The purpose of this Master's Thesis is to examine foyers, a form of supported housing for disadvantaged young people. I concentrate on the English foyer-system, which emerged in Britain in the early 1990s. The study is above all a case study, which means that a significant part of the dissertation is devoted to description of the subject. This approach was selected mainly because foyers are a relatively new and unknown phenomenon and, thus, a thorough examination of the subject is valuable in itself. In order to present the subject in all of its variety, I chose not to use a single overarching theory that would aim to explain the variety between foyers. However, several theoretical propositions inter-related to the subject are discussed and used as a general framework. The principal methods used are semi-structured interviews and a small-scale survey. It should, however, be stressed that since the subject is fairly unknown and there are virtually no major scientific works on it, all literature and reports published by the British foyer movement have an important role in my examination.

The study begins by introducing the concept of foyers and the methods used in this study. The next part concentrates on the British society of 1980's and early 1990's and especially the changes in housing, unemployment and homelessness. The examination shows that due to these changes there was a growing a need for a foyer-type project. The following section examines hypotheses, which discuss homelessness, individualism and communities. The purpose is to show that the foyer-movement is connected to certain more abstract societal changes and that it - and especially its ethos - can be partially understood through them.

The final section is devoted to description of the subject and tracking down the main principles, which guide all foyers regardless of their apparent differences. I conclude the study by claiming that regardless of difficulties connected in particular with the ethos of foyers, the foyer-movement has been relatively successful in helping their residents in their transition from dependence to independence.