‘Studentsification’: recognizing the diversity of student populations and student accommodation pathways

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'Studentsification':
Recognising the diversity of student populations and student accommodation pathways

By
Stacey Balsdon

A doctoral thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy of Loughborough University

January 2015

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Abstract

This thesis advances understandings of the diversity of student populations, student accommodation pathways, and connections to processes of studentification. The massification of HE, coupled with widening participation and internationalisation agendas, has led to changes in the social composition of the student population. Alongside this transformation, student accommodation preferences are changing, and student accommodation is being supplied which contrasts with traditional notions of shared student housing. From this starting point, this thesis progresses existing knowledges of student geographies in several ways. First, an evidence base for the hierarchical nature of HE in England is provided via the creation of a typology of English institutions, thus moving forward understandings of wider geographies of education. Second, the diverse nature of student accommodation pathways across the university lifecourse is revealed, enhancing current knowledge of the diversity of student geographies. Third, drawing upon a combination of quantitative and qualitative data new processes are identified that can be more widely viewed under the conceptual umbrella of studentification. More specifically, processes of ‘campusification’ within student accommodation pathways are illuminated, which point to students having a predilection to reside within university-maintained halls of residence for more than their first year of study. Fourth, it is argued that there is merit in extending the concept of studentification to ‘studentsification’, which more effectively acknowledges the diversity of student populations, student accommodation pathways, and how students studentify in different accommodation types and locations across university towns and cities. Fifth, the important contributions of longitudinal-directed research for deepening understandings of student geographies are emphasised, highlighting the need to focus on how student accommodation decision-making processes are influenced by stage in the university lifecourse. It is concluded that more fully understanding the heterogeneous nature of student populations along various axes of social difference is crucial for enhancing knowledges of student geographies, and processes of studentification across various university towns and cities.
List of Abbreviations

C - Living in university-maintained accommodation
GT - Living in the Golden Triangle (Dense terraces)
A - Living in Ashby (Ex-LA)
KF - Living in Kingfisher (New-build estate)
PRS - Private Rented Sector
HMO - Housing in Multiple Occupation
HESA – Higher Education Statistics Agency
PBSA - Purpose-Built Student Accommodation
UPP - Universities Partnership Programme

Key words: campusification; geographies of education; studentsification; studentification; students; accommodation; housing; Loughborough
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1. Introduction

1.1 Student Geographies

Higher Education (HE) has experienced significant change over the last 50 years (Bolton 2012). In the 1960s, the Robbins Report triggered an expansion of HE which led to the doubling of student numbers between the 1960s and 1980s. However, it was the New Labour policies of the 1990s that have created the highest increase in student numbers. The removal of the binary between polytechnics and universities in 1992 was conducted in an attempt to unify the HE system in the United Kingdom (UK). The current mass education system in the UK is characterised by a total student population of nearly 2.5 million, in 2011 (Holton 2015). The rapid expansion in total student numbers poses many questions about who now participates in HE, where they study, and where they live when they get there.

This massification of HE has been coupled with widening participation and internationalisation agendas across the HE sector. These agendas over the past 15 years have been argued to have altered the composition of the student population. Despite this, analysis of Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data reveal that the student population in the UK remains largely representative of Chatterton’s (1999) traditional student stereotype, being largely mobile, aged 18-21 years, white and from affluent backgrounds.

With this said this data also reveals the heterogeneous nature of the student population across various social differences. Holloway et al. (2010) argue that students are diverse, with Holton and Riley (2013: 68) also proposing: ‘much more work is needed here on the diversity of experience within and between student groups’. At the same time, research has indicated that stratifications can be seen between students attending more traditional, elite universities and those attending post-1992 institutions (Leathwood and O’Connell 2003). This thesis aims to explore the student population across England to both enhance and expand understandings of which student populations study where.
To date, it has been noted that social and cultural aspects of HE have largely been overlooked within geographies of education (Holloway et al. 2010). One way to explore these aspects is to investigate HESA data. This data is collected from HE institutions in the UK and details the social characteristics of students attending HE across the UK. Explorations of 2010/11 HESA data suggest that there is a strong need to explore social and cultural aspects of HE within the context of geographies of education and student geographies. Whilst this is arguably true, it must be acknowledged that geographical research has contributed significantly to debates surrounding student mobility (Waters and Brooks 2010), and in a local context to investigations of studentification (Smith 2002).

Studentification is noted to have social, cultural, physical and economic impacts (Smith 2005), and was initially conceptualised in the context of students living in student HMO (Houses in Multiple Occupation) in the private rented sector. The lack of understanding of the composition of the contemporary student population arguably prohibits our understanding of studentification. Whilst research to date has highlighted differences in the preferences of international and postgraduate students (Smith 2008), a fuller exploration of home student populations and their accommodation preferences are needed to gain a deeper understanding of student geographies and processes of studentification.

The impacts of studentification have been extensively explored across the discipline with the concept being expanded to include a second-wave of the process. Second-wave studentification has explored the development of Purpose-Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) often on city-centre brownfield sites (Hubbard 2009). Parallel to this are suggestions that student accommodation preferences are changing (Sage et al. 2012a), with recent findings illuminating students living in apartment blocks in the private rented sector (termed ‘vertical studentification’ by Garmendia et al. 2012) and students living on ex-social housing estates (Sage et al. 2012b).
The divergence of student housing has led some to report a counter-trend occurring, destudentification, in some areas (Kinton 2013). It is argued that the expansion of student accommodation has led to an oversupply of bed spaces leaving some student housing, particularly HMOs vacant. The array of student accommodation now available which ‘contrasts the traditional concept of shared housing’ (Holton and Riley 2013: 64) poses an important area in need of investigation which takes into account the broader range of accommodation now available to students.

Understanding student accommodation pathways is essential within these debates with studies to date largely assuming that students live in university managed halls of residence in their first year, and then HMOs in the following years. The expansion of on-campus accommodation through such schemes as Universities Partnership Programme (UPP) and the diversification of student accommodation options in the private rented sector, make it imperative to explore the ways in which students make accommodation decisions and their resulting experiences across the university lifecourse.

1.2 Research Aims

The aims of this thesis are to:

- Examine the English student population and where they study.
- Identify student accommodation pathways within a specific university.
- Explore the accommodation decision-making processes and experiences of students, and the implications for processes of studentification

Loughborough University has been selected as the case study to achieve the main aim of this thesis. Analysis of HESA data shows Loughborough University to have a majority traditional student population, similar to other previous 1994 and Russell Group Universities. By selecting this case-study, knowledge of student geographies can be significantly enhanced and expanded as it provides the opportunity to explore the experiences within, as well as
between, student groups. Chapter 4 provides the rationale for the selection of this institution in more depth.

1.3 Structure of this Thesis
This thesis is divided into 8 further chapters. Chapter 2 provides an overview of research conducted to date in geographies of education. This is followed by an in-depth investigation of axes of social difference, and how these have been considered within student populations. This chapter argues for a more student-centric approach to looking at student experiences of HE which recognises different experiences within as well as between student groups.

Chapter 3 provides an investigation of processes of studentification, beginning with an overview of gentrification from which the concept stems. This chapter then explores the economic, physical, social and cultural implications of the process. Finally, literature exploring student accommodation pathways is discussed. This chapter argues that the divergence of student accommodation preferences requires further investigation to fully understand student accommodation pathways and how these change over the university lifecourse, in turn influencing processes of studentification.

Chapter 4 discusses the methodology adopted for this thesis. First, this chapter explores the methods utilised in this study and data analysis conducted in relation to the aims and objectives identified above. This chapter then goes on to review the ethical considerations made during this research and the positionality of the researcher.

Chapter 5 details the analysis of HESA data, outlining many social differences within the English student population, comparing changes between 2000/01 and 2010/11 academic years. The second section of this chapter draws together these findings to form a typology of English HE institutions. This typology expands existing knowledge by comparing HE institutions not simply by one social indicator but by amalgamating factors that are inter-related. At the
same time, this section highlights the selection of Loughborough University as a case study.

Chapter 6 explores the accommodation pathways of undergraduate students studying at Loughborough University between 2007 and 2012. By tracing student movements this chapter enhances existing knowledge and reveals the value of longitudinal studies when examining student accommodation pathways. This chapter reveals 4 pathways which have incurred change across the 3 cohorts of students. Alongside this four case study areas are selected to represent different trends, accommodation types and geographical locations. Significantly this chapter shows changing pathways over time, many of which have yet to be explored within contemporary scholarship.

Chapter 7 addresses the third research objective, exploring the accommodation decision-making processes and experiences and the implications for processes of studentification. This chapter focuses on participants who lived in university halls of residence across their university lifecourse. The importance of hall identity and involvement in student accommodation decisions on campus is revealed. By investigating pathways across each year, differences and similarities are noted and examined in relation to existing understanding. This chapter concludes by arguing that affiliation with a university hall of residence is crucial in student accommodation decision-making, and that students living on campus are often there for associated academic and social convenience.

Chapter 8 again explores the third research objective. Accommodation pathways in the private rented sector are illuminated with a focus on exploring the second and third years of study and the housing decisions students make during this time. The second section focuses on the overlapping features that impact on student accommodation decisions such as landlords and letting agents, neighbours and PBSA. This chapter concludes by asserting a stratification in the student accommodation market based on multiple social differences.
Chapter 9 discusses the main findings of this thesis. First, the hierarchy of English HE is explored. Second, ‘campusification’ of student accommodation decisions are conceptualised. Third, the expansion of studentification to ‘studentsification’ is proposed based on the findings of this thesis. The merits of using longitudinal data in understanding student accommodation movements are then illuminated. Finally, this chapter concludes by reinforcing the main contributions of the thesis, and proposing potential avenues for future research.
2. Student Geographies

2.1 Introduction

Widening participation and internationalisation agendas in HE have sparked significant interest within academia and the media since the late 1990s (Gu 2009; Matthews 2014). This has been noted by geographers within studies that have explored the geographies of education and axes of social difference. This chapter reviews these two areas of scholarship. First, it considers the broader context-provided by understandings of geographies of education (Section 2.2). Second, this chapter explores the development of the terms ‘youth’ and ‘youth transitions’ (Section 2.3). Next, studenthood and categorisations of student groups are explored (Section 2.4), followed by an investigation of axes of social difference and the contemporary student population (Section 2.5).

Crucially, the chapter reveals two main gaps in the existing scholarship around HE, student populations and student cultures. First, it is highlighted that geographies of education have tended to focus on internationalisation of HE and student mobility. This chapter contends there is much opportunity to explore local student populations to enhance understandings within the sub-discipline. Second, scholarship reveals limited understandings of social difference within the student population, illuminating disparate numbers of investigations across each point of focus. This section highlights the need for studies that take into consideration the contemporary student population and majority, as well as minority, social groups.

2.2 Geographies of Education

Geographies of education, as a sub-discipline, has seen significant expansion in contemporary times (Hansom Thiem 2009). Holloway et al. (2010) outline some of the ways in which scholarship in the field of children, youth and families can contribute to understandings within geographies of education. At the same time, others have explored the alternative spaces of education (Kraftl 2013), and informal education (Mills and Kraftl 2014), highlighting the diverse nature of research within this field.
Research within geographies of education can be argued to have taken two dominant forms (Collins and Coleman 2008; Kraftl 2013). The first is research within educational spaces, especially individual schools, whilst the second is the study of educational systems, particularly in light of neoliberal restructuring. These insights have been useful in exploring the impact of education, both formally and informally, and the ways in which they relate to wider social practices. There have been increasing calls to bring ‘the subjects of education - the children, young people and adults involved in learning and teaching to the foreground’ (Holloway et al. 2010: 594), and strides have been taken to achieve this within the context of research exploring HE. Alongside this, Hansom Thiem (2009) has called for researchers to ‘think through’ education and develop an outward looking literature which emphasises the role of education within a wider context.

To date, studies have mainly focused on HE in two ways: the internationalisation of HE, and the impacts of HE institutions in their urban and regional environments. The internationalisation of HE has increasingly become a focused agenda of many HE institutions (Olds 2007), with many aiming to become ‘world-class universities’ (Sadlak and Liu 2007). Studies of internationalisation have tended to focus on the mobility of students to study abroad both for short-term opportunities (Findlay et al. 2006), and for entire degree programmes (Waters and Brooks 2011). This has also expanded to explore ERASMUS work placements (Deakin 2013), and volunteering abroad in gap years (Jones 2011). These studies have enhanced understandings of the ways students have educational experiences outside university, with key motivations being to increase student employability through their education and post-education opportunities. There is also a growing body of literature that explores academic staff mobility (Jons 2009; Leung 2013), noting both the short and long-term opportunities and barriers to academic mobility.

The internationalisation of HE has also been explored through investigations of world university rankings (Batty 2003). Geographical research within this field has highlighted how different geographies of HE are created depending on the ranking system used (Jons and Hoyler 2013). University
rankings have also been seen to be influential at a national scale in both the UK (Eccles 2002) and USA (Bowden 2000), highlighting the role of these positions in shaping where students go to university.

This increased connectivity between universities globally has become a normalised process for many ‘world-class’ institutions, with the need to have globally aware students and the perceived benefits including job creation, increased creativity and income from international fees (Altbach 2003). Turner and Robson (2007) differentiate between ‘symbolic’ and ‘transformative’ internationalisation, proposing that ‘symbolic’ institutions are concerned primarily with the financial gains of international students, whilst ‘transformative’ internationalisation focuses on knowledge exchanges and the integration of ‘international/intercultural dimensions’ (Knight 2008) across university activities.

Within local and regional contexts, studies tend to have focused on the economic impacts of HE institutions on the cities and regions in which they are located (Rutten et al. 2003; Vorley and Lawton-Smith 2007). Some have explored student mobility within the UK (Duke-Williams 2009), demonstrating how some regions acquire and retain more students than others. The second locality-based investigation of universities has been to look at the process of studentification, as coined by Smith (2002). Chapter 3 will focus on this process and the economic, physical, social and cultural challenges associated with large concentrations of students living in the private-rented sector in university towns and cities. Significantly, Hubbard (2008) and Holloway et al. (2010) note that there has been a paucity of research conducted to date that explores the social and cultural impacts of student populations on university towns and cities. This is surprising in light of Florida’s (2002) placement of students within his ‘creative class’ category, where he argues that cities with more educated residents are more likely to be creative and productive.

In light of research, within geographies of education, it is imperative to respond to calls to explore in more depth the social and cultural aspects of student identities and lifestyle. The next section will focus on visualisations of
youth and studenthood, drawing on insights from the social-cultural work of geographies of children, youth and families (cf. Holloway et al. 2010). It will then explore the contemporary student population in the UK, utilising scholarship that discusses axes of social difference alongside knowledge of the contemporary student population, and how this may relate to student accommodation, in preparation for discussions of studentification in the next chapter.

2.3 What is youth?
Geographies of children, youth and families is a growing area of scholarship within the discipline of geography. Jeffrey (2010) comments that until the early 19th century, people's biographies were seen as a continuous progression and therefore the lines between childhood, youth and adulthood were not commented on in a distinct manner. There has been much interest in the establishment of childhood and youth as separate stages in the lifecourse. Childhood has been acknowledged as a time of dependence, innocence and vulnerability, whereas youth is viewed as a movement into semi-independence and emotional instability (Kett 1971).

Valentine et al. (1998: 10) propose that ‘academic study of “youth” as a distinctive social category became established during the 1950s and 1960s in the United States and Britain’, with a focus on delinquency, fuelled by a moral panic surrounding young people on the streets. The idea of youths as delinquents and largely male was ‘critiqued by feminist researchers in the late 1970s’ (Valentine et al. 1998: 16), leading to further research being conducted on girl youths in the 1980s. This body of research revealed that there were clear differences between young males and females surrounding leisure time and activity and amount of time spent in the home. Skelton et al. (1998: 120) suggest that ‘[G]eography as a subject has been relatively late in ‘discovering youth”. Yet there has been growing scholarship on youth culture, with research into the geographies of youth having expanded to look at the influences that ethnicity, age, race, class and (dis)ability also have on young people.
It is important to recognise that both childhood and youth are socially constructed (James et al. 1998), and can consequently be interpreted differently depending on the person defining them and the context within which they are being explored. ‘The term “youth” is popularly used to refer to people aged 16-25, which bears no correlation with any of the diverse legal classifications of childhood or adulthood’ (Valentine et al. 1998: 5). Valentine (2003: 39) suggests that ‘the discipline has been slower to consider young people on the cusp of childhood and adulthood: those aged 16-25’, with others arguing for the extension of study to include young people up to the age of 30 in a global south context (Skelton 2009). Defining youth is something that is culturally specific, as Skelton and Valentine (1998) highlight in their edited collection, ‘Cool Places’, showing the diversity not only between the global north and global south, but also within more specific locales. In the UK, the category of ‘youth’ is generally accepted to be people aged 16-25, although the ways in which this is broken down, and further separated, are also significant. Sibley (1995: 34-35) acknowledges the ambiguity of the phrase adolescence:

‘[The] child/adult illustrates a... contested boundary. The limits of the category ‘child’ vary between cultures and have changed considerably through history within Western, capitalist societies. The boundary separating child and adult is a decidedly fuzzy one. Adolescence is an ambiguous zone within the child/adult boundary can be variously located according to who is doing the categorising. Thus, adolescents are denied access to the adult world, but they attempt to distance themselves from the world of the child. At the same time they retain some links with childhood. Adolescents may appear threatening to adults because they transgress the adult/child boundary and appear discrepant in “adult” spaces... These problems encountered by teenagers demonstrate that the act of drawing the line in the construction of discrete categories interrupts what is naturally continuous. It is by definition an arbitrary act and thus may be seen as unjust by those who suffer the consequences of the division’.
Youth is a transitional stage in the lifecourse from childhood to adult, and, as Sibley indicates, it has many difficulties, not only in definition but also in the lives of people within this age category. It is also important to note that youth transitions cannot be assumed to be universal with work in the global south (Langevang 2008; Van Blerk 2008) showing very different transitions from childhood to adulthood than those experienced in the global north.

2.3.1 Youth Transitions

Valentine (2003) explored ‘transitions from childhood to adulthood’, calling for geographers to conduct more research on this stage in the lifecourse in both the global north and global south. The transition from childhood to adulthood can take many forms and cannot be attributed to one singular fixed stage (Hopkins 2011). It can involve moving away from the parental home, starting employment, and having a family (Ford et al. 2002). Although young people take these steps towards adulthood, many will still be in some way linked to their parents, whether in a financial sense, or simply through needing parental advice (Valentine 2003). Ford et al. (2002) note five pathways that young people take in their transition to adult life: chaotic, unplanned, constrained, planned (non-student) and a student pathway. Each pathway has notable differences, but together they highlight the diverse ways in which young people transition into adulthood.

When looking at young people moving out of the parental home, Jones (1995) makes some important observations, noting that young people struggle to be recognised as adults by their parents, but at the same time form their own identity. The instability of modern households results in some young people moving away from the parental home, only to return in the not-so-distant future, making use of what is termed by some as the ‘parental safety net’ (Sage et al. 2013: 752).

Though noted as a separate life phase, being a student can be seen to transgress different stages, whilst some students move away from the family home into university provided accommodation, they do not gain full independence from their parents, going home for university vacation periods
and often still being dependent on their parents financially (Ford et al. 2002). Upon leaving education, there are also a percentage of students that return to live with their parents, particularly in the current housing market where renting and buying property is expensive but not always impossible for a graduate (Sage et al. 2013). Whilst students obviously fall within the category of youth, they are a distinct sub-section with different characteristics to other young people in the same age category (Munro and Livingston 2012), and for this reason the next section will explore ‘studenthood’ in more detail, highlighting further the distinct nature of this stage in the lifecourse.

2.4 What is meant by studenthood?

Just as youth is a transitional period, it is often argued that being a HE student poses the same issues over identity and belonging. Youth as a transitional stage is problematic in itself (Jeffrey 2010), and Philo (1992: 201) highlights that ‘social life is… fractured along numerous lines of difference constitutive of overlapping and multiple forms of otherness, all of which are surely deserving of careful study by geographers’. Acknowledging studenthood as ‘a form of otherness’ within the youth category justifies the need to further explore studenthood as a stage in the lifecourse. Recognising ‘studenthood is positioned as a “liminal”, transitional time, between adolescence and adulthood’ (Munro and Livingston 2012: 1688), this phase in life has distinct characteristics that separate people in this category from simply being a ‘youth’.

Epstein (1998: 1) argues that young people’s ‘habits, idiosyncrasies and argot have long mystified adults’, whilst others have commented that students and young people are often seen as a ‘nuisance’ (Van Den Berg and Russo 2004: 3), or ‘dangerous’ (MacDonald 1997: 1). There are consequences of the assumed differences between students and the local population, as students are identified by some as a separate group to others in the ‘youth’ category.

Ideas about students and studenthood can have implications on the way students are managed in university cities and towns (Munro and Livingston 2012). Munro and Livingston’s discussion offers particular insight into the ways
in which students are seen as different to other youth groups, recognising specifically the distinction between youths who are demonised for certain behaviour:

‘there is much acceptance and forgiveness of behaviour that departs from norms of responsible, well behaved, sober adult citizenship—indeed, an expectation that such behaviour is an inevitable part of being a student. Respondents of all types expressed a shared view of what student life is expected to be. Students, freed from parental constraint, are described as “off the leash”, “going berserk”, “going bananas”; they party like an “18–30 camp in Ibiza” … this taken-for-granted tolerance of students contrasts sharply with the near demonisation of young people in other contexts in the UK, particularly in relation to binge-drinking and other forms of anti-social behaviour and the strongly punitive policies pursued towards young people who are branded in this way (even just for ‘hanging around’ in what might be seen as a threatening group). Students’ heavy drinking and other bad behaviour is seen more indulgently’ (Munro and Livingston 2012: 1688).

The clear distinctions made above can be perceived as the student body being attributed a mono-culture, with assumed behaviours and, in turn, leisure spaces. These conceptualisations of the student population are significant in shaping the way students are treated in comparison to non-students of their age. The ways in which both students and the local population are stereotyped by one another highlights the segregation experienced within some university towns and cities, which will be touched upon in greater detail in Chapter 3.

Many academics comment on ‘students’ being a greatly over generalised populus, with Fincher and Shaw (2007: 1) stating that all groups have ‘internal diversity’. Whilst work is emerging that is breaking down the assumptions placed on students as a homogenous group by exploring the experiences of Muslim students (Hopkins 2011), students with Asperger’s syndrome (Madriaga 2010), and the experiences of international students in various countries (Fincher and Shaw 2007) there is still ‘considerable scope to broaden the
conception of social difference … which has to date been dominated by analyses of class and race/ethnicity’ (Holloway et al. 2010: 4). With these sentiments in mind, it is pertinent to explore what research to date has illuminated about the student population.

2.4.1 What it means to be a ‘student’

Students cannot be viewed simply as those in the youth age range of 18-25. The term ‘student’ covers a broad and diverse group, and it is recognised that within each of these groups there is further diversity in relation to the student’s ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability and age. This section will focus on the UK context and draw upon international studies where appropriate to discuss the ways student groups have been conceptualised to date. For the purposes of this discussion, it is proposed that within the category of student, there are in the simplest terms three identifiable groups: traditional students; new students and international students. These categorisations, which originated from Holdsworth’s (2009b) definition of local students, will form the initial point of discussion for the following section.

**Traditional students**

When thinking of the UK student population, many images may spring to mind, and scholarship into the identity of students has seen many assumptions made about the student population. Chatterton (1999; 2000) encapsulates many of these assumptions in his description of the ‘traditional student’. Chatterton presents two elements of the traditional student. These discuss the socio-economic status of traditional students alongside a description of what might be their typical lifestyle:

‘[they] tend to be white, aged between 18 and 21, originate from privileged social and economic backgrounds, have wealthy parents, studied at fee-paying, private schools and travel away from home to university’ (Chatterton 1999: 118).

‘have a particular identity as adolescents with large disposable incomes and free time which enables them to be significant consumers of city-
centre based goods, services, and entertainment, especially those connected with clothes, drink, drug, and music cultures’ (Chatterton 2000: 175).

Simultaneously, other studies suggest these are not the only characteristics associated with students. Gender is particularly missing in the above descriptions. When looking at drinking norms, some studies have found that students perceive the ‘typical’ student to be predominantly male (Lewis and Neighbors 2006), and historically there have been larger percentages of men participating in HE than women, although this has arguably changed since the early 1990s (Vincent-Lancrin 2008).

In the UK there is an assumed life course for ‘traditional’ (Chatterton 2000) students attending university, involving living in university provided accommodation in the first year, followed by consequent years living in the private rented sector (Allinson 2006). On-campus accommodation is argued to be a way in which students can form friendships, and overcome some of the initial difficulties associated with moving away from home, such as home sickness (Wilcox et al. 2005). The process of moving from on-campus to off-campus accommodation can be seen as a ‘process [which] represents an annual learning of student rites and a distancing from the student infrastructure as the student is acculturated into less ‘typical’ student activities within the city’ (Chatterton 1999: 122). It is in university provided accommodation that students settle into university life, learn what it is to be a student and form social groups that later shape their housing choices for following years (Munro and Livingston 2012). This often results in students having a strong sense of ‘student community’, which immediately forms in opposition to part of the city or town ‘community’, creating a clear distinction between ‘town and gown’ (Kenyon 1997):

‘Being a ‘student’ is more than an occupational or educational category; it implies certain dispositions and lifestyles, as well as a stage in the life course’ (Holdsworth 2009a: 227).
The term ‘student’ acts as an umbrella for many people in the specific age category of 18-21. Within studentification literature and the media, ‘student’ has many uses, although usually it is used as a term that homogenises this broad population under certain characteristics and actions. This does not simply apply to non-student versions of who a student is and how a student acts, as Holdsworth (2009a: 231) notes:

‘Most students are aware of a stereotypical image of students, none stated that they fully fitted with this image … [and] the potency of the stereotypical image and associated practices (particularly concerning socialising and getting into debt) were important images against which they compared their own experiences’.

With this in mind, Allinson (2006: 92) asserts ‘one should be careful of generalising about the student community’, and the diversity within student groups will be acknowledged later within this chapter. Significantly, traditional students are seen to be mobile and travel away to study, creating interesting questions in the context of studentification debates. These will be discussed further in Chapter 3.

**New Students**

Leathwood and O’Connell (2003: 598) assert ‘there have, of course, been many, and ongoing, challenges to traditional notions of a student as a young (white) man from an upper-class or middle-class background studying in the ivory tower’. Students outside of this category may be labelled ‘non-traditional’ and include mature students, those with long-term disabilities, those living in the parental home, ethnic minority students and students from working-class backgrounds. In this way, traditional students are ‘representing the norm against which the others are judged’ (Webb 1997: 68). Leathwood and O’Connell (2003) propose the conceptualisation of these students as ‘new students’. There has been much research conducted which investigates students from different backgrounds and HE experiences. Whilst this section cannot examine all research conducted within these fields, its aim is to review the various ways that ‘new students’ have been researched.
Mature students arguably have a very different experience of HE to their peers aged 18-21 (Bowl 2001). Alongside other under-represented student groups, mature students are also more likely to drop-out or withdraw (Quinn 2003). There are also noticeable differences in the experiences of mature students attending ‘traditional’ and ‘new universities’, with notably higher proportions of mature students attending newer universities (Waller 2006). These differences are important in shaping where students go to university, with mature students often having familial commitments and additional financial pressures (Merrill 2014).

Other student groups may also have the financial implications of attending HE to consider:

‘As more young people from non-traditional backgrounds are encouraged to participate in HE, and as the financial costs of attending are increasingly borne by students and their families, more students are choosing to stay at home for financial reasons’ (Christie 2007: 2445)

Students who choose to study in their home town or city are argued to have a very different experience of university to the ‘traditional student’. In light of changing fee structures in the UK HE system, it seems likely that more students may choose to live and study at their local institution. This cohort of students, choosing to study locally and live with their parents, is believed to total just under a quarter of all undergraduate students in HE (Callender and Wilkinson 2003).

Crozier et al. (2008a) comment on the negative experiences students have when attending local institutions, and how university is only one aspect of their life, whilst Clayton et al. (2009) go further to suggest that local students often struggle to see the benefits of university beyond the degree itself. Holdsworth (2009b: 1860) found that many academics and students had a very negative opinion of home-based students, contrasting these students with the more ‘cosmopolitan outlooks of students who move away [to study]’. Others
propose that students not living in student accommodation can be ‘more likely to feel marginalised from their peers and that they occupy a lower position’ (Thomas 2002: 436).

In contrast, Holton (2014) highlights that the ways students ‘re-sense’ place are not always viewed negatively by ‘local’ students, but that the process of studying at a local institution and renegotiation of identity is multi-faceted and complex. Christie (2007) notes that the stigma and assumptions attached to home-based students in the UK are not mirrored in an international context, with it being seen as normal in countries such as the USA (Mulder and Clark 2002) and Norway, where Thomsen (2007: 578) suggests, ‘student life in Norway does not necessarily include living in university-provided accommodation; neither in former times nor today’.

Both the student groups above are often investigated in conjunction with the students being a member of another under-represented category, students from working-class backgrounds. This group feature heavily within research which explores under-represented groups’ experiences of HE (Crozier and Reay 2011; Merrill 2014). Barriers to entering and remaining in HE are prevalent in working class student accounts of their experiences of HE, and centre around working class habitus and not ‘fitting in’ (Reay et al. 2010).

Ethnic Minority students have also been noted to have a disadvantage when accessing HE, with recent research suggesting that when all other social characteristics are the same, some ethnic minority student groups are seven times less likely to be offered a place at university compared to their white counterparts (Young-Powell 2014; Noden et al. 2014a). Research also acknowledges relationships between social class background and schooling with ethnic background in shaping which HE institutions ethnic minority students attend (Noden et al. 2014b). Discussions regarding the success of widening participation agendas often review the attainment of students from these groups. Richardson (2010) acknowledges that whilst some ethnic groups have high participation rates in HE, it is not reflected in their subsequent
academic attainment. This point raises important questions about who is attending which university, and their experiences once there.

A common theme which cuts across these different studies is an acknowledgement that it is seemingly more difficult for these groups to access and attend university in comparison to traditional students (Macdonald and Stratta 1998). At the same time, this section has highlighted how studies which explore non-traditional or new student experiences highlight the multiple aspects of a student’s identity which overlap and interrelate to shape HE decisions and experiences within the UK student population. All of these social differences will be explored in Section 2.5, and further research will be discussed in relation to statistics for the contemporary student population (HESA 2012). Throughout research into HE a stratification of attendance is also highlighted, with it being argued that new student groups are more likely to attend post-1992 institutions (Leathwood and O’Connell 2003). Recent research suggests that this is not the case for all new student groups (Noden et al. 2014a). With this in mind, it seems pertinent to explore the student population in relation to where they choose to study, incorporating multiple aspects of student socio-economic backgrounds.

**International students**

International students have a higher sense of separation from both the student and the local community, clearly being identified as ‘other’, primarily due to their English language capabilities (Gu 2009). International students have the same obstacles to overcome as home students in terms of needing to make friends and build social groups, and some believe university provided accommodation offers the greatest opportunity for them to do this (Paltridge et al. 2010). Forbes-Mewitt and Nyland (2008) perceive that students benefit from living in university accommodation when they first arrive in the host country, and this is reiterated by Paltridge et al. (2010), who suggest that this type of accommodation enables a greater sense of security for international students. The lack of local knowledge of the area has consequences in the housing choices believed to be available to international students, and choosing university provided accommodation can be seen as a way of overcoming this
whilst they become acquainted with their university town or city (Fincher and Shaw 2009).

In a similar way to how living-at-home students had divided identities, Gu (2009) found that Chinese students also had an identity and values that they maintained at university, and a second identity they maintained at home to prevent them from feeling like an outsider in either context. The cultural implications of studying abroad are considerable: ‘the contribution international students make – not only to the economy with the fees they pay and their wider spending, but also on a personal level in establishing and maintaining relationships with those they meet whilst in the UK – is not to be underestimated’ (Home Office 2010: 3).

However, Smith (2009a: 3) argues international students have a ‘predilection’ for high quality PBSA and this is, more often than not, unmatched by home students (Foth 2004). In this sense, the social and cultural benefits of international students noted above are not fully realised. The reasons behind international students tending to reside in PBSA are unclear, but the role of agents in international housing choices, relative naivety about the local housing market, and the recommendations of their university (Fincher and Shaw 2009) all appear to be significant in PBSA being international students’ accommodation of choice. The contrasts in student identity between home and international students are notable with varying opinions on the success of international students to integrate whilst at university.

2.4.2 Summary
Both new and international students experience segregation from traditional students in different ways. Fincher and Shaw (2009) suggest in the case of international students that this is an ‘unintended segregation’, however through her research, Holdsworth (2009a) found in the personal responses given by participants that local students saw themselves as very different to British students from other places. Paltridge et al. (2010: 360) reveal:
‘Social groups still usually formed predominantly along cultural lines, although there were frequent exceptions to this. The feeling among participants was that this was not a result of prejudice, but rather residents simply befriending those most similar to themselves’.

There are clear differences resonating from the findings above. In addition, research into HE hints at a stratification in where different student groups attend university. It is argued that new student groups are more likely to attend post-1992 institutions (Leathwood and O’Connell 2003). Recent research suggests that this is not the case for all new student groups (Noden et al. 2014a). A recent study reports that 31% of students studying in London already lived locally prior to attending university (Arnett 2014). It must also be noted that students who are geographically limited when attending university also have their ability to attend a top university significantly reduced (Noden et al. 2014b).

At the same time, Northern institutions tend to attract above average percentages of white students but they are also more likely to live in the parental home. This finding has been noted by other scholars, with many studies focusing on local students (Holdsworth 2007; Reay et al. 2010) in these areas. Indeed Reay et al. (2010) highlight clear distinctions in the way Northern students formulate their identity as local and working class, as opposed to students in their Southern and Midland case studies, who identified most with their student identity.

Whilst PBSA has been noted as popular amongst international student groups, not all home students feel PBSA is a viable option for them. This can be attributed to many factors (Foth 2004). As noted above, there is increasing evidence within the literature that international students have a strong presence within PBSA (Smith 2009a); this may form an attractive prospect to international students, however it has been argued to have the opposite effect on the desire of home students to live there (Kenna 2011) - although some cases have shown UK students are living in PBSA (Hubbard 2009). Fincher and Shaw (2009: 1890) found in their study of Melbourne that international students rarely made friends with ‘Australians’, in turn having consequences on the social and
cultural diversity within PBSA, further enhancing differences between broader student groups.

These discussions enrich debates on student identity, and illuminate the very different experiences of students from different backgrounds and places of origin, including with regard to where they choose to live whilst at university. With this in mind, it seems pertinent to explore the student population in relation to where they choose to study, incorporating multiple aspects of student socio-economic backgrounds.

2.5 Axes of Social Difference within the Student Population

The aforementioned categorisations of student groups have assisted in gaining a deeper understanding of the way students are investigated and explored. This section aims to broaden debates away from simply differences to traditional students and investigate lines of differentiation within and across these social groups. By doing this, the complexities of student identity and experiences can be made clearly evident (Holloway et al. 2010). To date, studies have tended to focus on specific groups in order to better understand their motives for attending university in the UK, their accommodation choices and subsequent experiences (Holton and Riley 2013). Whilst this literature has been insightful into the HE student experience, it does not fully explore what the social make-up of the contemporary student population is today. This is important in furthering understanding of HE and will be the focus of this section.

This section will focus on existing research investigating social difference within student populations alongside an exploration of the contemporary student population in 2010/11 (HESA 2012). This is achieved three-fold through an exploration of wider scholarship, investigations within geography and, finally, where possible, literature within geographies of education.

2.5.1 Age

The age of a student and their experience whilst at university can be argued to be strongly related, with the experiences of undergraduates, postgraduates and
mature students distinguishable categories in which experience could be divided (although not exclusively). 2010/11 HESA data states that 67% of students are aged between 18 and 20 years of age. This highlights a youthful student population in the UK, which can arguably be linked to higher levels of mobility than if there were larger proportions of mature students, classified as those over 21 when they start their degree (Christie 2007).

Within broader research, age has been investigated largely in relation to a particular stage in the lifecourse for example children and youth (Evans and Holt 2011), parents and families (Holland and Edwards 2014) and those of retirement age (Riley 2014). This is the same way for students, who are noted firstly as students over other characteristics, and secondly for their stage of study such as undergraduate, postgraduate or mature student status. This chapter has already noted the importance of distinguishing students within the category of youth. Wider literature highlights the significance of stage in the lifecourse, in this case studenthood, as a distinguishing variable across the entire population.

Within studies of student populations, age is often not the specific focus of investigation, but mode of study. Many studies that have investigated the influence of age for students at university, have been outside of geography, and this is worthy of note. The main way in which age has been explored is through academic achievement and needs (Scott et al. 2011).

Smith and Naylor (2001) found older students, in particular, had a higher likelihood to drop out of university, and linked this to integration, whereby older students may integrate less into university life than younger students. The difference in age and preferences has also been linked to the emergence of accommodation specifically targeted at postgraduate students (Knight-Frank 2010), clearly identifying postgraduate students as consumers with different needs and requirements to undergraduate students. Bewick et al. (2008) found that undergraduates’ alcohol consumption reduced as they progressed through university. By exploring undergraduates in this way, this study emphasises the changes which students may experience as they progress through their degree.
programme, and the way this may influence their lifestyle and consumption choice.

To date, there is a paucity of research conducted by geographers that specifically focuses on particular age groups, but more often age is mentioned in line with their categorisation as a student, for example, as a mature student or as a ‘student-parent’ (Brooks 2012). Geographies of education has much to contribute in understanding how age or stage of study interacts with the study choices students make. Investigating age has shown that research to date has tended to focus more greatly on stage of study and the lifecourse, both in terms of wider population groups and the student population itself. In the context of recent debates, these studies reveal that perhaps the usefulness of age in exploring student identities, and experiences may be superseded by stage of study, with findings revealing these distinctions as important and warranting further exploration.

2.5.2 Gender

Gender is often commented on within wider studies as a line of differentiation within study populations (c.f Holloway et al. 2012). Whilst gender has always been an important line of differentiation within populations, feminist approaches have brought it to the forefront of study across academic and social spheres. Gender has been noted for the role it plays within the labour market (Fortin 2005), the home (Sullivan and Lewis 2001), and also in relation to transgender identities (Stryker and Whittle 2006). Research highlights gender differences to be influential in shaping education, family and work decisions and therefore is an important consideration when exploring student populations.

With higher percentages of women participating in HE than men, there must be some discussion of the ways gender has been seen to inform their student lifestyles. There are higher percentages of UK (home) female students at every level than their international counterparts (HESA 2012). This may highlight differences in participation and perhaps opportunity between international and home students. Some university courses have considerably
skewed male to female ratios (HESA 2012), with some arguing that males are more visible in science disciplines (Woodfield and Earl-Novell 2006).

Studies that have explored gender in relation to achievement and learning have highlighted some important differences in learning styles and favoured assessment. Some research has shown that male students prefer exams, and female students coursework (Francis et al. 2001; Smithers 2003). Others have highlighted how anonymous marking enables female students work to be marked more fairly (Baird 1998).

Gender has been explored when looking at notions of safety and security, with it often being argued that female students have a higher desire to feel safe than their male equivalents because ‘being a woman meant thinking about personal safety on a daily basis’ (Kelly and Torres 2006: 26). Jennings et al. (2007) provide an insightful overview of scholarship investigating the gendered differences uncovered by various scholars. Interestingly, they discuss the ways crime restricts the spaces used by female students, particularly at night. Female students may be argued to choose locations that enhance how safe they feel, which is linked to an argument made by Kelly and Torres (2006) whereby female activities on campus (and within the city) may be restricted.

Gender has been the source of substantial investigations within geographies of education. These studies have enabled an expanse of differences to be acknowledged as being widely linked to cultural gender norms, which are viewed in wider society around domesticity and traditional perceptions of universities and subjects offered (c.f Ono and Piper 2004; Lee 2011). Brooks (2012) acknowledges the gendered differences in international male and female students studying at UK institutions. Importantly, she demonstrates how female participants were much more likely to consider their familial obligations and marital roles in their education choices, which led them to have to negotiate the ways in which they lived and learned. Holloway et al. (2012) found that the male participants in their study were more advantaged on return to Kazakhstan, where Islam is the majority religion and male advantage is commonplace. Whilst important in distinguishing between UK student
experiences, it appears to also be pivotal in shaping the ways international students study within the UK and how they negotiate the benefits and costs of an international education.

2.5.3 Ethnicity

The term ethnicity is in itself ambiguous, but ethnic group formation is believed to entail "both inclusionary and exclusionary behaviour, and ethnicity is a classic example of the distinction people make between 'us' and 'them'" (Hiebert 2009: 214). It is important to critique research such as this for placing a basic assumption that white people are normal and everyone else is 'ethnic'. Bonnett (1997) has commented on the intriguing relationship between ethnic enquiries and geography, highlighting that ‘white’ ethnic groups have often been forgotten within studies of ethnicity in the discipline (Bonnett 1997).

The majority of students in the UK (82%) categorise themselves as white (HESA 2012). This percentage has slightly decreased over time as widening participation agendas have had some success in recruiting students from under-represented ethnic groups into HE. Previous studies have shown that 16% of the undergraduate student population are from ethnic minority backgrounds (Connor et al. 2004), and 2010/11 HESA data supports this finding.

Studies conducted on the ways ethnicity impacts upon students’ everyday lives have been looked at extensively across the social sciences (Reay et al. 2010). In this way, research looking at the impacts of ethnicity on different aspects of experience has explored the way ethnic minority students are alienated in predominantly white universities (Loo and Rolison 1986). Research within education has explored ethnicity when looking at offer rates made by different types of institutions (Noden et al. 2014). Using UCAS admissions data, such studies have noted that ethnic minority students were significantly less likely to receive an offer from an ‘old’ (pre-1992) university than white applicants (Shiner and Modood 2002). This contrasted considerably with no ethnic minority group being less likely to receive an offer at new (post-1992) institutions (Shiner and Modood 2002). This stratification in where
students are offered a university place could have a considerable impact on subsequent student populations but to date this remains under researched.

Within geography, investigations into the ethnicity of students and their preferences may or may not be linked to ethnic segregation, a field researched in wider urban contexts (Peach 1996). This creates a more diverse picture of student geographies and further highlights the heterogeneous nature of the student population. Many studentified neighbourhoods have been termed ‘student ghettos’ (Hubbard 2009), whereby a mono-culture is attributed to students in one area. This is distinctly linked to the idea of ethnoburbs (Li 2009; Peach 2002), and ideas of segregation and inclusion/exclusion experienced within them. Geographies of education examine ethnicity but largely in relation to younger educational settings such as primary and secondary schools (Collins and Coleman 2008) offering much opportunity for the exploration of ethnicity within a HE context.

2.5.4 Religion
Peach (2006) argues that religion has overtaken race and ethnicity as a key interest within minority studies, and scholarship investigating religion has expanded since the earlier 2000s. Within wider bodies of literature, there has arguably been a greater interest in one religion than others, revolving around Muslim populations and Islam. This has been linked to the increased public attention in this group since the events of 9/11 in 2001, and subsequent terrorist attacks (Peach 2006). This interest is mirrored within scholarship into the effects of religion on aspects of student identity and lifestyles, with a recognisable body of work having looked at the experience of Muslim students in comparison to other religious groups.

Calkins et al. (2010) explored the experiences of Muslim students in residential halls in the USA. They identify that the students they interviewed faced challenges when living in halls, from issues such as washing their hair and it not being seen by others on the return to their bedroom, to the prejudice and questioning they were subjected to when wearing a veil. Interestingly, Calkins et al. (2010) also reveal students felt they were made to feel different
because their physical environment did not accommodate their religious practice, such as shared bedrooms and bathrooms. Song (2012: 155) found Muslim students had difficulty living both a Muslim and a British identity, noting that ‘there will be clashes at times’.

Within geography, Hopkins’ (2011) research contrasted the prejudice discussed by participants in Calkins et al. (2010), with many home students seeing university students as broadminded, educated and accepting of diversity, which enabled them to feel included. There was, however, recognition by Muslim students that any racist incidents occurred outside the university campus, highlighting a clear difference between the university campus as safe and free of racial tension in comparison with the surrounding town and their home town (Hopkins 2011). Respondents in Hopkins’ (2011) study revealed that they had restricted access to areas of campus due to their faith, especially due to the centralisation of many activities in places where alcohol was consumed. Many students found alternative spaces to socialise, such as coffee shops and cafes, but these were often not open late, and limited their activities.

Hopkins argues that this is a form of discrimination. Differentiating between home and international students was possible in these studies, and provided an insight into the different concerns and experiences of students. International Muslim students had particular concerns over how they would be received on arriving in the USA, making it a daunting transition. What Hopkins (2011) concluded was that whilst international and home categories are important, they are not the main influence over student experience, this was where they lived, on campus or off campus.

Whilst the focus of this section has centred around the influence of Islam on a student’s experience, there have been other scholars who have explored the effects of religion, and are still doing so. Sharma and Guest (2013) explore how Christian identities interact with other social aspects of identity and shape student experiences whilst at university. At the same time, other research has explored the performativity of Christianity in Scotland (Vincett et al. 2012). Sharma and Guest (2013) note that explorations of religion and HE in the UK
remain limited. Whilst Geographers are taking an increasing interest in the experiences of difference religious groups, there remains a paucity of research in this area within geographies of education.

2.5.6 Socio-economic indicators
Discussions of social class, and whether it has become an outdated concept in modern times, have been heightened in recent years (Cannadine 1999; Aaron 2012). The class system is said to have been integral in understanding historical British culture (Cannadine 1999) but a recent study conducted by the BBC (2013a) argues that working, middle and upper class definitions are outdated, and that 7 social classes can now be identified in the UK. This debate is beyond the capacity of this thesis, but highlights the complex nature of understanding class, particularly in a UK context.

The NS-SEC is taken from the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (ONS) and these can be found in Appendix 1. Many students are argued to be dependents or semi-dependents; and HESA data reflects this by basing the NS-SEC background of students aged 18-21 on their parental income. 31% of students are found to be in the NS-SEC categories 4-7, argued to be the lower income classifications. Alongside this, another way of exploring the socio-economic background of students is to investigate their education prior to attending university.

88% of students in 2010/11 have attended states schools and colleges (HESA 2012), indicating a considerable change in the student population from the 1990s, when the majority of students were assumed to be from fee-paying schools (Chatterton 1999). This finding is significant and should not be ignored, although the differentiation between students who have been to fee-paying schools and state schools may not be so visible. With this in mind, it interestingly highlights the changing composition of the university student population in comparison to twenty years ago. In wider education studies, the intersections of class and ethnicity have been investigated; with studies showing how racial stereotyping and exclusion can limit the educational aspirations middle-class Black Caribbean parents have for their children.
(Gillborn et al. 2012). This study provides useful insight into the overlapping nature of multiple aspects of student identity, and highlights the need to identify which aspect is most influential, or if all social differences contribute equally to student experiences.

Research into the impacts of social class in HE have seen growing interest in light of widening participation policies over the last decade. To date, the academic focus has mainly centred on working-class parents and students, although there are some insightful studies that explore the experiences of other groups. The more noticeable emergence of this social class group into HE may account for it becoming a point of interest for researchers. Studies investigating working class students have taken many forms; for example, looking at the way class inequalities of wider society are reproduced at university (Archer et al. 2003), the ways in which working class students attempt to transgress their class status (Lehmann 2009), and whether students disconnect themselves from their families on attending university (Wentworth and Peterson 2001). Johnes (1990) found that parental social class and type of school influenced students’ probability of non-completion, whilst Reay et al. (2010) contrast this to demonstrate the strong work ethic of working class students and their determination to succeed at university.

As can be seen in a wider context, the prevalence of research into working class student experiences can be seen to reflect that middle class students are often seen as the norm. Studies within geographies of education have also shown this within understandings of studentification, with the recognition of the process involving the replacement of families with a ‘generally middle-class social grouping’ (Smith 2005: 74). With this point stated, studies with a focus on middle class students still remain scarce, despite this group comprising the largest proportion of the contemporary student population.

2.5.7 (Dis)ability
The debate surrounding the medical and social models of disability is important when considering studies of disability. The first model implies (dis)ability to be a medical condition with physical characteristics intrinsic to the person with the
(dis)ability. The social model of disability, on the other hand, attributes (dis)ability to the built environment and the ways in which wider society reinforce (dis)ability through negative stigma and exclusion (Shakespeare 2006). This has been the starting point of many discussions that consider the effects of (dis)ability on students.

The majority of students within the HESA (2012) data are categorised to have ‘no known disability’ (91.81%), more so than all other categories combined. In 2001/2002 this figure was closer to 95% (HESA 2003), indicating an increase in the number of students that are either declaring a disability, or an increase in the number of students attending university with a disability between these years. Although it cannot be clear which is the explanation for this trend, Pallapies (2006) suggests that diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorders, in particular, has increased despite the number of children with the disorder probably remaining fairly constant. Students with a specific learning disability are notably the largest group (3.76%) of students with a disability.

Looking back to Chatterton’s (1999) traditional student stereotype, disability is not mentioned within his description of the ‘traditional student’. With this point noted, its very omission is an indication that students are assumed to be without a disability on the whole. Disability has constituted a growing interest within the discipline of geography, although there is a relative paucity of research into the effects of (dis)ability within university student populations. Some interesting work has been conducted to date, looking at children and disability in schools (Holt 2007), and in the wider social sciences (Fuller et al. 2004).

It is proposed that the 1990s policies of widening participation in HE institutions were not only associated with increasing participation from students with a particular socio-economic background (as discussed above), but also students with a (dis)ability (Goode 2007). Some studies have looked at the different ways the physical environment of a university can be seen to enable and (dis)able students (Matthews et al. 2003). User access is an important debate to which geographers have contributed, and represents the struggle
some students have with navigating university spaces. This can also be seen in terms of housing, whereby 'it is the house, its steps and stairs, its too narrow doorways, its overall standardised design, its lack of space, etc. which creates disability' (Oldman and Beresford 1998: 430).

Goode (2007) looks at the complex nature of a disabled student's identity and the negotiations they have to make, from social interactions through to the ways they learn and are taught, and the ways in which they felt ostracised in certain situations. Madriaga (2010) highlights how the sensory impairments of students with Asperger Syndrome left places where students congregated, such as the student union and bars, inaccessible to them - and this had negative consequences on their engagement with social activities at universities. The social inclusion and exclusion of people with disabilities is an important debate in student cultures, with it being found in some studies that people with disabilities avoid particular public and private spaces (Hall 2004). These case studies above show that there has been insightful research conducted on students with disabilities of some kinds (although not all), and highlights the different experiences of these students in comparison to other student groups. Geographies of children and youth and geographies of education have made significant contributions to these debates across different educational settings.

2.5.8 Summary
Research within Geography and the Social Sciences has revealed a wealth of studies on different social differences, and it can be argued that these differences traverse both one another and the broader student categories discussed above. What the above section does highlight is the multiple ways a person’s identity can be categorised and divided - and this is clearly illustrated within the student population. For example, feminists have noted that gender may be experienced differently depending on a person’s ethnicity. This section has by no means explored all the research conducted on different axes of social difference, but merely acts to illuminate the diversity within student populations, and in turn the influence these differences may have on experiences of being a student.
2.6 Conclusions

There is still great scope to expand knowledge in relation to HE, particularly in a UK context. This chapter has shown some of the ways in which social scientists and geographers have explored university students and their education, but there remain two ways in which research could greatly contribute to this field. Scholarship and HESA data have highlighted the social make-up of the contemporary student population, but more research is needed that investigates how this has changed over time in light of the Labour government expansion of education whilst in government, widening participation and internationalisation of education agendas. At the same time, the Coalition government have made further changes to HE with the rise of tuition fees for students to £9,000. Whilst studies tend to focus on one social group, it would be useful to explore the social make-up of the student population as a whole, and consider social differences in a more related and overlapping way – perhaps by recognising the complex nature of student identities hinted at in some of the studies discussed in this chapter.

Whilst many studies have acknowledged the need to explore minority student populations, this chapter has utilised scholarship and current statistics, to show that the student population is still largely representative of Chatterton’s (1999) ‘traditional student’ stereotype; the UK student population is still predominantly white, affluent and young. Here it seems important to recognise that:

‘a caution must be voiced alongside these calls to highlight and interrogate the diversity of student experiences- which is levelled at social geographies more generally- that we do not fetishise the marginal groups and in doing so ignore the mainstream or central’ (Holton and Riley 2013: 70).

Whilst significant, this chapter has also demonstrated that studying the mainstream is crucial but at the same time their experiences must also be acknowledged to not be ubiquitous. Explorations of each social difference
revealed a disparity in the number of studies conducted across axes, and the extent to which student experiences have been explored through these lenses. Particular student groups have been investigated more so than others, such as Muslim students (Hopkins 2011), and working class students (Reay et al. 2010), with extensive opportunity to research into social axes of difference within and across the student population being illuminated. At the same time, this chapter has highlighted geographical differences in experience both in terms of UK and non-UK studies, but also within the UK itself. This is an important and an often overlooked aspect of HE experience which warrants further attention.

In light of the findings of this chapter the identification of the first objective of this thesis; to examine the student population and where they study has been illuminated. At the same time, studies within this chapter have shown the need for in-depth studies exploring student choices and experiences. With this said there is opportunity to explore multiple aspects of student identity if a sufficiently open-ended starting point is chosen. This section has provided the background to assert that more research is needed to explore and convey the heterogeneous nature of the student population. This requires further investigation in order to deconstruct the student experience into one that incorporates, or at least appreciates, alternative student identities and experiences.

This chapter has highlighted some of the ways that student geographies have been explored. A separate way student geographies have been investigated is through the lens of studentification and this will be introduced in the next chapter.
3. Studentification

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the process of studentification. It begins by exploring the wider context from which studentification emerged, within debates of gentrification. The process of studentification itself is then unpicked through a discussion of the economic, social, cultural and environmental impacts within university towns and cities. In light of the mobility of student populations and changing accommodation preferences a distinct absence of student accommodation pathways is noted and explored in the following section. Finally, the aims of the thesis are examined in response to gaps noted in current understandings of student geographies.

Significantly, this chapter reveals four main gaps in existing scholarship around gentrification, studentification and student accommodation pathways. First, by exploring studentification within the context of gentrification, the importance of social class is illuminated. Second, this chapter has highlighted that student voices are largely missing from studies of studentification. Focus to date has centred on stakeholder groups such as landlords and local residents, and it is crucial to bring student opinions into these debates. Third, it is highlighted that student accommodation preferences appear to be changing with a wide range of accommodation options now available to students, raising important questions over which students live in different accommodation types across university towns and cities. Fourth, this chapter illuminates that very little is known about student accommodation pathways across the university lifecourse. It is proposed that an exploration of student accommodation pathways is needed to enhance current understandings of processes of studentification.

3.2 Gentrification Debate

The process of gentrification is extensively referred to across a multitude of disciplines, to describe a specific route through which an area experiences urban change. The process has undergone dramatic expansion over the past 15 years to incorporate a wide range of terms under its conceptual umbrella. This expansion has sparked extensive debates on the process and its
definition, and the following section aims to explore some of the history of the process, and the academic considerations and debates around this topic, to date.

3.2.1 Theories of Gentrification
It is essential to first explore the definition of gentrification, in order to be able to see where studentification fits within the ‘elastic yet targeted’ (Clark 2005: 258) understanding of gentrification. Glass (1964) coined the term gentrification, stating,

‘One by one, many of the working class quarters of London have been invaded by the middle classes—upper and lower… Once this process of ‘gentrification’ starts in a district it goes on rapidly until all or most of the original working class occupiers are displaced and the whole social character of the district is changed’ (Glass 1964: xviii).

In this definition, Glass focuses on the displacement of the working class and the movement of the middle class into an area. Glass (1964) went on to discuss the role of the individual in improving housing stock in particular residential areas, either through their own efforts or through the use of builders. Since its initial definition, gentrification has been the subject of much debate within public and academic domains (Lees et al. 2013).

Several theories have been proposed for the main causes of gentrification, and these have been framed under various guises such as production/consumption, capital/culture and supply/demand (Atkinson and Bridge 2005). At the heart of these arguments are debates surrounding people and capital. Marxist theorists such as Neil Smith originally suggested that gentrification is about the ‘movement of capital not people’ (Smith 1979). He explained processes of gentrification using rent gap theory, whereby inner city land could become more profitable if it were put to different use, thereby closing the rent gap. This largely economic focus was heavily critiqued in the 1980s and 1990s for forgetting the human aspect of the process.
To counter this, a cultural theory of gentrification was proposed. Laska and Spain (1980) viewed gentrification as a movement ‘back to the city’ by people living in the suburbs, to be closer to jobs and more suitable cultural and recreational sites. Ley (1986; 1996) took these arguments further, in the case of Canadian cities, suggesting the bohemianism of students following the hippy era made them prourbanist and seeking to live in convenient locations within cities.

In contemporary times, it has been suggested that both cultural and capital theories of gentrification are needed to better understand the process (Lees 1994; 2000). This proposition suggests that both supply and demand factors have a part to play in understanding the movement of the middle-classes into areas in the inner city. Hamnett (1994) links gentrification to the expansion of professional occupations, suggesting that changes in neighbourhoods are an outcome of this wider trend.

Gentrification can now be seen in a global context (c.f Atkinson and Bridge 2005), and it is suggested that local studies have much to contribute to wider debates, with manifestations of the process varying across different cities and contexts. There have been both negative and positive outcomes of gentrification. Gentrification was seen in a positive light, enabling the revitalisation of the inner city (Lees et al. 2008), and was later encouraged through government policy (Hackworth and Smith 2001). However, the acknowledgment made by Glass (1964), of displacement of the working class and changing social character of an area, is representative of the negative aspects of gentrification. The class-based nature of these changes has undeniably led to considerable activism in gentrified neighbourhoods (Hamilton and Curran 2013).

Throughout the past four decades, gentrification has formed a conceptual umbrella for many terms. The definition set out by Glass (1964) was extended by N. Smith (1982):
‘By gentrification I mean the process by which working class residential neighbourhoods are rehabilitated by middle class homebuyers, landlords and professional developers’ (N. Smith 1982: 139).

It can be argued that N. Smith identifies the shift from ‘first wave’ to ‘second wave’ gentrification (Hackworth and Smith 2001). N. Smith recognises the broadening of the concept, to include the roles of landlords and developers and the beginnings of more commercial intentions.

3.2.2 The conceptual umbrella of gentrification

The recognition of ‘rural gentrification’ in the 1980s signified the first derivative of gentrification (Lees et al. 2008). By using gentrification within the definition, it aimed to show the commonalities within the process in both urban and rural contexts (Smith and Phillips 2001). The emergence of this term raised questions about the spatial scope of gentrification, as it was no longer exclusive to the inner city areas, but had connotations in other settings too. Since this first derivative, other variations of gentrification have emerged, such as ‘greentrification’, whereby the perceptions of a place as ‘green’, particularly in a rural context, shape the location choices of in-migrants to especially remote rural areas (Smith and Phillips 2001). ‘Super-gentrification’, which sees the transformation of already gentrified, prosperous and solidly upper-middle-class neighbourhoods into much more exclusive and expensive enclaves (Lees 2003: 2487), is another example of the expansion of gentrification. The main topic of this chapter, ‘Studentification’ (Smith 2002), is one of the more recent additions to the gentrification banner, and will be discussed in Section 3.3.

Some fear the emergence of new terms, such as those above, can be argued to be extensions of gentrification, and are ‘stretching the term, and what it set out to describe too far’ (Lambert and Boddy 2002: 20). The term gentrification is acknowledged as being used as a conceptual background to processes which may in fact be a very different. Lees (2003: 2491) goes further to suggest that each addition is ‘running the considerable risk of making the meaning of the term so expansive as to lose the conceptual sharpness and
specificity’, reinforcing Lambert and Boddy in the need to maintain gentrification as a unique definition and process, separate to the emerging variations. In opposition to this, many academics have called for the term gentrification to be made broader, in order to be more inclusive of the many processes within the conceptual umbrella of gentrification (Ley 1996). This highlights its diversity and ability to have relevance as new related processes emerge.

With this said, Clark (2005: 258) presents an interesting definition of gentrification:

‘Gentrification is a process involving a change in the population of land users such that the new users are of a higher socio-economic status than the previous users, together with an associated change in the built environment through an investment in fixed capital’ (Clark 2005: 258).

Clark’s definition encompasses the four core elements of gentrification identified by Davison and Lees (2005: 1187), yet remains ‘elastic’ enough to encompass other strands of gentrification.

A gentrification debate especially relevant to studentification is the question of whether new-build developments should be seen as examples of gentrification. Davidson and Lees (2005: 1165) believe new-build gentrification is ‘part and parcel of the maturation and mutation of the gentrification in the post-recession era’. They propose that the demolition of buildings by the working class, in order to build new housing, has distinct links with gentrification. This type of development is often linked to the urban regeneration of city-centres and can be argued to not directly improve the housing stock in a residential area. With this said, it is obviously an important part of urban regeneration, as can be seen from the redevelopment of the Docklands in London (Butler 2007). It was often assumed that the working class were the occupiers of inner-city areas, but now there has been an increase in the number of high-rise, gated communities in these areas. The resulting in-movement of the middle-class, into areas that were previously
uninhabited or were inhabited by the working class, clearly links to gentrification although the process is slightly different.

3.2.3 Summary
Gentrification has been argued to have both positive and negative effects. This process is argued by some to be essential to the urban regeneration of many city-centres across the global north, yet on the other hand is causal of the displacement of an entire social group of the population and the creation of gated communities. The expansion of the term as the conceptual umbrella for many other processes linked to urban regeneration has come under scrutiny within academia, and sparked a debate concerning the effects of this on the integrity of gentrification as a unique process. As mentioned above, studentification is one derivative of gentrification, and this process will be discussed in-depth in the following section.

3.3 Studentification
Studentification is argued to be a derivative of gentrification, but there have been many debates about where studentification best fits within processes of urban change. This chapter will demonstrate the similarities, but also the differences that can be seen between studentification and processes of gentrification. This section is separated into four sections. The first section explores the emergence of studentification in the UK. The second section examines the economic implications of studentification, exploring first and second wave studentification, and, lastly, the process of destudentification. The third section focusses on the physical impacts of studentification, and the fourth section moves this forward to illustrate some of the social and cultural impacts of studentification.

3.3.1 Background
Studentification is a process that has originated in the UK, and it is proposed that in some ways studentification is unique to the UK and the particular HEI structures that are in place there. Smith (2005) has noted that in many other western nations, students move away from the parental home but are often

Due to changing government policy over the last 50 years aimed at increasing participation in HE in the UK, the volume of students moving into the private rented sector has rocketed (Rugg et al. 2000). In the 1960s, the Robbins Report triggered an expansion of HE (Kenyon 1997), resulting in student numbers doubling from 217,000 in 1963 to 524,000 in 1983 (Rugg et al. 2000). It can be asserted that it was the New Labour government policies of the 1990s that were the most influential source of the significant increase in undergraduate students (Hubbard 2008) and also postgraduate students (Glasson 2003). Since this period, student numbers have increased from 1.6 million in 1995 to nearly 2.5 million in 2011 (Holton 2015). This dramatic increase in students, coupled with a general unpreparedness of university accommodation to facilitate such an increase, resulted in the movement of students into the private rented sector. Rugg et al. (2000) found that an average of 2,843 students per HE institution lived in the private rented sector.

Students typically live in houses converted from family residences to a HMO. According to the 2004 Housing Act, an HMO is defined as any household where two or more unrelated people live together. Typically, a house with more than 6 unrelated people living together would be classed as a large HMO (Housing Act 2004), although this is perhaps simplistic, as there are multiple definitions and also multiple ways in which management and legislation of this type of residence occurs. There are many arguments about the consequences of having large numbers of HMOs in neighbourhoods, and The National HMO Lobby (2008), a key advocate of the need to regulate HMOs, states that 'The Lobby … opposes concentrations of HMOs in general (as a unique threat to the
sustainability of communities) and studentification in particular (as the principal cause and effect of HMO concentrations).

It is not solely increasing student numbers that led to the increased movement of students into the private rented sector. There are multiple additional factors as to why studentification occurred in many HE cities and towns, and the role of institutional actors, such as landlords, who bought properties to convert into HMOs. The local population responding to students moving into an area also needs to be considered, alongside the lack of legislation to regulate and control the formation of HMO and to prevent concentrations of students in particular areas.

The impacts of studentification have been a trigger to the emergence of many community action groups. Many of these groups are affiliated to the National HMO Lobby. The National HMO Lobby is an organisation which represents ‘some fifty community groups in some thirty towns in all parts of the UK’ (National HMO Lobby 2011). Campaigning for sustainable communities, they directly oppose the concentrations of HMOs in neighbourhoods, and have had a significant impact on the government changing the Use Classes Order in 2010, requiring the conversion of a property into a HMO to have planning permission (Newcastle 2011). The Nottingham Action Group (2008) identifies four elements that make HMOs different to family homes:

1. Occupancy in HMOs is high density, much higher than family houses, and generally higher than homes/hostels/hotels. This intensifies pressure on local services.
2. Occupants are typically from a narrow age range- young adults- unlike the wide range normal in family houses and homes/hostels/hotels. Their lifestyle generates high levels of noise, traffic and waste.
3. Occupiers within HMOs lack governance- this is the implication of multiple households- whereas houses and homes/hostels/hotels have a family and management structure. This can make general behaviour and relations with tenants difficult.
4. Occupation is short-term – especially in the case of students – while families are long-term residents and homes/hostels/hotels have long-term managers. This leads to a very different level of commitment to the property and the neighbourhood.

These different factors have enabled some neighbourhoods to reach, and in some instances exceed, the ‘tipping point’ identified by the National HMO Lobby (2008), wherein the student population equates to 20% of the total population in the area (Smith and Holt 2007). The process of studentification identifies students in a similar vein to gentrification, which ‘involves the in-movement of certain types of households and the out-movement of others’ (Wulff and Lobo 2009: 316), and in terms of studentification this can be seen through the ‘in-migration of HE students’ (Smith 2005: 73). This ‘in-movement’, specifically of ‘middle-class students’, into certain areas has created several issues between host and student populations, with these issues existing at a multi-dimensional level.

‘Bailey and Livingston (2005: 19) [who] note that over 95% of wards in the UK have a student population of between 2% and 11%, contrasted with the remaining, which are notable for their concentrated student populations- some as high as 61%’ (Sage et al. 2012a: 599). Similar to the displacement experienced in gentrification, it is argued by many lobby groups that the displacement of local families and the in movement of large concentrations of students can be linked with a loss of the feeling of community in many ‘studentified neighbourhoods’ (National HMO Lobby 2008).

3.3.2 Definition
Smith (2005) asserted that, as a result of having large concentrations of students in a residential area, four impacts of studentification could broadly be identified; these were economic, social, cultural and physical. Universities UK (2006) went on to produce ‘Studentification: a guide to opportunities, challenges and practice, setting out more clearly the positive effects and challenges created when studentification occurs. Below are the definitions
given by Smith (2005: 74) that will be discussed in detail in the following section:

‘Economic: studentification involves the revalorisation and inflation of property prices, which is tied to the recommodification of single-family housing or a repackaging of private rented housing to supply HMO for HE students. This restructuring of the housing stock gives rise to a tenure profile which is dominated by private rented and decreasing levels of owner-occupation.

Social: the replacement or displacement of a group of established permanent residents with a transient, generally young and single, middle-class social grouping; entailing new patterns of social concentration and segregation.

Cultural: the gathering together of young persons with a putatively shared culture and lifestyle, and consumption practices linked to certain types of retail and service infrastructure.

Physical: associated with an initial upgrading of the external physical environment as properties are converted to HMO. This can subsequently lead to a downgrading of the physical environment, depending on the local context.’

3.4 Studentification issues
Students are acknowledged as a main source of HMO concentration. However, there is a wide breadth of ways in which studentification plays out in different HE cities and towns across the world. Whilst studies, to date, have focused on the UK context, there are a growing number of studies being conducted elsewhere, and these will be discussed where appropriate. The two tables below (Table 1 and Table 2) show not only the positive impacts of students, but also the challenges faced by local authorities, communities and HE institutions. Some of the points present in these tables will be discussed in more detail in
the following section. First, the economic impacts will be addressed; next, the physical consequences of studentification will be discussed, followed by the social and cultural outcomes of the process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Student populations - positive effects</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student volunteering makes an important contribution to many aspects of social life</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student housing needs prevent serious depopulation in many inner-city areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increases the range of goods, services and attractions available to the town/city's population</td>
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<tr>
<td>A critical mass of students can ensure transport links to the benefit of the whole community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student communities can also support nurseries and multi faith centres</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cultural</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a critical mass and demand for diverse range of cultural events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhances reputation of city/town as vibrant, dynamic location and as an attractive destination for eg, night-clubbing, evening economy, or tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creates an international/cosmopolitan feel/outlook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher/rising property prices provide a level of incentive for upgrading properties which might otherwise remain empty, languish in a neglected state or be generally unfit for habitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many older properties receive considerable investment by private landlords which extends their life</td>
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<tr>
<td>The existence of large numbers of young people help to make city centres attractive to social and retail spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in type of retail and entertainment services available – eg, local shops becoming cafes, bookshops, live music venues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High demand for student housing and the stimulus to private rented sector leads to rising house prices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth in buy-to-let market and private investment opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students constitute a flexible part-time labour force undertaking seasonal employment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student presence can help stimulate urban regeneration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goods purchased locally by students make a significant contribution to the local economy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student presence ensures the viability of some retail businesses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Repairs, renovations and extensions to student properties benefits the construction and service sector of the economy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Availability of a graduate workforce</td>
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Table 1: Positive Effects of Studentification (*Universities UK 2006*)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Cultural</th>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Economic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase in low-level anti-social behaviour</td>
<td>Expansion of HMOs in traditional owner-occupied, family areas can lead to change in nature of communities</td>
<td>Reduction in quality of housing stock and neglect of external appearance to properties including gardens, due to lack of investment by absentee landlords</td>
<td>High demand for student housing and the stimulus to private rented sector leads to a rise in house prices, deterring access to housing ladder for other sections of community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concentration of vulnerable young people with low awareness of security and highly attractive possessions leading to increased levels of crime. This can result in higher insurance premiums (ie, house, contents, vehicle)</td>
<td>Gradually self-reinforcing unpopularity of area for families wishing to bring up children</td>
<td>Turnover of properties and preponderance of property letting boards – recurring annually – detract from streetscape</td>
<td>A rising concentration of students in particular streets acts as a strong inducement to owner-occupiers of non-student properties to take advantage of a lucrative sale to private student landlords</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased demand for some local services leading to closure – particularly educational services</td>
<td>Conversion of houses into student residences, often make difficult transformation back into family homes</td>
<td>Increased population density and increased pressures on services (policing, cleansing, highways, planning, public transport)</td>
<td>Changes in type of retail and entertainment services available – eg, local shops becoming take-aways and cafes, and re-orientation of stock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents feel pressure to move to avoid becoming marginalised and isolated as permanent residents. This can lead to the demoralisation of established residents</td>
<td>Transient occupation engenders a lack of community integration and cohesion and less commitment to maintain the quality of local environment</td>
<td>Increased on-street parking pressures arising from shared households and seasonal traffic congestion (eg, at graduations, end of term)</td>
<td>Fluctuating demand for private rented housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased competition for private rented houses</td>
<td>Turnover and short stay are disincentive and barrier to self-policing and aversion to crime</td>
<td>Increase of squatter (litter/refuse), as infrastructure is designed for lower density usage, low awareness of refuse collection arrangements and different conceptions of what is tolerable</td>
<td>Seasonal employment (in shops, pubs) and provision of retail and leisure services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure for greater provision of establishments catering for night time entertainment and consequent detrimental impact on residential amenity</td>
<td>Different perceptions of what is considered acceptable behaviour and communal obligations by different social groups</td>
<td>Noise between dwellings at all times especially music and at night – parties and gatherings and late night street noise disturbance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seasonal availability of some retail and service provision – development of a ‘resort economy’</td>
<td>Lifestyle frictions – late night student culture disturbs children and working people</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Communities of students – challenges

(Universities UK 2006)

**3.4.1 Economic impacts of Studentification**

The economic impacts of studentification can be seen in many different ways in studentified neighbourhoods. In a similar vein to gentrification, studentification can be argued to have occurred in two different yet connected waves, although a counter-process of destudentification will also be discussed. The first wave...
signifies the conversion of family homes to student rental properties, and the second wave is linked to the increase in PBSA developments. This section is divided by these waves, to show their differing drivers and impacts, and finishes by discussing recent findings concerning the process of destudentification.

**First Wave Studentification**

It is important here to understand changes to the student accommodation market over time. This can largely be linked to the growth of low interest, buy-to-let mortgage rates in the mid-1990s (Smith 2005). Whilst this does not automatically equate to studentification, it is something that has contributed greatly to the growth in the student rental market, as the availability of low interest rate mortgages contributed to the process of gentrification (N.Smith 1987). This is not simply about landlords buying properties to convert and rent to students, as it can also entail parents of HE students purchasing properties for their children, and often their children’s friends, to live in whilst at university. Until the recent change in the Use Classes Order in 2010, it had not been compulsory for Landlords to register a HMO (although this varies in each locale), enabling landlords to convert properties with relative ease.

Smith (2005) makes a convincing argument that in comparing studentification to gentrification, the students would technically be the ‘studentifiers’. However, he argues that it is perhaps better to assert the institutional actors (property developers, landlords) as the ‘studentifiers’. It is significant to recognise that the concept of a ‘studentifier’ is fluid and will be different in various university towns and cities. At the same time, some students or their parents have the capital to purchase an HMO, and this must also be considered. It is these actors that buy properties from departing residents, to be converted into HMOs. Interestingly, this point indicates a key difference between gentrification and studentification, with it being said that gentrification sees a growth in home-buyers, whereas in studentification housing is almost solely bought by a landlord or a letting company, for the recommodification of a family home into a rental property. Rugg et al. (2002) found that landlords could be defined in two ways: a ‘Traditional landlord’ being a landlord that owns only one student property, and an ‘Entrepreneur’ Landlord, owning multiple student
houses. They go further to suggest that not all landlords purposefully bought houses in student areas; some owned houses there before studentification occurred, and then took advantage of the higher rent prices gained from letting to students.

Landlords ‘operate at the interface between the production-consumption facets of studentification via their marketing and promotion of student ghettos and accommodation, and thereby influence the residential and locational demands of students’ (Smith 2005: 86). The obligations of student landlords have been widely debated by lobby groups (National HMO Lobby 2008), with most proposing that grievances associated with student housing, often placed on the students themselves, are at times better attributed to the ‘absentee landlord’ (Hubbard 2008: 333).

The role of both institutional actors (Chatterton 2000) and student agency are heavily discussed within debates on studentification. Smith and Holt (2007: 150) assert that ‘students have specific preferences for types of accommodation, location, and retail and leisure services that are being supplied by institutional actors’. More recently, Munro et al. (2009: 1808) have commented that ‘students can find “student areas” attractive places to live, particularly because of the associated development of facilities’. Hubbard (2008: 326) reiterates by stating that ‘this clustering is encouraged by students predisposition to locate in areas that they regard as convenient for university, as well as the tendency of letting agencies to push students towards certain parts of the town’. This assertion is similar to those made by some studying the clustering of new build condominiums in America, where they are argued to ‘provide more efficient and better organised housing environments and a more supportive set of community services’ (Rothblatt et al. 1979: 135). Both students and gentrifiers can be considered to want a convenient living environment that enables them to access services quickly.

As highlighted above, it should not be assumed that students are passive within studentification debates, as many academics acknowledge that students tend to cluster in particular geographical areas, near to both their
university and the city/town centre (Smith and Holt 2007). Smith paraphrases Redfern (1997) to say that ‘students studentify because they can’ (Smith 2005: 84), highlighting that students are active consumers within studentification. Many academics have already found that students prefer ‘nice’ or ‘safe’ areas, often where there is already a large student population present (Munro and Livingston 2012). Indeed, Rugg et al. (2002: 292) found that ‘in almost all case study locations, there was marked unwillingness for students to live in ‘non-student’ areas’. Rugg et al. (2000: 1), in their study of student demand for housing, suggest that:

‘One consequence is an increasing reliance on privately rented property. Increased demand has resulted in the establishment of ‘niche’ student markets. In most of the locations in this study, students were living in particular types of property, in geographically specific neighbourhoods, and renting from landlords who would be unwilling to let to other groups’.

Garmendia et al. (2012) also found that students were clustering in apartment blocks in Spain; they term this ‘vertical studentification’. In contrast to this, a recent study by Sage et al. (2012b) in Brighton has shown that students are moving into a former social-rented (council) estate that still has a considerably large local resident population. The variety seen within student accommodation and the increasing diversity of student accommodation choices raises the question of which students are choosing to live where and why. Within studentification debates it is important to note that there is very little acknowledgement of the types of students who are studentifying, above and beyond the home/international student or student/resident binary, as will be seen in the following sections. In this way home and international students are homogenised within studentification literature and the extent to which social difference interacts with the process needs to be teased out within studies of studentification and student geographies more broadly.

Whilst the above discussion helps to highlight why students move into a specific residential area, it seems imperative to gain greater understanding of the motivations for residents to move away from an area. There are multiple
reasons proposed as to why the host populations sell their properties. For some, it is a ‘voluntary departure’ (Bridge 2001: 91), to take advantage of the increased property prices in their area. For others, particularly elderly residents, it may enable them to move to ‘leafier suburbs’ (Munro and Livingston 2012: 1682). More negatively, it may be linked to landlords purposefully running down areas to encourage established residents to leave in order to escape the imposing ‘student ghetto’ (Smith 2005). It is still the case in some areas that the permanent residents continue to have positive student relations on their street, such as in Brighton (Universities UK 2006). The need to reduce negative relations between local people and students has led to an increasing focus on looking into alternative housing for students.

**Second Wave Studentification**

There has been increasing interest within academia in where the role of PBSA fits within studentification debates. PBSA is argued in some senses to be a way for local councils to overcome some of the issues associated with studentification (Smith 2009) - yet it is also recognised that PBSA ‘seemingly poses as many questions as it answers’ (Hubbard 2009: 1921). Over the past 10 years there has been a dramatic increase in the amount of PBSA in university towns and cities; this signifies ‘the roll-out of the studentification frontier, with redevelopment often on inner city brownfield sites’ (Sage et al. 2012a: 600), and a change in student housing preferences (Hubbard 2009).

The development of PBSA has been argued to be the second wave of studentification (Smith 2007). There has been a considerable increase in this kind of development over the past decade, with large scale developments emerging in university cities and towns, particularly in London (Smith 2009b). These developments must be likened to the transition from the first wave in gentrification, where individuals upgraded their own homes, to the second wave which saw the development of large apartment blocks on brownfield sites such as the Docklands in London (Butler 2007). The changing frontier of studentification is representative of the lucrative market available to developers in large university cities and towns, as seen in terms of gentrification in places such as New York (Barr and Peltz 2013).
The notable development of high-rise student accommodation in London has been linked to a recognition by developers that there was a need to cater for an insufficient number of bed spaces - believed to be a deficit of 100,000 (Knight Frank 2009; Smith 2009b). Whatever the reason for development, PBSA has enabled large developers such as UNITE and the UPP group to make substantial profit and build sufficient revenue around the commodification of the student experience (Smith and Hubbard 2014).

The University of Nottingham (2008) found ‘that most students think that “less is more”, rather than “big is beautiful”, with just over two thirds preferring to live in private rented houses instead of large developments’. On the other hand, there has been evidence that students have chosen to reside in PBSA to avoid conflict with the local population. One participant in Hubbard (2009: 1917) stated:

‘It is really similar to halls, having your own little rooms, being around other students so we don’t keep locals up... because we are five guys we thought we would be noisy and maybe keep people up if we lived in a house next door to non-students’ (second-year student, living in a purpose-built development).

This student’s reasons for choosing PBSA perfectly highlight both the advantages and disadvantages, for both the community and students of PBSA development. On the one hand, living in PBSA enables issues such as noise to be contained within a student-inhabited block, thereby not disturbing the local community. On the other hand, there still exists a clear distinction between ‘student selves and local others’ (Hubbard 2009: 1918), which largely prevents any attempts at a balanced and sustainable community (Smith 2008). In some ways, this intentional choice of housing links to Alvarez’s (2007) findings, whereby the motivation for the middle-class to live in ‘gated communities’ was centred around class constitution. Whilst unconsciously linked to class, this student chose PBSA as it separated them from what is often perceived as an ‘unwelcoming’ local community (Hubbard 2008).
There has also been growing interest in the increasing amount of PBSA being built in countries outside the UK, and a debate has arisen around the desire of universities to have students residing in purpose-built accommodation, rather than a large proportion living in HMO in the private-rented sector (Fincher and Shaw 2009). Newcastle City Council have identified 50 potential sites for PBSA in the city (Smith 2009b), highlighting PBSA as, at least in part, a solution to studentification. In some instances, universities report greater numbers of students living in PBSA than university-provided accommodation (Hubbard 2009). The impact of students living in this type of accommodation is having considerable consequences for both the students and the communities in which the PBSA has been built. Segregation of students from the host community is an acute concern of scholars, local authorities and local communities when discussing the impacts of studentification (Kenna 2011).

The comparison of PBSA to ‘gated communities’ (Atkinson and Flint 2004; Hubbard 2009) is important here, as it illuminates the occurrence of segregation between the local community and students at a different level to the separation that occurs within HMOs. Often PBSA will be marketed solely for the purpose of student residence - in some instances, taken further to appeal to particular groups within the student body, such as postgraduate or international students (Smith 2009b). Paltridge et al. (2010) explored the role PBSA plays in providing security for international students on arrival in a new environment. Some have suggested that international students are seen as ‘cash cows’ (Waters and Brooks 2010), as they pay higher fees, and alongside postgraduate students, they are argued to ‘tend to favour the professionally managed sector and are less price sensitive than other student categories’ (Knight Frank 2010: 2). By focusing on a specific student group, the exclusivity of some PBSA has been intensified, and can be in some ways likened to the ‘super-gentrification’ discussed earlier. On the other hand, the creation of student-only spaces could be argued to resonate with the creation of retirement apartments (Blakely and Snyder 1997), another group who have been targeted as consumers of an environment designed to cater to their needs.
Significant to studentification debates, PBSA development reiterates the importance of context and location (Smith 2009b). Smith and Hubbard (2014: 8) propose that ‘more and more educated youth are spatially concentrated within exclusionary, ‘student-only’ spaces, perpetuated by the relentless commodification of student housing and studenthood’, which has the potential to ‘reinforce central urban areas as student destinations’ (Chatterton 2010: 513). Scholars recognise that PBSA enables local councils to control the geographical location of students - a key difference to HMO emergence - yet, if built in the wrong place PBSA can exacerbate studentification issues (i.e. crime and litter) in an area (Smith 2008).

Studentification has great complexity, both spatially and temporally. As many academics highlight, past focus has been placed too heavily on the economic impacts of universities (Chatterton 2000; Hubbard 2008). Armstrong *et al.* (1997) looked at ways to maximise the economic, environmental and social benefits of Lancaster University and its students in the city, showing an increasing interest in the impacts of students outside the economic sphere. Universities remain important economically to many cities and towns in which they reside (Berg and Russo 2004), but student housing is argued to be creating a different financial situation in some university towns and cities. This will be explored through the following discussion of destudentification.

**Destudentification**

The expansion of student HMOs and PBSA is indicative of the diversity of student preferences. As noted in a previous section, Sage *et al.* (2012b) highlight a newer trend, where students are choosing to live in ex-social housing not traditionally known for attracting students in Bevendean, Brighton. Both the previous processes detailed the expansion of student accommodation, but this section aims to show the alternative outcomes of such substantial growth in the student accommodation market.

The growth across both HMO and PBSA development in the UK has led, in some instances, to an oversupply of bedspaces, and the recommodification of student housing back into family dwellings or being let to young professional
groups (Dowle 2008). University developments with UPP might also be contributing to this process, with more students having the option of being accommodated in university halls or residence as opposed to the private rented sector (Smith 2009c).

This process has been termed ‘destudentification’, which Smith (2008: 2552) identified as ‘the reduction of a student population in a neighbourhood which leads to social, cultural, economic and physical decline’. Destudentification is still an emerging field of research within geography, but contributions to date indicate that there is a substantial change occurring in the student housing market (Smith and Hubbard 2014). Destudentification does not simply have an economic impact in university towns, and Kinton (2013) expands by proposing a more detailed definition of the impacts of destudentification whereby there is:

‘Student population loss from a previously student-dominated area; resulting in partially-occupied and/or empty accommodation; Reduced rental rates, devalued property prices, and landlords withdrawing from/selling/abandoning accommodation; Downgrading, deterioration and decline of the urban environment due to student and landlord abandonment; Loss of viability/closure of student-oriented services’ (Kinton 2013: 226).

These impacts show the diverse consequences of destudentification in ‘student areas’, which can largely be viewed in a negative light. Interestingly, what this process hints at is a change in student accommodation preferences where students seek out different accommodation in the private-rented sector (Garmendia et al. 2012) and PBSA (Hubbard 2009), consequently leaving assumedly low-standard accommodation vacant.

All these processes suggest that the student accommodation market is changing, and it is imperative to explore the ways in which students make their accommodation decisions and, subsequently, how they experience their accommodation once there. At the same time, investigations into the stages of
the studentification process demonstrate little acknowledgement of internal diversity within the student population other than home/international student differentiations. This section has revealed a diversification of the student accommodation market. In light of this, deeper understanding of student accommodation decision-making processes are needed, to ascertain if different student groups are shaping studentification processes in different accommodation types across university towns and cities.

3.4.2 Physical impacts of Studentification

Studentification is believed to have many impacts on residential areas in which it occurs. Physical impacts are linked to the upgrading and downgrading of neighbourhoods, and this is intrinsically linked to the seasonal and transient nature of student populations, which will be discussed below.

The ‘seasonal student enclave’

The ‘seasonal student enclave’ is formed when students cluster into one particular neighbourhood. Allinson (2006) found in the case of Selly Oak, Birmingham, that many streets were almost empty of residents in the summer. The implications of a ‘seasonal depopulation, creating “ghost towns” during academic vacations’ (Sage et al. 2012a: 598) are extensive, particularly on a sense of community. Chatterton also summarises by saying;

‘Students … have a negative cultural effect in cities in terms of creating temporary and seasonal entertainment and residential ghettos and lowering the quality of private rented accommodation.’ (Chatterton 2000: 175).

In some cities the seasonality of students is overcome by letting to tourists, such as Edinburgh, with this practice also enabling students to obtain 9 month let periods (Christie et al. 2001). This is not possible in all university cities and towns, and the absences of students in the summer can be more noticeable in particular areas.
**Mobility and Transience**

In some towns, the seasonality of students has distinct effects on the residential area in which they live; however, it is not simply the seasonality of students that has an impact on residential neighbourhoods, but also the general transience of student populations. Wulff and Lobo (2009: 316) note that ‘population mobility is the essential dynamic underpinning gentrification’. In terms of studentification, it can be asserted that ‘students are a mobile part of society, and there is a high turnover of individuals within student areas’ (Duke-Williams 2009: 1826). Hubbard (2008: 1911) found:

‘50% of the population lived in a different address in 2001 than in 2000, with almost all student renters moving within the area or moving out, after just one year’s residence’.

The National HMO Lobby (2008) link this transience to a mentality of ‘student’, whereby they live in a constant ‘present’ with no concern for the history or future of the residential neighbourhood they are living in. Munro and Livingston (2012: 1685) compare the high turnover of students to ‘groundhog day’, whereby ‘every academic year brings a new set of neighbours who will need to be educated about the practicalities of bin days and how to complain to their landlords’. At the same time, Allinson (2006:89) notes: ‘the beginning of the year is particularly problematic’, with students moving from a managed to a more independent accommodation environment.

Smith (2009c: 1976) argues that: ‘it is difficult to identify another social group with such high levels of mobility, and palpable impacts on the place of destination due to expressive lifestyles and consumption practices’. Although the mobility of students is noted within the above studies, relatively little is known about where these students move to, or why it is generally seen that students do not remain in the same accommodation for more than one year.

3.4.3 Social and cultural impacts of studentification

Whilst Smith (2005) denotes social and cultural impacts as separate, literature reveals that there are many overlapping commonalities between them, and they
have therefore been combined within this discussion. Students are identified as a group with very specific lifestyles and consumption practices. The seasonal and transient nature of the student population and student cultures, in relation to studentification, will be the focus of the following section.

**Student consumption**

Student consumption is an essential element within studentification debates, with the perceived effects of concentrations of students in a particular area, on retail and leisure services, being contested within the public and private sphere. Allinson (2006: 93) proposes that ‘convenience is all-important: mainly to their [the students] university, but also to shops, pubs and public transport’. This often leads to the clustering of students into particular areas, such as the Headingley area in Leeds. This clustering leads Tallon (2010: 213) to suggest that ‘the proportion of students living in rented accommodation in particular parts of city centres… results in the take-over of the area, typically leading to increasing numbers of student orientated services’. Chatterton (2010: 239) goes further, arguing: ‘large swathes of cities have become focused on meeting the needs of large groups of young university students who have high propensities to credit-fuelled consumer spending’.

Allinson (2006: 90) acknowledges that in his study of Birmingham, ‘essentially, students constitute a local population, with local patterns of behaviour and this has been beneficial to the local shops and services of Selly Oak’. Whilst the spending power of university students is undeniable, it is not necessarily exclusively positive, with many local people arguing that the seasonal presence of students on retail and leisure industries is unsustainable.

Recent studies of the social and cultural transformations within towns and cities associated with students (Cochrane and Williams 2013), and on student housing satisfaction (Thomsen and Eikemo 2010), signify the shift away from purely economic impacts of students, toward insights into the other aspects highlighted by Smith (2005). As Chapter 2 revealed, investigations into students’ locations and lifestyles have looked at various aspects: the experiences of British students in international institutions (Waters and Brooks
students living at home (Holdsworth 2009a), the experiences of different religious groups (Hopkins 2011), and the increasing numbers of PBSA (Hubbard 2009). This research is indicative of the diversity within student populations and student accommodation options. This heterogeneity needs further investigation to enable differences to be illuminated across and within student groups, and the student accommodation sector more broadly.

As mentioned previously, the impact of high concentrations of students on the local community has been well documented (e.g. Hubbard 2008). This ‘loss of a sense of local community’ is expressed to be a deep concern by many local people living in studentified neighbourhoods. In some instances, there have been severe effects of high concentrations of students living in particular areas; for example, the closure of primary schools (Hubbard 2008). The closure of facilities further emphasises the different needs of students, as opposed to the local community, especially around specific services as highlighted above.

**Student and community segregation**

The clustering of students into one area, such as in Headingley in Leeds and Selly Oak in Birmingham, has led to tensions with local host communities in many cases, though not all, as in the case of Brighton (Universities UK 2006). Dorling et al. (2008: 1805) state that ‘statistically, the population of students shows a high degree of segregation from non-students’ and issues of ‘ghettoisation’ have also been linked to the large clustering of particular groups in specific areas (Gumprecht 2006; Lipsett 2008). The impact of having a high concentration of students within an area has already been illuminated in previous sections, with the notable emergence of local residents’ groups in university towns and cities, lobbying for the rights of the local community to be protected from further HMO development.

The differentiation between ‘town’ and ‘gown’, as it is termed by some academics, can be compared to N. Smith’s (1996) definition of a ‘polarization’, which he viewed as evident between those who ‘participate as gentrifiers and those who are displaced’ (1996: 101). Whilst the ‘polarization’ defined by N.
Smith is discussing processes of gentrification, it is evident throughout literature on studentification; the ‘polarization’ of the host and student population, with the student population being described as ‘other’, and clear boundaries existing between ‘locals’ and ‘students’ (Hubbard 2008). This ‘segregation’ (Munro et al. 2009: 1823), or ‘polarization’ (N. Smith 1996), can be seen extensively in the towns and cities throughout the UK whereby there is an increasing geographic segregation of young adult populations (Smith 2011). Hubbard (2008: 334) suggests that often students feel that the ‘host’ community is ‘unwelcoming’, and that, ‘community cohesion is seriously compromised by the creation of seasonal student enclaves’. Whilst this may be the findings for students in some towns and cities, in other places such as Sunderland, the ‘othering’ of students appears less apparent as a large number of students are from the North-East, thus reducing the distinctions between students and host residents (Munro and Livingston 2012). Smith and Holt (2004: 58) also found there was a ‘lack of a distinct student enclave within Brighton’.

Chatterton (2000: 166) proposes that ‘traditionally universities have been regarded as detached from the community’. There is increasing importance now placed upon sustainable communities within university towns and cities, and establishing firm relationships between the university and the community in which it is situated (Universities UK 2006). This is, however, a multi-dimensional process; as Berg and Russo (2004: 17) suggest, ‘relations between universities and communities extend beyond institutions to a smaller scale of ‘groups’. Smith (2008: 2546) asserts that ‘studentification reduces the opportunities for positive and mutually beneficial interactions between groups and fuels the segregation of groups based on lifestyle and life-course cleavages as well as differing levels of capital’. This can also be seen in the case of PBSA, with scholars commenting on the relative expense of living in PBSA in comparison with other student accommodation (Fincher and Shaw 2009). Smith (2009b) states that ‘it is argued that PBSA can give rise to major sociospatial divisions within the student population, based on axes of affluence’. If this is the case, it can be argued that PBSA exacerbates class-related issues within studentified neighbourhoods, especially in light of the fact that PBSA is normally
built on centre city/town brownfield sites, it can lead to new neighbourhoods of high student concentrations.

Whilst Universities UK (2006: 17) highlight that 'many of the disadvantages of concentrations of students in communities... are not confined to students as a group- they could equally apply to concentrations of young people'. As highlighted in Chapter 2, perceptions of students differ greatly from those of other youth groups (Munro and Livingston 2012), and this has considerable implications for how they are managed and accommodation in HE towns and cities.

**Summary**
This section has illuminated contemporary debates within studentification. Alternative forms of accommodation are now available to students, which differ from simply shared housing in the private rented sector (Holton and Riley 2013). Alongside this student accommodation preferences are notably changing with studies showing students living in ex-social housing (Sage *et al.* 2012b) and apartment blocks (Garmendia *et al.* 2010). At the same time, this section has highlighted the mobility and transience of student populations across several geographical contexts. Despite these findings, little attention has been paid within studentification literature to how students move between and across accommodation types. Although Hubbard (2008) highlights considerable mobility between academic years more is needed on why students leave one accommodation type and decide upon another. In this way, research conducted to date on student accommodation pathways will now be investigated to explore the extent to which existing knowledge may assist in gaining a deeper understanding of studentification, and the accommodation decision-making processes of students.

**3.5 Youth and Student Accommodation Pathways**
Investigations of student accommodation pathways remain in their infancy. Despite this, this section aims to explore research conducted to date alongside other studies which have focused on the progression of students through
university. There has been some debate about the best term to describe the accommodation experiences of young people and in turn students. Student progression has been looked at in the context of HE and their academic experiences (Hurwitz et al. 2015). Despite this point, it is generally well known that students often leave and return to the parental home periodically throughout their study making the linear ‘progression’ inappropriate when discussing accommodation. As Fitzpatrick and Clapham (1999) have discussed, in relation to young people and homelessness, it has been argued to be more suitable to discuss student housing in relation to pathways, offering the possibility of both repetition of stages and divergence. Rugg et al. (2004) describe this in the context of ‘housing pathways’ but as will be seen within this section, student residences vary widely from simply housing. This diversification has mostly been explored within the context of studentification but this section aims to explore this alongside understandings of youth transitions.

Youth transitions to adulthood are often complicated, as indicated in Chapter 2. In terms of their housing pathways this can often involve an initial ricochet between independent residences and the parental home, commonly called the ‘boomerang generation’ in national media (Cumming 2014). Traditionally, a ‘typical student housing experience - [has included] a supervised leaving of the parental home and a sheltered spell in the private rented sector’ (Rugg et al. 2004: 22). This understanding is commonly and widely acknowledged within the UK context. Nevertheless, this is not the case for other global contexts, as Thomsen and Eikemo (2010) acknowledge with this not being the case for students in Norway.

Hubbard (2008) found that 50% of students had a different address from one year to the next in 2000/01. This movement within and between areas is significant and is associated with several problems in studentified neighbourhoods. To date, limited research has unveiled the reasons behind such mobility in university towns and cities. Studies have tended to focus on a particular accommodation type, specific year group or have spoken to landlords about the annual changes they experience in the student rental market.
In a decade the student housing market has changed considerably in the UK, giving students more choice over both the type and quality of accommodation available. These changes arguably have adapted the accommodation pathways of students in various contexts across the country. Blakey (1994) noted an expansion in the number of university-maintained PBSA being built to accommodate students. This trend has not slowed in the last twenty years (Smith and Hubbard 2014), with partnerships between private providers and universities commonplace at many institutions such as the University of Essex and Derwent Living, the University of Bath and UPP and Liverpool John Moores University and UNITE. It is commonplace that first year undergraduates, particularly international first year students will be guaranteed accommodation in university-maintained accommodation (Rugg et al. 2002). These developments have expanded the portfolio of universities to accommodate students on campus, or in convenient nearby locations for more than just the first year of study.

Several studies have shown that shared student housing still remains the accommodation of choice for the majority of students (UNITE 2014), but that this number has reduced over time. Interestingly, recent student accommodation research suggests that the largest growing sector of the student accommodation market is living in the parental home. Nearly 20% or one in five students were found to be living in their parental home in 2010/11 (GVA 2012). This is a considerable percentage and poses questions for the private accommodation sector and university-maintained accommodation alike. With tuition fees now exceeding £9,000 in many institutions, the need to save money elsewhere may lead to a further increase in the number of students choosing to avoid private student accommodation altogether. By following this accommodation pathway students will undoubtably have a different experience to their peers and, in turn, may influence the number of vacant bedspaces in university towns and cities over time.

Student accommodation pathways post-graduation has seen growing interest over the last ten years, with institutions interested in exploring where their graduates settle once their degree is complete. Kenyon and Heath (2001)
found that students often returned to the parental home after graduation due to financial motivations. This post-student accommodation choice is noted by others who propose that this return to the parental home is more socially acceptable than it once was (Sage et al. 2013). Much more is understood about the motivations for student accommodation decisions post-study than whilst at university, and this gap needs to be addressed to understand whether accommodation experiences at university may shape later accommodation decisions.

As has been established, traditional notions of student accommodation pathways involve leaving the parental home, entering university-maintained accommodation followed by living in shared student housing in the following years of study (Rugg et al. 2004). This section has shown that the expansion of university-maintained accommodation and PBSA now enables students to remain in maintained accommodation for more than their first year of study. This change in student accommodation pathways is notable, and could have considerable influences on studentified neighbourhoods. Ultimately, these changes could shape processes of studentification, and be responsible for empty bedspaces and processes of destudentification. The paucity of research within this area, to date, offers a considerable opportunity to expand knowledge of student geographies through an exploration of student accommodation pathways.

3.6 Conclusions
This conclusion draws together the main findings of this chapter, and the formulation of the aim and objectives of this thesis. This chapter has explored the multiple facets of the process of studentification. It has highlighted links between the process of gentrification and studentification throughout, emphasising the similarities and differences, particularly around the involvement of middle class social groups. By exploring studentification within the context of gentrification, we are able to see not only how the origins of both processes can be largely seen to have been economic, but how, over time, this has developed to incorporate physical, social and cultural aspects. With this
said, this chapter has revealed a need to focus more on the social and cultural implications of studentification, with studies to date remaining fairly limited in their exploration of these dimensions (c.f Hubbard 2008 and Munro and Livingston 2012 for exceptions). Specifically, this chapter has illuminated the need to further explore the mobility and transient nature of student groups through an investigation of student accommodation pathways. By exploring this social aspect of studentification from a different angle, this thesis aims to inform understandings of the motivations behind student mobility within and across different neighbourhoods in university towns and cities.

When exploring the multiple dimensions of studentification, it is clear to see that the process of studentification has adapted over time to incorporate new forms of student accommodation. Studentification and the associated consequences of concentrations of students living in different accommodation types have been acknowledged within this chapter. PBSA has been argued to be a way of overcoming some of the issues associated with students living in HMO in university towns and cities (Smith 2008). However, some have suggested that this accommodation type is not attractive to home students due to its popularity amongst international students (Fincher and Shaw 2009). There is a wide array of student accommodation now available (Holton and Riley 2013) and this chapter has divulged scholarship suggesting that student accommodation preferences are changing (Sage et al. 2012a). This is further demonstrated by the emergence of studies that show students living in accommodation such as apartment blocks in Spain (Garmendia et al. 2011) and ex-social housing in Brighton, UK (Sage et al. 2012b), alongside the appearance of processes of destudentification (Kinton 2013).

This chapter has discussed how literature exploring student accommodation pathways remains sparse. Several scholars assert that the assumed accommodation pathways for students involve living in university halls of residence in the first year of study, and then moving into HMO in the second and subsequent years (Holloway et al. 2010). The expansion of alternative forms of accommodation to shared student HMO (Holton and Riley 2013) has led to students choosing alternative accommodation pathways whilst at
university and this enhances the need to further explore why students are choosing these alternative pathways, and if they indeed are now becoming the norm instead. The availability of a wide range of accommodation types is coupled with student accommodation preferences changing (Sage et al. 2012a), and research is needed to establish the reasons behind accommodation decision-making processes. By exploring student accommodation changes over time, the implications of student accommodation decisions on processes of studentification will also be illuminated. This gap in existing knowledge will be addressed throughout this thesis.

Both literature reviews highlight the need for a student-centric approach when investigating experiences of HE. Chapter 2 argues this from the perspective of geographies of education and geographies of children, youth and families, to bring the subjects of education to the foreground. Chapter 3 has a noticeable absence of student voices within studies of studentification (c.f Hubbard 2009 as a particular exception). To further enhance understandings of student accommodation decisions and experiences, the voices of students must be included in the enquiry. In this way, deeper knowledge can be gained. In addition to this, Holton and Riley (2013) call for majority groups not to be marginalised within student geographies, and in considering the student accommodation pathways of Loughborough University students, a majority student population will be the focus of study.

Current scholarship to date reveals a plethora of opportunities for further research as highlighted above. To this end, the main aim of this thesis is to gain a deeper understanding of student populations, student accommodation decision-making processes and the implications for processes of studentification. With the objectives of: examining the English student population and where they study; establishing student accommodation pathways within a specific university; and exploring the accommodation decision-making processes and experiences of students and the implications for processes of studentification. It is here that this thesis seeks to make its contribution to contemporary debates of student geographies.
4. Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology that has been adopted for this thesis. The methods engaged for this study address the main aim and objectives of the study: to examine the contemporary student population and where they study; to establish student accommodation pathways within a specific university; to explore the accommodation decision-making processes and experiences of students and implications for processes of studentification.

The structure of this chapter emulates the timetable for research followed for this thesis from July 2012. Several research methods were employed in order to answer the main objectives already outlined. Section 4.2 focuses on the analysis of HESA data, used to examine the contemporary student population attending English universities. By comparing 2000/01 and 2010/11 data, this quantitative analysis enabled changes in the student population to be established, and the case study of Loughborough to be identified through the creation of a typology of English institutions according to their student populations.

Section 4.3 details the case study of this thesis, Loughborough University and outlines the accommodation areas focused upon within the qualitative data. In order to address the second objective of establishing student accommodation pathways, an analysis of Loughborough University annual registration student data was completed. Recognising the need for a longitudinal investigation of student residences enabled changes in student accommodation pathways to be illuminated. This analysis involved several stages, and Section 4.4 will discuss in detail the steps taken to perform analysis at multiple scales and for different social groups. This enquiry led to the identification of four case study areas within Loughborough: University campus, the Golden Triangle, Ashby and Kingfisher - all of which will be discussed in this section.
Section 4.5 focuses on the third method employed to uncover why students followed the main accommodation pathways of note from the analysis of Loughborough University student data. Semi-structured interviews with final year students were deemed a suitable approach to understand student residential decisions across the university lifecourse. The interviews were conducted to reflect on the student’s time at university; this enabled transitions between years and experiences to be fully explored. Later sections within this chapter explore the positionality of the researcher within this study, and the ethical considerations that were taken into account whilst preparing for and conducting this research.

A mixed-methods approach was used to collate data from different sources (Clifford et al. 2010). By combining qualitative and quantitative methods, the researcher is able to answer research questions in a creative way that would not necessarily be possible if only one approach was used (Teddlie and Yu 2007: 77). Whilst the ‘method wars’ of the late twentieth century have made Geographers sit on either a quantitative or qualitative side (Cope 2010: 32), there has been a recent call to give mixed methodologies more attention within human geography (International Benchmarking Review 2013). This thesis uses a mixed-method approach to establish a wide-ranging empirical record about this topic (Axinn and Pearce 2006: 2). Mixing qualitative and quantitative methods enables a thorough understanding of a topic to be gained (Todd et al. 2004). By combining methods, they ‘enhance capacities for interpreting meaning and behaviour’ (Hoggart et al. 2002: 67), and in this way were deemed the most appropriate approach for this thesis to enable the main aim of the thesis to be achieved. Combining a longitudinal study of student accommodation pathways with qualitative interviews has facilitated a deeper understanding of student geographies. This has been termed the ‘third geography’ by Barnes and Hannah (2001: 383), where connections have developed across the divide between qualitative and quantitative.

There are considerable challenges when investigating studentification and student accommodation pathways. The most substantial of these is the transient nature of the student population (Hubbard 2008). Each year students
move accommodation, go on placements, and graduate. This places strict time limitations on the research and when it can be conducted.

4.2 Analysis of 2000/01 and 2010/11 HESA datasets

The first objective was to examine the contemporary student population and where they study. In order to do this, various data sources were considered, such as UCAS data which has been utilised in education studies (Noden et al. 2014). HESA data was deemed to be the most comprehensive data on students in the UK. Various statistics are available online, and these were utilised within the literature review. However, in order to address the first objective, a data enquiry needed to be commissioned. Chapter 5 discusses the outcomes of this analysis in detail. This section aims to provide an overview of the data, and the conditions set with regards to its presentation within the thesis.

A wealth of data was commissioned from HESA in July 2012. There were 164 institutions from England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in the original dataset. These were deemed too broad and varied to achieve the aims of this project as the ways in which HE is governed and organised across different UK countries are very different (McCelland and Gandy 2012). All major English HE institutions were included in the data. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland were excluded because of the differences in the way institutions there are governed. Minor institutions with less than 5,000 students were then also excluded such as the Conservatoire for Dance and Drama as they were often unique and typically specialist HE institutions. Alongside this, the Open University is a valuable source of HE, it is very distinctive in its provision and has been removed from the sample, as has been seen in other studies (Universities UK 2013).

Information about both international and home students was requested. However, upon receiving the data, significant disparities were seen between the level of detail and completeness in the data sets collected by HESA, and in light
of this, the two populations were deemed incomparable and home students were selected as the focus for this thesis.

The final sample includes 93 English institutions that have been used during analysis throughout Chapter 5 (See Appendix 2). Another enquiry was commissioned with HESA, which gave detailed statistics for the undergraduate and postgraduate student populations at these specific institutions (See Appendix 3 for specific data requested). The source of all data used within this thesis is HESA Student Record 2000/01 and 2010/11 and is Copyright Higher Education Statistics Agency Limited 2013. HESA cannot accept responsibility for any inferences or conclusions derived from the data by third parties. The total number of students (both UK and international) attending the 93 English institutions totalled 1,806,949 students in 2010/11 (72% total in the UK) and 1,361,920 students in 2000/01 (69% UK total).

4.2.1 Formatting and Extracting Data
HESA data came in the form of a Microsoft Excel pivot table. A pivot table is a data summarisation tool which enables cross tabulations between variables to be conducted with ease. Due to confidentiality, the only two fields for which this could not occur with were ethnicity and disability, which had to be placed on separate pivot tables.

Data was extracted for the institutions into a separate data table in Excel, where basic frequency graphs were created to establish general characteristics of the social makeup of the student population in attendance at English institutions. The data was then input into SPSS, to enable different statistical enquiries, such as cross tabulations and descriptive analysis, to be conducted. The debates surrounding the more appropriate tool for analysing data have been widely discussed (Kupferman 2010), and it was deemed that both SPSS and Microsoft Excel were required to achieve the objectives of this thesis.

The interquartile ranges of each field (such as gender, age, ethnicity) were calculated alongside the mean values, and all fields were transformed within SPSS to enable universities to be grouped according to their student
populations. This analysis revealed some variables had a larger range, and in this instance interquartile ranges were used as they enabled differences to be clearly seen. Where data ranges were smaller, the mean was used as the most appropriate way of differentiating universities.

4.2.2 Formation of the typology

Findings from the above data analysis were combined with scholarship, to create the typology of English institutions according to the social composition of their student populations. The justifications for each variable are given in Chapter 5, framed within understandings of social difference.

In order to construct a meaningful typology, different levels of analyses were considered. Socio economic status was first explored using the interquartile ranges of the percent of students from NS-SEC1 backgrounds. This field has a large range hence this measure is useful in seeing the distribution of institutions. This produced four groups of institutions (0-43.9% (23 institutions), 44-49.9% (24), 50-60.9% (24) and 61-100% (22). The mean values of the other variables were then utilised in the formation of the typology (Table 3 below shows these values). Age was investigated in the outcomes of the typology with those having more mature student populations being highlighted in bold. Gender is represented within the typology through colour with those having more than 60% male student populations being coloured blue, institutions with more than 60% female, pink and all other institutions with fairly equal proportions being coloured green.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of white students</th>
<th>Percentage of students living away from the parental home</th>
<th>Percentage of student population aged 18-21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean Value</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Mean Values of Variables used in Typology
The outcomes of this typology can be seen in Chapter 5 alongside a discussion of how the combination of class, ethnicity and accommodation poses interesting questions for further exploration.

4.3 Loughborough Case Study

Loughborough University is a well-established previous 1994-Group university, situated in the town of Loughborough in the East Midlands. The UK Census states that the population of Loughborough is 62,233 (Office for National Statistics 2012). At the same time, student numbers in the academic year 2012/13 stood at 16,237 (Loughborough University 2012), making the student population account for over 25% of the total population. Loughborough is an excellent case study to explore student accommodation pathways, with the university having a strong presence in the identity of the town alongside several town-centre PBSA developments and a variety of student HMOs.

Figure 1: Loughborough Welcome Sign (researcher’s photograph)
The typology developed as part of this research illuminates the ways that the student population is reflective of other institutions across England. Perhaps the most notable similarities can be drawn with the University of Bath, University of Warwick and the University of York. The student population at these institutions largely attracts a high percentage of students from NS-SEC1 (higher managerial and professional occupation backgrounds). At the same time, the students at these institutions are generally more mobile, with above average numbers living away from the parental home. They also have above average representations of white students, and they all recruit a relatively young student population, having above average numbers of students aged 18-21 years old. Alongside this, these institutions are all campus-based, and were founded in the 1960s - making them appropriate comparisons, both in terms of their student population and university type.

As Chapter 6 demonstrates, more students are choosing to reside on campus for two or three years of their study. In 2014, Loughborough University provides 5500 bed spaces on campus, with no intentions for further development currently in place (Loughborough Accommodation Centre 2014). In the same period, there has been a significant increase in the number of bed spaces provided in PBSA within the town centre and periphery. Kinton (2013) suggests that these developments have led to a considerable oversupply of bed spaces across the student accommodation sector in Loughborough. With this in mind, it seems apt to explore these changes through a student-focused lens in Loughborough.

Loughborough has been noted within studentification literature for its: ‘high proportion of students relative to long-term residents [which] suggests that the social impacts of studentification - both positive and negative - might be more acutely felt in Loughborough than in a larger city where the proportion is typically much smaller’ (Hubbard 2008: 325).
In this way, Loughborough provides a suitable case study to explore student accommodation pathways within this context, and to investigate the ways studentification unfolds within this geographical setting.

Hubbard’s (2008; 2009) investigation of Loughborough has provided a key insight into how studentification manifests in a particular locale. Loughborough has seen considerable growth in student numbers:

‘Since 2001, the numbers of students [in Loughborough] have grown significantly faster than the places available in managed student premises, and with only 4,978 managed bed spaces in the town this means there are around 6,700 students in the private (‘unmanaged’) sector’ (Hubbard 2009: 329).

This movement has had significant consequences on the private rented sector in the town over the last decade. Partly in response to increasing numbers living on campus, and Loughborough University’s commitment to providing all first year students with a bed space on campus, the University formed a partnership with University Partnerships Programme (UPP), which created 1,300 new bed spaces ready in the 2008/2009 academic year.

Figure 2: William Morris Halls of Residence (researcher’s photograph)
Figure 3: Falkner Eggington Halls of Residence (researcher's photograph)

Figure 4: Hazlerigg Rutland Hall of Residence (researcher's photograph)
Loughborough University operates an adaptation of the Residence Life Model seen in the American HE system (North Dakota State University 2014). This model sees a team of Residents Assistants living in hall who are responsible for the pastoral care of students and organising social activities, including orientation. This model is being emulated in various guises across the UK. In Loughborough, a team of hall wardens and sub-wardens work alongside student hall committees to ensure the wellbeing of students in halls of residence (Loughborough University 2014a). The student committees comprise of between 12 and 16 students at various stages of study. They are tasked with organising a social calendar of events across the academic year which begins with ‘freshers week’, a time which is viewed extremely positively by students, as will be seen later in this thesis. Associations with halls committees will be seen to play an integral role in shaping student accommodation decisions.

Figure 5: Robert Bakewell Hall of Residence (researcher's photograph)
Figure 6: Paget Street, Golden Triangle (researcher's photograph)

Figure 7: Arthur Street, Golden Triangle (researcher's photograph)
The private-rented sector in Loughborough offers an array of property types. Hubbard (2008) identified the Storer ward as one of the most studentified in the UK. The Storer and Burleigh wards (commonly referred to as the Golden Triangle, which is equidistant between the university campus and town centre), were the first to be developed into student HMO by landlords and letting agents. Terraced housing was traditionally the first to be developed (Rugg et al. 2004), and the location of the Golden Triangle makes it popular amongst students.

The 2011 UK Census data reveals the student population in Storer ward to account for 40% of the total population (Nomis 2014a). This is notably high, and the increasing concentrations of student HMOs led to the formation of the Storer and Ashby Residents’ Group (SARG) in 1999. This residents group claims not to be anti-student, but campaigns against the further development of family homes into student HMO within the area. The university has also sought to address negative associations with student housing, by creating a Campus-Community Liaison Group who state:

‘The University, College, Local Authorities, Students’ Union and local residents all recognise the need for positive co-existence, for the mutual benefit of all parties in Loughborough. It is however, inevitable that potential conflicts of interest will arise, as well as areas of agreement. The Loughborough Campus and Community Liaison Group will therefore act as a forum within which matters relating to the presence of the University and College in the community can be discussed in an atmosphere of mutual trust, co-operation and support, so avoiding misunderstanding and with a view to establishing an approach to the resolution of local issues and problems’ (Loughborough University 2014b).

Loughborough University has also placed Community Wardens in particular areas of the town - including Storer and Burleigh (already discussed), Kingfisher and Ashby, to deal with local resident complaints and to provide pastoral support and guidance to students.
Hubbard (2009: 1911) found that students were ‘unwilling to live beyond this [the Storer] area’, but it appears that there is a change occurring within student accommodation in Loughborough. Local media demonstrates that students may be moving into accommodation other than the Golden Triangle. The Kingfisher estate has more recently seen the formation of the Kingfisher Area Residents’ Group (KARG), in response to the proliferation of student HMO in the area. This accommodation is quite different to the HMO found in the Golden Triangle. Built in 2005, Kingfisher estate comprises of semi-detached and detached town house-style properties, typically three stories in height.

Kingfisher was identified in a recent report by a scrutiny panel, set up by Charnwood Borough Council, as an area where further planning measures may be needed to control the number of student residences in the area (Charnwood Borough Council 2014). To date, student HMOs within this area have emerged with little regulation or planning control and this may be partly accountable for the growth in student numbers living in this area.
Figure 9: Typical Townhouse in Kingfisher (researcher's photograph)

Figure 10: Kingfisher Way (researcher's photograph)
Ashby is the fourth accommodation location case study within this thesis. This area is large and combines ex social housing and 1960s housing. These houses are a mixture of terraced and semi-detached and detached cul de sacs, offering students a different type of accommodation again. Ashby has a considerable local resident population in comparison to Kingfisher and the Golden Triangle. Nonetheless Ashby is popular amongst particular student groups and the presence of a community warden in this area highlights it as an area where town-gown relations still need to be monitored.

Figure 11: Ex-LA housing in Ashby (researcher's photograph)
There are clearly changes occurring in the student accommodation sector in Loughborough that warrant in depth exploration. Whilst Hubbard’s (2008; 2009) study of Loughborough was insightful in providing background context for this study, this thesis aims to explore living in the private rented sector in Loughborough from the student viewpoint, to enhance existing knowledge. Simultaneously, by taking a longitudinal approach to student accommodation decisions, this study will reveal the multi-faceted ways in which students make accommodation decisions. This study is poised to provide a contemporary empirical investigation into student accommodation in Loughborough which contributes to wider knowledge on student accommodation pathways, and debates within studentification and student geographies more broadly.

4.4 Loughborough University Student Accommodation Data

Once the typology had identified Loughborough as the case study, it was important to realise the second objective. It was recognised that secondary data would need to be utilised in order to establish student accommodation pathways, and how they had changed over time. There are several advantages
and disadvantages that can be noted in the use and analysis of secondary data. One significant advantage is the access to a large dataset that is already collated, saving the researcher time in both collecting and formatting the data (Vartanian 2010). UK Census data was considered as a source of secondary data for this thesis. At this point in the project only 2001 UK Census data was available. Whilst comprehensive and an extremely useful source of secondary information, the static nature of census data was deemed inappropriate for this thesis, with changes over time needed at a more detailed level than the ten year periods that the Census could provide.

Loughborough University was deemed the most appropriate source for such data. Permission to use annual student registration data was granted in September 2012, and analysis began soon after this. Loughborough University data contained useful information that could be used during analysis. Student identification numbers were present in datasets that spanned 2007/08 - 2011/12 academic years. Three cohorts of undergraduate students studying for three years full-time have been tracked and analysed as part of this project. These students began in the 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10 academic years. Clark (2005) notes that institutions change how they collect data over time, and this was evident within the Loughborough University data. Fortunately, all sources contained registration data from January of each academic year, and this information was used within analysis.

In order to achieve the second research objective of this project, these aspects of the data were utilised:

- Student identification number
- Year/Part study
- Course studying
- Term-time postcode
- Gender

One notable disadvantage of using secondary data is the lack of control the researcher has over the data collected, and the way it is collated (Vartanian
In light of the literature review, the researcher would have investigated further social differences such as those between international and home students, social class and ethnicity. However, the data made available only the contained the information above, and this has shaped subsequent decisions with regards to other aspects of this thesis. Whilst this is the case, the data available did provide considerable insight into student movements, and left the sampling frame relatively open so that research could be conducted both within student groups and between them (Holton and Riley 2013).

It is important to note that all students in this analysis had graduated by the time this analysis was conducted. Data protection laws were strictly adhered to, and all data was securely stored and will be deleted in accordance with these requirements. Tables and maps are all presented at such a level as to prevent individuals from being identified, to ensure the anonymity of participants is maintained (Kwan et al. 2004).

4.4.1 Cleaning up the data and plugging the gaps

Utilising data of this type involves numerous challenges. Only one cohort were extracted at any given time, and this required the data to be ordered according to student I.D numbers, so that a year cohort could be identified and extracted into a separate Excel sheet. All students starting in a particular year group were given the same first two digits of their student I.D; for example, A7, A8, A9 if starting in 2007, 2008, 2009 respectively. This was then cross-checked with their part of study, in order to confirm they were in a particular cohort. This made the process of extraction relatively straightforward.

Table 4: Example of Data received from Loughborough University

Once the students among the same cohort of student I.Ds had been placed in a separate sheet, it was then necessary to repeat this step on the following year’s dataset. For example, A7 student’s would have started in the 2007/2008 academic year, and then had to be found in 2008/09, 2009/10,
2010/2011, 2011/12, with the majority of students only being present until 2009/10 due to studying a three year degree. Once they had all been extracted and placed into the Excel sheet, a VLOOKUP function was performed in Excel to establish how long the student studied at Loughborough University. This had to be conducted not only to differentiate between postgraduate and undergraduate students, but also to remove students who had incomplete records from the dataset for this study.

Table 5: Example of Data Analysis

Once the data had been organised it was clear that undergraduate students studying a 3 year degree full-time were the largest cohort. Additionally, all other student groups, such as postgraduates and students studying for more than 3 years, may have different motivations and preferences. Therefore each warrant a study in their own right which could be an avenue for future research in this area. Once 3 year undergraduates had been selected, the data was refined accordingly; for instance, some student addresses had a street name,
but were missing a postcode. As postcodes were the requisite level of detail, a combination of Google street maps and ArcGIS were used to establish the postcode for such addresses. When there was no means of establishing the postcode of a student address, the student was removed from the dataset, as only complete accommodation pathways were required for the purposes of this study. The number of students in the sample from each year is shown in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total students in third year</th>
<th>Students known to be living in Loughborough in original dataset</th>
<th>Number with incomplete addresses</th>
<th>Total remaining full-time 3 year undergraduates</th>
<th>% of total students known to live in Loughborough</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007/08</td>
<td>3271</td>
<td>1759</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>1484</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008/09</td>
<td>3321</td>
<td>1569</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>1291</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>3041</td>
<td>1682</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>1569</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Sample of Student Registration Data Analysed

Once the data had been grouped according to mode of study, the postcodes were then coded into various geographical scales and accommodation types. ArcGIS was used to establish the different areas in Loughborough, alongside existing knowledge on ‘student areas’ (See Figure 14). At Loughborough University, every hall of residence has a separate postcode, which was the initial level of coding. Areas in the private rented sector were identified according to their location around Loughborough town. A crude differentiation was also made between ‘town-side’ and ‘university-side’ accommodation, which used Epinal Way as the distinction as shown in Figure 13. These will be further discussed in Chapter 6.
The above distinction was merely used to deduce that the majority of students were found to live on the town-side of Loughborough, emphasising wider studentification literature asserting that students like to live in locations convenient for both the university and city/town centre (Smith and Holt 2004; Hubbard 2008). The coding table for area analysis is included in Appendix 4, and the coding process involved different scaled geographical areas, but analysis also went to the postcode level to ensure that the correct level of data trends were noticeable.

This analysis illuminated the need for different geographies, in order to better understand student accommodation pathways. Other scholars have
discussed the need to deliberate the appropriate scale for both the analysis and representation of data (Kwan and Weber 2008). Area boundaries such as postal sector and census ward were too broad and inspecific to give an accurate picture of the processes occurring in Loughborough. In light of this, the areas created by the researcher (See Figure 14) were deemed the most appropriate scale. Figure 14 contains 6 areas, these areas protect individual student identification from being possible, whilst facilitating meaningful data analysis, within the context of this study. Storer and Burleigh wards were combined to form the Golden Triangle, as they have similar housing and both attract large numbers of students. Kingfisher has seen growing numbers of students living there over the last 10 years. Ashby, Forest East and Forest West all have established student enclaves but have typically seen less public and university attention as ‘studentified’ areas. Finally, the university campus accounts for a variety of accommodation types and will enable a variety of hall experiences to be divulged.
Figure 14: Map Showing Student Areas in Loughborough
4.4.2 GIS

ArcGIS and MapInfo have been utilised throughout this thesis to conduct spatial analysis and provide visual representations of data trends. This software offered the opportunity to process large amounts of data, taken from the data provided by Loughborough University, and effectively present this data in map form. Digitized postal sector boundary files were obtained from UK Borders, a service provided by EDINA. These were placed on a base map OS tile of Loughborough, which was taken from Digimap. The main advantage attributed to using Arc Map was the ability to add a spatial element to data, displaying the data clearly and at an appropriate level to ensure that individual students could not be identified.

4.4.3 Identifying Student Accommodation Pathways

Chapter 6 highlights the different levels of analysis of student accommodation pathways in more detail. As mentioned in previous sections, it was important to maintain anonymity within the data but also ensuring the data was meaningful for further exploration. Because of this the pathways below were selected as the focus for the qualitative interviews as they highlighted interesting trends in the data which have shown change over time.

The Campus-Campus-Campus (referred to as c-c-c) pathway shows an increasing number of students remaining on campus across their three years at university. Campus-Campus-Private Rented Sector (c-c-prs) highlights a considerable number of students are staying on campus for their second year and then moving in the private rented sector for their final year. Campus-Private Rented Sector-Campus (c-prs-c) demonstrates how some students are moving between accommodation sectors across the university lifecourse. Finally the ‘traditional’ pathway of students moving from Campus-Private Rented Sector-Private Rented Sector is noted as the most followed accommodation pathway, yet has importantly decreased over time.
However, smaller analysis of particular areas within Loughborough did reveal interesting differences in the numbers of students moving there within the pathways listed above. In order to show the diversity of student accommodation pathways, four areas were identified as displaying particular trends within the wider pathways shown above. These areas have been further discussed in section 4.3; University-maintained halls of residence (C), Ashby (A), Golden Triangle (GT) and Kingfisher (KF) were selected. As can be seen in Figure 15 and Table 3 below, each area demonstrates a different trend within pathways, and also offers very different types of student accommodation, both on campus and HMOs in the private-rented sector. The areas were seen as important in student accommodation biographies and enabled different aged housing and different geographical locations to be explored in more depth.
Figure 15: Map Showing Case Study Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Housing type</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Storer/Burleigh (The Golden/Student Triangle)</td>
<td>Victorian Terraces</td>
<td>Terraced housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingfisher</td>
<td>Town Houses/New Build</td>
<td>Often detached or semi/detached</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashby</td>
<td>Two types;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ex Local Authority Housing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 1960s housing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Halls</td>
<td>Range of halls with different facilities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Accommodation Types in Case Study Areas
4.5 Exploring Student Accommodation Decisions and Experiences: semi-structured interviews

To successfully investigate the third objective of the thesis to explore the accommodation decision-making processes and experiences of students and the implications for processes of studentification, it was essential to hear first-hand student decisions and experiences. Questionnaires have been utilised in other studies to examine studentification patterns (Kinton 2013), and whilst they provide useful insight into the decision process, this thesis required the ability to pursue further elaboration to already established processes (Phellas et al. 2012). A self-completion questionnaire about the participant’s background and personal information was completed at the beginning of each interview but this was used to support the conversation, as opposed to being a method in itself. This enabled questions regarding the participant’s NS-SEC background to be answered, which is included in Appendix 5. A three-class collapse had to be used, which although broad does provide some insight into the socio-economic background of participants and illuminates fractions within the middle class when taken into consideration with participant accounts.

Semi-structured interviews offer ‘some degree of predetermined order but still ensures flexibility in the way issues are addressed’ (Dunn 2005: 52), and enable a structured conversational exchange (Lazaraton 1992: 373), whilst some may argue that even the most unstructured interview is far from an ordinary conversation (Pratt 2009: 393). The use of interviews within research has been recognised to have several advantages and disadvantages (Valentine 2005). Interviews often offer more flexibility than questionnaires, and enable the interviewer to explain questions and pursue points made by the participant (Phellas et al. 2012). This can result in interviews being time-consuming to conduct, transcribe and subsequently analyse. At the same time, however, this method enables the researcher to really explore the topic with the participant, and obtain rich information that can shape further questions. Another critique of the use of interviews within research is based on the relationship between the interviewer and participant. Baxter and Eyles (1997: 508) assert: ‘the implications should be stated, since similarities between interviewers and
participants may, for example, foster or stifle interview conversations’. This point will be discussed further, in relation to the positionality of the researcher within this thesis.

A considerable number of studies have utilised interviews within their methodology. Other studies have already extensively discussed the opinions of landlords and letting agents (Kinton 2013), local residents (Munro and Livingston 2012) and universities (Universities UK 2006) using interview techniques. This thesis focuses on the student perspective of their experiences, and accommodation decision-making processes. By having a student-centric methodology current understandings of student accommodation decisions will be significantly enhanced (Holton and Riley 2013).

4.5.1 Sampling Frame

Four key pathways were identified as warranting further investigation in the analysis of Loughborough University student data. As highlighted in section 4.4.3, specific pathways were shown to highlight changing trends within student accommodation pathways. Further to this 4 areas/accommodation types were then chosen, Golden Triangle (GT), Ashby (A), Kingfisher (KF) and University-Maintained Halls of Residence (C). The table below shows how this was used to create a sampling frame for the semi-structured interviews.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pathway</th>
<th>C-C-C</th>
<th>C-C-PRS</th>
<th>C-PRS-C</th>
<th>C-PRS-PRS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>GT</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>KF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of students</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8: Recruited Participants within Sampling Frame
Undergraduate students studying full-time degrees for three years were the focus for quantitative analysis. Final year students were selected to enable them to reflect on their accommodation pathways and experiences. Whilst concerns were raised regarding recall, this thesis has shown the clarity for which students remember their accommodation decisions and experiences with arguably 3 years not being a long period of time. Once the initial sampling frame above had been established, other differences were explored to see how best to further stratify the sampling frame. Gender and Department of study were investigated, but significant differences were not revealed between groups, and so the aim of the sample was to get an array of participants. This thesis is equally interested in males and females, and whilst the student dataset did reveal differences, the sample is reflective of the wider student population with a 1:2 ratio female to males.

Loughborough University data revealed that the Academic Departments of student appears to have a minimal impact overall (particular disciplines had stronger links) on where students live within Loughborough. Perceived workload was explored, but again no strong links could be made. Therefore a spread of students studying different subjects was sought. Ethnicity and social class were important social differences within the typology in Chapter 5. These variables were not present in the Loughborough University data. With this said, class and to some extent, whiteness resurfaced within qualitative interviews and will be discussed in Chapters 7 and 8. Whilst the intention was to continue this analysis throughout the thesis, 75% of undergraduate students are white at Loughborough University and ethnicity has been excluded from Appendix 5 as 6 out of 59 respondents were from non-white ethnic groups and the researcher wished to preserve their anonymity. As noted previously, the data available enabled a broad sampling frame to be utilised which led to rich and varied data from respondents.

4.5.2 Recruiting Participants

Interviews were conducted with students who were in their third and final year of study at Loughborough University. Recruiting participants can be challenging (Secor 2010), and a sufficient amount of time was spent thinking about how
students would be recruited to participate in the semi-structured interviews. It is recognised that those who come forward to participate may differ to non-respondents (Schutt 2012), but by using different ways of recruiting participants, it is hoped a wider pool of potential participants were accessed.

The aim was to recruit students from all of the selected pathways, with enough participants to gain an insight into some of the reasons why students follow particular pathways. One of the limitations within this thesis was Loughborough University’s framework of term dates, which gave the researcher a tight-time frame of 2 months in which to conduct interviews.

Students were recruited using two main sources. The first was through department administrators; a request was sent to all department administrators to distribute an email to all third year students. The second was through Loughborough University and Loughborough Students’ Union Facebook pages. Appendix 6 is an example of the email sent to participants, which was slightly adapted for Facebook pages. By combining these approaches, it was hoped that a diverse range of participants would come forward, and that a larger student population would be reached than if just one source had been used.

Overall, Facebook provided several more participants than department emails. This may have been due to exams, and students turning to the social media site for distraction. Social media has been used by other researchers to access participants (c.f. Barrett 2013), acknowledging that more personal approaches often yield good response rates. In contrast, department emails contained important information with regards to examinations, and as such the researcher’s requests might have been overlooked. 20 respondents came forward, and from there a snowballing method was adapted (Valentine 2005) as a way of obtaining more participants in the study, based on positive experiences with initial participants. Snowball sampling was particularly useful in finding participants from specific pathways that had been difficult to recruit. This was particularly true when recruiting participants from Ashby.
Sixty-five participants were recruited in total, with fifty-nine students being used within this thesis (reasons for 6 exclusions can be found within Section 4.6). Participant details are given in Appendix 5 enabling important characteristics to be obtained whilst maintaining the anonymity of individual participants.

4.5.3 Grounded Theory
Interviews were conducted and analysed within a grounded theory framework. Established by Glaser and Strauss (1967), grounded theory is a prominent approach to qualitative enquiry. Grounded theory pushes for continuous analysis throughout data collection, so that all relevant issues may be included in this case, in later interviews (Corbin and Strauss 1990: 419). Grounded theory involves three stages:

‘an initial attempt to develop categories which illuminate the data; an attempt to “saturate” these categories with many appropriate cases in order to demonstrate their relevance; and an attempt to develop these categories into more general analytical frameworks with relevance outside the setting’ (Silverman 2010: 434).

Aiming to ensure research rigour within qualitative studies, grounded theory has often been used to defend qualitative enquiry against the view that quantitative studies are the only form of systematic social scientific enquiry (Charmaz 2000: 509).

By adopting grounded theory methods it was possible to direct, manage, and streamline data collection and moreover construct an original analysis of the data collected (Charmaz 2000: 3). There has been much debate, particularly over the last decade, about the many variations of grounded theory that have emerged (Evans 2013: 45). Such discussion goes beyond the boundaries of this thesis, but it is important to recognise that differences exist, and have been taken into account in the design of this research. Hallberg (2006) proposes that there has been an evolutionary development of grounded theory since its conception from classic grounded theory in the 1960s, to
Straussian in the 1990s, to the constructivist approach in the 2000s. Howell (2013) argues that it is important to make distinctions between each methodology, as it dictates how you conduct research. Whilst there are many overlaps between each version, this research has predominantly taken a constructivist approach. With that said, it is important to take on board the view of Bryant (2009: 32), who states that ‘the epistemological issues that separate different strands, or branches of the GTM family, can then be set to one side provided that people’s research writings do not seek to make strong epistemological claims: the ultimate criterion of good research should be that it makes a difference’. To this end, grounded theory enabled the research conducted for this thesis to be conducted and analysed in a data-led, and rigorous, manner.

Themes were identified, and specific questions were designed to invoke further debate and allow the interviewer to gain an ‘intimate knowledge’ (Parsons and Knight 2005: 63) of the personal knowledge and experiences of the participants. Appendix 7 shows an example of an interview guide for one of the pathways. The informal nature of semi-structured interviews seems most suitable when interviewing students, and it is felt that it could result in a better rapport between the interviewer and the student.

Kvale (2007: 60) asserts that every attempt should be made within interviews to clarify any ambiguities in preparation for later analysis, and whilst not always possible, this was aimed for and achieved to a large extent. The interviews were recorded and transcribed as soon as possible after completion, to ensure any recollections of tone or specific gestures were taken into account (Longhurst 2010) if they had contributed significantly to discussions.

4.5.4 Data Analysis
NVivo 10, a form of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), was used to organise and code, and in many ways analyse, the interview transcripts. The use of CASQDAS in qualitative research analysis has been widely debated (Crowley et al. 2002), with concerns being raised over two decades ago (Seidel 1991). A main concern of using this software is the ease
with which qualitative data could be analysed in a quantitative manner (Crowley et al. 2002). Whilst this point is valid, the researcher found that the organisational and coding benefits of NVivo enabled a more coherent management tool than would have been possible using traditional coding methods.

All interviews were imported into NVivo, and the transcripts were coded into themes and sub-themes through the use of the ‘node’ facility within the programme. This process effectively replicated the traditional method, whereby researchers ‘cut and paste’ and highlight in different colours to code (Wong 2008), but was much less time consuming and allowed a more straightforward way of separating and amalgamating different identified themes. By coding in this way, themes were neatly organised into folders, and have subsequently fed into the structure of this thesis. NVivo also facilitates a grounded theory approach, as nodes can be easily created and added to when new themes emerged.

After attending workshops about the use of NVivo within research (Deakin et al. 2012), the researcher was mindful that errors in software can occur, and was sure to email and save the project at regular intervals whilst working on the file. The researcher encountered an issue with the software in January 2014, where these back-ups failed and as a result, some analysis was lost. Fortunately an older version had not corrupted, and data was reanalysed. NVivo ensured that analysed transcripts were secure, as all the files were password protected, and ultimately, the software was useful in the analysis of interviews in this thesis.

4.6 Ethics and risk

All research methods incorporate some level of ethical considerations (Dowling 2010: 27), and these considerations run throughout the research project (Sultana 2007). This thesis does not involve groups classified as ‘vulnerable’, nor does it deal with sensitive issues, but ethical approval was sought for all elements of this research project, and granted by Loughborough University.
Ethics Committee. An ethics form was completed and submitted to the Ethics Committee for review, and all secondary data had already been subject to the confidentiality procedures of the institution before being given to the researcher. Denscombe (1998: 144) emphasises that researchers:

‘are expected to be open and explicit about what they are doing- to let people know that they are researchers and that they intend to collect data for the investigation into a particular topic. Furthermore, they are expected to tell the truth about the nature of their investigation and the role of the participants in that research’.

When arriving at interviews, each participant was handed an information sheet (Appendix 8) and a consent form (Appendix 9). The researcher read through these documents with the participant prior to beginning the interview, in order for the participant to fully understand the research (Cresswell 2003: 64) and have the opportunity to ask any questions they may have about the research project. All participants were asked if they could be voice recorded. All identifying information was removed from the interview transcripts, and pseudonyms have been used when friends have been mentioned (Bryman 2008).

Respondents were told of their right to withdraw (Silverman 2010: 153) from the project at any point without justification, and this was also included in the participant information sheet. As stated previously within this chapter, six students who were interviewed have been excluded from this thesis. One participant exercised their right to withdraw without question in September 2014. Unfortunately, this was too late in the research process to seek another participant for the c-prs-c pathway but as one of the larger pathways sufficient information had already been gained and utilised within this thesis. All information regarding this participant and their interview was withdrawn from the content of this thesis. The five remaining participants were excluded as they do not fit the criteria for this thesis. Some students came forward to participate in this study and it only transpired during the interview that they did not fit the
sampling frame for this study. Four of these students were in their final year but had taken an industrial placement and so were not in their ‘third and final’ year of study. The final excluded participant had taken a study abroad term in their second year. These interviews were insightful for the interviewer into the many different student accommodation pathways available. Due to the desire of participants to contribute to this study it was deemed more appropriate to complete the interview. These interviews were never transcribed and have not been included within this thesis.

The risks associated with this project were fairly low, but some interviews were conducted in student accommodation, and therefore steps were taken to avoid harm, a good ethical approach (Israel and Hay 2006: 96). Risks such as lone working and working in unknown environments (Flowerdew and Martin 2005: 4) were minimised by the researcher by carrying a mobile phone at all times, and informing others of their location as stipulated in the health and safety form submitted to Loughborough University.

4.6.1 Positionality and Reflexivity
Positionality was an important part of the research process for this project. As a Loughborough University postgraduate research student, and a previous undergraduate at the institution, it was important that the researcher remembered her position in relation to the students being interviewed. As Valentine (2005: 113) asserts, it is important to ‘reflect on who you are and how your own identity will shape the interactions that you have with others’. The positionality of the researcher had both positive and challenging implications for this research. Sultana (2007: 382) recognises that: ‘dynamics change with context, and the insider-outside boundary gets blurred’. This was certainly the case within this research; in one way the researcher was an ‘insider’ - a student at Loughborough - but in others an outsider, studying for a PhD and female. Dowling (2010) acknowledges that there are many ways in which a researcher and informant can be different, such as age, gender and background. The researcher took this into account, and found that as a research student she was of a similar age to the participants. Reflective of the wider Loughborough
student population, most participants were white and from similar educational and social backgrounds, enabling the ‘insider’ stance to be further enhanced.

Given her positionality as a current Loughborough University student and a previous undergraduate at the institution, the researcher found that she was viewed as an ‘insider’ by the participants, which often facilitated a more relaxed atmosphere. It also made it possible for the researcher to develop an immediate rapport with the students being interviewed (Valentine 2002). The challenges associated with this were often associated to the researcher’s affiliations with halls of residence; for example, as an undergraduate she lived in Falkner-Eggington Hall of Residence, and as a postgraduate researcher in Towers Hall of Residence. The researcher was careful not to reveal any affiliations with particular halls on campus, in order to prevent bias. This was particularly important when considering Falkner-Eggington; as the cheapest hall on campus, and last to get refurbished, this hall has particularly negative connotations that the researcher wanted participants to be able to share should they have them.

Throughout this research process, the researcher was aware of her positionality in relation to her participants. The view of the researcher as an insider facilitated gaining participants, and building rapport before and throughout the interview. The ways in which the researcher was viewed as an outsider made the researcher reflexive of her conduct and the clarity of the questions being asked to participants. Overall, the existing knowledge of the researcher, combined with the ‘insider’ stance taken throughout, led to positive interactions that yielded rich and detailed data.

The researcher had experience of living in both campus-provided and private sector accommodation, but this was limited to the halls and streets where she had resided. In this way, the researcher had very little knowledge of what it was like to live in other university halls or other areas. By not informing students of her personal accommodation pathway prior to the interview, the researcher was able to prompt more information from participants, positioning them as the experts. Giving students the ‘space to talk’ (Rapley 2004: 25) about
their accommodation experiences was an education for the researcher, and provided some interesting insights into the variety of accommodation experiences had by students whilst studying at the university. The existing knowledge of the researcher did initially show in interviews, with questions to clarify an opinion not being pursued because they were an unspoken knowledge that comes from being a student at Loughborough. However, this was addressed in subsequent interviews to ensure all queries were pursued.

Having studied in the Department of Geography at Loughborough University for 5 years, the researcher had established networks with different groups across the university, and she was conscious not to use these groups as the main/only way she recruited participants. To avoid bias, students were recruited through department emails, and through social media to enable a wider participant pool to be accessed.

4.7 Summary
This chapter has outlined and evaluated the research methods undertaken within this thesis to achieve the research objectives: to examine the contemporary student population and where they study; to establish student accommodation pathways within a specific university; to investigate why students are following these pathways, and to discuss the implications of these accommodation pathways on processes of studentification. The need for a mixed-method approach in the context of this thesis, and an overview of the challenges and benefits of this utilising this methodology, have been discussed. A student-centric methodology has been the priority within this thesis, and the methods discussed enable an in-depth exploration of student accommodation patterns and experiences to be realised.

The quantitative analysis of HESA data and Loughborough University annual student registration data have been shown in detail, and the difficulties associated with secondary data have been illuminated alongside methods to mitigate these challenges. The selection of Loughborough University as the
case study has been discussed within the context of HESA data, and the case-study described to inform the thesis.

The second part of this chapter has focused on semi-structured interviews conducted with third year undergraduate students. This section has outlined the selection of this method within the context of this thesis, the selection of a sampling frame that arose out of the Loughborough University data, and the process undertaken to recruit participants using social media and university email systems. Next, it explored the grounded theory framework adopted for the methodology, and subsequently how interview transcripts were analysed using NVivo 10.
5. The Student Population in Attendance at English Universities

5.1 Introduction
This chapter addresses the first objective of this thesis: to explore the contemporary student population and where they study in England. It is imperative to establish the characteristics of the contemporary student population in order for this thesis to be given context within the wider HE system. The aim of this chapter is to move beyond stereotypes established by Chatterton (1999), and analyse HESA data to illuminate the social characteristics of the student population (incorporating both Undergraduate and Postgraduate students) participating in HE today. Knowledge will then be expanded further by investigating the relationship between social difference and accommodation. Finally, the chapter will discuss a typology of English institutions to show that different student groups are not evenly distributed throughout HE institutions.

Chatterton (1999: 118) defined the ‘traditional student’ stereotype, identifying them to be white, aged 18-21 from privileged social and economic backgrounds, have studied at fee paying schools and travelled away to study at a university. This outline was used as a starting point for investigating the social make-up of students in English universities in the academic year 2010-11. As discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, UK home students have been chosen as the focus for this study, and this chapter will highlight some of the changes and consistencies within the UK student population between 2000/01 and 2010/11 of the 93 English institutions detailed in Appendix 2.

Importantly, this chapter contributes three main findings to existing understandings of student populations. The first demonstrates that whilst there has been an increase in the number of students attending HE institutions from under-represented backgrounds, this may not have been as sizable as government or university policies had intended. This chapter subsequently illuminates two further but related points: firstly that HESA, in their collection of accommodation data, demonstrate the diversification of student
accommodation types between 2000/01 and 2010, and secondly that there are links between particular social differences and accommodation types. Significantly, the typology of English institutions reveals stratification in which student groups are attending different institutions, highlighting the hierarchical nature of HE in England.

5.2 UK Students
As explained in Chapter 4, 93 institutions have been selected for analysis for the purposes of this thesis, and will henceforth be referred to as ‘English institutions’. The UK student population in attendance at English institutions has increased by 23% from 1,194,856 in 2000/01 to 1,470,714 in 2010/11. There are assumptions placed on the UK student population based on images of the ‘traditional student’ (Chatterton 1999: 117), with a dominant culture that is both masculine and middle-class (Ledwith and Manfredi 2000). However, government policy over the last decade has aimed to change this by opening HE to under-represented groups. Hollands (2002: 160) proposed that the ‘bulk’ of the increase in the student population since 1992, comprises of ‘non-traditional’ students, who are often older, locally based and living at home, sometimes working class, and increasingly female’. This chapter will explore these contrasting views to ascertain who is currently studying at English institutions. Studies to date mainly focus on one aspect of student identity, and this is the starting point for this chapter. Where possible, social differences have been explored alongside others to highlight the heterogeneous nature of student populations and the multiple aspects of their identity.

5.2.1 Social Class
Some argue that the reproduction of cultural capital, or the ability to gain cultural capital, is a primary function of a HE institution (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990). HESA collect data on social class in the form of information on the occupation of the student’s parent. Increasing the number of students in HE from lower socio-economic groups is a principle goal of widening participation policies in the UK, and this section will explore the extent to which this aim has been achieved (Leathwood and O’Connell 2003).
Class has undergone much scrutiny in various disciplines and has been particularly explored in relation to working-class student experiences within HE (Reay et al. 2010). What can be ascertained from studies conducted outside the discipline is the agreement between many academics that measures to increase participation of this group need to start long before the application to HE, and can be linked to schooling from a much younger age (Greenbank 2006) - with others acknowledging other social differences can intersect with class to impact on the achievement of young people (c.f. Gillborn et al. 2012).

As already noted, NS-SEC categories are used by HESA to describe the socio-economic backgrounds of students (see Appendix 1 for specific classifications). There are 7 classes, as well as a ‘never worked and long term unemployed’ category, in the original format, and these can be condensed into five or three-class collapses. For the purpose of this discussion, a five-class collapse will be used, to enable a detailed analysis to be conducted.

![Five-class collapse look at social class](image)

Figure 16: Proportions of Students from Different NS-SEC Backgrounds (HESA 2013)

As can be seen in Figure 16 above, 53% of students are from an NS-SEC 1 background of higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations. This is considerably higher than the 10% from this NS-SEC
category, of young people aged 16-24 nationally (Nomis 2014b). This is arguably the most advantaged group, and is unsurprising in terms of traditional conceptualisations of universities and their students being from ‘privileged’ backgrounds (Chatterton 1999). Interestingly, there is a considerable percentage (21%) of the total population from semi-routine and routine occupation backgrounds. This data can be interpreted to suggest that the student population in 2010/11 came from relatively wealthy backgrounds, and is largely in keeping with traditional conceptualisations of middle-class student attendance at universities. Unfortunately, this data is unavailable for 2000/01, so no comparison can be made.

Whilst HESA do not have data about class for the year 2000/01, studies conducted before this period can help to give some indication of the composition of the student population in terms of class background. Robertson and Hillman (1997) contributed to the Dearing Report on the changes in participation of lower socio-economic groups in HE, noting that the participation of students aged 18+, and from lower socio-economic groups increased tenfold between 1940 and 1995 (from 1.5 to 15%). Whilst the UK Government are prioritising intergenerational and relative social mobility (HM Government 2011) to break the barriers associated with being from poorer backgrounds, there is much agreement amongst academics that students from higher socio-economic groups are still largely over-represented within the total student population (Robertson and Hill 1997):

‘The White Paper said that HE should be a powerful engine of social mobility and acknowledged that significant barriers remain in the way of bright young people from the most disadvantaged backgrounds accessing HE, particularly the most selective institutions’(Department for Business Innovation and Skills 2012: 23).

Crozier et al. (2008a: 175) suggest that ‘Whilst widening participation policies have opened up HE for working class people, inequalities still exist’, with Blanden and Machin (2004) proposing that HE is disproportionately beneficial to students from high income backgrounds. This is significant in light
of the findings within Figure 16, as students are largely seen to be from NS-SEC 1 backgrounds, which may intensify social class inequalities - although this arguably varies across the HE sector.

5.2.2 Students from state or privately funded education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schooling background of UK Students</th>
<th>2000/01</th>
<th>2010/11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State-school</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private School</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 17: Schooling background of UK Students (HESA 2013)

The percentage of students from privately funded schools has decreased from 13% in 2000/01 to 10% in 2010/11. One could argue that this is linked to widening participation policies, with under-represented groups more likely to attend state than private schools. These figures must be taken in the context of the national education of children. Despite 91% of students attending Independent Schools Council member schools (80% of private schools) going on to university, only 16% of students aged 16 + are educated in the private sector (Independent Schools Council 2012). The numbers of students attending private schools has fluctuated between 2001 and 2011, with decline being seen between 2009 and 2011 that one can only assume may be linked with the recession. Whilst these numbers from ISC seem high they are difficult to verify as much focus around schooling background and universities centres around Oxbridge and top university places being disproportionately awarded to students from private school backgrounds (Paton 2013; Stephens 2014).
Ethnicity can prove to be an interesting comparison with schooling, with the percentages of students of British-Black-Caribbean and British-Black-African origin from state-school backgrounds seeing noteworthy increases from 1% in 2000/01, to 2% and 4% respectively in 2010/11. This is in spite of studies suggesting that racial prejudice can inhibit the aspirations Black middle-class parents have for their children (Gillborn et al. 2012).

5.2.3 Ethnicity

When looking at the ethnicity of students in 2010/11, it can easily be seen that the majority (78%) of the student population class themselves as White. When compared with the data from 2000/01, a considerable rise in ethnic minority students is identifiable, with percentages increasing from 15% to 22% between 2000/01 and 2010/11. This equates to 99,589 more students from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Figure 18: Percentage of Students Identifying with Each Ethnic Group in 2000/01 and 2010/11 (HESA 2013)
It is important to recognise trends within the wider population when considering this data. Recently released census data is compared with the previous census below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Mixed</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>91.9</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9: Percentage of Total UK Population in Each Ethnic Group (ONS 2013)

When looking at the table above, Figure 18 and Table 9 suggest that the student population has been, and continues to be, more ethnically diverse than the population as a whole. Black students are over-represented in the student population in 2010/11, while 8% of the student population are Asian, which is mirrored among the total population (7.5%). This pattern of over-representation has been noted throughout the past twenty years, with Connor et al. (1996: ix) stating that ‘almost one in eight of all UK domiciled students at first degree level in 1994/95 were from ethnic minority groups, more than double their representation in the UK population’.

The links between class and ethnicity have been made quite apparent within academic literature and policy documents. Further analysis has been conducted to explore the linkages between these two social indicators, and is portrayed within the table below. The results of this analysis are interesting. Bakare (2012) states that ethnic minority students are twice as likely as their white counterparts to be from a low-income household. In Figure 19 below, it can be asserted that whilst some ethnic groups such as Asian or Asian British-Bangladeshi do have considerably higher proportions of their total student populations from lower socio-economic groups, the difference between white students and other ethnic groups is not particularly substantial.

Interestingly, when HESA ethnicity and class data is compared to UK Census data (Nomis 2011), there is an over representation of white students from an NS-SEC 1 background; for instance, 31% of the white population have
higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations, compared with 55% of white student backgrounds.

There appear to be clear links between class and ethnicity, with the highest proportion of any ethnic group from NS-SEC 1 backgrounds being white students. With this in mind, it seems important to reiterate Connor et al. (2004), who proposed that socio-economic class be taken into account in further studies of ethnic minority students and HE, because of a perceived relationship between ethnicity and lower socio-economic status.

The ethnicity data was also cross tabulated with gender, indicating that on the whole, most ethnic groups had similar percentages of men and women, with the exception of the ‘Black or Black British-Caribbean’ ethnic group, of whom 68% were female. Arnot et al. (1998) noted that this ethnic group often has the lowest level of academic achievement, with Archer et al. (2001: 439) asserting that ‘a number of African-Caribbean young men argued that their identities as “cool” black men were not compatible with HE participation’. Interestingly, when comparing this data to 2000/01, there has been a 77% increase in the number of Black or Black British-Caribbean men participating in HE, although this has only resulted in a 1% increase in men as a proportion of all students in this ethnic group, from 31% in 2000/01 to 32% in 2010/11. These increases are small but in light of research may suggest positive increases in the number of Black or Black Caribbean men participating in HE.
Figure 19: Percentage of Each Ethnic Group from Different Socio-Economic Backgrounds (HESA 2013)

5.2.4 Gender

Historically there have been more men than women in HE (Vincent-Lancrin 2008), although this has largely been acknowledged to have changed in contemporary times (Garner 2014). HEFCE (2010) highlight that 40% of young
women enter HE, as opposed to 32% of young men. Whilst this may be the case, the number of young men participating in HE has increased since the early 1990s. Thus, Figure 20 below demonstrates the relatively consistent composition of the student population according to gender groups.

The gender distribution within the student population has changed slightly over this ten year period, from a 43:57 percentage split of male:female students in 2000/01, to 42:58 in 2010/11. HEFCE (2010) highlight that in the mid-2000s, young women were 25% more likely to participate in HE, and when put in the context of disadvantaged areas, this increased to 44% more likely. Interestingly, within this dataset, there is no trend that more males participate according to their socio-economic grouping.

There are many reasons given for why more women participate in HE than their male counterparts. Gorard et al. (2001) note that gender differences become greater the higher the grades; with girls getting more high grades and boys getting mid-range grades, this could have later implications on the admittance of students into universities. Tight (2012) investigates widening participation agendas since 1945, and concludes that women seem to have
benefitted above all other under-represented groups from such agendas, to the point where they now ‘dominate as students’ (ibid: 222). In spite of this, there is still a notable absence of women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) disciplines, with several initiatives aimed at increasing women studying and working in these sectors (Royal Society 2012).

5.2.6 Age
Age is an interesting point of investigation, for while scholarship to date has tended to focus on the classifications of students as undergraduate, postgraduate or mature, it is proposed that there may be considerable differences among the experiences of students within the undergraduate category, as well as between the different groups. Consequently, age is an important point of enquiry. The years have been grouped according to the age categories used by HESA in their publications, to enable a more effective analysis. What can be seen from Figure 21 below is that the student population has become more youthful over time.

Figure 21: Age distribution of UK students (HESA 2013)
In 2000/01, 43% of the student population were aged 18-21, while by 2010/11 this figure had risen to 50%. There were 2,814,174 people aged 18-21 in the 2011 census, meaning that over a third are in attendance at universities. This amounts to a substantial proportion of young people being in HE in 2010/11. In 2000/01, this figure was much lower, with only a quarter of people aged 18-21 attending university. In this sense, it could be argued that government policy aiming to have half of all people aged 18-30 in HE (Department for Education 2003) has had some success in increasing the number of people in this age category now attending university.

There seems to be a noticeable percentage loss of students aged between 30 and 50 years. Coffield and Vignoles (1997: 12) state that 'the majority of HE entrants are now officially ‘mature’ i.e. over 21 years of age on entry and 30 per cent are actually over 30. However ... mature students are still concentrated in the post-1992 universities'. Whilst Coffield and Vignoles’ statement can be said to be true in the data from 2000/01, by 2010/11, the percentage of students aged over 30 has considerably reduced. When comparing institution types, there are more mature students in post-1992 institutions than older universities, thus supporting their statement.

Brooks’ (2012) recent paper on student-parents contributes to debates about age and gender, by directly comparing UK and Danish institutions. Interestingly, she found that much more support is offered to students with familial commitments in Denmark than in the UK, and that attitudes towards student parents in the UK were often associated with inconvenience. Alsop et al. (2008: 629) indicate that ‘the fact that women have been traditionally the carers in the family, and that students have been conceptualised as male and non-carers, influences ... the ways in which they are perceived by others, and also the manner in which their own identity is reconstructed’. With this said, in English institutions, there are considerably more women participating in HE than men. This gap increases with age, with over double the number of 40-50 year old women (69%) participating in HE, relative to their male counterparts (31%).
5.2.7 Disability

The percentage of the total student population who have no known disability has decreased from 95% to 91% between 2000/01 and 2010/11. As can be seen for the two tables below, the way HESA have defined disabilities has changed over the 10 year period, as terminology has changed, and some disabilities have become more widely recognised and diagnosed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2000/01</th>
<th>Total Number</th>
<th>% of total</th>
<th>% of students with disability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No known disability</td>
<td>1585955</td>
<td>95</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blind/Partially sighted</td>
<td>2595</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deaf/Hearing impairment</td>
<td>4730</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheelchair user/Mobility difficulties</td>
<td>3635</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal care support</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health difficulties</td>
<td>2700</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An unseen disability, e.g. diabetes, epilepsy, asthma</td>
<td>24235</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple disabilities</td>
<td>7065</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyslexia</td>
<td>26305</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A disability not listed above</td>
<td>10025</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Students</td>
<td>1,667,430</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10: Numbers and percentages of Students with a Disability 2000/01 (HESA 2013)

Agendas to widen participation among under-represented groups include students with a disability (Goode 2007). Some universities within the UK are centuries old, and while attempts to make buildings more accessible are constantly taking place, the built environment can be seen as a serious limitation for students with a physical impairment or mobility issue (Matthews et al. 2003).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2010/11</th>
<th>Total Number</th>
<th>% of total</th>
<th>% of students with disability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No known disability</td>
<td>1866020</td>
<td>91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blind or a serious visual impairment</td>
<td>3235</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deaf or a serious hearing impairment</td>
<td>6290</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A physical impairment or mobility issues</td>
<td>6310</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal care support</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health condition</td>
<td>15535</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A long-standing illness or health condition</td>
<td>21990</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more conditions</td>
<td>16715</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social communication/Autistic spectrum disorder</td>
<td>3290</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific learning difficulty</td>
<td>91530</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another disability, impairment or medical condition</td>
<td>24695</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Students</td>
<td>2055640</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11: Numbers and percentages of students with a disability 2010/11 (HESA 2013)

Whilst accessibility debates are important within discussions of disability and HE, it is important to note that specific learning disabilities, which are often physically unidentifiable are the largest category which is an important distinction and highlights aspects of disability relating to the social and medical models. Non-visible disabilities can alter student experiences (Madriaga 2010) yet are often about attitudes as opposed to the built environments. Dyslexia is perhaps the most well-known learning disability, and some have aired concerns at the increase in rates of diagnosis since 2007/08 (Grove 2014). When known disabilities are looked at more specifically, it can be seen that the percentage of students with a mental health condition has increased by 5% of students with a disability. The National Union of Students (2013a) published a report which found 20% of respondents considered themselves to have a mental health problem. Mental health can have a detrimental impact on student achievement and experiences whilst at university and this increase is worthy of note.
5.2.8 Summary
This discussion of the student population has revealed some interesting changes between 2000/01 and 2010/11, with a clear picture of the student population being created. Overall, this data suggests that the student population is largely from a privileged background, young, ethnically diverse in comparison to the general population, and with slightly more female than male students. At the same time, the majority of the student population remains white, with no known disability. It is important to remember that this data predates the new tuition fee structure, which may alter the characteristics of the UK student population significantly.

As Read et al. (2003) point out, it is worth recognising that some students and people do not aspire to attend HE, as they do not see it as the place for them. This can be linked to many aspects of identity, but also to background, and the financial implications of HE, which may become an even more prominent issue now that tuition fees have increased. Whilst this section has shown the diverse nature of the UK student population, the ‘traditional student’ stereotype as proposed by Chatterton (1999) still prevails when looking at English HE as a whole.

5.3 Term-time Accommodation of Students
5.3.1 All Students
This section moves on to explore the relationship between social difference and the accommodation choices of students. There are many ways in which the term-time accommodation of students attending English universities can be explored. Sage et al. (2012a) hint that student accommodation preferences may be changing, and Holton and Riley (2013: 64) go further to suggest that ‘alternative forms of living arrangements are beginning to surface within university locations which compete with the traditional concept of shared housing’. A recent report by Unipol (2013) suggests that PBSA, both university-maintained and private sector, is gaining considerable popularity in Leeds, leading to large numbers of empty bedspaces in HMO. With this in mind, it is imperative to ascertain whether any trends can be identified, upon inspection of
student accommodation data for English universities, that complicate or complement current understandings of the student accommodation sector. Fortunately, the HESA data provides a rich and comparable data set that enables multiple perspectives on student accommodation to be explored.

![Percentage of UK Students Residing in Each Accommodation Type 2010/11](image)

**Figure 22: Percentage of Students Residing in Each Accommodation Type 2010/11 (HESA 2013)**

The percentage of the total home student population living in institution-maintained accommodation has reduced from 22% in 2000/01 to 17% in 2010/11. What is perhaps most significant here is that whilst the percentages are not dramatically different, the number of students has increased considerably. The lack of a private sector hall presence in the 2000/01 data is indicative of the growth of this accommodation type over this ten-year period (Smith 2008). Importantly, comparing 2000/01 and 2010/11 data hints at the
changes in accommodation preferences and growing popularity of certain accommodation types (Holton and Riley 2013).

Figure 23: Percentage of Students Residing in Each Accommodation Type 2000/01

Other rented accommodation is a popular type of accommodation. This group encompasses HMOs and other private sector housing, which are an important element of studentification debates. Interest in studentification as a process has increased over the last decade; consequently, it seems important to compare the term-time accommodation of students in 2000/01. This data is not directly comparable, however, as the ‘Own residence’ category encompasses the 2010/11 categories of own residence, other rented accommodation and private sector halls.
The data above provides an interesting starting point for investigating the
types of students living in each accommodation type. However, further analysis
is needed to gain a deeper understanding of the social composition of students
living in each accommodation type, which will now be undertaken. As can be
seen above, there are two ways of investigating the relationships between
social difference and term-time accommodation. One is to look at the
accommodation in terms of the different social variables, while the other is to
look at these variables within the context of each accommodation type. The
next section explores both means of comparison, in order to gain a robust
knowledge of the way they relate to one another.

5.3.2 Age
Housing studies have shown that people’s housing and location requirements
and desires of people change alongside their age and stage in the lifecourse
(Katz et al. 2011). The needs of the elderly are a clear example of how housing
is built for the purposes of one specific demographic group (Housing Learning
and Improvement Network 2009). Holland and Peace (2011: 144) rightly assert
that for young adults, ‘leaving the parental home is not necessarily a once-and-
for-all-event’, and that there may be episodes where they return home before
finding their own house. Figure 24 below demonstrates the proportion of
students in each age category living in different types of accommodation.
Thirty percent of students aged 17 and under, and 24% of students aged between 18 and 21, live in institution-maintained accommodation. This significantly reduces in other age groups, to zero for all groups over 30 years old. This is perhaps unsurprising given suggestions that mature students are more likely to attend local institutions (Reay et al. 2002). There are still relatively small percentages of all age groups living in private sector halls, with the highest being 7% of students aged 18-21. University-maintained accommodation is often advocated as the best choice for first year students.
(Ford et al. 2002), as it enables them to meet new people and acclimatise to student life.

National trends suggest that there has been a considerable increase in the proportion of the 20-34 year old population living in the parental home - up to 26% of this age group in 2013 (Office for National Statistics 2014). The percentage of each age category living in the parental home tends to significantly decrease in age groups over 30, with it being most popular amongst students who are aged 22 (36%), 23(36%) and 24 (33%). This trend could be linked to the choice of which university to attend as a mature student, and wanting to reduce debt levels by residing in the parental home (Marsh 2014).

At 33%, a surprising proportion of students aged below 17 live in their own residence. However, reasons for this remain unclear. Over 90% of students aged over 40 years old live in their own residence, which contrasts considerably with the 8% of students among the 18-21 age group. The highest percentage of students living in other rented accommodation is those between the age of 18 and 22 years (between 33 and 34%). This age group is synonymous with processes of studentification, with concentrations of undergraduate students being seen as the main cause of issues within studentified neighbourhoods (Smith 2005).

Figure 25 below shows the proportion of each accommodation type from each age category. In nearly all accommodation types, students in the age category 18-21 make up between 66% (parental home) and 90% (institution-maintained) of students living in these accommodation types. The only accommodation type where this is not the case is students living in their own residence, where 59% of students in this category are aged over 30 years of age.
Gender

The gender differences within accommodation are quite small, and can in part be linked to the fact that 58% of students are female. The most noticeable difference, which can be seen in Figure 26, is in students living in their own residence. This sees 65% of students living in this accommodation type being female, and 35% male. Of students living in the parental home, 57% are female and 43% male. This differs considerably to recent findings of the wider population, which suggest that 1 in 3 men and in 1 in 5 women aged 20-34 live in the parental home (Office for National Statistics 2014; BBC 2014a).
figures suggest that both male and female students are considerably more likely to live in the parental home than others in their age group.

Figure 26: Gender distribution across student accommodation types 2010/11 (HESA 2013)

Figure 27: Proportion of Males and Females living in Each Accommodation Type (HESA 2013)
This data is contrary to Kelly and Torres’ (2006) findings, which suggested that female students’ activities could be restricted to campus due to issues of safety. Whilst this graph does not take into account the location of most social activities, it can be seen that more female students are living off campus than on. From the table above, it is also evident that there is a higher percentage of UK female students living in their own residence than males. This trend could be related to the familial commitments of mature female students, which have been noted to cause significant influence over where and how students study within HE (Reay et al. 2002). Whilst there are interesting gender differences across the accommodation sector, it is argued that with the exception of own residence, the relationship between gender and accommodation is fairly neutral.

5.3.4 Ethnicity
Widening participation agendas have aimed to have more students from ethnic minority backgrounds participating in HE. With this said, Leathwood and O’Connell (2003: 598) assert that ‘those working-class and minority ethnic students who do participate are more likely to attend post-1992 universities’. This is reiterated by Connor et al. (2003), who also found that particular ethnic groups (Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Indian students) were more likely to live at home during term-time. With these studies suggesting interesting links between ethnic group and accommodation, it is clear further analysis is needed.
Figure 28, above, shows the percentage of each ethnic group living in different accommodation types. Institution-maintained accommodation is occupied by all groups, with 19% of Chinese students living in this accommodation type, alongside 15% of white students and 14% of students in the other ethnicity category.

For white, black and other ethnicity students, the highest percentages of students live in their own residence. In contrast, 48% of Asian students live in the parental home, complementing other studies (Connor et al. 2003). This is a substantially higher percentage of the total number in this ethnic group than in others, which range from 19-26%. Other rented accommodation is occupied by all groups, with nearly a third of White and Chinese students living in this accommodation type.
As noted earlier, the UK Student population is predominantly white, and as such, Figure 29 above reflect this in the student population living in each accommodation type. This figure does, however, highlight that there are considerable numbers of Asian students living in the parental home and private halls, and a reasonably high number of Black students living in their own residence.

5.3.5 Social Class
NS-SEC categories were used to look at the socio-economic background of UK students in 2010/11. Figure 30 below illuminates the difference between each
group clearly. The majority of students from a higher managerial and professional background live in institution-maintained, and other rented, accommodation (70%). This is not surprising, with Sage et al. (2012a) noting the middle-class nature of studentification processes, in keeping within the wider conceptual framework of gentrification. A higher percentage of students from 'never worked and long-term unemployed' backgrounds live in the parental home, and in their own residence (over 70%). In professions assuming higher wages, more students seem to be living away from the parental home, in institution-maintained accommodation and rented accommodation.

Figure 30: Proportion of Socio-Economic Groups living in Different Accommodation Types (HESA 2013)

Figure 30 above highlights a link between socio-economic status and accommodation. In keeping with discussion centred around working class students, it can be seen that the percentage of students living in the parental home increases in the NS-SEC categories 3-7. It is argued that working-class students are aware of the financial costs of university, and some attempt to mitigate this by living in the parental home (Callender and Jackson 2008).
Figure 31 above, represents that 53% of UK students are from high managerial and lower managerial backgrounds. Over 60% of students living in institution- maintained accommodation are from these backgrounds. In contrast, less than 40% of students living in the parental home are from an NS-SEC 1 background. Figure 31 suggests that there are some links between socio-economic background and the housing mobility of students, with a clear trend being seen among NS-SEC 1 and 2 categories living outside of the parental home. This is in contrast to NSEC categories 3-7, which have greater presence in the parental home and own residence.

5.4 Creating a Student Population Typology of Universities in England

5.4.1 Background
The previous sections have highlighted the diverse nature of the UK student population attending English institutions. However, it has not shown in great
detail the ways in which these social characteristics relate to one another, nor how individual institutions relate to this data. The aim of this section is to aid a deeper understanding of the social characteristics of the student population in attendance at English universities. In turn, this will inform our understanding of, and investigation into, the types of students involved in studentification – in addition, revealing the case study for this thesis and the reasons behind selecting an institution from that particular ‘majority’ group.

5.4.2 Selection of variables
All social differences analysed within this chapter were carefully considered, in order to create a typology of English institutions according to their student populations. The justification for the selection of each category will now be presented.

Class: Class-based debates are entrenched in discussions of HE. This can be seen in terms of who attends university (Chatteron 1999), but also arguably within discussions surrounding the attainment and retention of students (House of Commons 2013). Ethnic minority groups, and also students with a disability (Goode 2007), were noted within widening participation agendas. In spite of this, however, class debates have continued to feature heavily within discussions of HE. This trend signifies the importance of class-based experiences within HE, with Archer et al. (2005: 2) suggesting that ‘the university system has long played a key role in the reproduction of social-class inequalities’. Crucially, other studies have illuminated the role that class plays in shaping the type of institution where students choose to study (Jerrim 2013). In this way, it is important to explore how class stratifies student populations and may shape the institutions which they attend. Much work has been conducted to date on the experiences of working class students at university (Archer et al. 2005; Holdsworth 2006; Holton 2014), but this chapter has shown, through an investigation of NS-SEC categories, that the majority of students are still from NS-SEC1 backgrounds, which is indicative of (although not equal to) the middle and upper class working professions or those with property and investments. This information has been taken alongside the traditional student stereotype as...
an important first social difference to be taken into account within this student typology.

**Ethnicity:** This chapter has revealed important relationships between ethnicity and class, which warrant further investigation. Much has been written about the participation rates and attainment of different ethnic groups. The relationship between ethnicity and education has been seen to inhibit the aspirations of students for post-compulsory study; in this case, black students and their parents (Gillborn *et al.* 2012). At the same time, this chapter has shown that students from minority ethnic groups are also argued to be from low socio-economic groups (Bhattacharyya *et al.* 2003). At university, studies have highlighted ethnic differences in enrolment into university (Beattie 2002), and the barriers to accessing post-compulsory education (Hurtado *et al.* 1997), highlighting the disparity of access to education in these cases in America. More recent research has suggested that entrance into elite universities in the UK is far from a fair process (Coughlan 2013). All these studies have informed the formation of the student typology, with the inclusion of ethnicity seen to enhance understandings of universities that recruit higher percentages of students from ethnic minority backgrounds. Within the context of the dataset provided, the white ethnic group has been selected for the student population typology, as it is recognised as the majority group within HE. Using the white ethnic group overcomes criticisms that ‘whiteness’ is an assumed norm within ethnicity studies (Bonnett 1997).

**Accommodation:** To provide relevant context within the study, accommodation needs to feature within the typology. Various accommodation types are included in the HESA dataset. When thinking about accommodation and the ways in which it may be interrelated with class and ethnicity, there is one accommodation type that is noted within scholarship: living in the parental home. Studies by Holdsworth (2006) and Holton (2014) explore the experiences of students studying at their local universities, and the negotiations that they may have to make between their student and local identities. Analysis of HESA data also reveals that particular ethnic groups are more likely to live in the parental home than others, with nearly 50% of Asian ethnic groups living in
the parental home in comparison to 19% of white students. There are some suggestions that Asian students have different lifestyles to other student groups, which involve lower expenditure and less acceptance of debt (Sanders 2001). By investigating accommodation type in relation to class and ethnicity, it is hoped that broader patterns may emerge to illuminate how social differences may relate to the accommodation choices of students. A lens into student mobility will also be provided, by incorporating ‘living in the parental home’ as a category into the typology.

**Age/Level of study:** It is commonly accepted that students at different levels of study, and at different stages of both their university and personal lives, have different expectations of, and experiences within, HE (Crozier et al. 2008b). In their conversations with mature students, Reay et al. (2002) highlight how multiple aspects of identity, such as gender, class and familial commitments, interplay with the mature student identity to impact on student experience. Similarly, Crozier et al. (2008b) highlight the multiple aspects of undergraduate student identity, and how students from different class and ethnic backgrounds, as well as genders, impact on their student experience. Chatterton (1999), and HESA data analysis within this chapter, have indicated that students in the age category 18-21 account for 50% of the student population in the 2010/11 academic year. This group will be used to highlight which of the institutions have a more mature student population, and those that have a particularly youthful and arguably undergraduate student population.

**Gender:** Differences in the experiences of male and female students and the disciplines they study have been noted within this chapter and Chapter 2. Gender is explored within the typology by highlighting each institution in different colours according to the gender ratios at each institution. Historically student populations have been male dominated but this has changed in contemporary times (Vincent-Lancrin 2008). Studies have indicated that gender may influence the learning styles of students (Smithers 2003) and the disciplines students study (Woodfield and Earl-Novell 2006). At the same time, studies of international students highlight males to be more advantageous when studying abroad (Holloway et al. 2012). Brooks (2012) illuminates the
awareness of female student-parents of their familial commitments. In this way, it seems important to include gender within the typology to see how this interacts with other aspects of student identity and student accommodation.

*University Rankings:* Although this variable has not been mentioned previously within this chapter, Chapter 2 raised questions about the influence of university rankings (both UK and international) on student university choices. Chatterton (1999) identified the traditional student stereotype whilst conducting research in Bristol. Others propose that students are more willing to travel further to attend a Russell Group institution (Arnett 2014). University ranking tables are an inherent part of HE in England (Croxford and Raffe 2014), and play a considerable role in the university decision-making processes of students. In this way, the Times Good University Guide ranking for 2011 have been included in the typology to enhance analysis. In doing so the typology can also illuminate trends between student populations and the wider HE context.

As 91% of the student population in 2010/11, have no known disability, disability has been excluded from the typology. By creating a student typology using the social differences above, enhanced understanding of the student population and their attendance at different institution types will be gained. The process that was undertaken to create the typology has been discussed in Chapter 4. The following section will discuss the outcomes of the data analysis and the resulting typology of the student population.
Figure 32: Typology of English Institutions (HESA 2013)
5.4.4 Discussion

Institutions in the first group include the University of Oxford, University of Warwick, Loughborough University and the University of Liverpool. These institutions have been categorised as having a largely advantaged, white and migrant UK student population in attendance. This group contains several Russell Group institutions, and other universities with an established history within England. Worthy of note here is the fact that these institutions, apart from the University of Warwick, also have a relatively youthful population, with above average percentages of students aged 18-21. This group contains high ranking institutions with established reputations for research excellence and student experience. This is an interesting finding as it suggests a link between higher ranking institutions and traditional student populations.

Institutions in the second quartile for NS-SEC background, still largely follow the same dominant pattern identified in the first quartile. This group includes the University of Reading, the University of Leicester and the University of Kent. There are higher numbers of institutions with above average percentages of white students, and the majority of those are living away from the parental home. This group of institutions does not have any immediate similarities, being geographically distributed across the country, and comprising a mixture of what were the 1994 Group and Post-1992 institutions as well as others. No London institutions are in this group, and most institutions have relatively equal proportions of female and male students.

A considerable proportion of the third quartile are situated in Northern England, such as the University of Sunderland, University of Northumbria at Newcastle and the University of Cumbria. This finding perhaps hints at the north-south income divide, which has been argued in 2008 to be getting significantly bigger (Dorling et al. 2008). Students in this category are less likely to come from an NS-SEC1 background and have higher proportions of students living in the parental home. This trend has been noted by other academics, with Reay et al. (2010: 115) stating:

‘For the most part, students at Eastern do not develop an identity as a
university student, and our case study students’ primary source of identification is as local, working class and ‘at college’. At Northern, students have a number of competing identities as university students, but also as local and working class. They are jostling work and family commitments with doing a degree, and often the first two overwhelm and take precedence over studying. . .In contrast, at Southern and to a lesser degree Midland, being a university student becomes the individual’s main source of identity’.

These institutions also tended to be lower ranking than those found in two previous groups. This emphasizes suggestions that students attending local universities may have limited access to higher ranking institutions (Arnett 2014).

All the quartiles have more institutions with higher than average percentages of white students, apart from the fourth quartile, which sees more institutions with lower than average percentages of white students. This indicates a greater ethnic diversity than that seen in other quartiles. Of the 14 institutions in the fourth quartile, 11 have a considerable number of students living in the parental home. Upon further investigation, it can be seen that 7 of the 11 institutions that follow the perceived pattern of housing are London-based. In turn, it could be suggested that an effort to recruit local students within London may explain this pattern, enabling students from lower income backgrounds to attend university and still live at home.

A wider trend within the data shows that in nearly all cases, where there are lower percentages of white students, the majority of institutions in this category are London-based. It has been noted that, ‘ethnic minority students remain concentrated in certain 1992 universities, predominantly those located in London and the Midlands, where they are the local institutions for large ethnic minority populations’ (Coffield and Vignoles 1997; 6-7). Within a Midlands context, both institutions in Leicester are worthy of note, and feature in the below average white student population, emulating broader patterns within the city whereby 51% of the population identify themselves as white (Elvin 2012). As white students have been used within the typology, it is
perhaps interesting to consider Strand’s (2008) observation that while white students from lower-socioeconomic backgrounds fare worse in comparison to other ethnic groups, within higher socio-economic groups they are the highest achievers. Institutions in the fourth quartile also seem to have lower than average percentages of students aged 18-21, showing a more mature population than institutions in other quartiles. Universities with female populations of greater than 60% also have more presence in the lower quartiles.

Many institutions in the lower quartiles are post-1992 institutions, and there has been much research to suggest that these institutions attract students from under-represented groups, and are therefore seen as more working class and ethnically diverse. For instance, Leathwood and O’Connell (2003) found that working class and ethnic minority students are more likely to attend post-1992 institutions, and Archer et al. (2003) reiterate this assumption by suggesting that some post-1992 universities have sometimes been constructed as working class. Assertions such as these have led others to propose that widening participation policies should address the type and quality of the courses and universities that students attend, as well as the act of attending university in its own right (Chowdry et al. 2010).

As has been acknowledged within this section, the institution rankings for 2011 highlight clear stratifications within the groups of institutions in each category which appear in part linked to the reputations of institutions. Long-standing universities with higher rankings are seen to recruit more traditional student populations and new student groups appear more likely to be found in lower-ranking and post-1992 institutions. This will be discussed further in Chapter 9 as it is an important contribution of this thesis to broader debates within geographies of education.

5.5 Conclusion
This chapter has illuminated several key findings. Research focused on widening participation agendas has presented the diversity of student
experiences in HE, centred around studies of class, minority ethnic groups and disability. Whilst all these studies contribute significantly to widening the understanding of student university experiences, this chapter has shown that change in the social composition of the student population has been relatively minimal between 2000/01 and 2010/11. This chapter enhances existing knowledge by showing the ways in which social differences interact to form a more complex picture of the student population attending HE in England.

The typology of English institutions deduced as part of this chapter reveals interesting stratifications within the student population attending English institutions. Crucially, this typology collates different aspects of student identity, and reveals the way class, ethnicity, accommodation and age interact across the HE sector. Significantly, this typology contributes to debates within geographies of education surrounding disparities in access to, and attendance of, HE in England. Key findings of this chapter show clear stratification between universities that attract ‘traditional’ student (Chatterton 1999) populations, and those that attract ‘new student’ (Leathwood and O’Connell 2003) populations. This typology reinforces discourses within studies asserting that working-class students are more likely to attend post-1992 institutions (Connor et al. 2003), with more ethnic diversity also seen in these institutions, particularly within London. In contrast, the typology reveals that ‘traditional’ students are in attendance at Russell Group and previous 1994 Group institutions, which tend to have longer-standing reputations as universities.

This chapter has highlighted that ‘traditional’ students are still very much the majority student population attending HE in the UK. The group of institutions attracting a typically traditional student has been identified within the typology of English institutions. Loughborough University has been selected from this typology as an example of a privileged student population, and the aim of the following chapters is to explore the accommodation pathways and accommodation decision-making processes of students studying at an institution which attracts an advantaged social group. This will be the focus of the thesis from this point forward. Investigations of age and stage of study highlight important differences in how student experiences may change across
the university lifecourse. This is the focus of Chapter 6, within the context of student accommodation pathways in Loughborough.

Studentification debates have largely overlooked other aspects of social identity when discussing the process in various settings. With this said, it has been acknowledged that studentification is largely seen to involve middle-class student groups, in a similar vein to gentrification (Smith 2005). This chapter has shown considerable variety in where different student groups are living, by exploring the interactions of multiple social differences with student accommodation. In doing so, questions have been raised in relation to who the studentifiers are, and highlighted that accommodation preferences may be different for different social groups. The explanations behind these trends are not always straightforward. Whilst studies, to date suggest that financial constraints (Callender and Jackson 2008), as well as accommodation availability (Garmendia et al. 2012), may shape student accommodation decisions, this requires further investigation. This will be taken forward within this thesis, with Chapters 7 and 8 illuminating the various factors that shape student accommodation decision-making.
6. Student Accommodation Pathways

6.1 Introduction

Loughborough University annual student registration data has been obtained and analysed, in order to achieve the second objective of this thesis: to understand student accommodation pathways. This chapter will demonstrate the divergence of student accommodation pathways across the university lifecourse. Popular understandings of student accommodation pathways involve students living in university-maintained accommodation in their first year, and then in shared housing or HMO in subsequent years (Holloway et al. 2010). Simultaneously, much has been written about students’ desire to live in ‘student areas’ in the private rented sector, with some proposing that there is a reluctance to live elsewhere (Munro and Livingston 2012).

This chapter will explore pathways at various geographical scales, illuminating student choices in terms of both location and accommodation type. This chapter initially looks at larger geographical scales, before progressing down to the smallest scale of university halls of residence. The selected accommodation pathways which have been the focus for the rest of the thesis have been discussed in Chapter 4, but will be illuminated where relevant. As will be seen, different social indicators, such as gender and department of study, have also been cross-tabulated with accommodation pathways for further discussion within this chapter.

Importantly, this chapter makes two assertions. First, there is considerable value in longitudinal studies of student accommodation pathways. Being able to map student movements across university towns and cities is as important as knowledge of student mobility abroad. Second, this chapter highlights that not all students wish to live in commonly known ‘student areas’, but are increasingly choosing to live in other areas across the town diversifying the process of studentification.
Within existing debates, there are notably four categories of student accommodation that are discussed. For those students who choose to live away from home, the three most popular accommodation choices are university provided accommodation, student HMO and PBSA. The final accommodation, relates to students who live in the parental home (Holdsworth 2006; Holton 2014), and will not be discussed for the purposes of this study, as it was not possible to identify this category of student from those who chose to live in the private rented sector within Loughborough.

As noted in the introduction, the most common student accommodation pathway involves on campus accommodation in the first year, and then student HMO in the years after (Sage et al. 2012a). Table 12 above highlights that there

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pathway</th>
<th>Students starting 07/08 (1484)</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Students starting 08/09 (1291)</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Students starting 09/10 (1569)</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campus-Campus-Campus</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus-Campus-Private rented sector (PRS) excluding Purpose-Built Student Accommodation</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus-PRS-Campus</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus-PRS-PRS</td>
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<td>56</td>
<td>764</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>734</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRS-PRS-PRS</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Pathways</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1484</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1291</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1569</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12: Accommodation Sector (Loughborough University Annual Student Registration Data)
have been decreasing student numbers following this pathway between 2007 and 2010 in Loughborough. Whilst this route remains popular, there is a substantial percentage decrease between the 2007/08 academic year and 2009/10. Whilst the numbers remain fairly constant, the percentage decrease is considerable, with 15% less of the population choosing this accommodation pathway in 2009/10 relative to 2008/09.

Studentification debates have heavily discussed student HMOs and PBSA, but there remains a paucity of research to have investigated the growth in on-campus accommodation in the last decade. This table highlights a need to investigate on-campus accommodation, as the percentage and number of students choosing to remain on campus for all or two years in their university lifecourse has steadily increased over the 3 year period. There has been a notable increase of 7% in students choosing to remain on campus all 3 years, and an increase of 9% in those choosing to stay on campus until their final year before moving into the private rented sector. In part this increase at Loughborough can be linked to an expansion of university-maintained bedspaces in 2008/09, but it more importantly signifies a desire by students to live in university halls for longer than their first year of study. A recent study by the National Union of Students (2013b) emphasises the importance of returning students to the student accommodation market, highlighting their different accommodation needs to first year students. Table 12 above is evidence that the diversification of the student accommodation market offers students greater choice in their accommodation, which has most noticeably led to more residing in on-campus accommodation in the case of Loughborough.

At the same time, the percentage of students choosing to reject university accommodation altogether and live in the private rented sector has also seen a decrease of 5%. This group could include students living at home, but it may also include students who did not get on-campus accommodation, or those who actively wanted to live off-campus.

Very few students follow the ‘other pathways’ category, which includes those students living in PBSA. A study in Leeds (Unipol 2013) demonstrated
the continuing popularity of PBSA amongst students in the city. This is not emulated in Loughborough. This is an interesting finding, which highlights the changing nature of student accommodation pathways over time. Hubbard’s (2009) paper suggests that PBSA is popular amongst undergraduate students, but Table 12 suggest that this has become less and less so since the 2007/08 academic year.

In light of the table above, four pathways were chosen as the focus for the qualitative research within this thesis, living on campus for three years (c-c-c), living on campus for two years and moving into the private rented sector in final year of study (c-c-prs). Those students who live on campus then move into the private rented sector and return to the university campus in their final year (c-prs-c) and finally, the most common pathway, living on campus in first year and residing in the private rented sector in the second and third year (c-prs-prs).

6.3 Living between the university and town-centre
Many scholars note that students like to live in locations convenient for their university campus and the town/city centre (Smith and Holt 2007; Hubbard 2008). In line with this, a differentiation was made based on local knowledge about where students live in Loughborough, and data was analysed to see if students did prefer to live between the university campus and the town centre. As shown on page 99, Epinal Way was used as the boundary for the two areas.

Table 13 supports other studies, highlighting that the town-side of Loughborough is still the most popular amongst students. This number has decreased over time, which is demonstrative of the increasing popularity of on-campus accommodation noted earlier in this chapter. Of the students who choose to move out in their final year, the town-side has increased in popularity from 13% to 17% of the total population. Student areas are located on the town-side of Loughborough; perhaps this can be linked to more students moving there as they are the most well-known locations within the town for student housing (Hubbard 2008).
Whilst this differentiation may be quite crude, it has illustrated that students in Loughborough do largely like to live in areas that are convenient for both the town-centre and university campus, with the walk between these two areas taking less than 15 minutes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pathway</th>
<th>Students starting 07/08 (1484)</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Students starting 08/09 (1291)</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Students starting 09/10 (1569)</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campus-Campus-Campus</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus-Campus- University side</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus-Campus-town side</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus- University side - University side</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus- University side - town side</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus-town side-campus</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus- town side- University side</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus- town side-town side</td>
<td>575</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>529</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>472</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town side-town side- town side</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University side - University side - University side</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other pathways</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>278</td>
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<td>1484</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>1291</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>1569</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13: University and Town Pathways

6.4 Accommodation Type

Studentification debates have heavily discussed the recommodation of Victorian terraces into student HMO, such as in Selly Oak in Birmingham, and the Storer Ward in Loughborough (Hubbard 2008). Recent studies have shown
that there has been a divergence in the type of accommodation in which students now live, with Sage et al. (2012b) highlighting students living in ex-social housing housing, and Garmendia et al. (2012) showing students living in high-rise apartment blocks. All these studies have led some to argue that there are changes in the accommodation preferences of students (Sage et al. 2012a).

With this in mind, the next level of analysis conducted was to investigate the types of accommodation in which students were living. The categories used were campus, terraced, detached, semi-detached, with other accommodation types being placed in the other pathways category.

When looking at the types of housing in which students reside, the preferred accommodation is terraced housing in the private sector. This can also be attributed to the most popular ‘student areas’ being predominantly Victorian terraces in the Storer and Burleigh area. There has been a decrease in the number and percentage of students moving from university halls to terraced housing in subsequent years, from 34% in 2007/08 and 2008/09 to 24% in 2009/10. There are some suggestions from Table 14 that students move from terraced accommodation into semi-detached or detached accommodation, which is in-keeping with ideas that students improve their living accommodation as they progress through university. Students learn more about what is available, whilst also being able to save money living in the private-rented sector (Collinson and Jogia 2010).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pathway</th>
<th>Students starting 07/08 (1484)</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Students starting 08/08 (1291)</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Students starting 09/10 (1569)</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campus-Campus-Campus</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus-Campus-Terraced</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus-campus-semi/detached</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus-terraced-terraced</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>438</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus-Terraced-Semi/detached</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus-Semi/detached-terraced</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus-semi/detached-semi/detached</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus-terraced-campus</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>61</td>
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<tr>
<td>Campus-semi/detached-campus</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td>51</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terraced-terraced-terraced</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi/detached-semi/detached-semi/detached</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>197</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>95</td>
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<td>98</td>
<td>1291</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>1569</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14: Changes in Type of Accommodation Students Reside In

When looking at the other accommodation pathways, it can be seen that housing types fit within the broader categories of campus and private rented sector as seen above. Increases and decreases seen in Table 14 are considerably varied, with some pathways having relatively consistent numbers of students following them throughout the three year period, such as the move from university halls to terraced housing and back again (4% across all 3 years).
By exploring larger scales and accommodation types, the variety in student accommodation preferences has been illuminated. This will now be taken forward by investigating smaller geographical areas in order to establish the most appropriate scale for investigating these changes.

6.5 Student Areas

Figure 14 highlights the boundaries for the student areas used within this section. It clearly shows that the most popular student destinations are centred around the university campus and town-centre. The table below demonstrates the way students move between these areas, illuminating some interesting changes between 2007 and 2010.

The Golden Triangle is Loughborough’s most well-known student area, and it is in this area that the data shows the most fluctuation in student numbers moving into and out of accommodation here. The most notable change shows that students who move follow the most commonly understood pathway, by moving into the private rented sector for their second and third year of study, are moving into the Golden Triangle less and less. The decrease in popularity of the Golden Triangle is in part due to the increasing popularity of university accommodation, but there have also been increasing numbers of students moving to Kingfisher estate.

The increasing number of students choosing to reside in Kingfisher is worthy of note, and has seen the area attract attention within local media (Loughborough Echo 2012; 2013). Some of this attention has been centred around issues such as rubbish and parking, created by concentrations of students living there (Smith 2005). Indicative of changing preferences, Table 15 also illuminates a growing number of students moving from the Golden Triangle to Kingfisher. These areas provide very different accommodation types, and further exploration is needed in order to establish the reasons behind this move.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pathway</th>
<th>Students starting 07/08 (1484)</th>
<th>Students starting 08/08 (1291)</th>
<th>Students starting 09/10 (1569)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campus-Campus-Campus</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus-Campus-Golden Triangle (GT)</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus-Campus-Kingfisher (KF)</td>
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<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus-Campus- Forest East (FE)</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus-Campus- Forest West (FW)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Campus-Campus-Other Lboro (OL)</td>
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<td>15</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Campus-GT-Campus</td>
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<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus-GT-GT</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>412</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus-GT-KF</td>
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</tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>44</td>
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</tr>
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<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>8</td>
</tr>
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<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus-OL-OL</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GT-GT-GT</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus-GT-FW</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-A-A</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Pathways</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1484</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>1291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>102</td>
<td>1569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15: Movement Between Researcher Defined Areas
At the same time, Table 15 shows that students are choosing to live in other places across Loughborough, moving away from popular student areas into areas where the proportion of students is low in comparison to local populations. Some of these areas have been analysed on smaller geographical scales, such as the Golden Triangle being broken down into Storer and Burleigh in order to see if there were any considerable difference within areas. Largely it was found that trends occurring in smaller areas were representative of the larger area trends, and therefore these have not been pursued further.

With many changes occurring over the study period, it is important to explore the extent to which students move within each area. For example, do students who move to the Golden Triangle stay in the same property for two years, or do they move around? Duke-Williams (2009: 1826) states that there is a ‘high turnover of individuals within student areas’, and Hubbard (2008) found that 50% of the student population had different addresses between 2000 and 2001 in Loughborough, illuminating movement between and within areas. In order to assess if this is still the case, two measures were taken. The first was to explore the number of addresses of students across their university lifecourse:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of addresses</th>
<th>2007/08 (n=1484)</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>2008/09 (n=1291)</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>2009/10 (n=1569)</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Same address all 3 years</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One move, two years same address</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>578</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Separate addresses</td>
<td>883</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>818</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>823</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16: Changes of Address Across the University Lifecourse
This table is demonstrative of the findings of Hubbard (2008) and Duke-Williams (2009). Students are highly mobile in Loughborough, with between 50 and 60% having resided at three different addresses over their time at university. These findings can then be considered alongside accommodation pathways, as follows.

It is perhaps unsurprising that the majority of students who remain living at one address are those living in halls of residence on the university campus for three years. With this said, there are a small number of students who move halls of residence during their time at university - but the majority make one move and then remain there. Similarly for students who remain on campus for two years, the majority stay living in the same hall of residence. Hall affiliation is integral to university life at Loughborough University, and hall publications demonstrate this strongly (c.f Towers Hall 2014). It is often recognised that students do not get their first-choice of hall, but that they enjoy their time there regardless. It could be argued that students form a sense of ‘elective belonging’ (Savage 2010) to their hall environment, and that this then deters them from moving elsewhere. However, Table 16 suggests that students who move from campus to the private rented sector, before returning, do not go back to the same hall. These differences need further exploration in order to gain a deeper understanding of the reasons behind these trends.

In contrast, Table 16 shows that students residing in the private-rented sector are much more mobile, with between 70% (2007/2008 cohort) and 78% (2009/10 cohort) moving address in each academic year. Reasons for this are needed to further understand why students are choosing to move for every year of study - something which has been argued to be stressful and difficult at times (Chrysostomou 2013).

Within the four pathways identified in section 6.2, 4 case study areas were focused on based on the scale presented in Table 15. These were the Golden Triangle (GT), Kingfisher (KF), Ashby (A) and University-maintained accommodation (C). As acknowledged in Chapter 4, the selection of these areas enables movements within and between areas to be achieved.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Same address for 3 years</th>
<th>1 move, 2 addresses the same</th>
<th>3 separate addresses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campus-Campus-Campus</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus-Campus-PRS</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus-PRS-PRS</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus-PRS-Campus</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRS-PRS-PRS</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 17: Change of Address Alongside Accommodation Pathways
6.6 Social Differences and Accommodation Pathways

Chapter 2 highlighted some of the ways that axes of social difference have been seen to impact on student experience whilst at university. At the same time, Chapter 5 revealed interesting relationships between social difference and accommodation. Class and ethnicity were seen to be important social indicators within Chapter 5, and it was the intention to continue analysis of these social differences throughout the thesis. The data provided by Loughborough University only included department and gender. With this said, social class will re-emerge within the qualitative data presented in Chapters 7 and 8. As will be seen in later chapters, whiteness is normalised within Loughborough student accounts of accommodation and this will be highlighted where appropriate. This section will focus on the ways gender, academic department and initial hall of residence interact with student accommodation pathways.

6.6.1 Gender

To provide context to data analysis, it is important to establish the gender composition of the broader student population in Loughborough within this dataset:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2007/08</th>
<th>2008/09</th>
<th>2009/10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female (F)</td>
<td>744 (50%)</td>
<td>645 (50%)</td>
<td>648 (41%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male (M)</td>
<td>740 (50%)</td>
<td>646 (50%)</td>
<td>921 (59%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 18: Gender Composition of Loughborough University Student Population

The table above highlights that within the Loughborough University data a fairly equal spread of female and male students can be seen. This, however, is different in 2009/10 with 59% of students being male and 41% being female. This contrasts with wider trends in HE, which note there are more female than male students participating in HE (Ratcliffe 2013). The first table below highlights the percentage of each pathway that is male or female, and the
second highlights the proportion of each gender that is following each pathway in any given year.

This table shows that the majority of the students choosing to live on campus for their three years of study are male with 61% in 2007/08, 63% in 2008/09 and 77% in 2009/10. In contrast, female (F) students are over represented in the housing pathway which involves living on campus in first and second year and then moving into the private rented sector in their third year at 56% in 2007/08, 60% in 2008/09, and 44% in 2009/10. Males (M) are also represented in movements from campus to the private sector, returning in their third year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pathway</th>
<th>2007/08</th>
<th>2008/09</th>
<th>2009/10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F %</td>
<td>M %</td>
<td>F %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-C-C</td>
<td>51 39</td>
<td>79 61</td>
<td>55 37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-C-PRS</td>
<td>129 56</td>
<td>101 44</td>
<td>130 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-PRS-PRS</td>
<td>417 50</td>
<td>417 50</td>
<td>396 52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-PRS-C</td>
<td>38 45</td>
<td>46 55</td>
<td>49 38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRS-PRS-PRS</td>
<td>82 61</td>
<td>52 39</td>
<td>0 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 19: Gender Differences in Accommodation Pathways

There have been several debates surrounding gender, which can be linked to the accommodation decision-making practices of students. Issues surrounding safety have been raised as a considerable concern for women (Kelly and Torres 2006), which has been argued to limit their use of different spaces, particularly at night (Jennings et al. 2007). In contrast, Table 19 seems to suggest that female students are more willing to move into the private rented sector than their male counterparts in any given year.
When explored in a different way, the proportions of students following each pathway are similar for both gender groups. The table above suggests that gender appears to have a relatively neutral impact on accommodation pathways which directly contrast Table 19. In light of this it appears that the previous Table 19 may be more useful as it looks within each gender group. Gender will be discussed within Chapters 7 and 8, but was not highlighted by participants as a main influence within accommodation decision-making processes.

6.6.2 Academic Department
Loughborough University has adopted a school system, with each school containing up to three departments. In the context of this thesis, departments were deemed the most appropriate geographical scale to explore
accommodation pathways. Academic schools are often geographically dispersed across campus, and for students residing in accommodation near to the academic community, it is more pertinent to explore the influence of their department. There are 19 departments identified within the dataset.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>2007/08</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>2008/09</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>2010/11</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aero and Auto Engineering</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School of the Arts</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business and Economics</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemical Engineering</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil and Building</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Science</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronic, Electrical and Systems</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Science</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematical Sciences</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHIR</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Science</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSEHS</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1484</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1291</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1569</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 21: Number of Students Studying in Each Department within this sample
As this data only includes students residing in Loughborough, not all students in each department are in this dataset, yet, the data still provides interesting insights into the relationship between course studied and department. All 19 departments above were cross-tabulated with the same pathways used in the analysis of gender. Analysing the data within the context of academic departments alluded some interesting results, which will now be discussed. Particular departments have been selected to illustrate relationships between academic department and student accommodation pathways.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2007-2008</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>2008-2009</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>2009-2010</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campus-Campus-Campus</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus-Campus-PRS</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus-PRS-PRS</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus-PRS-Campus</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRS-PRS-PRS</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other pathways</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
<td><strong>39</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
<td><strong>34</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 22: Percentage of Students Studying in Computer Science who Follow Each Accommodation Pathway
### Table 23: Percentage of Students Studying in Social Science who Follow Each Accommodation Pathway

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pathway</th>
<th>2007-2008</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>2008-2009</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>2009-2010</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campus-Campus-Campus</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus-Campus-PRS</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus-PRS-PRS</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus-PRS-Campus</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRS-PRS-PRS</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other pathways</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>138</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>114</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>94</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 24: Percentage of Students Studying in English and Drama who Follow Each Accommodation Pathway

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pathway</th>
<th>2007-2008</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>2008-2009</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>2009-2010</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campus-Campus-Campus</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus-Campus-PRS</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus-PRS-PRS</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus-PRS-Campus</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRS-PRS-PRS</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other pathways</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>123</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>110</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>96</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 25: Percentage of Students Studying in the School of Arts who Follow Each Accommodation Pathway

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pathway</th>
<th>2007-2008</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>2008-2009</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>2009-2010</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campus-Campus-Campus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus-Campus-PRS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus-PRS-PRS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>103</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus-PRS-Campus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRS-PRS-PRS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other pathways</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 26: Percentage of Students Studying Chemical Engineering who Follow Each Accommodation Pathway

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pathway</th>
<th>2007-2008</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>2008-2009</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>2009-2010</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campus-Campus-Campus</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Campus-Campus-PRS</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Campus-PRS-PRS</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>43</td>
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<tr>
<td>Campus-PRS-Campus</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRS-PRS-PRS</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>Other pathways</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

172
The five departments seen in Tables 22 to 26 highlight some interesting links between academic departments and accommodation pathways. These departments have been chosen as they clearly illuminate a correlation between the academic department in which a student studies, and their accommodation pathway.

In summary, students in Computer Science have the highest percentages of students living on campus for three years (32%). In contrast, 54% of students in English follow the normalised accommodation route for students, into the private rented sector in their second and third year. Social Science sees 33% of their students moving off-campus into the private rented sector for year three, whilst Chemical Engineering has the highest percentage of students moving back onto campus in third year (27%). At the opposite end of the spectrum, the School of Arts had the highest percentage of students living off campus for all three years (27%).

Studies, particularly within psychology, have looked at subject differences in terms of motivations and learning outcomes in secondary schools (Wolters and Pintrich 1998). This is also evident in the university context, with differences in contact hours (c.f Which Contact Hours Comparison Tool (Which? University 2014)). Other than assumptions surrounding students wanting to live in a convenient location for campus (Smith and Holt 2004), little is known about the relationships between study subject and student accommodation decision-making processes. In the absence of existing research, stakeholder and third sector organisations provide an interesting insight into this topic.

Students in English and Drama, and School of Arts disciplines, can be argued to have less contact hours than the STEM disciplines seen in the Computer Science and Chemical Engineering Departments (Unistats 2014). As such, they may have less need to be on campus, and this may explain why they have the highest percentages of students living in the private rented sector.
Whilst this data concentrates on three year degree programmes it must be recognised that many courses in Computer Science and Chemical Engineering have a placement programme, where the student spends the third year of their degree course working in industry. Whilst the students in this sample do not go on placements themselves, it can be proposed that others in their friendship group might do so, which may consequently shape their accommodation decisions. Indeed, discussions can be found on popular student forums such as The Student Room (2013), which discuss just that situation. In this way, it is not surprising that Chemical Engineering students come back onto campus in their final year, as their housemates may have gone on placement.

Similarly, Computer Science has the highest percentage of students living on campus for three years. This may indicate students’ awareness of changing accommodation situations, and demonstrate a protective mechanism of not moving into accommodation in the private rented sector with friends who will then leave. It is acknowledged that the reasons behind the trends seen in Tables 22 to 26 are speculative. Qualitative data presented in Chapters 7 and 8 will address this and will posit interesting links between particular departments and student accommodation pathways.

6.6.3 Further levels of analysis
As stated in the introduction, analysis was conducted on smaller geographical scales, but this presented interesting challenges, and raised important questions over the importance of appropriate geography within this thesis. Individual halls were looked at in relation to specific areas in Loughborough town centre. It was hoped that significant trends would be found, but when taking into account the large number of accommodation pathways created at this geographical scale, this was not possible. Numbers were small which led to an inability to comfortably assert relationships between particular halls and the destinations of students in the private rented sector. Whilst unfortunate, the mixed-method approach of this thesis will address and explore these factors within the findings of semi-structured interviews. Participants revealed
significant links between halls of residence and particular residential areas in Loughborough, and these will be detailed within Chapter 8.

6.7 Conclusions
This chapter has discussed important findings regarding how student accommodation changes over the university lifecourse in a privileged institution. This chapter has achieved the second objective of exploring student accommodation pathways, and has revealed a new and, as yet, unexplored perspective on student accommodation. Despite lack of scholarship in this area, links have been made to existing studies that are particularly concerned with studentification. In light of this, this chapter has crucially shown that student accommodation pathways may not be as straightforward as once assumed, and that there has been a change in student accommodation preferences.

Whilst other studies have prioritised the emergence of PBSA as an important student accommodation source (e.g. Hubbard 2009), this chapter has highlighted its relative insignificance in the accommodation pathways of undergraduates at Loughborough University. This is not to say that it does not hold an important position in the accommodation market for postgraduate or international students – however, such students are not the focus of this thesis.

Crucially, the role of university-maintained accommodation in student accommodation pathways has been illuminated. The presence of returning students in this accommodation type creates interesting points for investigation, as this is an underdeveloped area to date. A combination of increased numbers of bedspaces, and student uptake, has been linked to this trend, and clearly indicates Loughborough University recognising and taking advantage of a gap in the student accommodation market that they could fill.

Investigations into specific residential areas in Loughborough emulate studies elsewhere, with the most well-known student area, the Golden Triangle, still being the destination of choice for considerable numbers of students. Significantly, however, as has been found in the case of Headingley in Leeds
(Unipol 2013), there has been a decrease in the proportion of the student population residing in this area over time. This finding is supportive of Kinton’s (2013) study, which highlighted destudentification within the area. Simultaneously, the growth of student numbers in other areas, such as Kingfisher, is worthy of note and is again representative of changing student accommodation preferences.

This chapter has outlined the considerable advantages in gaining a longitudinal perspective on student accommodation, but also the challenges associated with different geographical scales. These points will be taken forward in Chapter 9, to further enhance the contributions of this thesis to existing knowledge. The pathways identified in this chapter will now be investigated in Chapters 7 and 8, to address the third objective of this thesis.
7. Consuming Campus

7.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the third objective of this thesis; to explore the accommodation decision-making processes and experiences of students and the implications for processes of studentification. There has been considerable discussion about how students choose and experience accommodation in the private rented sector (e.g. Rugg et al. 2002), but as yet there has been a scarcity of research that looks at university provided accommodation. This chapter aims to address this gap by investigating how undergraduates consume campus accommodation in Loughborough. Significantly, this chapter addresses a need identified by Holton and Riley (2013) to explore how student accommodation decisions change over the course of study.

Much of the literature to date that refers to university-maintained or campus accommodation is written from the perspective of international students (c.f Paltridge et al. 2010). Whilst interesting, the experiences of home students will arguably be different, and this chapter aims to explore this. This chapter explores living in halls of residence in a chronological order, to establish how students transition from one year to the next. The first section details how students choose their first year hall of residence, followed by their experience once there. The next investigates the second year living in halls of residence, and how they begin to notice age differences. The third section investigates the final year on campus, with some students returning from the private sector, and looks at the need to balance work and socialising. The conclusion then draws the chapter to a close, alluding to the importance of hall committee involvement in shaping student’s consumption of campus accommodation.

This chapter makes three significant contributions. First, it explicates accommodation decision-making processes. As this chapter will illuminate, there has been little scholarship to directly investigate both the selection, and living experiences, of on-campus accommodation. This is significant and clearly highlights the importance of studying university halls of residence to enhance
understandings of student accommodation pathways. Second, this chapter reveals the importance of friendship groups in shaping student accommodation decision-making practices - showing that the role of student accommodation goes further than providing an opportune place to form social networks (Sawir et al. 2008). Finally, this chapter highlights the interactions between stages in the university lifecourse, and the changing priorities of students. This has been acknowledged within an education setting, but as Holton and Riley (2013) suggest, warrants further attention within the context of student accommodation.

7.2 Choosing to Live on Campus in First Year

7.2.1 The move from home to university
The quantitative analysis discussed in Chapter 6 revealed that less than 10% of students chose to live in the private-rented sector in their first year. With 90% of students choosing to live in university-provided accommodation, it was imperative to uncover why they made this choice. Moving away from home can be quite a turbulent time (Vasquez and Rohrer 2006), and a recent study by the National Union of Students (NUS) found that ‘students who are moving away from home are naturally worried about starting a new life in a different city and acclimatising themselves to their accommodation and local facilities’ (National Union of Students 2012: 21). All participants in this thesis moved at least an hour away from home, coming from places such as London, Exeter and Durham and living away from home was seen as a key aspect to experiencing university life.

7.2.2 Normative Behaviour
Once students had decided to live away from home, living in university halls of residence was seen as the obvious choice for all students. There were many perceived benefits of living on campus in first year. Predominant reasons for wanting to live on campus centred on meeting the maximum number of new people, and the social aspects of living with others, as ‘everyone was in the same boat and it was easy to get to know everyone’ (I30, Male, C-GT-GT). This is reinforced by Ford et al. 2002: 2465), who state that ‘the student pathway
carries cultural expectations of shared and/ or communal living with an identifiable lifestyle’. Living in university halls was often seen as a home away from home, with the majority of students living away from their parental home for the first time:

'I think it’s nerve racking enough moving away from home for the first time, I think that the whole hall experience with your hall chair and people to look up to and looking after you and you’ve got freshers who are in exactly the same position all around you…

Sure. And what was the best thing about living in Butler in first year? Friends/ making good friends who are in the same boat. And always being busy. Your hall kept you busy the whole time so you didn’t have time to feel homesick. That was one thing that I noticed in those first 2 weeks that I was so tired or drunk I didn’t really have time to feel homesick. I think that was the best thing’ (I37, Female,C-KF-KF).

Very few students explicitly discussed feeling homesick when they started university. This is interesting, as there are many public sources that offer advice to students about how to beat ‘freshers’ blues’ (O’Mahony 2012). Whilst this was the case, many did infer that they felt more comfortable living on campus when they arrived, which again linked to meeting others in the same situation. Some students made decisions about which hall to live in on their own, but for others parental and familial influence was pivotal in their choice of hall. Parental influence in university choice has been debated in public forums (The Student Room 2014), with many students arguing their relative independence in choosing their university - something which was largely replicated in the accounts of participants within this thesis. Nonetheless, other students highlighted their parents to have played a key role in their accommodation decisions; ‘It didn't matter to me but I think my parents wanted me to be on campus because they felt that they’d have more security and stuff. So it gave them peace of mind that I was on campus’ (I23, Female,C-C-A).
Many psychologists have explored the anxiety that parents experience when their children leave home (Kins et al. 2011), and it seems that for students such as I23, parents played a key role in choosing accommodation, perhaps because ‘halls of residence are the default option for most first-year undergraduates living away from home. They are seen by both students and parents as safe, affordable, sociable and well-run’ (Bray 2013: 1).

Parental and familial involvement in choosing accommodation ranged from ‘my parents chose it for me because I was away travelling and couldn’t do it myself’ (I14, Male, C-C-GT), and ‘I’m not very good at cooking and my mum thought it (living in catered halls) would be the best thing for me!’ (I39, Female, C-GT-KF), to ‘I’m the only person in my family who’s ever gone to uni so she (Grandma) wanted to pay for it’ (I13, Male, C-C-C). It is perhaps not surprising that parents were involved in the choice of hall, when one considers that 26 of the 59 students had financial help from their parents/family in some way to pay for their accommodation, with 18 students having their parents pay for their accommodation completely. Students in this thesis all began study before the new fee structure was introduced in 2012 (Richardson 2011; Vasagar 2012), and in future it may be necessary to investigate the impacts that this has had on student accommodation decisions. Early reports seem to suggest that there has been a rise in the ‘stay at home’ student, due to the rising costs of HE (Tobin 2011; Marsh 2014; Chorley 2013), which may have significant implications for the student accommodation sector as a whole.

At the same time as desiring to live in halls of residence, most students were adamant that residing in the private-rented sector would prohibit their integration into university life:

‘I just wanted to meet people. I wanted the experience of meeting everybody and then whereas if I had a house it’s very selective and I would have been a bit secluded I think’ (I15, Female, C-C-GT)
‘Living in a house in first year would have been awful! You just wouldn’t meet anyone and it would be like being thrown in at the deep end in terms of bills and stuff!’ (I59, Female, C-GT-C)

Loughborough University advertises that it will accommodate all first year students who select Loughborough University as their firm choice (Loughborough University Accommodation Centre 2014), in halls of residence. This is often viewed as an appealing attribute, by both prospective students and their parents. To this end, very few students acknowledged the private-rented sector as a viable accommodation option in their first year. Some students stated that they would have lived in the private rented sector, but only if halls of residence were not available:

‘Only if I couldn’t get a place in hall. I thought it was important getting a place in halls being a fresher, having to make mates, not knowing anyone, I thought it would be easier to do that. So I wouldn’t have unless I really had to’ (I58, Male, C-KF-C)

Largely, students were more enthused by halls of residence in their first year, as opposed to specifically not wanting to live in the private rented sector. After students had made the decision to live on campus, there were several overlapping factors that were considered when choosing a specific university hall. Two aspects, catering facilities and hall location, will now be discussed in relation to choice of hall. Both were found to be influential in students’ decision-making, at both the initial and latter stages in student accommodation pathways.

7.2.3 Catering
An interview with an Accommodation Advisor at Loughborough Accommodation Centre revealed that approximately 85% of students who apply for university halls of residence in first year wish to be in self-catered accommodation. Nationally, there has been a decline in the number of catered halls of residence (National Union of Students 2013b), although this varies across institutions, with some investing in new build catered accommodation. Loughborough
University provides approximately a 50:50 split, with 2371 catered and 2456 self-catered bed spaces in 2013. This demonstrates that not all students got their first choice of accommodation in terms of catering facilities, and this will now be discussed.

Many students stated that self-catered was their first choice for accommodation, suggesting that it offered more freedom and allowed them to gain more independence: ‘we’re 18 years old, in my opinion we should just learn to cook whether we know how to or not’ (I12, Female, C-C-C). Some students wanted to make the break away from home, and saw self-catered accommodation as one way in which they would do this. These students often referred to catered halls being like ‘school dinners’ (I43, Male, C-A-A), noting that both the quality and the regulation of meal times would emulate their school experiences. One student wanted self-catered accommodation, but ended up in Faraday (a catered hall); her viewpoint is particularly interesting:

‘Ummm, I think it might have been to do with, because my sister is two years older than me and she went to uni and she was self-catered … And also I’m quite fussy so I didn't think I’d like the food very much, like school dinners and stuff, I wasn’t really that keen on. So I think I was like oh it will be easier to eat like that. But it turned out to be like the best thing ever! Like I would definitely recommend catered now after being there!’ (I45, Female, C-GT-GT).

As noted earlier, this student was not the only one who wanted to be in self-catered accommodation, but what the extract above demonstrates is a change of opinion based on the social aspects of dining. Whilst students were divided on their opinion of the quality of the food in catered accommodation, all clearly stated that they enjoyed the social aspect of the dining hall. For others, the familiarity and structure that catered accommodation offered was seen as one of its main attractions: ‘I thought living away from home it was easier and my mum thought it was easier as well - I didn’t have to worry about food’ (I58, Male, C-KF-C). A sense of comfort and familiarity within social groups is
discussed by Schrieff *et al.* (2010), and although they discuss this in terms of racial groups, this thesis found that students tended to sit with others from their floor or flats. Loughborough University has a predominantly white student population and it appears that the ‘whiteness’ of students at Loughborough has made them fairly unaware of ethnic differences, with non-white UK student groups also being normalised. Distinctions were only made in relation to UK and international student status.

For others catering type ‘wasn’t high up on my list of considerations, I guess obviously catered would be a bit more (money). I guess I prefer to cook than have to wait for specific meal times and possibly miss meals and stuff like that’ (I11, Male, C-C-C). Interestingly, many students who lived in self-catered halls made the observation that catered accommodation is undoubtedly more expensive than self-catered options. A national study found that the average cost of university accommodation saw a full board ensuite room at £171.72 per week, compared to £122.81 for a self-catered ensuite room, in 2012-13 (National Union of Students 2013b: 14). The initial cost often was seen as a deterrent to students residing in self-catered accommodation, whilst students living in catered accommodation often felt they were able to eat better in university halls in relative cost terms.

Whilst catering type was the initial differentiation students made, they did not simply identify the university hall they wished to live in by catering type alone. Often, they desired a particular location on campus, as well as the catering type. Indeed, for some, the location was the main consideration.

### 7.2.4 Location

Location was thought about in two ways. The first group of students were particularly concerned with living in the ‘Student Village’, a cluster of new and old-build university halls which can be seen on the campus map in Appendix 10. The second group of students placed location in relation to their course as the most important factor. Location of student housing in the private-rented sector has long been discussed (Smith and Holt 2004), with a general acceptance that
students like to live in areas located close to campus and the city/town centre. Loughborough University boasts the largest single-site campus in the country (Loughborough University 2014c), and for first year students, the location of their hall on the campus was important.

**Living in the student village**

The Student Village was viewed by many as the desirable place to live. In keeping with the rhetoric of university being about meeting new people from diverse backgrounds (Schrieff *et al.* 2010), students at Loughborough University saw the Student Village as the place where this was most likely to happen:

*And why was it important to be in the student village?*

Because it feels like the centre of everything. It feels like the centre of the bubble doesn't it?! And I dunno I didn't want to be anywhere else to start with I wanted to be in the thick of everything... I dunno, looking from the outside it seemed like the best place to be! As a fresher that was my opinion. I think a lot of people felt like that to be honest. (I26, Male, C-GT-C)

The extract above puts particular emphasis on the Student Village as a hub of social activity, and whilst for this particular student it was also located close to his lectures, for others the perceived social benefits outweighed everything else: ‘even though it was furthest away from my course, there was a hall closer, I picked the social over my course just cos yeah just cos of the uni experience’ (I33, Female, C-GT-GT). This student emphasises that ‘university accommodation are also sites of interaction’ (Paltridge *et al.* 2010: 357), and this point will be further seen in the experiences of students in university halls of residence throughout this chapter.

Studentification literature often discusses ‘student enclaves’ in relation to the private-rented sector (Hubbard 2008; Sage *et al.* 2012a). It appears that a similar concept could be applied in relation to the Student Village, with
conceptualisations of it being the place to be: ‘I just thought everyone would want to live in the village and loads of people were gonna be there. I wanted to be part of the fun’ (I57, Female, C-GT-C). Students often felt that there was a negative view of their accommodation if they weren’t in the Student Village.

In opposition to this, some students actively avoided the Student Village: ‘I just thought there was a lot of halls in a small area so I thought the noise levels and stuff. I’m a completely different person compared to when I came to university now. I think that kind of impacted a bit that I wanted to be off campus, ensuite…’ (I27, Female, C-GT-C). For this student, the thought of living in the Student Village was not appealing, and one student who lived in Elvyn Richards in first year was adamant that it was ‘too noisy!’ (I4, Male, C-C-C). Students quite noticeably differentiated between different types of students living in different university-provided halls, with some halls having strong stereotypes. This point will be further enhanced throughout, with links to class becoming more apparent within participants’ accounts of their own student experiences later in the chapter.

At the other end of the spectrum, many students actively avoided the Holt Hall, which was the university hall located furthest away from campus. In 2013/14, the Holt was removed as a university-provided hall and is now privately managed by Unite. One student chose to move from Elvyn to the Holt (I4, Male, C-C-C) for mainly academic reasons. Many students wanted to find a hall that was located advantageously for both their social and academic life: ‘it was close enough to the union and to my department and obviously it’s much more social. There’s stuff available, the library’s near to it and you have the purple onion (Student’s Union shop), everything is in the same place’ (I44, Female, C-GT-GT). Getting the balance between social life and proximity to their academic department was more possible for some than for others, and for some being close to their department was pivotal and will now be discussed.
Location of hall in relation to subject department

Whilst the majority of students were keen to live in the Student Village, there were some students who notably placed the location of their hall in relation to their department as the key priority. Interestingly, these students tended to be from three main disciplines: Engineering, Sports Science and English. All these departments are located at either end of the university campus, as can be seen on the campus map in Appendix 10. Loughborough University has a central location where the majority of lectures are held, but importantly, the above disciplines are more likely to have lectures within their departments. This may explain why the students were more conscious of their department's location when choosing a hall to live in for first year.

Butler Court was popular amongst students studying English: ‘When me and my mum looked round I was doing English and English is right next to Butler Court. And we only looked at Butler, I didn't know the village existed till I came at freshers’ (I37, Female, C-KF-KF), and ‘I did English which was on that side of campus so that decided which halls and I applied for Butler and got it.’ (I42, Male, C-KF-KF), and amongst others;

‘I called up the student accommodation centre and I asked where would be a close hall to the sports and exercise science lectures and sports facilities. They said that every hall was equally close to everywhere because everything was spread out across campus which actually it turned out the Butler was one of the closest halls to the sport and exercise science department’ (I11, Male, C-C-C).

The students above make interesting points, which are worth further discussion in relation to the role that both their parents and Loughborough University Accommodation Centre have in shaping where students choose to live. As discussed earlier, halls are often seen as the preferred accommodation for first year students. The extracts above demonstrate students who make decisions as an individual, those with their parents, and those who use external agencies to aid their choice. The final student (I11) above is an interesting case,
as he was the only one who stated he actively sought advice from the Accommodation Centre before choosing his university hall. This service can in part be linked to similarities in the private rented sector, where students are dependent on landlords and letting agents who shape their consequent accommodation decisions (Smith 2005). Crucially, Loughborough University Accommodation Centre has a monopoly on allocating accommodation on campus, and this power must not be underplayed. At the same time, the majority of other participants had limited contact with the Accommodation Centre, which mainly centred on them not getting their first choice of accommodation and trying to change, although most were unsuccessful in this endeavour.

At the opposite end of campus, the Student Village and David Collett appear to be the most popular halls for Engineers. When asked why they chose a particular hall, responses included: ‘simply because it was close to my engineering department. It was catered, I didn’t have to cook, at least in the weekdays and it looked good (I1, Male, C-C-C), ‘mainly because of its location, because it was close to engineering’ (I7, Male, C-C-C). Interestingly, Engineering was the most cited subject in terms of shaping where students chose to live throughout their degree - both by those studying the subject, and students of other disciplines. All students identified this group of students by the higher number of contact hours associated with most Engineering undergraduate degrees (Unistats 2014), as well as the location at the end of the West Park of the university campus. Whilst degree subject was important in shaping campus geographies, it played a more substantial role in the stratification of students in the private rented sector. This will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 8.

7.3 Student Experience in First Year
7.3.1 Running for committee and getting involved: growing social networks
Being involved in their hall community was an important aspect of university life for several participants of this thesis. Building social networks is a key element
of residing in halls of residence (Sawir et al. 2008), and several students took considerable advantage of the hall committee structure at Loughborough University to enable them to build extensive networks. As opposed to being elected at the start of an academic year, Hall Committee Elections take place in November and February, with half the committee changing in each election to allow for continuity across years. Running for a hall committee, and getting involved, were assumed by most students to be the key way to meet people whilst at university:

‘I liked the idea of coming from a person who’s quite outgoing, quite wanted to be known. It was a popularity kind of thing, I wanted to be on committee because everyone knew who they were and it was a good way of just throwing yourself straight into it and you had to meet people and then you had to go and talk to people. It was the easiest way of getting to know people’ (I21, Male, C-C-KF).

Whilst the student above recognises their own personal reasons for wanting to be on a committee, several students who ran for positions discussed the influence that the previous committee members had on how they got involved:

‘I was always going to get involved but I was lucky enough to be in a flat with a lot of second years that were on committee at the time. In our flat there were 3 or 4 committee members… They sort of dragged me along and said do it and I really enjoyed it massively…I think that one of the things when you come to uni is there are so many opportunities there. If you close the door on things then you are missing out, you’re missing the opportunity to meet new people, to find yourself, be confident’ (I22, Male, C-C-KF).

‘I literally loved freshers, I always wanted to throw myself into the Loughborough experience. And then gradually I wanted to become more and more involved, committee looked really fun. I’d known people who
had gone for committee the year before and they all said it was really fun’ (I17, Female, C-C-GT).

Student experiences during ‘freshers’ were integral to student discourses about what they enjoyed most during their time in hall. In international contexts, induction or orientation weeks typically replace ‘freshers weeks’. The role of these initial events presents students with the opportunity to socialise and acquaint themselves with others in their hall of residence (Paltridge et al. 2010). Loughborough University appears to have been particularly successful in this endeavour, with all students but one (I4) citing positive experiences of this time in their university lifecourse. The socialisation of students with older students also shaped first year students’ decisions to get involved with hall committees.

The role of hall committee and fresher helpers in shaping their experience, and their desire to be involved, was made very clear:

‘I made really good friends like with fresher helpers and they encouraged you to do everything. We had a really, really good committee our year… But yeah just the committee really encouraged you because your friends would do it so you would as well’ (I42, Male, C-KF-KF).

These students had a clear idea of running for committee, and for others the notion of ‘giving back’ (I24, Female, C-C-GT) was integral to their decision to run for a committee position: ‘I really enjoyed living in Butler and I made friends and I wanted to give something back I guess. I ran for sports sec and became sports sec and I just wanted to help out and continue to be a part of the hall’ (I11, Male, C-C-C). Psychologists have argued that a sense of community is strongest in students who live on campus (Lounsbury and DeNeui 1996), and this sense of community was important to participants. Students often ran for positions with which they felt a particular affinity, such as volunteering, fundraising or sports.
Within discussions of community, it is important to recognise that many students were involved in hall life without running for committee positions. They attributed this largely to:

‘the social aspect, it’s why I wanted to be in halls in the first place cos its where you make all your friends, you spend a really good year with people and you get to know some people really well but a lot of people quite well. So not only do you make a group of close friends but you make a lot of friends and it is just a great way to settle in’ (I26, Male, C-GT-C).

Students often stated, ‘I didn't know anyone when I came to university so thought I would throw myself into it’ (I19, Female, C-GT-KF). In most cases where this had been the aim, students felt they had successfully gained a considerable social network:

‘you move in on your first night and you get to know people in your flat and go out with them for the whole of freshers week and then by the end of freshers week you’ve got a group of thirty, forty something people that you can go and see. And then you develop your close friends from there’ (I28, Male, C-GT-C).

This has been replicated in other studies, which emphasise the role of university halls of residence in facilitating the accrual and growth of social networks with peers (Sawir et al. 2008). This student makes an important point about friendships, which will be touched upon throughout this chapter.

Students often acknowledged that through living in halls of residence, they knew a large array of people, but most also had a closer friendship group within that set. Halls of residence play a crucial role in forming first year friendships, as one student highlights:
'Elvyn was like a family when I first came. When I first came it was like a family, including my flat but yeah we had a big social group. Because we were all living together and stuff we didn't really feel like we needed anything else. Everything was there and socially it was just really good. Yeah it was an Elvyn community really' (I22, Male, C-C-KF).

It was often these friends that students lived with in the next year, as the propinquity students felt towards their peers in hall was unrivalled by any other group of students to which they belonged such as their course or a society. Knowing such large groups of peers created a positive and socially productive environment for students who were involved in hall activities.

### 7.3.2 Inclusion and Exclusion

The students in the previous section found getting involved and becoming assimilated within their hall culture fairly straightforward, and as a result acquired significant and substantial social networks. This section will focus on the group of students who felt socially excluded whilst living in halls of residence, who also see the large ‘involved’ student group discussed in the previous section as cliquey, and often elitist in nature.

Many students acknowledged that if you didn't get involved in hall activities then you were missing out:

‘I guess everyone who does get involved knows everyone so it makes it a lot easier for social situations and stuff if you’ve already done different things with each other and gone to different places with each other. I think it’s a lot easier than if you haven’t it makes it a lot easier to find that common ground I think’ (I38, Female, C-GT-GT).

They viewed hall involvement as a considerable benefit of their university experience, and regardless of where they went on to live, reminisced fondly of their time in halls of residence: ‘I absolutely loved halls, absolutely loved it. I had such a good year’ (I36, Female, C-KF-KF).
In contrast to the American context, whereby students select a fraternity or sorority based on interests and activities, UK students do not necessarily choose a hall based on a particular hall culture, but choose a hall based on facilities and location, as seen in the first part of this chapter. The associated social life of a hall is very rarely known when students make their choices, but at Loughborough, all students living in university halls pay a ‘hall fee’ to the hall committee to run hall activities. This fee ranges from £56 in Hazlerigg Rutland, to £110 in Telford Hall (Loughborough Students Union 2013). This fee is compulsory for all first year students, regardless of how much they choose to participate in hall events. For students who are heavily involved in these activities, this fee offers value for money and the opportunity to participate in events with their extended network of acquaintances. For others, however, its full benefit is rarely realised.

A minority of students felt excluded by their hall committee, stating things such as, ‘I think the committee in that hall (Falkner-Eggington) was quite inclusive, they all knew each other and they tended to organise events for themselves, for their little group. Even if it didn’t necessarily translate to the wider hall community’ (I23, Female, C-C-A), and ‘I thought it was a bit cliquey with like the committee because at mealtimes the committee would sit together and they wouldn’t mingle with the other students’ (I51, Male, C-GT-C).

Participants within these ‘cliques’ were very aware of the opportunities available in the hall. Cliques were not formed on the basis of a particular social background or characteristic but often the involvement of the student in hall and university activities. They knew how to gain access to events by knowing committee members - ‘the Action rep was a really good friend of mine and he was like get involved here, here and here’ (I27, Female, C-GT-C) - or being part of a group that socialised together:

‘it was always the same pre-drinks in the same places with the same people or there’d be someone’s birthday, every week there was someone’s birthday so you’d go to that flat and then you’d have punch
parties sometimes and just different things like that. You’d just all go to the union and there would be this crowd of people going to the union all the time’ (Male, C-C-KF).

‘The same strong ties that help members of a group often enable it to exclude others’, according to Engstrand and Stam (2002: 360). This can certainly be seen in the case of students at Loughborough. Whilst the students above felt included, others ‘didn’t especially enjoy it, it didn’t appeal to me. It was very loud, shouty, quite cliquey’ (I4, Male, C-C-C). These are obvious examples of the ways in which students felt excluded in social situations, but this also extended to other hall activities: ‘I felt a bit intimidated by the sport. Because I’m literally recreational, basic sports so I think even IMS is very, very competitive’ (I25, Female, C-C-A). IMS is advertised as a recreational inter-hall sporting competition, but students commented on the fact that students at Loughborough are ‘more sporty on average than most unis’ (I14, Male, C-C-GT), which prevented students such as the one above participating in activities.

7.3.3 Class based differences
Social class was highlighted within Chapter 5 to influence where students studied and the accommodation type they might live in. Although social class was not available within Chapter 6, it does re-emerge within interview responses. These class based differences led some students to simply feel that they were dissimilar to their peers, with one student in particular stating:

‘The people that I lived with. I lived with finalists that went to private boarding schools, prestige ones. I’ve never been exposed to really, really rich people, like where I’m from and where the school I went to, we didn’t have that. I just think coming here, I just couldn’t understand their attitudes and how blasé they’d be about things. They’d come in from a night out and just leave their food everywhere and they wouldn’t think to clean it up because I think in their minds it was someone else position to do that. I just clashed really badly with them because I just wasn’t used to it. I’d come from a completely different background, completely
different views and ways we’d go about things and I just clashed big time with them… I think that there is a hierarchy but there is in every hall as oppose to just Towers. I think you’ve got the people who are very well off, who’ve been to this school, to that school right down to people whose parents don’t earn half as much as theirs do and went to a state school. I think in every hall you get a hierarchy’ (I25, Female, C-C-A).

This student signifies considerable differences between her background, and those of her peers. This may be related to the findings of the typology in Chapter 5 which suggest students from lower-income backgrounds may be in the minority at Loughborough. Many of the feelings she expresses within this extract are representative of fears highlighted in other studies, particularly surrounding the experiences of working class students. She clearly highlights class-based differences in her reference to private-boarding schools, and her peers’ inability to clean up after themselves. This student represents some of the social differences that can be encountered in halls of residence. As noted earlier, not all students get their first choice of accommodation, and this student is someone whose experience suffered as a result of being placed in an expensive hall.

For this particular student, her inability or lack of desire to ‘fit in’ with other students on her floor led to her making friends elsewhere, and moving halls of residence in her second year to try and have the experience she felt she had missed out on in her first year. These coping mechanisms were found by Lehmann (2012), who states that working-class students have different attitudes in becoming acculturated into the university environment. The cost of Towers Hall was seen to reinforce social inequalities (Archer et al. 2005) between those who could afford it and those who had to work to pay for it, such as I25. Having to work whilst at university is not uncommon, and has been highlighted as a problem in balancing studies and work life (Reay et al. 2010). 38 participants in this study had to work during holidays or in term-time, with those working in term-time acknowledging that it was out of necessity.
Although some student accounts may have been based on clear differences between working-class and middle-class backgrounds, others highlight that there may be fractions within middle-class student groups. This scale of both economic and social capital was noted by several students, who when considering their NS-SEC background would themselves be seen as middle-class. Students were able to identify ‘types’ of people that live in different halls, and the way they imagined students in other halls was fuelled by different things, such as freshers week chants and hall rivalries, but predominantly centred around money - with the most expensive and the cheapest halls being easily identified by students.

‘With halls like Elvyn, Rigg Rutt and Bakewell it’s very much the stereotype of mummy and daddy have paid it all. With Falk-Egg it’s completely the other way where it’s not a very nice hall and you obviously don’t have as much money as the people who are living in Elvyn and Bakewell. And then I think the Village halls don’t have as much of that but then when you actually look at them they are quite expensive but then you do get all your meals chucked in and that sort of thing’ (I44, Female, C-GT-GT).

This sense of contrast is important, as many students in first year acknowledged that, ‘there is a lot of hall loyalty in this place. You always find that you make a lot of friends in one hall and it shapes your experience’ (I26, Male, C-GT-C). Lots of students did not come into contact with many students from other halls, so these ideas were firmly established in their psyche, and influenced who they socialised with, creating a unique social bubble around their hall and its activities that resulted in several students staying in campus accommodation in subsequent years.

In contrast to the presence of class-based differences within participant accounts there is a noticeable silence within interviews. Ethnicity was rarely mentioned within student accounts of their accommodation experiences. The sample within this thesis was predominantly white and this is reflected in the
households in which they lived. Whiteness was normalised and invisible within student accounts and this form of privilege went largely unrecognised by students within this thesis. The only way ethnicity was clearly highlighted was in relation to international students and this will be discussed in Chapter 8.

Class-based distinctions will also be touched upon more in Chapter 8, with it being seen to play a significant role, in the eyes of participants, in shaping student accommodation decisions. It should be recognised that other students did not acknowledge this level of exclusion, and this female student was one of two interviewed who moved halls in their second year. Other students had a strong allegiance to their individual hall, and had become so inculcated in their hall environment that moving to or living in another hall would have been, as one student insisted, ‘treason’ (I3, Male, C-C-C). When comparing this section and the previous one, the illumination of juxtaposing experiences is evident. However, further sections will move on from this to look at universal experiences and opinions amongst participants.

7.3.4 Living in the ‘bubble’: Student Perceptions of the Campus

Loughborough University campus is often termed the ‘bubble’ by students attending the university. The concept of a ‘bubble’ has been used within the student context, but more so to describe the concern in America over student debt (Davies and Harrigan 2012). In the case of Loughborough, the ‘bubble’ is a reference to a solely student space, which is largely conveyed as the campus. This bubble is safe, familiar and convenient, and enables students to satisfy most of their living needs.

Many students mentioned that they barely left the campus in their first year:

‘I’m not sure about Loughborough as a town when you’re a first year but then it’s in the first year that it really does feel like a bubble. It’s like living away from home but just within the campus, you’re still in a really protected environment I would say’ (I26, Male, C-GT-C).
This was supported by other students who stated:

‘There’s a sense of community, everyone’s quite like minded. I’ve gone out and got perilously drunk more times than I care to count and nothing bad has ever happened to me because it’s quite intimate and there’s campus security and everything’ (I47, Male, C-C-A).

Notions of living with ‘people like us’ (Butler 1997) are central in understanding student impressions of the ‘bubble’. This idea of being surrounded by like-minded people can be linked to Butler’s (2003: 1) proposal that contemporary gentrifiers are occupying different spaces to non-middle class groups. In this way, creating their own ‘bubble’ in Islington. Although different, the carving out of space to cater for a particular social group, in this case students, is important. Both students put forward the idea that they feel safe on campus surrounded by student peers (Kelly and Torres 2006). Findings from the typology suggest that students are likely to be surrounded by people like themselves in Loughborough; namely, white, young and affluent peers. Again, this notion of ‘community’ is cited, which further reinforces ideas of safety and commonality between Loughborough University students. This concept has been discussed in the context of international students, who were found to find university halls a secure environment (Paltridge et al. 2010). The example of I26 above also highlights the role accommodation plays in enabling a smooth transition from the parental home to university (Ford et al. 2002).

Other students’ ‘bubbles’ centred around their hall life:

‘In hall you’re in the Loughborough bubble so you don’t know how much, you’re just on campus, you’re just staying in your own hall’ (I55, Male, C-GT-A).

‘I didn't really go into town very much, I was in a proper bubble. Elvyn was a bubble, so I guess I missed out on a few opportunities to go into
town, like I would still have nights out but it would be with Elvyn people’ (I22, Male, C-C-KF).

This was not true of all students, with students living in off-campus halls noting that ‘we’ve got our on plot of land as it were, we’re not in the village living on top of each other where you can’t distinguish the halls. You know this is us, this is who we are, this is great!’ (I8, Male, C-C-C). This sense of space and place is important, with some students arguably feeling more immersed within some halls than others.

Halls have considerable importance in shaping friendship groups and student accommodation experiences, and this is strongly linked to hall allegiance, which has been hinted at in previous sections. Whilst the typology suggest students come from similar backgrounds at Loughborough University, this chapter does highlight that small differences in background can matter. Significantly, upon arrival students are placed in a hall of residence (which they may or may not have chosen) with other students from various places and social backgrounds. For the majority, this affiliation leads to a strong immersion in hall culture and social life. However, this manifests itself in different ways, and despite positive experiences in first year, not all students wish to stay living in the bubble, as will be seen in Chapter 8.

7.4 Second Year
In many cases, the choice to stay on campus in second year was related to students’ first year accommodation experiences. The main reasons for doing so are associated with students who were members of their hall committees, and their extended friendship groups. Second year was where the pivotal change in accommodation pathways occurred, with a sizeable proportion of students choosing to stay on campus in second year as opposed to moving into the private rented sector. The reasons for this will now be explored.
7.4.1 Hall Committee and friends

‘The people who did stay in halls were the people who got involved. Although we did get involved they were very, very involved and I’m guessing a lot of them were on committee so they had to stay and then a lot of their friends were like okay we’ll stay and I think that’s why they stayed pretty much and there was a lot of them so it was good’ (I38, Female, C-GT-GT).

As seen in the previous section, students who were involved often had much larger networks of acquaintances and friends. Students who were heavily involved in their halls and the student committees had the decision of staying in hall for second year made for them, but they often ran for committee alongside friends:

‘I was on committee, so second year I mainly stuck with the people who were on committee as well. Tom went on committee with me and we both lived with Terry so we chose to live with him and then the other three people were also on committee’ (I10, Male, C-C-C).

Collective accommodation decisions are important to student pathways, as negotiations take place amongst friendship groups that ultimately shape where students live. The influence of friendship groups has been looked at in terms of peer-pressure, particularly around alcohol consumption (Astudillo et al. 2013) and consumerism (Kurt et al. 2011). Within an accommodation context, the accrual of friends and growing social networks has been acknowledged (Sawir et al. 2008), but the impacts of these acquired friendship groups on students’ subsequent experiences have seen much less investigation.

Many participants within this thesis applied to live in hall for second year because of their committee friends. For these students living in hall in second year provided them with familiarity, and they often enjoyed being a known face: ‘I guess I had more experience, I guess it was easier to live there and not really problem at all so it was going smoothly so I decided to stay’ (I1, Male, C-C-C),
and ‘I was on committee so I kind of had an idea of what’s going on, it was
good fun when you’re on committee’ (I10, Male, C-C-C). For others it was
considerably simple:

*What was the main reason you decided to stay in Elvyn in second year?*

‘It was because I was on committee but I knew when I was going onto
committee that I would have to stay in halls and I was just completely
happy to do that because at the time I was loving it. Like I said it was
easy and I got to know loads of really nice people and yeah I was
popular so yeah it was just the best way to go really’ (I22, Male, C-C-KF).

For most students, running for a committee position automatically equated to
them living in hall for second year, and for some students, this was seen as an
added bonus: ‘I think why I applied for committee was you got a guaranteed
place in halls for next year’ (I47, Male, C-C-A). Students who were heavily
involved in hall in their first year knew a substantial proportion of their hall peers,
and had a strong sense of community. These students considered the campus
to be the ‘hub’ of their social lives and did not wish to leave in their second year.
Being a ‘hub seeker’ is something that can be seen within the accommodation
decision making processes of students who were friends with or a member of a
hall committee. This concept will me highlighted throughout this chapter and
Chapter 8 and alongside other student groups will be discussed in Chapter 9 in
greater detail. Students who were involved, but not responsible, often had
friends on committee, which can be seen as one of the contributing factors as
to why they became, and remained, involved in hall life in their first year. This
largest group of students knew several people in hall, but were torn when it
came to making their accommodation choice for second year. For some, having
friends on committee who had to remain living in hall in second year meant that
they also knew they were going to live in hall:

‘In first to second year, pretty much everyone applied to live in halls
again. Probably because there was that big, like massive sort of
community. It wasn’t like cliquey as such but it was literally like a group
of 100 people who all knew each other so we they all sort of wanted to stay in the same place’ (I6, Male, C-GT-KF).

Other involved students had enjoyed being in hall in their first year, but also had a smaller, closer friendship group with whom they wanted to move into a house in Loughborough. There is a longstanding sentiment that university is where ‘you meet your friends for life’ (Griffiths 2013). These students made friendships in many different ways throughout university, and the role of their hall of residence in facilitating this is undeniable in most cases. In hall was where the majority of students made their closest friends:

Why didn’t you want to live with other friends?
‘I just wasn’t as close with them, I didn't spend as much time with them as I did with people in hall. Hall activity in Royce was pretty intense so I didn't spend as much time meeting course friends. A lot of the boys that I was closest with on my course also were closer with their hall mates. So yeah I've always just been closer with my hall mates’ (I14, Male, C-C-GT).

7.4.2 The role of ‘community’ in staying
Second year is a key transitional time for university students, in terms of their accommodation pathways. Chapter 6 revealed that second year has seen the biggest change in where students are living, with growing numbers of students choosing to stay on campus. This section started with an acknowledgement, by I38, that it was the involved students who stayed. However, further distinctions were made by students, with regards to how involved they were:

‘It was a mixture really but interestingly the twenties blocks that we were in, the ones that were a little bit outside all moved into town and then most people who were in that main like square they’d stayed in Faraday. Just I think because their community was a bit closer to the community than we were and a lot were on committee and yeah so it was a huge mixture’ (I33, Female, C-GT-GT).
This is reinforced by:

‘I guess it was easy because we all... well a lot of them were running for committee, they wanted to stay in towers so we kind of had to stay in towers. Like a lot of them really wanted to stay here because a lot of them really like the social aspect, so I just kind of went along with it. I’d have been happy to get a house but I just went along with it’ (I9, Female, C-C-C).

Students involvement in hall activities really diverged in their second year, with some becoming more involved, and others distancing themselves from activities and focusing more on other aspects of university life, such as societies and their studies.

‘It was me and all my friends, actually there was three of us that would have liked to have got a house and we were like looking. But the majority didn’t and the three of us just thought well actually, what’s the point? There’s no point in going to a house, isolating ourselves from everyone if they’re all going to stay in hall so we just kind of thought well we’ll just stay in halls as well because everyone is’ (I18, Male, C-C-KF).

The participant above was keen to leave Robert Bakewell and move into the private rented sector, and this was very similar for many other involved students. The influence of friendships is crucial in understanding student accommodation pathways, especially from first to second year. The majority of students, when asked how they decided where they were going to live, often referred to ‘we’ or ‘us’, and rarely referred to their housing choices as an individual process.

7.4.3 Living with mixed years: Second year experiences
Loughborough University facilitates an interesting peer pastoral element within halls of residence, by allowing second year students to remain living in halls of residence. This was strongly discussed by students, and overall can be argued to have contributed to students having a positive experience of hall. Whilst in
first year, students drew upon their older peers for advice ('If we had any queries we could always ask them, they were kind of like our flat mums' (I23, Female, C-C-A)). Many found they took on this role in second year, becoming an ‘elder’ (I11, Male, C-C-C), or ‘go-to person’ (I22, Male, C-C-KF) for the new first year students.

For the majority of students, living in hall in second year was about meeting new people, but also developing stronger friendships with a core group of peers: ‘it was basically better than first year because you had friends but you were meeting new people as well’ (I17, Female, C-C-GT), and ‘[when] you’re on committee, everybody looks up to you… everyone wants to be your friend, so that’s always a good thing’ (I13, Male, C-C-C). This interaction with first year students replicated what these students themselves experienced in first year, well demonstrated by this student: ‘it’s a hierarchy thing. You move up one, you know the place’ (I7, Male, C-C-C).

The students above took this role as a key part of their second year experience, and one which they thoroughly enjoyed. For others, the arrival of new students meant that a new set of negotiations had to be undertaken.

‘I think that the people who stay there for their second year, the majority are on committee or have friends on committee. So when the new freshers arrive I think because they feel older. I think they’re ready to leave halls after that, because they feel like it’s not really their space anymore’ (I24, Female, C-C-GT).

Hall Wardens have different policies on how they allocate rooms in hall; some keep fresher students and returners separate, and others have mixed-year floors or flats. Students who lived in mixed flats often found the age gap was a noticeable problem: ‘people who are in their first year are very, very rowdy’ (I18, Male, C-C-KF); ‘The mess of the freshers! And having to continuously clean up after them. They just had no concept of looking after themselves’ (121, Male, C-C-KF). These were common complaints amongst
second years, and ultimately for many students, ‘the youngness of the new freshers was becoming more apparent and the new committee were all first years and I just started to notice the difference as I got to the end of second year’ (I20, Male, C-C-KF).

The change over second year was apparent for many students, but some found that they ‘felt more part of the hall in second year’ (I23, Female, C-C-A). For some this led to heavier involvement in their hall committee and hall activities, which consequently meant they applied to live in halls of residence in their final year. For others, the decreased involvement in hall after their committee term had ended led to them moving into the private rented sector. There was a considerable transition of students from heavily involved to much less, and in some cases, almost completely uninvolved in hall life. But there were still a number of students who chose to live in halls of residence in their third and final year of study. The next section looks at the reasons for this.

7.5 Third Year
This section will focus on the students living on campus in their final year of study. Importantly, students moving back into halls of residence from the private rented sector, as well as those students who have stayed for all three years of study, will now be discussed. By doing so, this chapter will highlight both the similarities and differences between these two groups. This section first reinforces the importance of hall committees in student accommodation decisions on campus, and then goes on to look at how students experience growing older in a similar environment, and the role placements play in shaping final year accommodation decisions.

7.5.1 Hall Committees and their friends
‘They got involved. It’s as simple as that. They’ve been on committee, they love the hall, that’s why they stay for three years’ (I8, Male, C-C-C).

Considerably fewer students stayed in hall in third year in comparison to second year. As seen in second year, the main reason for staying in third year
centred around hall committees but interestingly this was often more linked to meeting students in lower years which shaped their accommodation experience as they made friends with committee members and ‘didn’t want to leave her on her own’ (I9, Female, C-C-C). This was a common feeling amongst students, who often found their ‘friends were running for committee again, the same set of friends as last year, they went from one position to another’ (I9, Female, C-C-C). The majority of students in this instance were friends with committee members, as opposed to being on the committee themselves.

For those students who had remained on committee, they were now Chair of the Hall Committee, and ‘Returner’s Rep’. This shows their progression from other positions, and also highlights their seniority within the hall. There were advantages noted with holding these positions, such as:

‘I was Returner’s Rep in the third year until November. Mainly because when you’re on committee you don’t have to pay hall subs. You get a few perks. It seemed like the obvious thing to do really. Like I never really thought about living in a house. It’s just convenient’ (I10, Male, C-C-C).

‘I can do a 9-5 with revision or whatever but then in the evening I can do sports or socials or whatever so I’d say probably that yeah it keeps you involved, you’re not allowed to just drift out and it makes me want to stay at uni, it doesn’t make me want to leave at all because I’ve enjoyed it!’ (I3, Male, C-C-C).

These students chose to be on committee for the final year, and also stated that they would have stayed in hall regardless of whether they held a committee position or not. They felt that they had built up a rapport with the staff, knew the hall well, and moreover found the campus location to be convenient for their student lifestyle - as will now be discussed.
7.5.2 Convenience

‘Regardless of whether I’d got on committee or not I would have stayed in hall because it was very convenient’ (I3, Male, C-C-C).

Convenience was viewed as the one major advantage of halls of residence, in comparison to the private rented sector. Living on campus was convenient for a host of activities that students were involved in. This was predominantly seen in relation to the close proximity of halls to campus facilities; for some, these were for sports:

‘it was convenient and closer to all the facilities and stuff but for example I have football training at 7.30 in the morning and I’m not saying I wouldn’t have been able to do it in town but I would have had to wake up earlier and found it more difficult to do that than in hall’ (I11, Male, C-C-C).

The majority of students mentioned convenience in terms of proximity to the educational facilities (‘I wanted to be nearer to lectures, nearer to the library, just the convenience of it really’ (I53, Female, C-GT-C)). This perhaps represents a change from their first year - when their desire to live in hall stemmed from primarily social aspects - to their final year, where many acknowledged that, ‘I’m a finalist so I would have to be in the library quite a lot’ (I27, Female, C-GT-C). This point will be further discussed in Section 7.5.4.

A feature that often intersected with convenience was the idea that the hall environment was familiar and offered continuity, especially to students who had lived on campus for their first two years.

‘Mainly because it’s convenient. I think there’s a good family feel to the hall, especially with the staff and the students get on really well. We all see each other quite often cos our flats are next door. It’s like you just live with the same people for three years which is also good’ (I10, Male, C-C-C).
‘I didn't need the hassle in final year, it was important. I needed some sort of familiarity; somewhere I was absolutely happy with’ (I8, Male, C-C-C).

Participants exhibited strong senses of ‘ontological security’ (Giddens 1991) within their accounts, and this plays an integral role in understanding the relationship between students and their hall of residence. Students had a strong sense of belonging to their hall of residence and wider hall community, and this has been acknowledged throughout this chapter. By third year, students portray a sense of nostalgia in relation to their time in hall, as well as a deep connection with the accommodation itself, the staff who work there, and their peers. In this sense, it is clear to see why they are often reluctant or unwilling to leave in their final year, displaying high levels of affinity with their living environment. This reinforces Holton and Riley (2013: 63), who state that ‘student accommodation has shifted from its earliest form of ‘somewhere to live’’. Participants demonstrate an attachment to their hall of residence based on their living experience, and Chapter 8 will illuminate how this is replicated in the private rented sector, although arguably more in relation to the accommodation itself than the living community.

From participants’ perspectives, halls of residence offered the best working environment for them in their third year. With this said, it was often not as easy as they had thought, due to living with lower year groups where, ‘the majority of them don't care that much about their degree, obviously being a first year… So they will run around screaming and making noise and just generally being annoying’ (I11, Male, C-C-C). Whilst this is a very sweeping statement, many students acknowledged a changing dynamic as they progressed through university. This will be explored in Section 7.5.4.

7.5.3 The influence of placements on moves back to campus
The way student experiences and priorities change have been hinted at throughout this chapter. One of the ways in which some students choose to
progress is by taking an industrial placement, most commonly in their third year. This section explores the relationship between placements and university halls of residence. Placements have been discussed within scholarship, but the focus has been on the motivations for taking industrial placements, and subsequent learning outcomes and degree qualifications (Mandilaras 2004; Mendez 2008). Little is known about those students who wish to undertake a placement and are unsuccessful or the impact for friends who are left behind.

Participants revealed two ways in which placements had shaped their accommodation decisions. Moreover, there is a notable absence in the exploration of the experiences of students who do not get placements, and the friends of those who do. The first was a group of students who had considered going on placement themselves, but had been unsuccessful in securing one. The second group had their living situation changed by housemates leaving to go on placement. University halls of residence offered both these groups an element of security and familiarity, which will now be discussed.

It was easier for students to terminate a contract with Campus Living, something which often made it a popular choice amongst students considering placements:

‘When I realised I was a bit late to sort out a placement I had to sort out accommodation and I applied to halls, sort of like a back-up cos I knew I would enjoy it and if I found someone to live with then I would just lose my deposit’ (I26, Male, C-GT-C).

Other student groups shared this sentiment when it came to third year:

‘I applied for placements for the third year. It was kind of whether or not I got them, it’s difficult because you have to make a commitment to live somewhere and then if you end up not living there you sort of have ramifications to deal with. I think that probably influenced my decision a little bit in that it would be easier to pull out of a hall contract than to pull out of a house contract’ (I11, Male, C-C-C-C).
Third year accommodation on campus offers students familiarity, but the application process also seems to offer students more flexibility than if they lived in the private rented sector, where signing a contract commits them to paying rent for the entirety of the following academic year.

The second way that students were affected by placements were those whose housemates chose to undertake one. Many students who had moved into the private rented sector in second year subsequently found that their housemates were not going to be residing in Loughborough in their final year. Often, this was the case for several housemates, leaving them to make individual accommodation decisions or decide where to live with just one other friend:

‘So two of the girls I was living with were going on placement and it was just me and one other friend. Our best friend was on committee in Rutherford and they were staying for their third year and we just wanted to be together. And I also wanted to be nearer to the library, just the convenience of it really’ (I53, Female, C-GT-C).

Despite Chapter 6 suggesting that students who move back onto campus move into a different hall, the majority of interview participants returned to their first year hall of residence. Having existing networks of friends who had remained on campus was pivotal in persuading students to move back onto campus in their third year. Having access to an immediate friendship group made the process less daunting: ‘the majority of my friends had been in halls and were in halls for 3 years so I thought I’d go back’ (I52, Male, C-GT-C). Others indicated that by moving back into hall with their friends, they could get more from their university experience: ‘I started speaking to a lot of my hall mates who were still on committee and stuff like that and they were planning on staying and I just liked the idea of moving back into halls again, getting the most out of my final year’ (I28, Male, C-GT-C). In this way, students who had friends living in hall were able to make a fairly smooth transition back into halls of residence.
Placements also affected students residing in the private rented sector, something that will be explored in Chapter 8 and then briefly discussed within Chapter 9. This chapter now moves onto the experiences of third year students.

7.5.4 Hall experience in third year; balancing work and social life

‘I think that most people by the time they get to third year realise that halls is a place to have fun and socialise and actually when you get to your final year that’s just not an option. You have to crack down and get on with things’ (144, C-GT-GT).

This student aptly summarises the opinion several participants expressed in their final year of study: that halls of residence are not the place for students in their final year to live. The noticeable age difference between first year students and returning students has been acknowledged in section 7.5.2, and this section aims to build upon those comments. Students had mixed opinions on whether halls were suitable accommodation for students in their final year. In this way, whilst many who lived in halls of residence can be deemed as ‘hub seekers’ wanting to live in the centre of the action, others found this more difficult to manage. For some, halls of residence provided considerable distractions:

‘Obviously it’s good in terms of you can get involved in everything again but in your third year you’re supposed to take work first and it can be quite hard to do when you’ve got a piece of coursework which as a fresher you would have just blown off and a bunch of freshers are going out. They’re your friends so you feel like you should do the same thing and then you realise that you shouldn’t do the same things, you should do some work’ (126, Male, C-GT-C).

At points this was both welcomed and, as 126 demonstrates, seen as a considerable hindrance to their productivity levels. This was replicated in the accounts of other participants, who found that they shut themselves away from
younger students in order to complete dissertation projects and other final year work.

On the other hand, some participants found the experience of living with another year group to be much more positive:

‘I think it’s fantastic because there comes a point where age doesn't matter anymore. It’s nice cos it gets you into more of a real world situation that there’s going to be people from all walks of life, of all ages and you’re going to get on so why not deal with it now’ (I8, Male, C-C-C).

Whatever their opinion on living with other year groups, compromise was a key element of living in hall in final year. As the student above indicates, this is mainly related to balancing academic and social lives. Noise levels, and going out, were the main things that finalists felt impinged on them being able to work: ‘it’s quite noisy when you want to work, sometimes. I have to tell my flatmates to turn the music down quite often, especially if I’ve got a deadline. I’d imagine it would be a lot quieter in a house’ (I10, Male, C-C-C). This balance between work and socialising was difficult for some students, but largely students did not feel that residing in halls of residence had considerably impacted on their degree, admitting that although it was distracting at times, ultimately they got their work completed.

7.5.5 Gaining experience and getting a degree: acquiring cultural and social capital

Whilst students often viewed residing in halls of residence to have not had a significantly detrimental impact on their academic performance, it was clear from some accounts that it had. For students who had been involved in committee, living in hall and being involved enabled them to gain social and cultural capital that they believed was invaluable experience in gaining the career they wanted:
Massively, employability skills for one and it changes you as a person, you become more confident and the more you are involved you are the more you get out of it I kind of think... So I just went in all guns blazing and it’s worked... As soon as I came off I got so much work done, it’s like oh I could have done this all three years (laughs) but then like it wouldn't have been the same I wouldn't have enjoyed it as much so there’s no point (I13, Male, C-C-C).

The male student above was a Hall Chair, and happily admitted that holding this position had impacted his grades, as he was involved in all aspects of hall activities. This was reiterated by another Hall Chair, who said that ‘I think I’d have done a lot better on my course, for definite’ (I3, Male, C-C-C). Both, however, accepted that they had gained social capital through being Chair, with developed social networks within the university system and cultural capital, in terms of the complementary employability skills they acquired by gaining such a skill.

Other students ran for specific positions on a Hall committee:

‘it looked like fun, when everyone else was on freshers week, in freshers I wanted to be on committee and the role I applied for was something that I wanted to do when I left university so I thought it would be relevant experience’ (I5, Female, C-C-C).

This student was more strategic in her choice to be involved in committee, and recognised that she would not have wanted the position in her final year. Students who ran for committee, or became heavily involved in societies or their departments, were motivated by a desire to be more employable. This motivation can be said to be similar to the desire to be more employable driving industrial placement decisions (Peacock 2012). Overall, the students accept that the experience they had from living in halls of residence outweighed the potential detrimental impact on their degree qualification. This raises interesting questions as to the level of responsibility placed upon students, with some
clearly being more capable than others of managing the social demands of living in halls of residence. Taking this thought forward, further research could explore the employment of such students, to see whether their perceptions of improved employability are realised upon leaving university.

7.6 Conclusion
This chapter has addressed a need to explore student accommodation decisions over time (Holton and Riley 2013). By focusing on the consumption of campus accommodation, this chapter has unveiled a previously under-acknowledged segment of the student accommodation sector: university halls of residence. In doing so, this chapter enhances current understandings of student accommodation decision-making practices, and contributes significantly to debates surrounding student accommodation experiences.

Living in halls of residence has become ingrained within UK undergraduate student transitions to university (Ford et al. 2002). This chapter has shown how halls of residence perform an important function in facilitating students’ accrual of friendship groups and wide social networks (Holdsworth 2009b). Some students take this further by becoming a member of their hall of residence committee, which has consequences for their accommodation pathways as well as their social and academic achievements at university.

Whilst scholarship has recognised the value of volunteering whilst at university, this chapter illuminates the high value some students place on the cultural capital they gain through holding senior volunteer positions on their hall of residence committee. Importantly, this cultural capital is seen in some cases to outweigh that which they gain from obtaining a degree, with some recognising that their degree classification was affected by heavy involvement in their hall community.

Significantly, this chapter has shown the relationship between friendship groups and accommodation decision-making practices. It is not only those students involved in hall committees that choose to remain living on campus for
two or three years. The friendship groups of such students also embark on negotiations between their own accommodation wishes, and those of their friendship groups. Ultimately, student accommodation decisions place great importance on existing friendship groups and social networks, particularly in campus accommodation pathways.

Overall, this chapter has revealed that the consumption of campus accommodation is facilitated largely by groups of students centred around hall involvement, rather than individuals. This chapter has begun to conceptualise these students through the term ‘hub seekers’ and this will be further discussed in relation to the private rented sector in Chapter 8 and the aims of this thesis in Chapter 9. This chapter has illuminated the influence of placements on student accommodation decision-making practices, and this will be taken forward in Chapters 8. Although not always explicit, the ontological security and familiarity that halls of residence offer is an important factor in their remaining a popular accommodation choice amongst all year groups. This will also be further enhanced by discussions in Chapter 8 concerning the private rented sector.

This chapter has partially enabled the third objective to be addressed. By building upon the findings in Chapter 6, this chapter has offered some explanation as to the increased consumption of on-campus accommodation. Chapter 8 will enable the completed understanding of the student accommodation pathways requiring exploration as part of this thesis.
8. The Diversity of Student Housing Pathways

8.1 Introduction

The social, cultural, physical and economic impacts of student concentrations in the private-rented sector have been discussed extensively within both academia and the media under the auspices of studentification (Smith 2005; Smith and Holt 2007; Hubbard 2008; Munro and Livingston 2012; BBC 2014b). There is a common assumption that students predominantly select established ‘student areas’ because of specific amenities, such as convenience stores and takeaways, and their close proximity to the university and city-centre (Munro et al. 2009). This chapter extends this understanding by exposing the heterogeneous tastes and preferences for a diverse range of accommodation and geographical locations.

Focusing on 3 distinct areas within Loughborough - the Golden Triangle (Storer and Burleigh), Kingfisher and Ashby - the breadth of student accommodation pathways across the student lifecourse is revealed. It is argued that it is important to recognise that student accommodation decisions are complex, and that the intersection of factors differs between students or/and friendship groups; for example house type or style, location, cost and proximity to campus. Nonetheless, it is shown that students prioritise a particular set of factors irrespective of their specific housing pathway.

The chapter explores the key choices and constraints on the selection of second year accommodation, using broad categorisations of accommodation and location. Final year of study is then discussed in three main ways. First, those students moving into the private rented sector for the first time are identified. Second, students who remain in the same accommodation and/or area during their second and final year are examined. Finally, those students who move between areas during their final year of study are considered. The chapter concludes by discussing the heterogeneous nature of student accommodation pathways in the private rented sector.
This chapter illuminates four key findings that enhance both the trends identified within Chapter 6, and wider knowledge within studentification scholarship. The first is a reinforcement of Holton and Riley (2013), and Sage et al. (2012b), that student accommodation preferences are indeed diverse. Students do not simply wish to reside in ‘student areas’, and this thesis provides an insight into the reasons why other accommodation types and locations are being sought. Second, the role of first year hall of residence is seen as key to the later accommodation decisions made by students in the private rented sector. Links between halls of residence and subsequent accommodation are highlighted to be largely class-based, and this is significant when thinking of links between processes of gentrification and studentification. Third, this chapter enhances current understandings of studentification by suggesting that there are differences between private sector halls (PBSA) and university halls of residence, with the former being unpopular amongst undergraduate students in Loughborough. Finally, this chapter proposes that, as was hinted in Chapter 7, ontological security is integral in shaping student accommodation pathways in the private rented sector.

8.2 Second year: choosing where to live

All students in the sample resided in university halls of residence in their first year (see Chapter 7). This section focuses on students that select their second year accommodation within the private rented housing sector. It is important to acknowledge that a considerable majority of students selected their second year accommodation before the Christmas break in their first year of study. Arguably, the timing of this decision-making will have a major impact on the accommodation choices made by students. By selecting accommodation relatively early on in the academic year, some students may perhaps demonstrate a sense of naivety towards the private rented sector, which may be lessened in later years. As Edds (2011) discusses, residing in a shared house is often advocated as ‘the best option for second year and beyond’. Many participants supported this stance and had a strong desire to live in the private rented sector. Many overlapping factors were considered by participants when selecting accommodation, such as house size and facilities, social
difference and proximity to the university campus and town centre. These will be explored within each section.

8.2.1 The importance of the size of ‘student housing’
For some participants, the type of house was the main factor that they prioritised when searching for accommodation in Loughborough, with prevalence for off-campus shared HMO. Students were concerned about two main factors relating to the house. The first was size. Some participants stressed that they wanted to live in large friendship groups, often ranging from seven to twelve people, for instance:

‘I think our main focus was to get an 8 bedroom house and because there was only 2 we didn’t have much of a choice we were just extremely lucky that this one was in the areas we had wanted to be in, which was the Golden Triangle. Houses we didn’t want to go for were ones near the train stations just because they’re just so far away and I think the walk to uni was a factor but our main focus was finding an 8 bedroom house’ (I33, Female, C-GT-GT).

It is clear that participants such as I33 were able to find a house that suited the physical needs of the size of the group, and was also located in the residential area that they sought, namely the ‘Golden Triangle’. This participant consistently articulated her accommodation decisions as a collective, and her friendship group was a priority throughout (as shown in her quote above).

This theme was repeated by other participants, who placed an emphasis on the number of bedrooms they required when searching for a student house. Typical comments included:

‘We said look there’s 7 of us can you show us any 7 bedroom houses because we didn’t know if that was going to be possible. So we got shown a few which we really like and one we ended up moving into’ (I43, Male, C-A-A).
For both of the participants above, searching for appropriate large houses limited their choice in terms of location, but they would not have considered living in smaller houses. Interestingly, Kinton (2013) argues that larger houses are the most likely to be part-occupied or empty, as opposed to smaller houses with 3 to 5 bedrooms. By contrast, findings from this thesis suggest that large houses are very much still in demand, particularly in the Golden Triangle.

Within Loughborough the majority of large houses can be found on Ashby Road in the Golden Triangle (see Appendix 11 for location), and are nicknamed the Ashby Mansions by students at the university. These student houses can accommodate between 12 and 20 students, and most of these larger houses are owned by one letting agent, Club Easy, also located on Ashby Road in the Golden Triangle.

Figure 33: ClubEasy advert on back of SU Magazine (researcher’s photograph)
This influential letting agent in Loughborough is particularly popular amongst students because it offers all-inclusive weekly rents: As one participant states:

‘We just went straight to Club Easy. They were advertised all over the Label [Student’s Union] magazines and they looked like the best thing! They include all their bills, you get your tv, your tv license, you get your internet. Everything’s included with them and for second year that was just easier because there was 12 of us’ (I44, Female, C-GT-GT).

Because this participant wanted to live with 11 other students, she was aware of how difficult it might be to co-ordinate the paying of bills, and Club Easy offered an easy solution to this problem for £85 a week for I44. All-inclusive rent was important for other students, such as:

‘£75 a week bills included. But I liked bills included because then it’s less responsibility like getting the bills together’ (I54, C-GT-A).

Whilst this student is discussing his house in the Golden Triangle, all inclusive rental options were often referred to by students residing in Kingfisher. Several letting agents and landlords offer only all-inclusive properties (TopLets 2014), or give students the option to have all bills included for an additional £10 a week (Loc8 Me 2014).

Another factor that students also considered alongside the number of bedrooms was the size of the rooms in the house, in terms of both bedrooms and living space. For some participants this was the main reason for selecting a particular house:

‘The layout, the size, the rooms. I mean it’s the size. When we looked round there were a lot more pictures on the walls. It was house you could imagine someone living in when you graduated so we looked round and thought it was fantastic’ (I56, Male, C-GT-A).
This participant also makes an interesting point about the size of the interior of the house, as well as the desire to live in a house that looked like a house they could live in when they graduate, perhaps conveying the sentiment of an ‘apprentice gentrifier’ (Smith and Holt 2007). Whilst living in poor quality accommodation has been seen as a rite of passage for students (BBC 2014c), the students here perhaps point to a changing student preference for better quality, roomier, accommodation with all inclusive options. This point will be further developed in the context of particular areas below.

8.3 The importance of residential location of student housing

Whilst the type and size of house was an essential criterion for some, for other participants the residential area was viewed as being more important factor in their decision-making processes. The majority of participants revealed that they relied on website searches, or visiting specific landlord and letting agent offices. To this extent, students in Loughborough are largely reliant on the advice of both older students and letting agents and landlords, both of which will be discussed throughout the next section. As noted in previous chapters, three study sites were investigated: the Golden Triangle, Kingfisher and Ashby (locations can be seen in Chapter 4). Not all students limited themselves geographically when searching for accommodation in the private rented sector, but for the majority of the participants the location of their house was an essential criterion that they had in mind when speaking to letting agents and landlords. The reasons identified by students for choosing each area will now be discussed.

8.3.1 The Golden Triangle

What everyone does

The Golden Triangle is the most well-known student area amongst Loughborough University students, primarily due to its location on the main walking route from the university campus to Loughborough town centre, and more widely, its existence as the main ‘student area’ in Loughborough (Hubbard 2008). Traditionally, terraced housing has been acknowledged as
attractive to landlords for the conversion of family homes into student HMO (Rugg et al. 2002). In line with other studies (cf. Smith and Holt 2007), students appear to buy into the particular lifestyle that has been manufactured by landlords and previous student cohorts in the Golden Triangle. In a similar way to the normative behaviour of students in their first year being seen as residing on campus, students moving into the off-campus, private-rented sector often see the Golden Triangle as the most desirable place for students to reside. For example:

‘I think mainly, it’s kind of what everyone does. So everyone just like follows the crowd and also to live with people who are like minded so that you kind of like know that they’re going to be loud and you’re going to be loud as well. Cos if you live... I know some people who live in Kingfisher and they live next door to a family and they always get complaints and always get the university security and stuff coming round because of noise and stuff. So it’s just so much easier to live with and next to students cos you know what they’re going to be like and you hope that they’ll accept what you’re going to be like’ (I45, Female, C-GT-GT).

Dominant perceptions of the Golden Triangle as being where ‘everyone goes’, are important, with Allinson (2006) arguing that living close to other students and feelings of security are acutely linked. The desire to live near ‘people like us’ (Butler 1997) is particularly pertinent amongst students wanting to live in the Golden Triangle, with students tending to concentrate in this neighbourhood and segregate themselves from local populations (cf. Munro et al. 2009). Just as students living in halls of residence saw the campus as the ‘hub’ of their student life, the Golden Triangle appears to be the location of choice for ‘hub seekers’ in the private rented sector. Whilst there are established settled residents in the Golden Triangle, students do account for nearly 40% of the total population in this area (UK Census 2011). There is a clear student presence within the area, which has arguably led to a certain atmosphere, where the ‘inhabitants know that they are among their own’
(Allinson 2006: 92). Interactions between student and established neighbours will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

Students residing in the Golden Triangle often remarked about the influence of older students in their accommodation decisions. This influence was notable in two main ways: by knowing students living in the area, and through direct recommendations, such as:

‘We all decided well we definitely want to be in the Golden Triangle because we wanted to be in the thick of it. I don’t know I think maybe the people that we’d made friends with in the year above, lots of them lived around there so we just assumed that was the place to be’ (I59, Female, C-GT-C).

The high number of students living in the Golden Triangle often led to students viewing it as a ‘student area’, given that it is where the highest number of their peers can be found to reside. It is notable from the participants (above) that students who lived in the Golden Triangle, or other areas, still had the perception that the Golden Triangle is the location where ‘everyone’ goes. This is unsurprising, with Munro et al. (2009: 1808) acknowledging that ‘students can find ‘student areas’ attractive places to live’, with a ‘pool of peers’ on tap’ (Smith and Holt 2007: 151) in the private rented sector, similar to that seen in halls of residence. Interesting contrasts will be drawn by students residing in other areas further on in the chapter. These acknowledgements further enhance this student group as ‘hub seekers’ and this will be explored further in Chapter 9.

**Convenience to the Town Centre and University Campus**

Chapter 6 identified the Golden Triangle as the destination of choice for most students, but it also illuminated the fact that the numbers of students moving into the area have decreased over time (Kinton 2013). Whilst the previous section highlights the influence of the Golden Triangle being viewed as a ‘student area’, clearly contributing to some students residing there, students also identified other reasons as to why living in the Golden Triangle was the
preferable location. In line with wider studentification findings, where ‘convenience is all-important’ (Allinson 2006: 93), the Golden Triangle is seen as the ideal location:

‘As long as we were in the Student [Golden] Triangle we didn’t care because we didn’t really know the town very well and we just didn’t want to be far out in terms of we’d have to drive every day. On Derby Road we could just walk everywhere, it’s really convenient’ (I39, Female, C-GT-KF).

This participant echoes the findings of Hubbard (2008: 326), who states that ‘clustering is encouraged by student’s predisposition to locate in areas that they regard as convenient for university’. Students mentioned the Golden Triangle in relation to convenience for the university campus and the town centre, with Sainsbury’s supermarket being frequently mentioned by students.

Figure 34: The Paget Pub in the Golden Triangle (researcher’s photograph)
Many scholars have commented on the emergence of services and amenities for students in ‘student areas’ (e.g. Smith 2008), and the Golden Triangle has an abundance of takeaway outlets, convenience stores, and a local pub on Paget Street (as seen in Figure 34). These participants felt that the Golden Triangle offered convenience for both the town centre and the university, and often felt that the other areas in the town, did not offer such proximity to both. For instance:

‘We wanted to be close to town. You know Radmoor road, you know the road that you just walk to straight to uni along. We wanted to be close to that and Hastings street is right opposite that. Definitely Golden Triangle, definitely wanted to be close to town. We wanted to be a 10 minute walk from the union, which it is. So that was the ideal location rather than Kingfisher or any other areas that were kind of considered. Because we still wanted the student lifestyle, if you move somewhere by the library that’s not got many students there, but we still wanted our friends close by, living in the golden triangle’ (I27, Female, C-GT-C).

The participant above highlights the relatively small amount of time that it takes to walk from the majority of the Golden Triangle to the edge of the university campus via Ashby or Radmoor Road. The idea of being able to walk to popular or essential locations such as the university, train station and shops, has been highlighted to be one of the main attractions of living in the Golden Triangle. Many students do not bring a car to university, but the students that do bring a car still cause problems, as the majority of houses in the Golden Triangle are limited to on-street parking, which can be chaotic during term-time.

8.3.2 Kingfisher
As noted in Chapter 4, the Kingfisher area has the newest accommodation of the three study sites, with completion of the development in 2005. Chapter 6 also highlighted that the popularity of Kingfisher has increased over the last five
years. This may be, in part, linked to the growth of student lets within Loughborough, giving students more accommodation options (Kinton 2013), which appears to have intensified since the development of the Kingfisher estate. It is increasingly a popular area for students searching for accommodation, and this section aims to explore how particular student groups associated with seeking quality and convenience locate in Kingfisher.

**Privileged students**

Participants identified that the Kingfisher area was strongly seen to be inhabited by students from particular university halls of residence. Whilst the Golden Triangle was seen as where ‘everybody lived’, Kingfisher was deemed to attract particular exclusive student groups:

‘I think there’s quite a lot of, more of the well-off students in Butler. Because you’ve got the athletes who are quite rich really and the houses here are nice, they’re clean and they’re right near to campus and the sports facilities. I think it’s just the location for the type of people that were in Butler’ (I42, Male, C-KF-KF).

‘I would say similar to Elvyn and Bakewell and Rigg Rutt. I would say that because of the price, the same sort of people who live in Elvyn and those halls would live here’ (I18, Male, C-C-KF).

Interestingly, all but one of the participants (I46) who lived in Kingfisher had lived in the halls listed above. Butler Court is the most expensive self-catered hall of residence, priced at £5,268.80 for a deluxe en-suite room, and Elvyn Richards is the most expensive catered hall of residence, at £6,174.60 for 10 meals a week and double en-suite room in the 2013/14 academic year (see Appendix 12 for full 2013/14 price list). Munro and Livingston (2012: 1683) make a relevant point here, commenting that, ‘some student groups can be seen as disproportionately privately educated, “home counties”, “posh”, more privileged than local populations’. Loughborough students illuminate exclusive
student groups living in Kingfisher, and define them in a way that depicts them as more affluent than other students supporting Munro and Livingston (2012).

Similarly to how students commented on knowing older students who lived in the Golden Triangle, some of the students above imply that several other students from their hall moved to Kingfisher. Word of mouth amongst students is a significant influence on student accommodation pathways, and clearly demonstrates another aspect of the ‘power of halls of residence’ in shaping where students choose to live in Loughborough. For instance:

‘The Bakewell Hall Chair, I remember walking as a fresher one night. We were walking through Kingfisher with him and he told us, ‘oh this is Kingfisher, the best place, I lived here in my second year, best place in Loughborough to live’ and obviously that made an impression on me and whenever people talk about Kingfisher it’s oh that’s a really nice area. That was the main reason why I came here’ (I21, Male, C-C-KF).

The cost of accommodation was frequently mentioned by students when discussing Kingfisher. For example, one participant stated: ‘I think it was because it was the most expensive so people assume it was the nicest and the houses look nice from the outside’ (I37, Female, C-KF-KF). Students perceived that ‘areas like this will see students with more money, their parents probably pay for them and that’ll make quite a bit of difference to students who have to fund their own’ (I36, Female, C-KF-KF).

Smith (2008: 2546) asserts:

‘studentification reduces the opportunities for positive and mutually beneficial interactions between groups and fuels the segregation of groups based on lifestyle and life-course cleavages as well as differing levels of capital’.
Whilst stated in the case of local and student community cohesion, participants seem to take this segregation further within the student community itself. It can be proposed that Kingfisher is seen as an unreachable destination for some students, whilst it is seen as the norm for others. Social privilege is often ‘invisible’ (cf. McIntosh 1988 for discussions of racial and gender privilege) to those who possess it. In a similar way to whiteness being a normalised aspect of identity for Loughborough University students, it appears that I37 is demonstrative of more affluent students not being as concerned by the cost, with their parents often paying for their accommodation. With this said it is important to recognise that class moves in and out of focus for students as will be seen within this chapter.

**Quality**

After initially identifying wealthier students, students specified why these students were more likely to reside in Kingfisher, for example:

‘I think mainly students who have lived in the more expensive halls on campus, I think they’re more likely to go to Kingfisher because you wouldn’t go from living in somewhere really nice to living in somewhere like my house last year where there was dust balls in the corners and stuff’ (I44, Female, C-GT-GT).

The participants suggest that those who had lived in new accommodation on campus with en-suite, double beds and spacious living areas do not appear to want to live in accommodation that does not provide this in the private rented sector. There has been some acknowledgement of the stratification of student accommodation according to cost amongst international and postgraduate students, particularly in the case of purpose-built student accommodation (Collinson and Jogia 2010). The unveiling of this differentiation within undergraduate student accommodation is relatively under-developed. Students living in Kingfisher highlight a different student group who are categorised as ‘quality seekers’ whereby students are seeking better quality accommodation at an often higher cost. This phenomenon is not exclusive to specific purpose-built
student blocks, but is also evident in the wider private rented sector, and the case of Kingfisher could be linked to understandings of privilege. Although it is unsurprising that students with more economic capital can afford higher rents, it is interesting to see how this factor culminates in particular areas being inhabited by students who fit a particular student stereotype, yet with this said, students living here are not always aware of their privilege as can be seen in case of participants I36 and I37. One participant living in Kingfisher argued:

‘They could charge a lot more if they wanted to. I’m not sure why it’s so reasonable. Maybe the reputation of the Golden Triangle? Like everyone wants to live in the Golden Triangle. I actually don’t know why everyone does. I just know in 1st year when everyone was looking for houses, everyone was talking about the Golden Triangle. Like the first thing someone would say was ‘yeah I found a house in the Golden Triangle.’ Maybe Kingfisher are trying to compete with that by bringing down their prices’ (I36, Female, C-KF-KF).

What is interesting is that whilst the extracts above clearly show that students view Kingfisher as relatively expensive, this participant begins to illuminate that rental prices in Kingfisher may be comparable with the Golden Triangle. Some students did have bills included in their rent in the Golden Triangle but, others did not. Indeed, upon further analysis it would appear that when bills (such as electric, water, gas and in some cases Television License) are included, rent prices are relatively similar for student housing in the Golden Triangle and Kingfisher (Alamel 2014: Comparison of main student letting agent websites in May 2014). This is a fascinating finding, but it appears that the inclusion of bills often makes the face value rental price higher, which may deter some students from considering housing in the area whilst the perception that students from more expensive halls are the only students who can afford to live there prevails. At the same time, a review of landlord and letting websites suggests that there is greater range in the cost of properties in the Golden Triangle in comparison to Kingfisher. Although price, and perceptions that more expensive accommodation will be of better quality, are prevalent in the reasons
why students opt for accommodation in Kingfisher, it seems imperative to explore other influences that shape why students from these particular halls are residing in Kingfisher.

Munro *et al.* (2009) found that large detached and semi-detached, high quality properties in middle class areas were popular in Nottingham. The Kingfisher estate in Loughborough is representative of this student preference. Students perceived that Kingfisher offered the highest quality accommodation in Loughborough. Whilst it has been suggested that 'low-quality private rented housing is an integral component of the student habitus, albeit for a limited (and known) period of time' (Smith and Holt 2007: 152), this study may hint at a change in student preferences where students seek quality at an increased cost, which further study may illuminate in other locations across the UK. Students were willing to pay for quality:

‘We thought they were the best houses. They are really. They’re the best houses, they’re the nicest house it’s a secure street, garage parking for my friend. Yeah it was just the best houses but the most expensive as well’ (I58, Male, C-KF-C).

Whereas the Golden Triangle was seen as the most convenient location in relation to both town and university, students residing in Kingfisher in their second year of study often favoured this area for its proximity to the university campus, something highlighted by Allinson (2006) to be a key factor for students when looking for accommodation. It was often only after living in the area that students realised it was also close to Loughborough town centre.

Some participants had lived in Butler Court in their first year of study, which is the nearest hall of residence to Kingfisher:

‘We’d heard that that was like the nicest place to live from other people in Butler and it was close to campus’ (I37, Female, C-KF-KF).
The awareness of Kingfisher from students from Butler Court perhaps reflects their walking route into Loughborough town centre. Students residing in Butler Court may be more aware of Kingfisher than other students due to the location of the hall. This point highlights another dimension as to why students choose to live in particular locations, which centres on knowledge of the town. This was seen in the Golden Triangle being located along the main walking routes into town-centre for the majority of students. Familiarity with particular areas, such as Butler Court and Kingfisher, links into debates about student areas being seen as the most suitable accommodation option (Chatterton 1999). Whilst a considerable number of students were never aware of Kingfisher when selecting their second year accommodation, for other students this was seen as the most logical choice due to their awareness of the area.

8.3.3 Ashby

More for your money

The Ashby estate has seen the in-migration of stable numbers of students across the study period (see Chapter 6). With a mixture of ex-Local Authority housing and 1960s detached and semi-detached properties, Ashby offers a different set of student housing when compared to that of Kingfisher and the Golden Triangle. Ashby, in some ways, is representative of an alternative student accommodation preference, similar, but not identical to Bevendean in Brighton (Sage et al. 2012b). Although, Kingfisher was viewed as being attractive for the high quality of accommodation, it is the size of properties in the Ashby area that are a main appeal.

Participants revealed that the size and layout of the properties in Ashby are larger and more spacious than other student areas in Loughborough:

‘Because we’re not in the Golden Triangle, we’re slightly up in size, as it were, every room is like a massive double room. We’ve all got double beds, the kitchen area’s massive, the living room is like a double living room so that’s massive, it’s got a toilet on each floor, the bathroom has
got a bath and a shower, we have an en-suite, it’s got a balcony, it’s got a massive garden, it’s got a patio!’ (l43, Male, C-A-A).

This viewpoint was reiterated by other participants:

‘You got a lot more space than halls for a start because the room is bigger for a start. Then you’ve got the lounge and things as well. You get a lot more space and it’s cheaper’ (l49, Male, C-A-A).

Students residing in houses in the Ashby area were much more aware of the cost of their accommodation, and the size of their accommodation. Whilst size of accommodation was important, it was obtaining the most space for the lowest cost which lay at the centre of many students choosing. Students living in Ashby sought value from their accommodation. This student group have been deemed ‘value seekers’ and this categorisation will be discussed further alongside ‘quality’ and ‘hub’ seekers in Chapter 9. They also mentioned the other facilities that accommodation in Ashby offered, such as driveways and gardens, having a bigger desire to live in properties that gave them more for their money.

**Academic Considerations**

Another important factor is location to the university campus, and this was often seen as paramount when looking for accommodation in Ashby. As can be seen in the methodology, the Ashby area runs parallel to the north side of the university campus. In a similar way to students studying engineering being identified as more conscious of the location of their department in their accommodation choices on campus, Chapter 6 also reveals that Ashby appears to attract the largest numbers of engineering students:

‘People that live more down Ashby Road choose it for more academic reasons. Because obviously most of them will be engineering will just want to cross the road and be at their department’ (l32, Male, C-A-A).
'I think if you’re an engineering student it would make sense to live that end of campus or off campus because there’s where all your lectures are gonna be to be honest' (I41, Male, C-GT-GT).

These participants often discussed their studies and described themselves as being academically focused, recognising that being located near to campus, where they spent the majority of their time, was more important than residing somewhere that was convenient for other aspects of university life.

Students living in Ashby often also had cars, which gave them greater scope to live further away from town as they could access all areas of Loughborough more easily:

‘Yeah because the people who would choose to live there [Ashby] are either engineering students or have a car. Like if you had a car, like I’ve got one now but if I’d have had a car second year I’d have been more likely to go for houses that are a bit out of the way because you can just drive everywhere but it’s quite far to walk’ (I29, Female, C-GT-C).

Engineering students are perceived to have considerably more contact hours than students studying other subjects. This is supported by Which? University (2014), suggesting that Engineers are seen to have on average 20 hours contact time a week, in comparison with social sciences, which have just under 12 contact hours. This may be an influential factor when illuminating that students studying Engineering were more conscious of their course in their accommodation decisions on campus (See Chapter 7). Here we can also see the ways in which studying engineering influences student accommodation decisions made in the private rented sector. The influence of subject discipline becomes even more pivotal in the final year of study, and this will be explored in more depth later in this chapter.
International Students

As well as the Ashby area appearing to be most popular amongst Engineering students, there was another student group that was commonly associated with residing in this area: international students. The Ashby area is demonstrative of segregation amongst students, between those seen as home and those seen as international. Ashby was often unpopular with home students and seen to accommodate a considerable number of international students.

In a similar way to PBSA (Fincher and Shaw 2009), Ashby is seen as predominantly for international students, which may contribute to it being an unpopular destination for home students. Ashby was the only area where such a clear distinction was made about the students who live there, both by students who live in the area, and students from Kingfisher and the Golden Triangle. Participants stated:

‘I don’t think I conform to it but I think you need to be Chinese and an engineering student and I’m English and an engineering student. Yeah because you cross the road at the same point and you look around and there are a lot of international students and not many British ones. But I don’t think many students live where I live’ (I47, Male, C-C-A).

Accounts such as these illustrate the assumption many students placed on non-white students, particularly in Ashby, equating this to them being an international student. It was not possible to confirm if this student’s assertion that students residing in Ashby are both international and studying engineering was correct, as university data used in Chapter 6 does not include home/international student classifications. At the same time, there is quite clearly an international dimension to student accommodation in Ashby:

‘I think international students tend to be on our side [Ashby]. Like if there is any students over this side, then it’s international students. There is a lot of international students that I’ll see when I’m walking to campus. Whereas I think it’s more the UK students that are in the triangle. I could
be making a generalisation here but just from what I see when I’m coming home, there is a lot of Chinese students that live in these streets, maybe because it is quieter’ (I23, Female, C-C-A).

These students clearly identify Asian or Chinese students living in the Ashby area. Ethnicity was only raised by participants in relation to Ashby, with all non-white students also being equated to be international students. Studies have shown that Asian students struggle more with social integration than European international students (Li and Kaye 1998). It has been widely acknowledged that international students have a predilection for PBSA (Smith 2008; See section 8.4 of this chapter for more detail). There are limited understandings of their housing preferences in the private rented sector, and their clear identification by students residing in the area above provides an insight that they may have different accommodation tastes to the majority of home students (not engineering students in this particular case).

Ashby is not commonly popular amongst home students, with some even going so far as to suggest: ‘I just assumed that students don't live there, I just assumed it was more residential’ (I19, Female, C-GT-KF). However, the students above suggest that there is a noticeable presence of international students in this area. This perhaps indicates a bigger divergence in accommodation than current understandings have portrayed, beyond gated communities in PBSA (Fincher and Shaw 2007; Kenna 2013) to social grouping in private rented sector HMOs. Some suggest that separating international students in university halls has an ‘inevitable consequence of getting into a social network made up of other international students’ (Murphy-Lejeune 2003: 156), and the students often stated: ‘I don't really know any international undergraduates’ (I14, Male, C-C-GT) because ‘they kind of find their own group and they choose to stay in their own group’ (I29, Female, C-GT-C). This is greatly contrasted to their opinions of non-white UK student groups who were normalised within the context of this study. This is an important distinction which demonstrates that it is not ethnicity but nationality that forms an important line of differentiation for students studying at Loughborough University.
8.3.4 Summary of Second Year Accommodation Decisions

In summary, Figure 35 represents how students residing in each area prioritise the various factors of accommodation decision-making discussed in this section. It illuminates Kingfisher as the area where students appear to seek the largest and highest quality housing, whilst also being suitably located within the private rented sector for Loughborough town centre and the university campus. Students who select Ashby are much more polarised in the factors they prioritise when choosing accommodation, with their course, location to campus and the size of the house being seen as more of a priority than in other areas. The Golden Triangle attracts students who want a mixture of all factors, with a convenient location to both the town centre and university being paramount in their selection. This diagram succinctly shows the ways in which students prioritise different elements when choosing their second year accommodation. There appears to be a stratification in the student population,
in the way they select accommodation. The next section deepens this understanding by exploring accommodation decisions in the third year.

8.4 Third Year
This section aims to investigate how accommodation preferences continue and/or are transformed in the final year of study. Firstly, the accommodation decisions of students moving from university halls into the private rented sector for the final year are explored. Next this section discusses the experiences of students already living in the private rented sector; firstly, those who stay put, and secondly, the reasons that students decide to move.

8.4.1 Why do students move into the private rented sector in final year?
Chapter 6 shows that the most marked growth in an accommodation pathway is the group of students who live on campus for the first and second year, and then move into the private rented sector in their third year. The reasons for moving off-campus in third year are similar to second year, but the findings suggest that those moving out in the third year of study make more informed decisions about their final year accommodation options, pointing to a greater awareness/familiarity of Loughborough and the options available.

The monotony of halls
Many students who resided on campus for their first two years of study decided they definitely wished to move into the private-rented sector in their final year. Research has explored the motivations for young people to leave the parental home, both because of education (Beer and Faulkner 2011) and for other youth groups (Hendry and Kloep 2010), ideas of gaining independence from the parental home also resonate with students wishing to leave halls of residence in second year. A theme that came out strongly within interviews was the idea that students had 'outgrown' halls, and felt that they wanted to experience something different:
‘I had absolutely no desire to stay in halls at all. I liked it, I enjoyed being in halls for 1st year but staying in halls for more than 1 year didn’t appeal to me. I wanted to live in a house and change the atmosphere. My friends wanted to stay so I did in second year but for third year I just wanted to get out!’ (I21, Male, C-C-KF).

For the participant above, it was the overall experience of living in halls that made him want to leave, as he hadn’t immersed himself in hall life to the same extent in his second year. He had wanted to move into the private rented sector in second year, but had to wait until third year because his friends were on committee.

Other students shared similar sentiments, and the idea of being ‘sick of halls’ was often cited by students:

‘We were all a bit sick of it by the time we left and it was nice to think you could live with who you wanted’ (I18, Male, C-C-KF).

‘I think people got a bit sick of halls and catered food, I think that was probably the main reason. And then also to be living with people, two, three years younger than you, I don’t think you really would want it. Obviously your freshers would be different to third years especially third year, you need to be doing work more than freshers will be’ (I45, Female, C-GT-GT).

These students had become bored with the similar surroundings and experience to first year when in second year of study. Catering was a popular reason as to why students wanted to leave hall, leaving a regimented routine in favour of wider desires to gain more independence (Hubbard 2009).

Smith and Holt (2007) comment on students seeing a move into the private rented sector as a component of their pathway to adulthood, and students hint at this throughout their reasons for wanting to leave hall. In line
with this, some students had the perception that residing in the private rented sector would enable them to gain independence:

‘The main reason I decided to leave hall is I was off committee, I didn’t want to live in hall anymore, it wasn’t the same. I wanted to experience a house at university. I felt it was the right time and a lot of my friends were moving out at uni or going onto placement so I knew it wouldn’t be the same in hall, I didn’t want to keep holding onto the thing of being young at uni’ (I21, Male, C-C-KF).

‘Just because we wanted a bit more freedom, we wanted a bit more responsibility and that sort of thing. We just wanted to be a bit more grown-up, and be like we have to clean the house and be responsible for bills. I don’t know we just wanted to be more independent’ (I17, Female, C-C-GT).

Being on their hall committee, and having that experience, was highly positive for students, but stepping down from their position changed their experiences, and made them want to leave halls as it ‘wasn’t the same’ anymore. This comment is a reflection of students’ desires to ‘grow-up’ and be ‘independent’, and this was illuminated by several other students moving into the private-rented sector in their final year of study. Chapter 7 discussed how students began to notice the age difference with first year students. For the students above this age, the gap unveiled to them a need to move into the private-rented sector to avoid a ‘fresher’ mentality, whereby students go out several nights a week and are perceived to not work as hard. Hubbard’s findings (2009: 1914) support this, with students citing the need to get away from ‘an intense form of sociality’ within halls to the quieter environment of a shared student house.

A key difference in the two students above is the way in which they refer to their decisions. More widely, the friendship groups students make whilst at university have been linked to increased retention (Wilcox et al. 2005). As has
been noted before, group decisions are integral to student accommodation decisions. The male student discusses ‘my’ choices, whilst the female student notes that ‘we’ arranged her accommodation. In spite of the first student referring to ‘his’ decisions, he moved off campus with a group of four friends, and their accommodation choice was made as a collective.

*The private-rented sector as a second choice*

Whilst the students above actively sought to move out in their third year, for others their preference would have been to stay on campus for their third year of study. As Chapter 7 demonstrates, residing on campus is a popular option and is strongly advocated in America (Patel 2012). Residing off-campus was definitely seen as the unfavourable option for some students:

‘I didn't really want to live in a house I wanted to stay in halls so I wanted them to move into a hall with me so I had friends to live with (laughs). But they wanted the living room space more than anything and they wanted to be self-catered’ (I24, Female, C-C-GT).

For the student above, her friendship group were adamant that they wanted to live in a shared house and not in halls, which led to her having to make the decision between residing on campus alone or in the town centre with friends, the opposite to the student in Chapter 7, whose friendship group made him stay on campus. The majority of students still wanted to experience living in a house and having more independence in their final year (Ford *et al.* 2002). This made the accommodation decision-making process for this particular participant more complicated.

As noted in Chapter 7, members of hall committees are guaranteed a space in their hall of residence. Once students stepped down from their positions, it became more difficult to stay. Other participants and their friendship groups had to move into the private rented sector:
‘It wasn't so much that we decided to leave hall it was more that we left it too late to actually stay in hall. I think we all knew that next year was going to be a bit different because the new freshers coming in were going to be even younger so that's a bit of a contributing factor … I would have stayed in halls definitely in third year on reflection, it is more fun and it’s so much easier as well. We decided to get a house because at the time we didn't really have any other options’ (I22, Male, C-C-KF).

The noticeable age gaps between finalist students and first year students have been mentioned in Chapter 7, in relation to on-campus accommodation, and these students had the foresight to realise that this would be a problem for them. Unfortunately for this student and his friendship group, his hall of residence was oversubscribed. This has been seen in other contexts; Garmendia et al. (2011) discuss how university halls are often oversubscribed in the Spanish context, which forces students to rent private apartments, and that in this case, grades were used to decide who gained a place and who didn't.

Loughborough University allows individual warden teams to decide who can stay on campus, and various factors are taken into account (Loughborough University Accommodation Centre 2014). These students found out in February that they had not been allocated a bed space on campus, and then had to seek accommodation in the private rented sector. This participant, along with others, signifies the demand for on-campus accommodation as a preferred option to the private rented sector. The above student had lived in Elvyn Richards hall of residence, and was very specific about the area he wanted to live in:

‘It was late but we knew where we wanted to live because we wanted to live somewhere nice because we come from Elvyn… I can’t remember when we signed for this house but we got really lucky with it because normally all the Kingfisher ones go really quickly so as soon as we saw this on the market we said yeah we’d have it and now we’re here’ (I22, Male, C-C-KF).
Here the student acknowledges a point made in previous sections about Kingfisher being the desirable place to live for students from the more expensive halls of residence, because of its perceived quality and convenient location for campus. Despite seeking accommodation later on in their second year of study, he had fixed ideas about where he wanted to live.

8.4.2 Second to third year transitions in the private rented sector

The majority of students who live in the private-rented sector in their second year of study remain residing there in their final year. Although this is largely the case, it does not mean that their experiences remain the same, and various changes occur in a student’s third year of study that have consequences on the accommodation decisions they make, and their experiences. This will be discussed in relation to staying put, and moving from the Golden Triangle to a ‘new’ area.

Staying put: ontological security

Whilst the majority of this section will focus on the students that choose to move, there are a considerable number of students who remain in the same area, and even the same house, in their final year. For most students, this can be linked to a sense of convenience and familiarity. Typical comments include:

‘I think out of convenience, like no-one really wanted to move. We also knew people who were moving to Leopold (street in the Golden Triangle) from halls so it would be good to be close to them and we liked the area, it was an easy walk to uni and to town. We just wanted to stay, I don’t think we wanted to look for another house, we really liked our house and we didn’t know if we’d find anywhere better’ (I45, Female, C-GT-GT).

Whilst this student recognised the convenience of not moving, and that they had a house that they were happier with, another element is strongly presented here. Students who stayed for their second year accommodation in their third year of study often referred to their decisions collectively, saying that ‘we’ made this choice. Giddens (1991) discusses the ontological security
people as individuals gain from shared and routine background practices. Student ‘habitus’ (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977) within a household and shared experience gave students a tangible attachment to the accommodation that they had made home:

‘I think we were just so used to it and we loved the area, we loved how close it was to everything and we were familiar with it and we thought we might as well just stay. Probably more convenience to be honest, we didn't even look at other places we just decided we were going to stay’ (I38, Female, C-GT-GT).

Phrases such as ‘comfortable’, ‘convenience’ and ‘settled’ were often referred to by most students who remained in the same accommodation. Students formed strong attachments to their accommodation, and this seemed to provide them with ontological security (Giddens 1991).

Whilst some referred to this in the context of being ‘lazy’:

‘Yeah we were just being lazy really. We were all settled and it's so close to where we need to be like me and my other house mates that's in art so we’re in all the time every day we have to carry so much in so like if we moved any further away it would be such a pain. Yeah I think that’s the main reason really’ (I36, Female, C-KF-KF).

It seems more appropriate to view their reasons for not moving as being linked to a high sense of belonging within their houses and areas. Dupuis and Thorns (1998: 29) propose that: ‘home is the site of constancy in the social and material environment. [...] where people feel most in control of their lives’. These students, arguably in a largely unconscious way, remain in their second year accommodation having formed some level of attachment to the property and the area in which they have lived during second year. This exhibits an idea of ‘elective belonging’, whereby:
‘Belonging is defined not as an attribute of being born and bred in a place, but when a chosen place of residence is congruent with one’s life story’ (Savage et al. 2005: 53-54).

The idea of residing in an area that they are comfortable with, alongside ‘people like us’ (Butler 1997), should not be underplayed in understanding student accommodation pathways. Students often did not wish to leave the location that had become the centre, or ‘hub’ of their social lives over the past year. Interestingly, these concepts are often referred to within gentrification debates (Ward et al. 2010), highlighting the overlapping nature of processes of urban change, and similarities between studentification and gentrification.

For some students, convenience was coupled with another factor, such as landlord pressures or lack of time, but it was often the familiarity of their accommodation that deterred them from looking at alternative accommodation.

8.4.3 Moving to ‘somewhere new’

In contrast to students who stayed in their second year accommodation for their third year of study, Chapter 6 also illuminated a trend where students move between residential areas in the private rented sector. Part of this thesis seeks to explore what motivated students to make this move in the private rented sector, and this section will explore why they do this, by looking at students who move from the Golden Triangle to either Kingfisher or Ashby.

Moving from the Golden Triangle to Kingfisher

Four students in this sample moved from the Golden Triangle to Kingfisher. The aim of this section is not to generalise that all students making this move do so for the reasons given, but to give some indication of why some students may move from this area type to another. It is important to recognise that there were various reasons that students did not move to Kingfisher initially in their second year. This predominantly is linked to the understanding of the Golden Triangle being the place where ‘everybody goes’, but was also linked to choosing accommodation early and then discovering later, in their first year or second
year of study, that there were other people they would have preferred to live with:

‘It wasn’t quite working out with the housemates with 3 of them being athletes and we agreed that the 4 of us who liked to go out a bit more would just move out. There’s a lot of students around here actually, that means that we don’t have to worry too much about making some noise. Like the girls next to us are all students as well’ (I19, Female, C-GT-KF).

Many of the reasons participants moved to Kingfisher in their third year of study echoed the reasons given by students in their second year. Christie et al. (2001) suggest that as students’ progress through the rental market they are more able to secure better-quality accommodation and this can be seen in many movements from the Golden Triangle to Kingfisher. Kingfisher was deemed to have nicer accommodation with bigger rooms, gardens, and off-road parking:

‘I think the houses themselves, they just seem a bit nicer and they’re furnished. It had a garden which we never had on Derby Road and quite a lot of houses in the Golden Triangle don’t have gardens and that’s what we mainly wanted as well especially in the summer when it’s nice. You do really miss it! (laughs) it’s really weird but you do miss having a garden and I think that’s one of the main reasons we chose the house. The bedrooms are a little bit bigger as well … We chose Kingfisher because we’ve been to a lot of houses there and we had friends there in second year. The houses are really nice and it seemed like a really nice estate as well. Because it’s final year we kind of wanted to get away from how busy the Golden Triangle and things are. We just wanted a nice house as well. I think it was reputation and things why we went there. We knew another group of students who’d be living there too’ (I39, Female, C-GT-KF).

Gardens and off-road parking were benefits of living in the town-house style
accommodation in Kingfisher over the terraced housing available in the Golden Triangle (Munro and Livingston 2012). The reasons for moving from the Golden Triangle to Kingfisher are symbolic of students wanting better quality and this is discussed further within Chapter 9. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the main contrast between second and third year students that selected to live in Kingfisher was the direct comparisons they could make, having resided in the Golden Triangle. These students had actively sought to live in Kingfisher, because, having lived in the Golden Triangle, they believed that it would be ‘nicer’.

All of the participants expressed that they felt living in Kingfisher was better in many aspects than living in the Golden Triangle. Interestingly in comparison to understandings of the majority of students about Kingfisher being more expensive than the Golden Triangle, these participants found there were:

‘Nicer houses, not much more expensive. Actually pretty much the same price for a ridiculously, like a large amount more. Much better value for money, nicer. Yeah it was just much nicer. Probably a better community around here. There’s more people we know. I dunno it’s nicer, yeah it’s nicer living here than Leopold’ (I35, Male, C-GT-KF).

Both the student quotes demonstrate another element of moving to the Golden Triangle: a reputation that suggested it might be ‘nicer’ in Kingfisher, and a stronger student community than they had experienced in the Golden Triangle. Importantly, these students demonstrate a deeper knowledge of the private rented sector in Loughborough. They acknowledge that whilst the majority of students believe that Kingfisher is expensive, further experiences have led them to the conclusion that they actually get to live in a ‘nicer’ location for the same price.

Moving from the Golden Triangle to Ashby
Again, four students moved from the Golden Triangle to Ashby in the sample. The students mainly moved from the Golden Triangle to Ashby because of the
‘cost and convenience’ (Sage et al. 2012b: 1076) of living near the university campus in Ashby. As will be seen, there are some similarities between the reasons students moved to Ashby, and the reasons given by students who moved to Kingfisher. One Automotive Engineering student aptly summarizes the main reasons that students choose to move to Ashby from the Golden Triangle:

‘The course more than anything. We knew we’d be on campus a lot and to be honest I’m really liking it. It’s a really short walk to any lecture, stuff like that I can spend a lot of time in the department and when we started looking we knew that one of the housemates would have a car so if we wanted to go shopping that was sorted kind of thing. So we don’t really need to be in town. As you get older you realize you can get a taxi pretty cheaply into town if you want to go there, have pre drinks or whatever. It’s not the end of the world... The fact you’ve got a living room and dining room and kitchen so you can have pre drinks as well... When we were looking around all the rooms we liked it.

*Do you think you could have got this type of house in the Golden Triangle?*

Yes but it would have been a lot more money, a lot more money. I think probably another £30 a week on top. Based on the houses my friends have got they’re paying about £90 a week and, actually probably £20 on top because we’re paying about £70’ (I56, Male, C-GT-A).

This student acknowledges an aspect highlighted by Sage et al. (2012b) in a study of Bevendean, Brighton, where students sought more traditional family housing with a more permanent aspect. The idea of more space for your money was important to students in their final year, and was a considerable reason that students moved to Ashby, as it was for second year students. This type of value-seeking is important in understanding the motivations for students and is discussed further within the typology in Chapter 9. The student above recognises that the location of Ashby, parallel to the university campus, makes
it an attractive location to live, as noted previously in this chapter. Other participants highlighted location as the key swaying factor in their move:

‘I think location I’d say. Yeah it was right next to the union, close to engineering, just the whole campus really. That’s definitely a benefit... I think this year it did make a difference. Obviously from where the department is, a 30 minute walk like last year is not great because if you’ve got an hours break between your lectures what do you do? Do I go back home, have a 5/10 minute break when I go back or do I stay on campus? Whereas now it’s 5 minutes so it doesn’t mean anything; straight after a lecture I’m back home’ (I55, Male, C-GT-A).

The participants above were students studying engineering who found that Ashby was much more convenient for getting to their lectures in their third year, in comparison to when they had lived in the Golden Triangle. For the participants above, being engineering students dictated their housing searches, and shaped their accommodation choices. It is significant to recognise that not all engineering students lived solely with other engineering students.

Students not studying engineering disciplines still had to factor their housemates’ courses into consideration:

‘We looked at some over at engineering because there’s a couple in the house doing engineering but me and Roger wanted more close to the union and stuff. We looked everywhere really because we went through Nicholas Humphries. We want a 6 house for between, 6 person house for between £60 and £75 and they just sorted us. Yeah engineering, here and Shelthorpe, next to big Tesco’ (I54, Male, C-GT-A).

In this way, this student compromised choosing a house near William Morris Hall of Residence rather than directly opposite Engineering. These reasons are not different from those stated by second years, but the importance placed on their final year of study in shaping their accommodation decisions is crucial. It
shows the progression from wanting to be in a sociable environment in their second year, to thinking more pragmatically about the location of their accommodation in their final year.

All students interviewed did not necessarily dislike the Golden Triangle, but by their final year had come to the conclusion that it might not the best place for them to live, as participants commented:

‘This was about the 4th house and it was just ideal for location, right by the uni and literally about 5 minute bike ride to the department. So seeing that the department was gonna be the main focus this year because I’m a finalist, we’re all 3rd years, we wanted to be serious so this I thought this was a pretty good place to be’ (I40, Male, C-GT-A).

‘I don’t think we would have got this house in the Golden Triangle for the price we pay. There is so much space, it’s got a garden and it’s close to university’ (I54, Male, C-GT-A).

Crucially, these findings explore ‘how the dynamics of these relationships with housemates develop over time’ (Holton and Riley 2013: 69). This could, as the participants above illuminate, be that in third year priorities change and they prioritise proximity to their lectures and the library over other amenities, whilst for others it may be linked to negative experiences in one place and wanting to start afresh in their final year.

8.4.4 Placements

Another key factor that affected why students moved in their final year was linked to students taking placements and study abroad years, as seen in Chapter 7. Much research has been conducted into the reasons why students choose to go on work placements (Mendez and Rona 2010), study abroad programs (Brooks et al. 2012) and volunteering placements (Spalding 2013). Whilst the debates surrounding motivation, experiences and outcomes for
students on placements are important, there appears to be little, if any, research that explores the ways in which student placements affect the housemates who are left behind, and how these shape students’ household decisions. Chapter 7 discussed how housemates undertaking a placement led some students to move back into university accommodation. This section will focus on the students who remained living in the private rented sector.

Whilst some participants wanted to remain in the same house, with the same friendship groups, other participants were much more flexible in their accommodation arrangements:

‘My friend Bob, I already said to him in our 2nd year that we’d live together but he went on placement, did that and then I knew about this 3 person house that the land lord had and then realised my friend Tom was looking for somewhere to live as well. So we came together really quickly and just got the house’ (I34, Male, C-GT-GT)

This participant represents a number of students who found out last minute that one or more of their housemates were not returning for final year. The rhetoric amongst participants who moved back into halls of residence was very much centred around having a considerable number of friends still living in halls. In contrast, these participants had access to other friends who were also searching for accommodation.

The participants below demonstrate that placements have a powerful role in changing the composition of student households:

‘Placement years basically. Like 2 other people were doing a placement so they were out of the question. The people I live with now I knew from the first year so it made sense really’ (I55, Male, C-GT-A).
For some participants, the fact that one of their housemates was going on placement gave them an opportunity to change their living arrangements, as it was inevitable anyway:

‘One of my housemates went on placement, one of my housemates was female and lived with all boys so she wanted to go into a house with girls and then the other wanted to move back into halls. So I kind of just went off with another group’ (I30, Male, C-GT-GT).

Other participants who had lived with a particular group of friends on campus for the first two years of study had to change their direct friendship group to move into the private rented sector:

‘Well it was the people who were left over from placement but also I get on really well with all of them so it was a little bit of a no brainer in terms of the people who were left. We just thought we all get along and it would be a good house and you know, why not? (I18, Male, C-C-KF).

For all of the participants above, the fact that their housemates from second year went on placement had a direct impact on who they lived with, and where. These participants were quite flexible and adaptable when looking for their final year houses, but many of them acknowledged that they had not really considered the impact that placements, and in some cases study abroad years, would have on their accommodation.

**8.5 Overlapping factors which influence student accommodation decisions across the period of study**

The accommodation pathways of students in relation to the three areas in Loughborough have formed the first part of this chapter. This second section will focus on factors that are encountered across the university lifecourse that have also been highlighted as significant within current debates of studentification.
8.5.1 Influence of landlords and letting agents

An important and well-acknowledged stakeholder that interacted with students' desires to live in particular areas was the influence of landlords, and in particular, letting agents. Hubbard (2008: 326) discussed the important role played by letting agents in shaping student accommodation decisions, whereby there is a ‘tendency of letting agencies to push students towards certain parts of town, often making stereotypical judgements as to which areas suit undergraduates’. It is crucial to acknowledge that as previous sections show, students do ‘studentify because they can’ (Smith 2005: 84), and are not passive in the process. However, many students in this thesis do demonstrate the influence of letting agents and landlords in shaping their accommodation choices.

Several participants mentioned arranging viewings with one specific letting agent or landlord, and making an accommodation decision based on a limited number of viewings, often below five. In the Golden Triangle, participants commonly mentioned Letting Agents and bigger landlords who owned more than 10 properties in the area. Many letting agents may have started out as individual landlords, but upon increasing their portfolio of houses, expanded to be more like the ‘entrepreneurial landlord’ described by Rugg et al. (2002). With that said, there were no particular landlords or letting agents that stood out as having dominance in the area. Upon further investigation of the Golden Triangle, it appears that Nicholas Humphries and Loc8 Me have the largest share of the student let market in this area. It must still be acknowledged that there are several other letting agents and landlords offering student lets that contribute to the area being considered a ‘student area’:

‘It feels like it’s the centre of the accommodation options and when you go to see a company, all the first houses you get taken to are in the triangle’ (I26, Male, C-GT-C).

Chapter 6 highlighted the fact that fewer students have moved to the Golden Triangle over time. Kinton’s (2013) study suggests that there is
potentially an oversupply of 2000 bed spaces in Loughborough, and with the student let market expanding across the town, it can be suggested that landlords are trying to fill bed spaces in the Golden Triangle to try and ensure the houses they let are occupied—perhaps to ensure the area is busy, and remains a place where ‘everyone’ wants to live.

Other participants wanted to be in the Golden Triangle, and were initially shown properties that they didn’t feel suited their requirements:

‘Well quite a lot of people have gone with Nicholas Humphries and all the other ones but we decided to go to Loc8 me. We went to Nicholas Humphries and then we went to Loc8 me and spoke to them and they showed us lots of houses. Originally we were just going to have four of us and then we looked at all the houses and we didn’t really like the four bedroom ones cos they were all quite small, they’d always have one small bedroom. We wanted a dining table and bit more of a communal area. So we said to them one day that we were actually trying to find 5 or 6 of us if we could find other people. So they said to us well the Playgirl Mansion [well-known detached student house in the Golden Triangle] is still free and we loved it so we just went for it’ (I17, Female, C-C-GT).

The ‘playgirl mansion’ is well known by students at Loughborough University, and is a credible example of the ways in which letting agents manufacture accommodation in a way that appeals to students (Smith and Holt 2007). This student was adamant that the size of the house, off-road parking (unusual in the Golden Triangle), and garden were the reasons they chose this house, but the specific mention of the name of the house illustrates the way that students can be swayed by marketing, in a similar way to ClubEasy advertising in the Student Union magazine. Visibility, whether that is in the position of letting agent offices along student walking routes, advertising on the university campus or naming individual houses, seems to be a crucial way for letting agents to attract students in the Golden Triangle.
Whilst these participants did have some idea about where they wanted to live, they largely gave the letting agents or landlords the ability to show them whatever houses they had on their books that fulfilled their accommodation requirements, in terms of house size etc. In the case of Nicholas Humphries, the majority of their properties are located in the Golden Triangle, with only one property in Kingfisher and eight properties in Ashby - as opposed to over 40 in the Golden Triangle (Nicholas Humphreys 2014). Although landlords in Loughborough do tend to own properties in various areas across the town, the Golden Triangle is, by far, the location where the majority of their properties are located.

Smith and Holt (2007: 152) note that ‘the demand for this type of housing [student HMO] is also increasingly being catered for, and exploited, by medium to large-scale private sector institutional enterprises, as oppose to small-scale, single-property owners’. Whilst this can certainly be seen in the Golden Triangle, students living in Kingfisher and Ashby appeared to be renting their properties from considerably smaller, private landlords. Often the letting agent Aidan J Reed acted as a point of contact for the students, but in several cases they found and directly rented their property from a private landlord:

‘Basically we got the house through Aidan J Reed but it’s a private landlord but I’ve seen him once and he doesn’t respond to his phone at all. Like the house is okay but the landlord we’ve had a nightmare with’ (I23, Female, C-C-A).

This was a common rhetoric amongst students, with several referring to their ‘absentee landlords’ (Hubbard 2008: 333). Other students rented properties from personal contacts:

‘One of us knew of a lady who had a house in Loughborough and he suggested that we all move in there and we signed it by like November. Pretty easy really’ (I42, Male, C-KF-KF).
For this participant and others, they had an ‘easy’ time choosing accommodation through known sources. This type of rental was very rare, but illuminates the diverse ways that students can access student accommodation in the private rented sector. This section has shown the heterogeneous nature of student accommodation decisions, and the amount of license given to letting agents in particular to shape the final accommodation choice of students.

Whilst some of these findings are not surprising, and reinforce conceptualisations of the power that landlords and letting agents play in shaping student accommodation decisions, this chapter has gone further to show the role of landlords in continuing to attract students to their properties. It is not simply a case of landlords and letting agents purchasing property, and recommodifying family areas into student ghettos. Student preferences are changing, and with such changes come an increased pressure on landlords to improve the rental packages they offer, and the quality of the accommodation that they wish to let. Students have indicated elsewhere that they have high expectations of their accommodation, and Kinton (2013) highlights how this can negatively impact on landlords, with large numbers of vacant properties in destudentified neighbourhoods.
Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) in Loughborough

Figure 36: Map of PBSA Locations in Loughborough

The Student Block  The Foundry  Waterways
The Cube  The Printhouse
Optima  Asha House
8.5.2 Avoiding Purpose-Built Student Accommodation

Chapter 6 demonstrates that PBSA is not very popular amongst Loughborough University undergraduate students, and the reasons why will now be explored. This section aims to highlight that PBSA was unpopular with students for two main reasons. Firstly, students place a significant value on the hall experience on campus in Loughborough, and they felt this could not be replicated in PBSA. Secondly, students felt that the dominant student group living in PBSA were international students, and in this way felt their accommodation experience might again be inhibited if they chose to reside there. Whilst Munro et al. (2009) note that PBSA is largely seen to compete with on campus accommodation, there were several reasons stated by participants as to why they did not, and would not, choose to live in PBSA.

The first has been categorised as hall spirit:

‘I’d rather be in a hall on campus if I’m gonna be in a hall because it’s a better atmosphere. You’d probably get good atmosphere but I don’t think it’ll be quite the same’ (I56, Male, C-GT-A).

‘No, I would never consider them. Because of the benefits you get at halls. It’s on campus which is one of the benefits. You don’t really get that if you live in a hall outside campus’ (I55, Male, C-GT-A).

‘Because if we were going to do that then I would rather have just been back in halls. I feel it’s too much like halls, It literally had never even crossed my mind’ (I17, Female, C-C-GT).

In contrast to Munro et al. (2009) and Hubbard (2009), Loughborough University students were keen to express that PBSA, whilst a similar concept of communal living, did not offer the same hall experience as university halls of residence. These participants had positive experiences in university halls of residence, and whilst Kenna (2011) found PBSA in Cork to be socially active, students in Loughborough largely see PBSA as a hall without the ‘hall spirit’,
something which was notable amongst students who chose to remain on campus for all three years of their study. This statement seems to concur with Holton and Riley’s (2013: 63) assertion that ‘student accommodation has shifted from it’s earliest form of ‘somewhere to live’ to a place whereby students can establish a ‘student experience’ across a range of geographical sites (Morgan and McDowell 1979; Silver 2004)’ with the hall culture on campus not being replicated in private PBSA.

For other participants there were different barriers in the way such as distance and cost:

‘I would have considered it but it’s quite far away from campus and in the engineering bit so it’s another 25 minute walk to get there so I thought I’d rather stay close to the campus if I can but otherwise no. I wouldn’t have an issue with living in town, it’s convenient for a lot of other things apart from actually getting to the campus (laughs)’ (I16, Male, C-C-A).

This idea of proximity of PBSA in Loughborough to the university campus is integral to why students did not wish to live in PBSA. Whilst students were not asked why they did not live in PBSA in their first year of study, it can be assumed that they would be for reasons already stated in Chapter 7 and the beginning of this chapter; that halls of residence are the preferred option.

It has been found in Nottingham that students feel that ‘less is more’, rather than big is beautiful, and would prefer to live in a shared house (The University of Nottingham 2008). PBSA is often developed on brownfield, city centre sites which appeal to students (Smith 2008) but the student below demonstrates how in the case of Loughborough it is now viewed this way:

‘I would personally have never considered it because I think it’s just a bit strange it’s kind of the halls thing again but off campus. I don’t really know how that dynamic would work. I’ve got a couple of friends who live in the student block. The amount they pay they get their washing done
for them and something like that but the amount they pay I think is just ridiculous. I would never consider living there’ (I23, Female, C-C-A).

‘We did actually look when we were looking and I was tempted but it was the price really. It was more expensive than halls on campus so we didn’t bother with that’ (I56, Male, C-GT-A).

Again, these students discuss the ‘halls but not halls’ concept that other students had portrayed above, but the perceived cost of living in PBSA acted as a significant barrier to students. The participants above highlight how Loughborough University students see the accommodation as too expensive and out of the way, in comparison to halls on-campus and the private rented sector.

PBSA has been acknowledged to offer many solutions to studentification issues (Smith 2008), and offer a convenient living environment for students. They believe that part of the experience of living away from home was to gain some experience of paying their own bills:

‘We did go and look but we thought it was more of a halls thing again. But we did want the responsibilities in third year of looking after all our bills, sorting everything out’ (I15, Female, C-C-GT).

Whilst the majority of students did not see PBSA as a viable accommodation choice for themselves, they often recalled friends who lived in PBSA. Chapter 7 highlighted the important role university halls of residence play for students whose housemates and friends chose to take a placement year:

‘A couple of my friends went into Waterways and the Print House and those kind of places. Mainly because it got to the point where it was too late for them to sign for a house or for campus halls so they went into them because it was just the easiest thing to do by the time they found
out they weren’t going on placement and all that sort of thing’ (I44, Female, C-GT-GT).

From the extracts above, it does appear that PBSA performs a very similar function to university halls for students considering placements. PBSA offers individual students the opportunity to live in a communal environment, whilst only having themselves to consider. Students acknowledged that they knew of individuals living in PBSA, but no-one made reference to groups of friends living there.

Alongside smaller student groups and individuals, students noticeably identified PBSA as a popular accommodation choice amongst international students. There is much scholarship that discusses the prevalence of international students in PBSA in the UK and globally (Fincher and Shaw 2007; Hubbard 2009; Kenna 2013). The perception of PBSA being for international students is particularly strong amongst Loughborough University students:

‘I think the international students tend to live in halls or maybe not necessarily on the campus but they definitely seem to live in halls. As far as I’ve come to realise. Because Waterways [PBSA] I’ve never seen anyone else but Chinese students come out of those halls. Whenever I’ve been around there it always seems to be them going in. As far as I can see they tend to keep themselves to themselves’ (I16, Male, C-C-A).

The majority of participants did not distinguish between international student groups, generalising that all non-UK students were international:

‘There’s that expensive hall in town opposite Sainsbury’s which is called Optima. That’s flats and really expensive, I don’t want to generalise but I would have thought that a lot of overseas people use that’ (I18, Male, C-C-KF).
Other participants made considerable distinctions between different international student groups:

‘I think that international students tend to stay in halls either in town or on campus. They kind of develop their own communities with regards to their race and religion. I find that European international students integrate a lot better than for example the Chinese and Japanese do. Like Asian international students I see in halls really clump together and that's it. They really do segregate themselves and I think they do tend to stay in halls a lot. Because I think it's more to do with security’ (I25, Female, C-C-A).

Li and Kaye (1998), and Lee and Rice (2007), found that Asian students had more difficulty becoming socially integrated than students from Europe. Participants such as the one above illuminate another way that ethnicity was viewed within the international student population by home students. The distinction between European (mainly white) and Chinese and Japanese students, again distinguishes student groups. In this case, this student suggests that European students are better at integrating but this could also raise questions over whether it might be easier for white international groups to integrate with home students. Alternatively, there may be less of a cultural barrier to overcome for European students than international students from further afield.

Largely international student groups were very much seen as ‘other’ by home students, with cultural differences being a frequently mentioned point:

‘I think from the outside they're for International students. My mate, last year he lived in the Cube which obviously isn’t in town but it's like a purpose build student accommodation. It was awful. He had no one that really socialized in his flat, some didn’t really speak English, it stank, he didn’t really do anything all year’ (I47, Male, C-C-A).

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Participants often spoke about PBSA in this way, giving the impression that due to the high numbers of international students residing there, it was unwelcoming to UK students. The participants above indicate a sense of segregation between home students and international students that transcends into accommodation experiences (Fincher and Shaw 2009). This has been explored in terms of students residing in PBSA, but perhaps further research could investigate how the marketing of PBSA to particular use groups could be deemed to unintentionally exclude other student groups.

PBSA has been identified to attract particular student groups (Smith 2008; King Sturge 2010). This section enhances this knowledge by demonstrating that this segregation may be linked to cost, with international students who are already paying significant fees to study in the UK being more able to afford the accommodation. At the same time, Loughborough highlights the need for careful placement of PBSA in order to attract undergraduate students, with some being seen as too far from campus for a suitable walk for engineering students in particular.

8.5.3 Neighbours
The relationship between local communities and students is well documented within academia (Munro et al. 2009) and within the media (BBC 2014c). The presence of student populations within residential areas has been argued to have various social, cultural, physical and economic impacts (Smith 2008). Students in Loughborough are very much aware of how living next to local residents can impact on their student accommodation experiences, and this can be clearly seen to differ between the case-study areas. In-keeping with the idea that the Golden Triangle is where ‘everybody goes’, the majority of students had student neighbours:

‘It’s kind of one of the most similar streets to living in halls in Loughborough. Pretty much every house is occupied by students so on bigger nights like Friday, Saturday you can always hear everybody
screaming around from like 11 to half 12 before they head out’ (I14, Male, C-C-GT).

The idea of noise prior to, and upon returning from, a night out was an important distinction made by students, as they acknowledged that it might annoy local residents who have to get up and work.

Whilst the Golden Triangle was the most identifiable student neighbourhood, participants in Kingfisher also noted that their student neighbours:

‘Weren’t gonna complain about us and we were never gonna complain about them so yeah it was more relaxed actually with students like directly next to you’ (I42, C-KF-KF).

Clearly distinguishing between the effect local and student neighbours have on the way they can behave:

‘If students hear loud music they’ll be like oh that’s cool they’re having a party or something but if a resident hears loud music they’ll feel a bit aggrieved because they’ve obviously lived here for longer and they’ve got a right to sort of say shut up but students won’t bother cos they understand that if you want to go out, go out ... Unless they’re playing music at like 4 o clock in the morning and they’ve got an exam the next day then I don’t see why anyone should be moaning. But then residents have every right to moan because they’ve obviously lived there for longer and they’re working’ (I22, Male, C-C-KF).

This mentality was reinforced by several other students, with student neighbours being seen as more tolerant and consequently, as Munro and Livingston (2012) acknowledge, much less likely to complain - whether this was due to indifference, or fear of their neighbours.
Student relations with their neighbours are aptly summarised by this student:

‘I think it depends more on the person because there are some people who have residents next door but they don't really care. I think most people probably make an effort to be a bit quieter if they know they have a family next door but then there are some people who don't really care’ (I6, Male, C-GT-KF).

Deeper analysis reveals that there is a considerable contrast in the way students residing in Ashby view their neighbours, and their responsibility to behave in a particular way that reflects the neighbourhood in which they live in. Ashby is the area least seen as ‘student’, and in this way participants residing here are much more conscious of their behaviour and lifestyle in comparison to their peers living in other areas:

‘When we do go out we do try to be respectful and we tend to leave earlier than we would do to go out because we don't want the noise to be going on too late. It is always in the back of my mind if we have anything going on here, noise’ (I23, Female, C-C-A).

‘I think it’s made the boys be more conscious, like if they play music before they’re going out they think, actually we haven’t got students next to us. There is quite an elderly gentleman next door so I definitely think that plays into it’ (I25, Female, C-C-A).

These participants above had largely positive relations with their local resident neighbours, as their behaviour reflected a conscious effort to prevent ‘them being annoyed with you’ (I17, Female, C-C-GT).

Overall, female participants tended to be more concerned about their relationship with resident neighbours, appearing to be more proactive in preventing confrontation with their neighbours. In contrast, male participants
tended to be reactive, and much more likely to believe that it was their right as students to make noise:

‘If you’re a student and you’re moaning about noise I think it’s pretty poor because everyone makes it and you’ve got no right. If you want to work there’s a massive library you can go to’ (I22, Male, C-C-KF).

Participants would often indicate that while they were more conscious of such factors, another member of their household might not be so inclined. Most often, this related to loud music, whether that be a band rehearsing or recorded music being played on a speaker. Five students mentioned that they had been visited by campus security or the local police force to tell them to quieten down their noise, with one student household in Kingfisher being issued with a fine by the university.

Whilst residents in other studies have suggested that ‘there is much acceptance and forgiveness of behaviour that departs from norms of responsible, well-behaved, sober adult citizenship—indeed, an expectation that such behaviour is an inevitable part of being a student’ (Munro and Livingston, 2011: 10), there is strong evidence that from a student perspective, local residents in Loughborough are not ‘forgiving’ of student behaviour. With some participants highlighting:

‘One of them hated us from the word go… when we moved in and we’d gone out by 10 o’clock in the summer and the next day he walked out and started swearing at us about noise, which was quite bizarre because when I’d been emptying the barbeque, the other neighbours, the nice ones, said ‘thank you for not being too noisy’ … he’s got a grudge against students living in that house and I don't blame him to be honest!’ (I47, Male, C-C-A).

Similar stories were told by participants residing in Kingfisher:
‘It does impinge a lot on how we behave, not that we have to be vigilant but we’ve had a lot of bad experiences... They don't see us as people, we’re just ‘the students’ which is kind of frustrating... I do notice when I’m going to bed and I’m not going out on a Friday night that it is extremely loud in Kingfisher, so I guess they do kind of have an axe to grind haven’t they really?’ (I19, Female, C-GT-KF).

Both the participants above demonstrate the varying ways that local residents interact with students. On the one hand, there are complaints and bad relations, and on the other, a reflection of the thoughts expressed by those in Munro and Livingston (2012).

Participants often recognised that the issues they had with local resident neighbours would probably not be a problem with student neighbours:

‘On that side though if we have music in the garden or something, we’ve had the campus security come round because we were making too much noise which is fine. I mean I completely understand we should have turned it down but if there were students there they would have tolerated it instead of getting into trouble about it. But I mean I completely understand why they did it’ (I16, Male, C-C-A).

This participant is accepting of the fact that the ‘values and lifestyles [of students] do not accord with the moral codes ascribed by the majority’ (Hubbard 2008: 334). For these participants, having resident neighbours had a considerable impact on their experience in Kingfisher and Ashby, and they were quick to acknowledge that, ‘it probably wouldn’t have been the same in the Golden Triangle, well it wasn’t. I don’t think, we were made aware of the consequences of what that [living next to resident neighbours] would mean’ (I35, Male, C-GT-KF). This student raises issues that are already noted within studentification literature, about the saturation of student residences in areas (Hubbard 2008; Universities UK 2006).
But, most importantly, this chapter provides an alternative perspective on student residences, showing that not all students can be homogenised as inconsiderate or rambunctious, with some students proactively seeking to be good neighbours. In this sense, students also have negative experiences of having student neighbours in similar ways to local populations.

These participants illuminate another reason why students may choose to live in ‘studentified’ areas: because they feel unwelcome and prohibited from residing in other areas. This debate is interesting, as students arguably feel that they should be able to live in a particular way, and the question is whether that lifestyle should be possible, or whether students residing in non-conventional student areas should not expect the same student experience as those residing in the Golden Triangle.

8.6 Conclusion

‘One should be careful of generalising about the student community. It contains variations of patterns of work and behaviour, even preferences and lifestyle’ (Allinson 2006: 92).

This chapter is demonstrative of Allinson’s (2006) statement above. It has shown the heterogeneous nature of student accommodation decisions in the private rented sector, and the various ways in which students differentiate themselves from other students.

The first section identifies student groups with a desire to live in large student households, something that others have suggested is on the decline (Kinton 2013). It then reaffirms current understandings of why students choose to live in ‘student areas’, in this case the Golden Triangle, demonstrating that the manufacturing of the area into a ‘student area’, and its convenient location between the university campus and town centre (Hubbard 2008; Munro et al. 2009), make it somewhere that ‘everyone goes’. In this sense, students wanting to reside in the Golden Triangle have been acknowledged to be ‘hub seekers’ in a similar sense to those living in halls of residence. Discussions with student
groups residing elsewhere disprove this notion, with Kingfisher clearly being perceived by students as an area that attracts more affluent students, which is strongly associated with particular halls of origin. This is an important finding, as it indicates a classed stratification of student accommodation, which is firmly upheld by the student community itself. In addition to this, students living in Kingfisher have been clearly seen to be ‘quality seekers’ searching out a higher standard of accommodation. Finally, the Ashby area is shown to mostly attract Engineering students, and students who can be categorised as value seekers, adding another dimension to the diverse reasons why students select to live in different locations. International students are also perceived to mostly live in this area, contributing to discussions around where they live and why, moving beyond current understandings of PBSA (Kenna 2011).

The third section explored third year accommodation decisions. First, it focused on those students who move into the private rented sector for the first time. In direct comparison to Chapter 7, these students convey an idea of halls becoming monotonous. At the same time, it also showed how other student groups wished to stay on campus but were unable to, and how they managed the constraints then placed on their accommodation options at a later point in the academic year. Next, the chapter considered the reasons why students remained in their accommodation and area. Ontological security is a substantial reason as to why students ‘stay put’, moving away from students being a transient population to some that seek familiarity and continuity in their accommodation pathways. Finally, this section explores why students move from the Golden Triangle to the two other study sites. Arguably in both cases, this is linked to gaining a greater understanding of the accommodation market by their third year. In the case of Kingfisher, the majority of students were seeking more quality accommodation and more for their money. In the case of Ashby, it was again mainly linked to Engineering, and wanting to be closer to campus - but also students looking for more house for their money. All these findings highlight that student accommodation pathways are not as simplistic as current understandings of studentification suggest. Whilst many acknowledge the reasons why students move into the private rented sector, they do not
investigate these transitions across the university lifecourse. This section highlights how student accommodation decision-making practices change by third year, due to changing priorities across the social to academic spectrum.

Finally, this chapter explored the factors that are considerable influences on student accommodation decisions across their lifecourse. It began by looking at the influence of letting agents and landlords, demonstrating how letting agents tended to dominate in the Golden Triangle, whereas more private landlords could be found in Kingfisher and Ashby, showing a colonisation of the Golden Triangle by larger letting agents (Smith and Holt 2007). Second, it looked at the views students had on PBSA, showing a largely negative view but an acceptance that it accommodates particularly international and smaller student groups. This section raises questions about students’ definitions of ‘halls’, with Loughborough students clearly seeing them as more than ‘somewhere to live’ (Holton and Riley 2013). Finally, this section explores ‘neighbours’, thinking about this largely in the context of local residents. It highlights the different student mentalities towards resident neighbours, and indicates the first considerable gender difference in terms of female students being more conscious of their behaviour, and male students being less so.

Overall, this chapter has alluded to the diversity of student accommodation, and it has served to demonstrate how it is difficult to homogenise contemporary students and their accommodation pathways. This chapter has highlighted three student groups, ‘hub seekers’, ‘quality seekers’ and ‘value seekers’ and this will be the focus of section 9.3.2. This chapter demonstrates that different students studentify in different ways and this is an important contribution of this thesis. The chapter contributes new knowledge to existing debates within studentification and student geographies and these will be discussed in Chapter 9.
9. Discussion and Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the key original contributions to knowledge of the thesis to broader academic debates within geographies of education, student geographies and studentification. First, the chapter focusses on the value of the typology of English institutions, as presented within Chapter 5. The important evidence base that this typology provides to debates surrounding a hierarchical education system and access of different student groups is emphasised. Second, the chapter considers the main contributions of the thesis to on-going debates of studentification and, more broadly, student geographies. It is proposed that the conceptualisation of campusification be extended to more fully enhance existing understandings within student geographies, and a call is also made to expand studentification to incorporate multiple student identities, via a re-conceptualisation as ‘studentsification’. Third, the chapter highlights the importance of longitudinal studies within explorations of geographies of education and student geographies, stressing the current dynamics of the wider student population, and the requirements and needs of students, over time.

9.2 Hierarchy of English HE System

The first objective of this thesis was to examine the student population and where they study. This section addresses this by highlighting how the typology of English institutions illuminates clear stratifications within the student populations and where they study. Geographies of education have explored young people and student populations in various ways. Holloway et al. (2010) called for a fuller focus on the ‘student’ within geographies of education, and this thinking has influenced the direction of this thesis. At the same time, other geographical research shows the ways in which the upper world university ranking institutions are geographically concentrated within the global north (Jons and Hoyler 2013), and how university rankings in the UK can be an influential factor in where students choose to study (Eccles 2002). This thesis combines these two areas of interest within geographies of education to enhance understandings of English university rankings, which have a long-
standing tradition, with knowledge of the student populations which choose to attend different institutions.

Of course, differences within the HE system have existed since the origins of HE in the UK. In 1992, when the binary division between universities and polytechnics was removed, it was perceived that the differentiation between such institutions would be considerably lessened or even abolished. This thesis demonstrates that the differentiation between post- and pre-1992 institutions still remains clear and identifiable within HE in England. Indeed, Croxford and Raffe (2014) discuss the hierarchies within UK education as an ‘iron law’, something which is deeply entrenched within societal understandings of HE. Importantly, Chapter 5 provides a contemporary evidence base to substantiate these claims, demonstrating how institutions with more established histories tend to attract a more traditional student population.

The hierarchical differences within the English HE system are shown to be particularly prevalent within Chapter 5, with Russell Group and previous 1994 Group institutions notably attracting a more ‘traditional student’ population. In contrast, London and (some) Northern institutions alongside post-1992 institutions, would appear to more likely attract ‘new students’. This thesis explores these differences using HESA data, enhancing existing scholarship outside of geography which has tended to utilise UCAS application/admissions data to date (e.g. Shiner and Noden 2014).

The typology formulated as part of this thesis highlights a hierarchy whereby established institutions with excellent reputations tend to attract more ‘traditional students’, with it being suggested that students are more willing to travel further from the parental home to attend pre-1992 or Russell Group institutions than if they were going to a post-1992 institution (Arnett 2014). Reputation of a university is clearly important to students applying to university (Raffe and Croxford 2014), but this in itself is arguably not enough to fully explain why more traditional students attend these types of institutions. The hierarchies within the English HE system are well noted and can be seen to be
influential on an international scale; ‘International university league tables extend the perspective of national rankings that have a long-standing tradition in many countries’ (Jons and Hoyler 2013: 51).

Whilst this typology has concentrated on English institutions its importance should not be understated. An avenue for future research may wish to explore the interaction between different university rankings and the international student populations a university attracts. Loughborough was selected as a case study given its majority student population (as highlighted in Chapter 5). To date, many studies have focused on minority groups, and whilst crucial in understanding different student experiences, this thesis sought to explore internal diversities, with a focus on an institution which attracted a largely ‘traditional’ student population. In this way, this thesis contributes new understandings and does not fetishize marginal groups (Holton and Riley 2013). Selecting a majority student group yielded interesting results in both the quantitative and qualitative data collected and analysed. The case study of Loughborough reveals interesting differences in the experiences and decisions of students from different backgrounds, which tended to centre around their first year hall of residence. In this sense, and importantly, this thesis argues for a different way of categorising students. Whilst clear links have been established between the socio-economic backgrounds of students and their applications to university, this thesis proposes that once at university, environmental factors (i.e. hall of residence, personal interests, participation in sports teams/departments) can in some cases shape, in profound ways, the accommodation pathways and university experiences of students. At the same time, the thesis asserts that affluence is influential within the ability of students to live a distinct lifestyle within a particular type of accommodation.

Interestingly, and in keeping with other similar studies, this thesis has shown how students from less affluent backgrounds are acutely aware of wealthier students and the wider opportunities available to them in terms of both accommodation and lifestyle. As can be seen in Appendix 5, the majority of students within this thesis come from middle-class backgrounds,
nevertheless there are clear differences noted by participants between themselves and more affluent students. Because of this it may be more appropriate to view these disparities as a result of fractions within the middle class. Parents may be classed as holding professional managerial positions but within that it appears important to acknowledge that can be considerably variation in income. In this way, a local case-study provides great insight into the national picture of HE in England. It has been widely noted that some students feel out of place at university for a variety of reasons such as class and ethnicity. Others propose that instead of the abolition of polytechnics and the unification of universities across the UK leading to a level playing field in terms of status, this is not the case (Scott 1995). In light of this, this thesis demonstrates firstly that this differentiation between institution types is very clear with students from different backgrounds making initial university decisions based upon this factor. Secondly, it is demonstrated that there may be merit in universities more fully addressing gaps within their student population to enable students from under-represented groups to have more capacity to attend and interact with different student groups.

Although complicated, this thesis has shown the close links between accommodation and social class. It has been demonstrated how the friendship groups made in university halls of residence shape not only subsequent accommodation decisions, but also university experiences across the university lifecourse. This link is a common theme throughout this chapter, particularly in reference to the heterogeneous nature of student populations and their accommodation decisions.

9.3 Diversification of student accommodation pathways
Chapter 3 revealed a diversification of studentification processes within the private rented sector. The thesis aimed to further explore this theme by investigating a wide range of geographical areas and accommodation types within Loughborough. The second objective of this thesis was to establish student accommodation pathways within a specific institution and Chapter 6 clearly achieves this. As Chapter 6 highlighted, students are residing in a wide
range of accommodation across Loughborough, and not specifically within the commonly known ‘studentified areas’. This finding suggests that student accommodation preferences are heterogeneous in nature, and the reasons behind these patterns, as shown in Chapters 7 and 8, are indicative of this. The findings and concepts discussed within this section fulfil the final objective of this thesis; to explore the decision-making processes and experiences of students and the implications for processes of studentification.

9.3.1 ‘Campusification’

This thesis has noted the increasing popularity and importance of on-campus accommodation in Loughborough. Hubbard and Smith (2014) noted the growth of so-called ‘student villages’ across the UK, and this has been evidenced within this thesis. In light of this, it is argued that a process of ‘campusification’ can be identified, whereby students are making the choice to live in university-maintained accommodation when available. This two-fold process explicitly acknowledges the growth in both the development of this accommodation type and the increase in the development of a student lifestyle based around this accommodation type. University halls of residence demonstrate that student accommodation is more than somewhere to live (Holton and Riley 2013), and that the student experience fostered within halls can have considerable impacts on the subsequent accommodation pathways they follow. Many participants noted how several elements of their student life centred around the campus, albeit activities, sports, friendship groups or nights out. This campusification process has impacted on the private rented sector within the town, with several houses being noticeably vacant during the academic year. Halls of residence are popular amongst students for several reasons, whilst convenience is notable, there are several social benefits which were illuminated by participants throughout this thesis. This includes access to a large social group, being close to activities on the campus and social dining experiences.

The creation of an environment where students can nurture relationships and participate in organised social activities at Loughborough University is a similar concept to the Residence Life Model adopted in many institutions across
America (American Campus Communities 2015). This model is interpreted differently in different institutions, yet it can be broadly interpreted as a commitment to student development and fostering a community within halls of residence, in both university-provided (Edinburgh University www) and private halls (Community Living Villages www). Although Loughborough University’s way of achieving this is slightly different to the above model, this thesis highlights how it has successfully achieved the above objectives for the majority of students. All 59 students within this sample lived in university halls of residence, and of these 57 students reported largely positive experiences.

Residence Life is still in its infancy across the UK but a recent conference held by Unipol (2014) entitled ‘Developing Residence Life in the UK: Over There and Over Here. Models from the USA, Canada and the United Kingdom’ is indicative of the growing interest in introducing this model within the UK HE system. Having taken a slightly different, more collegiate approach, Loughborough University has much to contribute to these debates. This thesis proposes that if such a model is adopted at other institutions it will be well received and could increasingly lead to more students wanting to live in on-campus accommodation. It is acknowledged that not all universities, whether campus or city-based have the capacity to expand their portfolio of student residences but other initiatives have shown that this can be achieved with partnerships with the private sector. This has been seen in the case of the University of Essex and a partnership with Derwent Living whereby the University still provides the pastoral support and social activities for students, but Derwent Living provides the facilities management aspect (Derwent Living 2012).

The differences between university halls of residence and private-sector PBSA, a distinction which has been highlighted throughout this thesis, are crucial for better understanding student accommodation preferences. Whilst other studies have attributed the decrease in numbers of students in shared housing to PBSA, participants within this thesis clearly distinguish between university-maintained accommodation and private PBSA. This is important and
Chapter 6 highlighted PBSA was not a popular accommodation option amongst undergraduate students, in part, contradicting Hubbard (2009: 1903) who noted ‘a move away from shared houses in multiple occupation towards purpose-built accommodation’.

Students illuminated two aspects they disliked about private PBSA. The first centred on not being able to achieve the atmosphere and community they had experienced in university halls. This further feeds the proposal that creating a ‘student experience’ is essential within student accommodation. Second, the town-centre location of private PBSA was seen as inconvenient for getting to the university campus, particularly for students studying engineering. These factors alongside the perception that PBSA is inhabited largely by international students deterred participants from viewing it as a viable accommodation option for them. This raises important questions with regards to how accommodation providers both market and shape their accommodation to reflect the needs of different students in different university contexts. PBSA has been highlighted as popular in some university towns and cities such as Newcastle and London. Research suggests that PBSA providers are largely consolidating their accommodation over the next few years with limited plans to expand their portfolios (Savills 2011). At the same time, there has been some evidence that private PBSA providers are seeing the benefits of providing a ‘student experience’ within their living environments (c.f CampusLivingVillages www for a particularly good example). Although universities have always been important actors within student accommodation, evidence from Loughborough demonstrates that university accommodation should be seen as serious competition for both landlords and letting agents, as well as PBSA developers and managers.

9.3.2 ‘Studentsification’

Whilst university halls of residence have increased in popularity, the majority of students have a predilection to reside in shared housing at some point during their university lifecourse. However, this thesis has made clear that different students studentify in different ways. With this in mind, this thesis argues for an
extension of studentification to ‘studentsification’, proposing that this term more explicitly recognises the heterogeneity of the students involved within the process in different accommodation types and locations.

This thesis has revealed multiple student types with different requirements and expectations of accommodation and geographical locations across the university town. Whilst a study of Loughborough has been useful in illuminating these groups it is important to note the transferability of the findings of this thesis to other university towns and cities. In this way, some of the student groups discussed within this thesis can be broadly grouped to reflect their different accommodation making influences. Conceptually, students within this thesis have been classified as ‘hub seekers’, ‘quality seekers’ and ‘value seekers’. It is argued that within student populations at all institutions, these student groups alongside others may be easily seen due to differences in background, income and the variety of student accommodation available. These different groups have been seen to considerably shape the student accommodation market within this thesis, and will be discussed within this section.

This thesis has moved studentification debates further than simply suggesting students wish to live in ‘student areas’. This is in contrast to Rugg et al. (2002: 292) who found ‘in almost all case study locations, there was marked unwillingness for students to live in ‘non-student’ areas’. This thesis has shown through both qualitative and quantitative research findings that this is not the case in Loughborough. Whilst there were some areas which students actively stayed away from within Loughborough, Chapter 6 shows students living across the town in different locations and accommodation types. Whilst this is the case, this thesis has enhanced these understandings by showing that it is not simply about an area being a ‘student area’ but that students select their accommodation based on a much more complicated list of requirements and priorities.
The Golden Triangle is the stereotypical student area within this thesis, and participant accounts for moving there do relate to it being the area where ‘everybody goes’. Participants living in this area stressed the importance of this point within their accommodation decision-making process. In this way, students wanting to reside in the Golden Triangle can be seen as; ‘Hub Seekers’. This student group can be viewed within both university-maintained and off-campus accommodation in the Golden Triangle in Loughborough. This group are distinguishable for their desire to reside within studentland for longer and this being the main motivation for their accommodation decisions. These students prioritise living amongst student peers in a convenient location for their student lifestyle both on-campus and in the town-centre. Notably these students appear to be more involved in university societies and activities, as highlighted through hall involvement in the case of participants in Loughborough.

Scholarship to date has suggested that students are ‘tolerating substandard accommodation’ (Chatterton 2010: 509). This thesis suggests that this is no longer the case for contemporary students in Loughborough. This is initially found in increasing numbers of students moving to Kingfisher, as outlined within Chapter 6. Participants then further enhanced this finding by detailing the reasons they selected accommodation in Kingfisher as oppose to elsewhere. This group of students can be interpreted as ‘Quality Seekers’. These students tend to want to live in higher quality accommodation throughout their university accommodation. For some students, this is noted from their first year accommodation choice of hall of residence. For others, this desire for good quality accommodation emerges from their experience in first year, with many not wanting to live in accommodation below the standard of their first year accommodation. In many cases, students within this group tended to have access to higher levels of economic capital and acknowledged their privileged position to be able to afford better quality, non-typical student accommodation. Quality seekers were often more likely to be willing to pay a higher rental costs, which often included utility costs, off road parking, double beds and ensuite rooms.
These findings suggest that what once might have been seen as luxury accommodation is now seen as the normal standard which students seek in the private rented sector, further enhanced by the development of ‘exclusive’ student accommodation, such as the Nido development in London (Nido 2014). Within this thesis the idea of good quality accommodation stems from halls of residence with newer halls being seen to offer double beds and ensuite rooms, leading to students wanting similar facilities to this in the private rented sector.

Smith and Holt (2007) liken students to ‘apprentice gentrifiers’ and this thesis strongly supports this conceptualisation of students. Although students link halls of residence to subsequent residential locations in the private rented sector, this thesis has highlighted how this can be viewed within wider conceptualisation of social class. This is important because although patterns illuminate students residing in Kingfisher and Ashby, participant accounts suggest students reside there for very different reasons. In this sense, this thesis raises important questions about who studentifies and where, arguing that current conceptualisations of the process of studentification are too simplistic in suggesting all students want to live in particular areas for similar reasons. This thesis has proven this is not the case with significant differences being seen across the case study areas.

The investigation of Ashby significantly reveals another student group; ‘Value Seekers’: these students were more aware of budget limitations in their accommodation decision-making. In contrast to quality seeking students, these students were more likely to be self-funding their accommodation, and are therefore more conscious of their budget. Accommodation searches for students in this category often covered a wider geographical area than other student groups, as the search for the most for their money took them further afield than other student groups, especially ‘hub seekers’.

By complicating the process in this way, this thesis illuminates the temporal and spatial variations of studentification in Loughborough. One of the central questions using Loughborough as a case study poses is the transferability of the findings of this thesis in a broader context. Significantly, the
diversification of student accommodation has already been noted (Sage et al. 2012; Garmendia et al. 2012; Holton and Riley 2013) across the UK and in an international context. Similar to the patterns of decreasing student numbers in the Golden Triangle, studies in Leeds (Unipol 2013) and Nottingham (Nottingham City Council 2012) suggest other student areas are seeing increasing number of empty spaces, as students choose to reside in private and university PBSA. These wider patterns and trends may be more acutely felt within Loughborough than in larger cities or towns (Hubbard 2008). With this in mind, if these patterns are being identified within the condensed environment of Loughborough such patterns will be noticeable in different university towns and cities.

The temporal differences in processes of studentification and destudentification alongside areas with static numbers of students is something which is also worthy of note. Studentification has occurred at a different pace across Loughborough, with the Golden Triangle and Kingfisher experiencing different rates of studentification and destudentification, both within and across the areas. As student accommodation preferences continue to diversify and adapt, this finding will be seen across other university towns and cities as students seek accommodation that most suits their particular requirements.

Whilst it is not always possible to categorise students, with student identities often being complex, these groups have been clearly illuminated throughout this thesis. By conceptualising these student groups it is hoped that more weight can be given to the importance of social processes and institutional influences on student accommodation decision-making. Although some links can be made to the socio-economic characteristics of students and their accommodation pathways, to conceive of these processes only in terms of class is too simplistic in nature and must been seen in a multi-faceted manner as it is in the above categorisations.

This thesis is unable to take into account how the changing fee structures within HE may impact on student accommodation pathways because
of the data available. Nonetheless, it is postulated that these changes will have an impact on the accommodation decision-making practices of students. In one way this may see an already debt embracing generation continue to seek high quality accommodation despite its cost. On the other hand it may view students seeking to study close to their parental home or seek cheaper accommodation. This has already been noted within the context of widening participation and more students from working-class backgrounds choosing to study at local universities (Christie 2007; Holton 2014). In a related way, hierarchies of HE, as identified in Chapter 5, may play a significant role in shaping which students attend where and the reasons why they select particular institutions.

9.4 The value of longitudinal studies
A unique insight into student accommodation pathways has been gained through exploring changes over time. By using a longitudinal approach, this thesis has been able to highlight new trends that have remained largely untouched within studentification scholarship to date. This approach, alongside a mixed-methodology, has resulted in a deeper understanding of student geographies. This was only possible through an investigation of different cohorts of students and the changes which have occurred over a 6 year period. It was also important to explore HESA data by investigating the changing nature of the student population between 2000/01 and 2010/11.

HESA data revealed relatively minimal changes between 2000/01 and 2010/11 in the proportion of students from working class and ethnic minority backgrounds, as well as students with a disability. Many studies which have investigated the experiences of these student populations have largely utilised qualitative methods. In doing so, such studies have illuminated the voices of students who have remained under-researched within HE debates. Whilst crucial in complicating the multi-faceted experiences of student populations, this thesis has discussed the experiences of students who attend a university with a majority student population. Chapter 5 demonstrated that despite widening participation agendas being successful in recruiting higher numbers from under-represented groups, the majority student population is still largely in-keeping
(with the exception of being state-schooled) with Chatterton’s (1999) ‘traditional student’ stereotype. This important finding enabled a case-study to be identified which would enable an exploration of this student population to be achieved. By highlighting the changes over time this thesis complements existing knowledge by investigating the dominant student group within contemporary HE in England, something which would not have been possible had comparisons with 2000/01 not been made.

This thesis has shown both longer term change within HESA data and moved on to show the movements of students on an annual basis between 2007 and 2012, through the use of Loughborough University term-time address data and semi-structured interviews. Hubbard (2009: 1912) asserted ‘very little has been written about how students weigh up the merits of different accommodation’. Holton and Riley (2013:69) go further, to state, ‘future research would do well to pay attention not only to how students make decisions on their choice of residence, but also how this changes throughout the course of their study’. Crucially, this thesis has addressed both these identified gaps in existing knowledge of student accommodation decision-making processes.

This thesis has shown that there has been significant diversification away from commonly acknowledged student accommodation pathways where students reside first in university halls of residence moving into HMOs in subsequent years (Holloway et al. 2010). Highlighting change over time enabled multiple agents and explanations to be investigated. This was then further enhanced by participant accounts and reflections of their own accommodation decision-making processes. The need identified by Hubbard (2009) and Holton and Riley (2013), alongside the findings of this thesis, present a real value in longitudinal studies of student accommodation.

This thesis has been able to enhance current understandings by highlighting the popularity of university halls of residence throughout the university lifecourse. At the same time this thesis has shown the changing
priorities of students at different stages of their study, highlighting a more social focus in first year and a shift towards academic concerns in their final year. These changes are important in showing that student requirements and priorities influence their accommodation decisions. As the previous section has illuminated, it is not simply that students want to live in student areas. Whilst this thesis still emphasises the popularity of the Golden Triangle, it also proposes that as students learn about the private-rented sector they may change their accommodation to reflect a need to be closer to university or to live in better quality accommodation. Had a longitudinal approach not been taken this important finding would not have emerged and understandings would have remained limited. Studentification has been acknowledged as a fluid process (Kinton 2013), and this thesis supports this argument proposing that studentification and student accommodation pathways will continue to change and evolve in line with wider changes in society and the £9,000 tuition fees now seen at many top universities.

By exploring student accommodation decisions across the university lifecourse, this thesis also uncovered another significant influence on student accommodation pathways. Scholarship has noted the motivations behind taking an industrial placement or year abroad and student experiences once there (Findlay et al. 2006). This thesis reveals the impact of placements on students who remain studying at the institution. Importantly, this finding signifies the importance of friendships and social networks in shaping student accommodation pathways. This has an impact on students particularly in their final year of study and justifies their selection as participants within this thesis.

Bynner (2005: 378) proposed that there is a need to ‘move away from a blanket categorization of individuals in terms of stages bounded by chronological age towards a broader conception based on a range of trajectories or pathways’. This thesis suggests that student experiences are an interaction between both their stage of study but also the path they chose to take through university, both in terms of their extra-curricular activities, changing friendship groups and their accommodation decisions.
This section has shown the value of taking a longitudinal approach to studies of student accommodation. This thesis argues this approach has revealed unique perspectives on accommodation decision-making processes which would not have been seen had one academic year, one cohort of students or one year group been selected. This thesis proposes that future research could use this approach in exploring the experiences of other student groups such as those who take a placement, those studying undergraduate masters courses and postgraduate research students. In doing this, the complexities of student identity and university lifecourse will be further enhanced.

9.5 Conclusions
This chapter has discussed the main contributions of this thesis to the fields of geographies of education, student geographies and studentification. Notably, this thesis has enhanced and expanded conceptual understandings within student geographies and studentification. Crucial here is the empirical evidence base for the stratification of the student population attending different institutions in different geographical locations across England.

The typology of English institutions within this thesis has highlighted how the contemporary student population is stratified across HE institutions in the UK. It provides an evidence base for existing debates, reinforcing that 'new student' populations are more likely to attend post-1992 and London based institutions (Leathwood and O'Connell 2003). Geographies of education and HE have an important role in shaping discussion in the uneven access and distribution of different student groups across HE in England, the UK and globally. This thesis has expanded knowledge within geographies of education by investigating multiple aspects of student identity within the typology, and then examining this through the exploration of a specific case-study to divulge how this impacts on student experience.
Significantly, by using the case study of Loughborough this thesis has enhanced this understanding by complicating the assumptions placed on student populations. This case study has revealed how students from different and similar backgrounds interact at different institutions and the way in which this subsequently shapes their university experiences and accommodation pathways. Future research with a more extensive budget could investigate this within a cross-institutional study selecting institutions from different groups in the typology to explore how specific institutions also influence these trajectories and experiences.

Overall, this thesis has contributed to student geographies in several ways. First, this thesis has shown that student accommodation pathways are diverse and heterogeneous in nature. As has been acknowledged, traditional understandings of student accommodation pathways at university involve living in university accommodation in the first year and in shared housing in the private rented sector in subsequent years. This thesis proposes that whilst this is still the case for the majority there is greater diversity in the options to students in both university-maintained and private student accommodation. In light of this, this thesis has also expanded the conceptual umbrella of studentification in two ways. There has clearly been a process of ‘campusification’ at Loughborough, the creation of additional bedspaces in 2008/09 represents a recognised need for this accommodation type. The success at Loughborough has been seen elsewhere such as at the University of Warwick, where considerable growth in the number of returning students living in university-provided accommodation has been seen. It is acknowledged that not all universities have the capacity to expand their student accommodation but that partnerships with private providers such as Unite and UPP for Loughborough have proved to be highly successful and could be replicated elsewhere.

The recognition that student populations are heterogeneous in nature has been an integral thread throughout this thesis. The conceptualisation of this in relation to the urban environment proposes that ‘Studentsification’ is a more
appropriate way of viewing student concentrations within neighbourhoods. This thesis has highlighted different processes and different students studentifying in different ways, at different paces and in different accommodation types and locations. This is significant and studies which support this finding have been seen elsewhere with students living next to ‘people not like us’ in Bevendean, Brighton (Sage et al. 2012b). This thesis has identified three student groups which can be categorised to exemplify the diverse nature of student accommodation pathways and decisions throughout the university lifecourse. ‘Hub Seekers’, ‘Quality Seekers’ and the ‘Value Seekers’ are student groups identifiable in other university towns and cities across the UK, with studies already beginning to highlight the range of student accommodation now available (Holton and Riley 2013). Studentisation could be developed further with the investigation of other case study locations across the UK. By conceptualising this process in this way, it is hoped a broader framework could be adopted in its investigation that encourages the explorations of whole urban environments and not one particular sector of the housing market.

This thesis has found private PBSA to be unpopular with undergraduate students attending Loughborough University. This contrasts with other studies which illuminate the popularity of this accommodation types amongst student groups (Smith 2008). National reports suggest a slowing to PBSA development (Smith and Hubbard 2014) and further investigation into the PBSA market would assist in understanding the student populations living here. PBSA has been acknowledged to be popular amongst international and postgraduate students (neither of which were the focus of this thesis) and this thesis enhances this knowledge by suggesting it is actively unpopular amongst undergraduate student groups. Whilst PBSA has been seen as a measure to overcome issues associated with studentification processes, this thesis makes one policy suggestion to local councils to more carefully consider the local context to which planning permission is granted for PBSA. In the case of Loughborough, town-centre locations were seen as inconvenient which contrasts heavily with the popularity of this location in other university cities and towns.
By studying student accommodation pathways this thesis has illuminated changes in student accommodation selection over time and demonstrated the role of university lifecourse in shaping these decisions. This new contribution to knowledge was only possible through an exploration of student accommodation across both cohorts and the university lifecourse. A recommendation of this thesis is therefore to encourage others to explore student accommodation within this same vein, proposing that with greater capacity to work alongside institutions in the collection of data may yield highly useful primary data.

In conclusion, this thesis has met its initial aim, to gain a deeper understanding of student populations, student accommodation decision-making processes, and the implications for processes of studentification. In doing so several key original contributions have been made to knowledge about geographies of education, student geographies, and processes of studentification. This thesis has shown that student accommodation is more than somewhere to live, and that student accommodation and other requirements change across the university lifecourse. Whilst an individual’s background may shape their initial choice of university, it is often the students’ hall of residence, and the subsequent friendships that students make which ultimately shape their accommodation pathways and experiences across the university lifecourse.
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## Appendix 1. Eight-, five- and three-class versions

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<th>three classes</th>
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<td>1. Higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations</td>
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<td>1. Higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations</td>
<td>1. Higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Lower managerial, administrative and professional occupations</td>
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</tr>
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Source: Office for National Statistics (2010)
### Appendix 2. Universities requested from HESA

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Appendix 3. Data Requested from HESA

Number of students studying at specified institutions* 2000/01 and 2010/11 by:

Domicile marker (UK/ Non-UK)
County/ Country of domicile
Age (full)
Ethnicity (full)
Disability (2000/01)
Disability (2010/11)
Gender
Term-time accommodation 2000/01
Term-time accommodation 2010/11
State school marker
Socio-economic classification
Institution
Age (grouped)
Subject area - 2010/11 only
Subject area (based on HESACode) – 2000/01 only
Principal subject - 2010/11 only
Principal subject (based on HESACode) – 2000/01 only
Mode of study (Full-time/ Part-time)
Level of study (Postgraduate/ Undergraduate)
Sector domicile postcode (provided for UK domiciled students only/ non-UK grouped together)
Sector term-time postcode - 2010/11 data only
## Appendix 4. Coding Framework used for Residential Areas in Loughborough

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<th>Larger area code</th>
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PBSA
Appendix 5. Participant Information

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Appendix 6. Email sent through departments

Dear Finalist,

My name is Stacey Balsdon and I am a student in the Geography Department, as part of my research I need to talk to students about their accommodation decisions and preferences and I need YOUR help!

Are you a third year finalist?

Do you live in Storer, Burleigh, Kingfisher, Old Ashby Road (engineering side of Bill Mo) or in University halls?

If YES, please would you consider taking part in an interview for my research?

I am completely flexible with the time, date and location of the interview and it can be after exams if you would like but I would be really grateful if you could help me or if you know someone who could, please contact:

S.L.Balsdon@lboro.ac.uk

With your name, and where you have lived in year 1, 2 and 3.

Many thanks,

Stacey Balsdon
Appendix 7. Example of Interview Guide

Interview Guide- Traditional Pathway (C-PRS-PRS)

1. First Year
   Why halls? Why particular hall?
   
   **Experience first year**
   Best/worst experience?
   Get involved in activities?
   Who were friends in first year? Why this group?
   
   **Transition- discuss process of selecting second year accommodation**
   Why do some people stay and some people leave halls?
   Why did you decide to stay/leave?
   Who did you decide to live with?
   Why not other people?
   Where did you look for accommodation for second year?
   Why did you choose that particular area/house? (ask according to what student states)

2. Experience second year
   Best/worst experience?
   Get involved in activities?
   Who were friends in second year? Why this group?
   How different to first year?
   
   **Transition- discuss process of selecting second year accommodation**
   Why do some people stay and some people leave halls?
   Why did you decide to stay/leave?
   Who did you decide to live with?
   Why not other people?
   Where did you look for accommodation for third year?
   Why did you choose that particular area/house? (ask according to what student states)
   Is there anywhere you didn’t consider?

3. Experience third year
Best/worst experience?
Get involved in activities?
Who were friends in second year? Why this group?
How different to first and second year?

4. Broader questions relating to student geographies more broadly (if not already covered)
   Gender differences?
   Why might students live in different areas?
   Resident or student neighbours (does this impact their lives?)
   International vs home differences (any notable differences in where they live in comparison to one another?)
   Loughborough stereotypes (do students feel Loughborough is unique?)
The involvement of different sub-groups of the student population

in studentification:

Participant Information Sheet

What is this study about?

The aim of this project is to explore the accommodation pathways of students at Loughborough University. I am speaking to third year undergraduates living in different accommodation types and different locations within Loughborough.

This project aims to gain a better understanding of the housing choices students make whilst at university and why they choose to live where they do. There are two main things that I am interested in for this project, firstly in finding out about your accommodation choices whilst studying at Loughborough University. Secondly I am interested in why you chose these particular types of accommodation and their locations.

Who is conducting this study?

This research is being undertaken by Stacey Balsdon as part of her PhD thesis which aims to gain a deeper understanding of student populations, student accommodation decisions-making processes and the implications for processes of studentification.

For further information, please contact:

Stacey Balsdon

Address and Telephone number provided.
Appendix 9. Consent Form given to participants

The involvement of different sub-groups of the student population in processes of studentification

(to be completed after Participant Information Sheet has been read)

The purpose and details of this study have been explained to me. I understand that this study is designed to further understanding of the accommodation pathways of undergraduates studying at Loughborough University.

- I have read and understood the information sheet and this consent form.

- I have had an opportunity to ask questions about my participation.

- I understand that I am under no obligation to take part in the study.

- I understand that I have the right to withdraw from this study at any stage for any reason, and that I will not have to explain my reasons for withdrawing, and that anything I have already said will not be used in the research.

- I understand that all the information I provide will be treated in strict confidence.

- I understand that brief quotes from my interview may be used by the researchers in publications and reports, but that my confidentiality will be preserved and any identifying material will be removed and that all names will be changed.

- I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

  Your name........................................................................................................................................

  Your signature....................................................................................................................................

Signature of investigator.........................................................................................................................

  Date...................................................................................................................................................
Appendix 10. Loughborough University Campus Map
Appendix 11. Location map of Ashby Road

Source: Google maps (2014)
## Appendix 12. Loughborough University
### Accommodation Pricelist 2013/14

#### 12.1 Catered Accommodation

<table>
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<th>Contract Length</th>
<th>Meals per week</th>
<th>Accommodation with Catering</th>
<th>Annual Fees- start date 29th September 2013</th>
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<td>Standard</td>
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# 12.2 Self-Catered Accommodation

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Source: Loughborough University Accommodation Centre (2014)