

## **Belonging, pausing, feeling: A framework of ‘mobile dwelling’ for UK university students that live at home**

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### **Abstract**

Notions of place and dwelling have become increasingly dynamic of late. No longer is place considered the sedentary equivalent to mobility, instead the spaces at which place and mobility intersect have produced exciting new ways of thinking about liminoid and mobile places, and how one might dwell in and through these intersections. In this paper we develop a framework of mobile dwelling to better understand student mobilities within UK higher education (HE), a sector that is framed by a set of binary dualisms – mobile/immobile, home/away, local/non-local. This dualistic thinking about im/mobility reflects the legacy of the ‘boarding school’ model attached to traditional (and elite) HE participation, and newer permutations of undergraduate entry which is increasingly skewed towards the local. The framework developed here challenges these binary conceptualisations, which unhelpfully cast the growing number of live-at-home (LAH) students as immobile, writing out everyday movements such as commuting, and social and digital interactions with (and off) campus. Thus, by applying our concept of mobile dwelling to two UK-based studies, we reveal the complexities of LAH students’ daily mobilities; illuminating the pauses, the senses of belonging and the emotional reflections that are afforded by performances associated with commuting. By approaching everyday mobility as a tripartite experience of dwelling within/upon the liminoid spaces and experiences that constitute HE, we provide tools for understanding how marginal students make sense of their own identities, relationally understood against more traditional notions of studenthood.

## **Keywords**

**Dwelling; embodiment; emotion; higher education; students; everyday mobilities**

## **Introduction**

The political instability seen in the UK since the vote for Brexit on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2016 has placed issues of student experiences and mobilities squarely on the table. From debates about who has the right to travel to the UK for higher education (HE) and how such mobilities should be categorised (Skapinka 2017), to the highly political discourse around fees and costs of study, there is a renewed focus on the practices and movements that are open/closed to those wishing to access HE in the UK. In England and Wales, where tuition fees have trebled since 2012, there has been a shift towards more localised study with 41.6 per cent of students living in non-typical student accommodation in 2015-16<sup>1</sup> (HESA 2017). This highlights a change in the appetite for HE, with students selecting universities within their region and commuting to participate in HE (Donnelly and Gamsu 2018). This notably, and symbolically, shifts away from the traditional (elite) 'boarding school' model whereby predominantly young students reside in campus-based term-time accommodation (Holdsworth 2009b). While student mobility (residential mobility away from the family home) remains privileged in media rhetoric, recent scholarship has critiqued the widely held opinion that students 'miss out' on valuable experiences and opportunities by living at home (hereafter referred to as LAH) during study (Christie 2007; Hinton 2011; Holton and Finn 2017). This body of work mostly sees localism not as a 'second best' mode of participation, but as reflecting greater instrumentalism and individualisation (Finn 2017) amongst a new cohort of students who desire a rootedness in place (Clayton, Crozier and Reay 2009; Hinton 2011). Thus, localism has been cast in oppositional terms to the highly mobile, and ostensibly traditional, student studying domestically or (increasingly) overseas.

We intend to broaden these debates further by taking a rather different view of student (im)mobility. Specifically, we apply theories of mobility and dwelling, and their embedded, everyday and emotional dimensions, to reimagine the binary and

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<sup>1</sup> By non-typical accommodation we mean properties that are not halls of residences or shared student houses.

oppositional conceptualisation of UK students as either movers or stayers, mobile or rooted. Our approach offers new and highly nuanced tools for thinking through student geographies, particularly the experiences of LAH students whose everyday movements are overlooked or read as evidence of immobility that write out everyday movements such as commuting, social interactions and engaging with campus (Christie, Munro and Wager 2005; Crozier et al. 2008; Pokorny, Holley and Kane 2016). Indeed, notwithstanding the importance of categories like mobile/immobile and local/non-local for describing changing patterns of student geographies, these binaries have, in recent times, hindered more wide-ranging debates about who can and cannot claim and sense space in particular ways (Holton 2015a, 2015b). Thus, we aim to critique these binaries, by applying a conceptualisation of everyday practices of mobility through commuting, waiting, lingering as a form of dwelling that involves a combination of emotions, stillness and movement. We develop Clifford's (1992) argument that places or locations should not be viewed as discrete anchors, but as closely bound to the constellation of events and encounters that influence how people experience space. In doing so, we consider more subtle ways of thinking about the complex relationships between mobility and stasis, knowledge and inexperience, the extraordinary and the everyday.

In what follows, we demonstrate the diverse ways in which everyday LAH student mobilities provide liminoid spaces in which actors can dwell; that is, inhabit or feel at home; pause or break, opting in or out of the multiple worlds they are connecting through travel; and lastly, reflect, often emotionally, on memories, states or attachments. These three modes of dwelling – belonging, pausing, feeling – are posited as analytical tools for interrogating and understanding mobilities that may be hidden or perhaps less valued within hierarchies of movement, flow and activity within (and outside of) The university. By drawing out these three dimensions of everyday commuting and movements around campus we foreground the embodied, mundane and everyday dimensions of university-related mobility (Holton and Finn 2017) whilst also capturing how HE mobilities are meaningfully inhabited rather than passively *done*.

We begin by elucidating upon the three dimensions of our mobile dwelling framework – feeling, pausing and belonging – to provide a brief overview of the (more recent)

understandings of mobility in response to the now twelve-year-old mobilities turn in the social sciences (Sheller and Urry 2006). Next, we outline the methods of the two studies and then discuss the research data through a three-fold analysis of the ways participants engaged in the performances and practices of feeling, pausing and belonging.

**Theoretical Framing** Whilst mobile dwelling as a term has emerged from discussions pertaining to this Special Issue, the contestations between moving and staying, mobility and immobility have been circulating for some time (Bissell and Fuller 2011; Meier and Frank 2016). As Cresswell and Merriman (2011) suggest, in many ways, the geographies of mobility have very often originated with the fact of moving without attending adequately to notions of immobility and mooring – the still, the stuck and the stopped – to help problematise the tensions between mobility and stasis (Cresswell 2012). It is important to understand the localities, or perceived immobilities, discussed earlier in this paper as being more than simply relational to others' mobilities (Adey 2017), particularly in terms of the privileging of certain mobilities over another's. Hence, stillness can usefully be recognised as a process of movement or a consequence of mobility *and* immobility (Lagerqvist 2013).

Our framework moves contemporary interpretations of mobile dwelling beyond simple preoccupations with 'travelling-through-dwelling' and 'dwelling-through-travelling' (Clifford 1992) to embrace more complex forms of mobility and stasis and understandings of everyday mobilities (Jensen, Sheller and Wind 2015) – that reconfigure our understandings of how and where to dwell and/or move. Dwelling is a difficult and slippery term to define through its multiple and contrasting meanings; nevertheless, its common use and multiplicity of meaning makes it analytically fruitful when observing dwelling through a mobilities lens. We offer three interpretations of dwelling as part of our analytical frame. First, we consider the physical features attached to dwelling – to be in, inhabit and indeed belong to a space; second, we explore dwelling as a constituent part of the process of mobility through stops, pauses or breaks; and third we question the emotional characteristics of the term through thinking, lingering or pondering.

***Mobile dwelling: belonging, pausing, feeling***

Dwelling is immediately understandable as a space in which to live, reside and inhabit. As Blunt (2005) posits, dwelling in the context of home carries significant material and symbolic value. Homes are inscribed with meaning and with belonging and are often crucial in shaping and re/producing our collective and individual identities (Blunt and Dowling 2006). As Iris Marion Young (2005) argues:

“humans attain to dwelling only by means of building. We dwell by making the places and things that structure and house our activities. These places and things establish relations among each other, between themselves and dwellers and the surrounding environment.” (117)

Young’s reading of dwelling means to cultivate, nurture and preserve and also, having a sense of ontological security. To dwell is, in essence, the opposite to feeling adrift, insecure – ‘homeless’ (thus reinforcing many of the mobility/stasis binaries). Drawing on Heidegger, Julian Young (2000, 194) provides two different forms of dwelling: ordinary and essential. Ordinary dwelling is “to live a life that is informed by a particular experience – the feeling of being “at home” in one’s world” By contrast, essential dwelling “is entirely independent of any feeling or experience” and is a quality we may possess regardless of whether we feel at home or alienated in our world. Belonging is a key concept in HE research and dominant theories often privilege being ‘at’ university in a physical sense which engender particular modes of in-situ engagement (Thomas 2014). Quinn (2010) has critiqued such a deficit view of belonging for minority students such as LAHs and, following this, we find analytical value in Arp Fallov, Jørgensen and Knudsen’s (2013, 468) notion of ‘mobile forms of belonging’ in which feelings of in-betweenness and movement are understood as part of one’s pursuit and longing for particular ways of being in the world. Thus, mobility and belonging are not seen as mutually exclusive. Instead, belonging becomes ‘a product of processes relating to both immobility and mobility’; it involves varying ‘centering’ processes which are constituted of different combinations of mobility and immobility at different times.

On a different level, dwelling can be part of a process of mobility – a stop, a pause or a break in proceedings. Here, mobility is intrinsically linked to notions of dwelling. As Heidegger (1977: 245) instructs, “dwelling is the manner in which mortals are on the earth”, insofar as to dwell is to incorporate certain activities together as part of

performances of everyday life. Here, like dwelling at home, dwelling through mobility can be read as cultivation and construction – the building of dwelling. Meier and Frank (2016) recently argued that in contemporary thinking, “mobility and dwelling are embedded in broader transformations of society, social inequalities and home” (362). They discuss that dwelling and mobility are fundamentally an issue of power relations and contestations. Crucially, mobile dwelling provides opportunities to question the interconnections between mobility/immobility, fixed/free (Conradson and Latham 2005). For example, Clarke (2005) emphasises how dwelling through mobility hinges on the interplay between the moveable and the stuck, the material and the symbolic, the corporeal and the imagined and how this produces complexities associated with residence and mobility. Moreover, Giorgi and Fasulo (2013, 113) make use of Germann-Molz’s (2008) term, the ‘global abode’, to refer to “a notion of home captured in the tension between mobility and stasis”. They infer that such tension can be partly ameliorated through the transportation of material objects that may produce familiarity, maintain imagined connections and provide a sense of home while in transition. This can be usefully inverted to account for how forms of social mobility may enliven interpretations of home for LAH students.

Finally, we may consider the emotional characteristics of dwelling – to think, linger, ponder or be pre-occupied with. Here, dwelling – or to dwell – links to affective qualities of language, expression and performance, and how these contribute to dwelling *upon* something, often negatively or excessively. To dwell suggests to think privately, to retreat or to hold a thought in space and time. We may in fact want to consider how the process of dwelling *upon* something might contribute towards our emotional understandings of where we dwell and when we dwell. Whilst there is agency in dwelling on a problem or an incident that we have taken to heart, as Smart (2007) notes, often processes of dwelling can be the result of ‘sticky’ relationships – to people, places, things, memories – to the extent that it becomes “hard to shake free from them at an emotional level, and their existence can continue to influence our practices, and not just our thoughts” (45). Thus, dwelling in this context means to linger – emotionally – and mobile spaces can provide the particular spatio-temporal configurations for these practices. Quinn (2010) reflects on the importance the everyday body in educational settings, not just dis/abled bodies (as is often the case) but also those but as sites of emotional energies and interactions. This is how we

interpret 'feeling'; as concerned with the emotional qualities of place and human life, and as relationally produced. Thus, we locate our conceptualisation of 'feeling' within interdisciplinary studies of emotional geographies (Davidson, Bondi and Smith 2005) which regards them as social relations (Burkitt 2014) and ways of knowing, being and doing (Anderson and Smith 2001).

It is through a lens of mobile dwelling that we might more critically consider the various, and contrasting, relationships and tensions between mobilities, immobilities and moorings for LAH students who are presented as fixed, secure and necessarily 'at home' as they engage in HE. In formulating our framework of mobile dwelling we embrace more complex forms of mobility and stasis – such as the relationship with work, study and home – that essentially reconfigures understandings of how and where to dwell. We consider the following points important in framing mobile dwelling, based around the connected and overlapping conceptions of *feeling*, *belonging*, *pausing*. Our paper is uniquely concerned with this particular configuration of mobile dwelling, rather than becoming preoccupied with contrasting and intersecting forms of identity, because it provides a lens through which to unpack and explore the experiences of individuals who elect to be socially mobile (in our case university students going to university) but choose an institution that is in the 'local' proximity. We approach our conceptual triad as follows:

**Feeling/emotion:** First, we contemplate the impacts of emotional ties to place(s) and home(s) as crucial signifiers of mobile dwelling. We examine how strong emotional ties may be re-imagined through forms of social mobility that destabilise or problematise existing connections with significant places.

**Belonging:** Second, we consider mobile dwelling as the point through which new spaces/opportunities become activated through access to new transformative capitals (e.g. the provisions for HE). Here we view (perhaps often temporarily) the material, imagined and symbolic elements of place merge, or become 're-worked', at the confluence of mobility and immobility (the action of 'going' to university alongside the decision to 'stay' at home) that develops new understandings of places that are constantly shifting and, in turn influencing feelings of and rights to belonging.

**Pausing:** Finally, in 'pausing' we consider how relationships with place and interpersonal connections may be caught in the intersections between mobility and stasis and how mobile dwelling becomes a mode of reconciling the potential contradictions between consistency and change. Bissell (2007) has made important contributions to understanding the significance of waiting in the process of journeying. Waiting and pausing are not exactly the same experience; however, as Bishop (2013: 137) reflects, "[w]hen waiting, emotions, relationship to others, and surroundings are experienced differently. When we wait, the space around us radically transforms". For us, pausing is a way of thinking about dwelling *in* and *through* everyday im/mobilities, and how this weaves together the emotionality of (not) belonging for LAH students. Pausing, therefore may engender feelings of 'otherness' or disadvantage for those who have chosen to stay while all around others appear to be moving.

## **Methodology**

The data for this paper has been gleaned from two separate studies, both concerned with understanding the complex mobilities of UK university students. The first was conducted in 2012 and examined how undergraduate students from the University of Portsmouth developed a sense of place in their term-time location. The second study, carried out in 2016, took a slightly different approach by exploring the everyday mobilities of students studying at Lancaster University. We, of course, acknowledge the advantageous nature of combining these datasets, yet the use of complementary mobile methodologies (walking interviews and go-alongs) in both projects and the peripheral geographical location of these institutions expose similarities in how LAH students engage with university spaces. We reflect here the difficulty in assuming a 'blueprint' for examining and measuring student experiences due to the unique configurations of university spaces that produce equally unique mobilities, identities and experiences for each of their student cohorts. The notions of feeling, belonging and pausing were evident in our encounters and was assisted greatly through mobile interviewing. Our mobile and place-based interview techniques provided serendipitous opportunities to experience term-time spaces with our participants that enlivened discussions of the pausing and senses of belonging that necessitated our LAH students' university experiences (Holton and Riley 2014).



Moreover, we argue that the ability to encounter emotions 'in place' was hugely important for us, even if in some situations, as with Timothy's interview on public transport, difficulties arose in containing emotions in what was such a visible space.

The University of Portsmouth was granted university status in 1992 as part of the 'post-1992' initiative and, at the time the study, was ranked as one of the UK's top modern institutions. Portsmouth is situated in the South East of England and is the country's only island city, meaning students often travel large distances from neighbouring counties into the city centre. Lancaster University was established as a 1960s 'plate glass' institution that emulates the 'Oxbridge' college model, through which students are allocated to colleges whereby they live, study and graduate from. Lancaster University's campus is contained within a greenfield site in the heart of rural Lancashire in the North West of England, and this provides similar mobility limitations to Portsmouth, with students living in Lancaster itself required to commute up three miles to get to the campus.

In terms of sampling, the Portsmouth study comprised walking interviews with 31 undergraduate students, of which the thirteen participants that we focus on here were LAH students. Each walking interview lasted between 1-1.5 hours and comprised a tour, led by the participant, that explored interpretations of, and attachments to (or not), their term-time location. The participants had full control of both the direction and pace of the journey and the voice recorder. The sample comprised primarily female (10), White British (12) students, under the age of 25 (9). Eight participants lived with parents and the other five self-identified as living in their 'own homes' with partners, spouses and/or children. Only three lived on the island, while the other ten lived between eight and twenty miles from Portsmouth.

The Lancaster data was derived from 21 interviews conducted in the summer of 2016. The mobile methods were employed slightly differently to above with nine 'go along' interviews on different forms of public transport; four walking interviews in and around campus; and eight 'stationary' encounters held on campus with car users. Each interview lasted between 30 minutes and two hours. The sample comprised both undergraduate (14) and postgraduate (7) participants including nine students under 25 and twelve mature students (ages ranging from 25 to 51). As with the Portsmouth study, most participants were female (16) and White British (15). Seven

participants lived with their parents, while the other fourteen either resided with a partner and/or family (10), friends (1), or lived alone (3). Again, similar to the Portsmouth study, only four participants lived in Lancaster itself, with the remaining participants living between eight and 55 miles away from Lancaster.

Before turning to the analysis of our data, it is important to stress the close interrelationship between feeling, pausing and belonging; therefore, although the framework is applied in the following discussion as three discrete modes of experience, these necessarily overlap, mutually reinforce and often complicate each other in everyday experiences of im/mobility. To articulate this framework we have chosen to draw on vignettes from our participants' responses to convey fuller, richer accounts of our participants' experiences of pausing, feeling and belonging whilst being a LAH student. This, as Taylor (2016, 592) suggests, communicates "a sense of place, time and character" that may otherwise be lost through the use of shorter quotes.

## **Feeling**

We begin by exploring the ways in which some participants considered their feelings about what were primarily spaces of memory and long-term attachment, that had been 're-imagined' through their new experiences of university life. Carl is a student from the Portsmouth study who lived with his parents and who discussed having strong familial connections to the city. For Carl, going to university did not result in a residential move away from home into student accommodation, but instead comprised readjusting and rethinking the city he had called 'home' all his life. LAH are often characterised as immobile in relation to the stereotype of students "not being from around here" (Holdsworth 2009a, 227), yet, on the contrary, the unique layering of LAH students' relationships with term-time locations exposes more dynamic understandings of dwelling through mobility – albeit often through social mobility:

"This [Southsea Common] is somewhere I used to come to when I was younger. My parents would bring us down here as children and now when I come down here more recently as an adult – being a student here at university – I sort of look at things differently. I look at places and buildings

that I remember as a child and they look different. I suppose when you're a child you don't look critically at stuff, you tend to just look at buildings and at places and maybe now I see them in a bigger scheme of things, understand them in time, how things have changed in Portsmouth. I've found myself having memories from when I was a child but being able to understand them on a different level now that I'm older" (Carl, Portsmouth).

Carl's comments reflect how the social mobility attached to going to university contrasted with the stillness, and presumed continuity, associated with LAH. Home – and relatedly 'family' – is often assumed to be a somewhat static system of resources out of which young people emerge (Holdsworth and Morgan 2005). However, it is clear that memories of place and the relationships and attachments that weave through them possess the kind of 'stickiness' to which Smart (2007) refers. Thus, Carl reflects and dwells upon those emotional disruptions through his HE mobilities, and his position as mobile dweller thus epitomises Clifford's (1992) call for recognising the linkages between stasis and movement by challenging how pre-existing spaces may be re/interpreted by choosing a 'local' institution. Moreover, Young's (2000) ordinary and essential notions of dwelling makes it possible to read Carl's self-reflexivity as a complex mixture of the past and the present. This entanglement of memories and recent experiences – of historical, familial and present student attachments to Southsea Common – were part of a simultaneous dis/ordering of Carl's interpretations of the use of the space. Crucially, Carl's identity as 'mobile dweller' means he links his innate understandings of Southsea Common as a child (essential dwelling) in conjunction with how he was using the space now (ordinary dwelling). His apparent immobility – his being caught in-between the memories of his childhood spaces and current student environs – has changed his relationship with place. In developing forms of social mobility as a student, Carl's relationship with home and with dwelling in his term-time location is complicated, meaning these changes were caught in a tangle of maturation, memory and independence.

LAH students may also go through processes of reconciliation as well as disruption when attending a local institution. What we mean is those situations where bodily and material experiences are expressed through mobility for LAH dwellers, whereby

the city as a place of study and as a place with familial connections becomes closely intertwined. Continuing in Portsmouth we consider the experience of Helen who lived with her parents two miles away from the city centre. Like Carl, her walking interview expressed how her identity as 'dwelling citizen' was at odds with others' identities as mobile, temporary sojourners, yet where Helen differs is through the contrasting ways in which her identities were performed in the city:

“[Students] seem to stick to the same places. Like my friends live in Fratton and they get to know where the clubs are but they won't be interested in where the museums are, I mean some of them haven't even been to the beach and you'd think that would be something that you'd do in a seaside town. [...] Students just aren't really interested in that (laughs), the little community things. It's just the social things that they're driven by. [...] I suppose they're enjoying the freedom of being without parents and knowing that they can just go out whenever they want.” (Helen, Portsmouth)

Helen perceives the non-local student cohort's inability (or unwillingness) to engage with the non-student aspects of the city as a form of immobility. This extends Holdsworth's (2009b) critique of the fixation on mobility as transition by demonstrating diversity in how mobility is produced, performed and understood by LAH students. This appears to be less by their initial movement *to* university and more likely to be shaped by everyday movements once *at* university. Jensen (2009, 154) emphasises that we must “realise that mobility is movement that produces cultures”. Often, the production of particular (cosmopolitan) student cultures are regarded as the preserve of typically mobile students and the campus spaces they occupy (Fincher 2011). Nonetheless, as Helen's account reveals, knowledges, experiences and identities are produced as much through everyday movements and changing interactions with the environment, as wholesale separations with home. Yet, in line with Cheng's (2016) discussion of cosmopolitanism among young Singaporean students is important to recognise that LAH also affords mobile dwellers similar exposure to new forms of culture rather than engendering fixity and immobility.

## **Pausing**

Next, we move to Lancaster to examine how mobile dwelling can be a product of movements and embodied practices of selfhood. By exploring the (over)reliance on familial/friendship connections we discuss how mobile dwelling is an indication of pauses, or a 'stickiness', that can situate LAH students in the space in-between the stasis of home and the mobilities associated with new-found university lives. This is articulated through daily movements and future aspirations, whereby pausing has ripple effects upon how life is experienced and understood. We focus first on the experiences of Faheema, a British Muslim student living with her parents and siblings in a small town 45 miles away from Lancaster. Faheema suffers from anxiety which appears to inhibit her mobilities to, from and around university:

"I relied on my dad such a lot [during her first months]. I was like 'dad, I actually don't know what I'm doing' and he said, 'look, you'll find your way around'. I had to sort of, once I left a certain lecture I would just look at my map. I had a real fear of getting lost. So I did have to ring my dad several times for his help. I didn't want to ask other students. I didn't want to stand out." (Faheema, Lancaster)

Faheema describes how she came to inhabit her daily mobility around campus and, in particular, the significance of the breaks and pauses between lectures, for her sense of belonging and dwelling at university. Dwelling can be understood as a mode of reconciling the potential contradictions between consistency and temporality. Much of Faheema's everyday life had remained constant by her decision to LAH, and her family continued to be her main source of social, emotional and practical support, albeit from afar and through mobile technologies. Nevertheless, the temporality of her daily movements around campus – the 'dead' time between lectures that was actually, for Faheema, not dead at all but fraught with the stress and anxiety of appearing 'other' – brought disruption and upheaval. Digital and mobile technologies were highly significant for this act of pausing which, in turn, becomes dwelling, as LAH students like Faheema opt out of the proximate space around them and re-embed themselves in more comfortable/comforting spaces and relationships. Thus, this example supports Fasulo (2013) who argues that tensions related to belonging can be managed through various strategies and mechanisms

that produce familiarity, maintain imagined connections and provide senses of home while in transition

Faheema's interview was a lens through which to understand the significance of pausing for mobile dwellers. Her next quote emphasises how those breaks, stops, and temporal phases that connect 'official' university activities were in fact full of liveliness and activity; of attempts to connect with home and manage her daily mobilities and respond to hiccups and changes. Bissell and Fuller (2011) caution against defining stillness as emptiness or a wasted moment; and Faheema used these pauses to speed up the university day and compress time by contacting her parents and asking them to collect her earlier than planned. Hence, such contrasting spatial (and social) infrastructures (e.g. classes and lectures) often enable/disable the mobility of subjects as well as of objects, ideas and images.

"There are times when I am just sitting there and I want to be at home. I like that I can just be in touch and [her parents] will set off early. If my plans change I will actually let them know. One of my meetings got cancelled the other day and I text home and I was so, itching for a reply because I wanted to know what I was doing, staying or leaving early, and I was in a lesson and I couldn't contact them." (Faheema, Lancaster)

Additionally, it is clear that whilst pausing, Faheema was also reflecting and longing, revealing the interconnections between the different dimensions of dwelling examined here. For Faheema, part of the desire to manage seamless mobilities between lectures and early finishes, so that there were few occasions on which she was left explicitly pausing on campus, was to avoid standing out as a young traditionally-dressed Muslim woman. It was during her pauses that she felt lost and unaccomplished in her everyday, on-campus mobilities, and this exacerbated the experience of being a 'body out of place' (Loveday 2015). Faheema's narrative invokes feelings of nervousness and discomfort at being seen in her everyday embodied mobilities which, in turn, intensifies the tensions that may exist for mobile dwellers in reconciling distance and proximity – of being physically proximate whilst simultaneously being emotionally and experientially distanced, or different.

We with pausing by drawing on the experiences of Maya, a final year student living with her family in central Portsmouth to examine the consequences of pausing for mobile dwellers, particularly in how this may *dis-locate* LAH students' identities and relationships with place. Maya spoke of how the completion of her degree triggered thoughts of moving on and leaving home:

“I guess I wouldn't change going to university here because I've had such a good time but at the same time there's not much else here except for my friends which I can come and visit after university. I don't really know what I'd do with my life when I'm not a student, I mean I'm thinking about doing a Masters but not down here, I wouldn't want to do it down here. [...] I'm hoping to have left [Portsmouth] before they [friends] leave if that makes sense, I feel like I have outgrown the city, I don't want to stay here much longer because I've had all my life *and* university here whereas most other people have lived in one other place by now, I feel a bit behind on that I guess.” (Maya, Portsmouth)

Maya's comments juxtapose Faheema's experiences by revealing the dynamism involved in mobile dwelling, even for those considered caught up in pauses, and how this exposes the contradictions between continuity and change outlined earlier. Maya chose to LAH to retain stability, yet her dynamic social mobilities have ruptured the perceived stasis involved in mobile dwelling. Here, leaving university reframes Maya's understandings and experiences of Portsmouth and her self-reflexivity appears to prompt desires for future mobilities post-university. This positions mobile dwelling to be an active, lively process that can prompt such flexible, complex and non-linear trajectories as outlined by Maya's account. These contradictions between mobility and stasis, continuity and change, advantage and disadvantage echo Clarke's (2005) earlier postulations of mobile dwelling, yet, Maya reveals a perhaps more ambiguous articulation of mobility and dwelling, with her experiences complexly infused with embodied and imagined interpretations of mobility and immobility.

As a final point, Maya's self-reflexivity concerning 'old' identities and her position as 'dweller' – and crucially her decision to consider leaving Portsmouth – coincided with the impending out-migration of her student friends. Hence her mobilities were guided

by a sense of buffering against her perceived loss of social connections. She considered herself to be situated in an 'immobile' vacuum during her degree, but like Carl's earlier comments, Maya's changing social status over time provided her with alternative perspectives of Portsmouth. These were framed through the lens of being a student – of a constantly shifting relationship with place – that, in turn, influenced Maya's feelings of, and rights to, belonging, highlighting, what May (2000) argues is the potential for social transformation through a degree of self-reflexivity. Her self-reflexivity appears to have encouraged future mobility both through a sense that she had "outgrown the city" and anxieties regarding being left behind.

## **Belonging**

This final section illuminates how the mobilities experienced by the LAH participants of both studies became a mode of dwelling-as-belonging. That is, the process of being mobile became part of the ways these students structured, and thus inhabited, their experiences of university (Young 2000) often through a re-sensing or re-working of previously familiar spaces and places. Adam, a mature student from the Portsmouth study, lived close to the city centre and had spent several years working in Portsmouth prior to his degree:

"I used to run to work, down through Southsea and along the seafront but I never came through the uni campus. I mean I still run but now I cut through this area outside Richmond building all the time on my way to uni. It's a bit of a plaza really and there's plenty of space for people to mill around. I discovered that if you come out of one of those gates over there [indicates towards Gunwharf Quays] you come out near here. It's funny, before I wasn't really that conscious of Portsmouth Uni because I never really went anywhere near it and now I'm always cutting through it." (Adam, Portsmouth)

In contrast to the disruptions and interruptions faced by the previous participants over their changing mobilities, Adam's comments emphasise the complex negotiations between flow and fixity experienced by LAH students that have both material and temporal impacts upon their mobility (Harker 2009). Mobilities that were once considered problematic or odd, like moving through campus as a non-student, became embodied, legitimised and then habituated through their everyday



movements through space. These students came to dwell and belong through their mobilities; meaning LAH students' experiences can be constitutive of an array of more complex mobilities than previous HE studies have perhaps afforded them. So, contrary to notions of disadvantage through immobility (Christie, Munro and Wager 2005), mobile dwellers' experiences of term-time locations are vibrant, and at times irrational, being re/shaped through their reinterpretations of seemingly familiar landscapes (Jensen 2009).

There were echoes of Adam's experiences in the Lancaster study, with several participants describing how their routes to and from campus had become modes through which to dwell and belong to their 'home' in new ways; activating new opportunities for belonging and sensing place. Timothy, a final year undergraduate, describes how he had begun stretching out his commute to include longer walks through the city and/or from the train station in his home town, about 30 miles away from Lancaster. Although in the earlier stages of his degree he had sought efficient and time-saving routes to university, often feeling frustrated when trains were delayed, as he reached the close of his degree and with a cloud of uncertainty hanging over his plans for postgraduate study, Timothy began to re-sense the journey to and from university, mostly as a means through which to feel a sense of belonging at a time of personal crisis.

"I sit and look out of the window mainly; I don't work on the train. It's only a 30-minute journey so not long enough for any meaningful work. I like to just be in my music. Radiohead or Arctic Monkeys. Depends on my mood. I try not to think about much when I'm travelling. Particularly at the moment because my mind can drift, like, to what's next. What I'm doing after [graduation]."

(Timothy, Lancaster)

Here, we can see how the daily mobility of LAH students can become a strategy for managing uncertainty by creating a third-space where they can draw comfort, and take refuge. The train journey provides Timothy with a sort of stillness in between the demanding programme of exams at Lancaster and the equally stressful revision at home; however, stillness ought to be recognised as a process of movement or a consequence of mobility and immobility (Lagerqvist 2013) not as something which exists outside of mobility itself. Thus, we consider mobile dwelling to create

opportunities for belonging through the interplay between the moveable and the stuck, the material and the symbolic, the corporeal and the imagined (Clarke 2005; Arp Fallov, Jørgensen and Knudsen 2013). Timothy uses daily train journeys as ways of negating feelings of being stuck and unable to move on to a Masters programme at Lancaster; he finds comfort in the scenery out of the window and the music in his headphones; and in the act of being physically in-between places but also absent(minded) as a way to cope with the stresses and disruptions of his end of university experiences.

## **Conclusion**

The aim of this paper was to develop a framework of mobile dwelling to better understand the (im)mobilities of LAH students in the UK, where conceptions of authentic and valuable student experiences are predicated upon particular notions of mobility that privilege predominantly young students residing in campus-based term-time accommodation. Within this framework for understanding and problematising the variable mobilities that exist in term-time locales, LAH students are understood to dwell in the local; invoking notions of immobility, rootedness and an unchanging personal landscape. Through the development and application of our framework, we reveal how LAH students, so often positioned on the periphery of HE, actually engage in complex and contrasting practices and processes of 'mobile dwelling' in and through their daily mobilities (not merely in spite of them). Our framework demonstrates that for our LAH students in particular, senses of dwelling (at home, at university, or in the spaces in-between) were not achieved simply by 'being in place', but rather, emerged through pauses, emotional reflections, and the dynamic and unpredictable re-sensing of places that may once have been familiar. We extend previous research in the field of student geographies by revealing that these processes – pausing, feeling and belonging – are not inhibited by (im)mobile practices associated with living at home and/or commuting, but *afforded* by them.

Specifically, we illuminate how experiences of dwelling within/upon the liminoid spaces and experiences that constitute HE, creates spaces for LAH students to understand their own identities at times of heightened change and transition. Far from reflecting rootedness, or indeed a sense of constancy, the experiences of LAH students reveal the complexity and dynamism of everyday movements and flows, as

well as the significance of stillness and pauses, in ways that are rarely appreciated in the student geographies/mobilities literature and yet are crucial to the ways that LAH students might navigate feelings of belonging. Of vital importance, as the cost of university continues to rise in England and Wales, and as HE policy increasingly emphasises the need for non-traditional modes of participation, it becomes necessary to understand university life (here, the everyday modes of mobility and stasis that are articulated through pausing, belonging and feeling) as much more than the act of relocating and taking up the traditional spaces of HE. Beyond this our framework is valuable for understanding the many forms of student HE participation (online, distance, and European models) which exist outside of the UK and US-centric residential mobility models. Indeed, our framework of mobile dwelling considerably extends the debate about student mobility, moving it beyond binary thinking that privileges the experiences of the temporary sojourner as 'legitimate'. This allows for a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the multifaceted experiences of everyday life that are deeply connected to understandings of, and motivations for, negotiating the spaces in-between place and mobilities.

Finally, our framework can be usefully applied to other groups that may experience periods occupying the intersections between place and mobility. By teasing out the three dimensions of dwelling this paper encourages a more general, and critical, engagement with what it means to feel at home in the world and how this might be achieved for those who occupy more marginal spaces and positions. Thus, mobile dwelling can also encourage us to think more critically about forms of migration and transnationalism – the voluntary and forced global movements of populations and the ways in which understandings of home, identity and belonging are disrupted by various temporal and spatial forms of mobility (Giorgi and Fasulo 2013; Germann-Molz 2008). Finally, our framework for mobile dwelling might also help develop understandings of the experiences of those on the margins (e.g. migrants of those experiencing homelessness) and the tensions that exist between mobility and immobility, for those where mobility may cast individuals as out of place. As Jackson (2012) argues, such marginal mobilities, while providing certain resources (e.g. deeper connections and understandings of places that might provide essential anchors and support networks), may also engender feelings of dislocation and loss that result in fixing, or trapping, individuals in their particular (im)mobilities. Mobile

dwelling, therefore can usefully be phrased by unique translocal forms of distance and proximity or multi-locational living arrangements embedded in particular migration patterns.

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