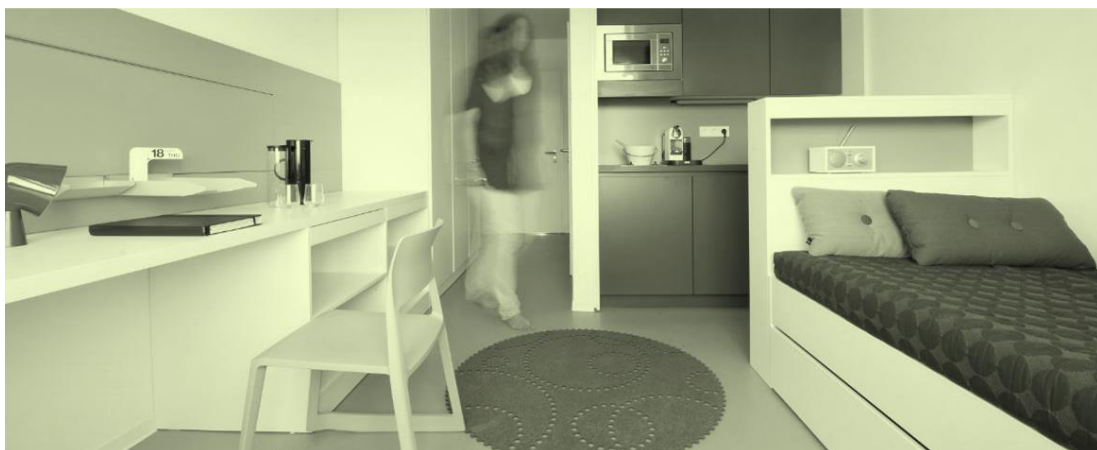




Impacts of the commercialisation of student residence halls in form of purpose-built student accommodation on the life quality of students

A case study of the city of Bremen



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Abstract:

The German student housing market has faced a change in the last decade when in addition to the traditional public student halls of residences purpose-built student accommodations (PBSA) have been established in higher numbers. PBSA constitutes a new upmarket housing segment, often also labelled as luxury or premium student housing. This segment is growing in a context of rising student numbers, lower relative amounts of places in public student and tensing housing markets in most middle-sized and large German cities. Especially against the backdrop of these factors, the impacts of PBSA on the life quality of students have been analysed using the case city of Bremen. By taking into account the views of actors, experts and students connected to PBSA in Bremen, it was assessed that PBSA can have critical impacts on students' lives. PBSA were attributed with the risk of negative influences on the socio-spatial structure of the student population and diminishing advantages of the typical student housing pathway, mainly due to the focus on commerciality.

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Chapter 1 Problem Formulation

The German student housing market has changed in the last decade, where in addition to the traditional public halls a new kind of privately funded and operated halls of residence are being established in higher numbers (ZEIT ONLINE 2013, Salzburger 2016, Lueg 2016). This constitutes an addition of a commercial kind of student housing to a market segment that is traditionally non-commercial. This change started around 2010 and occurred for different reasons. Firstly the number of students has risen considerably due to an expansion of universities since 2007 (Federal Ministry for Education and Research 2007), changes of the high schools system and the abolition of the compulsory military service (Ständige Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 2014). Another reason is the tensing of the housing market especially in agglomeration areas, large cities and university cities. Providing affordable and social housing has become challenging for middle and larger cities and their different population groups (Öchsner 2013). The existing public halls of residence which are operating on a non-profit basis and host averagely 10% (DSW a 2015) of the student population do not have the capacity and means to expand quickly to provide affordable student housing. The problem is urgent for those students who are now troubled to find housing matching their income situation (e.g. in Berlin: Studentenwerk Berlin 2014). New models of privately developed halls of residence, also called purpose-built student housing (PBSA), are being built since a few years, making use of this changed situation of the student housing market and the general housing market. They often provide a range of additional services and can be classified as rather upmarket student

accommodation, where therefore also high rents are charged (e.g. The Fizz (2016, Smartments (2016) or The Flag (2016)).

The development of commercial student residence halls has provoked different reactions from different interest groups and observers. Several newspapers have accounted it as “luxury”, “upmarket” and “premium” student housing exceeding many students’ budgets (e.g. Zeit Online 2013, Salzburger 2016, Lueg 2016). The federal state and the governmental institutions are accused of ‘not stepping in’ to support students, and different associations and politician are asking for an increase of public student housing (e.g. DSW 2015). Surveys examining how students want to live, show that the PBSA are fitting students’ housing wishes very well (ibid.). Apart from that, there has been not much opportunity for opposing opinions neither from the public sphere nor from students about this kind of housing. Also, the administrations of university cities do not seem to oppose this kind of development or rather try to foster the building of public student housing. Since PBSA constitutes a new segment of the housing market its influences on both the student housing market as well as on students’ life and affordability has not been researched yet. This thesis focuses on the possible effects of the PBSA development.

This thesis thus aims at shedding a light on how the growing share of PBSA changes the situation of the student housing market and qualitatively influences students’ economic situation and consequently their life quality. The thesis also takes a look at how decision makers position themselves regarding this new kind of housing.

This topic is important and interesting to research since PBSA have only been developing for a few years in Germany and are currently a ‘booming’ housing segment (Savills 2015). Quantitative assessments of the trend of the new PBSA in Germany have already been published within e.g. studies of real estate companies or these of the Student Union Germany (see Savills 2015, DSW 2015). These actors of the housing market determine a

boom of this kind of student housing because it has been found to be one of the currently more reliable and lucrative investment options (DSW 2015, Savills 2015). Due to the currently low interest rates, much investment flows into the area of real estate, which offers a high profit margin and through the strained housing markets a constant stream of renters is secured (ibid.). Research of real estate companies (CBRE 2014, Savills 2015) has predicted a strong increase of PBSA in the next years and have analysed how much PBSA is going to be built until the German housing market is saturated. It has been found that, at the moment, the public providers are incapable to offer affordable student housing due to the rising student numbers (BFW 2013). Large quantities of PBSA are built with rents deemed unaffordable for the majority of the students (DSW 2015).

Nevertheless, these existing findings do not indicate in which manner students are affected qualitatively and what it means for them to adjust to the trend of new private student halls on a rather strained housing market. PBSA seem to be the solution to match the different interests: offering affordable student housing, enough student housing, a relaxed housing market or a positive urban development; these are all aspects of the rising share of PBSA.

This thesis aims to enrich the knowledge of which influences PBSA have on students and their life quality and how actors involved with and in charge of the planning of student housing assess and deal with the new housing form PBSA. The developments of PBSA have been determined by a lack of student housing in Germany and especially the affordable housing market has been observed, however, little research has been done to date on how students are affected by and dealing with PBSA. The German city of Bremen, which at the present features a comparatively high amount of PBSA, has been chosen as the case study to investigate this topic. Since different positions, perceptions and assessments of PBSA already exist, the following main research question will be discussed in this thesis:

How can the commercialisation of student residence halls in form of purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) be assessed to impact the life quality of students in Bremen considering students, actors and experts views?

Sub-questions:

1. How can the influences of the growing number of commercial student residence halls (PBSA) on students' life quality in Bremen be assessed considering arguments of Bremen's actors and experts?

To answer the first subquestion, existing research findings regarding the impacts of PBSA on students' lives will be compared with new findings on the arguments of Bremen's actors and experts of the student housing market. PBSA is critically studied in this thesis in relation to possible negative effects like social and spatial segregation as well as an overall increase of inequality and disadvantages among students. So far, existing research has been mainly focused on Anglophone countries, a gap in research remains thus in other countries like Germany that shows possible trends emerging in other European countries. Bremen is the chosen case study to explore the awareness of experts and actors regarding the critical effects of PBSA.

2. How do PBSA change the typical student housing pathway of students in Bremen?

The second subquestion elaborates from the concept of the student housing pathway, which describes how students typically navigate the housing market. Research conducted in past years shows that students are enjoying considerable advantages compared to other young people regarding their housing. This subquestion analyses in which way PBSA have an influence on the features and advantages of the student housing pathway. This will be done

by analysing the 'housing biographies' of students who live in PBSA in Bremen and therefore also give an insight to how PBSA influence students' life quality from the student perspective.

3. How can the arguments about the rising share of PBSA and the lack of public student housing by Bremen's actors of public student housing be seen as forms of rationalization?

The third subquestion is not investigating the direct influences of PBSA like the other two subquestions but rather aiming at uncovering how this kind of housing is dealt with by the ones responsible for social infrastructure for students. Although a higher share of public student housing would be appreciated by Bremen's administration, which is responsible for policy decisions regarding public student housing, it seems to be relatively ambiguous towards the rising numbers of PBSA. Starting from this point a closer look will be taken at how plans and opinions are explained and which reasons are given for not increasing public student housing more strongly. The ambiguousness might cover the decision makers own interests and they might use their power to rationalise their arguments. This analysis will be done with the help of the Flyvbjergs (1998) theories on rationality and power.

Chapter 2 Students and the housing market

This chapter is discussed in two main parts. The first part reviews the definition of student lifestyle as a basis for the following more specific topic of student housing. Students are a special social group and feature a precise lifestyle; their housing need is therefore different from that of other social groups. Students' housing needs and demands and the influences of their housing on their study situation will be described in the following. Student housing has also been attested to impact cities in certain ways. There are typical social and economic problems and opportunities connected to student housing. The second part of the chapter is focusing on the student housing situation in Germany, the history of German student residence halls and the development of commercial student residence halls.

This chapter will especially look at research findings concerning the purpose-build student accommodation (PBSA) to outline which kind of development led to this new kind of student housing and its implications for students and cities.

2.1 Students and the student lifestyle

The common student

One definition often used of the student body separates the mass into the traditional and the non-traditional student. Being a traditional student means starting to attend a higher education institution directly after graduation from school, therefore being relatively young when starting (usually not older than 20 years) and focusing completely on the studies as no

employment is required. The definition of the non-traditional student varies between countries, but is mostly tied to the starting age (usually when older than 25 years), biographic particularities (having already worked or gotten a qualification before studying) and the mode of studying (part-time, evening and distance learning) (Tischler and Wolter 2004). Other countries and definitions might also include married and single-parent and financially independent in the group of the non-traditional students. In Germany the traditional, also called “normal student” (Normalstudierende), is the predominant kind with only a small number of non-traditional students at the higher education institutions (Kerres et al. 2011).

Holton and Riley (2013) contest this and other dualistic (e.g. local and non-local) classifications, pointing out that more research should be directed at the diversity of student experiences which would probably lead to rather fluid and heterogeneous classifications. Media and popular culture stereotypes of students being “consumer oriented and alcohol-fueled” as well as “hedonistic and irresponsible” (Moffatt 1991) also need to be differentiated by closer investigating the student population. They ask for a better definition of “what constitutes ‘being’ a student in contemporary HE [higher education]” (2013: 70). Without it, the subject is simplified to a homogenous student community which excludes the differentiation of existing subcultures. Then again the authors find the outcome of stating an “elastic nature” of what is the student identity (Crozier et al. 2008; Holdsworth 2006) problematic as well.

Though the definitions of “the student” might be to some degree fuzzy, most literature agrees on the “specific demographic and economic profile that is represented by most student populations” (Macintyre 2003). This typical student will serve as the basis for this work and will further be explained in the following parts about the student lifestyle and the students’ behaviour on the housing market.

The student lifestyle

In the same way that students are defined as a special population group, their lifestyle has also been defined as specific and delimitable from other social groups. Chatterton (1999) finds that “students as a part of the population have a different lifestyle from that of the majority” (in Thomsen and Eikemo 2010) which is described as expressive and shows special consumption patterns.

In connection to the life circumstances of the typical student “the conditions associated with student life in Trondheim are usually ascribed to the younger students without established families” (Thomsen and Eikemo 2010: 275). This place-dependent assessment fits most of the student population. Due to their personal independence, students can e.g. take part in cities’ social and cultural life and even produce cultural events themselves. Though acknowledging the complexity and heterogeneity of student lifestyles, Chatterton and Hollands (2003) find that “...student communities still share a common cultural archetype of the “student” being characterised by higher levels of free time, disposable income, socialising, experimentation and a more learning oriented lifestyle.” (p. 131). To explain the student life they use the term “studentland” as a set of discursive practices which is defined and created by involved groups like students, staff, parents or business people. In this studentland students are trying to balance “education and working with fun, drinking and socialising.”(ibid: 127).

The distinguishability of the student life style is also explainable by the effects ascribed to student populations on cities. The geographic accumulation of student populations is sometimes seen as an asset to a city’s economy. At other times they are also seen as physical, social and economic threat (Macintyre 2003) (a more detailed explanation will be given later on). However positive or negative the influence, it is clear that student populations are assessed to have veritable influence on their environment due to their lifestyle. Nevertheless, students are often dependent on financial support from their family (Ford et al. 2002) and entitled to other advantages because of being categorized as a low

income group (e.g. Rugg et al. 2004; Eikemo and Thomsen 2010). They make use of diverse services and support provided by universities, cities and other institutions, which are supposed to create a helpful study environment. They are offered spaces for personal development and experimentation, as well as material advances (e.g. credits, consumer goods, discounts, employment opportunities etc.).

Regarding new developments in that field Chatterton and Hollands attest student experiences and student lifestyles are experiencing a commercialisation (2003). Holton and Riley even talk about the emergence of “new type of student – one who does not conform to the stereotypical, cash-restricted, student lifestyle” (2013: 64).

Less basic, but also a fact shaping students lifestyle is the internationalisation of higher education (Walter and Brooks 2011 in Holton and Riley 2013), which leads a considerable number of students to incorporate a stay abroad into their study career. Whereas in 1991 about 1.3 million students studied abroad this number more than tripled to ca. 5 million in 2014 ("The State Of International Student Mobility In 2015" 2015).

2.2 Students on the housing market

Students are a special group on the housing market. They feature a special lifestyle; different needs and demands than most other population groups, which influences their way of housing. On one hand side, they are attributed with an expressive lifestyle that can leave an impact on their surroundings and even on the wider housing market (e.g. urban regeneration and revitalisation or decay and destruction (Macintyre 2003) as well as gentrification (Hubbart 2009; Chatterton 1999). On the other hand they are in need of support in form of affordable rents (DSW 2014; BMUB 2015) as well as “stable and supportive living environment” (Macintyre 2003:111) helping them to study successfully.

This shows that students are in a complex situation on the housing market. They can be utilised for commercial and urban development reasons or supported because of their financial and educational status. The commercialisation of student housing fits into the broader context of the European process which started approximately twenty years ago and which sees “a surge of privatisation in all kinds of industries” (Lennartz 2011:1). In the housing sector “(s)trained public budgets, the dominance of a neo-liberal public policy agenda, and the general impetus propelling owner-occupation have spurred the privatisation of public housing” (ibid.). Also Chatterton (2010) finds that a “new wave of aggressive high-rise urban property developers” (p. 514) and the commodification of student services make up a system that features inequality and disadvantage. These negative effects will develop further if “a higher education system is characterised by (...) creeping privatisation and a greater reliance on a corporate business model” (ibid.).

The usually young adults leave the family home “without established families and in pursuit of ideals, friendships and new experiences” (Frønes and Brusdal 2000). Thomsen (2007) describes the first own accommodation as a “physical manifestation in the transition to adulthood, supporting the development of an adult identity and independence” (p. 581 also Kenyon 1999; Ford et al. 2002; Rugg et al. 2004). This underlines the importance of housing in the students’ life.

To conceptualise students’ behaviour on the housing market the theoretical frameworks of “housing pathways” is often used. Among other pathways (e.g. the chaotic or the constrained) the student pathway is distinguished. On this pathway, which usually includes leaving the family home with the aim of enrolling in higher education, constraints are manageable due to accommodation provided by the higher education institutions and private rented sector of the student housing market. Also substantial family support and some mobility is part of the student pathway (Ford et al. 2002). Mayer (2002) assesses that student housing is often of a rather temporary and transitory character therefore being connected to differing demands than rather than long-term housing (Thomsen 2010). Also

shared or communal living is culturally expected in the field of student housing (Ford et al. 2002).

A development is seen in the shift to rather demanding generations of students who do not only seek somewhere to live but look for place that offers a student experience (Morgan and McDowell 1979; Silver 2004). The mentioned “commercialisation of the student experience and student lifestyles” (Chatterton and Hollands 2003) is assessed to be connected to the trend of student housing becoming more “high-end, passive, modular living” and “more niche and exclusive on-site facilities” (Holton and Riley 2013: 64). This trend has been witnessed to attract students away from traditional forms of student housing with student unions as well as competing with the traditional form of shared student housing. Especially students studying abroad usually have more difficulties to enter a foreign housing market, due to language barriers and lacking oversight, therefore being a target group of this kind of exclusive student housing. These assessments show that both the housing market is offering this new upmarket student housing segment because of its own dynamic but also student generations are creating a demand for housing of a higher standard.

2.2.1 Gaps in research on student housing

Researchers dealing with the topic of student housing complain about the lack of investigation in this field. Riley (2010) postulates the need to study students’ “lifeworlds” which includes their living spaces. Next to analysing choices of student housing also the changes in the housing careers during the studies and relationships developing in shared flats would be an interesting field (Holton and Riley 2013). Mayer (2002) claims that the limited research on the housing needs of young people is due to the low economic status of

this group and the temporariness of their housing which might lessen students expectations in terms of the housing quality.

2.2.2 Influence of housing on life quality and education

The housing situation is generally an important aspect of the life and well-being of any person. “Like almost no other life area, housing offers the possibility of free choice and autonomous social, creative, time-related organisation and use.”¹(Beck 2001: 348). Therefore the housing conditions are proven to have high influence on the levels of satisfaction and life quality (Beck 2000, Beck 2001). There are numerous conditions that have to be met to ensure satisfaction:

“Determinates of satisfaction are qualitative and quantitative features (e.g. room size, facilities), the form of housing, individual factors (e.g. educational status), infrastructural/ ecologic factors (e.g. good transport connections, proximity to shops and cafes) and identity-establishing factors (e.g. embeddedness in social relationships).*(Sonnenberg 2007: 9)

Students are no exception to this and they voice specific demands for their housing as well as being dependent on a satisfactory housing situation as one factor to help ensuring a successful study experience and life quality. It has been researched which demands students have regarding the physical aspects of their accommodation and also which aspects influence their level of satisfaction regarding their housing.

Macintyre points out that there is “evidence of a greater level of academic success among students who share a stable and supportive residential environment” (2003: 111). Although

¹ * indicates own translation of German sources

this statement is in this case connected to findings about relatively concentrated groups of mainly on-campus living students, it is very probable that it is also true for students living off-campus and in other housing market segments. There are few studies which deal with the topic area of students residences as a factor for study success in general and especially in Germany. A study conducted in 2014 by the German student unions examines the effects of study-accompanying services on the success of studying. It assesses that almost no empirical studies have been conducted on the topic so far and that therefore new methodological ground has to be broken. In order to do so a model categorising the influences on the successfulness of studying was made, which also lists the provision of services like housing as a factor (DZHW 2014). After the model, the service of housing affects the personal study situation which then influences the study process. Both of these factors influence the overall study success. This study found that almost every second student who found a place in a public hall of residence did not have an alternative place to live. Therefore it is concluded that the public halls of residence are an important provider on the housing market. If this service was not provided part of the students would probably have to deal with negative study conditions or might not even start to study. The halls of residence are especially important for foreign students of whom even a lesser share had alternative housing to choose from and a higher share trouble to find housing. These results indicate that enough publicly supported student housing spaces are important for at least a part of the student population to get a chance to study successfully.

Looking at influential factors regarding their accommodation choices Oppewal (2005) found the room size, sharing facilities and the location in relation to the university most important for students. Contrasting that a study about the housing satisfaction conducted in Trondheim, Norway, by Thomsen and Eikemo (2010) shows that the type of tenancy/ownership (a greater satisfaction of institutional over private renters was found) is most important. This aspect is followed by the quality of different housing characteristics (e.g. importance of the space available, light, being able to personalise the housing) and in third place the location (living close to campus positively affected and living close to the city

centre slightly positively affected the housing satisfaction). Demographic variables (age or financial background) and the sharing of facilities (bath, kitchen and entrances) turned out to be of little significance. It was found that if students have the possibility to express their identity through their housing and making a home of their accommodation, they will feature higher levels of satisfaction. Even though most of the time student housing is of a temporary and transitory nature it has also been analysed that its users put effort and care into creating a homely space (Thomsen 2007).

2.2.3 The influence of student housing on the housing market and cities/neighbourhoods

The aforementioned specific demographic and economic profile of students results in a “significant impact upon the cultural and social dynamics of a community” (Macintyre 2003: 112). Research in various locations has led to different conclusions about the effects of student concentrations on neighbourhoods and cities. On the positive side they possible enrich the social and cultural life, strengthen the local economy or have a reviving influence. They might also lead to an increase of property prices which can be viewed as positive if the plan is to revive and area or negative if it causes unwanted gentrification. On the negative side they are also connected with disruption of the social structure and fear of e.g. increased thread of burglary, neglect of properties or lowering housing values.

These negative effects can be avoided and the positive enhanced by integrating student housing in an appropriate manner into an area. This means taking into account the size of existing residential patterns, encouraging long-term or as constant as possible rents and applying attractive and competitive priced housing meeting the needs of the students (Macintyre 2003). A keyword in the topic area of how concentrations of students influence distinct areas or neighbourhoods is “studentification” (Smith and Hubbard 2014) which sums up the described possible negative and positive influences.

2.2.4 Student housing: commercial interests vs. social interests

The property market is thriving in current times, being a relatively save investment option and offering high profit margins. Therefore, the interest in this market as well as the competition about it has increased. This also concerns the student housing market:

“Groups have different reasons for engaging with studentland – for younger students it is learning, fun and an important rite of passage experience; for city bosses universities may mean having a skilled and educated future workforce; and for businesses it is a potentially important source of revenue and profit.” (Chatterton and Hollands 2003: 126).

This quote shows how the different parties involved in the student housing market have different reasons for participating: While it is learning and fun for the students, its revenue and profit for investors. These goals can be contrary, leaving the students as the disadvantaged group as the high rents might decrease the quality of their study situation (e.g. by having to work or not being able to live close to campus). The quote does not mention universities which can also be part of the student housing market. On the competitive market of the higher education institutions the offer of student housing is seen as an important asset, which is a reason for universities to get involved. Macintyre (2003) observes a shift from universities advertising their educational merits to providing a wider range of services, including housing, to attract future students. In this context the institutions view the student as an “academic consumer” or a “shopping client” (p. 110).

Purpose built student accommodation (PBSA) is a recent development towards rather exclusive, niche and on-site housing, that is estimated to influence the patterns of the student housing market by competing with traditional shared housing. This type of residence hints a new type of student “who does not conform to the stereotypical, cash-restricted, student lifestyle, opting instead for high-end, passive, modular living” (Holton and Riley 2013, p. 64). Sage (et al. 2013) describe PBSA as “large blocks of commercially provided off-campus student accommodation (...), attracting premium rents for luxury amenities and styled interiors” drawing from Hubbard (2009) and Chatterton, (2010).

This development could become a problem for the less well-off part of students who do not belong to this new type. In Germany this expensive housing increasingly supplements non-commercial student housing and has done so for a few years. Student unions are not able to build the amounts of housing that would keep the percentage of affordable housing stable, therefore any kind of new student housing is deemed preferable to no student housing (BID 2015). The students with less income are at the risk of suffering from this, because PBSA are targeted at students with an income over 800€. The national average is 680€, with 25% under 560€ and 25% over 800€ (CBRE 2014). German officials involved with student housing agree with the fact that students as a low income group and in an educational phase are profiting from support to be able to focus their life on studying (BUMB a 2016, DSW 2015). Anyone who is eligible for funding by the state, which depends on the income level of the parents, receives 224€ housing money (independent from which university location, 250€ from autumn 2016, DSW 2015). Nevertheless none of the PBSA which are usually renting for 400-600€ are affordable for students with a low income. Combined with the scarcity of housing in most large German cities this fact might lead to low-income students having trouble finding suitable housing and because of the lack of alternatives settling for expensive housing. The discrepancy of their income available and the money needed for the rent might cause certain problems and pressures for them ultimately affecting the quality of their performance.

This might not only affect individual students but the whole city and student body. Chatterton (1999) finds that “the continued regulation and segregation of space for the exclusive residential [...] needs of students enhances [...] division and conflict in cities”. The traditional students, who are classified as the privileged middle and upper class, are forming exclusive geographies (ibid.). This seems to be the case as well when it comes to PBSA which further the exclusion the non-traditional students. This segregation is not in the interest of the public actors which are following the goal of giving everybody the chance to study. Hubbard (2009) reflects this critical view in his assessment of PBSA. He writes that “the enclosure of students in de facto gated communities runs counter to the government’s objective of creating “cities which offer high quality of life and opportunity for all, not just the few” (DETR 2000, p. 17 in Hubbard 2009, p. 1921). On top of that, Chatterton connects the social mix to learning, assessing that “(l)earning home to study is not much of a learning experience if the only people you encounter are people from similar social and economic backgrounds.” (p. 131).

2.3 Student housing in Germany

Since this thesis deals with the situation of a rising amount of PBSA on the German market the previous theoretical consideration were already partly taken from the German context and research. In the following a closer look will be taken at student housing in Germany to give insight on how it developed over time and what the current situation is. After pointing out general developments e.g. in the shares of different forms of student housing, student numbers or preferences regarding housing, the numbers and the attributes of the German private student residence halls will also be presented.

In the western world different approaches on how to accommodate students exist. Whereas on-campus living is common e.g. in the U.S. and the UK, off-campus institutional student housing is provided to some degree in many other European Countries. In the German student housing tradition the universities are not responsible for providing accommodation (Adelmann 1969 in Thomsen 2007). Moreover the categorisation of on-and off-campus living is not common in Germany. Though a share of student union residence halls are located near campus or even on campus grounds, most of the residences would be categorised as off-campus housing (see e.g. maps of CBRE 2014).

The institutional housing in Germany mainly consists of “Studentenwohnheime”, which are public halls of residence provided by student unions. These are rented only to students for a limited time (usually 4-5years maximum) and operate on a non-profit basis. The public assignment of the student unions is to “support the economic, social, health and cultural concerns of students” (DZHW 2014: 8) helping students to cope with their study requirements. They’re mainly meant for students who would not find affordable housing otherwise (Middendorff 2013). Hoffmann (1976) calls them community buildings where students find accommodation and relaxation, as well as good conditions for studying and the development of a cultural and intellectual community life.

2.3.1 History of student housing

Analyses of the student housing forms in Germany have been conducted since 1953 and changes dependent on manifold influences have been assessed.² These influences are the quantitative relation of supply and demand, the income of students and their study behaviour. Furthermore, the later start and the longer time of studying as well as the increased number of side jobs and the delayed transition into work are influencing housing

² Though the topic being part of theses analyses, the description of the specific differences between East and West Germany is not included in this work

choices. Looking at the different housing forms it becomes evident that in the 1950s half of all students were living in sublet spaces whereas this form of housing has been reduced to 1% nowadays. The amount of students staying at their parents' place went down from 30% in the 1950s to 18% in 2009, with changes during the decades attributed to the availability of affordable housing alternatives. Student residence halls showed relatively constant demand throughout time. The percentage rose from 8% - ca. 12%, with a special development in the 1970s where numbers of students increased massively and the residence halls therefore significantly enlarged their capacities. In contrast to offering about 8000 spaces in the fifties, the capacity in 2009 was 180.000 spaces. Throughout time, the percentage of students living in their own flat or with a partner considerably increased, with only 6% using this form of housing in 1963 to more than a third of all students today. The form of housing used in 2009 the most by students is the shared flat, which only started to develop in the 1970s (Wank et al. 2009).

2.3.2 Student residence halls in Germany

Currently public student residence halls make up about 10% (9,86 DSW Wohnraumstatistik 2015b) of overall student accommodation. This number varies between the federal states (e.g. Brandenburg (15%), Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg (14%), Hamburg (5%), Berlin (5%) and Bremen (6%) (Middendorff 2013)).

In 2014, 188.000 places were provided by student unions making the largest share on the market (70,9%), but their share varies among federal states (high shares in Thuringia, Saxony , Brandenburg, Saxony-Anhalt, Lower Saxony and North Rhine Westphalia). The overall share of commercial halls of residence is 17,4% (with its highest shares in Saarland, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Rhineland Palatinate and Bremen). Religious and non-commercial providers offer a share of 11,7% (a quarter of these being provided in Bavaria and almost none in the states of the eastern federal states)(CBRE 2014). Statistical reports

stress that the use of the specific forms of student housing is dependent on various factors: with increasing age the wish for higher levels of independence and life standards grows, the financial possibilities and the housing supply, as well as the use of housing as an expression of the life situation and life style (Middendorff 2013). Nevertheless, it is also said that the use of halls of residence mainly depends on the supply of rooms. The decrease of use from 2009 to 2012 is connected to the student numbers increasing faster than hall of residence places which forced students to switch to other forms of housing (Middendorff 2013).

Since 1991 the number of students rose from 1.65 mi. (BID 2014) to over 2.7 mi. in 2015 (statista.com 2016). Included in these numbers is also the rising amount of foreign students (1991: 134.000; 2014: 322.000 (BID 2015)). While the high numbers of study starters are estimated to last until 2025, the relative number of publicly funded places is lowering. This has not only to do with the halls of residence but also the decrease of social housing, which is stated to be an important supply for students. In 2013, 1.5 million flats belonged to the German social housing scheme (1 million less than in 2002) whereas 5.6 million people were identified as in need of social housing, among them students. The report states a general deficit of 770.000 flats in Germany, especially in bigger cities and university cities (BID 2015). The annual report of German student unions of 2014 (DSW 2015) speaks of a lack of affordable student housing and a demand that considerably exceeds the supply of affordable student housing at many university cities. An estimated amount of 25.000 new places are necessary which could be realised with 800 million euro of funds and affordable building ground.

A study from 2014 surveyed that students are particularly heavily impacted by the strained housing market. When being asked about difficulties of finding a place to live, 40% of the students found the search for housing difficult and 32% even classified it as very difficult. The former separation of Germany is still influencing these statistics with half of the

students in the eastern part of Germany reporting no hardships in regards to finding affordable housing, whereas the students living in the western federal states complain about lacking student residence halls. The eastern German federal states are assessed to lack residence halls by 56% of students (with Berlin standing out with 73%) and the western federal states are lacking 74% (Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach und Reetsma Begabtenförderungswerk 2014).

2.3.3 Influence of students on the German housing market

The current deficit of housing on the overall housing market is severed by the large student numbers. The 90% who are not living in publicly supported housing are taking part in the competition on the increasingly strained free housing market. Especially the pressure on single households in the larger cities and the competition for affordable housing with other apprentices and young professionals is seen as a problem worsening the general housing situation. Often university cities with housing shortages feature high shares of single households, which are assessed as causing increasing rent levels (BID 2015).

2.3.4 Student housing preferences and satisfaction

The latest large scale survey about forms of student housing is from 2012 and shows that most of the German students are living in a shared flat (29%), followed by living with parents (23%), a partner and/or child (20%), alone in a flat (17%), in a hall of residence (10%) and sub renting (1%). A comparison of shares in forms of student housing shows that the percentage of students living in halls of residence decreased relatively continuous from 1991 (16%) to the current 10%. In comparison to 2009 the share of residence halls went down 2% (Middendorff 2013).

Looking at the satisfaction with the housing form, the report finds that the ones with the highest standards and most personal freedom and privacy were mostly preferred (living with a partner, in a shared flat or alone in a flat). Still there are 9% preferring halls of residence. Of the students living in a hall of residence 45% see it also as their preferred form of housing with the other roughly 50% voicing the wish to live in the commonly preferred forms. Overall 58% of the residents of student hall are (very) satisfied with their housing.

2.3.5 Regulations on the provision of student housing

There is no policy on how much publicly supported housing has to be provided in Germany or the federal states. Generally the support of student housing belongs to the overall social housing programmes. In 80s and 90s special student housing support programmes existed, funded by the state to the countries basing on Art. 104a Abs. 4 GG, the German Basic law. This changed in 2007 with a federal reform, which made the federal states responsible for the subject. The federal government was not allowed to fund student housing anymore. The goal of the reform was to lessen mixed financing models and make the federal states look after issues they were closer to than the federate states government (BUMB 2016). Though the responsibility for publicly funded student housing has been given to the federate states the student unions are striving to get support from the federal level. The federal states are known to offer varying levels of funding programmes for student housing with 9 federal states employing programmes, but general federal funding programme for the student social infrastructure is assessed to provide better means to tackle the problem. The student unions refer to the “higher education pact” of 2007 which served to enlarge the sector of higher education to provide more places to study and which made federate states and the federal state work together. A reoccurring argument is that this form of a pact must also be viable connected to students social infrastructure including housing (DSW 2015). The federal level has answered these claims with pointing to other programmes, e.g. support for energy

friendly building or loans to non-profit organisations, which the federate states should use to fund student housing (BUMB 2016). Only in autumn 2015 the federal building ministry decided to start a funding programme that allocates 120 million € for the building of flexible housing modules. The aim is to provide sustainable and affordable student housing now (rents shall not exceed 260€) which can be restructured and changed into e.g. housing for the elderly when the number of students decrease again (BUMB 2016a). Though this programme is appreciated critics find it insufficient and not targeted enough at students.

2.3.6 PBSA in Germany

As mentioned before the share of commercial student residence halls is currently 17.4%³ of student residence halls in the 61 biggest German university locations. Whereas 12.000 places in PBSA were offered in 2010 in the 30 biggest higher education cities this number rose to 25.000 places until 2015, now making up 1,7 % of all student housing (Savills 2015). Since 2010 several transregional companies added their housing to the student housing supply (estimated 8.000 - 10.000 places). Traditionally only local and regional operated single objects were managed by private investors (DSW 2015). Each of the five largest national providers, that are established in Germany, have more than a 1000 places in stock, under construction or in planning (CBRE 2014). It is estimated that until 2020 ca. 41.000 PBSA places will be installed (Savills 2015).

National providers of PBSA:

Company	Brand name	Locations	Being built or planned
IC International	The Fizz	Berlin, Bremen,	Berlin(2), Bonn,

³ The publication of the CBRE is analysing the 61 largest university locations in Germany, which includes ca. 75% of the total student population

Campus	www.the-fizz.com	Darmstadt, Frankfurt, Freiburg, Hannover	Frankfurt Freiburg(2), Hamburg(2), Köln,
GBI AG	Smartments students www.smartments-student.de	Darmstadt, Frankfurt, Freiburg, Hamburg, Köln, Mainz	Berlin, Hamburg
Benchmark. REAL Estate Development GmbH	Headquarter www.headquarter.de	Darmstadt, Dresden, Frankfurt, Münster	
Youniq AG	Yuoniq Studentenwohnung mit + www.youniq.de/de	Bayreuth, Frankfurt (2), Greifswald (2), Karlsruhe, Leipzig(3), Mainz, München, Potsdam	Annually 1500- 2500 spaces all over Germany
Grundkontor Projekt	Campus Viva www.grundkontorprojekt.com	Bremen, München (5) , Heidelberg (2),	Berlin
VEGIS Immobilien Verwaltungs- und Vertriebsgesellschaft	No brand name, rather traditional and conservative www.vegis-immobilien.de/	Berlin, Darmstadt, Dieburg, Erlangen, Idstein/Wiesba den, Koblenz, Mainz, Mayen, München, Passau, Trier	

2.3.6.1 Features of PBSA

The majority of PBSA housing consists of single room upmarket apartments. This is a difference between PBSA and student unions, because the latter offer 28% of single room apartments (religious/non-commercial offering 21%) and a main stock consisting of single rooms and residential groups (CBRE 2014). The rents of newly build PBSA is usually between 400€ and 600€ which is significantly higher than that of new buildings of student unions (DSW 2015). These so called micro-apartments are also matching the demand of young professionals and second flats for commuters. The size of those apartments is on average 21 m² (double apartments 40 m²) and single rooms in residential groups are 16 m² with 82% of all of these places being furnished (Savills 2015). The rent usually includes bills and an internet connection. Many providers also offer a range of additional services and special rooms, e.g. concierge services, laundry facilities, events for the community (the-fizz.com 2016), bike- and car parking spaces and advisors and a starter kit of household items (smartmants-students.de 2016), Fitness rooms, cinema rooms and roof top terraces (headquarter.de 2016) and Learning Lounges (youniq.de 2016). The German PBSA are mainly targeting students, but other groups like young professionals and commuters can live there as well, since being a student isn't a requirement for renting.

2.3.6.2 Reasons for building PBSA

Nowadays interest rates are very low; therefore providers are in the position to offer investors better profits with the building of PBSA. This does not only have to do with the kind of building, but also with the general shift of more investments being made in the area of real estate (DSW 2015, CBRE 2014). Another reason is the high tension of the German housing market which is increasing the demand for student residence hall places. Or as the CBRE (2014) puts it, referring to students: "There also appears to be a correlation between

willingness to pay and a strained housing market situation...” (2014: 18). As mentioned before, businesses see the student population as a “potentially important source of revenue and profit” (Chatterton and Hollands 2003: 126) which includes their housing. This profit is even easier to make if the pressure of the housing market is higher.

Moreover, students are also increasing their expectations towards their accommodation. The study regarding the preferred form of housing shows that most German students strive to live in accommodations of high standard offering personal freedom and privacy. The PBSA offer these qualities and therefore match the students’ wishes. In contrast to accommodation of the free housing market students don’t have to go through an application process to become part of a shared flat and also don’t have to deal with the bureaucracy that comes with renting a flat when living in PBSA. In contrast to the majority of public residence hall housing type of residential groups, most of the PBSA are single apartments without unwanted flatmates. Furthermore they offer “modern and thought-after room types” which are of “the latest standard” (CBRE 2014: 12), which the typical public student hall is not able to offer within the restriction of keeping its housing affordable (ibid.).

Chapter 3 Research Design

A research design “guides the investigator in the process of collecting, analysing, and interpreting observations.”(Nachmias and Nachmias 1992: 77). It outlines “what questions to study, what data are relevant, what data to collect, and how to analyze the results” (Yin 2009: 26). Directed by these questions the design of this research will be described in the following. The research questions which are a crucial for guiding the research have already been outlined before. The overall research question is:

How can the commercialisation of student residence halls in form of purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) be assessed to impact the life quality of students in Bremen considering students, actors and experts views?

The subquestions are:

1. How can the influences of the growing number of commercial student residence halls (PBSA) on students’ life quality in Bremen be assessed considering arguments of Bremen’s actors and experts?
2. How do PBSA change the typical student housing pathway of students in Bremen?
3. How can the arguments about the rising share of PBSA and the lack of public student housing by Bremen’s actors of public student housing be seen as forms of rationalization?

The goal of this work is to explain which kind of effects the higher number of PBSA might result in. It is aimed at gaining information about the situation of Bremen's student housing market and the assessment of the addition of PBSA. Which improvements do PBSA bring about, especially looking at the students and the housing market and what are the negative effects of this kind of housing?

From politicians and the student union it is planned to learn how the problem of little affordable student housing and increasing numbers of PBSA is assessed and if improvement strategies are pursued. These and other experts will also be asked which economic and social reasons there are for approving or disapproving PBSA which is less documented than the plans around student housing and PBSA. From the students it is aimed to find out which economic effects and consequential effects, e.g. quality of study environment they experience because of PBSA.

It has been decided to employ the case study method to reach this goal, as it is of use if the researcher wants to find out how and why a phenomenon occurred, when the focus is on contemporary events and no control of behavioural event is necessary (Yin 2009: 8). Also the aspect of contemporary events is given, as PBSA have increasingly been built since 2010 and are estimated to grow a lot more in numbers in the next decade (Savills 2015), changing the students and cities housing situation.

It is a feature of case studies that the phenomenon examined and the context which it is set in are not clearly separated (Yin 2009). This is also valid for this research as the rise of PBSA, the student body and the city's housing market are all affecting one another, making a distinction between the bigger causal connections and the ones just connected to PBSA difficult. Therefore, "(t)he case study enquiry [...] benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis." (Yin 2009: 18). Consequently theories relating students' life quality to their housing and theories connecting

developments in cities on its housing market with student housing will be used as a guide for the collection and analysis of the data. Nevertheless this research aims to be explorative towards the possible outcomes of a more commercialised student housing market. Looking at the even wider context, an overview over the development of private commercial student residence halls (PBSA) in Germany will be given to quantify the trend and its share of the student housing market before starting the analysis of the data of the case subject. This will be done by an analysis of the documents and data available on this topic.

3.1 Data collection

Qualitative data will be gathered from the actors related to the student housing market such as providers of public student residence halls, communal actors, students and housing market researchers to get an insight to their different opinions about the influence of PBSA. This will be done by researching documents (e.g. strategies and plans of the city and suppliers of public student residence halls) and data (e.g. statistics on the student housing market of the city) as well as doing expert interviews with relevant actors about motivations and opinions. It is assumed that the students and the housing market are influenced by different interests and other factors which is why the gathering of qualitative data in the form of interviews is necessary. Through the method of expert interviews causal connections can be detected which the documents might not reveal.

The information will be “converged in a triangulating fashion” (Yin 2009) as it is taken from different sources and therefore forms a solid basis to build conclusions on. The statements of experts of the housing market and students will be compared to see if the two groups on the opposite sides of the situation (providing housing and receiving housing) are perceiving it the same manner. The documents and interviews will be showing how the actors of the student housing market deal with the topic PBSA. As single case studies have been judged to serve as means to derive generalized conclusions and the actor constellation as well as the

general situation of the student housing market (tense and high student numbers) of the chosen city is comparable to that of many German cities, the results will be sufficient to answer the research questions.

3.1.1 Characteristics of qualitative and quantitative research

Since this work builds on qualitative data, this section will take a short look on the nature of this kind of data and review its characteristics in comparison with those of quantitative research.

Being part of different research paradigms qualitative research and quantitative research has been disputed about for more than a century. While quantitative research fits well into the characteristics of positivist philosophy, qualitative research developed within the constructivist and interpretist school of thought. Especially purists of either one of these paradigms are of the opinion that only one of the two kinds of data is ideal for research and that a mix of these paradigms is impossible (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004). Being rooted in positivist philosophy, quantitative research is ought to be objective, which means to be exclude context or time when generalising. It is expected that the observer is disconnected from the entities under observation to stay objective. The aim of doing so is arriving at research outcomes which feature reliability and validity. There should be no bias, emotionality or other involvement with the objects studied, while hypotheses are tested or empirically justified. Inquiries of social science are also expected to exhibit rhetorical neutrality and formal, impersonal writing style. Purists of the constructivist paradigm, however, are opposing this school of thought. They believe that multiple-constructed realities exist, which cannot and should not be generalised without taking into account the context and the times in which their set. It is also believed that there is a connection to values and no clear categorisation of causes and effects. Subjective generalisations are accepted as well as the inductive reasoning, in which generalisations are made from specific instances. Generally qualitative purists find that “the knower and known cannot be

separated because the subjective knower is the only source of reality” (Guba, 1990 in Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004). Lastly a more undetached and informal style of writing is preferred to the rhetorical neutrality and formality of positivists (ibid. 2004).

3.2 The case study research

The specific case housing market and students chosen to be explored is that of the city Bremen. This city has about 500.000 inhabitants of which about 31.000 are students, and a comparably high amount of commercial student residence halls with a share of ca. 35% of all student residence places (CBRE 2014). The initial situation makes for a good case as the actors of this housing market have gained experience with the influence of a larger share of PBSA on students.

As many German university cities Bremen’s housing market can be categorised as strained (Seidel and Sundermann 2014). A publication of CBRE (2014) lists Bremen on place 22 of the 61 biggest German university locations regarding their fitting for investment considering the situation of the (student) accommodation market. The factors taken into account are housing vacancy rates, rent levels and trends of rents of the general housing market. Also the student accommodation ratio in total and of private providers as well as rent levels of the student housing market have been analysed. Because of the relatively low vacancy rate, the medium rent level, the trend of rising rents and a below-average student accommodation ratio this city is featuring a strained housing market for students. This in turn means suitable market conditions for commercial student housing providers. However, since there is already an existing stock of 656 high-quality student apartments (of a total number of 2830 hall of residence places) the report assess the student housing market of Bremen as saturated regarding upmarket PBSA (CBRE 2014).

In Bremen the average student income of 700€ is slightly over the national average of 680€. The share of private (excl. charitable and religious) providers is comparatively high and its average rent is 407€. The student union provides ca. 60% of all residence places which cost in average 231€, emphasising the fact that private student housing is almost twice as expensive as publicly subsidised student housing. There are 34.4% of student with an income over 800€, who are seen as the target group for the commercial high-quality housing as they are able to pay at least 400€ monthly rent (ibid. 2014).

3.3 Methods for data collection

By guiding through the whole work the research design also determines the methods which are fitting the best reach of the research goal. In this chapter these methods will be described in greater detail.

To answer the research questions' different aspects one overall method will be used: "The case study's unique strength is to deal with a full variety of evidence – documents, artefacts, interviews, and observations." (Yin 2009: 11). This research will be built on documents and interviews, which - while it does not reflect the variety of possibilities of case studies – is allowing a thorough investigation and data collection. Observations and artefacts are not a useful to this case, as the focus is on factors like the rising rent or life quality which are not recordable by observation or connected to artefacts. In the following first the documents, why they are relevant and their general contents will be presented. Thereafter the considerations regarding the interviews and interviewees will be explained.

3.3.1 Relevant documents

This paragraph introduces the documents from relevant actors and experts which are addressing the topic of PBSA and their influence on the students of Bremen. It is aimed at consulting documents of the decision makers and influencers of student housing.

Programmes, strategies, press releases, party documents and statements will be reviewed as they display the actors' point of view very clearly. The documents will be analysed towards the intentions and motivations their authors maintain. Official documentation provided by the city, public organisations or political parties usually also offers validity thus strengthening the case study. Furthermore, publications of other organisations, who are researching Bremen's housing market will be examined to find out how the situation is described from a more neutral perspective. The advantage of this kind of data is that it can be reviewed again whenever necessary, thus being a stable source of information. Its shortcomings are that important documentation could be missed out, hidden or restrictedly accessible (Yin 2009). Having an overview over the actors' positions will also provide a starting point from which further inquiries can be made in the interviews.

The following documents have been chosen to serve as main evidence (Table 1):

	Actors⁴: Persons/Institutions	Documents⁵
Political actors		
Senate	Senator of Civil Engineering, Environment and Transportation	"Bremen's alliance for housing – 2 nd housing support programme" (25.02.2015)
Senate	Senator of Civil Engineering, Environment and Transportation/ Senator of Education and Science	"Support measures for building student housing" (30.01.2015)
	Senator of Education and Science	"Science plan 2020" (February 2015)

⁴ The titles of the institutions have been translated from German

⁵ The titles of the documents have been translated from German

	Senator of Science, Health and Consumer Protection	“Student housing market“ (12.10.2015)
Parliament	The Left (party)	“Enlarging student housing – building additional housing with the student union“ (25.11.2015)
Other actors		
Student union	Student Union Bremen	Business report 2013
General students’ committee	AStA Bremen	“Lack of housing“ (November 2012) “AStA asks the senate to support the building of public student housing and improve the housing situation in Bremen“(14.10.2014) “Press release on lack of housing in Bremen“ (16.10.2014)
Experts		
Research institute	GEWOS institute	“Update of the housing market prognosis until 2030 of the Hanseatic city of Bremen“ (February 2015)
Research institute/Real estate company	Institute of the German economy Cologne/German Real Estate Funds	“A rent index for student housing“ (06.04.2016)
Real estate company	CRBE	“CBRE market report student accommodation 2014/2015“ (2014)
Real estate company	Savills	“Market report student housing market Germany“ (July 2015)

To give a first insight into the case, the main statements within the documents of organisations which are responsible for the housing policy of Bremen (the senate and the parliament), for public student housing (student union) or which influence the situation (ASTA), will be presented. They are not comprehensive but still fitting to gain an insight on how the actors are positioning themselves concerning the current situation of student housing in Bremen. This will be helpful to get a first overview over plans, motivations and assessments of the actors. The documents are displayed in a chronologic order.

Lack of housing (November 2012) – General students committee (ASTA) of the university of Bremen

On their webpage the committee assesses a lack of housing for students. Student housing should be affordable and in proximity of the university. The AStA notices the following alarming processes:

The amount of money offered to the student union by the senate to build new student housing is not sufficient. The development of PBSA is viewed critically as it is not affordable for the average student and the conditions, e.g. checking the flats semi-annually, are deemed absurd. Using student housing as a capital investment shall not become a concept for the future. The plots now occupied by PBSA should instead have been sold to the student union. The representative for social issues in the AStA expresses that many students are not able to pay the rising rents of the free housing market and therefore having to have a side job which can have a negative influence on the studies.

Business report 2013 (August 2014) – Student Union Bremen

In its annual business report of 2013 the student union dedicates a section to the topic of student housing. After presenting the current numbers (ca. 1800 places, rent average of 220€), it is mentioned that the occupancy rate of 99,33% was reached. Of all new rental

contracts 32% were made with foreign students. Not only does the student union offer places in student residence halls but it has also built a network of private landlords over which 760 students could be supplied with housing. However, often the landlords of the private rented sector prefer German speaking students, which often excludes the foreign ones. The student union points out that the rents of the privately rented sector and PBSA are distinctly higher than those of its residence halls (partly over 450€/month). Especially foreign students have problems affording this type of housing.

Support measures for the building of student housing (January 2015) – Senator of Civil Engineering, Environment and Transportation and the Senator of Education and Science

This document builds on the mentioned eligibility for funding of single room flats which is planned for in the second housing support programme. It also offers a number to determine the demand of student housing - as inquired in other political documents - to have a reference point for how much student housing is needed. The demand for student housing orients itself on the results of a study of the student unions, which show that 84% of the students prefer the private rented sector of Bremen and 14% wish for a student union housing space. It is emphasised that Bremen has a comparatively good supply in the private rented sector available, but especially low-income and foreign students are depending on affordable student housing. Next, concrete projects to build student housing are listed which the administration is currently working on. Two models of student housing are being planned to be tested by the building and the science department and the student union on two different sites in the city. These should fulfil the students housing wishes while supplementing the offers of the student union without elaboration the models in more detail. Furthermore the city made two plots available, but on one it is not economically feasible for the student union to build and on the other one a private investor will be searched for to build student housing with. It is stated that the city aims at diversification concepts. Combinations of student housing with working areas or cross-generational living that are to newly build will be considered. The concept "Housing for Help", where students

move in with elderly people and help them in the household instead of paying rent, is praised. Here the social department, student union, ASTA (general student committee), university and the parity society have been working together but the concept is not used much.

Bremen's association for housing– Second housing support programme (February 2015) – Senator of Civil Engineering, Environment and Transportation

This housing programme is prolonged and going in a second phase. It is a general housing programme with a focus on student housing. In the document students are classified as a group that has difficulties to access the housing market. As the building activity in the last years has been focussed on upmarket housing and the owner sector, small and medium income households cannot afford this housing anymore. Therefore from the beginning of the programme 25% of all new housing is planned to be social housing. The big change for students is the new eligibility of funded single room apartments. These are decided to feature special rules regarding furnishing and rent, which ought to lead to a better supply for the target groups within affordable housing. An apartment of 30m² would be rented for 200€ (excluding costs) following the programme's guidelines.

Science Plan 2020 (February 2015) – Senator of Science, Health and Consumer Protection

The Science Plan 2020 lists the focus points of the federal city state Bremen. Among the comprehensive agenda also the topic of student housing is touched. It is stated that the building of student housing places will be worked on with vigour to improve the infrastructural conditions for scientific work in teaching. More concretely the plan says that the student union will be provided with means to supply housing for the students. It is pointed out that Bremen is on the 2nd last place of all 16 states in regards to providing publicly funded living spaces for students. These places are assessed to be especially important for students receiving funding from the state and foreign students, especially those coming from non-EU countries. As a specific goal the plan wants the current number

of 1922 places raised to 2500. New student housing shall be built in close proximity to the universities' campuses.

Student housing (November 2015) – Senator of Education and Science

Even though there are 900 students on the waiting list for public student housing it's assessed that those students most likely already found transitory housing solutions. The strong expansion of the waiting list at the beginning of the academic year and its strong decrease in the following months is assessed to be a usual phenomenon. The placement of a share of students in flats of the private rented sector was successful. Referring to the Science Plan 2020, the aim is to enlarge housing of the student union and offer students an affordable and good housing supply. The senate is seeking to create 400 new places with the help of the housing support programme and, if necessary, public and private housing companies. By building 400 places near campus, the percentage of accommodation would rise from 6,4% to 7,8%. It is strived to build the first 140 places soon. The necessary investment could be financed by savings and a loan from the student union plus subventions by the city of Bremen. On top of that there are a large number of offers of private investors to build PBSA featuring high rents. Bremen's ecumenical student residence hall offers 72 places featuring cheap rents and a low standard. Two plots are possibly given to private investors.

Expanding student housing – Creating additional flats with the student union (November 2015) – The Left party

This left-wing party is part of the opposition in the current government. Therefore it is in the position of asking the senators to resolve certain issues. In this document they point out, like the senators, that Bremen is on the second last place of states regarding the supply of publicly funded student housing places. The numbers are 6,3% of in Bremen and 9,9% in Germany in average. The fact that an exceptionally large number of 1000 students were on the waiting list for the housing of the student union in the 2015/2016 semester is

mentioned. Different numbers of how many more affordable student housing places are needed are pointed out: The science plan 2020 talks of 580 places, the coalition contract says 400 and the SPD (Social Democratic Party of Germany) wants 1000 new places. Furthermore, the party points out that the student union is the best partner to cooperate with for the following reasons: Firstly, it follows social criteria: the use for students, decent rents and income limits will be minded, secondly, it is not profit-oriented which leaves it a wider scope for managing the building, operation and financing of the projects and thirdly, it has the necessary knowledge about student housing. A positive effect of affordable student housing is said to be that less students will fight over affordable housing with other groups on the overall housing market. In conclusion, the party asks the senators to enable the student union to build the student housing, to specify how the 1000 new places will be built and to receive funding from the federation.

3.3.2 Interviews

By interviewing relevant institutions and students their specific expert knowledge can be obtained and causal connections can be revealed. To reach this goal it has to be considered who the experts for answering the research question are, how the questioning will be organised and which questions are best to gather the required knowledge.

It is important that the interviewer has gathered some knowledge about the topic of the talk before meeting the expert. This knowledge is needed to be able to communicate competently and to be not be perceived as a non-professional by the expert who might start explaining basic terms instead of the specific knowledge which such an interview aims for. By reviewing the documentation first the subject knowledge will be gained prior to the interviews in this work (Mieg & Näf 2005). In this work the studying of the case of Bremen will sufficiently prepare the researcher for questioning the experts.

The guideline of the interviews should be featuring key questions which are the ones that are crucial to ask. By using introductory questions in the first part for ice breaking, topic

related questions in the main part and ending with e.g. queries of the interviewed expert, a review or outlook (ibid. 2005), the interview will be well structured. However, using a guideline and not a fixed set of questions helps staying flexible and adjust questions to the information gained during the interview thus helping to gain deeper knowledge (ibid. 2005). As this thesis aims at gaining this deeper knowledge, the interviews will also follow a guideline of questions. They will be conducted face-to-face to ensure undisturbed and direct communication. Furthermore, the interviews with the actors and experts will be audio-recorded with the permission of the interviewee to be able to reconsider the exact answers given. Additionally notes will be taken during the interviews. As the interviews with the students are less comprehensive and complex only notes will be taken of their answers. The researcher should be aware that a topic might make the interviewed feel under pressure when dealing with a sensitive issue and that this might affect his/her answer (ibid. 2005). In the topic area of housing this difficulty might arise due to the fact that it is a polarised one. The possible reluctance of the interviewees will be borne in mind by the researcher.

3.3.3 Interviewees

To get a comprehensive overview on how PBSA are perceived in Bremen, actors, experts and students will be interviewed. In the following the persons chosen to be interviewed as well as the reason why recording their opinion is assessed to be insightful will be presented.

Student living in PBSA

To find out what the influences of PBSA on students are the opinions of students living in PBSA were deemed relevant. They are able to report specific experiences made with this kind of housing, which set them apart and gives them knowledge valuable for this research. Though statistics have been drawn upon to explain which percentage of students has the income to afford PBSA (e.g. CBRE 2014) these statistics do not explain why and under which

circumstances students are choosing to move into PBSA. Therefore it has been decided to survey students living in PBSA in Bremen, to find out about their housing biographies. These biographies offer a more dynamic and qualitative view on student's behaviour regarding their housing (Rugg et al. 2004). It will be recorded in which housing they have lived or planned to live in over time. In this manner the data to answer the second subquestion will be collected and it will be possible to assess in which way living in PBSA influences them.

Thirteen students living in Bremen have been asked as part of this work why they chose to live in PBSA, in which kind of housing they would preferably live, how they assessed living in PBSA and the of performance this kind of housing. They were asked for their experience navigating the housing market to establish housing biographies and eventually categorise specific housing pathways. Ten of these interviews were done face-to-face, with 3 of them scheduled and 7 unscheduled. For the scheduled interviews the interviewees were met at the residence and for the unscheduled ones the inhabitants were approached when leaving or entering the residences. The statements of the interviewees were written down in the questionnaires during the interview and the notes were reviewed after the interview. The questionnaire was semi-structured and featured mainly open question, which is why different depths of insight were given by the interviewees. To gain further data, an online survey was created which students living in PBSA were invited to participate in. Three more participants took part in this manner, offering a rather static insight, as opposed to the housing biographies of the face-to-face interview, which allowed further enquiries.

Actors and experts of Bremen's student housing market

To obtain useful information about PBSA and the student housing market in Bremen specific actors have been chosen as interview partners, which will be listed in the following. It has been tried to find actors with different perspectives to acquire a nuanced insight to the processes of Bremen's housing market. Therefore, was decided to interview the representatives of the Senator of Civil Engineering, Environment and Transportation, the Student Union Bremen, the General student's committee (AStA) of Bremen and the

research institute GEWOS. These institutions show different kinds of social and economic interests. The senate represents an administrative perspective, the student union the focus on its social assignment, the AStA on representing students' needs and the GEWOS has a neutral view on the development. It has also been assessed that to know about the influence of PBSA the interviewees have also to know other market segments and how these are intertwined. The builders of PBSA e.g. have not been chosen as sources as their knowledge probably is only about the market segment of student and micro housing. Moreover, the solely economic perspective of businesses is irrelevant for this work as it investigates PBSA between the conflicting priorities of social and economic considerations.

It has been decided to question a representative of the Senator of Civil Engineering, Environment and Transportation because this person is ought to have a good overview over Bremen's entire housing market. This overview is necessary to point out causal relations between different processes and housing market segments. Therefore, the representative should also be aware of what influence the new segment of PBSA has and for which reason it has been implemented. As a part of Bremen's administration this person will be able to judge what is profitable for the city from a political point of view. The student union too is predestined to make statements about PBSA and its influence on the student housing market as well as on the student population. This organisation has a long tradition of housing students and therefore experience regarding the housing needs of students. Knowing the numbers and students seeking public student housing the student union is also able to assess how PBSA fit into Bremen's offer of student housing. The general students' committee of the University of Bremen, called AStA, also has an opinion regarding that topic. Fighting for students' interests, they view PBSA quite critically because of its unaffordability. Their view is of interest since they are a place to for students to receive help or advice and voice concerns. The AStA will be able to report how students in Bremen are dealing with PBSA and if there are e.g. complaints about the situation. The before mentioned actors are all dealing with student housing and are to different extents the representatives of their needs and wishes. Therefore they can be classified as experts in that

field and are in the position to allow insights to the research question. Nevertheless, to also get a neutral assessment of the situation it was decided to interview an expert with general knowledge about the housing market of Bremen and its mechanisms. For this purpose the GEWOS, an independent research institute which did an analysis of the housing market of Bremen, was selected.

The representatives, who were appointed for the interview by their respective organisations and institutions, were the following: of the senate Mr. Dennis Lakemann, who supervises the planning of new student housing projects; of the student union Mr. Hauke Kieschnick, the deputy director; of the AStA Mr. Jendrik Hilgerloh, who is active in the topic area of student housing and of the GEWOS Mr. Felix Arnold, who worked on the housing market analysis of Bremen.

3.4 Theoretical Frameworks

The previous section has considered students on the housing market and PBSA as already introduced and assessed in research. In the following, the theories utilised for structuring and carrying out the analysis will be presented in detail. These are a framework for the information on PBSA influences on the student population gathered through a literary review and the model of housing pathways. The analysis of power and rationality by Flyvbjerg (1998) will here also be connected to the field of housing research specifically to gather insights into how issues of power alter decisions about PBSA.

3.4.1 Framework: Influences of PBSA on the student population

PBSA is relatively new phenomenon of student housing markets. In recent years research has gradually accumulated findings on how it affects student geographies and therefore students with focus on Anglophone countries. The purpose of listing the findings around this

topic is to connect them in a small framework which can be used to analyse PBSA in different locations. The application of the findings to a specific student housing market, in this studies case to Bremen's, helps to analyse and define the impacts of PBSA. Thus the existing body of knowledge functions as a reliable basis to base further findings on.

In the following the framework consisting of the findings that have been made in regards to how PBSA influence the student population will be introduced. Looking at the works of Chatterton (1999 and 2010), Hubbart (2009) and Smith and Hubbard (2014) a common topic regarding influences of PBSA crystallises which is the social and spatial structure of the student population. The authors also refer to influences of PBSA on the structure of society as a whole, but in this work the focus lies on findings about the student population. In regards to the student population a risk of segregation processes has been detected and is mentioned frequently. PBSA may result in "inequality and disadvantage" according to Chatterton (2010), to segregation of middle and upper class students from other students due to their exclusive residential needs (Chatterton 1999) and to "gated communities" (Hubbart 2009). Smith and Hubbard (2014) assess that PBSA "may deepen the socio-spatial divides between different sub-populations of students" (p. 99) and is therefore strengthening "exclusionary trends" and segregation. This unmixing of students from different social and economic backgrounds removes the chance of learning experiences made in heterogeneous student groups (Chatterton 1999).

Another point highlighted is the change of treatment of students. Here the risk is detected that students are not being categorised as a group in need of certain support and help in connection to PBSA, but being treated like any other demand-group. This shows as PBSA is almost not distinguishable from housing of other young professionals (Hubbard 2009). Macintyre (2003) expresses that this puts students in the position of shopping clients and academic consumers. With the shift from publicly provided residence halls to privately provided ones the focus will probably also shift from trying to offer students a favourable atmosphere for studying to trying to gain the biggest possible economic profit. This bears

the risk of neglect to support students' study success by means of a stable and supportive housing situation.

Framework of Influences of PBSA on the student population:

INFLUENCES	RESULTS
<p>Influences social and spatial structure of student population</p>	<p><i>Social and spatial segregation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Enclosure of students in de facto gated communities runs counter to the government's objective of creating "cities which offer high quality of life and opportunity for all, not just the few" (DETR 2000, p.17 in Hubbard 2009, p. 1920), - Segregation of space for exclusive residential needs of middle and upper class students leads to a decreased learning experience, since people are from similar social and economic backgrounds (Chatterton 1999) - PBSA "may deepen the socio-spatial divides between different sub-populations of students", e.g. the affluent and less affluent; and cause "exclusionary trends" and segregation (Smith and Hubbard 2014) <p><i>Integration into planning aims</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the light of need for "mixed-use environments that promote social contact, tolerance (...) PBSA "poses as many questions as it answers" (Hubbard 2009, p.1921) <p><i>General result</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inequality and disadvantage will increase in the face of "creeping privatisation and a greater reliance on a corporate business model" (Chatterton 2010, p. 514)

<p>Influences on treatment of students and the social assignment towards students</p>	<p><i>Changed view on students</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students as “academic consumer”, “shopping client” (Macintyre 2003), as “a monetarised and commodified (...) persona, representing opportunities for profit”(Chatterton 2010, p.512) <p><i>Changed treatment of students</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students need a stable and supportive housing situation which will positively influence their study success: the difference between private investors and higher education institutions is the concern of economic return or the first and concern of valuable service of the latter (Macintyre 2003) - “(...) in aesthetic, social and rental terms, the distinction between new-build developments aiming at young professionals and those targeting students are barely noticeable” (Hubbard 2009, p.1920) <p><i>General result</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inequality and disadvantage (Macintyre 2003) will negatively affect low income students
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3.4.2 PBSA and the housing pathway model

This section focuses on how students navigate the housing market. To find out how PBSA influence students on the housing market, the typical ideal housing pathway of a student (as described in Ford et al. 2002 and Rugg et al. 2004) will be used in comparison to the pathways of students in the case study. By comparing the defined typical student housing pathway to pathways on a student housing market coined by high number of PBSA,

influences of PBSA become measurable. The housing pathways model and especially the student pathway will be described in the following.

To conceptualise students' behaviour on the housing market the model of "housing pathways" is often used. Housing pathways are describing "patterns of interaction (practices) concerning house and home, over time and space" (Clapham, 2005 p.27). The term has prevailed competing with "housing biographies" and "housing careers". It is "an analytical construct which may be used to help decipher any particular housing biography" (Ford et al. 2002, p.2463) and in contrast to straightforward careers it acknowledges the meandering nature of ones way through different housing situations (Fitzpatrick & Clapham 1999). Nevertheless, first individual housing biographies, which describe which forms of housing have been lived in and why these were chosen, have to be analysed to then categorise specific housing pathways (Rugg et al. 2004).

Ford et al. (2002) identified different housing pathways young people in the UK are following when entering the housing market and among them the student housing pathway. Which pathway young people follow is dependent on the following three factors: to which degree they are able to plan and control the entry to their independent living; how heavily and in which form their housing access is constrained and the amount of family support available to them. On the student housing pathway, which usually includes leaving the family home with the aim of enrolling in higher education, constraints are manageable due to accommodation provided by the higher education institutions and private rented sector of the student housing market. Besides these factors, substantial family support and some mobility are characteristics of this pathway. Rugg et al. (2004) explain the features of the student pathway which they classify as "essentially supported and unproblematic" (p.26) in further detail.

The planning of housing is often beginning months ahead of starting the studies by visits and reservations of residence halls. Most of the students start living in residence halls in their first year and a few in head lease schemes. The halls of residence offer students an easy

entry to the housing market because they give “basic lessons about budgeting and the development of social skills” (ibid, p.31). After the first year the majority moves into shared housing of the private rented sector, now better equipped to manage their housing themselves. The following years of study are characterised by moving within the private rented sector which a number of students do to upgrade their housing quality, change flatmates or move to a more affordable arrangement. The student housing experience even continues after graduation, with the housing quality still improving and households getting smaller, often ending with living with the partner before buying a house. When following this typical pathway during their education students are in a “straightforward progression” regarding their housing.

Most times their parents cover parts or the full rent in addition to paying living expenses. They are also showing appreciation for their children being supported regarding their housing when moving out to study. Furthermore students frequently return home and in this always have a safety net.

The student housing pathway does show significant advantages in comparison to that of other young people. Firstly the higher education institutions provide residence hall places for most first year and international students, thus supporting them and trying to keep their rent affordable. No other group, but students “are practically guaranteed a context where their social and economic welfare are deemed the responsibility of a public sector institution” (ibid, p.23) when moving for the first time. For two reasons the student housing market is assessed to work in favour of students. Firstly higher education institutions intervene to help students transitioning to the private rented sector by e.g. supplying accommodation lists and recruiting landlords. Secondly the student housing market has turned into a niche market catering the student habitus, adapting to a specific specialised group and not matching demands of other groups. It fits students’ needs regarding location (often close to university, drawing associated businesses). Also management practice is

adjusted to students in different ways. Due to their combined spending power higher rents can be obtained from a number of students than from single income households. Nevertheless a deliberate increase of rents with the increase of student demand was not discovered. Tenancy agreements exclude or lower the rent during recess and in low-demand areas students have the chance to find housing for low rents.

3.4.3 Power and rationality

There are certain actors who are responsible for the student housing market and exert influence on it, like municipalities or student unions. Additionally, there are different reasons for getting involved with student housing, like financial gains for investors or urban development strategies for the city. Therefore power plays a role in the assessment of PBSA. Flyvbjerg (1998) offers a way to investigate power by arguing that power defines reality and rationality as traditional research on power shows, the power dimension adds to aspects of policy making that often remain uncovered. This theory will be used as an inspiration to analyse whether the actors of Bremen's student housing market are producing rationalisations which are presented as rationality when referring to PBSA.

Flyvbjerg (1998) examines the connections of power and rationality, stating that "not only is knowledge power, but, more important, power is knowledge" (p.319). Power is in the position to determine what is deemed knowledge and which interpretations become dominant by supporting the knowledge it favours and suppressing unwanted knowledge. Hereby "... power *defines* what counts as rationality and knowledge and thereby what counts as reality."(ibid., emphasis in original).

Flyvbjerg's work explains how diverse kinds of rationalisation can be seen as main strategy in the exercise of power. There is a difference about what is presented up front, accessible and examinable to the public and what is hidden backstage, by those in power. The front can be examined as forms of rationalisation presented as rationality whereas backstage certain other forms of rationalisation are hidden from the public. In a case study research

Flyvbjerg observes “... groups that stand to gain from propagating certain interpretations, rationalisations, and lies about reality and that use politics to create the reality they want.” (p.322). Therefore it is difficult for anyone but those in power to find out the ‘whole story’; the researchers task is thus uncovering the rationalisations that can constitute rationality/ies. Nevertheless rationalisations exist in different degrees and are challengeable through deconstruction by using rationality or other rationalisations. However, the power might be strong enough to prevent the attempt to uncover rationalisation, as this could mean harm to those rationalising.

Looking at the discussion and plans around student housing in Bremen it becomes apparent that on one hand the need for more public student housing is acknowledged by those in power and on the other hand new private residence halls are still developed in higher numbers. It will be tested if the explanations and justifications for this development given up front are the ‘real reasons’ and if there might be other explanations hidden backstage, which those in power in Bremen are hiding from the public.

Chapter 4 Analysis

4.1 Influences of PBSA on student life quality

Subquestion 1: How can the influences of the growing number of commercial student residence halls (PBSA) on students' life quality in Bremen be assessed considering arguments of Bremen's actors and experts?

This question aims at finding out how those responsible, concerned and informed about the student housing market of Bremen respond to PBSA in their city. Existing research has already touched the subject of influences of PBSA on students, but it focusses on the Anglophone countries and is still in the phase of accumulating knowledge around this relatively new phenomenon. Therefore, the analysis of how PBSA is assessed in Bremen is valuable to find out more about PBSA in the German context. To answer the first subquestion documents of and interviews with actors involved and concerned with the issue of increasing numbers of PBSA in Bremen will now be examined. This is done to find out, if the so far in research predicted effects on the student population are mentioned in relation to the situation of Bremen. Two different fields have been detected around the assessment of PBSA by existing research, which are "Influences on the social and spatial structure of student population" and "Influences on treatment of students and the social assignment towards students". In the following the detailed analysis of these two fields and their subtopics in relation to the case of Bremen will be presented, guided by the framework introduced in Chapter 3.4.1.

4.1.1 Influences social and spatial structure of student population

When looking at influences of PBSA on social and spatial structures, most of research mentions the risk of a segregation process among the student population. Another topic was found to be the integration of PBSA into planning aims, which might be weak in comparison to the wish for mixed use urban quarters.

Social and spatial segregation

The points made in existing research, regarding the social and spatial segregation of students by PBSA, are also addressed by Bremen's actors in varying degrees of overtness. The senate, which is responsible to take measures to provide the desired amount of suitable student housing, addresses this topic in connection to Bremen's housing support programme (Senator of Civil Engineering, Environment and Transportation). In this programme it is stated that the building activities in recent years have been focused too much on the upmarket sector, which small and medium income households, among them students, cannot afford. Though indirectly, this statement shows that the senate is aware of the fact that almost all newly build housing which PBSA belongs to is unavailable to students with an average income. Consequently, the senate aims at changing this situation, to reduce the gap of offers between high income students and those with a low income.

The Left party, in opposition of the current administration of Bremen, states in a press release that if less than the announced 400 new public student housing places will be built displacement mechanisms of the housing market will be aggravated in disfavour of the low income population (The Left 2015). Though the students are not explicitly named as those suffering the displacement mechanisms, they are categorised as part of the low income population in this document. PBSA are not specifically mentioned either, but indirectly it is made clear that only the building of public student housing places will have a positive contribution on displacement mechanisms of the low income students and other low income groups.

The general students' committee AStA points out that student housing ought to be affordable for the average student and that PBSA doesn't suit this criterion (AStA Bremen 2014). The *Business Report 2013* of the student union emphasises that especially foreign students are having trouble affording PBSA, as language and culture barriers restrain them from entering the private rented sector (Student Union Bremen 2014).

The research institute GEWOS voices the assumption that for many students to choose the live in PBSA depends on the parents' willingness and abilities to afford the over-average rents. Students who rely on a grant from the state are not in the position to afford PBSA. The institute also talks of PBSA causing a stronger segmentation of residential groups, as it is focused on its target group of students and promotes no mixing of society. A consequence of PBSA as judged by GEWOS might also be a reduction of a student life atmosphere and fewer chances to mix in PBSA for foreign and domestic students, due to offering less flats and more single apartments than public student residence halls (Arnold 2016).

This overview shows that actors and experts of Bremen are mentioning effects relating to topic of PBSA causing segregation, yet in a rather indirect way. The actual term segregation is not used, but assessments indicating the awareness of possible segregation processes are mentioned. The effects of PBSA described in research and in documents and statements regarding Bremen are found to be overlapping. The actors of Bremen, too, want student housing "for all, not just for the few" (see DETR 2000, p.17 in Hubbard 2009, p. 1920) and agree that it should not be limited to "exclusive residential needs of middle and upper class students" (see Chatterton 1999). Also statements referring to PBSA "deepen(ing) the socio-spatial divides between different sub-populations of students" (Smith and Hubbard 2014) can be found in connection to Bremen. This division is seen by actors and experts between the affluent and less affluent students as well as the domestic and foreign students. While the less affluent students are excluded from PBSA, the foreign ones are driven into PBSA by a lack of prerequisites needed to enter e.g. the housing alternative of the private rented sector.

The possibility of a decreased learning experience of students in PBSA, due to being from similar social and economic backgrounds (Chatterton 1999) is not mentioned, but the GEWOS institute offers an assumption that relates to this topic area. The institute assumes PBSA to give domestic and foreign students fewer chances to mix, though this is rather due to the common PBSA structure of single apartments, than due to the inhabitants only being one social and economic background. Another way PBSA might increase social segregation is by pressuring students living there to get a side job to afford the high rents, and as a consequence these students might have less time to spend on studying and be taking a longer overall time to study. This concern is only voiced by the student representative group AStA.

Integration into planning aims

Another field PBSA influence in regards to the social and spatial structure of students is the integration into current planning aims. Especially the wish to implement mixed-used environments helping to promote social contact and tolerance in cities is said to be left unanswered by PBSA (Hubbard 2009). Regarding this aspect, the senate states in the document *Support measures for the building of student housing* that Bremen wants to put flexible building and diversification concepts into action and combine student housing with working areas or cross-generational living (Senator of Civil Engineering, Environment and Transportation/Senator of Education and Science 2015). The GEWOS institute addresses the topic from a more negative angle, finding that high concentrations of only one kind of housing like PBSA destroys the chance for a better mix in a quarter (Arnold 2016).

The PBSA of Bremen isn't part of a mixed use environment, which is why the senate is still in the phase of planning to implement flexible building and diversification concepts in connection to student housing. By comparing public student housing and PBSA though, it becomes apparent that also the public residences are commonly not part of a combination of different uses. They are not combined with other functions (e.g. working or retail) and are housing only students and no other social group.

General results of the influence of PBSA on social and spatial structure of the student population

Chatterton (2010) predicted that the reliance on privatisation and corporate business model in services for students will lead to an increase of inequality and disadvantage. This overarching judgement of the impacts of PBSA does impressively show in which direction the commercialisation of student housing might stir the student population socially and spatially. The statements of actors and experts of Bremen show that PBSA is assessed to possibly have negative influences on social and spatial structures of the student population, as seen in the previous sections. The Left party states in a press release that PBSA are not posing a valuable housing alternative as mostly the rent levels are exorbitant and no rent limits are set on two new planned student housing projects in Bremen (The Left 2015). These statements show that the actors of Bremen acknowledge the need for public student housing to match the social structure of the student population, and don't find PBSA the suitable housing solution for this goal.

4.1.2 Influences on treatment of students and the social assignment towards students

This section investigates what the actors and experts of Bremen say about the way PBSA influences the treatment of students and the social assignment towards them.

Changed view on students

Existing research so far has found that several services around universities and student life, including PBSA, turn the student into a monetarised and commodified persona (Chatterton 2010). This means that the categorisation of students as a group that needs support during their education has been altered, aided by building of PBSA to a group that is profitable to offer the service of housing to.

The senate of Bremen tries to oppose this change by making single room apartment, the main structure of housing in PBSA, eligible for funding, to boost the building of affordable single room apartments. This shows that Bremen's administration doesn't find the apartments of PBSA fitting students' budgets, but sees students in need of support. By applying a funding scheme for the single room apartments which were built as PBSA in Bremen in high numbers in the recent years, the city shows that it doesn't support the view of students as a financially strong group. Thus, the funding programme counteracts the commodification of student housing.

Secondly the Student Union Bremen as well as the AStA of Bremen states that PBSA do not necessarily reflect the students' wish for expensive apartments (Kieschnick 2016; Hilgerloh 2016). They find that a large number of students are moving into PBSA in the beginning of their studies until they find a cheaper alternative. Instead of easily getting a place in public student housing or a shared flat, many students find themselves struggling to find housing on a rather strained housing market when starting to study in Bremen. This situation is utilised by PBSA, which take advantage of the fact that offering student housing in cities with strained housing markets creates good opportunities for profit (CBRE 2014). The new phenomenon of building housing for students which matches their wishes exactly does also show the changed view on students. The traditional cash-restricted student wouldn't have been supplied with a high standard or luxury housing, but with rather basic housing since students were traditionally not to that degree seen as means to make profit.

Changed treatment of students

The treatment of students has changed as well – connected to the changed view of students – through the development of more student accommodation being offered by commercial providers. Macintyre (2003) finds that students need a stable and supportive housing situation which positively influences their study success, and that PBSA doesn't provide this environment since the focus lies on the economic return. Concerns about this change can also be found in statements of actors and experts of Bremen.

There is a document of the Left party inquiring the senate already in its title for *Enlarging student housing – Creating additional flats with the student union* (The Left 2015). Therein it is stated that building new housing with the student union is preferred to assure that social criteria will be minded. The student union is seen as the only organisation that will cater students with affordable rents and mind students' income limits. It is also criticised that student housing by private providers in contrast to public student housing isn't restricted to solely housing students. By calling PBSA student housing and at the same time offering it to other user groups, this housing provision embodies a decrease of support of students. The fact that PBSA is not limited to students is also noticed by the senate, who says that Bremen's PBSA have been built because of the demand of students but also because of that of workers at the university who are usually short-term renters (Lakemann 2016). The AStA complains about the fact that one of Bremen's PBSA which was originally tendered as student housing is now open to other rent groups as well (Hilgerloh 2016).

Furthermore, the Left party assesses that a positive consequence of being non-commercial is a having a wider scope for managing, operating and financing buildings than PBSA have. Another reason for the preference of the student union is their long-term experience with housing students. With these reasons the Left party argues that private providers and PBSA are not the adequate choice for stocking up student housing. The Student Union of Bremen supports that by saying that "We certainly need more public student housing" (Kieschnick 2016), since the current quote of 6.3% is assessed to be too low. To really be able to follow their social assignment and offer the necessary amount of affordable student housing the student union wishes to double its stock. The Student Union Bremen also voices the concern that it is not cooperating with PBSA but competing. These arguments show, that the student union and other actors deem public student housing the best way to offer a supportive housing environment to students, especially in the comparison to PBSA.

The general students' committee AStA has more specific objections towards PBSA and its treatment of students. It is stated that the AStA gets noticeably more complaints about

PBSA than about public student housing. These complaints are concerning the value for money (e.g. the unpractical layouts of flats) and treatment regarding private sphere (e.g. cameras in the hallways), how the janitor works (e.g. entering rooms unpermitted and patrolling to enforce bedtimes), the handing over the room (e.g. keeping too much deposit) and the outsourced management office (the Fizz has its office in Munich). In another document they denounce the condition of PBSA to check flats semi-annually to be absurd (Hilgerloh 2016).

Moreover, the Senate of Bremen finds that it would be good and sensible to build more public student housing as it would raise students' life quality (Lakemann 2016) and that it is planned to provide the student union with the means to do that (Senator of Education and Science 2015). Being interviewed senate also assesses that a number of students are probably moving to PBSA for a transitory time and for different reasons although the rent might exceed their budget. Connecting these statements one can interpret that the senate doesn't find PBSA the preferable solution to create student housing which supports students. This interpretation is further strengthened by the assessment of the GEWOS that says that it is difficult to judge if PBSA are the kind of housing students need and wish for or if these are the students' choice in an emergency situation, e.g. when public student housing is unavailable or shared flats found unsuitable. Although there is no data basis to build these assumptions on yet, these assessments are an indicator for the risk of PBSA being chosen because of the lack of other housing options. It shows that the motivation of students to live in PBSA might be a negative one, because it doesn't build on the preference of this kind of housing but the lack of alternatives.

The GEWOS institute also has a plan for enhancing the supply of student housing in Bremen, and advises that cooperation contracts with housing companies and the involvement of social institutions should be sought to support reaching a better supply of student housing (GEWOS 2015). It is believed that the sole reliance on privately built new housing is not

enough to cause a relaxation of the housing market and supply medium and low income households, including students, with housing.

General results of the influence of PBSA on the treatment of students and the social assignment towards students

Several documents from different actors, as well as the interviews, emphasised that Bremen is on the 2nd last place of the German states regarding the provision of affordable public student housing and the wish to increase the amount of public student housing is expressed (e.g. Senator of Education and Science 2015, The Left 2015). Not counting PBSA as a helpful addition to the provision of student housing shows that the actors and experts do not consider this kind of housing to fulfil the social assignment towards at least parts of the student population. The senate, the student union and other actors repeatedly state that public student housing places are important for students receiving grants and for foreign students, especially from non-EU countries. The dependence of these student groups on affordable housing is clearly expressed, which is why the senate aims at a quick promotion of this kind of housing. The need for a support programme for student housing demonstrates that the administration of Bremen find the supply of PBSA, of which ca. 1000 places have been built in the last five years, not adequate compared to housing needs of the student population. Instead the senate tries to develop student housing in cooperation with the student union to fulfil the current housing needs of students and reasonably complement the existing student union stock (Senator of Civil Engineering, Environment and Transportation/Senator of Education and Science 2015). Private investors are considered to supply suitable student housing either in cooperation with public housing companies or other public organisations (ibid).

4.1.3 Conclusion

How can the influences of the growing number of commercial student residence halls (PBSA) on students' life quality in Bremen be assessed considering arguments of Bremen's actors and experts?

To answer this question a framework containing possible influences of PBSA on students has been assembled with findings of research so far existing about PBSA in the context of Anglophone countries. Reviewing this research it became apparent that PBSA is found to mainly have detrimental effects on the social and spatial structure of students and also on the view and the treatment of the student population. To then find out if and how the actors and experts of Bremen relate to these influences, as there is no research on the influence of German PBSA to date, documentation and in interviews collected statements have been reviewed regarding the arguments on this topic.

The comparison of opinions the actors and experts voiced regarding the influences of PBSA to what is stated in existing research, has found to be matching to a fairly high degree. The assessment that social and spatial structure of students is experiencing segregation is expressed indirectly. The risk of causing segmentation processes and displacement mechanisms of the low income population is mentioned which might increase if no affordable student housing is going to be built. It is assessed that PBSA is unaffordable to the average student budget, and therefore strengthening the exclusion of the low income students. Marginally also the concern that domestic and foreign students are given less chance to mix due to the focus on single room apartments is voiced. Furthermore the fear of low-income students possibly being pushed into PBSA and taking a job to afford it, and consequently being affected in their study success is expressed. It is also assessed that the PBSA in Bremen is not part of a mixed use scheme, a fact which is criticised by research, although this holds true for most residence halls of Bremen and therefore isn't a factor specifically connected to commerciality. Nevertheless PBSA is generally not judged as having

a cohesive influence on the student population or as being a suitable option when planning supply housing fitting the whole of the student population.

The assessment that PBSA negatively influences treatment of students and the social assignment towards students can also be found in the case of Bremen. The actors and experts still classify students as a low-income group in the need of support regarding their housing, which is why a housing support programme with a strong emphasis on student housing has been launched in the beginning of 2015. Accordingly the focus of PBSA on the economic return is criticised to be disadvantageous for the student population. The management of the PBSA is found wanting by the general students' committee AStA and the missing reliability on the places being exclusively rented to students is criticised by the Left party. Different actors state that PBSA possibly provides an emergency housing solution to students who have trouble to access other housing options, although the rent is not really an expense those students are able to afford. Generally the need for a student housing support programme is acknowledged although the fact that a great number of PBSA places was built in recent years leads to the conclusion that PBSA is assessed to not meet the requirements the city wants for suitable student housing.

4.2 Influences of PBSA on the typical student housing pathway

Subquestion 2: How do PBSA change the typical student housing pathway?

This subquestion utilises the housing pathway concept as a basis to elaborate to which degree PBSA influences how students navigate the housing market. The ideal typical student housing pathway has been described in research as featuring manifold advantages for students which help accessing suitable and supportive housing (Ford et al 2002, Rugg et al. 2004). In the following the student housing pathways of students who live in PBSA in Bremen, which are established by categorising individual PBSA students' housing histories, will be compared to this ideal typical pathway. However, since the typical student housing

pathways of Great Britain and Germany are not completely similar and the concept has been established in connection to the situation in Great Britain first the typical pathway in a German context and its advantages will be outlined.

Through the comparison of the typical German student housing pathway excluding PBSA with those including PBSA, it will be possible to assess which advantages are further enforced and which are diminished by adding PBSA to the student housing market. In doing so, further knowledge about how PBSA are affecting students' life quality can be gathered. In contrast to the first subquestion, which looked at the opinions of actors and experts, this subquestion includes the views of students on the topic. Their opinion is important to get a comprehensive view on how PBSA is assessed in Bremen. Since there is little verified knowledge around the effects of PBSA in Bremen it is reasonable to correlate assumptions of actors and experts with the experiences of students living in PBSA.

4.2.1 The typical student housing pathways in Great Britain and Germany

The typical ideal student housing pathway as described by Rugg et al. (2004) is defined in the context of the housing situation in Great Britain. As it is tied to the traditions and circumstances of the British housing market, it cannot be directly applied to the German situation. Therefore, before employing the concept as a means to compare it to PBSA influenced housing pathways, differences and similarities of the defined typical ideal student housing pathway in Great Britain and Germany will be outlined.

The differences of British and German housing pathways start with the initial situation of the students when moving out from home and entering the housing market to pursue higher education. According to Rugg et al. (2004) it is typical for the universities in Great Britain to arrange housing for most students in residence halls and some in head lease schemes in their first year of studies. It is attempted to provide all students coming from abroad with housing managed by the university. In Germany the larger part of students

starts their housing pathway in a shared flat of the private rented sector. In the beginning of their studies 17% of all German students (1st -4th semester) live in residence halls. The residence halls of the student unions offer space for about 10% of all students averagely. The share of students in residence halls continually decreases with the duration of the studies (Wank et al. 2009). Universities, as mentioned before, are usually not an actor of the student housing market in Germany. The position held by British universities is in Germany taken by an organisation, which is more independent from universities: the student union.

A similarity of both countries is that only a few of the students living in student residence halls are long-term residents (Wank et al. 2009). After one or two years most students of the typical ideal pathway in Great Britain find housing in the private rented sector which they usually share with others. Also, on the German housing pathway a fair amount of the students who first lived in student residence halls are, according to statistics, changing predominantly to the private rented sector and partly other kinds of housing during studies. The British students are assessed to, after having entered the private rented sector, usually move within it to either change flatmates or upgrade their housing to a better flat. The German students most likely show a similar behaviour regarding their housing in the private rented sector. Since almost all students who live alone or with partners/friends in a flat are stating this their preferred kind of housing (Wank et al. 2009) it seems logical to assume that they, too, stay within the private rented sector. After the reversed start of the two country-related typical housing pathways in either predominantly residence halls or the private rented sector these seem to converge with most of the students moving into the private rented sector. Rugg et al. (2004) also describe how students typically house after their graduation, but since this work focusses on the housing situation of students during studies, these findings are not as relevant and won't be utilised.

Advantages of the student housing pathway

In the previous passage the main differences and similarities of the typical student housing pathways of Great Britain and Germany have been outlined, regarding which kind of housing is lived in at certain points of time during studies. Rugg et al. (2004) found the student housing pathway to have distinct advantages in comparison to that of other young people. Most other pathways of young people are defined as “chaotic”, “unplanned” or “constrained”, while the student pathway doesn’t show these characteristics. The following comparison of pathways doesn’t include the option of PBSA, as Rugg et al. (2004) didn’t specify other housing options than universities controlled student housing and housing of private landlords.

On the student housing pathway which usually includes leaving the family home with the aim of enrolling in higher education, constraints are manageable due to accommodation provided by the higher education institutions and the student housing market of the private rented sector. Besides these factors substantial family support and some mobility are part of the student housing pathway (Ford et al. 2002). Although regarding the advantages of the student housing pathway Great Britain and Germany are not completely similar, they are showing considerable overlap.

In terms of advantages for the student housing pathway Rugg et al. (2004) point out that it usually starts well-planned. Months ahead of the start of studying the students visit and enrol in student residence halls and head lease schemes. This is also valid for the German student housing pathway on which most students are able to plan their housing ahead after knowing where they have been admitted to study. Whereas the students in Great Britain often have no choice but to move into university-let housing in their first year, the German students are free to decide whether they want to start their housing career in hall of residence or on the private rented sector. Further along the British pathway the usual transition from the halls of residences to the private rented sector is said to be highly supported by universities. This is accomplished by e.g. supplying accommodation lists and recruiting landlords, and offering further advice when the student has already moved out

from the hall of residence. Finding out in depths which services the student unions, which are the complement to the British universities regarding student housing, and the German universities are providing would go beyond the framework of this research. Nevertheless, it can be stated that also in Germany students are provided with advice and support by student unions and universities, e.g. with counselling centres for residential affairs (e.g. "Studierendenwerk Hamburg" 2016) or offer information on how and where to find housing (e.g. "Wohnen In Hamburg: Campus-Leben: Universität Hamburg" 2016).

Apart from this, there is the advantage of the institutions of both countries to keep rent levels affordable. In Great Britain this is minded especially in high-demand housing locations. Another motivation is to attract students by offering low rents in the competition with other universities. In Germany the advantage of low rents of institutionally provided student housing is even more accentuated. The main purpose of the student union is to follow its social assignment towards students, which is among other matters to provide affordable housing (Wank et al. 2009).

The student housing market of the private rented sector in Great Britain is named as another advantageous factor of the student pathway. Even outside the range of support measures of universities, students find a niche market "in which supply has become adapted to meet the needs of a specific, specialised group, and displays a reluctance to meet demand from another source" (Rugg et al. 2004, p.23-24). Therefore it caters students housing needs regarding its location and management practice. The private rented sector student housing was found to often be located close to the university, as students tend to prefer this housing location. Looking at management practices it has been assessed that the students' demand led to "the growth of student market landlordism, with letting practices specifically modelled for student tenants." (ibid., p.24). Property would be bought with the purpose to let it to students, with the aim of utilise the combined ability of students to pay a higher rent than a single income household, but at the same time keeping the rents affordable for students. Moreover housing in low demand areas would feature accordingly

low rents and tenancy agreements offered excluded or reduced rent during the long vacation in the summer months (ibid., 2004).

The previous aspects concerning the student housing of the private rented sector in Great Britain are in many aspects different to those in Germany. It is difficult to delimit a special market section that caters mainly the students' needs in the private rented sector from the rest of the private rented sector. The interviews with different actors and experts of Bremen's housing market showed, for instance, that the student housing market and the private rented sector are not conceived as separate markets (Lakemann 2016, Arnold 2016). Generally, shared flats of students are not very different from other kinds of flats of the private rented sector regarding their location and management. Often student housing of the private rented sector is distributed over the city, with accumulations in preferred student quarters or quarters close to university (see Frey 2009). Usually a flat is offered on the market with a fixed rent for the complete number of rooms and facilities. The level of rent is connected to the location, demand and attributes of the flat as is with other flats of the private rented sector. If students then decide to rent a flat for the purpose of starting a shared flat and the landlord agrees, this rent will be shared among the students. This rent will normally be payed monthly and throughout the whole year. Nevertheless, before starting a shared flat the students normally have to compete against other user groups the housing would also fit. Those might be preferred by landlords for reasons like a less expressive lifestyle, a steady income or less fluctuation (see "Studenten-WG: Gemeinsam Leben, Gemeinsam Feiern, Gemeinsam Lernen (WG Arten, WG Formen, Studenten WG)" 2016).

Rugg et al. (2004) found that students experience a high level family support along their housing pathway. This consists of moral support (normally it is seen as favourable that young person is leaving home to study), monetary support (parents usually cover parts or the full rent in addition to paying living costs) and the security that the student may return home during breaks or after finishing to study which creates a kind of safety net. These

characteristics of the typical student housing pathway in Great Britain are assessed to be matching the ones of Germany. For instance, the share of students who are getting monetary support from their parents are the majority (87%) (Middendorff et al. 2012).

Summarising this rough comparison of advantages of the British and the German student housing pathway, it becomes apparent that both countries show many similar advantages. The supportive nature of institutions providing student housing, as well as the family support, may be assessed as relatively steady advantages in both countries. The only factor that shows significant differences is the student housing provided in the private rented sector. It can be argued that the student housing of the German private rented sector is not featuring the same advantages and structure as found in Great Britain. The phenomenon of “student market landlordism, with letting practices specifically modelled for student tenants” (Rugg et al. 2004, p.24) is not evident in German university cities nowadays, but rather the contrary is the case in most university cities. As described earlier on in this work, providing affordable and social housing in the private rented sector has become a challenge for medium-size and large cities and their different population groups (Öchsner 2013). Nevertheless in Great Britain and Germany alike students “are practically guaranteed a context where their social and economic welfare are deemed the responsibility of a public sector institution” (Rugg et al. 2004, p.23).

Rugg et al.’s (2004) student pathway conceptualisation doesn’t specifically mention PBSA, although the phenomenon existed already in 2004 (Hubbard 2009). It only mentions affordable halls of residence and affordable shared housing of the private rented sector and PBSA matches neither category. The defined typical ideal student housing pathway is not giving specific consideration to PBSA; however these considerations will be had in the following section.

4.2.2 The student housing pathway including PBSA

After outlining the typical student housing pathway of German students, it is now possible to examine this pathway in regards to the influences of PBSA. In the following, using the case of Bremen, it will be analysed which of the features and advantages of the established German student housing pathway are still obtainable for the students travelling a pathway that includes living in a PBSA. Therefore, first the housing biographies and the categories found in connection to these biographies will be presented in the next section. Afterwards, it will be concluded which advantages of the student housing pathway are furthered or diminished when living in PBSA.

Housing biographies of students living in PBSA in Bremen

Although every housing biography is unique, one can establish housing pathways within a number of biographies, if these show similar characteristic patterns. This was done with the sample of housing biographies obtained from students living in PBSA in Bremen. These housing biographies were categorized into specific housing pathways, with the aim of showing generalizable aspects and patterns of PBSA-influenced housing biographies of students living in Bremen (Ford et al. 2002). In the following, the examples of housing biographies of students living in PBSA in Bremen will be used to find out if the PBSA student housing pathway is featuring different characteristics and advantages from the overall student housing pathway.

Categories of PBSA housing pathways

The following section presents the housing biographies of 13 surveyed students currently living in PBSA. These biographies consider the entering phase into the PBSA, possible previously attempted housing options and the anticipated kind of housing during studies, if different from PBSA.

Even though all of these housing biographies show individual motivations and developments, different groups of biographies showing similar features shaped when analysing the sample. Inspired by the pathway model, the group of students which live in PBSA will therefore be categorised in another set of subgroups, to distinguish common motivations and influences. In this manner it becomes apparent that these housing biographies are not isolated cases, but driven by similar influences and are, due to their multiple appearances, generalisable. Nevertheless, after establishing these groups, it must be pointed out that they are not completely separable but blend into one another to some degree.

For the 13 students surveyed, four categories or pathways were found, which seem to show more frequently occurring patterns in regards to PBSA (plus one rather exceptional biography). The categories are mainly depending on which kind of housing the students want to live in when planning their housing and after moving into PBSA, as well as on how much that choice is based on monetary concerns or on features and services of PBSA:

1. The German students who fail to find a place in a shared flat and still plan to move in a shared flat
2. The foreign students who fail to get into a public residence hall and are wishing for a lower rent
3. The German students who want the services and features of PBSA, therefore deciding to pay a high rent
4. The students who wanted the services and features of PBSA, but now want to change

In the following each of these categories will be introduced together with its matching list of biographies.

1. *The German students who fail to find a place in a shared flat and still plan to move in a shared flat*

- a. A German student decided to move out from his parental home when nearly being done with his studies. He prefers to live in a flat share; therefore he

applied for this kind of housing and viewed several places. Also he wished to live close to the university. As he wasn't successful in finding housing in a shared flat, he decided to rent a place in a PBSA. Although he doesn't prefer to live in a PBSA and deems it "unavoidable", he is satisfied with the rent (400€) and the performance of the housing as a temporary solution. He has a side jobs and gets money from his parents to sustain him. As the reason for jobbing, the wish for independence and no connection to the rent level is stated.

- b. A German student wanted to start a shared flat with her friends when coming to Bremen to start studying, but they were for some reason not moving to Bremen in the end. She saw an advertisement of Galileo Residence when exploring the campus and decided to move there also because her parents found it a good and safe option for their daughter. First, she planned to stay there for only one year, but now she has been living there for two already. She doesn't like her roommate, the layout of the flat and that she is not allowed to personalise it the ways she wants to. Therefore she is planning to move into a shared flat with her boyfriend. For half a year she has had a side job, but mostly her parents finance her.
- c. A German student studied in another German city before changing to Bremen. She reports to have had little time for searching for housing. She has taken the public residence hall into account, but found the quality too low when visiting it. The quick solution was the PBSA, but she would prefer and plans to move into a shared flat with a flatmate, after living in the PBSA since half a year. She is unsatisfied with the performance of the housing for the rent (465 €), and finds it is worth less money (380€). She affords the rent by receiving money from her parents.

Group 1 consists of the students who reported to first having tried or wanted to find a place in a flat share in the private rented sector. For different reasons they weren't able to get into a shared flat and alternatively moved into a PBSA. The reasons for not being able to realise the preferred kind of housing are: not having friends/a network, not having time for searching and just not being accepted upon applying. Nevertheless they indicate that PBSA

have a common advantage for students in contrast to flat shares, which is that the application process is swift and simple. When applying for a flat share usually students have to go through a casting process to find out if they will fit in, which can be time-consuming and exhausting, especially if the number of competing candidates is high (see for instance Finkemeyer 2016). For the application in PBSA no casting is needed but just the provision of the necessary documents, e.g. the proof of matriculation to get the student rate.

The biographies also show that the students who chose to move into PBSA as an alternative are for different reasons not satisfied enough there to want to stay. They are already planning to move out and realise their wish for a flat share. Two of the three have social contacts now (a partner/a friend) with whom they want to move in a flat share. Having social connections at their study location raises their chances of finding a place in a flat share. As long as it is a temporary housing solution, they are adjusting to PBSA. However, the reasons for not wanting to stay in the PBSA are diverse (wanting to live cheaper, wanting to move in a flat share, disliking the flatmate, disliking the layout of the flat and the missing possibility to personalise it). The students of this group seem to have little trouble with affording PBSA, as their parents cover their expenses. Still, finding cheaper housing is mentioned as one of the reasons for wishing to change the housing. The one student doing a job reports to be motivated to do this by wanting to be independent rather than his parents not being able to cover the rent.

The division of the surveyed students into German and foreign ones reflects the division which is made in most discussions around student housing in Bremen. Of the interviewed students only German students attempted to get into a flat share when first planning their entry of Bremen's housing market. None of the foreign student in a PBSA attempted to find a place in this kind of housing initially, showing that both groups are equipped with different prerequisites when entering the student housing market of Bremen.

Overall this group is characterised by not choosing PBSA for its features, but rather as an alternative, because of not being able to realise the initial housing wish of a flat share when

entering Bremen's student housing market. They are still pursuing this former goal – partly using the advantage of developing contacts in Bremen – and adjust to PBSA only as a temporary solution. The high rent level doesn't seem to pose a hardship as sufficient financial family support is given.

2. *The foreign students who fail to get into a public residence hall and are wishing for a lower rent*

- a. A foreign student tried to find housing in Bremen and first applied at the student union but didn't get a place. Then she started living in a shared flat but found that it was too far from the campus. Therefore she applied at a PBSA, where she was put on a waiting list for some time again. She moved in there, but now she wants to move out again, because she finds the rent too high and doesn't like her flatmate. She is planning to move into a flat of the private rented sector soon with someone she knows. About her attempts to find housing in the private rented sector she says that she was experiencing a language barrier as landlords didn't reply her inquiries when written in English.
- b. A foreign student wanted to live in a public residence hall to pay a low rent, but there was no space. He is on the waiting list since one year and still hopes that he will get a place there soon. He perceives the rent as very high and uses his savings to pay it. Overall he assesses that his housing situation could be better, but he also values the location close to university and the community areas as positive elements.

The students in Group 2 are foreign students, whose first option when coming to Bremen is trying to get a place in a public student residence hall. Failing at this because of lacking capacities in the public halls they are put on a waiting list. Here the two example biographies diverge, with student '2a' first living in a flat share, but changing to a PBSA because of wanting to live closer to the university and the other one having chosen PBSA as the alternative right away. Also, student '2b' mentions the PBSA close location to the university as a positive factor. Nevertheless both are stating that they perceive the rent as too high and wishing to live cheaper. Student '2a' tried to get a job to supplement the

funding of her parents, but isn't successful because of the language barrier and student '2b' lives of his savings, which are finite. Student '2b' is still waiting to be accepted by the public student residence hall and Student '2a' has plans to start a flat share with someone she knows.

This group of foreign students who initially planned to move in a public residence hall seem to have less chances (e.g. language barriers, time to visit shared flats) to move into shared flats than the German students. Therefore they fail to or do not even attempt to rent such a place when first coming to Bremen. They also have limited money available, which is why they probably tried to move into the affordable public student residence hall in first place.

3. The German students who want the services and features of PBSA, therefore deciding to pay a high rent

- a. A German student, who has already been living in Bremen for most of his life, was finding an ad of The Fizz online when looking for a place to move for the start of the studies. He likes the location at the university, the services and that one doesn't have to be autonomously dealing with the housing, e.g. with bills and long applications. Also the single apartment with its individuality seems worth the price to him. Therefore he has never tried to find other housing. He has to pay 400€ rent, which he covers with the 670€ he gets from his parents (the equivalent the highest possible amount of the state grant). He has done a side job for two semesters out of interest rather than because of needing the money.
- b. Another German student features a very similar story as the previous one. He also already lived in Bremen and finds the services and features of the PBSA worth the rent (490€), which he pays from the 670€ his parents give him monthly. He doesn't have any side job. When having the option to move into a cheaper apartment within the PBSA, he declined as he thought it wasn't worth the hassle.

- c. A German student decided to live in PBSA, because he liked the location and wanted to live in an apartment on his own. He finds it expensive for its size, but being able to live on his own there makes it worth to him. His parents cover all expenses and he doesn't have a side job.

The third group is another German group of students. These have decided to move into a PBSA upon searching for a place to live in Bremen. They wished for the services of PBSA (not having to deal with any bills and other administrative tasks related to running a household) and features (single apartments; location close to university). Also the uncomplicated application process is part of the services of PBSA these students were able to enjoy. All three of the students of this group of biographies name the single apartment as an important feature they don't want to miss, which at the same time shows that a flat share wasn't an option for them.

This is the only identified group of users of PBSA who appreciates this kind of housing for its services and features enough to want it as their permanent housing during studies and to whom it is worth the high rent. Their parents fully finance them, which is why they're not pressured to do a side job. Nevertheless it is interesting that two of these three students who named their exact income and rents, have only 270€ and 180€ left for other monthly expenses after paying the rent. Although they don't complain about having too little money left after paying the rent, this amount seems comparably low for the monthly expenses of a student.

Overall Group 3 therefore consist of those students who wish in PBSA for what it has to offer and are affording it, if necessary by living with a comparatively low amount left for other living expenses. Wanting to stay in the PBSA permanently is a characteristic that sets them apart from the other groups.

4. The students who first wanted the services and features of PBSA, but now want to change

- a. A German student moved into PBSA because there he can live in an apartment on his own. He pays between 450 and 500 € rent, which is matching his budget of 900-1000€. Nevertheless, the value for the money is judged as too low. His rent is financed by his parents and his side job. He wants to stay in the PBSA only temporary.⁶
- b. A German student chose to live in PBSA because of finding it less complicated than other forms of housing, like sharing or renting a flat. Still the PBSA is a temporary choice, because of the rent of the housing which she finds too high (450-500 €) and the value for money ratio, which she finds too low. The parents cover all her expenses and give her 900-1000 € monthly.
- c. A German student didn't want to go through the application process for shared flats and chose to move into PBSA because of the simple application process. He pays between 450 and 500 € rent, which he finds to match his budget (700-800€), but not the quality of his housing. He pays the rent with money from his parents and a side job. The PBSA is only a temporary housing solution for him.
- d. A foreign student searched for housing from outside of Germany and found PBSA an attractive and nice looking option to book from afar and as a starting place for studying there. Now that he has lived there for half a year he wants to move into cheaper housing and has applied for housing of the student union but not yet gotten in. Generally he finds his housing at the PBSA too expensive and pays it through family support.

The fourth and last group is a mixed group of German students and one foreign student. They are all connected by choosing a PBSA over other kinds of housing, when looking for a place in Bremen. For different reasons connected to the services (simple application process, not having to deal with any bills and other administrative tasks related to running a

⁶ Students 4a, b, and c have been answering an online survey and didn't specify which kind of housing they want to move to, after leaving PBSA

household) and features (single apartments) of PBSA they decided to move into this kind of housing. After experiencing the live in a PBSA for some time though, all of the students want to change to another kind of housing. They all deem the PBSA too expensive for its performance. The financial situations of these students are more diverse, as student '4a' has an income of 900-1000€ from a side job and the parents, student '4b' gets 900-1000€ by the parents, student '4c' has 700-800€ from a side job and the parents and student '4d' not exactly specified family support. Independent of the low rating of the rent performance two of the four (students '4b' and '4d') find the rent not matching their budget or wanting to live cheaper, whereas the other two (students '4a' and '4c') find the rent matching their budget.

The students of Group 4 are a mixed group, regarding the division into foreign and domestic students. All of them decided to move into PBSA first, because of the services and features it offered. After living there for some time they find that this kind of housing features rent levels that don't match the quality of the housing and therefore plan to only use the PBSA as a temporary solution.

One of the 13 students is listed as an exception and could be called the foreign high-income student:

- A foreign student applied for public halls of residence and PBSA when first coming to Germany. Coincidentally, from her point of view, the PBSA is the first residence hall that accepts her. She states that the rent (390€) and the performance of the housing suit her which is why she never considered moving in the 3 years she's been living there. She affords the housing with a study grant of her home country (Luxemburg) and explains that it is higher than the study grant of the German state. She also mentions that she heard that students receiving the German study grant have more trouble affording the rent of her PBSA.

This student was like the other foreign students not considering or making use of the option to move in a shared flat of the private rented sector. Nevertheless, contrary to the other

foreign students she wasn't making a difference between moving in a public student residence hall and PBSA. Her study grant from her home country is higher than the German one, which is why it easily covers her rent. She is the only other student in this research from abroad which chose to stay in the PBSA permanently.

4.2.3 Comparison of categories of PBSA housing biographies with the typical student housing pathway

The following section aims at connecting the findings made about PBSA students in Bremen back to the concept of the typical student housing pathway. Previously, it has been established that German students experience similar advantages on their typical housing pathway as the British students (whom the concept of housing pathways was originally connected to). They're able to plan their housing ahead and institutional housing is offered by student unions in the form of public student residence halls. Additionally, further support and counselling is offered by student unions and universities for the transition into the private rented sector. However, how much help the students receive ranging from advice on where to apply to the offer of accommodation list of approved landlords seems to be depending on the study location (e.g. the student union of Bremen supplement their stock of housing by assembling a list of several hundred approved landlords). The German public student residence halls have a social assignment towards students, which is why the rents are kept affordable. The private rented sectors however is not catering to the students in this manner, as there is no special niche market for students only, but rather competition within the students and with other user groups of the general private rented sector (Arnold 2016; Lakemann 2016). This is also the case in Bremen (GEWOS 2015). Even though the rents of the private rented sector are rising in Bremen, these rents are still in the middle ranks compared to other medium and large university cities in Germany (BFW 2013). Lastly, the financial support of the parents is given with 87% of students in Germany being fully or partly financed by their parents (Middendorff et al. 2012). In the following these advantages

of the student housing pathway will be compared to PBSA housing pathways of the students in Bremen by taking into account the general aspects.

The advantage of being able to plan the housing ahead:

The German students coming to Bremen used to have the choice to try and find housing in a flat share of the private rented sector or in a residence hall of the student union. Currently the waiting lists of student residence halls contain several hundred students at the beginning of the semester (Kieschnick 2016) and the housing market features rising rents and low vacancy rates (CBRE 2014). These circumstances make it difficult to find housing for students. Especially for foreign students the planning from afar this is more complicated than for the domestic ones. When not being accepted to public student housing the foreign students often use PBSA as an alternative though their budget might not match the high rent (Group 2). The foreign students also tend shy away from the application process for flat shares when first coming to Bremen. Getting a space in a shared flat usually is more complicated than entering the housing market or than starting to move in hall of residence first, because of e.g. the language barrier and lacking experience on the specific housing market. This is acknowledged by the institutions around student housing in Bremen, which offer special support to foreign students. Nevertheless, as their capacities seem to be exhausted and the students don't get a foothold in a shared flat on the private rented sector they end up choosing PBSA as a temporary alternative. The addition of PBSA to the student housing market therefore helps to supply foreign and German students, who are not successful in the private rented sector or public student residence halls, especially when first entering the study location's housing market. This additional supply is therefore an alternative to not offering any housing, but as it doesn't fit a common student's budget, and not very helpful one.

The advantage of affordability:

The housing on the typical student pathway is described as affordable. Before the trend of building PBSA student housing was connected to a lower standard housing but also to a lower rent level. Flat shares and student union housing in most cases mean sharing facilities and having little private space available. The PBSA in contrast mostly offer private apartments with no shared facilities, but these services come with a high price compared to an average student budget. The data collection shows that there is a share of students to whom the amenities of PBSA were so important, that they afford the rent even with a low income. Having their private apartment is the main motivation to stay in PBSA but the price leaves a comparatively low amount of money for other living expenses (see Group 3). The greater number of students surveyed though showed discomfort about the high rent level, either not liking the price-performance ratio of PBSA (Group 4) or having a low income (Group 2).

The advantage of family support:

When asking the students in PBSA about their income most named their parents as their main source. Some mention to have side jobs, but this is usually connected to the wish of being more independent from parents who would otherwise cover the expenses. Although the majority of the surveyed students are wishing to move in the cheaper housing option of either the student union or a shared flat of the private rented sector, they are mostly not having trouble to pay the high rent, because of being able to rely on the monetary support of the parents. Therefore it can be argued that PBSA accentuates the advantage of the student housing pathway featuring strong family support. Nevertheless, the obvious downside of this factor is that to the students whose parents are not in the position to offer an over-average amount of funding, PBSA don't pose a helpful housing alternative. Needless to say they don't appear in the sample of PBSA students.

The advantage of niche market that serves exclusively students' demands:

In Bremen neither the private rented sector, where students compete for housing with several other user groups (GEWOS 2014), doesn't show a distinct niche. The public student residence halls which are reserved for students have a capacity too low for the demand of students. And PBSA are aiming mainly at students, but offer their housing, to other user groups too. This shows that many students upon entering the housing market of Bremen are in the situation of having to compete against other user groups, which PBSA particularly take advantage of.

4.2.4 Conclusion

How do PBSA change the typical housing pathway?

Comparing PBSA housing pathways with the typical student housing pathway it becomes apparent that the advantages of the latter are indeed lessened. This cannot be solely blamed on PBSA, because its development is to some degree a consequence of the strained housing market of Bremen and the unused chance of public institutions to intervene. Nevertheless, PBSA do seem to worsen the situation of the student housing market by taking advantage of the limited housing choices of German and foreign students. The fact that students "are practically guaranteed a context where their social and economic welfare are deemed the responsibility of a public sector institution" (Rugg et al. 2004, p.23), is not anymore given in the field of student housing when PBSA takes care of students in a new, economically driven manner.

4.3 Power and rationalisations in the case of Bremen

Subquestion 3: How can the arguments about rising share of PBSA and the lack of public student housing by Bremen's actors of public student housing be seen as forms of rationalization?

To answer to this subquestion, Flyvbjergs findings about how power is exercised to rationalise decisions will be utilised to uncover possible 'rationalisations' regarding the building of PBSA. The aim of the question is to find out if there is a fair development of the student housing market in relation to the concrete housing needs of students.

In the first subquestion it was examined how research classifies PBSA and which statements of those involved with PBSA in Bremen show that they share these assumptions and see risks too. With the third subquestion now it will be investigated how PBSA is classified from another angle, because it will be looked at how actors concerning public student housing are rationalising it. These actors mention the need for affordable public student housing (see Senator of Civil Engineering, Environment and Transportation 2015) and that PBSA features certain disadvantages like only serving students with high income or being an emergency housing solution for student with a lower income (see Kieschnick 2016). Yet, at the same time, they rationalise 'why' more PBSA is to be planned while new public student housings are not built to the same extent.

The lack of student housing in Bremen is a topic in current political debates, showing that the administration isn't unaware of the problematic situation. About 1000 places have been built in PBSA in recent years in comparison to 63 public student residence hall places (Kieschnick 2016). To take action, a housing support programme has been launched in the beginning of 2015, which puts great emphasis on supporting the building of new student housing. Nevertheless when talking about student housing in official documents and protocols do seem to rationalise the building of PBSA and not so much private student

housing in different ways. Before presenting examples, this section continues investigating the main actors involved in the decision making of student housing in Bremen.

Who does exercise power in student housing in Bremen?

In the city-state Bremen, the political power lies at the senate and the parliament. The senate is the executive power and government. The issues of student housing are in the hands of Senator of Civil Engineering, Environment and Transportation (SCET) and the Senator of Science, Health and Consumer Protection (SSHC). Then there is the parliament of Bremen, the “Bürgerschaft”, equipped with the legislative power. The parties in the parliament of Bremen, which is the legislative power, are in the position to file motions regarding the topics that the senate should work on. Among the different parties filing motions regarding the topic of student housing and getting active in this area, especially the Left party is stands out because of its engagement. The senate and the parliament of Bremen determine which course the issue of student housing is taking.

4.3.1 Rationalisations around the building of new PBSA and public student housing

The following section will present rationalisations found in official documents and statements of those exercising power regarding student housing. This is done by carefully checking their explanations and justifications for their acting and planning, which might be approximated as a form of rationalisation. Other sources like reports of research institutes and market research will be used to challenge these rationalisations and to show which other reasons for the actors’ decisions exist.

One interesting document is a report of the SSHC about student housing from October 2015 (Senator of Science, Health and Consumer Protection 2015). This report was issued by the Left party wishing for an update on the current state of student housing as well as the measures planned to reach the number of publicly funded housing planned in the Science

Plan 2020. The document begins with the mentioning of the number of 900 students that have applied for a place in public student housing and are still (at the beginning of the semester) on a waiting list. They are estimated by the SSHC to actually not be waiting for admittance for housing of the student union but to have found housing elsewhere in the meantime. Experience would show that basically no one in on this waiting list at the anymore at the start of the second semester of the year. There are two kinds of reasoning in this statement, which could be approximated to rationalisations. Firstly it carries the implication that if the students are not on the waiting list for public student housing anymore, this means that they are successfully finding temporary housing elsewhere and the students aren't really in need of many public places. The explanation seems to downplay the high demand of public student housing places. What is being left out is that a share of those students who first applied for housing of the student union, might find in housing solutions like PBSA which are more difficult for them to afford (see Kieschnick 2016) or might struggle to find housing on the private rented sector (see Interviews with students) . It is only mentioned that for a part of the students housing with private landlords could be organised. Therefore, reasoning that finding alternative temporary housing options other than public student housing shows that the demand for public housing is not evident gives the impression to be a rationalisation to not build a higher number of public student housing.

Secondly, arguing that experience showed the waiting list diminishing throughout the course of the semester, is also another way to downplay the housing situation. The number of students on the waiting list is unusually high and other circumstances like a rising number of student in general and a tensing private rent sector indicate that the situation of student housing in Bremen is changing. Therefore, relying on experiences collected in earlier years, doesn't seem valid. It rather seems to be made to calm those, maybe even the senate itself, concerned about the long waiting list.

Further on, the document the SSCH explains the senate's plans to build 400 new places in public student housing with the student union, using Bremen's funds of the housing support programme and possibly public and private housing companies. Building these 400 places, the percentage of public student housing in Bremen would rise from 6,4% to 7,8%. In total 32mio € would be in need to realise this new plan. Building 140 places has been already planned, possibly through savings of the student union, together with funding of the city of Bremen and a loan taken out by the student union. Here, regarding public student housing the document talks about 400 new public student residence hall places, but only explains how the first 140 might be financed and that they are planned to be built that shortly. The status of planning and the possible funding of the 260 other places are not discussed. Nevertheless, the calculation for the new higher percentage of public student housing is done with all 400 places. This way the senate argues how the aim of building a few hundred public student housing places will be reached and presenting numbers to show that considerable process will be made. However, the current funding only touches 140 places. By not mentioning the plan for the rest of the places, the senate probably implicitly admits that there is no plan for the funding yet. This assumption can be supported by the interview of the author with the SCET, in which the hope for financing to be freed from other places is mentioned as a way to get new resources. In the interview it was also mentioned, that in the household plan for 2016/17 only 100 new student housing places are planned (Lakemann 2016). Up front the planning of 400 new places is presented, whereas at the backstage of this policy making, it is well known that it will be difficult to reach the necessary amount of funds for the complete realization of this plan.

Another influential actor on the issue of the public student housing, and existing and planned PBSA student housing are private investors.

“Furthermore, there is a large offer of private investors, which provide student residence hall places of an upper price segment in the facilities “The Fizz”, Galileo Residence and Campus Viva. The ecumenical residence hall on the contrary offers 72

especially cheap housing space – however, also featuring a distinctly low standard. The idea of an investor to build 300 student flats [at a certain location] is being discussed. Additionally a privately financed new building could be developed [at another location], which facilitates student housing too.” (Senator of Science, Health and Consumer Protection Report 2015, p.2)*

Planning the student housing possibilities in Bremen it has been assumed – as Senator of Science’s sentence above reports – that naturally affordable housing is connected to low standard housing. But it is not always pointed out that higher standard student housing, as planned to be built in the close future, will imply partnership with private investors. This aspect seems to be an indicator that the result will be the building of less affordable student housing. Instead of stating the option of other funding schemes, the building of new PBSA is presented as the most logical solution by the senate. This solution has been chosen to provide over 300 more places for student housing. By just stating these plans as a fact, the senate does not mention that these ‘solutions’ are just the consequence of being unable to fund more public student housing.

As analysed in another report of the SECT and the SSCH regarding the “Measures to support the building of student housing” (Senator of Civil Engineering, Environment and Transportation and Senator of Education and Science 2015) the following statement is worth taking a closer look. It is argued that Bremen shows a comparatively good supply of ‘private housing’, and that the shortages of housing occurring at the beginning of the winter semesters diminish more quickly than those of other university cities. By ‘private housing’ here most likely the private rented sector is meant, which mainly offers the students places in flat shares. However, other research assesses this housing market segment as less ‘good’ as the senate.

A published analysis on the development of student housing of the private rented sector in different German cities reports that this housing experienced a rent increase of 13,4% in Bremen from 2010 to 2015. It is also argued that the supply of student housing doesn’t

increase with the growth of the population, mirroring the rising tension of the housing market (Institute of the German Economy Cologne and German Real Estate Funds 2016). Another report from GEWOS Institute, which focuses on the housing market of Bremen, also comes to similar conclusions of the private rented sector tightening and showing rather dynamically rising rents (GEWOS 2016). Here the senate might overestimate an advantage of Bremen's housing market, but this assumption isn't supported by the experts and concrete available knowledge. Although stating on one hand that new affordable student housing is needed, the senate creates the impression of a well-functioning student housing market by 'rationalising' that the supply of housing through Bremen's private rented sector is relatively good.

The presented rationalisations are found to be mainly created by the senate. The other actors exercising power, like the parties in the parliament, are either accepting these rationalisations or challenging them. The Left party for example has published a document called *Enlarging student housing – building additional housing with the student union* (The Left 2015) which clearly states why the building of student housing in partnership with the student union is assessed to be preferable over building it in partnership with private investors. Also the update on the student housing market and plans regarding new student housing were requested of the senate by the Left and other parties, which put the senate under pressure to justify its policy decisions.

4.3.2 Conclusion

How can the arguments about the rising share of PBSA and the lack of public student housing by Bremen's actors of public student housing be seen as forms of rationalization?

The previous observations showed that actors exercising power in the field of student housing in Bremen – mainly the senate – are rationalising plans for building new PBSA as well as the lack of public student housing. While being under pressure to publicly show progress in the field of student housing the senate also knows that the unavailability of

funds from the city will make it difficult to ensure greater improvements, as found out by interviewing a representative (Lakemann 2016). To not reveal that lacking funds are defeating the realisation of a significant increase of affordable student housing, the need for this housing is downplayed while partnering with private investors is presented as the solution to build new student housing.

Moreover, this analysis shows that the ones exercising power in the case of student housing in Bremen are in fact hardly able to add the amount of public and affordable student housing strived for. Due to the city being out of funds the administration is not in the position supply the numbers of new student housing places needed in the next years. Despite the use of rationalisation to gloss over the situation of the student housing market and the need for public student housing, real efforts are taken to build new public student housing. This shows in e.g. in the fact, that the housing support programmes puts a special focus on students. The deeper problem apart from politicians wanting to present their work in the best light possible is probably the fact that Bremen does possess only little funds. The situation of being “chronically underfinanced” (Lakemann 2016) makes it difficult for the administration to keep control over the student housing market. Instead, to not let the building of student housing stagnate, it has to cooperate with private investors. By e.g. offering private investors to build new student housing on city-owned land at least objectives like flexible building and diversification concepts can still be negotiated (see Senator of Civil Engineering, Environment and Transportation 2015). Nevertheless, the analysis shows that in the case of student housing in Bremen the main power lies where the money is. An assessment used earlier on in this work to describe the general conditions in which PBSA flourishes also fits to describe the current situation in Bremen: “(s)trained public budgets, the dominance of a neo-liberal public policy agenda [...] have spurred the privatisation of public housing” (Lennartz 2011:1).

Chapter 5 Conclusion

In the following, the main research will be answered by combining the findings of the three subquestions. The main research question was:

How can the commercialisation of student residence halls in form of purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) be assessed to impact the life quality of students in Bremen considering students, actors and experts views?

Before answering the main research question, the answers of the three subquestions which structured the analysis will be presented individually. Afterwards their content will be combined to answer the main question.

In subquestion 1 it was examined how, actors and experts of Bremen's student housing market assessed the impacts of PBSA on students' lives compared to date existing research. It was found that, though to some degree indirectly, most of the possible critical effects of PBSA like segregation or inequality among students are determined as a risk in Bremen. The unaffordability of PBSA for low-income students is criticised for enhancing the exclusionary trends and leading to a segmentation process and displacement mechanism. The focus of PBSA on the economic return is found to be disadvantageous for students, as their income limits are not considered by the providers and little funds are invested in managing and operating the buildings. Lastly, the supply of student housing is assessed not be secure with PBSA, because they are not exclusively housing students but also other user groups. Overall it can therefore be concluded that the actors and experts of Bremen assessed the

commercialisation of student residence halls in form of PBSA as causing critical socio-spatial effects. Taking the case of Bremen as a representation for wider German developments these findings show that the critical effects of PBSA, which have been researched mainly in the context of Great-Britain and other Anglophone countries, also apply in the German context.

The second subquestion elaborated the concept of housing pathways. This concept describes a typical student housing pathway as more advantageous than that of other young people due to students being able to plan their housing well and receiving great support in the public and private housing sector as well as family support. These factors were applied to the housing pathways distinguished among students living in PBSA in Bremen who were surveyed for this thesis. This way it was analysed that pathways which included PBSA show less advantages than the typical student housing pathway. Due to being less affordable than other kinds of student housing, with PBSA the factor of the typically guaranteed the social and economic welfare is not given anymore. PBSA don't cater students exclusively, therefore there is competition with other user groups and also the family support factor is limited, as the long-term financing of the PBSA rents exceeds many families' financial capacities. Thus the conclusion of the second subquestion is that PBSA changes the typical student housing pathway to the students' disadvantage, by limiting the opportunities ascribed to it.

Nevertheless, to answer this question other student housing options existing in Bremen had to be taken into account as well. Shifting the focus from PBSA to the overall student housing market shows that not just PBSA influence the life of a share of students in a negative way, but that PBSA are probably a consequence of the limited availability of other housing options. Therefore the deeper problem seems to be the abolishment of the social assignment towards students which leads to the provision of less than the demanded share of affordable housing and subsequently a commercialisation of this housing.

The third subquestion aimed at uncovering 'rationalisations' of those in power which hinder a fair development of the student housing market in relation to the concrete housing needs of students. This analysis of the case of Bremen builds on and supplements the findings of subquestion 1 and 2, as it examines why the critical assessment of the actors of Bremen's student housing market doesn't translate into logical policy of building more public student housing and less PBSA. This initial situation allowed the assumption of PBSA being the preferred solution by those in power, although the findings of the first subquestion showed otherwise.

While it has been examined that 'rationalisations' exist concerning the lack of student housing and the still rising share of PBSA, it has also been concluded that these are not resulting from the wish to build the latter, but rather the inability to build the first. The senate, being the main powerful actor and policy maker might use rationalisations to some degree to appear capable of building sufficient public student housing and not like lacking the necessary funds. Nevertheless, it has been assessed that serious efforts are taken by the administration to build public student housing instead of PBSA, but the cities strained public budget thwarts the realisation of these plans. Therefore this analysis of power and rationality showed that the powerful actors in the case of Bremen use rationalisations to cover up the lack of monetary power. They have partly given in to a "neo-liberal policy agenda" (Lennartz 2011) of building PBSA as it is preferred to not building any significant number of student housing in Bremen. Thus, while subquestions 1 and 2 directly added to answering the main research question, subquestion 3 was used to give further insight to the case of student housing and PBSA in Bremen in a more indirect manner. Combining these findings the main research question will be answered in the following:

How is the commercialisation of student residence halls in form of purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) assessed by students, actors and experts to impact the life quality of students in Bremen?

While the first subquestion showed that actors and experts of Bremen view the influences of PBSA on the students' life quality critically, the second subquestion confirmed that PBSA is also assessed to have negative effects on students by the students' themselves. The third question then added to this understanding by showing that also those in power in Bremen would prefer to build public student housing to building PBSA even though their 'rationalisations' at first implied otherwise.

These findings results in the following answer to the main research question: The commercialisation of student residence halls in form of PBSA can be assessed to have critical effects on students considering the views of students, actors and experts in Bremen. Due the negative influences of PBSA on the socio-spatial structure of the student population and the diminishing of the advantages of student housing pathway, PBSA are determined to impact students' live quality negatively.

However, beyond these primary findings the case showed that the commercialisation of student residence halls in form of PBSA mainly has a strong influence on the student housing market and students' lives, because of the lack of other housing options. Although the specific housing form of PBSA and not the general student housing market of Bremen was focussed on in this work, it became apparent that mostly the strained situation of the latter made PBSA as influential as they turned out to be. If there was more funding for public student housing and more housing of the private rented sector available for the students of Bremen they wouldn't have to deal with the downsides of PBSA and its negative impacts on life quality in first place.

Chapter 6 Reflection and outlook

This thesis helped contributing to the knowledge about the PBSA regarding its impacts on students' life quality in a German context, since research published so far has mainly focussed on quantitative analyses of German PBSA. The collection of qualitative data in the form reviewing relevant documents and interviewing actors, experts and students proved to be very insightful. Nevertheless, especially assessing the choice of interview partners, it would have been a valuable addition to also have obtained information from further actors like housing companies or parties of the opposition in parliament. A housing company could have given further insight as to how the situation of Bremen's housing market is evaluated from the view of a housing market actor. The parliamentary party "The Left" for instance could have given further insight to oppositional views to complement the statements of the governing senate. However, due to the good accessibility of especially documents from the administration of Bremen, many opinions of e.g. the Left party regarding the topic of PBSA could be obtained by reviewing these.

Furthermore, although it would have exceeded the limits of this work, a more thorough analysis of the other kinds of student housing in Germany would have benefitted this research. Many of the negative influences of PBSA on students turned out to be increased by the strained situation of the overall student housing market, thus the observations often included a comparison of PBSA with other student housing. A more detailed analysis of the private rented sector for instance would have provided a more solid basis for these comparisons. Therefore, a possible extension of this work would be the collection of

students housing biographies who live in public student housing or the private rented sector and examining the current quality of their housing pathways.

The scope of this work only covered a small section of all the interesting topic areas the relatively recent development of PBSA touches. Another possible focus would be the assessment of how PBSA impact the housing market of university cities in other topic areas than the ones touched in this work. For instance, an expert of the housing market of Bremen mentioned in an interview, which was conducted for this thesis, that PBSA might turn into a problem for the future housing market. Due to the typical factors of single room flat structures, the homogeneous residential groups and many small private owners, the managing and operating of these complexes could become rather difficult in the long run. Taking these factors and the quickly aging German population as well as the eventually also shrinking number of German students into account, the PBSA complexes are in the risk of becoming unwanted building structures 20 to 30 years from now (Arnold 2016). Exploring these processes, which are connected to PBSA and the future housing market, would be another relevant contribution to the research around PBSA. Possible further research beyond the analysis of the impacts of PBSA could also help develop better ways to integrate it into the housing market. This could be accomplished by investigating how administrations of university cities could work with private investors and keep control over the affordability or how PBSA could become part of a better mix of uses.

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