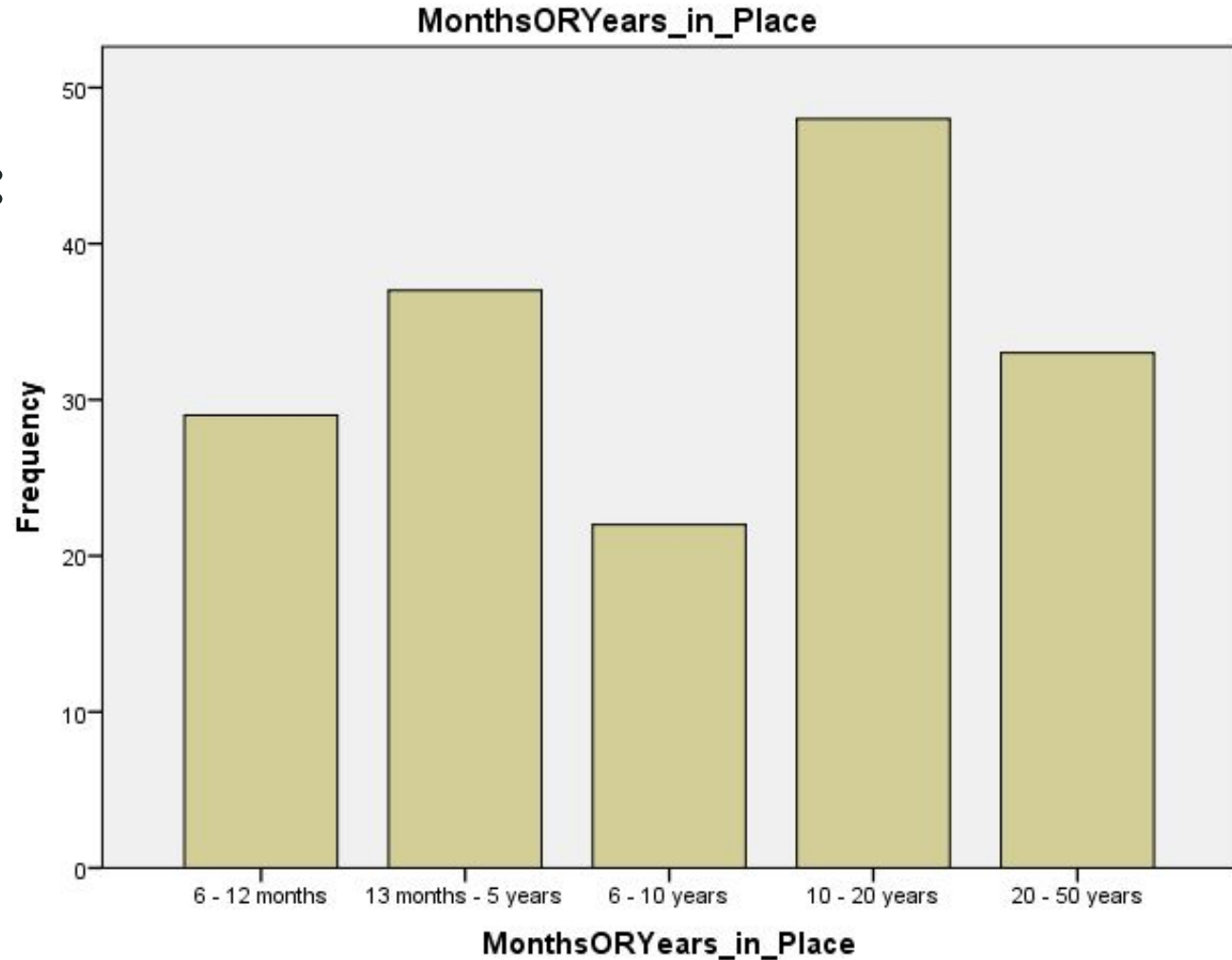


Demographics: Netherlands Place



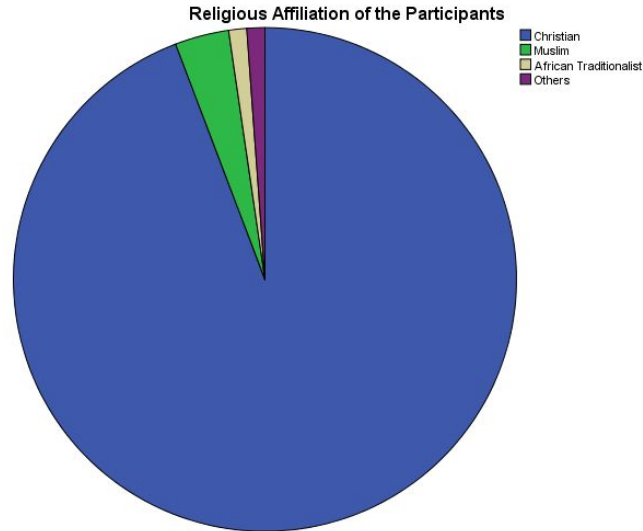
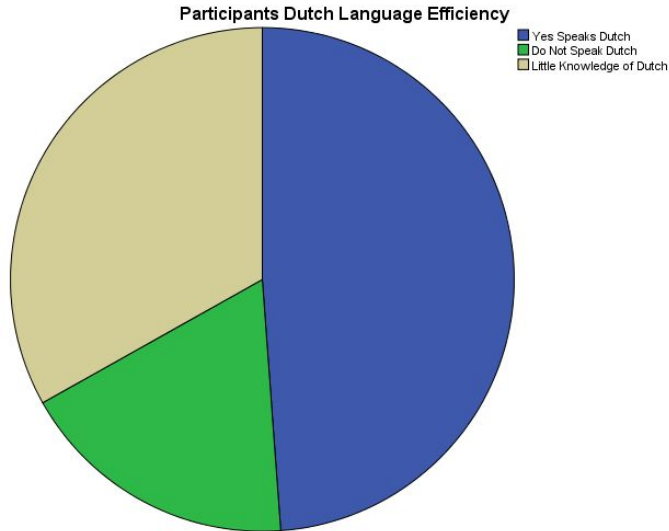
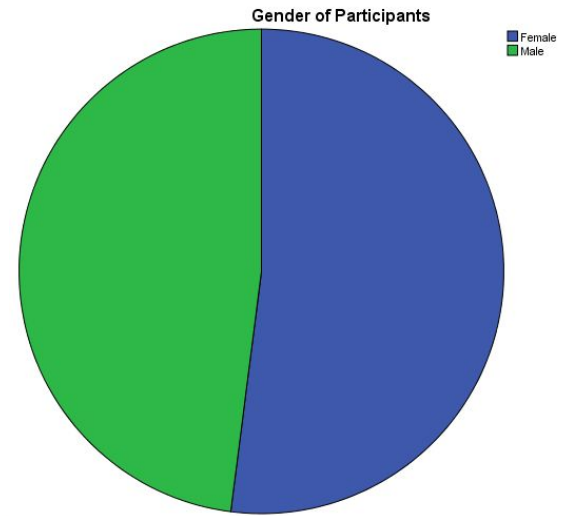
Demographics:

Length of residence

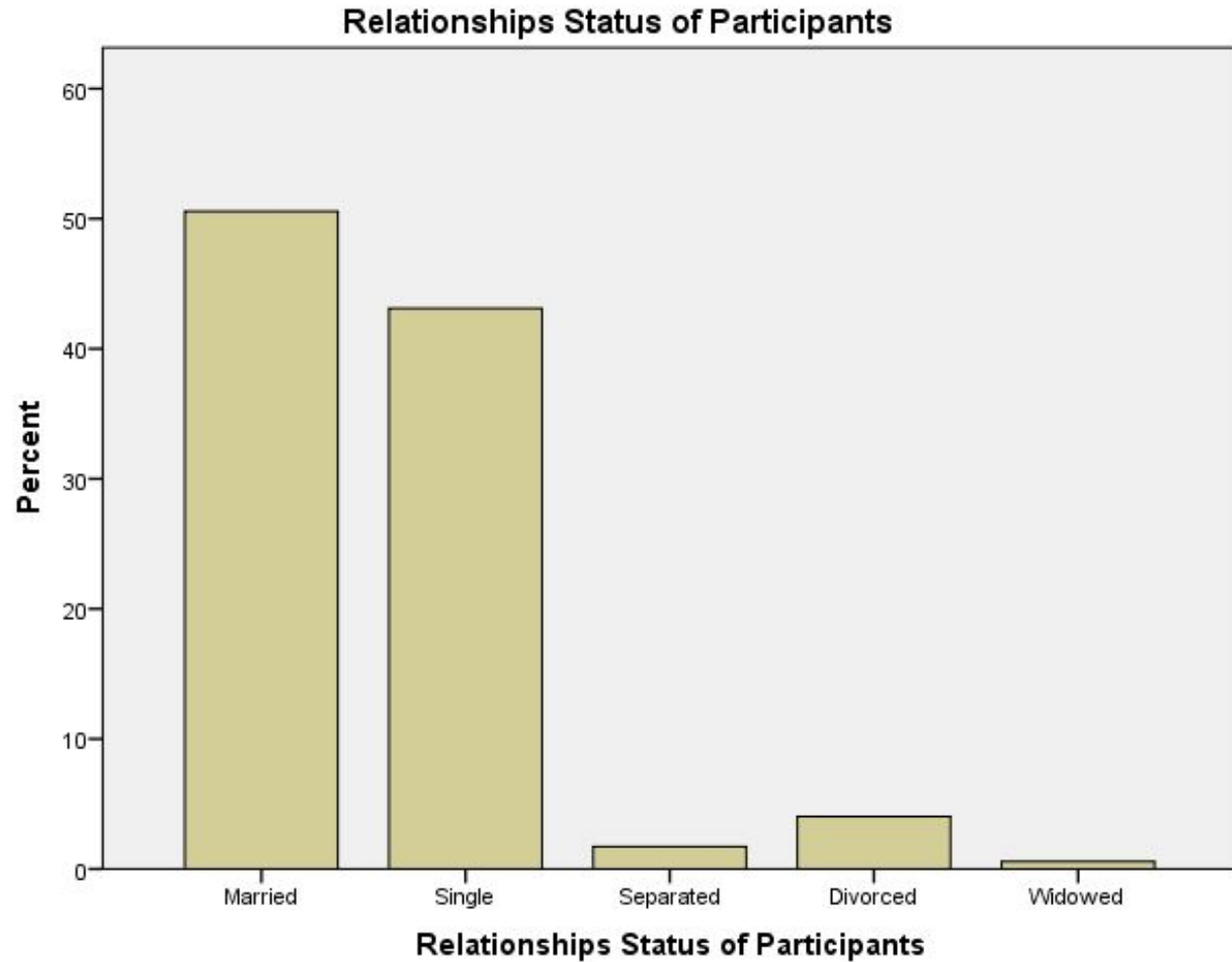


Demographics:

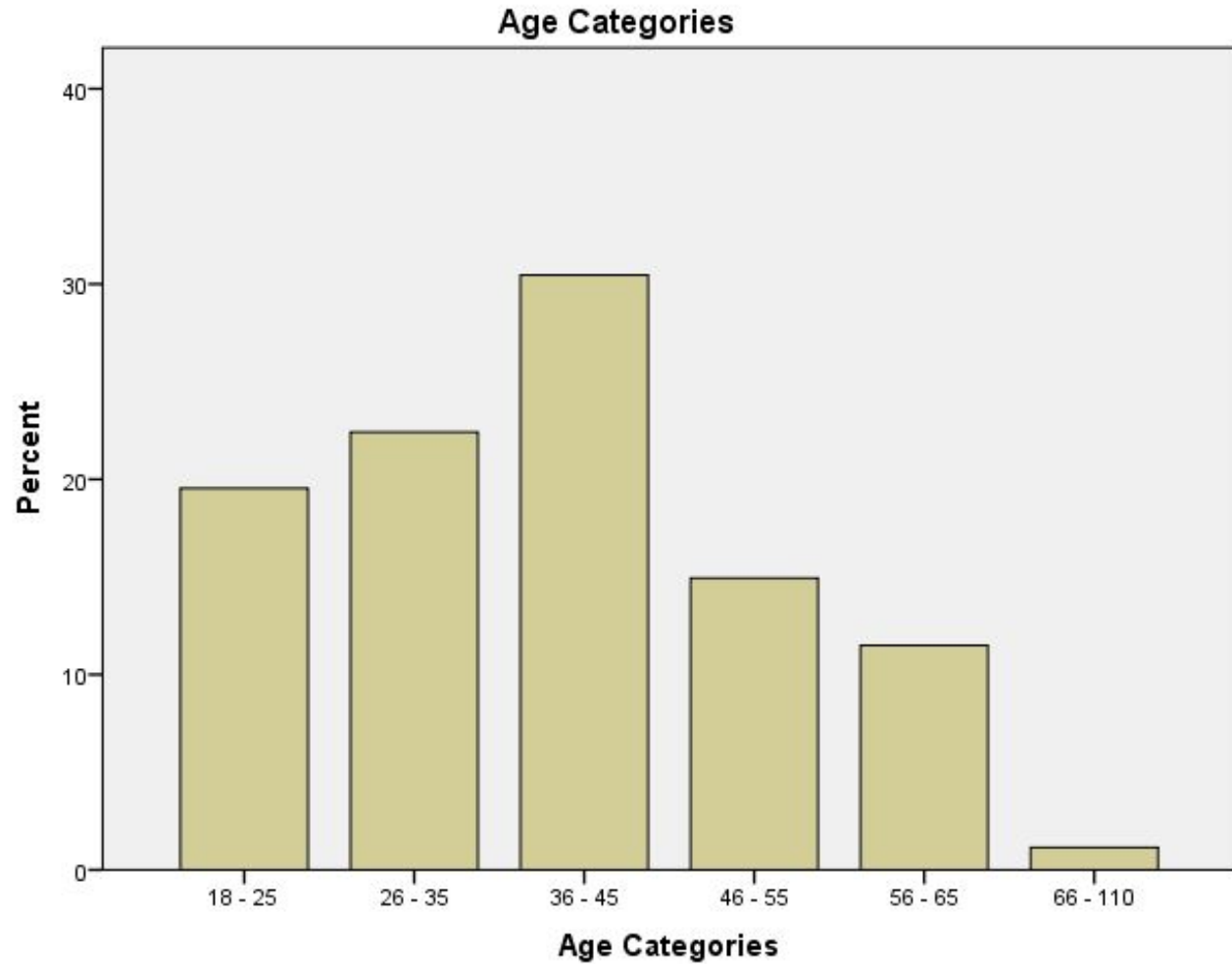
Gender, Dutch Language Efficiency, Religious Affiliation



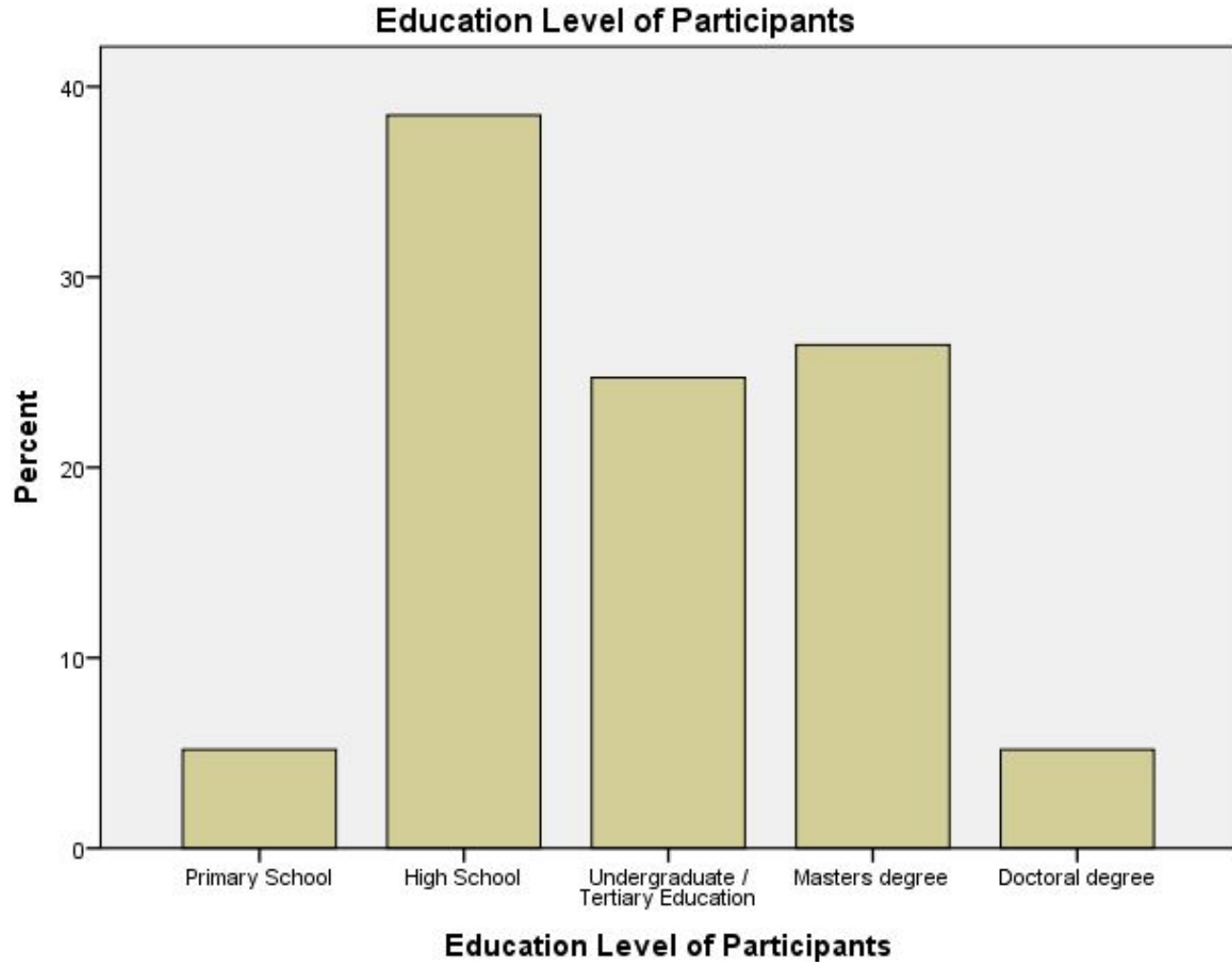
Demographics: Relationship Status



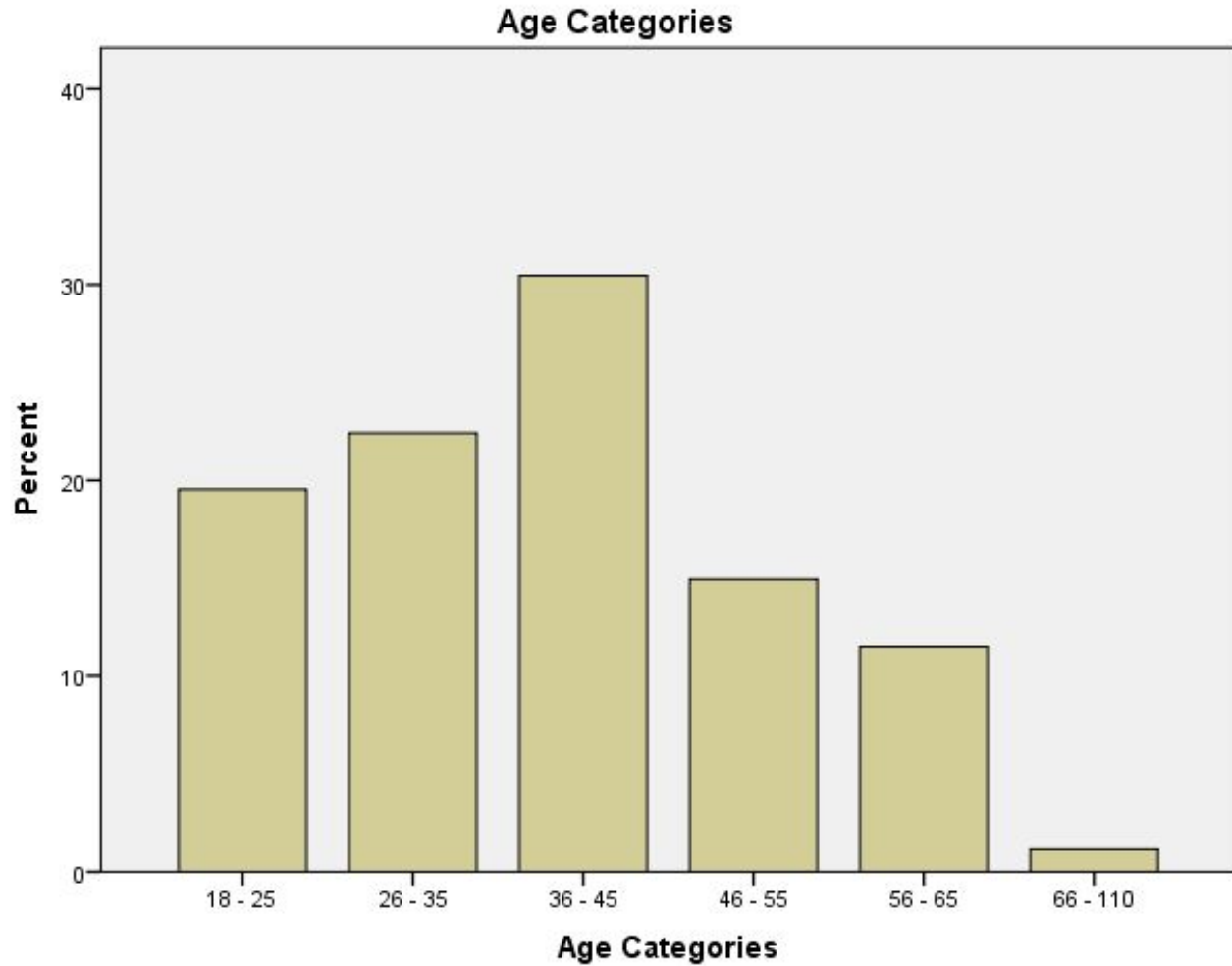
Demographics: Age Categories



Demographics: Level of Education



Demographics: Age Categories



RESULTS

Relationship between place attachment attitudes and attachment to God behaviours

RELIABILITY AND
ALPHA LEVEL
COEFFICIENT

POSITIVE

($\alpha = .85$)

for all *Place Attachment* and
Attachment to God 49 items

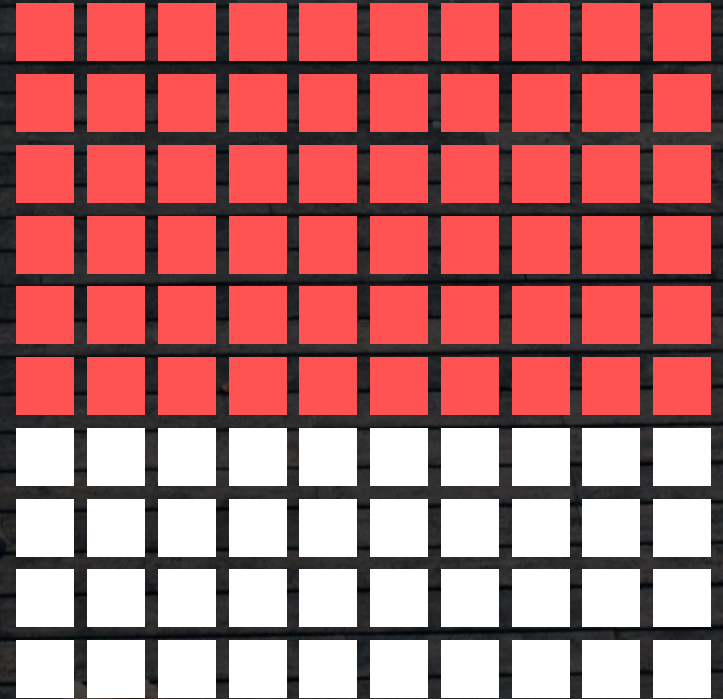


Table 1. Matrix of correlation between place attachment and attachment to God

VARIABLES	1	2	3	4	M	SD
1. Positive/Secure attachment to place	-				36.99	6.12
2. Negative/Insecure attachment to place	.006	-			4.18	.728
3. Positive/Secure attachment to God	.076	.003	-		131.80	20.75
4. Negative/Insecure attachment to God	.211**	-.111	-.242**	-	38.32	13.86

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2. Variable Intercorrelations and Means

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Place Anxiety	1.60	.479	-													
2. Place Inequality	1.53	.498	.113	-												
3. Place Insecurity	1.05	.222	-.024	-.197**	-											
4. SOP_Place Identity	12.61	2.41	.014	.102	-.242**	-										
5. SOP_Place Attachment	12.89	3.21	.038	.138	-.203**	.530**	-									
6. SOP_Place Dependence	11.48	2.28	.004	-.117	.019	.253**	.351**	-								
7. AGM_Proximity to God	21.24	3.41	.001	.026	-.135	.032	.177*	-.037	-							
8. AGM_God as a safe haven	21.82	3.38	.005	.047	-.164*	.011	.157*	-.057	.915**	-						
9. AGM_God as a secure base	21.36	3.47	.032	.042	-.107	-.009	.170*	-.015	.917**	.903**	-					
10. AGM_God as response to loss	21.33	3.74	.060	.074	-.062	-.069	.074	-.062	.854**	.826**	.847**	-				
11. ATGS_Positive attitudes towards God	46.03	8.33	-.028	.050	-.104	.036	.163*	-.011	.785**	.786**	.831**	.733**	-			
12. ATGS_Anger with God	4.43	7.75	-.055	-.107	.064	.190*	.030	.288**	-.276**	-.315**	-.285**	-.229**	-.310**	-		
13. AGS_Divine anxiety	8.84	5.03	-.048	-.147	.118	.021	-.062	.192*	-.217**	-.224**	-.229**	-.124	-.196**	.470**	-	
14. AGS_Divine avoidance	25.04	4.41	-.109	-.040	.060	.126	.167*	.333**	-.021	-.042	.011	-.025	.099	.466**	.424**	-

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS

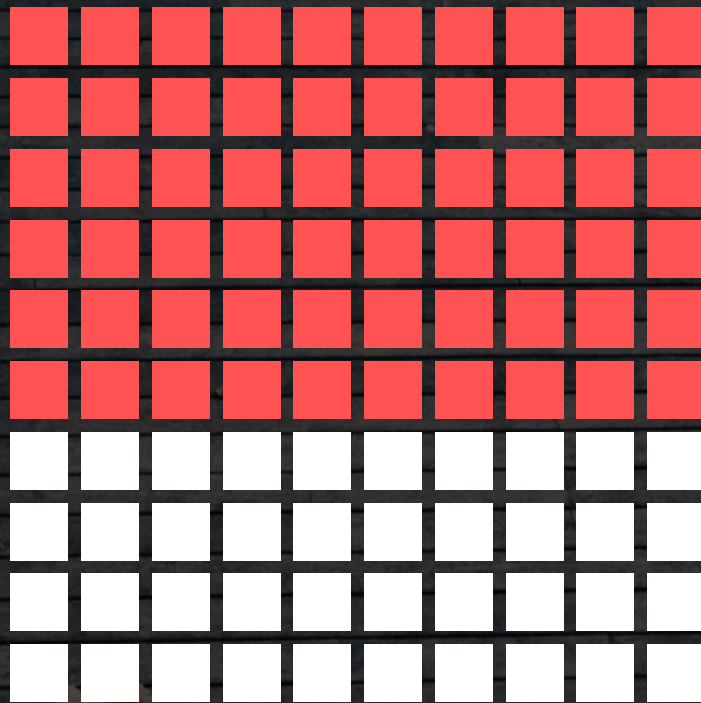


Table 3. Multiple regression results showing significant AG dimensions that serve as predictors for significant PA dimensions

Independent Variables	R	R²	f	β	t	p
<i>Criterion: Positive Place attachment</i>						
Negative Attachment to God	.21	.04	8.046	.211	2.84	.005
<i>Criterion: SOP Place Identity</i>						
Anger with God	.19	.04	6.452	.190	2.54	.012
<i>Criterion: SOP Place attachment</i>						
Proximity to God	.18	.03	5.612	.421	2.99	.019
Divine avoidance	.25	.06	5.554	.169	2.31	.005
God as a response to loss	.29	.08	5.099	-.281	-1.99	.002
<i>Criterion: SOP Place dependence</i>						
Divine avoidance	.33	.11	21.50	.253	3.16	.000
Anger with God	.37	.13	13.21	.170	2.11	.000
<i>Criterion: Place Insecurity</i>						
God as a safe haven	.16	.03	4.777	-.164	-2.19	.030

Note: AG Variables that are not shown in the table were not significant ($p > .10$)



Significant predictors within the circle of place spirituality

Exploratory-assertive
correspondence interaction



Attachment-affiliation
compensation interaction

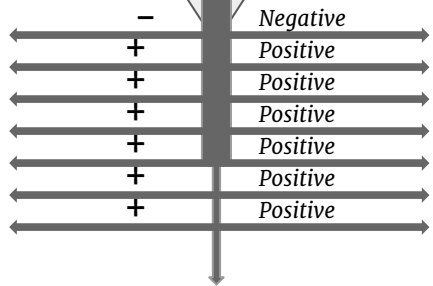


**PLACE
SPIRITUALITY
PREDICTORS**



**Attachment to
God
BEHAVIOURS**

**Attachment to
Place
ATTITUDES**



- Place insecurity
- SOP place identity
- SOP place attachment
- SOP place attachment
- SOP place attachment
- SOP place dependence
- SOP place dependence

- AGM God as a safe haven
- ATGS anger with God
- AGM proximity to God
- AGS Divine avoidance
- AGM God as response to loss
- AGS Divine avoidance
- ATGS anger with God

PLACE SPIRITUALITY

Close relationships with human relational partners, e.g. parents, friends etc

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IMPLICATIONS & DISCUSSION

Clarifying the circle of place spirituality

Results support that place attachment experiences often influence attachment behaviours toward God and vice versa. For instance, we saw that perceived feelings of anxiety and insecurity with God are linked to exploring different activities in a place.

Clarifying two motivational systems

Two kinds of motivational interactions were identified in the proposed circular movement pattern of place spirituality between Place Attachment attitudes and Attachment to God behaviours.

- **Compensatory attachment-affiliation: A nonconscious implicit motivational system**
- **Correspondence exploratory-assertion: A conscious explicit motivational system**

*These systems are agencies for facilitating intrinsic motivational behaviours within a specific environment in order to change behaviours that enhance one's sense of security. This also depends on these factors: **individual needs** (for security?), **intentions, emotion, motivation and personal experiences.***

Discussion: Compensatory attachment-affiliation

Negative Attachment to God *accounted for Positive Place attachment*

($\beta = -.21, p < .00$).

Anger with God *is predictor of place dependence*

($\beta = .17, p < .00$)

Anger with God *accounted for place identity*

($\beta = .19, p < .01$).

Discussion: Compensatory attachment-affiliation

Divine avoidance
accounted for
physical place
attachment

($\beta = .17, p < .00$).

Divine avoidance
accounted for
place
dependence

($\beta = .25, p < .00$).

Discussion: Correspondence

Exploratory-assertion

God as a response to loss
negatively predicted physical place attachment

($\beta = -.28, p < .00$).

Proximity to God
predicts physical place attachment

($\beta = .42, p < .01$).

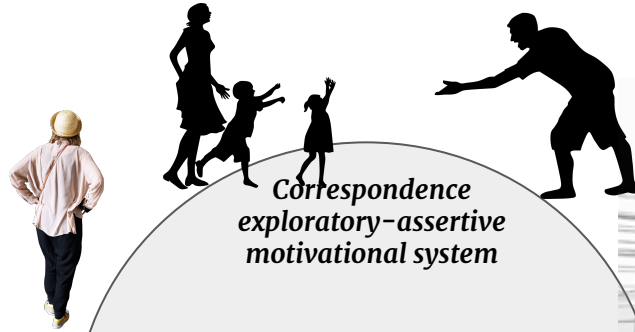
God as a safe haven *negatively accounted for*
Place insecurity

($\beta = -.16, p < .03$)

THE CIRCLE OF PLACE SPIRITUALITY

Whether because the individual is experiencing a secure or insecure relationship with God, at some point they might want to explore a place either to enhance their security or to meet their other care-giving needs. They are only attracted to the physical elements of a place (e.g. nature, buildings etc) at this point.

The attached individual is here lost in excitement about the activities in a place. They depend on place for their pleasure, career ambitions, and for other advantages. At some point they start copying the characteristics of such place(s) (e.g. the fashion sense, lifestyle, language, or place identity etc).



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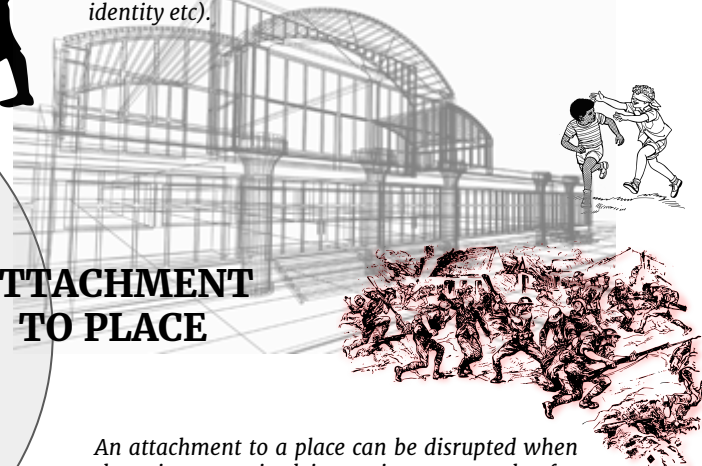
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Compensatory attachment-affiliation:

A nonconscious implicit motivational system within the circle of place spirituality

Stimulates closeness to God

(Read more: Lane, 2008; Gyurak, Gross, & Etkin, 2011; Cortina & Liotti, 2010; Lichtenberg et al, 2011; Lichtenberg, 1988; Pinderhughes, 1985)

Influenced by **IMPLICIT EMOTIONS** and **INTERACTIONS** (*motor, sensory, biological memory, cognition*)

Driven by **PHYSIOLOGICAL ADJUSTMENTS** and **AFFILIATIVE NEEDS**

Based on **EMOTIONAL AND COGNITIVE APPRAISALS** of an attachment figure(s)

Correspondence

Exploratory-assertion:

A conscious explicit motivational system within the circle of place spirituality

Motivates engagement with place

(Read more: Ghent, 2008; Lichtenberg, 1989; Edelman, 1987; Strogatz, 1994; Damasio, 1999, Counted 2016, Lichtenberg, 2011; Bucci, 2002)

Sparked by **BACKGROUND FEELINGS**

Activated due to **ATTENTION TO SUCH FEELINGS**

Explored due to **REFLECTIVE AWARENESS & FASCINATION**

CONCLUSION

Analyses of the results allowed us to clarify two motivational systems identified within this circle of place spirituality, showing that experiencing God as a safe haven is quite likely to happen when the Netherlands is perceived as unsafe or insecure for members of the African diaspora living there.

A smiling man with glasses, wearing a light blue shirt and a grey blazer, stands in front of a modern building with large windows. He is leaning his right arm against the wall. The background shows an outdoor area with tables and chairs, and greenery.

Thank you
for your attention!!!

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