

2020-05-28

Accommodation

Holton, Mark

<http://hdl.handle.net/10026.1/16165>

SAGE

All content in PEARL is protected by copyright law. Author manuscripts are made available in accordance with publisher policies. Please cite only the published version using the details provided on the item record or document. In the absence of an open licence (e.g. Creative Commons), permissions for further reuse of content should be sought from the publisher or author.

Holton, M. (2020). Accommodation. In Amey, M. J., and David, M. E. (Eds). *The SAGE Encyclopaedia of Higher Education*. SAGE: London.

Accommodation

The notion of accommodation in higher education comprises two discrete but intertwined forms – first, as residence, and second, as universities offering students from a variety of backgrounds equitable access to higher education.

Accommodation as residence

Accommodation as residence has two distinctive dimensions – living in student accommodation, usually adjacent to campus, or remaining at home and commuting into campus. These modes of living are spatialized with dedicated student accommodation often a UK, North American or Chinese phenomenon and living at home being the preferred option for students in European, Asian, South American and Australian contexts. Nevertheless, student accommodation is becoming increasingly popular among international students through the proliferation of purpose built student halls of residences (halls).

Student accommodation routes contain two property types – university managed halls and privately rented houses in multiple occupation (HMO). In UK, North American and Chinese contexts, halls are populated primarily by first year undergraduate students (as well as international and postgraduate students). Notwithstanding this, some institutions (e.g. Oxford and Cambridge University colleges, North American fraternity/sorority houses, Chinese shared ‘sùshè’ (dormitories) etc.) encourage campus-based lodging for the duration of the degree.

Alongside traditional halls and dormitories, increasingly globalised higher education markets have introduced privately-managed purpose built student accommodation (PBSA) that offers different ways of living (e.g. high specification services, entertainment facilities, cutting-edge technologies etc.) to students in countries that may not necessarily have traditions of leaving home for university (providers include: Studentenwerk (Germany), International Campus (Netherlands), Nexity Studéa (France), UniLodge (Australia), GSA Coral (Japan) and ENBD Reit (UAE) among others). PBSA differs from traditional halls as they are managed not by universities, but by private companies, meaning a single accommodation block may contain students from multiple institutions across an urban area.

The second type of student accommodation is privately rented student HMO. This is characteristically a UK phenomenon, although there is growing evidence of student HMO in North America, mainland Europe and China. Typically, HMO accommodates students beyond their first year and involves collective student groups seeking a shared property and entering into private contracts with landlords and/or letting agencies. Student HMO has been responsible for studentification, a process whereby residential neighbourhoods become dominated by student housing.

Whilst HMO is popular in UK and North American contexts, there exists varying appetite for leaving home for university in other countries. The third dimension of residential accommodation concerns students remaining at home, colloquially referred to as ‘commuter’ or ‘living at home’ students. This

might involve younger students living with parents and/or other family members, or mature students living in their own homes with partners, spouses and/or dependents. Living at home students are often characterised as 'local' or 'immobile' despite, the often long commuting distances they may experience daily to and from university.

Accommodation as equitable access

This second dimension of accommodation examines the role of widening participation in encouraging (or not) students from a broader range of backgrounds into higher education. In terms of access, students are divided into two streams – traditional and non-traditional.

Traditional students usually approach higher education with a legacy of university attendance behind them, through their families and/or schools/colleges. Traditional students often follow pathways through higher education that are historical, familiar and unsurprising, and of which they understand the 'rules of the higher education game' – identities consistent with historically elite institutions in European, North American, Asian and Australian contexts.

Conversely, non-traditional, or 'new' students – characterised as first-generation attendees from minority backgrounds who may experience difficulties 'fitting in' with university life – follow different pathways that do not necessarily comprise knowledge and experience of higher education, but instead link to notions of risk, confusion of university life and fear of failure (see The Global Broadcast for an excellent rebuttal of this <https://csuglobal.edu/blog/nontraditional-students-age-millennial>). Non-traditional students increased during the early 2000s, as greater quantities of students entered higher education globally. Non-traditional pathways are, of course, not new but became prevalent in contemporary higher education through various global restructuring initiatives between the 1960s and 2000s that radically altered the shape of, and access to, higher education across the world.

A significant component of accommodating students comes from widening participation. This often include state-led initiatives that reward universities for awarding degree places to students from low socio-economic or ethnic backgrounds and may punish others through financial disinvestment if targets are not met. In reality, widening participation is difficult to administer. For example, in China, the nationwide GaoKao university entrance exam has been criticised as a meritocratic instrument that affects students' higher education opportunities.

Moreover, widening participation has coincided with increased internationalisation of higher education that draws students from diverse social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds into global higher education circuits. While internationalisation reveals new pathways for domestic and global students perhaps unable to access tertiary education, it also exposes greater divisions between traditional and non-traditional students. For example, international higher education pathways may be linked to more elite forms of educational mobility, such as the seamless transitions between globally elite schools and universities.

Examples comprise the often privileged international credit mobilities (defined as academic credit earned by students who temporarily study abroad) attached to student exchange programmes, including the European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students – Erasmus

(Europe), Go Overseas (USA), University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific – UMAP (Asia) and the Fulbright Program (USA). Yet, while these schemes encourage learners to develop connections with students, institutions and employers across nations, inequalities can manifest for those non-traditional students unable (or unwilling) to spend periods living/studying abroad.

Mark Holton

Further Readings

Cheng, Y.E. (2015). Biopolitical geographies of student life: private higher education and citizenship life-making in Singapore. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 105(5), 1078-1093.

He, S. (2015). Consuming urban living in 'villages in the city': Studentification in Guangzhou, China. *Urban Studies*, 52(15), 2849-2873.

Leathwood, C., and O'Connell, P. (2003). 'It's a struggle': the construction of the 'new student' in higher education. *Journal of Education Policy*, 18(6), 597-615.

Leung, M.W., and Waters, J.L. (2013). British degrees made in Hong Kong: An enquiry into the role of space and place in transnational education. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 14(1), 43-53.

Reay, D., Crozier, G., and Clayton, J. (2010). 'Fitting in' or 'standing out': working-class students in UK higher education. *British Educational Research Journal*. 36(1), 107-124.