5
'Studentification ication': the gentrification factory?

Darren P.Smith

> …gentrification has been broadly defined to embrace several processes which are also known by other names in the literature.
>
> (Van Weesep 1994:80)

The conceptual terrain of gentrification has been constantly debated, particularly since Beauregard's (1986) landmark discussion of the 'chaos and complexity of gentrification'. There is now an extensive literature which has teased out the varied myths and meanings (e.g. Mills 1993; Ley 1996; Bridge 2001a), and explored the diverse representations and differences (e.g. Lees 1996; Hamnett 2000) of gentrification. This work problematises the taken-for-granted ways in which the term has been historically tied to different processes of urban revitalisation, and seeks to sophisticate understandings of the complexity of gentrification in a wider variety of spatial contexts.

It has recently been suggested that the term gentrification is a neologism. Indeed, it is claimed that the conceptual power of gentrification is weakened as the boundaries are extended to encapsulate new forms of revitalisation, such as (post-recession) 'financification' (Lees 2002), 'Londonisation' (Dutton 2003), and 'greentrification' (D.Smith and Phillips 2001; D.Smith 2002a). At the same time, such pluralistic uses of the term gentrification herald a wider consensus that: 'it makes no sense to try and separate it [gentrification] out conceptually from the broader transformation known as revitalisation' (Badcock 2001:1560). In this respect, there would appear to be a growing synonymy between gentrification and revitalisation within academic discourses (N.Smith and Williams 1986; N.Smith 1996). Arguably, there are many conceptual weaknesses and merits associated with this perspective of gentrification as a capacious concept; although it is not the aim here to tease out the advantages and disadvantages in this chapter.

This chapter hooks up to the debate of the meaning of gentrification, and takes inspiration from recent calls for scholars of gentrification to be cautious and (self)reflexive when utilising the term gentrification (Lees 1999). Without doubt, this critical stance will have important bearings for theorisations of the causes and consequences, as well as the varied dynamics and trajectories, of

nascent expressions of gentrification. In light of this scenario, this chapter focuses on a newly emerging process of urban change termed 'studentification', which underpins the formation of 'student ghettos'. The term 'ghetto' is utilised here to emphasise the residential 'concentration' of higher education (HE) students in distinct enclaves of university towns.

The discussion is divided into three main parts. The following section outlines a definition of studentification, and considers the conceptual overlaps between studentification and gentrification. The second part unravels the components of studentification, focusing on the production of studentifiers and studentified housing, as well as teasing out the spatiality, tenurial and migration specifics, and cultural-consumption facets of studentification. The third part contends that the social and cultural spaces of studentified locations provide a 'training ground' for potential gentrifiers, and that studentification represents a 'factory for gentrification'. The discussion is informed by empirical findings from recent examinations of studentification in the north (Leeds, West Yorkshire) and south-east (Brighton, East Sussex) of England.

The conceptual meaning of studentification

Studentification engenders the distinct social, cultural, economic and physical transformations within university towns, which are associated with the seasonal, in-migration of HE students. At a conceptual level, processes of studentification connote urban changes which are tied to the recommodification of 'single-family' or the repackaging of existing private rented housing, by small-scale institutional actors (e.g. property owners, investors and developers) to produce and supply houses in multiple occupation (HMO)[1] for HE students.

In a similar vein to gentrification in the 1980s and 1990s, the dramatic transformations associated with studentification have captured the interest of the national media. The term was listed in the top 100 new words of 2002 (BBC 2002), and has permeated into numerous national media articles. Examples that pin down some of the more emotive effects of studentification include:

> In the past three years, more than 8,500 families have left. Last year 1,600 houses were converted to house students. Home prices have risen by 50 per cent, knocking first-time buyers out of the market. Schools fear closure because of a shortage of children in the area. Because students move on, there is an electoral roll-over of 52% a year in Headingley, compared with an average 8% in other Leeds wards.
>
> (Chrisafis, 2000)

> Pubs have been converted to theme bars, which often shut during the summer months when students have returned to their homes. Fast-food takeaways and off-licences selling cheap alcohol dominate the shopping streets. Schools have seen their class sizes plummet as families move out

of the area… House prices have also rocketed as landlords have created a property boom and now people wishing to move house but stay in the area have found themselves priced out of the market.

<div align="right">(Harris and McVeigh 2002)</div>

The remarkable coverage of student ghettos within media discourses is not surprising, particularly given the visibility and rate at which studentification has proceeded in the urban landscape. Indeed, these contemporary urban geographies are manifest in the majority of English university towns, such as Birmingham (Collinson 2001), Nottingham (Midgley 2002), and Leeds (McCarthy 2003) creating social and political concern, with community organisations, private sector institutions and policy-makers debating the causes and effects of studentification in many locations. In this sense, studentification can be seen to represent a trenchant restructuring of urban space and politics.

Despite this significant profile, there have been limited academic studies of studentification. In the English context, the processes which underpin the formation of student ghettos have been of passing concern within wider studies of: student's cultural consumption orientations in Bristol and Newcastle (Chatterton 2000; Chatterton and Hollands 2002), relations between student and local communities in Sunderland (Kenyon 1997), and the institutional supply of student accommodation (Rugg *et al.* 2000). To date, there has been no conceptualisation of studentification under the wider rubric of gentrification; the key focus of this chapter.

This is unfortunate given the many parallels between the social, cultural and economic effects of gentrification and studentification. Such similarities are well exemplified in the definition of studentification (see Warde 1991, for an equivalent definition of gentrification), outlined below. It is important to stress here that the definition conflates the common signifiers of studentification; although empirical evidence suggests that studentification unfolds in different ways, and takes different forms in different contexts (for example, see Van Weesep 1994, for a similar discussion of gentrification). In line with gentrification and other contemporary processes of change studentification has four different dimensions:

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.

At the level of process, studentification does not indicate the varied trajectories and complexities of gentrification (see Warde 1991). Rather, processes of studentification are aligned to forms of gentrification which are instigated by smallscale institutional agents, or to borrow Ley's (1996) term 'organic entrepreneurs'. In this sense, it is the small-scale property owners and investors who recognise an opportunity for profit-maximisation, primarily in locations within close proximity to university campuses, that can be viewed as the 'pioneers' of studentification; although a relatively small number of HE students will have often ventured into the location beforehand (see below). It follows, therefore, that studentification can be viewed as a material capital-led process, albeit involving significantly lower levels of material capital when compared to the large-scale, capital intensive private sector redevelopment of waterfronts and city centres (e.g. loft living).

Moreover, when contextualised within wider understandings of gentrification, studentification does not express the cultural capital-led process of gentrification, whereby 'economic capital becomes more significant than cultural capital as gentrification proceeds' (Bridge 2001b:92); a representation associated with process-related commonalities of the 'classical' stage-model of gentrification (see Ley 1996). The following sections now tease out the key components of studentification within a theoretical framework of gentrification.

Studentifiers: the consumers of studentification?

Pinning down the studentifiers of studentification is not straightforward. Indeed, clarification of this conundrum exposes some marked temporal and production-based differences between the prototypical inhabitants of gentrified housing and studentified housing (namely the HMO). First, by contrast to traditional representations of gentrifiers (i.e. residents with relatively 'mid- to long-term' residential attachment to the gentrified location), HE students that reside in HMOs are predominantly inhabitants only for the duration of the academic year or their period of study. Hence, if studentification is conceptualised as an expression of gentrification, this raises questions about the residential status and the conceptual meaning of a gentrifier. Second, HE students do not usually undertake any production-based activities, or participate in the recommodification of 'single-family' housing to HMO.

From a production-consumption perspective it would appear that studentifiers are comparable with later waves of gentrifiers, who predominantly consume 'readymade' gentrified commodities that are produced and supplied by 'professional developers' (see N.Smith 1979). The key difference here, however, is that the latter groups of gentrifiers are often owner-occupiers, and utilise high levels of economic capital to buy into and 'capture' the cultural capital of gentrification (Bridge 200 1b). At the same time, there are prominent economic-related similarities between studentifiers and early phase (marginal) pioneer gentrifiers (see Smith's 1979, discussion of 'occupier developers' for fuller discussion), given their comparable low levels of economic capital, constrained position within the housing market and quasi-participation in the labour market (Rose 1984). In this respect, studentifiers are similar to artists and other creative-workers, and may be viewed as the ground-breakers for gentrification activity in some contexts (Bowler and McBurney 1991).

Despite these similarities and differences HE students do not fit neatly into ideas of gentrifiers being: 'the necessary agents and beneficiaries of the gentrification process' (Beauregard 1986:41). Instead, it may be more appropriate to consider the institutional actors (i.e. property investors, landlords) that convert and control or own HMO as the 'studentifiers', rather than the HE students. This issue clearly has significant resonance with earlier conceptual debates over which producer-consumer groups could most usefully be defined as gentrifiers (Hamnett 1991, 1992; N.Smith 1992).

Putting this definitional issue aside, there is some value within the context of this chapter to consider HE students as the 'studentifiers'—given it is this social and cultural grouping which ultimately consumes the accommodation within HMO. It is also the demand from HE students for this type of accommodation which, in part, forms the sub-housing market within university towns for short-term rental accommodation in HMO. Clearly, HE students are not the passive recipients of the studentification process, and their agency, expressed in their decision-making and search processes for HMO, is pivotal to the dynamics of the processes of change (see below).

The production of potential studentifiers

According to Hamnett (2000:187), 'if gentrification theory has a centrepiece it must rest on the conditions for the production of potential gentrifiers'. Taking this approach, the production of potential studentifiers is clearly rooted in the social, economic and political forces which are reshaping advanced capitalist societies (see N.Smith 1996), and the deeper social, cultural and economic restructuring of society (Butler 1997). In line with long-standing theorisations of the production of gentrifiers (e.g. Ley 1980, 1996), it can be argued that the promotion of HE (and thus the increase of HE students) is bound-up with reproduction of post-industrial service-based socio-economies, and the dramatic

rise in the total number and percentage of the labour force with higher educational credentials (Hamnett 2000).

The enhanced participation in higher education is an established and ongoing agenda across post-industrial nations, and this is linked to the professionalisation of the occupational and employment structures in metropolitan and global cities (Hamnett 1994a). In the English context, this societal trend is borne out by the recent White Paper *The Future of Higher Education* which proclaims: 'In a fast-changing and increasingly competitive world, the role of higher education (is essential] in equipping the labour force with appropriate and relevant skills, in stimulating innovation and supporting productivity' (Department for Education and Skills 2003:10). Indeed, one of the key rationales for the expansion of HE is based on a forecast that 80 per cent of new jobs between 1999–2010 will be in higher level occupations; 'the ones most likely to be filled by those who have been through higher education' (Department for Education and Skills 2003:58). Clearly, the role of the state within processes of studentification should not be underestimated.

The existence of a growing pool of HE students also signifies a wider ideological and cultural transformation within society about the meaning and role of HE. One of the major manifestations of this change are individual and familial middle-class attitudes and perceptions that an important phase of the 'typical' lifecourse of middle-class individuals and households involves the movement away from the parental home to study at an HEI; hence, the overall rising expectations and aspirations of gaining access to HE. Crucial here, and in line with theorisations of the causes of gentrification (Ley 1980), are broader changes in gender relations and demographic patterns (e.g. Bondi 1991b), lifestyle preferences and reproductive orientations, such as the postponement or rejection of marriage, family formation and childrearing.

In England, the structural and ideological commitment to HE has enabled an increase of HE students from 1,720,094 to 1,990,625 between 1995/6 and 2000/1 (Higher Education Statistics Agency 2002), with 43 per cent of 18–30 year olds currently participating in higher education (Department for Education and Skills, 2003). It is not surprising, therefore, that the emergence of student ghettos has coincided with the marked expansion of HE in Britain during the 1990s. Particularly significant here is the subgroup of full-time undergraduate students, which increased from 1,107,841 to 1,210,165 between 1995/6 and 2000/1 (Higher Education Statistics Agency 2002), and who are most likely to reside in HMOs (Chatterton 2000). Indeed, it is this cohort of students which Chatterton (1999: 118–19) asserts are: 'analytically important because of the way in which they still largely determine the overall image of who a student is within British society, and their colonisation of certain areas of cities'.

At the same time, the laissez faire, and unregulated, approach of central government towards the supply of student accommodation is a key factor underpinning the current supply-demand of HMO for HE students. Despite the promotion and rising numbers of HE students, there is a serious lack of

appropriate guidance and suitable resources for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to develop university-maintained accommodation. It is implicitly assumed that the private rented sector will 'mop up' the shortfall between the supply and demand for student accommodation.

Importantly, it is not being suggested here that residential concentrations of HE students did not exist prior to the 1990s. This discussion seeks to stress that in many English university towns the scale and magnitude of residential clusters of HE students has reached a threshold, whereby the supply-demand relationship of accommodation within HMO is imbalanced. As a result, the production of HMO has become a major institutional endeavour to discover new opportunities for profit. With this in mind, the discussion now turns to the production of studentified housing.

The production of studentified housing and economic reordering

The rigid definition of studentification, outlined earlier, points to the fundamental agency of 'landlord developers' (N.Smith 1979) within the process, yet it should be noted that HE students often move into many studentified areas, prior to institutional actors setting in motion intentional profit-maximisation strategies. This phase of pre-studentification (i.e. it does not usually involve the recommodification of single-family housing on a significant scale) is an important factor which illuminates the latent demand of HE students, and is key to the financial motivation of institutional actors. As Hamnett (1991:181) states: 'most developers are risk averse and will not risk entering an area until demand is proven'. Moreover, this is a crucial point within the process of change when the existence of a rent gap between the actual value of single-family housing and the potential value of an HMO (N.Smith 1979) becomes evident. Subsequently, the production of an HMO and the realisation of long-term rental income from multiple students per annum can be viewed, therefore, as a closure of the rent gap. Of course, this is only a partial explanation of studentification, and in line with non-structuralist interpretations of gentrification, I would argue that studentification is not essentially a product of urban land and property markets in university towns (Hamnett 2000), but is inter-related with demand-related facets, such as residential preferences and consumption practices (see below).

Interestingly, the presence of a rent gap is not always tied to locations with devalued housing stock or areas—although it is widely acknowledged within discussions of gentrification that 'neighbourhoods and housing need not be deteriorated before being gentrified' (Beauregard 1986:47). Indeed, many areas which have been influenced by processes of studentification, such as Clifton in Bristol, Headingley in Leeds, Hanover in Brighton, or Lenton in Nottingham, contain relatively exclusive high cost housing, and a middle-class residential composition. If studentification is subsumed under the rubric of gentrification, this therefore begs questions about the traditional assumption of gentrification

involving 'the rehabilitation of working-class or derelict housing' (N.Smith and Williams 1986:1).

Perhaps more importantly, the restructuring of the housing stock and the closing of the rent gap underpins a reordering and inflation of property prices, as the demand from HE students for accommodation within a student ghetto (which is increasingly promoted and marketed by institutional actors, e.g. letting agents) becomes more pronounced, in conjunction with the diminishing availability of suitable housing for conversion to HMO.

Moreover, in the British context the conditions of profitability are also tied to buy-to-rent mortgages with relatively low interest rates since the mid-1990s (which have also encouraged some parents of HE students to purchase housing, rather than absorb rental costs for student accommodation). Empirical evidence suggests that the availability of mortgage capital is a prerequisite of studentification (N.Smith 1979), although like gentrification: 'the centrality of mortgage finance, in itself does not create' studentification (Hamnett 1991:1). Other influential factors include the absence of legislation requiring property owners to register HMO, and the lack of a national code of management practice for HMO landlords; thereby enabling some landlords to limit maintenance costs and longer-term capital investment. This latter point is important since studentification can be associated with a downgrading of the physical environment and housing stock, as property owners fail to upgrade or maintain HMO. Indeed, in Leeds and Brighton there is evidence of 'irresponsible' landlords intentionally 'running down' areas to encourage established households to 'sell up' and move out of the ensuing student ghetto. Clearly, this contrasts with many of the metaphorical associations of gentrification, and revitalised urban landscapes.

However, it is should be noted here that the scale of the downgrading is a relatively minor aspect of the urban change. When compared to the considerable physical upgrading and revitalisation of retail premises and culture-oriented services (i.e. pubs, café bars), links between processes of studentification and the physical downgrading of the urban landscape are generally limited. Of course, there may be specific enclaves within some university-towns where this supposition does not hold, given studentification unfolds in different ways and at different rates in particular places according to contingent conditions (e.g. housing stock).

It is important to stress here that processes of studentification do not explicitly encompass the new-build development of purpose-built HMOs for HE students, for example university halls of residence or flat units, or the large-scale redevelopment of former industrial or commercial premises. By contrast, this type of development has been integrated within recent conceptualisations of gentrification (Lees 2003a). Clearly, such developments do not fit within the rigid representation of studentification (i.e. recommodification of existing housing stock), outlined above. However, the supply and consumption of this type of accommodation is implicated in the studentification process, influencing

the scale and pace of the recommodification, and the subsequent consumption by HE students of single-family or existing private rented housing. For instance, the presence of HE students residing in university-maintained accommodation heightens the visibility of students within a specific location and exacerbates the demand for 'student-centred' cultural and retail services. This is a key factor in the identity-making and reproduction of a student ghetto. Furthermore, empirical findings from Leeds reveal that HE students' spatial awareness and knowledgeability of potential residential options is often limited to the specific location of university-maintained accommodation, and this constrains their residential search when moving out of university-maintained accommodation and into the private rented sector, usually at the end of their first year of study (D.Smith 2002c).

Another key feature of studentification is the prominence of private rented tenure, and a reduction of owner-occupation. This is the inverse of gentrification (Hamnett 1991; Hamnett and Randolph 1986). Of course, the proliferation of private rented housing during studentification is bound up with the production of HMO for HE students, and the rate of this tenurial transformation is context-specific within and between different university towns. Findings from Leeds and Brighton reveal a combination of place-specific factors, for example the level of the resistance of established households to sell up and move out of the studentified location, and the capacity of institutional actors (i.e. estate and letting agents) to acquire or identify suitable property for investors or owners. Interestingly, in some locations which have been recently studentified and which had previously witnessed processes of gentrification, such as Headingley in Leeds, the subsequent unfolding of studentification may signify a profound tenurial reversal of the gentrification process. This issue raises important questions about the wider tenurial tenets of gentrification and urban change.

The spatiality of studentification

The production of HMO involves the conversion or sub-division of the internal space of properties to provide accommodation for multiple students. Hence, recommodification is usually restricted to properties with relatively large internal space, which are physically and economically conducive for conversion to an HMO (see Redfern 1997a, 1997b, for discussion of domestic technological developments which enable gentrification). In line with theorisations of gentrification, the supply and availability of such housing stock does not necessarily lead to studentification (Hamnett 1991, 2000), yet this is one of the necessary prerequisites for studentification to take place. Importantly, the availability of such housing stock limits the breadth of locations which are potentially studentifiable, and ultimately underpins the spatial distribution of studentification.

In addition, the recommodification realms of studentification are not restricted to particular types of housing. Empirical findings from Leeds and Brighton show

that a considerable variety of terraced, semi-detached and detached housing is recommodified during studentification; another comparable feature of gentrification, as Beauregard (1986:41) notes, for instance: 'different types of housing stock might be rehabilitated'.

Nevertheless, processes of studentification often unfold within inner-city locations. In the English context, this is not surprising given the vast majority of established HEIs are located within inner-city areas, and a key factor within the residential decision-making processes of HE students is close proximity to the university campus. However, there is a geographical pattern to the distribution of studentified areas, with many tied to housing stocks and neighbourhoods often associated with the architectural aesthetics and styles of gentrification (see Jager 1986; Bridge 2001b), or as Ley (1981:125) states: 'the desiderata of the culture of consumption'. Indeed, in many university towns studentification unfolds within areas that have been previously gentrified, or in areas which are adjacent to gentrified neighbourhoods. This finding is particularly important since it points to the formation of student ghettos within both working-class and middle-class enclaves. In the wider context of discussions of gentrification, this socio-spatial distinction raises questions about the class-related dynamics of the processes of change, and in particular wider issues of the long-term temporal effects of gentrification. For example, does studentification signify an emerging spatial expression of degentrification? At the same time, does studentification express a prelude to gentrification, or a form of 'marginal gentrification' (Rose 1984), in non-gentrified areas that bear the necessary prerequisites of gentrification (see Hamnett 1991)? These issues provide useful entrées for future research, and are particularly intriguing given HE students are often themselves associated with the pre- or early phases of gentrification (Ley 1996).

It should also be acknowledged that processes of studentification are not restricted to inner-city locations. In some university towns, such as Leeds and Bristol, studentification has spread outwards, penetrating into suburban areas as the processes of change have matured and gathered momentum. Empirical findings suggest that this spatial extension is predominantly linked to the agency of institutional actors, as they encounter additional 'single-family' or existing private rented housing stocks which are suitable for recommodification to HMO —rather than the explicit residential preferences of some HE students for suburban locations. It should be noted, however that such suburban areas are often relatively well-connected to university campuses by efficient public transport services and within close proximity to a student ghetto.

The migration specifics and population changes of studentification

A common effect of studentification are dramatic sociodemographic and population changes which are linked to distinct outward and inward migration flows (D. Smith, 2002b). In a similar vein to gentrification, studentification

therefore 'necessarily prompts questions about migration' (Bondi 1999b:204). However, there are major demographic and class-based migratory differences between the households that move in, move out or remain in the studentified location. Put simply, the assumption of a class-based transformation, or social upgrading (see for example, McDowell 1997), does not hold for studentification. Studentification involves the in-migration of a transient group of individuals, who are generally at an earlier phase of their lifecourse than conventional gentrifiers. The demographic profile of such in-migrants is dominated by single and childless young adults, with limited economic capital and non-participation in the labour market, seeking temporary rental accommodation, and with limited residential attachment to the studentified location (although some HE students may remain after graduation). There are also important class-related signifiers, with many 'traditional' HE students from predominantly middle-class backgrounds. As the Department of Education and Skills (2003:17) note: 'Those from the top three social classes are almost three times as likely to enter higher education as those from the bottom three'.

An a priori starting point of many discussions of gentrification is that the process induces the 'displacement of one group of residents with another of higher status; entailing new patterns of social segregation' (Warde 1991:227). This assumption of a spontaneous socio-economic upgrading, and the reconfiguration of the local class structure (see Bridge 1994; Badcock 2001 for fuller discussion), underlies dominant understandings of the non-gentrified population; this is despite a lack of empirically grounded accounts of gentrified households, a social grouping which are difficult to identify and track (Atkinson 2000a). However, a common profile of the stereotypical 'gentrified' individual is often reproduced within academic discourses of gentrification: working-class, marginal to the labour market, unemployed or under-employed, and with limited economic capital and earning potential. Perhaps more importantly, the displaced households are often perceived as being 'politically powerless', or as Beauregard (1986:50) states: 'they are unable, because of their low economic status, to resist gentrification'. As a result, Beauregard asserts that the gentrified households are 'easily exploited by landlords if they are renting, unable to resist 'buyouts' by more affluent households if they are owning their housing, and unlikely to mobilise to resist' (ibid.). However, some recent empirical studies of gentrification have transcended the simplistic interpretations of the socio-economic upgrading of gentrification (Ley 1996), and have pointed to the replacement or displacement of middle-class social groups that have higher levels of economic and political power. As Bridge (1994:32) asserts: 'not all those displaced are working class and not all the working class are displaced'.

This latter point is particularly pertinent to this discussion, given that studentification often leads to the displacement or replacement of 'established' middle-class or working-class households, depending on the local context. Indeed, in some instances studentification results in the out-migration of gentrifiers. It is ironic, therefore, that in some gentrified locations which are now

witnessing processes of studentification, the new middle classes that initially replaced or displaced industrial working classes from desirable inner city areas, may themselves be replaced or displaced by the children of the expanded new middle classes.

In line with empirical accounts of gentrification, established households often move out of studentified locations due to a combination of economic and sociocultural factors (Atkinson 2000a, 2000b). On the one hand, the out-migration of some established households may express 'voluntary departure' (Bridge 2001b), as households sell their property, and move on, to take advantage of inflated property prices. On the other hand, some established households with relatively limited economic capital, such as first-time buyers or marginalised households in private rented accommodation, may be excluded from (buoyant) studentified housing markets. More significantly, it would appear that the (re)production of the different cultural ambiences and ideologies of student ghettos, and inter-connected changes in the local retail and services infrastructure, may underpin the out-migration of established households. For example, in many university towns the behaviour, recreational practices and attitudes of some HE students are perceived by established households as being 'anti-social', and detrimental to the social and cultural cohesion of the 'local' community. Such induced population movements thus bear many of the 'contagious' displacement tenets associated with gentrification (see Marcuse 1986 for fuller discussion).

In a wider social context, the migratory specifics of studentification mark a major social difference between gentrification and studentification, and expose different levels of class-based power. This factor underlies the recent widespread growth of local political action and movements to resist and contest processes of studentification in many university towns. By contrast to gentrified households, it would appear that studentified households have the economic and political prowess to contest and resist the processes of change. For example, the Leeds HMO Lobby has been established to co-ordinate the actions of local resident groups in Leeds, and to articulate the wider concerns of the established community. This group has illuminated some of the detrimental outcomes of studentification within the local context of Leeds, albeit influenced by their vested interest, and have now encouraged HEIs to develop accommodation strategies, and local planning and housing departments to acknowledge and monitor the rise of HMO, and develop a HMO landlord registration list.

Evidence from Brighton also shows widespread implicit resistance from some working-class households, with HE students remarking that some 'locals' are 'unwelcoming', 'intimidating', and 'anti-student'. As a result, HE students in Brighton tend to congregate in more familiar middle-class enclaves of the urban landscape; thereby perpetuating processes of studentification.

The cultural facets of studentification

Empirical findings from Leeds and Brighton reveal that it is necessary to focus upon the cultural choices and consumption practices of HE students to, in part, pin down why HE students concentrate within student ghettos and reside in HMO. To paraphrase Redfern (1997a), this suggests that 'students studentify because they can', rather than 'students studentify because they have to'. This is not to say that HE students have unbounded choice in the housing market when seeking short-term rental accommodation, or are not influenced by the intentional strategies of institutional actors and urban gatekeepers. Clearly, there are many economic and practical (e.g. lack of experience in searching for residence) limitations on the demands of HE students in the urban housing markets of university towns.

Given many HE students are at non-earning phases of their lifecourse (although an increasing number of HE students work part-time, Canny 2002), amassing appropriate levels of economic capital for bonds and rental deposits is likely to be difficult for many HE students; particularly given rising tuition fees and living costs. Nevertheless, many HE students often dismiss cheaper rental accommodation within locations that are not perceived as student ghettos, and choose more expensive rental accommodation in order to realise a 'student lifestyle' and 'student identity' within the student ghetto. It should be noted here, that some HE students in Leeds and Brighton undertake important trade-offs, often selecting lower-quality, and cheaper, accommodation within HMO at the periphery of the student ghetto, yet which is accessible to cultural amenities and services (D.Smith 2002c).

This latter point emphasises, in a similar vein to the socio-spatial concentration of gentrifier households (Butler 1997; Butler and Robson 2001 a), that the clustering of HE students expresses the predilection for the distinct cultural and entertainment facilities often located within student ghettos, and HE students move proximate to such cultural consumption items (Beauregard 1986). Therefore, in line with Hamnett's (2000:335) interpretation of gentrification, studentification 'is not simply a class or income phenomenon—it is also crucially linked to the creation of cultural residential preferences'. On the whole, such cultural practices bear many similarities to the self-conscious consumption strategies, lifestyles and ideological values and beliefs of gentrifiers (Ley 1994, 1996).

In light of this overlap between gentrifiers and studentifiers, it is valuable to draw upon Bridge's (2001a) recent discussion of the rational time-space strategies of gentrifiers. According to Bridge, 'early gentrifiers are seen as having large amounts of cultural capital even if their stores of material capital are small' (p. 206). It is argued that such cultural capital 'is deployed in lieu of material capital to achieve distinction', or in other words 'the set of values that privileges pro-urban lifestyles' (ibid). I would contend here that HE students share many similarities with such groups of marginal gentrifiers, albeit via

different strategies to achieve distinction and social and cultural identity and belonging. In line with early gentrifiers, most HE students possess limited levels of 'individual' economic capital (although parental contributions are influential here), and often utilise the values, beliefs and meanings (i.e. cultural capital) tied to student lifestyles and identities to achieve distinction. The reproduction of the student ghetto, via the consumption practices of HE students to reside in HMO within a specific location, can therefore be viewed as the spatial expression of the student habitus.

Indeed, the predispositions of the student habitus appear to provide HE students with a sense of 'ontological security', during a potentially insecure and uncertain phase of their lifecourse. For many HE students, moving away from the parental home to study at a university often involves their first significant period away from the parental home, and leads to social interactions and co-residence with strangers. Therefore, the tendency of HE students to reside in HMO is tied to the search for a sense of belonging and membership to the wider student grouping, and signifies collective self-conscious acts of reflexive consumption to buy into the student lifestyle and realise a student identity. In line with Bridge (200 la), this cultural practice expresses the conscious, rational decision-making of HE students —a perception of a 'sound judgement' in light of the actions which they think other HE students will choose:

> If games are repeated there will be a history of prior interaction on which agents can draw to help make their decisions. This shared history means that class agents can be fairly sure of the beliefs of others and so can make sound judgements about how others will be thinking and likely to act in the knowledge that the others are also trying to judge how the class agents with which they are interacting will act.
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> (Ibid: 210)

Similarly, Chatterton (1999:119) claims that the distinctiveness of student ghettos enables 'identifiable students' ways of life to be developed which are internalised and embodied'. It is noted that the sharing of student housing, for example, provides a framework which nurtures and perpetuates 'a common set of student dispositions, or something like a student habitus'– thereby setting 'students apart from the non-student world' (ibid.).

Of course, and in a similar vein to gentrification, these cultural underpinnings are mediated by intermediaries, such as letting agents and cultural-service providers (D.Smith 2002a). These actors 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 HE students. For instance, Bridge (2001b: 214) reveals that the cultural practices of gentrifiers: 'are open to manipulation by the cultural workers or the critical infrastructure who attempt to move this co-

ordination of expectation in particular directions'. Clearly, the role of intermediaries within processes of studentification should not be understated.

Studentification: the gentrification factory?

The previous sections point to studentification as a generational or cohort specific phenomenon, in a similar vein to Ley's (1996) notion of the 'hippies' of the 1960s and 1970s becoming the new class consumers of gentrification. Likewise, it can be postulated that studentifiers represent a potential grouping of future gentrifiers. In this sense, the social and cultural spaces of studentified locations may provide a 'training ground' for future gentrifiers, or represent a 'factory of gentrifiers'. The socio-cultural practices and consumer preferences of HE students, noted above, may therefore influence new expressions of gentrification, and the types of residential location, housing and tenure which are viewed as desirable by future gentrifiers. Similarly, this may influence the cultural consumption practices of future gentrifiers, and the predilections for particular types of retail and cultural services associated with the lifestyles of gentrifiers. This link between a distinct group of 'gentrifiers in the making' and future forms of gentrification stresses the need for lifecourse analyses to explore the individual and collective biographies of gentrifiers; a theme which has generally been understated within studies of gentrification (D.Smith 2002c; Bridge 2003).

This raises important issues for the study of gentrification. For example, do studentifiers represent a new (future) generation of gentrifiers (i.e. when their economic capital increases following graduation and entry into the labour market). Studentified spaces may be understood as important 'learning spaces', whereby the embryonic new middle classes sophisticate their levels of cultural capital and competences, and formalise (or reproduce) the values and beliefs of the new middle classes. In short, while gentrification is linked to higher education as the gateway through which professional status (connected with economic capital) and cultural capital may be transmitted, the lifestyles within ghettoised studentified areas provide a certain kind of symbolic capital. This form of capital represents an attempt to find security in areas of 'people like us' and one which is likely to be repeated in future location decisions upon graduation (Butler 1997).

Chatterton's (1999) discussion of the formation of student lifestyles may offer some valuable insights here. It is shown that student spaces, such as shared student housing, are 'arenas' where the rituals and rules of student life are learnt and embodied. Perhaps more importantly, Chatterton postulates that HE students then 'unlearn the rules of the student game', as their university career matures and develops, and enter into a 'process [which] represents 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' (p. 122). This practice, according to Chatterton, gives rise to some HE students exploring and

discovering 'other areas and venues in the city which are not associated with traditional student culture' (ibid.). Clearly, if studentifiers are viewed as potential gentrifiers, such experiences may have important effects on future forms of gentrification, and the types of locations which may be gentrified.

The experiences of HE students may also have broader ramifications upon the gender, sexuality and lifecourse dimensions of future gentrification, with 'less-traditional' relations often being integral to 'typical' student lifestyles and identities. This is likely to have an effect on the normative expectations and attitudes associated with partnering, parenting, marriage and family forming of future gentrifiers; factors which have been shown to be pivotal to the causes and end results of gentrification (e.g. Bondi 1991b; Butler and Hamnett 1994).

Given the emergence of this group of potential gentrifiers, there is clearly a need for more sophisticated analyses of the wider temporal contexts of gentrification. For example, are current dominant understandings of gentrification based upon out-dated, historical expressions of urban revitalisation associated with the latter decades of the twentieth century, and perhaps linked to different structural and ideological conditions? Recent accounts of emerging forms of gentrification illuminate the urgent need to acknowledge this point, with authors increasingly refining understandings of gentrification (Lees 2002b). In this respect, different expressions of gentrification may be viewed as conceptual and historical markers of time, space, and society, which encapsulate the fluid relations between structure-agency, production-consumption and supply-demand. Gentrification may therefore provide a 'window' through which broader economic, societal, cultural and spatial restructuring can be viewed.

Discussion and conclusion

This chapter asks questions about the contemporary meaning of gentrification. By transposing studentification within a framework of gentrification, the previous sections have been closely aligned to recent discussions which, as Eric Clark's closing chapter suggests, transcend ideas of gentrification as a fixed marker of the (re)colonisation of the inner city by middle-class households and the displacement of working-class residents (Glass 1964). Instead, the term gentrification is increasingly being utilised as an all-encompassing, descriptive label of urban revitalisation. Importantly, this perspective is based on the premise that: 'The process of gentrification seems to have mutated so much that traditional definitions no longer seem apt' (Lees 2003a:572). In particular I have argued that gentrification may be seen as much as a learned response stemming from early housing careers as to some inherent motive to gentrify.

In this reworked guise, the use of the term gentrification allows researchers to bring some assemblage to the multiple trajectories of urban revitalisation, which are known by a plethora of other names—according to the economic, cultural or socio-spatial distinctiveness of a particular process. But what unites these processes of change other than revitalisation, and what does the label of

gentrification signify at a deeper theoretical level? A major commonality between the processes of revitalisation is the (re)production of geographies of social segregation and concentration, and the widening socio-spatial polarisation of different groups (see Dorling and Rees 2003).

Furthermore, these processes often lead to tensions between different social class and cultural groupings, and induce territorial claims about rights of ownership to space, neighbourhood and housing, and public (e.g. schools, health care, public transport) and private services (e.g. pubs, types of retail provision). This social division is manifest in the rise of local political action and community movements, and socio-cultural resistance and contest in many transformed urban landscapes; a common feature which is exemplified by studentification. Studentification can therefore be subsumed under the wider label of gentrification, and future research should compare the social and spatial significance of studentification and other forms of revitalisation.

In the British context, it is imperative here to recognise localised and regional contingencies when undertaking detailed examinations of geographies of studentification. In particular, changing structural conditions tied to HE funding regimes and a growing diversity between groups of HE students point to the formation of uneven patterns of studentification. For instance, recent plans by central government to allow HEIs to charge differential 'top-up' tuition fees may result in a multi-tier HE system (Curtis 2003). It is envisaged that HE students will be polarised (Cottell 2001), with attendance at prestigious HEIs dominated by relatively affluent students moving away from their parental home to study (i.e. 'traditional' students), and less-affluent students paying lower tuition fees at less-prestigious HEIs in their local area, and residing in parental or family homes (i.e. 'non-traditional' students). As a result, processes of studentification may be confined to university-towns with prestigious HEIs, such as Oxford, Cambridge, London, Durham, Bristol, Leeds, Manchester, Nottingham and Sheffield. Likewise, it can be argued that the socio-spatial polarisation of HE students is further compounded by other recent legislative changes, such as HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council for England) advising the Secretary of State for Education and Skills that the restriction of the MaSN (maximum student numbers) should be removed, thereby allowing a higher intake of HE students to the more prestigious HEIs.

These links between the supply-demand of HE and studentification may be usefully explored in other European and global contexts. Intriguingly, preliminary investigations suggest that processes of studentification may be specific to Great Britain. It would appear that studentification is bound-up with the HE system of 'young' adults moving away from their parental home to study in another location, and is tied to the supply-demand nexus which results in HE students often entering the private rented housing market for accommodation in HMO. The system of HE and migration patterns of students in a global context suggest that this is not the case. For example, anecdotal evidence from Northern Italy and Ireland shows that 'typical' HE students often attend a university within

their local area or region, and may often travel back to their place of origin at weekends. Similarly, in other international contexts where individuals move away from the parental home to study, it is unusual for students to seek accommodation in private rented housing (e.g. Singapore, Indonesia). Examinations of the geographic scale of studentification may warrant further attention.

In conclusion, the emergence of studentification raises some important issues for scholars of urban revitalisation. These beg questions about future forms of gentrification and the characteristics of potential groupings of gentrifiers—thereby reiterating the value of problematising the meaning of gentrification. I would argue that this orthodoxy forms part of an ongoing endeavour within gentrification discourses, which is intrinsically connected to the dynamic nature of processes of urban revitalisation. The chapter therefore reaffirms the need for reflexive and critical perspectives when using the term gentrification to investigate emerging, and established, expressions of urban revitalisation. Twenty years on, Rose's (1984: 62) call for a reconceptualisation of 'our ways of seeing some forms of gentrification, and some types of gentrifiers' clearly holds significant resonance for understanding the broader revitalisation of urban space in the twenty-first century.

Note

1 Unfortunately, there is currently no official definition of HMO in Britain. In the English context, the definition of HMO varies within housing and town and country planning legislation. In the former, the Housing Act (1995) defines HMO as a house which is occupied by persons who do not form a single household. However, this raises the question: what constitutes a single household? In the latter, the Use Classes Order (1987) suggests that HMO is a house with more than six persons, not forming a single household. In this chapter, a working definition of HMO is adopted in line with Scottish legislation: a house with more than two people from more than two families. This is the definition espoused in the Houses in Multiple Occupation (Registration Scheme) Bill (House of Commons 2001).