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Enrollment in higher educational institutions (HEI) has been steadily increasing across Canada, while on-campus accommodation provided by the HEI has plateaued. As a result, a majority of upper-year students now turn towards near-campus neighbourhoods for accommodation, displacing many long-term residents and occupying many low-income units. This process, by which residential neighbourhoods become dominated by student occupation, is known as studentification. Surprisingly, municipalities and HEIs collect little information about the locations of student dwellings. Fortunately, the Canadian Census does not clarify students living away from their parents' home as occupants of a dwelling, so we can assume that "unoccupied" dwelling units near an HEI are filled with students. This report estimates unoccupied dwellings as potential student dwellings to provide a picture of the geographies of studentification in eleven mid-sized university cites in Ontario.

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Is there a relation between the number of beds provided by the university and the changes seen in occupied dwellings?

Using Canadian census data,

CMAs showed the strongest patterns of studentification, with over 2500 units converting to student dwellings from 2006-2016. These CMAs in particular all had a single CT close to or containing the university that had high numbers of unoccupied units. There were also several CMAs where patterns of studentification were not as strong. The Oshawa, Peterborough, and Thunder Bay CMAs did not see a large conversion of units to unoccupied from 2006 to 2016. Colleges also seemed to influence studentification in the CTs surrounding them – the pattern is most visible in Mohawk College, in Hamilton and St. Lawrence College in Kingston. No positive relationship between university enrollment increases and the number of studentified units surrounding the HEI could be ascertained.

Greater Sudbury, Thunder Bay, and Windsor all saw population declines, which may have affected the accuracy of the results in these CMAs. The method may be capturing housing abandonment or foreclosures in these CMAs, highlighting the need for contextual analysis when applying this method. Another four CTs were found to be anomalous, all located next to Great Lakes, possibly alluding to the conversion of units to cottages or short-term rentals.

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