

The effects of studentification on the residential neighbourhood of a university suburb: A study of the University of Cape Town in Rondebosch

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Abstract

Universities and other higher education institutions are generally acknowledged as valuable contributors to the economy. At the local level they are known for having a steady presence in a locale, for attracting revenue from within and outside their host community, providing jobs on different levels and relatively resistant to business fluctuation cycles. A university town is described as a town or in some cases a suburb of a city which is dominated socially, economically and culturally by its university population. One of the most prominent influences of a university on its host community is the phenomena termed 'studentification'. This paper investigates the effects of studentification on the residential neighbourhood and businesses of a university suburb and how the social, cultural, economic and environmental impacts of the studentification affect the residential neighbourhood and businesses in the suburb. The case study was focused on the University of Cape Town (UCT) in Rondebosch, Rosebank and Mowbray. The research revealed the existence of a unique student housing market and opens new areas of research into the patterns, distribution and implications for the formation of student areas. Moreover, it raises the issue of the trade-off between the apparent profitability of the student market and the implications for urban facilities management and the demographic balance in these areas.

Keywords: Urban Facilities Management, Studentification

1. Introduction

1.1 Background and context

Situational information: The University of Cape Town (UCT) has grown in the scope of studies it offers and the calibre of its graduates, attracting considerable human capital in the form of students, staff and other employees. This growth is in line with government's desire to drive a modern economy underpinned by a knowledge-driven and knowledge-dependent society (Republic of South Africa, 1997: 1). The government's strategy towards achieving these objectives involves agreed phased increase of higher education (HE) student enrolment to predetermined targets. These targets differ in the various higher education institutions. The UCT student enrolment has increased at an average annual rate of 1.4%, reaching a total of 23,600 students in the 2009 academic year (Republic of South Africa, 1997; University of Cape Town, 2008). The target student population for the UCT is 24,000 students by the year 2010 (University of Cape Town, 2008). This expansion in the HE programme has impacted on the host communities of Rondebosch, Rosebank and Mowbray precincts economically. This research explores these impacts, their effects, and implications on the residential neighbourhood and businesses in the area which the study defines as UCT's host communities.

1.2 The research study

Universities and other Higher Education Institutions (HEI) are generally known to be valuable contributors to the economy in many ways. At the local level, universities are known to have a steady presence in their locale, attracting revenue from within and outside their host communities, providing jobs at different levels and are fairly resistant to business fluctuation cycles (Steinacker, 2005). The presence of the university or HEI pervades the economic and social life of the host community, with far reaching consequences. Arguably the most prominent influence of a university or HEI on its host community is the phenomenon of "studentification" (Smith, 2005). While a number of studies (see, for example, Smith, 2002; Hubbard, 2008) have been done on the subject of studentification globally, very little research has been done on its prevalence or otherwise, its causes, effects and implications in the South African context. The effect of studentification, which is often seen as the primary influence of the HEI on the university suburb, results in a form of urban restructuring, socially, economically, culturally and environmentally; which negatively distorts the local residential property market (Smith, 2005).

1.3 Research questions

(a) How has the University of Cape Town (UCT) influenced studentification in the Rondebosch – Rosebank – Mowbray areas?

(b) How have the effects of studentification affected the Rondebosch–Rosebank – Mowbray residential neighbourhoods and businesses socially, culturally, economically and physically?

1.2 Research proposition and method

The proposition for the study was that the University of Cape Town (UCT) causes studentification in its host communities, *negatively* impacting on the social, economic, cultural and environmental attributes of the associated residential neighbourhoods and businesses areas. A single case study was undertaken, using semi-structured interviews with UCT officials, local property letting agents, landlords, local business owners, Rondebosch-Rosebank-Mowbray community and neighbourhood leaders, as well as the Local Authority and Ward Councillor in the area.

1.3 Research objectives

The purpose of the study was to explore the phenomenon of studentification, its effects, and the implications of these effects on the university precincts of Rondebosch, Rosebank and Mowbray. The objectives of the study were to:

- i) establish whether there is an imbalance between the size of the student population and the UCT-provided accommodation available to them.
- ii) establish the dependence of the overflow of students not catered for by university-provided accommodation on the private rented sector (PRS) in the study area, and how widespread this is.
- iii) establish whether the factors which define studentification exist in the study area.
- iv) substantiate the influence UCT has in the studentification of the area, and
- v) examine the effects of studentification on the residential neighbourhood and businesses in the study area.

2. Literature review

The strict meaning of the concept of gentrification has evolved since it was first revealed in the late 1960s. Scholars, in the late 1970s and 1980s, gave a broader conceptualisation to its meaning and process, which tried to accommodate the complexities and diversities of the phenomenon (see Atkinson and Bridge, 2005; Smith, 2005; Sabri and Ludin, 2009). Over the years, new definitions of gentrification have emerged from research, which introduce gentrifiers, as well as explain its occurrence in parts of cities and towns, which probably would

not have fitted earlier strict definitions of the phenomenon. Smith and Holt (2007:153) assert that “*the ethos of gentrification is being stimulated and nurtured by networks of institutional actors in different places*”. It has therefore been suggested that gentrification should be labelled by the processes that define it. Studentification, a term first established by Smith (2002), is one of such unique processes of urban transformation influenced by the effects of the overbearing presence of an HEI on its host community. Hubbard (2008:323) describes it as “*the process by which specific neighbourhoods become dominated by student residential occupation*”. The literature review first establishes the conceptual definition of studentification and then examines the causes and drivers of the phenomenon in different parts of the world, albeit in different contexts. Finally, literature review discusses the effects of studentification, as well as the impact and implications of these effects on the residential property sector in university towns.

2.1 Studentification

The term ‘studentification’ is associated with the seasonal, in-migration of HE students, and explains the growth of high concentrations of such students around the neighbourhoods of HEIs. The process of studentification signifies urban changes, which bring about distinct social, cultural, economic and physical transformations within university towns (see Smith, 2005; Smith and Denholm, 2006). In terms of the strict conceptual definition of the process of studentification, these dimensions of urban transformation are linked to the recommodification of ‘single-family’ or re-modelling of existing private rented housing to create houses in multiple occupation (HMO) for HE students (Smith, 2005). In recent times, the concept of studentification has also embraced the provision of purpose-built off-campus, usually high density, accommodation for HE students, within the existing neighbourhoods of the university suburbs (Smith and Holt, 2007; Hubbard, 2009). Research has revealed that there are several causes and drivers, with many parties like government, HEIs, students, landlords and local communities, bearing at least part of the responsibility for its development (Sabri and Ludin, 2009). The expansion of the HE sector by the national government, without providing the resources and the powers required to manage the impact on student accommodation, is identified as one of the contributing factors to the occurrence of studentification (Shelter, 2002; Smith and Denholm, 2006). Research has shown that studentification occurs in stages over time (Kenyon, 1997; Smith, 2002; Smith, 2005; National HMO Lobby, 2005; “Studentification: discussion”, 2005). Studentification is inadvertently caused by such wider and often unrelated events as economic and social trends in a country, as well as government policies (Smith and Denholm, 2006). The desire to achieve social and economic competitiveness in the global arena has ensured that the development of most major countries of the world is hinged on knowledge-based economies and societies. These imperatives of economic competitiveness have inevitably ensured the rapid growth of the idea of knowledge-based economies and societies in most developed countries (Sabri and Ludin, 2009). The unavoidable implication of these developments for such countries is the rapid expansion of the HEI sector, which is usually state-sponsored, and consequently the rapid increase in the number of HE students (see Rugg *et al.*, 2000; Smith and Denholm, 2006; Sabri and Ludin, 2009). Consequently, the rate of

increase of the number of HE students greatly surpassed the rate at which the institutions are able to provide institutionalised accommodation for them, resulting in the commodification of HE student spaces and lifestyles, which are components of (see, for example, Chatterton, 1999; Smith, 2005; University of Brighton, 2007; Benn, 2009; Doward, 2009; Sabri and Ludin, 2009; Smith, 2009). Researchers argue that finance instruments such as the buy-to-let instrument in the UK for example, which makes finance more accessible, has invariably influenced the rise in investment culture (Crook, 1992; Bailey *et al.*, 2000; Rugg *et al.*, 2000; Ball, 2006; Lowe, 2007; Leyson and French, 2009). Consequently, the better access to finance and the demand for accommodation by continually increasing number of the HE students who were not accommodated in university-provided accommodation encourages private landlords, as well as developers, to provide HMOs for these HE students (Smith, 2005; Smith and Denholm, 2006; Lowe, 2007).

2.2 Effects and implications of studentification on the University suburb

Aligned with theorisations of gentrification and other current processes of change, four main scopes of the effects of studentification have been identified. These are: (i) the social impact, which is considered to be the primary one; (ii) the economic impact; (iii) the cultural impact; and (iv) the physical impact (see Smith, 2005; Smith and Denholm, 2006; Smith and Holt, 2007). The implications of these dimensions of the effects of studentification may be considered to be positive or negative, depending on the context and the social group it impacts. It can be argued that the *social dimension* of the effect of studentification on a university town involves the development of a new social group of ephemeral and young middle-class residents which displaces the original established residents of the area (Kenyon, 1997; National HMO Lobby, 2005; Smith, 2005). Research has shown that in a university precinct, the sheer numbers of young adults of higher educational learning engenders an assumed distinct culture, lifestyle and pattern of consumption associated with particular retail service outlet provisions (see Chatterton, 1999; Smith, 2005; Smith and Denholm, 2006; Smith and Holt, 2007). This defines the *cultural dimension* of the effect of studentification (see Chatterton, 1999; Rugg *et al.*, 2000; Chatterton and Hollands, 2003; Gopal, 2008; Hubbard, 2008). Research has shown that the *economic impact* of the effect of studentification on a university suburb is usually marked by the inflation of property prices, which is underpinned by the recommodification of 'single-family' houses or the remodelling of private rented housing to supply HMO for the HE students (Rugg *et al.*, 2000; Smith, 2005; Smith and Denholm, 2006). The impact on the *physical environment* is characterised as follows. There is an initial upgrading of the physical environment, driven by valorised property rentals and prices, which is induced by the conversion of single-family housing stock to HMO to meet the accommodation needs of the large HE student population (see Cox, 2000; Martin *et al.*, 2005; National HMO Lobby, 2005; Smith, 2005; Smith and Denholm, 2006; Smith, 2008; Doward, 2009; Osborne, 2009). Notably, the impact of studentification on the residential sector is not only limited to the supply-demand imbalance in accommodation within HMO (Rugg *et al.*, 2000). There are telling implications for issues such as the lack of regulation of HE student housing, property prices, availability of

housing stock, and the growth of the student sub-market (Rugg *et al.*, 2000). The constantly growing HE student population ensures an increased demand for student accommodation and, inevitably, the establishment of a ‘niche’ student housing market. The tendency of students to live in concentrated pockets in large numbers within parts of the university suburb is a major feature of this market (Rugg *et al.*, 2000; Smith, 2005; Hubbard, 2008; Munro *et al.*, 2009; Smith, 2009). Although the literature above refers largely to the UK, and not much research has been done on the subject of studentification and its effects in South Africa, Benn, (2009) pointed out that it occurs in Stellenbosch. In Cape Town, the only similar example where a residential neighbourhood is host to an HEI of similar size is the UCT in Rondebosch – Rosebank – Mowbray areas. Surveys of UCT students, commercial property owners and tenants, residents and shoppers in the Rondebosch area, which is a significant part of the study area, give useful insights regarding the aspects of studentification discussed in the literature (Moilola, 2007; Cattell *et al.*, 2008). The survey of UCT students revealed that a majority of students live ‘off-campus’ in rental accommodation (Moilola, 2007; Cattell *et al.*, 2008). Of these students, 33% use the UCT Jammie shuttle (university provided transportation) to travel to and from the campus, and 32% walk (Cattell *et al.*, 2008). Sixty-one percent (61%) of the respondents perceived the area what area? to be unsafe. The most common types of crime committed in the area were found to be muggings and snatchings, theft from cars, and armed robberies (Cattell *et al.*, 2008). Sixty-five percent (65%) of the respondents described the quality of the public environment as “average” (Cattell *et al.*, 2008).

3. The case study

The research method involved a single case study comprising semi-structured interviews of selected stakeholders from within the area of study, as well as Local Authority officials. Generalizations from the research findings are made to the proposition, in line with Yin’s (2003) assertions regarding single case studies (see Remenyi *et al.*, 1998; Yin, 2003; Flyvbjerg, 2006; Yin, 2009). Information was obtained from three tiers of sources, analysed and inferences made, within the framework of the issues identified in the literature. The first tier comprised semi-structured interviews of selected stakeholders made from within UCT and its host communities. The stakeholders from within the UCT included Administrative/Council members as well as officials of the Planning Unit office and the Student Housing office. Stakeholders in the host community consisted of local property letting agents, landlords, local business owners, Rondebosch-Rosebank-Mowbray community and neighbourhood leaders. In order to validate the data, a second tier of source of information was obtained from interviews with Local Authorities and Ward Councillor in the area, who, unlike the selected stakeholders, have a fiduciary and social responsibility over the area of study. The third tier of source of information is from records from the police, and local municipal authorities with jurisdiction over the area of study, as well as relevant archival sources such as UCT admission and student housing records. Having defined the issues to be investigated and the case, semi-structured interviews was the preferred means of data collection, as it is better suited to qualitative research, and fosters the pursuit in-depth information, and not just statistical facts. The semi-structured interview was then designed in accordance with the issues and questions raised from

the literature on studentification and its social, cultural, environmental and economic impact on residential neighbourhoods and businesses in a university precinct. Selected stakeholders to be interviewed were identified and their informed consent for an interview was sought telephonically as well as via e-mail. The interviewees were carefully selected to ensure that the information obtained would be from different and multiple sources. However, while the Police were willing to grant interviews, they were not will to part with hard copies of historical and statistical data on crime. A potential risk in having adopted a single case study is that the findings could be anecdotal or peculiar to the UCT-Rondebosch – Rosebank – Mowbray areas. The single case choice was, however, unavoidable, as there are no similar cases in Cape Town where a residential suburb is home to a university of UCT's scale.

3.1 Analysis

3.1.1 Evidence of the number of students exceeding UCT-provided accommodation

The findings from the data collected indicated that for over a decade there had been a sustained and rapid growth in the UCT student population to 23, 600 in 2009. This is attributed to government policies aimed at achieving societal transformation outlined in the Reconstruction and Development Programme, as articulated in Education White Paper 3 (Republic of South Africa, 1997). This agreement with the department of education sees UCT targeting a total student enrolment of 24, 000 in 2010 (UCT, 2008). This growth has put pressure on UCT infrastructure, including student accommodation. It is evident that there is a substantial 'imbalance' between the UCT student population and the capacity of the university-provided accommodation. Furthermore, the information from records of, and interviews with the officials of the UCT Planning Unit Office and the Student Housing Office indicate that although the university-provided student accommodation has increased by 30% to 5, 700 between 1994 and 2009, only 24% of the student population is housed in UCT-provided residences. It follows then that 76% of the UCT student population live outside of UCT-provided accommodation. This supports Cattell *et al.*'s (2008) finding that 72% of the UCT students live 'off-campus'. The UCT officials further pointed out that some students who live off-campus lived at home with their parents, while others lived outside the study area. It was further revealed that, excluding the students who live with their families and those who live outside the study area, 47% of the students who live outside the UCT residences, live within the study area in PRS homes. This statistic is similar to Moilola's (2007) finding that 51% of the students lived in the Rondebosch – Rosebank area. The slight difference in the figures can be attributed the fact that Moilola's (2007) study did not make the distinction between the students who lived in the PRS and those living in the UCT-provided residences in the Rondebosch – Rosebank area. Given the above, it may be concluded that the majority of UCT students live outside of UCT-provided residences, but within the study area and that it is evident that the number of students exceed the UCT-provided accommodation.

The above discuss from the study findings implies that UCT does not have the capacity to provide accommodation for its entire student population. Furthermore, the interviews with the UCT officials indicate that UCT's plan to build an 880 bed student residence is expected to add only 3.7% to the total UCT-provided accommodation. This limited intervention strongly indicates that there will continually be a substantial over-spill of students without university-provided housing who live within the area of study. In line with theorisations of the phenomenon of studentification, it is asserted that the pressures by the large HE student population on its host community begin with the over-spill of the students without institution-provided accommodation (Kenyon, 1997). The study findings discussed above therefore suggest that the presence of UCT in the study area gives rise to a large HE student population, which indicates potential for the phenomenon of studentification to occur in the Rondebosch – Rosebank – Mowbray areas.

3.1.2 Evidence of students' dependence on the private rented sector

The case study data obtained from the local Letting Agents, Landlords and Officials of the UCT all indicate that the students who live outside of the UCT-provided housing, but within the study area, live in HMOs. It was revealed that in past years the students mainly lived in HMOs in digs, but in recent times HMOs in flats and sectional titled complexes are better preferred. In some cases the parents of such students buy the property to provide accommodation for their child while he or she remains a student at the UCT. Furthermore, Letting Agents in the study area confirm that in the last ten years, over 90% of their clientele in the area have been students or their parents. Information from the Letting Agents and Landlords interviewed in the area further point to the fact that investors have taken note of this opportunity, and now buy property in the study area with the intention of remodelling, if they need to, and leasing the properties to student tenants. This discourse suggests that the large number of students who desire to live in the study area guarantee a steady demand for student accommodation from the PRS and depend on the housing stock supplied by the PRS to meet their demand for accommodation. Furthermore, it was indicated above that the study findings showed that 47% of the students lived in the study area in the PRS. This result also confirms Moilola's (2007) finding that 51% of UCT students live in the Rondebosch – Rosebank area, and that 33% of the total number of students surveyed pay rent. It can therefore be inferred that the majority of the students who live in the study area pay rent, and, as such, depend on the private rented sector. The discussion on the case study findings above show that there is evidence of in-migration of HE students from UCT, which explains the high concentration of such students in the study area. Furthermore, the findings reveals that there is strong evidence of the remodelling of existing private rented housing, as well as the development of purpose-built houses to create flats and HMOs for the HE students in the study area. These findings which show the high concentration of HE students living in HMOs in the study area strongly indicate a condition that defines studentification as discussed in the literature (see Smith, 2005; Hubbard, 2008; Sabri and Ludin, 2009). In line with theorisations regarding the formation of student areas in a university precinct, the study findings suggest that the choice of Rondebosch as the preferred area of residence of the students outside the university-provided accommodation is influenced by: the proximity of such accommodation to the UCT academic campus; access to

transportation; and desire for houses on secure streets. The survey of UCT students in Rondebosch (Cattell *et al.*, 2008) supports this as it showed that the majority of the students travel to and from the area on foot (32%) or by the UCT dedicated Jammie bus shuttle (33%) (Cattell *et al.*, 2008). In addition to these findings above, there is evidence showing that students are attracted to those areas of the neighbourhood where other students live. Inevitably, definable 'student areas' are formed along these parts of the suburb, as large numbers of students converge there. These areas are mainly along the Main road in Rondebosch, Rosebank and Mowbray. Furthermore, the UCT interventions aimed at providing student accommodation are also located within the community, thereby exacerbating the creation of 'student areas' within the study area. Consequently, an imbalance in the demographic composition of those parts of the study area can be expected, whereby the area becomes dominated by a transient student population. This was observed to be the case with the area behind the Riverside Centre in Rondebosch, for instance. These findings reflect the formation of 'student areas' identified in the literature review, which is a hallmark of the conditions which define studentification (see Kenyon, 1997; Rugg *et al.*, 2000; Smith, 2005).

3.1.3 The impact on residential properties in the area

The findings from officials of the UCT, local property letting agents and landlords in the study area point to the fact that investors often receive better returns on their properties let to student tenants in the study area. This is because student tenants share accommodation and are thus able to pay higher rentals than would otherwise be affordable to a single family. This finding aligns with the Moilola (2007) survey, which revealed that individual students can afford monthly rentals of up to R3000. Thus, a group of three students sharing a HMO can afford a rental of R9000, which is more than it would attract from a single-family tenant. Thus, residential property rentals in the 'student areas' of the case study area have been valorised as a result of studentification. The local property letting agents and landlords point out that there is consequently great pressure on the PRS to meet the demand for student housing and this has ensured that rentals and property prices have not fallen. This guaranteed demand for student housing and the steady overflow of students without UCT-provided accommodation ensure the existence of a unique 'student market' in the study area. Furthermore, the study findings also show that the constant low vacancy rates recorded in the area is strongly correlated to the UCT academic year and the presence of the students in the area.

3.1.4 Effects of a large concentration of students in the study area

The case study data show that the clustering of a large population of students in the 'student areas' influences those parts of the suburb. *The social influence* referred to in the literature is supported by the case study findings, which point towards the increased occurrence of antisocial behaviour such as late night and general noise pollution and public drunkenness. The response from the Police also indicates increased levels of crime in the student areas, especially burglaries, muggings, break-ins and thefts from parked cars. The response from Rondebosch, Rosebank and Mowbray community and neighbourhood leaders attributed the increased levels of crime to the naïve carefree attitude of the student population which attracts such crimes. This

finding is further buttressed by the Police response, which revealed that majority of these crimes mentioned in the area occur along the Main road, which is a known 'student area' as shown in earlier discussions. This finding discussed above reflects Cattell *et al.*'s (2008) survey finding that 61% of their respondents regarded the area as 'unsafe'. It also strongly mirrors the patterns of the social influences identified by Chatterton (1999) and Smith and Denholm (2006), which resulted from the presence of a large HE student population in the area. In addition to this the interview with the Police showed a clear correlation between the presence of the students in the area during the UCT academic year and the increase in levels of crime. All respondents on the issue above, however, made the distinction that the students did not commit the crimes, but attracted it as explained above. *The cultural influence* is evident in the case study findings, in which the response from the Rondebosch, Rosebank and Mowbray community and neighbourhood leaders as well as the Council Member and the UCT administrative Official all agreed that the study area is more inclusive, with a cosmopolitan and 'international' feel. This finding mentioned above is ascribed to the large number of international and regional, non-local students and staff in the area. In addition, there is also the distinct student culture as well as evidence of a buoyant social scene that is directly linked to the presence of UCT. There is also evidence that the existence of a student culture in the area is not well accepted by some sections of the local community thereby encouraging social tensions between the established non-student population and the student population. The presence of a large and increasing number of students in the area inevitably creates *economic* opportunities. This assertion is supported by evidence from the case study findings that indicate that there are businesses in the area that take advantage of the opportunities and thrive on catering to the needs of the students and in some cases the broader university community. Some of these businesses identified in the area which thrive on the large student population, include fast-foods, internet cafes, nightclubs, pubs and bars as well as business centres, most of which are located along the Main road, which has been identified by earlier discussions above as a 'student area'. Conversely, the interviews with business owners in the area has shown that the economic operations of these businesses are cyclical, experiencing buoyant and lean periods, in line with the UCT academic calendar and the presence of the student population. In addition to the findings above, findings also show that the large student population in the area invariably influence appeal of the retail market, which primarily caters to the needs of the students. This significantly narrows the appeal of the market for non-student buyers who sometimes struggle to identify with the goods and services being offered.

The environmental influence is supported by the response from neighbourhood and community leaders in the study area, which show that, generally, students do not have a high degree of maintenance culture, which consequently contributes negatively to the quality of the public environment. This lack of maintenance ultimately influences the gradual decline of the environs of the student areas. This finding mirrors Cattell *et al.*'s (2008) survey finding that 61% of respondents in the survey described the cleanliness of the area as 'average', 21% considered it unclean, and 65% described the quality of the public environment as 'average'. All the respondents to interviews also pointed out that these lack of maintenance issues mentioned above create a tense relationship between the students and the landlords. Study findings show that UCT tries to circumvent the tension through its planned greater involvement

through a head lease agreement with landlords. The findings also show that ultimately, the student culture and the perceived antisocial behaviour associated with their presence in the area makes it somewhat unattractive location for the non-student population to live in. This means that the property type and stock in the area mostly have to target the student clientele.

3.1.5 Public policy regulating student housing and HMO in the study area

The interviews with the Local Authorities and Ward Councillor in the area revealed that there is no real public policy regulating student geographies and student HMOs in the area. However, the growth of these student areas coincides with the planned densification of the city, a policy which seeks to combat urban sprawl and maximise land use in the city. It appears that the issue of student geographies and student HMO and their effects on the study area have been left by the Local Authority to the complex interplay of market forces. This unregulated aspect of student geographies in the study area seems to repeat the same lack of public policy regulation identified in the literature, which was seen to have encouraged the studentification in university precincts, and ultimately bring about the disintegration of established communities.

4. Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to explore the phenomenon of studentification, its effects, and the implications of these effects on the university precincts of Rondebosch – Rosebank – Mowbray. The case study findings generally support the acceptance of the proposition, *i.e.* “that the University of Cape Town causes studentification in its host communities, negatively impacting on the social, economic, cultural and environmental attributes of the residential neighbourhood and businesses area”. However, the part of the proposition which states that the social, economic, cultural and environmental impact of the effects of studentification on the residential neighbourhood and businesses in the area is negative, was found to only be partially true. From the analysis of the data, it is evident that some of the impacts of studentification on the residential neighbourhood and businesses are positive. Examples of such impacts of studentification which have a positive impact include the vibrant social scene created by the large student population and the establishment of retail outlets, businesses and services which cater to the needs of the large student population in the area, are positive. This observation largely depends on the section of the community being considered. Finally, the study adopted the lens of selected stakeholders, and only the key dimensions of the social, economic, cultural and environmental impacts were considered. Further research involving multiple cases of South African HEIs, thereby widening the population and the reach of the inferences and generalisations, is necessary. It would also be pertinent to conduct detailed studies of known properties with perennial student occupancies, as well as such issues as the trade-offs between the apparent profitability of the ‘student market’ and the challenges of urban management in these areas. In addition, further studies are needed on the patterns of the ‘student areas’, *i.e.* what influences such formations and their effects on the city.

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