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Original Citation

Ramsden, Bryony J. (2018) LEARNING AND USAGE BEHAVIOUR IN TWO HIGHER EDUCATION LIBRARIES: HOW STUDENTS USE LIBRARIES AND HOW DESIGN INFLUENCES THEIR BEHAVIOUR, A CRITICAL ETHNOGRAPHY-BASED APPROACH. Doctoral thesis, University of Huddersfield.

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**LEARNING AND USAGE BEHAVIOUR IN TWO
HIGHER EDUCATION LIBRARIES: HOW
STUDENTS USE LIBRARIES AND HOW DESIGN
INFLUENCES THEIR BEHAVIOUR, A CRITICAL
ETHNOGRAPHY-BASED APPROACH**

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A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Huddersfield

December 2018

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Abstract

User behaviour in academic library spaces is an under researched topic in the UK, and that research which has been undertaken is predominantly based on quantitative research. There is still little understanding of use or behaviours that manifest within Higher Education (HE) library spaces, or of the way staff interpret use and behaviours. There is also little discussion of how much the design of the library influences use and behaviour, thus whether or not the library spaces are inclusive of a broad range of users. This thesis represents qualitative research addressing this gap.

Using a critical ethnographic based approach influenced by Feminist Standpoint Theory, observations and semi-structured interviews were carried out at two HE institutions across a period of two academic years over 2013-14 and 2014-15. The overarching research aim was to discover whether academic libraries provide a supportive and inclusive learning environment. This led to the following research questions:

- How do students behave in and use academic libraries?
 - What do students do when they visit the library?
 - How do students interact with each other when they are in the library? Do they support or disrupt each other's activities?
 - How do students interact with staff in the library? When in a study space, do students interact with staff to gain support/guidance in their library use, or are staff members seen primarily as rule enforcers?
- What impact does design have on use and perceptions of use?
 - When students use academic library spaces, does the design of the space help or hinder their chosen use?
 - Do students conform to the intended purpose of a space? If not, is the non-conformity of benefit or problematic to other users?
- How do staff understand and interpret the way students use the spaces in the library, and do they try to modify student behaviour as a result of that interpretation of use? Does modification of behaviour impact on:
 - The student-staff relationship (will students refer to staff for help or feel discouraged from doing so?)
 - The ways students use or situate themselves in spaces (is their use modified to match staff requirements or does it differ from staff expectations? Does modification of behaviour by staff impede the levels of students' productivity and learning?)
- Do differing perceptions of appropriate use create inequalities between students, and between students and staff?

Addressing the research aim and these questions offers a better understanding of how academic libraries can be used and, in some cases, manipulated to the benefit and detriment of different library users. Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was used to draw out themes of patterns of use (groups and individual) and how they could be gendered in representation of power over other users and the space itself. Themes also indicated discrimination.

There are a number of key findings from the research. There are several groups of people for whom the library is important or essential: in particular, people who attend university under the Widening Participation bracket, including mature students (usually female) returning to studying, need library space and technology because of lack of resources at home. The spaces studied are designed to be supportive of a number of study activities, but often also encouraged or allowed exclusive disruptive behaviours to manifest. There are incidents of some staff racializing behaviour at one institute in the study, whether consciously/intentionally or not, primarily influenced by problematic behaviours regularly requiring policing. Staff interpretations of larger group use (i.e. more than six to seven

group members) in the library were also racialized. I conclude that the library is both inclusive and exclusive via behaviours of its users, through space design, and through staff interpretations of use.

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Dedications and Acknowledgements

There are many people who have supported me on the road to the completing this thesis. Firstly, my thanks go to my supervisors, Professor Christine Jarvis and Dr Liz Bennett, whose advice, patience and support throughout the last seven years have been essential.

To my partner, Dave, who has supported me, and dealt with the joys and pains of a PhD as if he were undertaking it himself. I could not have reached this point without him.

To my friends, Becky and Kathrine, who have supplied me with far more chocolate, beer and spirits than necessary, plus, on occasion, useful advice.

To my mother who has never failed to ask how my research was going during every phone call, and my brother, who has always known never to ask me how my research was going.

To my grandmother, rest in peace, who would not have understood what her only granddaughter was trying to do, but I hope would have been proud of me anyway.

To all the members of the Facebook group "PostgRAD study gang: school of hard thinkin'": without you all I would never have made it to this point!

Lastly, to my cat, who has unfailingly found ways to disrupt my writing whenever I have worked at home.

List of abbreviations

BA: British Asian i.e. Asians with a South Asian heritage of Bangladesh, India and Pakistan

FST: Feminist Standpoint Theory

HE: Higher education

NSS: National Student Survey

PGR: postgraduate researcher i.e. those who are attending university as an untaught research student, usually at PhD level.

TEF: Teaching Excellence Framework

WP: Widening Participation

Chapter 1: Introduction

When I first began my career in libraries, I developed an interest in how people use library spaces, what they actually do when they visit them. As my career has progressed, and as the design of library buildings has developed to create statement higher education (HE) libraries, I've seen patterns emerge in the kind of support I was providing in the various roles I've held. Students would ask for help using computers and printers, and were usually female. Passing observations would suggest students were manipulating spaces to suit their needs rather than seeking out space designed to support them. When a chance came up to study use of the library I worked at as a library assistant, which had just been refurbished, I applied and was appointed research assistant. The research was short term, and developed into primarily quantitative data collection, but I saw that new research was being published in the US using ethnographic methods to collect data in college libraries and reporting intriguing results. On completion of the research, I was eager to learn more about UK usage patterns, about what kind of people use HE library space, and whether library space design was inadvertently creating problems for specific groups.

1.1 Format of the thesis

This section of the thesis introduces various concepts relating to recent developments in and changes to HE throughout the last few years, and the impact this may have had on academic library design and use. The following chapter discusses research on library usage, particularly in an HE context and using my chosen method of critical ethnographic-based methods for data collection. I then move on to discuss my theoretical approach to the methodology in chapters 3 and 4, specifically a feminist standpoint-based approach, and the research questions, moving on to look at using ethnographic based methods for data collection and thematic analysis for interrogating the data. The settings for the data collection are described, with information on the nature of the furniture and layouts of the spaces, as well as the nature of the data collected in each setting. I then move on to the three analysis chapters, discussing the nature of power, the need for appropriate space for specific groups, and patterns that arise in usage. Chapter 5 presents the patterns of use that appear in the settings, primarily group and individual use, and how both user types engage in representations of their own power. I also discuss whether library design has any influence over use and power dynamics, and deal with the concept of ownership of library space and where it can develop from. In chapter 6 I focus specifically on people who need the library space because of lack of resources and facilities available to them elsewhere. I also discuss

how the marketisation of Higher Education has potentially influenced student perceptions of ownership, power, and what constitutes appropriate use of library space. Chapter 7 addresses user behaviours at Institute 1 that staff have racialized, and the issues arising from the racializing process, as well as one usage pattern that data from Institute 2 indicates is not necessarily one linked to race. Finally, in the conclusion (chapter 8), I discuss what implications the data may have in terms of design provision and ensuring library visitors are sufficiently catered for in a fair and supportive manner, with statements on the limitations of the research, and possible routes for further research.

1.2 The changing world of Higher Education

When I submitted my research proposal in the summer of 2010, HE was in a very different position, undergoing rapid changes, and has continued to change throughout this research. I registered for my PhD at the same time that the results of the Browne Review (Browne, 2010) were published, and given my professional experience and research I had been involved in (Ramsden, 2011), I had already seen that student behaviours and perceptions of HE were changing. The Browne Review aided development of further monetisation and marketisation of the HE system, concluding on the basis of interviewing a small percentage of various stakeholders that potential applicants to university would not be put off by higher fees should the loan and grant system prove fair. However, prior to the publication of the Browne Review, the NUS expressed concerns that people from poorer or harder to reach groups would be “priced out” of attending university (National Union of Students, 2009). The universities I have collected data from have both long engaged with widening participation practices, and are known for encouraging applications and attendance from disadvantaged groups and those who would find it more difficult to access university, such as mature women with families. It was the mature women who were particularly noticeable in my professional role, who asked for the most support and struggled the most with using library resources, including technology provisions. In 2013 the announcement of a removal of student number caps in 2015, and an emphasis on funding for science and engineering courses raised further concerns on whether the funding of HE was biased against the arts and humanities; coupled with the drop of grade requirements for entry, universities were seen in competition with each other (Ramesh, 2013). The changes saw an increase in 18 year olds applying for full time courses, and from Widening Participation applicants, but a drop in part-time applications was seen partially attributable to concerns mature students have over funding, debt and support from their employers (Lowe, 2016). The drop of bursaries for courses like nursing has had a similar impact on student applications, although rates of acceptance are relatively unchanged (Royal College of Nursing, 2018).

The newest concern amongst current and potential students is over the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and the Higher Education and Research Act 2017. The Act was passed in April 2017, pushed through parliament prior to a snap general election in June of the same year after a tumultuous political period, where the UK voted to leave the European Union leading to concerns about European and international students applying for studying in the UK. The House of Lords attempted to revoke a section on students counting towards net migration figures but failed to do so, leading to the fears that students outside the UK originally hoping to apply to study in the UK will reject that option (although there has been an increase in applications in 2018 compared to a drop for each of the preceding two years (Adams, 2018)), and that international/EU staff will leave the country (Buchan, 2018; Weale & O'Carroll, 2017). The TEF draws its core data from Teaching Quality (TQ), Learning Environment (LE), and Student Outcomes and Learning Gain (SO) (Higher Education Funding Council for England, 2016, p. 23). However, some of this data utilises scores from the National Student Survey (NSS), a tool already disclaimed as potentially unreliable and problematic in itself (Grove, 2017; National Union of Students, 2017). It is hoped that the whole set of metrics will create a wider, more nuanced demonstration of the quality of an institution (Grove, 2017), but the TEF links in to a more economic perspective of measuring quality. As Busch suggests, "it is easy to measure the percentage of students who graduate within five years but much more difficult to measure what they have learned." (Busch, 2017, p. 46). The TEF is designed to allow applicants to choose which university best suits their needs, and this in itself is a problematic decision to make: students may not know what course or teaching style suits their own requirements until they attend, and the TEF metrics will not contain any amount of data that would inform them of that. Students will only discover whether the teaching and course is entirely appropriate to them when they attend university, and are still at risk of dropping out in the early stages of the course. Nevertheless, the TEF, linked with the proviso that universities will be able to justify fee charges according to their ranking, has scope to lead to a change in what applicants want to achieve from their degree.

The implementation of higher tuition fees and the reduction of financial support for anyone who may have not been able to study without bursaries or similar funding means that the student body is changing. Busch (2017) points out the Browne Review (Browne, 2010) was a clear signifier of HE moving from education for furthering society to education to further economic gain, "...seeking a monetary return in the form of higher salaries. The more debt they incur, the more obsessed with monetary rewards of a university degree they will be." (Busch, 2017, p. 53). Since I enrolled, the NUS has

raised concerns over 'laddism' (defined in one form as behaviour by young male students embracing a culture of alcohol and misogynistic 'banter' (Phipps, 2013, p. 6)), sexism and personal safety at university (National Union of Students, 2015; Phipps, 2013), and academic staff have experienced problems dealing with 'lad culture' in teaching (C. Jackson, Dempster, & Pollard, 2015)¹. Much of this change in behaviour has been attributed to the monetisation and marketisation of HE (Phipps, 2013; Phipps & Young, 2015). The changes in the funding of HE have supported a feeling amongst successful applicants that they are entitled to certain provisions and rights, and in many cases this feeling is appropriate: fees are costly, so services and support should meet expectations. However, a consumer-led marketised education encourages and increases certain inappropriate and undesirable behaviours related to that sense of entitlement, including the culture of laddism, and behaviours that manifest in abusing and taking 'rights' to the extreme: 'I am paying £9,000 a year to have access to this service, this building, this resource. Why shouldn't I be able to behave how I want, take what I want? Why should I have to pay library fines when I already pay so much?' (Temple, Callender, Grove, & Kersh, 2014). HE is now an investment where education prepares students "to be competitive in the global marketplace" (Giroux, 2014, p. 17), where spending money on fees is akin investing on the stock market, expecting returns (Busch, 2017, p. 49).

In short, HE has changed significantly since I began my research, and my data and analysis have mirrored that change. The thesis and research have been evolving creatures, as the language and behaviours manifest in the data demonstrate the continuing evolution of the university environment. What began as curiosity regarding behaviours and the influence of design on those behaviours has morphed into concerns as to whether some students are behaving in ways that exclude others because of that neoliberal 'empowerment' and entitlement, and whether the environment can influence that behaviour. The research has developed into a measure of how students, in a changing HE environment, use and ideally benefit from library provisions, and that the changing attitudes towards HE as a purchased commodity are not problematic or to the detriment of students using library spaces. Library space should be inclusive and supportive of a variety of student needs, varied as they might be, and the research presented here addresses whether the libraries studied are indeed inclusive and supportive of their users.

¹ Laddism and similar issues are discussed in more detail in chapter 6

1.3 Academic library design and the changing face of HE

Library design has always been an important consideration for universities, and more recently, libraries have become part of the statement architecture that helps generate interest in choosing to study at a university. Boone (2003) suggests that as courses are modified and marketed to reflect changing requirements of the economy and thus students, so too are university libraries. The goal is to achieve something visually stimulating while supporting a wide variety of study needs, and libraries can be different but share a great deal of similar features in their choice of soft furnishings, rows of computers, consistent colour themes. Problems arise when architects and interior designers are not familiar with what usage patterns are undertaken and thus how (un)successful what they include in their designs actually is in practice. When I was working on a piece of post-occupancy² research before I began this PhD (Ramsden, 2011), a colleague reported an interior designer who had contributed to the design of one of the new spaces moving a wheeled chair as it was 'in the wrong place': the designer had envisaged it remaining in one spot in spite of its moveable adaptable nature, the student had simply taken advantage of being able to move it. As my colleague suggested, why include moveable furniture in a design and expect it to remain static? Another design feature frequently found in library space (and HE building generally), but almost as frequently lamented by its visitors, is the atrium. They are utilised to attempt to create light, and function as visually engaging (Joint Information Services Committee, 2006), but create problems with sound and temperature in particular: noise and heat carry easily through to the top of the atrium creating disruption and discomfort (Lanclos, 2014). Accordingly, as will be seen in chapter 2, research has attempted to assess the quality of these (re)designs from the perspective of various stakeholders, looking for appropriate working space for both library staff and visitors, for where problems may arise such as with staff opinions of purpose or appropriate usage patterns clashing with students using the space as suits their needs.

Historically, libraries have portrayed a range of messages. They communicate a church-like/monastic sanctuary of learning aided by rules of silent use (Boone, 2003; Eigenbrodt, 2013). Sometimes they simultaneously provide meeting or group use spaces, indicating a social learning perspective of libraries that many are trying to move towards (Childs, Matthews, & Walton, 2013; Eigenbrodt, 2013; Hunley & Schaller, 2009; Montgomery, 2014). In the process of attempting to communicate varying messages in one place, libraries are trying to bring in and cater to a wide variety of student needs

² Post-occupancy research refers to a building being redesigned/redecorated and then researched for success of the changes.

and uses, which may or may not create conflicting messages if designers and library staff providing the briefing do not carefully consider the impact of these combinations (Joint Information Services Committee, 2006). As Boone suggests, "The emerging library is no longer simply a monastery full of books and journals for scholars but marketplaces competing for clients by offering different arrays of services." (Boone, 2003, p. 358).

Library design trends have shifted aiming to represent the change in HE teaching styles, most recently incorporating social learning spaces such as general social areas, group spaces and more shared space overall (Childs et al., 2013). The most recent concept has been the learning (or sometimes known as information) commons, the development of what is essentially a space where it primarily hosts a variety of spaces with technology to allow its visitors to learn and study, usually with reduced or no physical texts, splitting views of whether the importance of physical or virtual space in libraries should take priority (Childs et al., 2013; Lippincott, 2006). To help inform the increase in developing new HE spaces to reflect teaching changes, Jisc produced guidance on how to ensure learning space is designed to be flexible, creative and supportive amongst their promoted design ethos, referring to several "learning centres" as case study examples of good practice (Joint Information Services Committee, 2006).

The library (no matter its name or design) as a building has reconfigured its message and ethos, has developed into a space with the intention of being associated by its users with studying: even if they are not used for resources, they are associated with learning (Childs et al., 2013). Architects and designers have embraced the process of creating new modern spaces away from the traditional to communicate concepts of comfort, of stimulation, using furniture that would be more often seen in a café or Apple store. Indeed, students have reported they receive better service from retailers than from their academic library, unfavourably comparing the ease and speed of service in Starbucks with that of their library desk (Delcore et al., 2009). Moving in the direction of providing services in the same way as a stylised retailer encourages further perceptions of libraries as commercial, but it also creates a library that functions as a home from home, as comfort is catered for: the library is trying to answer what coffee shops appear to have provided students for some time in their provision of free Wi-Fi, refreshments and sofas. HE libraries are attempting to cater for students as consumers. Because HE requires funding outside of the government support, they have had to embrace a commercial perspective to answer the needs and requirements of a marketised culture. They are endeavouring to discard the perception that a library communicates as church-like, which can easily deter some visitors with its reverential and potentially oppressive atmosphere, towards a space that is welcoming and inviting, somewhere that is easy to

use for prolonged periods. Discarding an atmosphere that might frighten some students away from using it is a positive action to take, but the risk is that HE libraries can deter students who need the traditional 'library as church' to help them engage in studying. The answer many HE libraries are taking is to try and create a design that caters for a large variety of needs, relying on designers and student feedback to lead changes in facilities and services.

Research into HE libraries has usually involved collecting a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data, but where it often falls short is an understanding of actual usage patterns: usage data stem from interviews or focus groups rather than examining what is actually happening in the spaces. This is where ethnographic techniques have become popular, utilising observations and interview techniques that are very open in order to collect data that would otherwise be missed, forgotten, assumed by the interviewee to be boring or not of relevance and so missed out of conversations with researchers.

1.4 Thesis purpose and contribution

This research examines user behaviour in two HE libraries at two separate universities, utilising ethnographic-based techniques to study behaviours within the space. Multiple, unaffiliated universities have not yet been studied in combination in the UK. Additionally, a critical perspective is used with the application of an approach influenced by Feminist Standpoint Theory (FST). A FST-based approach is used to examine power relations between inhabitants, between staff and students, and to consider key groups of students using the library space who are insufficiently catered for. The marketisation of HE discussed above can change perceptions of how students, in the payment of fees, 'own' what they pay for, including study spaces and services provided by the library, which can play into power dynamics between library users, potentially excluding others from using facilities. Library space design and its influence over its inhabitants is also considered.

The thesis contributes the following:

- Ethnographic data on patterns of behaviour, of group users, of individual users, and a representation of gendered patterns of power and (dis)empowerment throughout the analysis chapters (5 to 7);
- That library space can sometimes influence behaviour both in inclusive and exclusive ways (i.e. that support multiple separate library users, or prevent them from successfully using the library), but in the context of negative user behaviours, has little to no influence over inhabitants. Library users will use the space as they feel best to complete their tasks whether their purpose matches

the design intentions or not. These findings are discussed throughout the thesis (chapters 5 to 7);

- That some staff perceptions of use at Institute 1 are racialized. Some of these perceptions are based on specific incidents where students behaved in a manner that potentially endangered other library users or made them feel intimidated. Data from Institute 2 implies the racialization of some behaviours (specifically related to the creation and membership of large groups) is unfounded. This issue is addressed in chapter 7.

In this chapter I have introduced how I became interested in library space use, and how the changing nature of HE has seen a shift in student behaviour and perceptions of their university provisions. I will now move on to detail the current literature on HE libraries, and to what extent and depth it examines library use and design considerations. The literature review will identify gaps that the research presented in this thesis addresses.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Here I will detail the current research based in and on HE libraries, with a focus on the increase in library space evaluation and the methods utilised. I will discuss the literature in the context of the current competitive nature of HE institutions and design features in library spaces, and the link between design intention and usage. I will then shift focus to the nature of methods used to evaluate HE library spaces, narrowing down the scope to qualitative research. I will examine the relatively recent interest in utilising ethnographic/anthropological approaches to study usage patterns and to better understand student study practices in the context of their day. I describe how library research is starting to take a critical approach in the US, specifically focussing on race and mirroring research in a broader HE context. I identify how critical approaches to studying HE library space and use, which can offer insights into specific user needs and the (un)successful provision of library services and spaces, are uncommon, and how my own research fills this gap in knowledge.

Research into formal learning spaces is common, with post-occupancy evaluation of newly designed classrooms and lecture theatres featuring heavily in the literature. Hunley and Schaller (2009) attribute the increase in this type of evaluation to a change in the approach to designing learning spaces and pedagogical approaches, with grand architectural statement campus developments, and moves towards more utilisation of technology within formal learning space. Naturally there is a need to ensure money is well spent when investing in new builds and refurbishments (as well as teaching and course content), but in the UK the need has become more pressing, with changes to student evaluation of HE provisions when the National Student Survey (NSS) was introduced in 2005 and the first introduction of tuition fees in the late 1990s. HE has moved towards improvements intended to impact on student evaluations as well as teaching quality (G. D. A. Brown, Wood, Ogden, & Maltby, 2015; Havergal, 2015; Sabri, 2013; Temple et al., 2014).

The Joint Information Systems Council (JISC)³ and the UK Higher Education Space Management Group (SMG)⁴ have both produced recommendations for design of library and HE learning spaces, primarily providing case studies as examples (Joint Information

³ As they were on the publication of guidance on learning space design. They have since changed to Jisc (with no acronym)

⁴ SMG was formed in 2002 specifically to support and advise UK HE institutions on managing their space, and were later involved in a project supported by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) (who also funded it), Scottish Funding Council (SFC), Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) and the Department for Employment and Learning (in Northern Ireland) (DELNI)(UK Higher Education Space Management Group, 2006b)

Services Committee, 2006; UK Higher Education Space Management Group, 2006a). JISC talk about how “learning spaces should become a physical representation of the institution's vision and strategy for learning – responsive, inclusive, and supportive of attainment by all.” (Joint Information Services Committee, 2006, p. 2). They discuss the rise of the learning centre, a new breed of library integrating a variety of support services, learning and social spaces, cafes and computer areas, silent study and collaborative areas, using zoning and furniture design to define what kind of area usage is expected. However, they warn against creating spaces that cannot be self-regulated: if the design purpose is not clear and provides too many messages about intended use, users cannot be expected to comply to and respect the overarching design ethos and thus the design has failed. Self-regulating spaces are created from designs that influence behaviour to match the purpose of the space e.g. silent spaces will be used as such because the influence of design matches the intended purpose and the rules designated to the space. Where multipurpose designs (as discussed by JISC (2006) above) may become problematic is when the space layout encourages too many purposes that clash, causing disruption and discomfort for visitors, rather than guiding usage to particular patterns that allow varying concurrent uses. This clash is well demonstrated by Bedwell and Banks (2013) who reported observational data that showed group study tables could encourage collaboration between students, but also lead to aggressive behaviour from other occupants when the tables were located in quiet study areas but used for discussion. During development of spaces, emphasis is placed on involving all stakeholders in the design process to ensure not just requirements of a variety of users are met, but expectations of the intended space use are made clear to those operating in or overseeing them (Hunter, 2006; Joint Information Services Committee, 2006; Oblinger, 2006). Users of HE libraries are diverse; they represent different genders, races, ethnicities, and attendance modes, and have a broad mix of home responsibilities. A diverse population will likely have diverse, complex requirements, and to understand these requirements brings about a need to use approaches that are inclusive, that help develop an understanding of a population's needs.

2.1 The changing nature of academic libraries

To help develop a context as to why there is a need for more research into library space use, a discussion of the progression of how academic libraries have changed over the last few years is useful. Libraries have been reimagined as several varieties over the last decade or so. The re-naming of libraries as ‘learning centres’ is a way of rebranding libraries directly linked to their changing provisions, shifting away from a focus on books on the shelves to online resources and a variety of uses beyond reading (Daniels, Darch, & Jager, 2010). Rebranding has also led to the new generation of library spaces and

other informal learning environments linked to libraries in the form of information or learning commons (IC/LC). Commons design places an emphasis on technology rich spaces, often with no physical study or reference materials such as books or journals (but as a result, commons are usually contained within or near library/learning centre facilities). Commons spaces vary greatly in the provisions they offer, ranging from small, self-contained computer areas with additional software, printing and technical support available, to varieties of non-library, non-teaching spaces designed to provide a mixture of high technology in conjunction with individual or collaborative learning (although some research suggests students prefer solo working away from Commons spaces (Catalano, Paretta, McGivney, & King, 2014)), to those connected with library materials in high demand incorporating furniture that encourages the use of both physical and electronic resources. Often, if contained within new builds, they will incorporate statement architecture and furniture, such as an atrium spanning the full height of the building, easily (re)movable options for creating spaces (inflatable group study pods and movable walls have featured in some designs: see JISC (2006)), and multi-purpose desks (such as desks that flip open to provide access to a computer).

It is important to ensure new design ideas are formulated to create an atmosphere that students can study successfully within, and thus feel connected to and engaged with their university library. However, as we shall see below, until comparatively recently assessment of academic library design (be the design new or not) primarily depended on quantitative research, without consideration of how to learn about student behaviours or interpretation of the spaces. I shall demonstrate that qualitative data is the key to learning about library use and while quantitative data can be useful, it does not provide a sufficiently comprehensive view of what kind of practices (and why) are undertaken within library spaces.

2.2 Evaluating learning spaces and design impact

Assessment of a space to measure its success and influence on its users is important in order to gain an understanding of how a space works and how it can be improved, and assessment of educational spaces is key for HE institutions to ensure they provide spaces fit for purpose. Evaluation of formal learning spaces has for some time regularly featured in discussing whether the space design influences directed learning behaviour, but discussion is limited in terms of how much detail it examines the design in, in tandem with inhabitants' use. There is some discrepancy in the literature as to whether academic libraries can be considered formal or informal learning spaces with definitions varying. Those who include libraries in the informal definition are in the majority: Montgomery refers to formal learning spaces as classrooms, placing libraries firmly in

the informal bracket (2014, p. 70), while Hunter and Cox refer to libraries as a formal learning environment in contrast to cafes and other social environments (2014, p. 34). Harrop and Turpin define informal learning spaces as “non-discipline specific spaces frequented by both staff and students for self-directed learning activities” (2013, p. 59), which implies that spaces can be flexible and switch between becoming a formal and informal space: should a classroom for non-discipline specific use be booked by students for a study group, does that make it an informal learning space for that period of time? For the purposes of this research and literature review, I define formal learning spaces as classrooms and lecture theatres when learning is being directed by a qualified individual such as a teacher, tutor or lecturer. This definition still leaves the space open to fluidity of meaning: libraries can contain rooms used for teaching purposes where formal learning is undertaken, while classrooms in teaching departments can still be utilised for informal learning practices, but this definition is accepting of that fluidity of space meaning, and library spaces will be predominantly informal, while classrooms remain predominantly formal in nature. This definition also accepts that practice and use of a space can define it at that point of practice/use.

The success of a formal space can depend as much on the tutor as on the space design itself. McArthur (2015) looked at formal ‘instructional’ learning environments used for teaching purposes in HE, considering gender of students, learning environments and the instructor themselves as analysis factors in a survey given to students at the end of a semester of a public speaking class. Students were within one of three specific classrooms of different types, with each classroom split into sections: a traditional lecture style classroom, a room set up as lecture style but with movable desks that could be reconfigured into different arrangements, and a classroom with round tables and wheeled chairs. The rooms had varying types of lighting. McArthur found that students perceived their learning as more consistently “learning in substantial and meaningful ways” (2015, p. 14) when they studied with tutors within the formal lecture style classroom than in other spaces with tutors attempting to experiment with teaching approaches or using traditional methods in less traditional spaces (where the space and teaching styles were incongruent). McArthur attributes the students’ perception of consistency to the possibility of one of, or a combination of, three traits demonstrated by instructors. First, the tutors were forced into a consistent level of teaching practice and thus learning outcomes because of the forced restrictive nature of the space. Second, the tutors were highly experienced in teaching in the traditional environment. Third, the tutors were comfortable in/familiar with the traditional space. With increased flexibility in the environment came an increase in inconsistency of learning outcome success which was attributed to an increased emphasis on the capacity of the tutor to use and design

classes that suit the space: staff who were able to adapt to the change in space saw better learning outcomes, while those who had difficulty with using the non-traditional rooms were at risk of seeing lower outcomes.

Assessment of school classrooms has resulted in similar findings: classrooms and school buildings overall can influence learning success and behaviours if they are sufficiently utilised by the teachers, but poor facilities and upkeep will impact on comfort levels and thus on learning capacity (Könings, Brand-Gruwel, & van Merriënboer, 2005; Sztejnberg & Finch, 2006; Uline, Tschannen-Moran, & Wolsey, 2009; Zhang & Barrett, 2010). Formal learning spaces are thus well-researched in terms of the interplay between design intentions, learning outcomes and user behaviour/experiences, but what of academic libraries? An overview of HE library space assessment now follows, demonstrating how prevalent the use of quantitative techniques are in library space research.

2.3 Evaluating academic libraries

Having discussed the context of formal space assessment, I now move on to focussing on research on HE library space and services. Most research in this field utilises quantitative methods, but do they produce sufficient data to gain an understanding of user needs and opinions? Assessment of provisions in HE libraries is common, with survey focus often placed on elements such as student research processes, librarian support, frequency and purpose of visit, and preference for space (Beckers, van der Voordt, & Dewulf, 2016a; Cha & Kim, 2015; K. Hall & Kapa, 2015; Haug, 2008; Head & Eisenberg, 2011; Hults, 1992; Kayongo & Helm, 2010; Lee & Schottenfeld, 2014; Wong, 2009). Data from survey tools can be used to gather information that leads to improvements such as increasing staffing numbers at key times, or assessing how popular computer labs are in comparison to reading areas. Surveys provide the opportunity to gather data in a simple, quick way for participants, meaning that libraries can minimise costs to data collection and staff time but also have usable data. Some universities use the US-based LibQUAL+ survey tool to collect data (Association of Research Libraries, n.d.), a web based survey specifically designed for libraries which uses scaled numbered ratings to gauge opinions on the library. Responses are analysed by a data centre in the US ("What is LibQual+?," 2017), meaning that library staff can obtain data and information from the survey (potentially with very high numbers of respondents) without needing to process it themselves. A section within the survey

refers to 'Library as place'⁵ while other sections provide options for short comments (Stuart & Association of Research Libraries, 2008, p. 7). However, LibQUAL+ does not collect any demographic data in any detail (Elteto, Jackson, & Lim, 2008, p. 329) meaning the data cannot be attributed to any specific user groups: if data cannot be linked to a specific user group, their needs cannot be sufficiently understood and gaps in service/space provision may not be successfully filled.

The survey costs money for the library/university, and while it is perceived by some as a high quality analytical tool for understanding both library use and non-use (Asemi, Kazempour, & Ashrafi Rizi, 2010; McCaffrey, 2013), it is focussed on quantitative data with few opportunities for students to submit qualitative responses. Heath (2007) used LibQUAL+ in tandem with other surveys designed by their university library to learn more about usage practices and student perceptions of what their library was for, discovering the library was used more for a meeting place and study location than for access to resources. The combination of the established survey tool in LibQUAL+ and additional surveys can be a good way of personalising and expanding on what data is retrieved, and as a starting point for evidence based practice in the evaluation and (re)design of library space. Heath used the data to modify library facilities to reflect the emphasis on the library as an environment, installing a coffee shop while ensuring quiet and silent spaces were maintained: Heath reported "unanimous student support" and "no complaints from undergraduates" about the modifications to services (Heath, 2007, p. 15). However, Heath's use of surveys lacks detailed data on what kind of usage patterns manifested prior to and after changes were made, thus missing the understanding of what behaviours were supported prior to and after the changes were made. Different groups of students may use the new space in different ways, and a 'no complaints' approach does not necessarily mean students were happy with the modifications, or indeed felt comfortable and happy in the new environment. The data collection approach also risks students experiencing 'survey fatigue' i.e. filling surveys with minimal response or with speed to counteract becoming overloaded with requests for feedback. Relying purely on surveys to understand student use of libraries can answer some simple questions, such as providing information on frequency of use, favourite spaces, and general satisfaction levels, but will not deal sufficiently with details or the nuances of behavioural patterns that qualitative data can provide, of what happens in library spaces when they are used.

⁵ Library as place is a concept that modifies the idea of a library from a space housing resources to one where people interact with each other and the space around them, giving meaning to the environment.

Surveys, even when allowing for open questions, can be problematic in a number of ways. If compensation for completion is involved (such as prizes or coffee vouchers) participants may complete them quickly without contemplating their answers. Similarly, completion may be rushed because of the participants' scheduling commitments. Answers can be skewed according to the participants' current situation and recent experiences: if they have just been asked to be quiet while using the library and resent being policed, they may respond more negatively. Open questions may only be answered as briefly as possible, if at all. Closed questions have little flexibility and require careful construction to ensure they are easy to understand without limiting responses too much or creating such a lengthy survey that participants are deterred from responding. Additionally, surveys can only reach the people willing to respond to them: while this can be said of many research tools and methods relying on volunteers, qualitative based research methods allow more scope for learning about people who may not participate in research otherwise.

Other quantitative based library assessment often utilises seat counts to study how successful a space may or may not be. Seat counts can be useful to assess how furnishings may or may not be used: at Huddersfield, use of soft furnishings was low, with armchairs only at 4-31% capacity at any one time (Ramsden, 2011). As a result, some chairs were moved (as they were originally placed in silent areas) with many removed. The research was primarily designed to assess the appropriateness of the methods employed, but provided some insight into how students perceived the Library as 'the place to go' to achieve study goals. Unfortunately counts like this do little to create understanding of why these usage preferences exist without supporting data obtained using other methods. Seat counts can tell you that the space is occupied, which may lead to changes in the library layout to increase that kind of space/resource combination availability, such as modify a library to include more silent computer labs if they are in high demand. Where data like seat counts fall short is when it cannot tell you that a space is occupied because there is no room elsewhere, or because the computer rooms in a department are closed that day, or because a student can't afford their own computer/laptop and need to use the library to be able to complete their assignment. Seat counts have, however, been used as a preliminary tool or component of multi-method research to aid further more in-depth studies of what kind of study behaviour is undertaken in what kind of space. Given and Leckie (2003) found that public library patrons primarily used tables, most frequently for reading but sometimes writing. They also observed what they considered low usage of computers (13-15%), low because of the emphasis on public libraries and their role in providing access to IT resources for those with no computer at home. May and Swabey (2015) found that using seat counts

in tandem with a questionnaire meant they could develop a better understanding of their academic library's user preferences. They discovered the library was heavily used for desktop computers and laptops to undertake academic work, and that student demand for some spaces was sometimes high enough to create a perception that the entire library was full (rather than it just being that particular space they were visiting). However the researchers admit that the method of monitoring seat occupancy and occupant activity was limited and "superficial" and meant they could not develop a full understanding of student perceptions of and attitudes to the library, and that ethnographic methods would have provided more information (2015, pp. 774–775). This method of research, unless used alongside other more qualitative methods, still produces large quantities of quantitative data, and has limitations on the amount of understanding of the 'why' of that usage behaviour and space/seat selection. However, it can be considerably more informative than other quantitative data collection methods purely because of the consideration of activities undertaken within a library space. My own research addresses the need to assess what actually occurs within library space over a prolonged period, rather than brief snapshots of data.

If quantitative methods are considered necessary for certain data elements (for example by management who might need quantitative information for reports to other departments or for funding), then to use them alongside qualitative methods can provide more revealing results. To compare and assess consistency and quality of data from qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, Montgomery (2011) developed a mixed method approach derived from ethnographic methods to investigate space use and preference in HE libraries. They approached observations as a quantitative technique, using the method to count the number of occurrences of activities (such as what equipment they were using to what purpose) and where students were, collecting data within one particular floor of the building, as it was the busiest of their floors and could potentially house a wide variety of uses (including a cafe, reference desk, computers and a mix of solo and group work facilities). For qualitative data they utilised design charettes⁶ with students who were asked to design a floor of the library as their ideal space design within 10 minutes, with a discussion carried out after the design was completed. Data collected from observations demonstrated nearly half of students worked alone (48%), most students working in the library overall were engaged in academic activity (64%), and some students (no numbers detailed) were observed using a laptop while also using a PC and other devices. However, as the quantitative data did not provide details of why these activities and usage patterns (i.e. working solo vs in

⁶ A meeting where participants focus specifically on planning and designing something or solving a specific problem through a design process.

groups) manifest, the charettes helped supplement the observation data, and led to feedback on the importance of privacy and space around individuals to help them have room to work, as well as confirming students' need to work with multiple devices/tools, and their preference for solo, silent/quiet working. Groups of two or more people in the observations were seen to be more frequent at certain times of the day, and interest in group areas for some participants in the charettes mirrored that preference, with complaints about the group areas becoming claimed quickly. Students also commented during design discussions that support services were difficult to locate, data that would not have been possible to derive from the observation counts. Montgomery concluded that the methods complemented each other successfully, with each method providing unique data as well as confirming results from the alternative method, but was overt in representing this research as an intended prequel to more extensive ethnographic research: where there were gaps in the data on understanding student space preferences and study practices, further research was planned to gain more insight, particularly in non-users of the library.

While Montgomery's (2011) research does demonstrate a successful use of a mixed method approach, the fact that both methods are derived from ethnography, and the quantitative data collection stems from a method that can also be used for qualitative data collection implies that the observations can be adopted for deeper and more revealing data collection. Using observations for numbers is useful, but without the supporting data from qualitative techniques, does not help gain insight and understanding of the data, or knowledge of how behaviours manifest and interact or conflict with other behaviours in the same or different spaces. Additionally, Montgomery's research does not consider the demographics of people using or not using the library, whether or not there are patterns amongst specific user groups, where my own research does. However, the use of ethnographic methods here is an example of how the method(s) have become increasingly of interest amongst some library researchers in recent years, as I shall now demonstrate.

2.4 Qualitative research in academic libraries

Here I will detail how ethnographic methods in particular have been utilised within library research to draw out data that would have otherwise been difficult to obtain, as well as where the gaps in existing research are. Ethnography is the study of cultures and/or people, incorporating a cluster of methods primarily providing in-depth qualitative data, including observation and interviewing techniques that produce detailed descriptions of behaviour and actions (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Ethnography is still comparatively underused in academic library research, which may be linked to lack of

time or funding for staff to conduct research: should a library carry out its own ethnographic research the method often involves investment in both. Should a library choose to hire someone to carry out research for them, there are costs involved. There is also the possibility of lack of experience in using the methods being a deterrent: if the person collecting data is not a practised researcher, there may be concerns raised by management or even the researcher themselves as to whether they can successfully collect and analyse data to a level library management find useful. As my research progressed, interest in using ethnography in library research has increased on a practitioner level as part of the UX (User eXperience) approach, with conferences aiding librarians in discovering and experimenting in using the method in smaller scale research⁷. However, published research is still predominantly outside the UK, and often based in public libraries (Aabø & Audunson, 2012; Aabø, Audunson, & Vårheim, 2010; Applegate, 2008; Becker, 2011; Carlsson, 2011; Given & Leckie, 2003; Huvila, 2013; Mandel, 2010; McKechnie, 2000; McKechnie, Dixon, Fear, & Pollak, 2006; Mcquaid, Goel, & Mcmanus, 2003).

Interestingly, in spite of its recent rediscovery ethnography is not a new method to be employed in library research. Indeed, in one of the earliest pieces of ethnographic library research, Bourdieu⁸ and de Saint Martin (1994) in the 1960s investigated the attitudes of visitors to the University of Lille's library and how they perceived its services. The researchers saw the Library as somewhere that could provide materials unavailable elsewhere as well as a place for the varying study activities of its student body. Utilising survey data of 880 students (with a second shorter survey to validate responses later in the year of 255 students) they noted that most students would visit the Library to study, whether they used library-provided resources or not, or to borrow books to read in-house or at home. The survey was constructed to collect data in a manner mirrored in many more recent library ethnographies, such as using images to reflect how students perceived the library atmosphere, for example of a church or a bee hive. However, observational data prompted them to conclude that many student activities:

suggested distraction or relaxation, with some students endlessly checking their watches as if they were about to leave, others chatting continually with their neighbours or getting more involved in what their friends were doing than in their own work. (1994, p. 123)

⁷ The first User Experience in Libraries conference was in 2015 ("PAST CONFERENCES – UXLibs," 2017)

⁸ Bourdieu was a renowned sociologist and anthropologist (Grenfell, 2012)

Bourdieu and de Saint Martin felt dismay at the visitor perception of the Library as a meeting place, and that while students saw the Library as a place to achieve their study goals, observations were interpreted as infrequently demonstrating any study achievements. The authors lamented that students would complain about the library not having the resources they needed while lacking the skills needed to locate those resources. The authors also felt students failed to use the Library in what the authors saw as the correct way, or else would study in environments the researchers considered inappropriate: cafés, at home on their bed, at a friend's house. Female students were in the majority of library users (70% of 880 respondents, in comparison to consisting of 60% of the student body), and reported wanting to go there to study because of the atmosphere and to feel less isolated. Bourdieu and De Saint Martin labelled female students as wanting to study somewhere noisy thus being able to blame their environment for preventing them achieving as much as they should: women preferred company so that they could socialise as well as study, so that they would not get bored. The authors blamed societal pressures creating confusion in women because of the dichotomy of traditional female roles in the family and the role of student at university, leading to their desire to both conform to academic requirements (they were more likely to read recommended texts than men) and to seek out a more social usage pattern. Bourdieu and de Saint Martin also considered class differences in usage, stating working class students used the Library less than other classes, but had a "greater seriousness of purpose" (Bourdieu & de Saint Martin, 1994, p. 127). The researchers attribute the working class students' comparatively low use of the library to the students' perception that the Library was where you went to *look* like you were working rather than actually doing so: if working class students used the Library, they wouldn't successfully study.

Bourdieu and de Saint Martin (1994) may seem dated in their perceptions of students using the Library 'incorrectly' and allowed their own preconceptions to influence how they represented library users/practices: however, I've found on presenting their research at conferences that the broader findings and behaviours are recognised by many librarians, who are surprised when they hear the date the research was conducted. The research presents many familiar usage patterns to any member of staff who may spend some time in their library spaces. The main difference is that social use of a library has started to become more acceptable as it has been attributed to supporting learning processes in some circumstances (although in some cases social use of the library is inevitably just that), that using the library as a meeting space as well as a study space is now expected and often welcomed (Harrop & Turpin, 2013; Regalado & Smale, 2015). Bourdieu and de Saint Martin linked specific usage patterns to gender

and/or class, and did not consider whether the environment may play a part in supporting or influencing that behaviour. In spite of this gap in considering space influence, Bourdieu and de Saint Martin and their consideration of demographics is in contrast to much recent library research, which, as we will see, more frequently focuses on design and provisions over social/demographic considerations.

More recently, amongst the most seminal pieces of research is that by Foster and Gibbons (2007), who conducted multipurpose ethnographic research at the University of Rochester across its multiple campus libraries. The student undergraduate population was approximately 4,500, largely white (almost two thirds) with most (80%) living on campus. The researchers sought to learn about students and their study patterns on and off campus when they tried to complete assignments, asking 14 academic staff for their expectations of how the students would find appropriate information, the support the library provided via reference desks and the library website, space design, and the personal lives of students that might impact on their academic life and requirements. Students were interviewed and asked to complete a task according to the research purpose at that time: interviews with students at the reference desk and in informal learning spaces (15 students for each set of interviews); website design workshops (through two phases of recruitment, the first with two groups of three students who had previously been involved with the research overall, the second with seven students recruited via advertising at the reference desk); library design workshops (19 and 21 students across two different recruitment drives); diaries mapping their daily lives across the campus (14 students); guided photo diaries with specifications for what to provide photos of (eight students), including their favourite seat to work in and images of “a person, any person” and “something really weird” (Foster & Gibbons, 2007, p. 41). The research was conducted initially over the period of 2004-5 utilising the support of an anthropologist to help develop the methodology and interpret the data collected. The project was then followed up in 2011-12 replicating the original methods while adding new projects to develop further understanding and service provisions for a changing student population (Foster, 2013). Initial findings from the first project produced some surprises for the researchers. The process of completing papers included some expected processes such as planning and scheduling research time, but also surprises regarding liaising with family members to discuss academic requirements of the assignment, and some students struggling with breaking away from the distractions of social media. Library space design workshops helped provide a set of overall requirements from students including comfort, variety of space types and staff support services. Website design workshops demonstrated students wanted availability of much of what was already present on the library website (such as links to search options and support), but

also wanted a level of personalisation so that they could find details of their own courses, tutors and assignment details. Data from the photo and diary mapping surveys demonstrated that students lived busy complex lives, with their days split across academia, working, social lives and volunteering opportunities. Particularly surprising from the mapping and photo data was the finding that while students owned laptops they would rarely carry them because they already had so much scheduled into their day that they had too many other things to carry as they went about their lives: laptops were only used outside the dorms when students could plan separate specific study activities in a pre-selected space. The findings from the two projects provided supporting data for informing the redesign of library spaces and modifying services to reflect the usage patterns and needs of students, including extending opening hours on the reference desk to suit the night studying patterns of some students. The work conducted by Foster and Gibbons has had a huge influence on qualitative library research, and has served as an introduction to and trigger for other academic libraries to carry out their own ethnographic research. The nature of their longitudinal and ethnographic approaches applied to learning about such a broad range of off and on campus behaviour was new to academic library staff, who had long focussed on quantitative and minor qualitative data. However, the research still falls short on consideration of the direct influence of space design when in situ, and does not examine specific demographic groups in detail. My own research answers this issue by ensuring details of the space itself are analysed from observations and discussed in interviews.

Following from the work at Rochester several other projects were developed along similar lines. Delcore collaborated with several other anthropologists to develop an insight into student study practices at California State University, Fresno (Fresno State), with the work at Rochester serving as primary inspiration (Delcore et al., 2009). Fresno State had a very different student population to that at Rochester with over 19,000 undergraduates: Fresno had a student body more than twice as large with a third of students identifying as white, and another third Hispanic. Fresno also had a large percentage of first generation students attending, with a higher percentage (95%) of attendees living off campus compared to Rochester. The researchers were thus asked to generate a comprehensive portrait of students' needs with this population difference in mind, providing recommendations for improvements and modifications to the library's services and provisions. Delcore et al chose to approach the research from a design anthropology perspective (a field very similar to UX work but with deeper, more sociological and cultural emphasis) and used several data collection methods: taking an easel into a busy area and asking students to write/draw their responses to questions on study practices over a period of four days (in September 2008); a workshop with 50

library staff to find out more about what they wanted to learn; photographs of students engaging in studying/research; mapping diaries completed by students (ten in the Autumn term 2008, five in Spring 2009) who were also supplied with disposable cameras; 'mini-ethnographies' with five students each semester over one academic year, where the student took photos based on a list of prompts and researchers visited at their home to discuss the photo content; a 'reference desk' where students could act out fictional library reference queries; 'bootlegging' workshops where participants were given tasks such as listing all the possible users of a library and any technology they might need, and then asked to act out a scenario in groups of 4-5 'actors' using a random selection of items from their lists; students were asked to create a piece of theatre based on a specific library scenario in three separate workshops; three each of physical and virtual design workshops for library space (three groups split into two, creating six designs in total) and the library website (12 students in total); observations of actions and interactions within the library. The participants for bootlegging, theatre and the space and web design workshops were described as averaging 10 per workshop, but ranging between 6 and 15 attendees.

The research Delcore et al (2009) conducted produced extensive data: that many of the students observed and involved in the research had an extensive social network of support for academic practice, including the more obvious classmates, but also their family. The nature of the University's commuter population meant use of the library could sometime be problematic: data from the day mapping demonstrated that many commuter students had family commitments, thus they sometimes felt lack of available time and limited familiarity of the library spaces excluded them from successfully studying within the library. Indeed, one participant in her late forties with a learning disability felt excluded because she felt too old to use the library with the often younger student groups, but felt happier working in an office for disability support as it meant she could share the space with other students with disabilities, increasing her personal comfort levels. One participant was even so in need of quiet spaces to study on occasions that he felt he could only work from his parked car. A skit developed in the theatre workshops led to the researchers concluding students were looking for a library environment that matched the ease and speed of access to services and resources that they experienced in using Google and fast food chains/coffee shops. This in part was due to the need to be able to fit studying in and around the rest of their lives: Fresno students often had to work, care for their family, commute to and from campus as well as attend classes and complete their assignments. The researchers developed a list of recommendations for changes to be made to the library facilities and services, including improved access to social and quiet spaces, allowing food and drink into the library,

creating a portable enquiries desk to help improve access to and knowledge of library support, and developing a library website that allows some level of customisation for students to help them access their course information more easily. Delcore et al shifted emphasis in US research to demonstrate the importance of considering specific demographic groups and needs within library research, although at this stage critiquing focussed more on the broader group of commuter students than specific demographics. The nature of the research (of demographic groups, and of commuter students) at Fresno has not yet been considered in the UK in terms of library research, indicating a need to examine what specific demographic groups in the UK may require from library services for their own educational support.

The research discussed so far has specifically focussed on individual colleges/universities, albeit with multiple campuses. Duke and Asher investigated usage patterns across multiple institutions, instigating the Ethnographic Research in Illinois Academic Libraries (ERIAL) Project (Duke & Asher, 2012; Green, Asher, & Miller, 2014a). The project was led by two resident anthropologists and the Associate University Librarian under the consultancy of Nancy Foster of the Rochester project detailed above, and investigated student research habits over a period of two years. The ERIAL Project carried out research across five different universities in Illinois (two of which were branches of the University of Illinois in different cities, Chicago and Springfield), each providing a different student base with a variety of university population size, attendance methods (commuter or residential), and broad demographic ranges of age, race and ethnicity. The researchers utilised the same methods as those used at Rochester with the addition of cognitive mapping of library spaces (where participants are given a fixed period of time to draw a map reflecting their perception of the library space they visited) and research diaries with students logging information on what research activities they carried out where and for how long. The research involved a total of 719 participants across all institutions and methods, with most data stemming from ethnographic interviews (156 participants) and cognitive mapping (137 participants), but some institutions chose not to use all methods to collect data to reflect their personal research requirements⁹.

One of the more unusual approaches to library research in the project was that of one of the participating universities choosing to examine library use amongst male Hispanic students. A quarter of Northeastern University Illinois's students at the time of research were Hispanic, but male completion of their first year of study on a six year full time

⁹ For a full tabulated summary of the data collected via each method at each institution, refer to Green, Asher and Miller (2014a)

course was 13% (compared to 19.2% female Hispanics and 20% of attendees overall in the same pattern of studying) (Green, 2012, p. 90). As many Hispanic students were first or second generation immigrants at the time of research, the researchers wanted to learn more about their lives and how their personal life might impact on their study practices. After interviewing 27 students and analysing the data, the researchers focused specifically on the Hispanic participants, and found that they would only ask people for help if they had a personal (as opposed to academic) relationship with them, referring to people based on previous interactions rather than their professional status. However, many students also reported needing and wanting but not asking for help, with the researchers concluding that the students had throughout their education developed an independent mind-set (particularly given their parents' education was likely to be to a lower level than their own, which could mean less academic support in the home). Additionally, many Hispanic students had family obligations and struggled to both study and work lengthy hours to support their families.

The project findings overall showed that students lacked skills in searching and using library resources, evaluating quality, and lacked awareness of library support available (a key problem given library support led to improvement in student skills). Research on library space led to conclusions that the library was a confusing space, and confirmed that students were not aware of librarian support available as they did not know where librarian offices were. The combined data suggested that, irrespective of age or place of residence (on or off campus) students wanted quiet and group space, and plenty of room to spread their work out. As a result of the data, new furniture and lighting was installed, signage improved and access to computers extended to 24 hours a day, with plans to collect more data on specific groups of students (such as Hispanic) to further understand their needs. The researchers emphasised the need for faculty and library staff to develop a strong relationship in order to create more awareness of library support amongst students. The ERIAL project had a similar impact on the academic library community as the Rochester project, serving as one of the points of inspiration for a number of library staff to collaborate on creating the yearly UXLibs (User eXperience in Libraries) conference (UXLibs, 2018). The extensive work of Duke and Asher (2012; 2014b) and their collaborators in studying behaviour at multiple universities and considering the needs of specific demographic groups has not yet been matched in the UK. However, their work still falls short on considering gender and usage patterns which I address in my own research here.

While the research by Foster and Gibbons (2007) and Duke and Asher (Duke & Asher, 2012; Green et al., 2014a) has been particularly seminal, use of ethnographic methods

has not been limited to these works. Other ethnographic explorations of library use include Suarez (2007), who carried out his research in the academic year of 2006-7. Suarez was a librarian for Brock University in Canada when he began his research of student use of their library, utilising observations and semi-structured interviews. His primary goal was to learn whether students “were engaged when using the library, particularly when using study spaces” (Suarez, 2007, p. 1), but interestingly his use of ethnographic methods was used with the intention to learn more so that he could develop a tool with a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods. He situated himself as a researcher using the library as well as observer, engaging in study practices associated with research including searching for literature and reading while he conducted his observations. Suarez targeted students he had seen using the library for semi-structured interviews designed to learn about their perceptions of the library and how they used the study spaces, resulting in eight participants. He also informally interviewed some¹⁰ library staff selected on the basis of whether they would be able to provide a perspective of what student behaviours manifested. He used the interview data to assist with analysis of the observation data, and found overall that library space was heavily used by students across many demographic groups, but primarily by younger people. Lighting and temperature levels impacted on student use and/or behaviours e.g. lower lighting levels and higher temperatures could be linked to more students taking naps or students reporting feeling sleepy. Most students were engaged in some form of studying, but could easily switch to socialising, particularly if in group spaces. However, as Suarez found:

Identifying engaging behaviors, or those behaviors that support student learning were sometimes the most difficult to differentiate. In fact, these groupings are not mutually exclusive and may depend on the observer’s perspective bias and the contexts these behaviors are being observed in.
(2007, p. 6)

He clustered behaviours into engaging, leisure, and social groupings, i.e. where students were reading, writing or discussing research with peers, they would be classed as ‘engaging’, leisure behaviours were playing games and listening to music, and social behaviours were conversing about non-study themes, including joking and flirting, as well as eating and sleeping. He points out that social behaviour is not mutually exclusive of learning behaviour, and that social behaviours can often help develop bonding that

¹⁰ Suarez does not state how many staff he spoke to other than “a few” (Suarez, 2007, p. 5)

supports learning activities, something that Bourdieu and de Saint Martin (1994) did not consider but is well represented in more modern research and consideration of library space design (for example see Bilandzic & Foth, 2013; Foster, 2013; Foster & Gibbons, 2007). Suarez openly discusses his analytical difficulties and his awareness of his initial presumptions and bias about where to conduct observations, providing a useful example of a reflective and reflexive approach to the research process. Suarez concluded that more work was needed to confirm his data, focussing on specific user groups, study behaviours, and relating both of these to grades to assess how the library could support students and improve its facilities. His work did not consider gender or race/ethnicity.

As Delcore, Teniente-Matson and Mullooly (2014) suggest, in spite of the work by Suarez above, there is still a shortage of direct observation of activity within library spaces (indeed, Suarez (2007) only planned his observations to aid development of a research tool rather than a main source of data, even if he utilised the data to inform his knowledge of library use). Most recently, O'Kelly, Scott-Webber, Garrison and Meyer (2017) have tried to remedy this in the US by carrying out extensive research on a new library build at an American university using environmental behaviour theory (i.e. that space influences behaviours of its inhabitants) to assess whether students study successfully within the new build and thus whether or not the design influences behaviours. They decided to focus on whether "...observed behaviors align with the desired stakeholder goal of fostering student engagement?" (2017, p. 846), defining student engagement as using library services, and "making academic and social connections" within the library space (2017, p. 847). The library designers propose four different types of study space with environments meant to encourage behaviour reflecting intended study activities within them: private/alone (solo spaces designed for long periods of private study thus considering comfort levels and support for using personal devices); private/together (group learning in areas such as bookable rooms to allow some privacy and focus); public/alone (solo studying in an environment that allows some level of study noise); public/together (less formal group use than in private/together, where students can collaborate for study but may also meet up intentionally or unplanned).

The researchers studied library use in these spaces using ethnographic observation via photographs of space use (over a period of 93 days from 7:00am to midnight, 744 photographs were taken at a rate of 8 a day, in a total of 33 areas within the library), and mapping of student and library and faculty staff behaviours in terms of interactions i.e. each with students, staff, information and environment (125 observations over a three-week period spread across seven different locations). They also conducted six

group interviews, two each of students, library staff and library stakeholders elsewhere in the university (including the Dean of library staff) (with groups consisting of three to six of each participant type). The interviews involved questions about how participants would describe the library, where they go to study and what tasks they undertake while visiting, and how the library impacted on their overall university experience. The researchers found that when analysing the photographs, dominant behaviours were interacting with each other (63% of 464 interactions logged) and with content (34%), but very few interactions were with a librarian (2%). Students interacting with tools totalled 28% analogue (e.g. paper resources, whiteboards) and 72% digital (such as laptops).

The researchers found that students would claim space, manipulating furnishings to create privacy and use whiteboards as walls for personal study areas with messages on them requesting that they not be moved, whether the space they had claimed was intended for use in this way or not. In interviews the students reported finding the library environment supportive and inspirational, appreciating the designers' use of mixing various usage types (such as private solo studying and public spaces) which allowed students to find the right space at point of need. The researchers concluded that the design influenced behaviours, providing cues for use and study approaches, but also that students would engage with the space according to their personal requirements in sometimes unexpected ways, such as moving furniture between floors (but still using it in a way that suited the design of the area they moved it to). However, the researchers also pointed out that the space design could produce opposing responses from both students and library staff, indicating the need for providing a wide variety of options for library users. O'Kelly et al also hoped that staff would engage with a change in culture given some staff perceived some behaviour as inappropriate even if they conformed to the design ethos and intended use. The researchers admit that researching one library and its use has limitations and operates as a case study and potential source of method for other library research. However, the research, like many pieces of research before it, was focussed more on actions, and less on the nature of variety of students using it and the differing needs they may have as groups.

There is a clear gap at this stage in investigating user needs from a demographic and/or a critical perspective: in other words, an approach that questions whether or not library spaces and/or services support or exclude certain groups of library users. This gap is one I have addressed in my own research here, in order to understand how academic library spaces and their users may not always interact as intended by designers or library staff.

I shall now move on to demonstrate that the gap in this research extends to studies in the UK.

2.5 Ethnographic research based in academic libraries outside the US

Overall research examining academic library use in depth is predominantly conducted in the US. However, outside of the US there is some evidence of ethnographic-based research. Bryant, Matthews and Walton (Bryant, Matthews, & Walton, 2009; Bryant, 2009) carried out 40 hours of observations from May to July 2007 at a newly created (primarily group) space at Pilkington Library at Loughborough University. Bryant found students collaborated in groups of from two to ten people at a time within the space, or sometimes up to 20 students in closed off group study rooms. However, the space was also used by individuals for solo studying, an action that surprised the researchers given the nature of noise generated by group use, but that clearly took advantage of the availability of the larger table provided. Bryant et al (2009) briefly touch on the demographic use of the space, including the largely male use of the space, and the presence of a number of ethnic groups using the space, but admit that the study was not of a nature that could generate broader conclusions of different demographics' use of library spaces. The researchers also admit the limitations of carrying out observations over such a specific period when most students were studying for exams, meaning behaviours would be more likely attributable to that study need, thus indicating a gap in research across different periods of the academic year. Additionally, Bryant's focus on observations means she did not provide access to student voices, thus missing their own personal experiences of using the library space.

Where Bryant's work was focussed purely on observational data of use, other work has attempted to learn more about library use from a student perspective. Crook and Mitchell (2012) designed their research when they considered how little data had been collected about the use of 'informal' learning spaces, in spite of the increased use of that space type in HE library design. They used a specific newly developed space in an unnamed UK university library, collecting data over a period of ten days during four weeks prior to and during exams at the end of the academic year. Data were collected via: eight students making audio recordings of their studying behaviours over a period of a week; observations over a week (19 periods of 80 minutes observing, over four 'cycles' of 20 minutes, incorporating a 'scan' of students in the area once every 5 minutes (2012, p. 124)) logging location of students in the area, their movements, study practices, and posture; brief interviews with a small sample of students in situ (five students seated alone and six groups; focus groups with students discussing their

perceptions of and usage patterns within the observed spaces and other spaces they used (six groups of four to six students). The researchers found that students liked to use the area, and would often use it for individual study, but students participating in audio diaries also largely found it a distracting space (74%); observations mirrored this data, with most visitors to the space sitting alone or working alone even if with someone. Students would often take ownership of the space, using their property to claim areas whether they were using it or not. Interestingly, conflict arose between participants and other library visitors because of the latter's social use, whether the purpose and overarching activity of the latter visitors matched the research participant's own use or not, and some library users found that other users of the space would act in a disruptive way or "a bit silly" (Crook & Mitchell, 2012, p. 132). The researchers developed four concepts of social use patterns as a result of the data analysis: focused collaboration ('traditional' group work with study goals); intermittent exchange (where solo studying periods will be split with often unplanned discussions); serendipitous encounter (where unplanned meetings on studying occur as visitors change in the area); ambient sociality (where students use the space to identify as part of a communal study activity within their own practices) (2012, p. 136). Social behaviours can thus often form an important part of study practices but can easily be perceived negatively by others studying in the same environment. However, like Bryant (Bryant et al., 2009; Bryant, 2009) before them, the research was focussed over one specific and likely study-intensive period during one academic year, without considering what other behaviours and usage patterns may manifest during the ebb and flow of a longitudinal period. Additionally, the researchers did not factor in for specific user types, not considering gender or other groups who may need further support in locating and using a safe, supportive space for themselves. My own research addresses all of these issues, asking whether there are usage patterns amongst specific groups, particularly by gender, and utilising a feminist approach to ensure participants are given a voice in the research and an opportunity to express their concerns and how they benefit.

The concept of different patterns of social use has also formed part of an investigation by Harrop and Turpin (2013), who examined informal learning space usage and behaviour across the campus at Sheffield Hallam University. Their research utilised observations to gather quantitative data on what spaces were being used across a specific pre-selected area in different campus spaces (including the students' union, and classrooms not being used for teaching), and what use involved e.g. what resources/equipment, whether food and drink was consumed, and also what decibel level of noise was generated within that area. Observations were carried out on the 11th of December 2008, January and March 2009, four times a day every three hours, and again in March 2010. Qualitative data was

collected from 240 students via Foster and Gibbons' (2007) method of campus mapping and photos of students' days followed up by interviews of ten minutes in length, during the periods of March 2009 and January and February 2010. The data was used by the researchers to develop a "typology of learning space preference attributes" (Harrop & Turpin, 2013, p. 64): destination (whether students choose to use campus spaces or to remain at home according to their task), identity (the influence of the space on use), conversation (the level of collaboration required throughout a visit), community (developing not just a social environment but one of collaboration and mutual support, plus the influence of others' use on a visitor's study practice/success), retreat (the ability to find private study space away from distraction), timely ("just in time" (2013, p. 69) needs for spaces when deadlines or short breaks in a schedule lead to studying), human factors (personal preference for an environment such as lighting levels or space to spread out), resources (such as computers, printers, and proximity to other equipment or materials) and refreshment (the availability of or capacity to bring food and drink into an area).

Identity was of particular importance in connection with the design of a space, with some spaces "...designated for a particular purpose, but the layout and location gave mixed messages or suggested a function which was incongruous in that area." (2013, p. 66). Harrop and Turpin found that students also manipulated the use of a space to match their own perceptions of its use, rather than the one attributed by the designer and rule makers. This can work well in some spaces if they are situated and designed appropriately, but can also "lead to a negative experience if the identities [of the space] are incompatible." (2013, p. 66). Additionally, the researchers found that data consistently conveyed the need for social use whether it be connected to studying or not, hence a need to factor in the need for community opportunities in designs so that students may "[work] in close proximity to friends or peers to create a sense of community, for co-support and for someone to take a break with..." (2013, p. 68).

Harrop and Turpin conclude that while their typology helps identify successful study spaces, it falls short in identifying whether space preferences can be linked to learner attitudes and behaviours, and the researchers advise approaching the typology as something that can evolve as further data is collected. Harrop and Turpin's research is one of the few in the UK to consider usage from a more longitudinal perspective, examining use and student feedback over multiple academic years, but their lack of demographic consideration leaves a gap in their data: the typology may factor in for this shortage in data, but demographics may also have influence on space selection and thus be important to reflect on when designing spaces and modify space provisions.

McKay and Buchanan (2014) support the importance of considering community and space identity in library space design (discussed by Harrop and Turpin (2013) above) in their research into group study practices at Swinburne University of Technology, Australia generating a typology of groups. McKay and Buchanan argue that there is a need to learn more about group use of library space because of the increased group study requirements placed on students at an HE level. The researchers used a combination of headcounts incorporating counting the use of resources (including personal mobile devices, campus PCs, and reading materials) and the group size (groups were classed as two or more people), followed by observations of the groups and their use of materials, interactions within the group and with the space. McKay and Buchanan considered the headcounts a longitudinal process, carrying out the process every Wednesday afternoon (a busy time of the week according to library entry statistics from the entrance gates) over the period of one semester, whether it was classed as a holiday period or peak study period. Once the initial headcount data was analysed, the researchers carried out closer observations to check early conclusions, and developed the group typology, which was then assessed with further counts to check how frequently each group appeared within the library. More close observations were then conducted to learn about the behaviours of each group.

The group typology created from the data designated seven group types in total: co-production (creating an 'artefact' such as a document in sub-teams), co-reading (collaborative reading of a shared document(s), co-production/reading (a hybrid of the previous two, with reading being a sub-task), loose study (working on an exercise/problem without producing an 'artefact', or solo reading - sometimes topic switching in this group, but main purpose was studying), social/work (often a smaller group size, working on their own tasks but sometimes socialising, each member using different materials which is where it contrasts with other groups), purely social, and rehearse talk (using group rooms presenting slides which usually looked unfinished while others watched and asked questions) (2014, pp. 100–101). Other group types were observed but were not frequent enough to officially be classified in the typology. The nature of this variety of groups meant that their differing needs and tasks could often not be easily accommodated within library space: some groups would need to gather round computers in comparatively large numbers (e.g. 3-4 if not more group members) thus taking up a large amount of traffic space, meaning other students outside of the group would not be able to negotiate the space around them easily to access other PCs/desks in the area. Additionally, the need within some groups to switch tasks meant groups needed to move to other spaces to accommodate their changing

study needs. McKay and Buchanan concluded that the space configurations at their library were largely inappropriate for group use, even if they were designed for group use: groups primarily operated to share the view of their work, or to create a shared space that allowed them to collaborate if needs be but also excluded other people outside of the group from using the claimed work area. Furniture and space design at the researchers' library meant groups struggled to operate in these ways and thus modified and manipulated the space layout to suit their needs with some difficulty. McKay and Buchanan end with the recommendation that they undertake further research in order to understand usage patterns and thus improve their library space/furniture configurations. However, they do not consider in any great detail what kind of power dynamics exist between groups and other groups, or between groups and individuals, or indeed the nature of the dynamics within the groups in terms of gender or other group membership characteristics.

The typologies developed by Harrop and Turpin (2013) and McKay and Buchanan (2014) are of particular importance because they address issues regarding what is important to students in their usage patterns, deriving data and analysing them in detail hitherto unseen in library research. However, where they both fall short is the lack of demographic analysis. McKay and Buchanan collected data on gender, but discuss it no further than listing interactions by gender within groups (i.e. F1 and F2 move to one screen indicating females in a group). Harrop and Turpin are overt in their not collecting demographic information: their typology appears to be broad enough to cover all student needs regardless of demographics, but specific groups are still likely to need focussed consideration, such as women needing a space to feel safe. It is clear from the literature discussed so far that there is minimal consideration of the characteristics of the student populations and what impact that might have on their usage patterns. One way to approach this gap is from a critical approach.

2.6 Critical approaches to library research

Where research in library use starts to fall short, particularly in the UK, is looking at HE libraries from a critical perspective i.e. overtly acknowledging and considering (dis)ability, race, gender, sexuality, class and whether the needs of students in each group are met sufficiently. Using a critical approach can help break down assumptions on the perception that a library with a variety of spaces will suit all types of user because it has variety. Diversity of library users is rarely considered in great detail, and is important to develop an understanding of who exactly is using libraries and to what purpose: not everyone will experience the library in the same way. A diverse population can need support in different ways and a critical approach considers that diversity.

Bourdieu's work in Lille was innovative not just in his ethnographic study but in his attention to demographics (Bourdieu & de Saint Martin, 1994) and sadly his interest has not been extensively duplicated. This deficiency in a critical approach is across both qualitative and quantitative research, yet many pieces of research collect demographic data as part of their methods. Considering the emphasis placed by some universities on Widening Participation activities in recruitment, the lack of response in library research is disappointing, but not surprising. Libraries originate from an ethos of creating access to information and learning for self-improvement, and are thus frequently perceived in the context of generating safe accessible spaces. However, numerous classification schemes used in academic and public libraries such as Dewey Decimal Classification and Library of Congress Subject Headings have been critiqued for presenting a method of cataloguing and organising items in sexist, racist and homophobic ways (Olson, 2001). Yet, more recently, discussion across the profession has been that libraries (and indeed staff) should NOT be, and cannot be, neutral in order to protect and express solidarity with specific groups of library users (e.g. white supremacists should not be allowed to hold meetings in a library space in order to maintain access and safety for BAME (Black, Asian and minority ethnic) people) (Bourg, 2017; Sendaula, 2017; Wilkinson, 2017). Library staff do not always have the support for finding time and funds to carry out research that may be interpreted as a negative portrait of library provisions if published outside of internal management reports (rather than a tool to help improve access, services and support for students). I will now detail research that considers groups of specific demographics.

2.7 Library users with disabilities

Perhaps surprisingly given legislation related to building design, students with disabilities can struggle to access and use library facilities. There are many barriers that make using a library unintentionally more difficult for anyone with unseen disabilities such as autism or visual impairments. Cohen and Cohen (1979) refer to problems with lighting for even people without disabilities, such as low level versus bright lighting and, whether using print or electronic materials, glare preventing people from being able to read comfortably. They talk about how some kinds of light can flicker or vibrate, causing further visual discomfort. They also raise issues with using patterns such as stripes (which are particularly bad when used on carpets as the patterns can cause optical illusions that lead to visual "vibrations" (Cohen & Cohen, 1979, p. 192)), and how colour choice can be too strong leading to visitors getting headaches and being unable to work, poorly combined meaning colour-blind people may have difficulties telling them apart, or highly polished surfaces causing problems for people with visual impairments. Signage can be problematic for people with dyslexia if the text is all one case. Cohen and Cohen

also talk about how building design can exacerbate sound problems, bouncing noise around without diminishing it, making it harder for people to concentrate.

If Cohen and Cohen saw all the above elements as important aspects to consider, it is disturbing to read of statement academic library buildings often appearing to ignore guidance that would increase accessibility for students with disabilities. Andrews (2016) provides a case study of her own experience as a student with autism and cerebral palsy, where she visited an academic library that has been used as a model design for both the university it was built for and other universities. She found it inaccessible for many reasons, including "harsh" lighting, noise, brightly coloured abstract paintings used for decorative purposes next to the base of a staircase, and the stairs being too narrow for her to easily navigate past other people as they descended, and when she reached the floor she needed the signage was unclear and Andrews was unable to navigate the floor (Andrews, 2016, p. 111). Research on disabled use of/difficulties accessing academic libraries like Andrews' is limited, with most frequent consideration of legal requirements in space design (usually relating to ramps, and physical room for wheelchairs such as in Majinge and Stilwell (2013) or Storey (2015)), virtual spaces such as the library website, and access to electronic resources for the visually impaired and improving access for disorders such as dyslexia (such as in Billingham (2014) or Comeaux and Schmetzke (2013)).

Most of the difficulties Andrews (2016) encountered are dealt with in Cohen and Cohen above (1979), a text that was published nearly 40 years ago, so why are they not dealt with in modern builds? Andrews refers to two issues, the first being that hidden disabilities are often neglected and may go undeclared. Building design will include ramps and the space between shelves to accommodate wheelchairs, software will be purchased to support disabilities like dyslexia. However, provisions often fall short or do not even factor in for the needs of those who have unseen or a combination of disabilities/disorders, such as a need for softer lighting, cooler colour schemes, and noise reduction (both of people and environmental noise like air conditioning) so that, for example, people with autism can reduce the risk or avoid altogether incidents of over stimulation. Similarly, people with overt mobility problems may also suffer from unseen difficulties: Andrews referred to her first case study site as granting her access via an external door because she struggled to share the main internal stairwell simultaneously with other visitors, and could not use the lift because she has agoraphobia. The external door was too heavy for her to negotiate alone, but no friends/peers were allowed to use it as an access point in order to help her, and the door was only in use during staffed

hours in a 24/7 building. Outside of staff hours she found she needed to risk her mental state using the lift or struggle physically to use the main stairwell.

The second issue Andrews refers to is that libraries and their services are often designed:

for one majority group (e.g. '18-25-year-old students') and treat other groups such as disabled users, part-time students, older users, non-native English speakers and so on as add-ons – the 'non-traditional students' or the 'socially excluded'. (2016, p. 114)

Andrews argues that we need to remember that users of libraries are "a heterogeneous bunch" ((2016, p. 114), an argument that is supported by Storey (2015), who fears investments in buildings are so large that a new build or an expensive refurbishment "simply has to be declared a success" in spite of the inability to be able to predict all visitor needs and requirements (2015, p. 580)). While it is impossible to be able to accommodate for all variations of all types of users of a library, we can consider how to make libraries and their services as accessible as possible, and then work on improving them as we encounter any issues people experience. Andrews warns against modifying services and designs to make special provisions for every additional need: doing so is not an inclusive process as it can make a student feel separate and 'other'. Rather libraries should be creating facilities and services that are designed to support students overall as problems are encountered: if one person is experiencing a difficulty using our libraries, then surely they are not alone, and making changes will benefit the many rather than the few. Andrews also suggests that making changes for all students will take away the onus on others for reporting problems (something that not all disabled visitors may have the capacity to do), and make the process easier for staff given there would be a formal process in place.

Andrews lists several actions from which disabled students (and the entire student body in many cases) could benefit: in terms of space, she advocates creating a spacious, quiet entrance way, set aside from the main entrance if necessary, with clear and easy access to other floors. She also refers to creating natural 'shortest route' paths through the floors with plenty of space, clear signage with pictograms, easy identification of where the visitor can get help, and zoning floors with colours to emphasise the role of the space (whether it be for particular type of space rule or a resource such as printing). Andrews asks that libraries should also be transparent about where students may not have full

access. One point in particular that Andrews makes is to try and avoid changing the building regularly, and create consistency between floors, so that familiarity can make the space feel easier to access and reduce anxiety. When the building does need to be (re)designed, she advocates speaking to disability advisors and involve both users and non-users of the library to ensure that anyone who has felt excluded from the space before can feed into ideas and discussions and raise any problems with the proposed design. While Andrews' case study is very personal to her experiences, she clearly points out that not everyone will experience the same library in the same way(s), and thus both points out gaps in research on library use as well as endeavouring to start to fill that gap.

2.8 Studies of race

In comparison to disabilities, research on race and the use of libraries is more common, primarily in the United States. Some research focuses on a range of demographic information, including race and gender differences in perceptions and use of libraries. Yoo-Lee, Heon Lee, and Velez (2013) found when surveying 100 students¹¹ at D.H. Hill Library (at the North Carolina State University) that females used the library more and had more positive perceptions of it than males, and that Asian students (although it is unclear here what Asian is classified as, it is likely they are referring to South East Asian students) preferred quiet spaces over social spaces while white students used both space types equally, and African-American students generally had a more positive perception of libraries and their usability in comparison to both Asian and white students. Yoo-Lee et al recommend further research given the gap in research around broader library use/perception and ethnicity/gender, as opposed to focusing on very specific uses of library provisions such as internet use (e.g. Jones, Johnson-Yale, Millermaier and Perez (2009)).

Libraries have long been perceived as created in their first form in the UK and US as a neutral space with access to all, but there has always been some privileging of specific groups: access to all who can at least read, which implies schooling, which in turn implies some income. Brook, Ellenwood and Lazarro (2015, p. 248) suggest that the perception of libraries as neutral is based on a white-based constructed 'neutrality' that actually serves to oppress: white people are the norm by which a neutral accessible space and service is construed, thus perpetuating white as norm with all the privilege that entails. They talk about how a historically white designed/constructed library

¹¹ Respondents consisted of 51% female, 49% male, and a 'diverse' racial response rate of 63% white, 18% Asian, 10% African American, 4% Hispanic/Latino, 5% multiple race (Yoo-Lee et al., 2013, p. 502)

building/space (in the lines of library as church/sacred) might lead to resistance in the form of:

...graffiti on library walls, clandestine meetings in the study rooms, raucous study groups, pieces of book art hidden in the stacks, the camaraderie that forms between the unlikeliest students, and the loud and joyful greetings that students exchange with friends (or librarians) in otherwise quiet spaces. (2015, p. 278)

The traditional usage patterns embraced by the more commonly perceived usage rules of library space such as silent individual use are interpreted by Brook et al (citing Gay (2000)) as a white-design usage pattern that frequently does not fit into the study patterns of non-white groups (a study pattern supported by others including McKinley (2010, p. 115)). Gay (2000) advocates the need for communities of shared ethnicity in learning and generating support networks, approaching the issue from a US teaching perspective which will likely be mirrored in library use patterns. Studies such as those by Whitmire (2004, 2006) detail the lack of neutrality within HE spaces, and thus contributing to the discomfort some students of colour¹² feel when using academic library spaces.

Elteto, Jackson and Lim (2008) examined the approachability of their library spaces and staff utilising Critical Race Theory¹³, a theory that had not yet been used within the HE library research environment (although previous research had recommended it be applied (Whitmire, 2004, p. 377)). The researchers, disappointed at the lack of demographic information collected and thus connected with results in the LIBQUAL+ survey, conducted additional research utilising their own survey at Portland State University incorporating a combination of closed and open questions (they do not detail how many responses they received). They found racial differences in responses in the areas of: where students study in the library and how often; use of librarians for support in their research; whether the library is perceived as a welcoming, safe place. The University had a population of 18% of students identifying as a racial minority at the time the research was conducted, with many students in an earlier assessment of the

¹² I am aware that reference to people or students 'of colour' is a problematic umbrella term for race and ethnicity, but I use it here as it appears in research cited.

¹³ Critical Race Theory is the process of "studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power." (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 3)

student population listed as first-generation students (18%) with 14.2% both first-generation and from low income families. The researchers used Critical Race Theory to frame two themes within the research: that race is central to life in America i.e. it is always present in thought (consciously or not), and racism is common. The researchers were also aware that their method at this stage was flawed, as using a web-based form to collect the data meant participants were self-selecting and thus "respondents tend to be those with strongest feelings about the survey topic." (Elteto et al., 2008, p. 331). Additionally, the survey was designed as part of more longitudinal research with focus groups intended to be the next phase, thus providing richer data in later stages.

The results of the survey showed that students of colour visited the library more often, daily in contrast to white students' weekly visits. Both students of colour and white students most commonly used the second floor of the library for their main study location, where support desks/offices, computers and study desks were available, but for different reasons: students of colour wanted to find a place with computers and desks and found the floor quieter than the first floor, while white students used the floor because of the texts and support available there. When studying alone, students of colour used the designated-quiet fifth floor of the building, while white students preferred other floors (fourth, second and fifth in that order of preference). When asked about group work, both groups most commonly had no preference for a space to work followed by using the second floor. However, the key findings included the reasons why students of colour did not use library support, and the level of safety and welcoming space reported. Students of colour felt staff were not welcoming because of their facial expressions, and also suggested that the library "'Have a more diverse group of people working so that others will feel more comfortable speaking with them.'" (Elteto et al., 2008, p. 333). The issue of librarianship being a predominantly white profession is one regularly debated within the profession (Alabi, 2015b, 2015a; Bourg, 2014; Gohr, 2017), but is also clearly recognised as an issue by students here. Additionally, while students of colour visited the library more often than white students, they felt less safe, encountering problems of harassment and theft of food, both stemming from non-university visitors to the library, and that racist and homophobic graffiti could be found in the bathrooms (although the authors state the comment above regarding improving diversity amongst library staff was closer to the norm than these more horrific experiences). However, irrespective of race, respondents overall perceived the library facilities as important to their academic lives, from basic facilities to resources and a supporting environment. The researchers hoped that further studies into the University's library users would help feed into improvements, particularly improving access to support and study guidance.

2.9 Gender

Some work has been conducted on gender and use of academic libraries. As with research into race, frequently the focus of the research has been on particular aspects of use such as specific resource types or facilities. Applegate (2009) conducted research at Indiana University-Perdue University Indianapolis and found there were gender differences in use of laptops where males used them more frequently than females (37% to 25%), but perhaps more tellingly, males used a particular space in one library more often. The space is described as a "somewhat secluded, separate room" (2009, p. 343) containing soft furnishings and usually used by individuals: Applegate questions whether "individual women may prefer a more visible area." (Applegate, 2009, p. 344).

Applegate also comments on the difference between female/male attendance numbers of the University and gendered use of the library: males are 42% of the undergraduate attendance, but constitute 53% of the library visitors. Applegate sees this is a positive in terms of males engaging in academic activity given in the US males spend fewer hours studying outside of class than females, but also raises concerns that females may not feel comfortable in using some of the more enclosed library spaces.

2.10 Race from a broader HE perspective

Because of the lack of discussion of race, particularly in the UK, in an HE library context, it is worth examining work conducted at HE level overall, particularly that discussing educational support needs which are of relevance to library research. Bhopal (2008) focused her research specifically on female communities of British Asians studying at HE level, and found that her interviewees needed their own community of the same ethnicity, irrespective of country of origin, as they shared an understanding of the pressures placed on them. The women involved in Bhopal's research discussed their need for multiple identities (which to some extent are mirrored in work carried out in the US such as that by Delcore et al. (2009) on the pull between different pressures on student/personal life): the woman at home with family; the student; the future employee. Each identity presented with different issues connected with a mixture of religious beliefs (i.e. Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism), issues that were similarly problematic enough to generate a shared understanding of the pressures, requirements, and external perceptions of their personal situations, thus creating a bond that existed before they found each other as friends/collaborators. Each group member found safety with the others because the groups meant "being accepted by women who would not marginalise or discriminate against them based on where they came from, their religion, their dress or any other marker of difference..." (Bhopal, 2008, p. 189). Bhopal's participants talked

about how their parents were keen to ensure their children gained qualifications that they had never had the opportunity to obtain, but also that the qualifications would mean proving their graduate children were highly skilled. There was some pressure on the students from parents to work hard and gain very high degree awards to prove they are at least as good as, if not better than white peers: the parents were very aware of how being judged by race could leave them and their families perceived as less competent, so a high grading education was perceived as leaving nothing to be discussed or questioned by potential employers. Additionally, demonstrating educational competence meant the potential to improve or secure social standing with other Asian families. Parents were also aware that their daughters may need some level of financial security in an unstable economy, and a good degree was seen as a way to help avoid or minimise the risk of going without at any stage in their life. HE for British Asian women was thus for economic and social improvement. Bhopal's findings are supported by research on many other Asian groups in the UK across different religions, country of origin, and generations (Bagguley & Hussain, 2016; Basit, 2012; Ghuman, 2002) although other research implies that historically there were differences with first generation immigrant parents perceiving the importance of HE for females (Ijaz & Abbas, 2010).

Bhopal's (2008) work demonstrates that the community is of extra importance to British Asian females in HE because of the shared understanding between members meaning all that was important to the members was within that community: no awkward questions, no discrimination, shared goals and aims and hopes for achievement. Bhopal also talks about how the women she spoke to needed spaces for their communities to convene, including library spaces:

Having regular meetings (which were informal and consisted of coffee breaks in the canteen, meeting in the library, sitting together in lectures and seminars and meeting to have lunch together) positively reinforced the membership of the community and the effectiveness and collaboration which existed within it.

(Bhopal, 2008, p. 189)

That Bhopal's interviewees needed space for informal meetings, including in the library, suggests a number of issues libraries need to address which, while specifically related to British Asians, will also likely be of consideration for other library users, including the

need for: informal spaces; spaces that can accommodate potentially large groups; spaces that have provisions to allow communities to exist and reinforce the relationships within. My own research incorporates observations that feature groups of British Asians, as well as discussing the experiences of those group members and the perceptions of their library use and (non)study behaviours with interviewees, in an effort to address this gap in UK HE library research.

2.11 Conclusion and summary

The literature detailed in this chapter represents several shortfalls in academic library research. Research indicates that students will use library spaces out of habit, out of ease of access to resources, and through the perception that they can 'get things done' in that space on a regular basis (for example see: Beckers, van der Voordt, & Dewulf, 2016b; Harrop & Turpin, 2013; McKay & Buchanan, 2014). Research and guidance on learning space design also suggest that while current library design ethos and student practice means academic libraries should contain a variety of uses, there is a risk that designs are insufficient to cater for that variety, with conflicting spaces sited in close proximity and students using library space to their own benefit but also to the detriment of others (such as in: Crook & Mitchell, 2012; McKay & Buchanan, 2014). We can also see that specific demographic groups in the US have their own particular needs and usage patterns of campus and library facilities due to familial and other pressures (Elteto et al., 2008; Green, 2012; Regalado & Smale, 2015) that we have only seen implied in broader educational research in the UK so far (Bhopal, 2008). The research on the influence of space design on students is also extremely limited: O'Kelly et al (2017) endeavoured to demonstrate that space influences use but only examined use over a three month period and considered 'engagement' with scholarship a suitable measure of design influencing behaviour.

Much of the library research data obtained through in-depth qualitative methods, including using an ethnographic approach, has revealed information that could not easily be obtained purely by surveys. Ethnographic methods have been key in developing a broader picture of student lives and thus generated a better understanding of how library provisions contribute to the academic lives of their users, be that in a positive or negative way. However, what we do not know is extensive. We do not know what kind of requirements specific groups (for example by gender, race, disability) in the UK have of their library services, whether they perceive library provisions as successful, sufficient, and inclusive. We also do not know how library staff perceive and classify practices of users, in their social or study use. We do not know how space design influences either social or study behaviour across a broad period of differing demands throughout the

academic year. We do not know what kind of power dynamics arise between different user groups in academic libraries.

These gaps are best addressed by using a multi-year (across different periods of the academic calendar) process, using a qualitative-based method, and so an ethnographic approach has been selected to gather data from multiple perspectives, via interviews and observations. As demonstrated throughout the literature review, using ethnographic-based methods is of great use to developing an understanding of library use (as for example in: Duke & Asher, 2012; Foster & Gibbons, 2007). A critical approach is also of particular importance to ensure diverse, rarely-heard voices are represented and heard throughout the research: I am guided by a Feminist Standpoint approach in the identification of these voices. All of these choices are detailed in the next two chapters. The next chapter, chapter 3, covers the epistemological decisions made, while the subsequent chapter (chapter 4) provides details of the method of data collection and research ethics of this project.

Chapter 3: Research Questions and Theoretical Approach

In the last chapter, I discussed how there are gaps in the literature studying academic library use indicating that researchers do not sufficiently consider their demographic base, and thus potentially miss opportunities to discover how inclusive and supportive their library environment really is. This chapter discusses the theoretical framework developed and the process of selecting an appropriate viewpoint and methodology that helps develop an understanding of library use that can fill the gap in the literature: theory here is specifically influenced by Feminist Standpoint Theory. The research questions are defined here, along with the nature of the data required to answer them. The method is considered in the context of other research as detailed in the literature review, and how the method is appropriate to the data, as well as why other methods were discarded as inappropriate. Additionally, I detail the epistemological journey I have undertaken to reach the analytical and methodological standpoint I have adopted. Finally, I relate the method and philosophy to the research questions themselves.

3.1 The research aim and questions

This research aims to discover whether academic libraries provide a supportive and inclusive learning environment, exploring student use and interpretation of academic library space: to learn more about how students use and behave in library spaces, how they relate to each other and library staff, and how staff perceive varieties of student use, focussing on usage across multiple UK institutions. This thesis will help develop an understanding of how students use academic libraries, how staff interpret use, and whether the library design supports or discourages student use. A library should be as inclusive and supportive as possible to its users, and this research aims to ask whether this happens in reality. This research also endeavours to find out whether or not library users behave in inclusive or exclusive ways towards each other: the changing HE climate can develop a perception that may generate behaviours that prioritise the self instead of the community at large i.e. 'I'm paying my fees so I should be able to use this space how I wish'. A large percentage of library research discusses the more tangible, quantifiable aspects of library design and usage, but from my own professional experience and a comparatively small amount of more detailed research (e.g. Foster and Gibbons (2007), see section 2.4 for a detailed review of their work) there is still much to learn about how students and library staff interact with each other, and interpret and use academic library spaces.

The research questions cover all of the above elements, and consider various aspects of student behaviour within library space, their relationships with other concurrent users of the space whether they know them or not, and the potential influence the space design may (or may not) have on their behaviours: the research questions now follow.

How do students behave in and use academic libraries?

- **What do students do when they visit the library?** Do they study, interact with each other for group study, socialise, or a combination of all three? What else do they do in the library?
- **How do students interact with each other when they are in the library?** Do they support or disrupt each others' activities?
- **How do students interact with staff in the library?** When in a study space, do students interact with staff to gain support/guidance in their library use, or are staff members seen primarily as rule enforcers?

What impact does design have on use and perceptions of use?

- **When students use academic library spaces, does the design of the space help or hinder their chosen use?** Academic libraries are designed to support a variety of student uses and purposes e.g. silent study, group study areas, and presentation practice rooms. Does the design of a space match the prevalent use, and thus support it? And so:
 - Do students conform to the intended purpose of a space? If not, is the non-conformity of benefit or problematic to other users?
- **How do staff understand and interpret the way students use the spaces in the library, and do they try to modify student behaviour as a result of that interpretation of use?** How do staff decide whether behaviour requires addressing or interception (a decision that could primarily be based on staffs' own opinion or of their interpretation of the space's rules and designated intentions)? If staff do not intercept, is the resulting environment problematic for the variety of users in the space? If staff attempt to modify student behaviour, does it change student behaviour, and if so, how? Does modification of behaviour impact on:
 - The student-staff relationship (will students refer to staff for help or feel discouraged from doing so?)
 - The ways students use or situate themselves in spaces (is their use modified to match staff requirements or does it differ from staff expectations? Does modification of behaviour by staff impede the levels of students' productivity and learning?)

- **Do differing perceptions of appropriate use create inequalities between students, and between students and staff?** Do the different rules of space and ways that each student utilises the space mean that, even if it mirrors the intended and designed use of a space, it disrupts and creates a problematic environment? Does the resulting study atmosphere and environment mean that certain usage patterns and thus specific student user groups are privileged over others? Similarly, does staff interpretation and thus interception result in an unbalanced and problematic privileging of particular types of use? Indeed, does the design of an area intentionally or unintentionally create certain types of behaviour and space use that ultimately create inequalities?

I intend to address these issues drawing from a critical ethnographic approach, utilising methods used already in library research, but influenced by a feminist standpoint perspective. The method choice will be defined and considered in more detail in later sections in this chapter, and the logistics of the method in a later chapter (see chapter 4). A feminist-influenced approach is the most appropriate for collecting data and developing an understanding of diversity, inequalities, and power relations within academic library use. Power relations here are primarily defined as the way some library users dominate and create ownership of a space through various means, but can also apply to power dynamics between staff and students in the staff struggle to maintain designated appropriate use versus how students perceive a space should or can be used. Power can also manifest through student perceptions of the current HE environment in terms of what they consider appropriate use when they are paying substantial fees. In each chapter I will refer to the nature of the power dynamics demonstrated in that particular data set, and how they relate to wider societal and cultural influences (where applicable) including race, class, gender and (dis)abilities.

As demonstrated in the literature review research is still lacking detailed, qualitative research into student practices within academic libraries, particularly in the UK, and from a critical approach. Library staff and students, whether they realise or not, have different expectations for how library spaces should be used (Ramsden, 2011). Students are now experiencing a contradiction of more cross-service support from staff with lower expectations of what extent of support they might ask for, as in Delcore et al. (2009, p. 30) and their “retail-oriented” classification of library users: that is, students perceive all library staff they meet to be able to provide the same level of information regardless of qualifications and role, but often have very simplistic requirements such as the location of a specific campus building or to borrow stationery. This “retail-oriented” perception may extend to use of space, so that the library is considered as a space for use that

suits them at that time; education is seen as a purchased commodity, and thus spaces to some extent are included in the purchasing agreement, a perception that has increased in recent years.

Staff reactions to student space use can create a great deal of animosity between staff and library users in what can be considered the 'policing of inappropriate behaviour' (my interpretation). My own personal professional experience has seen staff react quite strongly to students using spaces designed for social learning in a social manner, veering away from what is the traditional perception of the quiet, almost sacrosanct library environment many staff have grown up in and perceive as the true library environment. Unless it is embedded in their role, few staff have the opportunity to spend more than a few moments within library learning spaces to discover other uses, to observe other interactions, or to find whether learning is taking place at all. Additionally, how do they know whether or not social interactions constitute learning interactions? Learning as a process and its occurrence is difficult to measure, whether it be in a formal learning environment such as a classroom, or a less formal environment. Melhuish (2010) emphasises that the measurement of learning is extremely problematic, and may not be possible to measure at all, but can be suggested as occurring with supporting research data.

At this point it is worth emphasising that the research questions are ones I have been asking myself throughout the course of my professional experience since my workplace facilities were refurbished and as more publications are released discussing the success of the authors' own library's refurbishments/new building. The initial questions have grown into further questions, thus there are many considerations for each one here. My research perspective has led me to consider them more generally: in order to discover new answers to questions I wasn't necessarily aware of when this research began, and to avoid being led to conclusions before I had data. I wanted to attempt to separate and modify my professional observations of seeing staff reacting without knowing (and thus potentially doing so myself as a result) to a reflexive yet critical perspective of academic library use, utilising my experience and acknowledging its influence on my considerations without being drawn into conclusions. Changes are regularly being made to the service and the design of library facilities and provision that potentially reduce the level of interaction staff have with students in various ways, which may lead to more differences of understanding of space purposes and student use, and thus potentially more attempts to gain power both between students and between students and staff as they struggle to take ownership of space. Changes may also be developed with the intention of creating a more inclusive space for a variety of student needs, yet not consider just how broad a

student population wants to use the library, risking creating a space that is meant for all but caters for too few. For the moment, I will move on to discuss how I intend to address these questions.

3.2 Method selection

To answer the research questions, I have selected qualitative methods, based around ethnographic techniques. The nature of the questions means quantitative research is inappropriate: it would not deal sufficiently with reasons or individual purposes of library users to the extent that I require, and would box and categorise responses in ways that limit them without really learning why participants might respond, react, or relate to each other. The literature review demonstrates that the most comprehensive results stem from utilising ethnographic methods. Developing a deep understanding of library use necessitates an ethnographic approach, rather than counting popular spaces and computer use, or finding a prescriptive fix for 'problem use' or praise of the 'right' kind of use as was evident in qualitative research detailed in the literature review. To enable me to learn about student practices, I needed to be able to gather data that provides extensive in-depth information, and ethnographic based methods have been successfully utilised in highly influential library research in recent years.

Ethnographic based techniques, specifically observation and semi-structured interviewing, were selected with the intention to learn about the ways students move, utilise and react to their surroundings and each other. Ethnography uses a combination of observations and interviews to gather qualitative data, its roots are in anthropological research conducted to learn more about groups of people, their culture, behaviour, and interactions. Observational techniques allow the researcher to gather data from the primary point of interest: they place the researcher in the centre of the setting(s) and locale(s) in terms of accessing the actions needed to answer their questions. They also provide the researcher with the opportunity to sit to the side of the actions and actors¹⁴ and gather data without being obtrusive, thus minimising skewing behaviours, something that even qualitative surveying could risk by design alone. The method requires detailed descriptions and notes to be provided on what occurs where, how and with whom in the observed situation, thus providing huge scope for learning about the actors and their culture, influences, and relations; the nature of this data is incredibly difficult to gather in such depth in other methods. Interview techniques are guided by both interviewer and interviewee, and are often based on themes rather than

¹⁴ i.e. people observed during data collection who produce or are involved with actions logged during the research.

incorporating lengthy lists of specific questions, allowing the data to emerge and flow rather than being forced into specific directions by language use and question design. The ethnographic methods allow a greater flexibility than quantitative and some other qualitative methods, as ethnography allows a much more subject-led approach, with the opportunity to develop and reconsider the reasons for behaviour, actions and reactions, and indeed the research questions themselves as data collection progresses.

For the nature of the data required, an understanding of behaviours and use within academic libraries is necessary, so observation of library users in the library environment is essential. Observational data can be used to develop themes to be discussed in interviews to gather a better understanding: interviewees can provide more information for why a particular behaviour occurs, causes specific reactions that may or may not be unique to that interviewee, how it may be interpreted by differing parties/individuals within the environment, and more. Ethnographic methods have been used several times in library research, and have produced results that allowed library staff to develop themselves and their perceptions of library use, as well as modify services and adapt to aid students and provide facilities that best match their requirements. Delcore et al (2009) examine student life both on and off campus in more detail to learn why certain library usage behaviour occurs, while White (2009) writes up biographies of participants in his research of use of library web pages and provisions to gain a better understanding of why students may work in a particular pattern or use/discard certain resources. Both use ethnography to develop a broader understanding of their participants as unique individuals and as representative members of the student body who will not have wholly unique opinions of library services. While much ethnographic library research has utilised the data in these practical ways, it has also discovered usage patterns and student preferences that have opened up staff understanding of the changing student populations of their facilities. I may move away from a prescriptive use of results, but I do not want to totally discard implications arising for services from space use.

I have informed my use of ethnographic-based methods via critical ethnography (CE). Critical ethnography utilises ethnographic methods within a critical approach to assess social structures and power relationships, with the goal of generating emancipatory actions and the reduction or elimination of oppression (Thomas, 1993). It is designed to give voice to participants who may not always have the means to communicate or articulate their situation. Critical ethnographic methods are very similar in terms of data collection, involving the gathering of observational field notes in thick description, conduction of open-ended interviewing, and providing descriptions of actors and incidents. Where CE differs from standard ethnography is primarily analysis of data. CE

analysis is essentially political; it avoids providing pure description and embraces using a specific critical perspective e.g. Marxism, Feminism (Carspecken, 1999; Thomas, 1993). It allows the researcher to examine relationships between actors at a deeper level, considering power relations and social settings as key in the way actors respond to their environments and each other. It provides a way of combining ontological and epistemological reasoning within analysis, rather than forcing the researcher to simplify data as 'these actions are as they appear here' as is common in conventional ethnography. Using this method has allowed me to work objectively yet reflectively, appreciating that while I analyse data deeply within a critical context to understand what is and why in a specific scenario or situation, I am simultaneously aware of my own professional and personal experience and limitations and the impact they made on analysis.

I have chosen to take this route partially based on my own professional practice observations throughout my career: I have observed that students react to each other in different ways and to different members of staff in different ways that suggest there may be a number of complex unspoken/unconscious culturally political relationships within the library space. A certain level of subversion of authority in the library occurs, which this research aims to examine in more depth. However, subversion of authority can be of benefit to one group of users while also to the detriment of others. Certainly, there are numerous 'Spotted' Facebook groups for students specific to their own university, where anonymous contributors post photos of famous people or other students with slogans about library rules and specific members of staff. Some of these groups contain motivational images and slogans, but many include photos taken of other students covertly with jokes about their behaviours or appearance. A prime example is for one group for where I am employed, where students used an image of Wesley Snipes in one of the Blade films, wearing dark glasses and a leather jacket with the caption "THERE IS ONLY BOTTLED WATER ALLOWED IN THE MOTHERFUCKING LIBRARY", suggesting a reference to library wardens asking students to put away fizzy drinks or preventing them from taking hot drinks to the floors when they enter the building. The image was printed out and posted in various areas within the library. The library wardens had already been shown the print-out and found it to be amusing, but also removed the posters and continued to enforce the rule. While this is a very simple and potentially trivial example (to some parties!) in humorous subversion, taken at a literal level, it only potentially benefits those who do not agree with the creation and enforcement of this rule and consider it unjust. Those who have experienced problems as a result of others drinking something other than water have their academic life disrupted if, for example, rare but important textbooks are disposed of because of spillages rendering them unusable. The

example demonstrates just one of many potential rifts and imbalances within the academic library environment, but also suggests some discrepancy and disagreement between those who are asked to enforce rules and the rules themselves. It suggests the existence of further imbalances in rules, whether environmental or academic, spoken or unspoken, subverted or embraced by different parties.

3.3 Theoretical approach: influences from a Feminist Standpoint Theory

I have selected to follow a feminist approach to inform my research: using feminist guidance is most suited to representing the power dynamics and diversity of academic library users. Power here reflects consideration of dominance¹⁵ within library spaces (be it be enacted by library users or by staff), but also how individuals are already engaging with power to enable themselves or perceive their own lack of power. My choice of feminism as a perspective has been specifically chosen for two reasons. The first is as a personal belief/ethos: I consider myself an “advocate” of feminism (hooks, 2000, p. 31)¹⁶ and I feel a feminist approach allows me to look at the power dynamics and diversity of HE library users in a way that enables positive changes developed from research findings.

The second reason I have adopted a feminist-influenced approach is that professional practice has led me to question, as implied in my research questions above, how students interact with each other. Throughout the literature review I have demonstrated that research examining library spaces is primarily concerned with examining usage of spaces with basic considerations; those of environmental comfort, design ethos, or success in terms of footfall and positive quantitative feedback. Those studies that look beyond the design and examine the needs of their users in more detail do examine student behaviour with regards to class and social group to some extent, but still fall short of considering their interactions in the environment and service that is provided for them.

As I read, I found myself feeling frustrated at the lack of observation and analysis of natural behaviour and a more extensive discussion of the student interactions with each other and staff members beyond simulations and theatre-style workshops (participants improvising designated scenarios to provide discussion and understanding of particular

¹⁵ Domination for the purposes of this research is defined in specific analytical contexts later in the thesis, but more generally indicates control of either a space or people, via actions or the size of the population.

¹⁶ hooks suggests the use of the phrase “I advocate feminism” over “I am a feminist” to encourage both discussion of what feminism is, and interest in the potential feminism can have for everyone.

issues). I have observed in professional practice that there is a great deal of variation in how well different students cope with IT provisions, specific design configurations, and different usage within a library setting. IT rich environments may unintentionally discriminate against those not familiar or comfortable with using computers or particularly advanced technology (which may include people from lower income backgrounds or older students, who may not have access to current technology or to computers of their own at all): the library space can make students feel disempowered. Some user groups (in particular by gender) are more prevalent in certain areas at certain times, often due to preferences for proximity to a variety of resources including textbooks and refreshments (Kinsley et al., 2014; Ramsden, 2011; Wong, 2009), but also because some students visit libraries on the basis of 'as and when' where pressures outside of academic life mean visits must happen during specific periods (Harrop & Turpin, 2013; Regalado & Smale, 2015). Unwritten rules may be formed by the dominant user group, creating potential imbalances that may or may not be nurtured or disrupted by formal institutional rules.

The feminist perspective is particularly suited to studying the modern university environment: a feminist approach can aid the researcher to examine in more detail the nature of power relations between user groups, with gender as a particular focus, but also aids each participant to have their own voice, while recognising that there may be context specific interpretations from each individual. To ensure that I enable participant voices to be expressed across different groups, as well as represent power, I chose to adopt an approach based around Feminist Standpoint Theory.

3.4 Using a Feminist Standpoint Theory approach.

Feminist Standpoint Theory (FST) is one of the numerous approaches that has developed in an attempt to provide a feminist/'female' science and research perspective. From an epistemological approach, there are as many discussions of what makes a research approach feminist as there are definitions of 'feminism'. Feminist researchers argue that 'male' science/research is dominated by masculine techniques, locating research within a definable answer, and excluding or diminishing female and marginalised voices (Harding, 1986; Letherby, 2003; Maynard, 1994). Feminist researchers primarily focus on understanding women's lives, which usually means focussing on women as respondents, but can introduce men as respondents to gain understanding of their experiences in a society that privileges males (hooks, 2000; Letherby, 2003). Because of my intention to give voice to multiple accounts of experiences, I have chosen to follow a feminist standpoint approach, using it to locate and represent the experiences of multiple

perspectives (including females and males, as well as class, race and disability) and the power dynamics that influence and manifest for each.

Feminist Standpoint Theory proposes that women's experiences are the main source of understanding societal oppressions and power dynamics: different women from different groups and backgrounds will experience the world in different ways, thus utilising their experiences will present a wider view and understanding of the world. Millen (1997) suggests that standpoint theory has developed from the Marxist proposal that women are oppressed, and thus can not only understand their own experiences as oppressed, but can provide an understanding of their oppressors as a result, and thus the world as a whole. McLennan (1995) argues feminists should reject the idea that research is 'neutral' (as endorsed by feminist empiricists, who argue that 'male' science can be modified to remove male bias), and adopt a "commitment to knowledge from the standpoint of women's experience and feminist theory" (McLennan, 1995, p. 392). Feminist Standpoint Theory reasons that the lives of women can provide a more 'true' point of knowledge because they are culturally and politically located in an oppressed position i.e. that knowledge is situated: women have, as Smith (Smith, 2004b, p. 21) describes it, a "point of view of 'women's place' [where] the values assigned to different aspects of the world are changed." Women's' lives are multifaceted, their experience is developed through their situations as students/academics, at work, and at home, making experience and knowledge contextual to social positioning (Smith, 2004b). Harding, a prominent proponent and developer of FST, cites Smith as being a highly influential FST researcher, a position that Smith rejects as she locates herself as a sociologist researching from "women's viewpoint" (Smith, 2004a, p. 244). Irrespective of whether or not Smith sees herself as a key influence on FST, Harding refers to Smith's work on women's lives as demonstrating a key point: that women are assigned roles by men that limit women's capacity to act freely (Harding, 1993). Harding (1993) argues that FST is based on the existence of a social hierarchy that endeavours to sustain the marginalisation of certain groups, specifically women, and that 'male' science frequently ignores the marginalised, in contrast to FST which focusses on the marginalised. Harding continues to describe how the knowledge of the marginalised should be "*for* marginalized people [...] rather than *for* the use only of dominant groups in their projects of administering and managing the lives of marginalized people" (Harding, 1993, p. 56. Author's emphasis). The intention is to ensure the groups featured in research benefit and find themselves enabled and empowered through their involvement, rather than allowing their oppressors to utilise the knowledge produced to consolidate their control over the marginalised. Marginalised people can thus take control of their own lives through ownership of their knowledge position (in that they know more about their

oppressors from the point of being oppressed), and being provided with a voice, a standpoint, via the researcher.

Feminist Standpoint Theory has been criticised for assuming that women are unified and can provide an overarching theory of oppression for all women: the assumption is that all women can be clustered into labels, with respondents in research providing knowledge transferable to all women. The underlying theory has also been critiqued for potentially leading to more power dynamics, as utilising it implies one group of women has a more 'real' experience, with more truth, than the experiences of another group. Additionally, researchers utilising standpoint theory have been accused of trying to create a shift from male supremacy to female supremacy (Letherby, 2003). Standpoint theorists have been accused of relativism, an assumption that there is no one true unifying answer, a criticism that is rejected by Harding (1986) for suggesting feminist theorists are trying to shift directly from a male-centred to female-centred theory without considering there may be an aim to remove overarching assumptions of gender. Stanley and Wise (1990) also contest these criticisms, answering that there is no need to refer to one single standpoint, but multiple standpoints. Cain (1990) points out that standpoints are linked directly to political and socio-cultural positions rather than biology. To approach standpoints from a biological perspective means to limit the marginalised to an arbitrary gender binary construct, rather than the multifaceted perspectives that race, ethnicity, class, sexuality and the broad mix of gender identities that can be found in a multitude of standpoints. Acknowledging the differences and similarities between different standpoints ensures we also acknowledge that there are differences in oppression, that women can and do oppress and hold power over other women. As Letherby (2003) points out, oppression does not fit easily and neatly into labels of gender: women in the west, whether aware of it or not, will endorse the oppression of women if they buy cheap clothes made in factories by women paid low wages in unsafe circumstances (see also Flax (1987, p. 642)). Similarly, not all men easily and neatly fit into masculine norms. Each gender is more complex than biological labelling, and thus it is of particular importance to ensure multiple standpoints are considered throughout FST research.

Using FST means that stereotypes and identities assigned to the marginalised by dominant or oppressing groups can be challenged and dismantled. Patricia Hill Collins refers to oppressor-created "controlling images" identifying African American women as a collection of caring domestic servants, controllers, or sexually available: these identities have become so familiar that they progressed into being adopted and perceived as norms by the African American women themselves (Collins, 2000, p. 284).

The groups who are oppressed and forced into stereotypes are thus blamed for the oppression itself. Critiques of FST have claimed that the process of creating standpoints automatically 'others' those people identifying with that standpoint. However, Collins (2000) suggests that in the process of understanding their own standpoint more, the marginalised and oppressed are able to become empowered by their knowledge, an idea that Harding (1993, 2004) agrees with. Harding argues that FST is not ethnocentric or a process of othering, but a way of opening discussion, and helping us to learn how oppressing or dominant groups are warping the way various standpoints (whether the researcher is part of that group or not) are (mis)represented within stereotypes (Harding, 1993). Additionally, Collins refers to a process of "call and response" in African-American cultures that requires people to listen to a speaker, respond, and involves participation from all group members in a respectful and empathic manner (Collins, 2000, p. 261). Applying this process to the perspective of a feminist standpoint approach, Collins uses it to demonstrate the complexities of varying standpoints, and how, if combined, they can feed into an overall larger portrait of different experiences that demonstrate where society is failing the marginalised, and thus help develop a stronger community across those standpoints to aid resolutions and actions. Collins refers to Yuval-Davis's work on transversal politics as a way of feeding into this process to help generate solidarity between different groups who experience marginalisation and oppression and reduce the sense that definitions of these groups are simple and clear-cut.

Yuval-Davis considers transversal politics a means to allow different groups to form a "coalition [which] should be set not in terms of 'who' we are but in terms of what we want to achieve." (Yuval-Davis, 1997, p. 126). Transversal politics is based on standpoint epistemology, but incorporates the ideas that "differences are important [...but] should encompass, rather than replace, notions of equality." (Yuval-davis, 1999, p. 95), and that an overarching shared position can exist simultaneously with those differences, such as a feminist collective with membership from different classes, sexuality etc. Collins feels this approach can create an opportunity to develop multiple standpoints while also acknowledging that there are differences and similarities between the standpoints (Collins, 2000). Transversal politics advocates a process of 'rooting' and 'shifting' i.e. a person remains rooted in their experiences, identity and knowledge, retaining a sense of self, but also makes efforts to shift their perception to match those of other people who have different experiences and identities (while also retaining personal identity and values) (Yuval-Davis, 1997, p. 130). Shifting provides an opportunity to develop an understanding between different representations of experience at individual and cultural levels, that then leads to solidarity and promotion of shared

values and empowerment goals (as long as those goals do not lead to further oppression and corruption of power). Yuval-Davis warns that this process is not always possible, because there may still be a conflict of interest leading to different goals. Shifting is achieved via a process of 'situated imagination', a concept introduced by Stoetzler and Yuval-Davis to be used alongside situated knowledge and thus further develop FST (Stoetzler & Yuval-Davis, 2002). The process of 'imagining' deepens a perspective into a standpoint that represents and generates knowledge that then creates the possibility of achieving a goal. To develop an imagination approach as well as studying experience from an intellectual approach means adding meaning and deeper understanding that can thus lead to social agency as the goal becomes more achievable (Stoetzler & Yuval-Davis, 2002).

By utilising a feminist standpoint approach, informed by Harding (1986), Collins' (2000) approach incorporating her use of transversal politics, I have endeavoured to give voice to participants who may not always have the opportunity to speak¹⁷, although as discussed in chapter 4, respondents were small in number and thus I have been limited in opportunities to provide these voices. However, with the intention of understanding these experiences further, and as per hooks (2000) and Letherby (2003), I have endeavoured to include male voices, and the voices of those who hold more power i.e. staff. Doing so allows me to create a broader perspective on the dynamics and perceptions of usage, and while men are not the focus of the study, they are situated in different levels of power (e.g. class, ethnicity), albeit from a more dominant place in society than that of women. Indeed, Harding argues that men can also make contributions to knowledge in the development of their male feminist standpoints, particularly where males endeavour to struggle against male dominance and supremacy (Harding, 1998). A multitude of standpoints aids the development of a better understanding of power dynamics and how they operate within an HE library environment: different standpoints may share similar needs and perspectives, albeit for different reasons. As Andrews (2016) suggests, needs may vary, but by trying to solve a problem experienced by one or two marginalised groups, the solution will often benefit the many. Using FST helps develop an understanding of how groups may be represented or marginalised/overlooked in the creation of supportive learning spaces, and how groups can engage in power relations. It can also aid in representing how a shared need for empowerment across different groups can be aided or disrupted by (what are primarily good) intentions of controlling stakeholders in library developments (i.e. architects/designers, management, staff).

¹⁷ Certainly some interviewees expressed frustration at communicating their issues with library facilities with library staff but not receiving responses that reflected their own knowledge and experiences.

In the process of developing standpoints, I will group people together that will sometimes necessarily be based on assumptions I have made regarding their gender and ethnicity, particularly in the case of observational data, but informed by demographic information from each site (this is discussed in more detail in chapter 4). However, they are developed with the understanding that the groups they are designed to represent have subgroups that will have a variety of standpoints within them, and the overarching group structure will share overarching behaviours and needs, while I also consider the potential for diversity of these behaviours and needs. I may not be in the position to develop more complex multiple standpoints, but I endeavour to be as representative as possible, and to provide opportunities for positive, supportive change.

Utilising standpoint theory under a CE approach is not an easy route to undertake. Like any ethnographic approach CE is intensive, with all actions and interactions throughout observation considered of value and in need of recording. It is difficult to prove validity and truth, where triangulation of data means extensive data collection. It depends greatly on both the receptiveness of the actors and the techniques of the researcher to be able to draw out interview data that provides triangulation points and access to deeper understanding of meaning, and indeed the willingness of respondents to volunteer their time can be difficult alone. Additionally, to retain a reflexive, critical standpoint requires understanding of social settings that may be difficult to acquire: policies and policy makers, social groups and access may all potentially create a blinkered perspective of the site, whether the gatekeeper/actor consciously creates this or not. The critical perspective may also be resisted or disregarded by those participating if they become aware of that research purpose, for example if they have a negative perception of feminism or feminist research. However, using CE with a feminist approach has allowed me to analyse data in new ways beyond my professional experiences and capacity. It has allowed me to engage with data in order to understand actions, moving away from shallow interpretation and pure description towards meaningful social ontological discussion, and thus move towards improving the positions of actors. The combination of CE and FST is applied in the analysis to locate power structures, incidents that may result in (further) marginalising groups, and in identifying how issues generated by and within libraries via a variety of factors can be addressed (all of which is discussed in more detail in chapter 4).

3.5 Reflexivity

The very nature of feminist-influenced research means reflexivity and awareness of personal positioning is important: in this section I situate myself and my personal beliefs in more detail, for transparency. I am white, a CIS¹⁸ female, and consider myself to be lower middle class: that is, I am well educated (and have easy access to continue my education), make a comfortable living, and thus perceive myself as comparatively privileged to some of the groups who attend university. My family was relatively comfortably off when I was growing up until my parents divorced, at which point my mother had to work several part time jobs to care for my older brother and myself. My brother and I are both first generation university attendees, and were lucky enough to attend when fees were only just being introduced at the end of the 1990s and were comparatively low, while small loans were available to those who had lower income (which I supplemented with part time work in a public library, and the beginnings of my library career). Since my undergraduate degree, I have been lucky enough to be supported by my employers throughout my postgraduate education, whether by being offered study leave or support in funding the cost of studying. All this leads me to accept that I am in a privileged position: my colour means I experience no racial discrimination, and the support networks I've been lucky enough to be part of mean I might have experienced periods of low income, but am now in a comfortable position. This may place me at a distance to some current students who have to self-fund their education costs in times when fees are considerably higher and costly student loans are the norm. However, my experiences growing up mean I have some knowledge of how difficult it can be to manage on limited income.

As I have hinted at previously in this thesis, my curiosity around user practices and behaviour in libraries is longstanding, but I have always primarily been interested in the 'why' and the 'how' as opposed to controlling, policing and changing library users. In spite of this, there will be situations where I have preconceptions of what is appropriate or inappropriate in a library. I try to actively question my own personal beliefs and preferences for library use when I see something that conflicts with these preferences or surprises me, but sometimes this might prove difficult. My profession combined with my status as a research student gives me some balance between library user and library staff, but still will skew my positioning to some extent and potentially create conflicting concerns¹⁹.

¹⁸ i.e. I identify with the gender I was assigned at birth.

¹⁹ A simplistic example of this would be the need for a student to access food and drink while studying for long periods, but from a professional position the process of cleaning up after or purchasing new resources ruined from spillage means I have to find some level of compensation between the two.

3.6 'Answering' the research questions: finding and discovering meaning within the academic library environment

Using critical ethnographic methods in the context of my research questions and concepts, I'll now take each question in turn and discuss how the method will retrieve information that will aid discovering relationships and actions, and thus also aid in moving towards resolving power struggles.

- **How do students behave in and use academic libraries? What do students do when they visit the library? How do students interact with each other when they are in the library? How do students interact with staff in the library?** Student behaviour, use and interaction with other students and staff is primarily assessed via observation, utilising thick description to gather as much data as possible. Semi-structured interviews are used to triangulate observation with how students see their use of spaces and their perception of their interactions with staff (if applicable), with 'touchstone tours'²⁰ used at the start of the interview to generate a rapport with the respondents as well as gain a better understanding of 'their' library space.

What impact does design have on use and perceptions of use? When students use academic library spaces, does the design of the space help or hinder their chosen use? How do staff understand and interpret the way students use the spaces in the library, and do they try to modify student behaviour as a result of that interpretation of use? Space impact is collected via observation and semi-structured interviews. Observations provide data on more overt issues, such as whether students conform to planned and expected use of a space (for example in silent spaces). Semi-structured interviews with students provide information on how individuals perceive library spaces, whether or not they find them supportive and feel they have an influence on their practice. Staff interpretation and impact data are gathered via semi-structured interviewing, but should any staff be observed in the context of student use of spaces their actions and interactions are noted. Any available numerical evidence of changes in the nature of enquiries made of staff will be considered, but will be used as supporting evidence for staff comments.

²⁰ A user experience technique where students provide a tour of the library, providing the researcher with information about the spaces they use or do not use, as well as some more informal conversation to aid in comfort levels and familiarity before the interview formally commences.

- **Do differing perceptions of appropriate use create inequalities between students, and between students and staff?** Student/staff interactions, and any issues of inequalities are again primarily discovered via observational data, and are discussed in semi-structured interviews.

Obtaining the appropriate data is a complex process: interactions are not guaranteed to occur while observations are conducted. I accept that my presence, whether blatant or unobtrusive, still was noticed to a certain degree, and may have influenced behaviour within the environment, whether consciously or subconsciously on the part of the actor. Thick descriptions are time consuming and intensive to take down, regardless of technique or observational framework, and even so risk missing some elements of actions.

When conducting interviews with students, they depended very much on both myself as an interviewer creating a rapport with the interviewee/actor, my position as librarian, researcher, post-graduate student automatically placing me in position of both authority and societal Other (as a combination of all three) before we were even aware of where our conversation took us. When conducting interviews with staff, the same issue arose, with some differences; while I may not be as much a figure of authority and power, I may have influenced as an outsider a reserved response from wariness. There may even have been a situation where the interviewee used the relationship as an opportunity to release frustration at their own authority figures or subordinates. However, in all these cases, responses can still indicate where power struggles lie, where inequalities exist, where there is a need for further analysis and interviewing to draw out underlying issues. Some of these difficulties were overcome by using techniques to develop familiarity quickly, such as in the touchstone tours, and discussion of food and drink in the coffee houses I sometimes visited with respondents.

Analysis is inductive, based around Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis (2006). Rather than create expectations of results, I have built up discussion based around what is present in a scenario, rather than making assumptions and seeking evidence prior to gathering data. I chose this method as, yet again, I am all too aware of my own professional experiences and the assumptions and presuppositions my colleagues have made about what is the 'right' way to use a space. In contrast to other analytic approaches (e.g. grounded theory) Braun and Clarke acknowledge personal awareness and reflection is important in the analytical approach, and that the researcher cannot truly separate themselves and their experience from their research. The intention is to be reflexive, aware of my own limitations and presuppositions, and consider them

carefully during the analytical process: awareness led me to be more critical of my own analysis and to be more open to other usage concepts and ideas.

3.7 Chapter summary

In this chapter I have detailed the overarching research aim, to discover whether academic libraries provide a supportive and inclusive learning environment, and the research questions, which are focussed on learning more about academic library use, interactions between inhabitants and between inhabitants and staff. I have raised the issue that marginalised/underrepresented groups of library users may encounter power dynamics that enable or restrict their capacity to use library space, be that via other users, staff, or the space itself limiting opportunities for studying. I have introduced my chosen method of ethnographic techniques, incorporating observations and interviews, to collect data that will be used to address the research questions, and how the method is informed by using a Feminist Standpoint Theory (FST) approach. FST provides the opportunity to develop understanding of power relations and experiences of library users, be they students or staff, irrespective of background, as well as a way to create opportunities to help improve access to facilities and support services.

I will now move to address the logistics of data collection, the sites and participants engaged with, and the data analysis process, using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis, including how FST feeds into that process.

Chapter 4. Methodology

In the previous chapter, I described my choice of using a Feminist Standpoint Theory approach for my theoretical framework, my research aim and questions, and how my choice of ethnographic based methods have helped produce information to answer them. In this chapter, I detail the actual process of data gathering, and the practicalities of the research as opposed to the philosophical reasoning behind it. I begin by discussing the procedural elements of the observation and interview methods, including how I refer to gender and race, sampling choices on an institutional level, and progress through the pilot stages. I consider the data analysis process, examining the method of analysis to draw conclusions. Finally, I discuss the ethics of my research, and how I ensured I maintained high ethical standards.

4.1 Observation methods

I have assessed student behaviour and interactions between students, and between students and staff, primarily via observations, taking as detailed a description as possible to gather as much data as possible. Observation for the purposes of this research entailed the use of a framework for collecting fieldnotes, and placing myself in various spaces in each setting to take note of what was occurring in each space. I have adopted Spradley's Nine Dimensions of Descriptive Observation (Spradley, 1980, p. 78) for fieldnotes:

1. SPACE - layout of the physical setting: rooms, outdoor spaces, etc.
2. ACTORS - the names and relevant details of the people involved
3. ACTIVITIES - the various activities of the actors
4. OBJECTS - physical elements: furniture etc.
5. ACTS - specific individual actions
6. EVENTS - particular occasions, e.g. meetings
7. TIME - the sequence of events
8. GOALS - what actors are attempting to accomplish
9. FEELINGS - emotions in particular contexts

Spradley's observational framework was selected here to aid in the focussed collecting of data that considered the actors and settings in many variants: it extensively considers a range of elements highly relevant to my research questions. However, it also contains some aspects that I could not find out easily during observations, such as actors' specific goals at the time of being observed. I therefore used a modified version of the dimensions, only noting overt statements of goals and feelings (Dimensions 8 and 9 above) in observations: logging overt statements is still debatable as to how reliable the statements can be as there will always be hidden, unspoken goals and feelings (and overt statements do not necessarily mean they are being acted upon), but the same can be said of any data collected in any form. Additionally, details of the actors incorporated into observations were largely unknown: in these cases, I logged basic data where possible, and where relevant to the research i.e. gender, race/ethnicity (where identifiable). However, as I discuss in section 4.2, I have used interviews to supplement observations and learn more about the more difficult-to-classify aspects of actor behaviour and goals.

It is important to know at this point how gender and race were recorded in observations. Gender was recorded on a binary female/male basis, primarily using assumptions based on appearances for lack of any opportunity to confirm gender with actors. This logging of gender is based on biological sex, but is not always only about biological differences: it also involved linking behaviour to gender roles and performances of gender (for example societal gender normative roles and their manifestation within behaviours). To ask actors what gender they identify with could have 1) been obtrusive and invasive of their personal life should they not wish to discuss their gender or preferred pronoun and 2) disrupted observations and removed natural behaviour. I am aware that gender is not binary, and while I would prefer not to label people by assumptions based on appearance, it was necessary to do so to collect the data needed for this research in terms of whether or not demographics of the institutions demonstrated differences or similarities and the power structures in action (i.e. via domination of space).

With respect to race and ethnicity, I again made assumptions primarily based on appearance, but also considered the demographic base of each institution, using data from each on their attending population. It is useful here for me to define what I mean for the purposes of this research by race and ethnicity. Race here is an overarching term for ancestral country of origin, for example a British Asian may be not be a recent immigrant to the UK but their parents or grandparents may be. I refer to ethnicity

regarding the cultural variations across different people with the same ancestral country of origin. I may refer to groups of British Asians in observational data because the demographics of that observation site explicitly detail British Asians rather than other Asian identities as a portion of the institution's population, which risks my representing students falling into this group as one consistent group of people without variations between individuals or groups of individuals. I make assumptions on attributing race to actors because, as with gender, I cannot ask actors which race and ethnicity they describe themselves as, which will create the possibility of me incorrectly labelling actors (and thus potentially creating inaccuracies in the data analysis). A white researcher such as myself conducting research that includes collecting and analysing data including race and/or ethnicity is problematic by default. Historically ethnography and anthropology has sometimes been used for horrifically racist purposes, from labelling people as 'savages' and purposely 'othering' people to supporting arguments for eugenics, but has also been utilised to oppose and fight these racist claims (Mukhopadhyay & Moses, 1997). My intention is to ensure all kinds of library users are represented in this research, particularly those who demonstrate membership of marginalised groups (who in some cases are identified through observations or interviews) and that any practices and usage patterns are identified to ensure a supportive, enabling and accessible environment. However, by labelling actors by race, I risk 'othering' groups and developing a negative power relationship between myself, as a white researcher, and any non-white²¹ actors and interviewees. I risk (unintentionally) positioning myself as a 'white saviour' and representing myself as a voice for all British Asians at the institutions, portraying myself as responsible for fixing racialization. Nevertheless, the issue of power between the researcher and the researched is one that already exists, whether or not my race and ethnicity matches those of my actors and interviewees (Pillow, 2003). The purpose of this research is to discover whether academic libraries provide a supportive and inclusive learning environment, and the nature of this aim requires an understanding of behaviours that can be designated racial by staff (as discussed in chapter 7).

Arguments made by Feminist Standpoint theorists are that the researcher should not need to match the researched in terms of gender, ethnicity or class (Harding, 1998; Narayan, 2004). Elliott (1997) argues that it is impossible to ever know everything about

²¹ The use of 'non-white' as a label is in itself problematic, implying that white is the standard label for race/ethnicity over any other grouping. However, I use it here in the context of my own racial identity, as a comparison to myself and my own whiteness rather than as an umbrella term to identify racial and ethnic differences.

the experiences of any person or group we do not share all the characteristics of. However, we can share *some* knowledge and identify issues that emerge repeatedly so that we can endeavour to deal with these issues (Elliott, 1997). Similarly, Narayan raises concerns over a lack of acknowledgement of oppression but also that “our sympathizers [...] may claim that their interest provides a warrant for them to speak for us, as dominant groups throughout history have spoken for the dominated.” (Narayan, 2004, p. 219). My intention is to identify whether power dynamics, particularly between library inhabitants and staff, extend to issues with racializing behaviours. Some people interviewed specifically identified problematic behaviour as being attributed to racial groups. To address my own risk of racializing behaviours observed or discussed in interviews, I have utilised research on British Asians (who constitute the largest UK demographic group after British whites attending the institutions at the sites included in this research) in HE in the UK (Bagguley & Hussain, 2016; Basit, 2012; Bhopal, 2008; Ghuman, 2002) in an effort to understand how ethnicity can impact on HE experiences (see section 2.10 in the literature review). I have made efforts to understand the pressures British Asians encounter and consider these in my analysis to ensure I am minimising any racialized representations. I will never be able to fully understand what it is to be a British Asian studying in HE because I am white, but I have attempted to use the process of remembering my own roots while also trying to understand and empathise as per transversal politics. I acknowledge that my representation of each standpoint in this research will have limitations based on my own experiences and situation. And as Chadderton (2012) suggests when discussing the problems of being a white researcher, it is too easy to analyse and represent data and findings from a white position, but maintaining a reflexive position and presenting both the similarities and discrepancies between people provides an opportunity to break down my own assumptions.

As the pilot observations progressed, I found that some observations were lacking minor details that in hindsight would have proved useful in the analytical process: this led me to modify my note-taking procedure. In ethnographic observation, all details are considered important irrespective of whether they seem to be at the time of observation, but the skill to collect this information takes some practice to develop. When I initially utilised a continuous narrative of observations, I found it difficult to make it clear for later reading what was actually occurring and what my own input was. The ambiguity of fieldnote content is not a new issue, even to the most seasoned ethnographer or anthropologist: Jackson’s work on the definition of fieldnotes (1990) demonstrates how

unstable the concept is amongst its adopters, with her respondents unable to agree as to whether fieldnotes are data, or mnemonic to the generation of data (p.7).

After encountering the problems of clarity in my notes, I chose to modify my observation notation method to a double-entry format of fieldnote writing. I moved to using a two-columned table to record events in the left column in detailed description, with my personal feelings and reflections on the right. Using double-entry notes enabled me to make a more objective description of the actions and actors observed, while remaining reflexive by monitoring my initial thoughts and reactions to the events I observed as they happened, and my own comfort levels and needs. Keeping the personal separate from the action yet simultaneously acknowledging it aided the analytical process later, and served as prompts for concerns, but the importance of remaining reflexive throughout the research process as to what meaning I may be placing on data needs to be considered. The use of personal notes provided reminders of the way the setting, actors and actions could influence how the environment and observation felt and was communicated to me as the observer. Reflective practice thus allowed me to consider my own potential bias in logging data, ask myself whether that potential bias and experience skewed any data in the analytical process so that I represented actors fairly, and aids in my own (ever-continuing) learning process (as in transversal processes within FST). The use of detailed descriptions in my fieldnotes was an important part of ensuring as much detail as possible was collected to enable 'thicker', more detailed description when writing up observations during the analysis. My initial attempts at concise but less detailed notes left too many opportunities to begin to mis-remember or mis-interpret my own notation. Detailed notes made during the data collection process were possible because I was not directly engaged in participation with library users, and was purely observing.

Pilot observations were conducted at the two selected sites (see section 4.3), in order to:

- Assess the appropriateness of Spradley's Nine Dimensions method for observation
- Check for the most appropriate fieldnote-taking method for both researcher usability and data quality
- Target specific areas in each building for data collection.

Initially, I was joined by a fellow researcher for a total of six observations to assist with assessing the pilot process. A graduate of anthropology and working as both a researcher and in research support, she participated in observations and we compared note-taking styles and points of interest in the observation process. Conducting pilot observations with her produced a way of checking the content of our notes and the style to see what worked on a personal level, but also a data quality level. We found that we were logging actors and actions in the same way, albeit with minor differences in details: for example, she would log a description of their clothing to help identify them consistently in her notes, while I would number them and their seating position. Both of these methods of identifying actors are flawed but useful: actors can easily change clothing (adding or removing coats, sweaters and so on), and switch seats during the observation process, but both myself and my colleague found our chosen method worked well for us personally and our data was consistently the same.

I mention detailed description as a note taking method as opposed to thick description as made famous by Geertz (1993) in particular. Geertz discusses the need for thick over thin description in fieldnotes, referring to Ryle's definition of both: in thick description, a wink may be discussed in tiny intricacies of detail as to what it might symbolise in the winker's culture and to the receiver of the wink; whether the wink is an involuntary spasm and whether it would be interpreted by the 'receiver' as that or an actual communication. Thus, thick description endeavours to locate intention within the actions observed. Thin description involves no interpretation and is purely the reporting of the events observed. Geertz argues that the object of ethnography is to find the moment between thick and thin description:

...a stratified hierarchy of meaningful structures in terms of which twitches, winks, fake-winks, parodies, rehearsals of parodies are produced, perceived, and interpreted, and without which they would not (not even the zero-form twitches, which, as a cultural category, are as much nonwinks as winks are nontwitches) in fact exist, no matter what anyone did or didn't do with his eyelids. (Geertz, 1993, p. 7)

Geertz here is saying is that thick description is important to ethnography to ensure that the interpretation of cultural norms is visible in the fieldnotes, and that fieldnotes need to have some level of analysis built into the notes to generate understanding of the

situation, rather than detailing actions that ultimately have no meaning in the way the fieldnotes detail them (thin description). However, I was venturing into a field that I already had some understanding of, albeit from a very specific perspective of librarian and sometime student, and could safely make some level of assumptions without needing to note every minute detail of action. For a simplistic example, I could note a person arriving at a computer, using the keyboard to type something then sitting doing nothing for a short period (thin description), and easily surmise them to be a student logging on to a computer: they are most likely a student because they have access to the computer²², the process of typing on the keyboard is inputting the log-in name and password to access the computer, and the waiting process is for the computer to log in and load up the operating system and any software that runs on start up. "A student logging on to a computer" is still, on some level, a comparatively surmised description, but it does not entail any analysis of implication or cultural norms behind the action, such as concern for deadlines, desire to check emails, and so on: at this stage I preferred to avoid surmising too deeply about how the individual felt without consultation and discussion with informants. I endeavoured to avoid interpretation at the point of data collection because I wanted to avoid making assumptions before I had completed collection, and to avoid becoming distracted from the event as it occurred. Thick description can stem from the analytical process on revisiting the events observed and beginning to learn from actors or other members of the observed groups. However, in the method of my fieldnote collection detailed further below, I included personal feelings and speculation on what was observed to some extent, but outside of the description of events, so that events could be portrayed without skewing.

Fieldnotes were collected in several ways for practical reasons, but only ever using one method per observation; handwritten in a notebook, or electronically on a laptop or tablet device. After using each type of data storage, I found the tablet to be the most flexible, as it allowed speedy logging of notes and provided an opportunity to move around the settings to different environments. From the start of the research, I had been given some permissions at one site to use their library computers, which allowed me to be placed more conveniently for conducting observations in some areas of that library. Unfortunately, this option wasn't available at the other institution until towards the end

²² Most academic libraries will allow members of the public to visit, but access to computers is often limited, particularly during busy periods of the academic year.

of data collection: a combination of changing gatekeepers²³ across the research period and misinterpretation of staff members at the library desk for my purpose of reporting to them led me to unintentionally discover I could be given temporary log-in details during my visit²⁴. However, using the tablet meant I could move into a variety of spaces with ease, whether or not they were designed for computer use or reading, providing more opportunities to access and situate myself unobtrusively.

Data were collected from two institutions (see section 4.3 for more details of the sample). Observation hours totalled 75.25, including 15 hours for pilot observations (11 hours at Institute 1 and four at Institute 2), with coded data consisting of 37 hours at Institute 1, and 23 at Institute 2. The observation hours were not equally split between institutions due to the differences in size between their libraries, and thus the difference in variety of spaces available to conduct observation. Visits to each library were carried out over two academic years during 2013-14 and 2014-15, so that behaviour could be checked for repetition between student intakes, and for monitoring the impact of any environmental or policy changes made during the data collection period. Data were collected during both term and vacation periods on different days during the week during August, October, November, December, January, February, March and June of 2013-14, and November, December, January, February and March 2014-15. It should be noted the selection of days was sometimes restricted by my own part-time employment requirements, but I am confident I observed a broad enough range of activities and actions at a variety of times. The mixture of term and vacation periods was chosen to ensure a wide variety of behaviours was observed: different periods during the academic year, and outside of it, mean a different user group or scope for behaviour/usage intentions, for example those who visit during the summer may be resubmitting assignments/re-sitting exams, or may have different course requirements for attendance. Settings of formal observations were selected from locations visited during the pilot observations for the level of potentially rich data collection. Durations of observations were timed to last until behaviour was repeated, or until it was judged that nothing of value was observable at the time. It can be difficult to know if anything is missed after the area has been left, but as a solo observer in a large variety of potential

²³ A gatekeeper facilitates access to the research setting. Changing gatekeepers at Institute 2 led to a breakdown in communication between gatekeepers and a loss of consistency of communication between myself, gatekeepers and staff at the Institute, which in turn on one occasion led to me being unable to collect observational data because of students not being informed of my presence that day.

²⁴ Problems with gatekeepers are detailed above but in this case I had been requested to report my arrival at the desk so that staff knew I was there. However, the person I spoke to wasn't aware of the purpose of my visit and proceeded to issue me with access to computers. Computer access had not been offered or advertised to me as an option prior to this point.

settings it was inevitable that something would be missed. Similarly, logging as complete and detailed account as possible was likely to mean I missed something else occurring in the area, particularly depending on where I was situated in each setting. Interviews with staff and students helped reduce the issue somewhat²⁵, as interviewees had the opportunity to present their own experiences and personal observations which were used to supplement data already collected (more information on the interview process is below in section 4.2).

Observations were conducted as non-participant and non-obtrusive (the ethics of using this method are discussed in section 4.5 of this chapter). Visitors were notified via posters at entrances and access points to other floors stating "Please note that today a research student will be observing how people use the library. If you want to know more, please ask at the library's XXXXXXXX desk" where XXXXXXXX was the name of the desk closest to the entrance, and usually the first one they saw when entering the building. Handouts (see appendix 1) were supplied to the desks, referred to in the posters, and staff were informed that they should be able to direct any enquiries about the research to the handout, minimising the impact on staff during data collection. The handout was designed to ensure that the most likely concerns about privacy and participation were addressed, with opting out information included, and contact details for both myself and my research supervisor.

Considering myself to be non-participant and non-obtrusive is a moot point: to attempt to be non-obtrusive when there were no actors in the area or within observational reach, I took printed articles with me to look at so that I could work. The articles were usually connected to my research, which in turn made me a user of the library's facilities, and effectively a participant in some of the actions that occurred as the observation period progressed. Additionally, during some observations, I was asked a question: for example on occasion I was asked how to deal with submitting an assignment and, when I was unable to answer, the student turned to a neighbour slightly further away on their other side and asked them instead. It was thus inevitable that I became a participant at some points. However, I do not feel that this modified how incidents and actions progressed around me, or dramatically modified behaviours. In the example given above, the

²⁵ To the best of my knowledge, students who participated in interviews were not part of the observation data and were recruited outside of observations. Some staff involved in interviews may have featured in some of the observations but they were also recruited outside of the observation data. Staff recruitment in the interview process is detailed further in section 4.3.2.

student could have asked that question of anyone they chose to in the vicinity; I was merely the nearest person at the time.

I accept that my presence may still inadvertently have had an impact on actor behaviours. I purposely endeavoured to place myself in a way that would not make anyone nearby feel uncomfortable: if I was selecting a seat in a low population area, I did not choose to sit directly next to someone if there were many empty seats available elsewhere as it would create some invasion of personal space that would not be as obvious in a busy area. However, merely having someone else entering the area and sitting down, irrespective of level of proximity or recognition, may have an impact on what an actor may do, consciously or not. The presence of another person may influence the amount of social or study use of the library: students have stated in previous research that proximity to other people working, be they friends or otherwise, helps them work more (Foster, 2013; Fraser, 2009; Ramsden, 2011) and thus whether it was a researcher observing or a fellow student there to work, the difference in choice of action was likely to be minimal. Any person entering the area would have had a similar impact on the behaviour of anyone already there. I dressed casually and mimicked the behaviour of inhabitants, 'ignoring' behaviours like noise or mobile phone use to further minimise any suggestion of me appearing out of place.

4.2 Interviewing tools and techniques

Interviews were conducted with both students and staff used as informants in order to attempt to find out how they perceive their own use of spaces, what influences behaviour, and how students and staff relate to and respond to each other. Interview questions were initially tested on a mix of targeted students and non-library staff. Non-library staff were selected to avoid reducing the final sample size availability, but were all regular visitors to their institute's library. Both groups were asked to volunteer from a pool of staff and students I had become familiar with in my time at Institute 1. Interview questions and styles of questioning were tested on five volunteers, and were modified according to feedback from the volunteers.

Details of the recruitment and selection of informants after the pilot can be found in section 4.3.2. I started each interview by requesting the informant read an information sheet (see appendix 2a and 2b for student and staff information sheets respectively) and sign the consent form (see appendix 3). Students were then asked to take me on a tour

of their library, indicating their favourite and least favourite places in the building, as well as describing any memorable experiences or behaviours they found interesting or problematic. The purpose of the tour was twofold: it helped build rapport and trust between myself and the respondent, but also provided valuable information and discussion points for later in their interview, encouraging open discussion and honesty about their use. I did not respond in any judgemental or negative way to the informant's description of their own use, and emphasised from the beginning that the whole tour and interview combined was not a 'policing' exercise in any way: FST is not a means to judge people but to learn about and represent their lives to enable and empower. The tour was recorded using a digital voice recorder, but I also took short notes on the nonverbal communication of the informant, and photographed areas of significance to the interviewee as an aide-memoire for the transcribing and data analysis processes.

The interview itself was conducted in an area of the informant's choice outside of the library, usually a coffee bar, to help continue the rapport and comfort levels developed during the tour: should the informant be aware of their own library use behaviour breaking any rules, I wanted them to feel happy talking about that. Interviews were conducted at a time convenient to the informant, usually during term time, and in the case of student interviews away from particularly study intensive periods such as exams or assignment deadlines.

The interview process was designed as semi-structured to ensure I could collect data related to my research questions and explore any further issues or themes I may not have discovered during observations (the interview schedules can be found in appendices 4a and 4b for staff and students respectively). A structured interview would have proved too prescriptive and lost the potential to learn more about anything I had not yet considered or discovered (see Chadderton (2012) on how asking specifically about racism or discrimination led to more limited responses than keeping questions open and less prescriptive). However, totally open, unstructured interviews may have developed into discussions that collected interesting data which didn't relate to my research questions. Again, the digital voice recorder was used, while I made notes during the interview on non-verbal communication, key concepts raised by the interviewee, and any need for clarification I had so that I could return to any of these later in the interview if necessary. The questions began with a simple introductory discussion of the informant's typical visit to the library and moved into prompts developed from the research themes (see section 3.1) as well as any key points

identified during the tour in the case of student respondents. My choice of semi-structured interviewing meant that there would always be some level of variation in questioning between each informant to allow me to follow up anything new.

4.3 The Sample

4.3.1 Institutions

Two Higher Education (HE) institutions were selected as settings to provide variety in data based on their differing size, age, and the nature of their students (see below). Two institutions of different size may not be comprehensive for comparison purposes, but do provide sufficient data to expand on knowledge of use of library space, particularly when there has been little consideration of gender/equality balance in use of libraries as a whole (as indicated in the literature review). A cross-analysis of data obtained at each institution provided a broader picture as to whether any observed incidents were common or unusual, as well as the opportunity to examine different types of space provision in their libraries: while there may be similarities in purpose of design, there are often differences in style and combinations of furniture and technology that could influence behaviour.

Institute 1 is a large institution, with over 20,000 students in total at the time of data collection across undergraduate, postgraduate and research degrees, full and part time, with some courses taught at validated separate institutions. White students constitute the largest single ethnic population of the institution, with a significant proportion of students listed as 'Asian', and slightly more females than males attending. It is relatively modern, having originally existed as a polytechnic, and provides courses designed to support students in accessing the workplace on graduation. The campus is situated on the edge of a large town, and features a mix of building ages and is regularly modernised. The library, at approximately 10,000 square metres, is larger than the average of the institution's type and age, and has a combined library and computing service providing support for both areas from the one building and service desk. Until early 2014 (part way through data collection), it housed most student services facilities on the entry floor, meaning that those who visited the building were not necessarily using the library facilities but may have been referring to financial support services or careers guidance. The entry floor now houses library and computing support, research guidance, and self service facilities for borrowing or returning items, paying fines, collecting reservations, and borrowing laptops. The library is split across five floors, having completed a refurbishment plan of the library as a whole in 2009, with the entry

floor being redesigned and modernised during the data collection period. The resources are held on the four floors outside of the entrance floor, with the floors designed to house a variety of study spaces on each floor: silent areas with or without computers; quiet discussion areas with or without computers; group study rooms; short visit computer benches with high stools. Silent areas initially only featured as areas on two floors housing approximately 30-40 occupants in each area, but as is discussed throughout the thesis, modifications were made to some areas in an attempt to increase the options for silent work and in attempts to modify student behaviours. Library stock is organised around one continuous 'Dewey' number sequence²⁶, with most floors providing access to a separate 'special collection' for subjects such as Law or Music. Some areas, while not necessarily unique in design purpose or policy to that floor, do have furniture unique to those spaces, creating a variety of options for visitors with different preferences. Areas where observations were conducted are fully detailed and mapped within the data.

Institute 2 is a smaller institution, in a city with other HE institutions, and while comparatively young in terms of HE degree provision, has existed in various educational provision forms since the 1800s. In its more recent life, it has expanded to cover a large collection of undergraduate and postgraduate degrees across the arts, sciences and business. It currently has less than 10,000 students enrolled on courses, with a predominantly white, female population. The institution has had problems with antisocial behaviour amongst students in the past, and, as a result of complaints from local residents, instigated a campaign combined with hiring staff to try to police and curb behavioural issues. The library covers approximately 4,000 square metres over three floors; the ground floor being the entrance floor and housing a collection of high usage titles, as well as journals. In a similar style to Institute 1, the entry floor also provides self service facilities for borrowing and returning books or collecting reservations, plus support desks for library, IT and research enquiries. Institute 2 has two floors housing the main collection in a continuous Dewey sequence, and, like Institute 1, has 'special collections' on each floor, such as language or school resources. As with Institute 1, spaces are labelled with specific noise or purpose intended, incorporating silent areas and group study spaces, and some areas may have furniture unique to that location in the building. Library facilities had been recently refurbished at the time this research

²⁶ Dewey Decimal is the scheme used to locate items on shelves, in prolific use in both public and academic libraries in the UK, and uses a combination of numbers and letters to help visitors identify where their item of choice is located. As touched on in the literature review (in section 2.6), this classification scheme has been critiqued for being sexist, racist and homophobic in its numeric organisation (Olson, 2001).

began, and had further modifications made to the building during the summer of 2014 in response to student feedback, halfway through the data collection period. What was originally a space with an atrium all the way up the centre of the building was then modified so that the balcony over the atrium on the second floor was changed to accommodate a glass wall to create a silent area. The library facilities were, however, predominantly group and discussion areas across the rest of the building.

The difference in size (Institute 1 has over three times as many students and a library more than twice as large as Institute 2), background, and the nature of the problems Institute 2 had with their students' behaviour were what drew me to them. I was surprised that Institute 1 initially didn't seem to have the same issues with antisocial behaviour as Institute 2, in spite of both institutions being based in an urban centre, and a mix of student housing near to and away from their campus. On a much smaller scale of behavioural issues, both libraries regularly receive complaints about noise levels and temperature, and deal with noise issues in similar ways: both have a system of logging complaints anonymously to staff who then visit the area in the complaint to police and monitor the problem. I wanted to learn more about how students behaved in these institutions' libraries and whether there were behaviours that were perhaps not as visible to the general public as those reported in the local news or via the complaints procedure, whether they impacted on the use of library spaces, and whether those spaces influenced what was happening. Additionally, because of the differences in demographics at each institution, I was interested to know what kind of dynamics, if any arose between different groups (both in terms of student/student and student/staff), and in how and what kind of behaviours manifested. Applying FST approaches to develop an understanding of the experiences of each group allowed me to consider whether the library spaces were inclusive and support of student learning processes, and to assess the nature of any power dynamics arising between groups.

4.3.2 Staff and student selection for participation

Staff at both institutions were invited to participate in the research via email, and encouraged to share their experiences of student library use, with a small number of initial prompts included in the email to describe what kind of information would be requested of them e.g. unusual/unexpected use of spaces, movement of furniture, and what they interpreted as learning vs. social activities. At Institute 2, response rates were poor with only one member of staff agreeing to participate and attending the interview. At Institute 1, there were more staff volunteers (totalling five), across a range of roles

within the library and IT departments. Some of the staff at Institute 1 were targeted because of their knowledge and/or experience of problems with student behaviour which developed during the research period but outside of my observational data collection. Targeting was seen as important in this case because of the nature incidents and the individuals involved. Students involved in these incidents were identified as British Asian, and I felt it was important, as per my feminist, social justice led approach, to learn about these incidents, and how staff perceived the behaviours and the students involved. These incidents are discussed in detail in chapter 7. Targeted staff were also asked standard questions that were asked of all staff participants, as well as about what happened with the students involved. This was because they had experience and knowledge outside of the problem behaviour which made them appropriate for involvement in the research outside of these behavioural incidents.

Students were invited via advertisements on institution emailing lists to reach a wide group of possible respondents, distributed to students at all levels of studying, and sent via the managers of the emailing lists. However, the number of volunteers for participation was low: several attempts to recruit were made using various contacts provided by gatekeepers via members of staff in the Students' Union and in administrative offices in an attempt to reach students such as course representatives (who may have the experiences of other students they represent to discuss as well as their own use). In spite of these attempts, recruitment was still very low, with seven students from Institute 1 and one from Institute 2 agreeing to participate. Those who did agree to participate were offered compensation for their time in the form of either refreshments from a local coffee shop/cafe or a £10 Amazon.co.uk voucher: these options were not included in the initial recruitment drives, but were in later drives. However, it was made clear that where respondents took up the offer of compensation and then decided to withdraw their participation and their data from the research, or if they decided part-way through the interview that they no longer wished to be involved, they would still receive compensation (as per guidelines provided by Wendler, Rackoff, Emanuel and Grady (2002)). There are risks to utilising the incentive method of encouraging participation, including the concern that interviewees have been coerced into participating without being fully aware of what the research is about and thus bringing informed consent into question. However, I counteracted the problem by providing anyone who volunteered with the research information sheet prior to meeting with them, and again during the meeting. As detailed above, informants were provided with a consent form before they were asked to conduct the library tour, were reminded that they could withdraw at any time they chose, and were reassured that they would

not be identifiable in the data or any reporting of data at any point. The comfort of participants was prioritised throughout: my intention was to make the research process as easy for participants as possible with minimal disruption to their daily lives, and so I adapted to their preferences, personal needs and time restrictions accordingly. This research was developed to support and provide opportunities for participants to contribute to knowledge generation that can ideally improve their academic lives, and thus the experience of their participation was intended to be informative, and ideally enjoyable, for them. To enable change while also making participation an engaging process are both key considerations in feminist methods (Oakley, 2016; Riddell, 1989).

Interviews lasted approximately 45-60 minutes (with student interviews, this included the library tour, which normally took no longer than ten minutes), with some notable exceptions, the shortest interview was 30 minutes with a student; the longest, again with a student, lasted two hours. After interviews were transcribed, all participants were provided with the transcript and asked to review it to ensure they were happy with what it contained or to ask for corrections/clarifications should anything appear to misrepresent them or be open to misinterpretation. Any participants who did not respond within three weeks were reminded of the request, which prompted a response from most participants. Some participants did not respond to the reminder, so a further email was sent suggesting that no response would be treated as accepting the transcription as correct. A profile of each respondent involved in the research is provided in appendix 5. It is acknowledged here that the limited number of responses, particularly from Institute 2, limits the potential for research findings to be capable of being considered representative of all students/staff. However, what each individual had to say is of importance and is representative of *their* experiences and highly unlikely to be entirely unique to that individual.

4.4 Data analysis procedures

Analysis of observations was conducted using Braun and Clarke's Thematic Analysis (TA) procedure (2006). I chose to follow a primarily inductive route of analysis, so that I could locate meaning in and from the data rather than trying to attach data to pre-conceived concepts. At first I considered using Grounded Theory (GT) as an analytical process for its inductive method, but later rejected the theory. It became evident that there were several variations of the theory, with some disagreement in particular between the creators of GT themselves. Critics of GT often express concern over the need to completely disregard all previous knowledge of the area or subject being

researched, whether it be via reading, personal experience, or previous research conducted (Seldén, 2005; G. Thomas & James, 2006). I had already conducted some research in my chosen subject matter, and have knowledge of similar research conducted, and of the use of ethnographic methods in libraries. I was highly unlikely to be able to deny all this prior knowledge, and the FST approach I have adopted (as discussed in chapter 3) involves self-reflection and thoughtful examination of my own positioning within the research. This self-reflection has involved considering myself in terms of race, gender, my preconceptions as a librarian and as a postgraduate research student, and how I will always be different from yet share many characteristics of those people who feature in my data and their standpoints. Thematic analysis in Braun and Clark's form is much more flexible and allows for pre-existing knowledge, but is no less comprehensive in drawing out themes in data.

Braun and Clarke express concern that research involving thematic analysis all too often lacks detailing of the decision processes behind it (2006, p. 80) and what was actually done during analysis, hence I will detail how I applied the method to my research in some detail here. Braun and Clarke describe a number of decisions the researcher must make before analysis can commence (and in some cases prior to data collection commencing).

1) Decide what constitutes a theme: what 'size' or importance of theme is acceptable i.e. whether only one appearance of a concept is acceptable to name it as a theme, and whether the nature of a concept is significant enough irrespective of frequency to consider it 'key' to the analysis. I began my analysis considering any frequency of data to be an acceptable theme for discussion, as the nature of ethnographic based methodology is not necessarily to conclude that frequent occurrence is of more value than the occurrence itself. I took the decision to class anything of note as a theme in order to learn more about the data and investigate potential further research, but I also concluded that the importance of a theme would depend on how well it appeared to relate to my research aim (to discover whether academic libraries provide a supportive and inclusive learning environment) and questions and feminist approach. I was particularly interested in social justice aspects of the data, as per my earlier discussion of FST, and as a result some themes which could have been rejected for being too small were included from the early stages of thematic development. Attaching themes to the research aim and questions in this way meant that I also rejected to some extent whether the number of informants acknowledging a theme, such as problematic behaviour, was important to how much weight a theme would carry: the nature of issues like subtle or hidden sexism, racism, and power dynamics between different library

stakeholders can mean what I, as researcher, could see as occurring that informants could not (although of course this could manifest as a weighted theme in itself). Themes can be revisited during the analytical process, so some level of flexibility in the classification of themes and their importance exists.

2) Describe the whole data set, or one particular aspect of it: I chose to analyse the whole data set. As Braun and Clarke state, analysis of a full set can be of particular use in an under-researched area such as my own, as it presents a broader, richer picture of the data, albeit with some loss of depth (2006, p. 83). Too focussed a study here may miss important issues visible elsewhere in the data set.

3) Choose whether to conduct inductive or theoretical analysis: the data for this research is approached from an inductive analysis. While I could not, as Braun and Clarke suggest, totally separate myself from my epistemological perspective and ignore what I aimed to find out from my data, I did not want to limit myself to looking for explicit themes. The desire to learn what was happening at my sites from the data itself without imposing expectations is where my initial interest in GT stemmed from, and the acceptance and acknowledgement that I will always be influenced to some extent by my own perspective, knowledge, experiences and preconceptions is one that TA makes allowance for. Braun and Clarke differentiate between the rejection of an overarching theme in favour of numerous smaller scale themes in inductive analysis and searching for data that matches a specific concept in theoretical analysis. However, the scope to gather inductive themes into a larger bracket is still possible at a later stage in the analysis, and the use of inductive coding allows the less visible in the data to become more visible, something I feel is essential to my feminist approach. Using inductive coding feeds into the process of ensuring the marginalised are as well represented as possible, as it provides opportunities for the discovering the new and unexpected as well as the familiar, and when combined with a reflexive process helps curb the risk of being too subjective and too linked to my own preconceptions. This use of self-reflection and inductive coding in turn helps to even out the power dynamics between the researcher and the researched, in terms of avoiding prioritising my own beliefs, although this dynamic will always remain to some extent.

4) Select semantic or latent themes: because of using FST to give voice to the marginalised, some issues will be 'normalised' in everyday life, thus represented in the data but hidden below the surface, meaning an approach involving examination of latent themes was the most appropriate. As stated above, the appearance of subtle sexism and similar issues is not always one that is explicit on the surface, and requires some deeper examination of the data to uncover understanding of what is occurring in each piece of data.

5) Epistemological choices: Braun and Clarke state that the choices here are split between a realist/essentialist perspective, or a constructivist approach (2006, p. 85). Again, my adoption of Feminist Standpoint Theory approaches here almost immediately placed me in the realm of the constructivist: FST says knowledge and standpoints are socially constructed, developed from experiences of and within the world. As Braun and Clarke suggest, the adoption of analysing for latent themes also tends to sit with the constructivist approach, and viewing behaviour, particularly that which may be marginalising or dominating as influenced from social perspectives, is particularly fitting here.

Braun and Clarke describe thematic analysis as a six-stage procedure:

- 1) Familiarisation with data: this entails the repeated 'active' re-reading of data and making notes of any ideas for codes or points of interest that manifest during the process. At this stage, transcription is also involved.
- 2) Generate initial codes: here the data is tagged with codes, with the formal analysis of the data really beginning at this point. At this stage, repetition of codes are identified within the data. Braun and Clarke recommend coding for as many different concepts or ideas as possible at this stage to ensure the data is comprehensively checked for anything that might be deemed of importance or interest later in the analysis. Thus, the list of codes may be considerable.
- 3) Searching for themes: the codes are analysed for commonality to group them into themes, simultaneously collating data into themes. Codes and themes may be visually mapped into relationships at this stage, and themes may be broken down into smaller categories of themes. Braun and Clarke emphasise that themes should not be discarded at this point, even if they only have one or two codes and small amounts of data attached to them.
- 4) Reviewing themes: the final process requires the themes to be checked to ensure data is substantial enough to make them viable, or whether they are different enough from each other to be retained separately. This part of the analysis may require recoding or reassignment of data to different themes.
- 5) Creating definitions of and naming themes: Braun and Clarke stress that this stage it is important to ensure definitions of the themes detail the importance of the data rather than just describing them. The themes are then used to create "the 'story' that each theme tells" (2006, p. 92) within the broader overarching story of the data as a whole.
- 6) Writing up the results.

While the process appears initially to be quite straightforward, it is actually a very complex way of conducting in-depth analysis of qualitative data. The repeated process of reading and re-reading, coding and re-coding, and generating and organising themes created a familiarity and affinity with the data, thus ensuring the data 'spoke' and told its story within the research.

4.4.1 The coding process

The inductive coding initially generated a large set of codes covering various aspects of all the combined interview and observational data. Codes included more tangible concepts including study behaviours (reading, working on presentations, writing documents, and so on), if people were working alone or in groups, incidents of rule breaking, environmental incidents (such as different kinds of noise including talking, and temperature), using different types of IT equipment (including library computers and mobile devices). Codes also included more abstract or personal concepts such as interviewee feelings, perceptions of how useful the library is, and incidents that represented a sense of community. Other codes acted as parent codes for a combination of tangible and abstract concepts, such as space use, which served as an umbrella term for: the type of space being utilised; whether it was supportive or not for chosen activities; whether or not it was designed for those activities; and as a means of discussing choice of space as a habit in interviews. These aspects of the coding meant I could assess the nature of what library use manifest, how supportive or problematic library design was for different users, as well as begin to investigate the nature of the interactions and relationships between staff and students.

FST also influenced some specific coding: demographic information including race and gender to monitor inclusivity both within the library space and in an effort to develop voices for each group identified, socio-economic discussion in interviews, power and domination (including actions that could be considered subversive and/or a means to empower the actors), respect (or lack of it) for other library users and staff, and [subtle] discrimination were some of the codes that fell into theoretical-based interrogation of the data. These codes could be related to incidents reported during interviews, behaviours during observation, and issues discussed by interviewees that represented the interviewee as discriminating against or showing lack of respect for others themselves. Coding for these topics meant I could develop an understanding of how inclusive or exclusive library spaces and their users were, and the nature of the power manifest by different library users.

The codes were then refined through several re-readings of the data to combine them where they were too similar to stand as separate codes, and to develop overarching themes (see figures 1a and 1b below). The themes were developed with a focus on linking them to the overarching research aim of discovering whether academic libraries provide a supportive and inclusive learning environment, and to answering the research questions, representing the various usage patterns connected with the library spaces. Themes were also developed with the theoretical framework in mind, considering issues of power dynamics and social and cultural influences over accessibility and inclusivity of spaces. Decisions surrounding the theme development were made based on the research questions and the issues and practices prevalent in the data: the themes identify a number of issues related to the aim and questions, but also provide an overview of use and stakeholder experiences that represents the data as whole. The final themes did not include demographic information as different standpoints and positions featured in each theme.

The analytical process involved interrogating the data on several levels: on the level of the library space and success or failure in providing a suitable environment for studying; on the level of how (if at all) inhabitants, whether employees or library users, demonstrated control and domination of a space in their behaviours; and on the level of whether there were inequalities developed as a result of the previous two levels or through other means. Power was also considered in the context of whether or not a sense of entitlement and ownership was demonstrated amongst library users in relation to the current HE climate (as discussed in chapter 1 and throughout the analysis chapters).

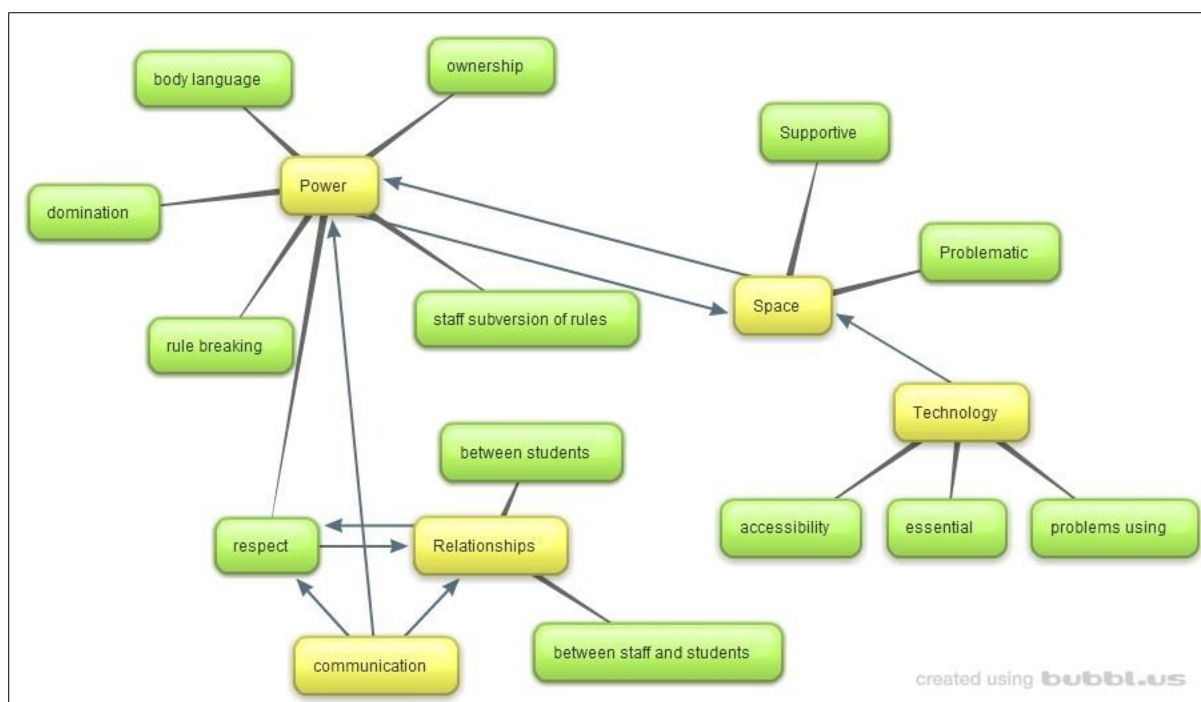


Figure 1 an early iteration of the thematic map

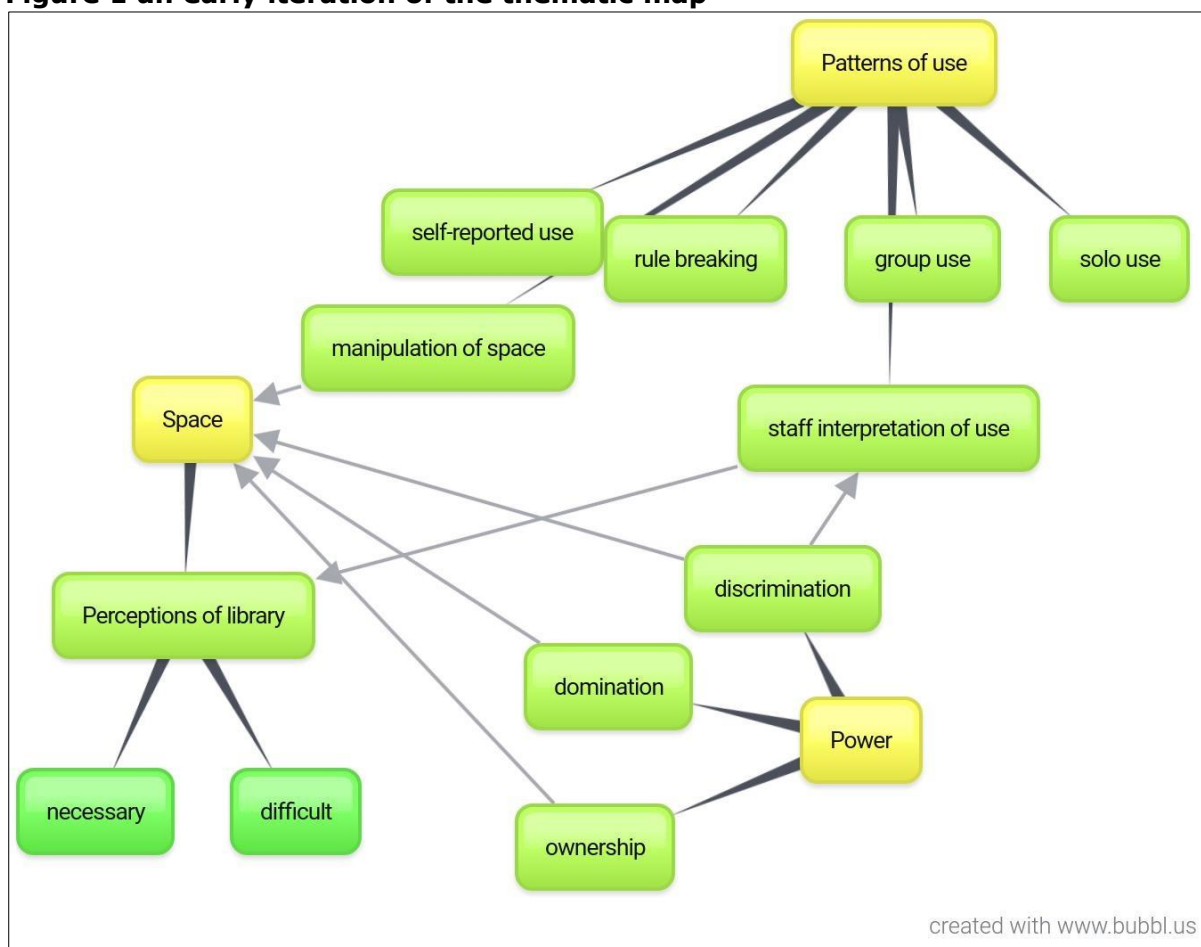


Figure 2 The final iteration of the thematic map.

To demonstrate the coding and analytical process, the following extract can be seen to, on a base level, discuss a range of study styles coded as 'writing' and 'reading' and working as a 'group', 'alone together' (that is working with peers but independently), with 'peer support'. On a deeper level the data was coded for 'community', as it indicates something more than pure peer support in a mutual understanding that each group member can turn to each other for help.

we're the type of group where if we're each working on an essay we might have our headphones in but if one of us says can we stop for a minute and just listen to this paragraph then then we'll do that erm sometimes I might just be reading if I need to get you know reading and taking notes erm annotate and analysing text things like that you know.

[extract from interview with Gemma, student, Institute 2]

Data extracts are primarily presented as vignettes summarising observations or interview content as a continuous story (the data collected would usually have the 'story' broken up by other events observed throughout the timeline of observation). Extracts describing observations have been chosen because they are representative of common behaviours, but also provide the most complete, continuously consistent example of those behaviours. Interview extracts are used to represent usage patterns, needs, and opinions of student participants, and the observations and opinions of staff participants, both in context of answering the research aim and questions. In both cases, interview extracts are used to supplement my observation data, or to provide an opposing example for further discussion.

4.5 Ethical considerations

In my consideration of ethics for this research, I took several steps to try and ensure that the observational method utilised was as respectful of actor privacy as possible, and that the motives behind the method were clear. Clearly, it was not possible to gain consent from all potential actors within the setting, and to ask for consent during observation would disrupt actions sufficiently to make them not representative of normal behaviour. Therefore, my primary concern was to ensure all participants retained anonymity and that they were not placed at risk or in discomfort by the research. I had consent from the participating institutions, and promised them anonymity, as well as the anonymity of their inhabitants. As detailed in section 4.1, notices of research were

clearly displayed at several key traffic points in the building with information leaflets available. The academic libraries involved are public spaces. One of them has open access to the facilities: that is, there is no system where visitors have to provide ID to access the building. The other employs a swipe card access system, but also participates in schemes encouraging members of the public to visit. It has advertised that non-university visitors are welcome to visit in local newspapers, with referrals from the local public library further promoting access. This latter Institute is no less a public space than the first, similar to, for example, rail stations which may or may not use ticket swiping systems at their entrances: the swipe access is not to prevent people accessing and using the services, but to help ensure those who misuse facilities can be monitored and policed as appropriate, and to aid control of stock movement. Swipe access may subsequently portray limited access to academic libraries, but this is certainly not what most libraries wish to say about themselves, with exceptions tending towards those with highly specialised or rare materials.

I carefully considered the use of observation in relation to other methods. The primary reason it was chosen was to ensure the data gathered was of natural behaviour, and representative of both regular use and unique events. Previous library research has indicated that quantitative data presents a limited description of use in terms of how many people inhabit a space. Surveys, interviews, and focus groups provide some data, but are at risk of skewing from the participant in terms of either presenting themselves as they think they should be presenting themselves, missing out data that they feel would provide a negative portrait of themselves, or that doesn't occur to them to be something they would tell the researcher (including elements that might seem banal or normal to them but would be of importance in data collection).

As discussed in the literature review, observation is not as common as other qualitative and/or quantitative methods in academic libraries, but has been utilised to great success by Applegate (2009), Bryant, Matthews and Walton (2009), and Delcore et al (2009): all gathered more detailed data allowing them to reconsider their facilities and service provisions to reflect student needs and usage. Thus, there is precedent to my using the method. Observation is of particular use to gatekeepers at institutions as they are provided with data that they would have been unable to access otherwise. Library users also benefit, as gatekeepers can endeavour to modify provisions, policy, and environments to reflect user preference and usage patterns.

As already discussed to some degree, academic libraries are public spaces. Their primary users are members of the university or college they provide for, with non-university/college members also using the facilities, albeit to a lesser extent. I considered extensively how I could protect any potential actors during observation, with privacy of particular importance. All actors were anonymised, recording only actions necessary to the research themes detailed in section 3.1, and according to the list in section 4.5.1 below, whether actions related to studying or not, and only recording interactions between staff and students that could be deemed public interactions. Non-studying interactions were noted minimally, for example "X student starts having a personal conversation with Y". The content of conversations were only logged if it related to studying, and only briefly mention the nature of the conversation and not the speech/discourse itself, for example "Y asks if X can help with using the assignment submission software": if the actors very obviously endeavoured to make their conversation private it was treated as such and not logged in the field notes (see the previous example of personal conversation). However, in a small number of cases, conversations could be classed as personal (when using the list of actions below in section 4.5.1), but incorporated sexist, racist or similar exclusive derogatory language/actions: here the nature of the content was noted for the purposes of recording how behaviour and conversation could impact on other inhabitants, but not the personal content in itself.

My primary concern was to ensure all participants retained anonymity and that they were not placed at risk or in discomfort by the research. However, I am highly aware that while I obtained consent from interviewees, and from the participating institutions, my method was largely unobtrusive in terms of observation. I did not request consent or explicitly notify the majority of the sample population that I was present and undertaking observations beyond the notice at access points. There were several reasons for this:

- Requesting consent would have made the research more transparent, but would also have risked skewing behaviours, usage, and relationships in the process of making the presence of the researcher and their purpose clear.
- The population in each institution is extremely large. If considering all potential actors, it would have been highly likely that if consent for observation was requested of each individual potentially using the library facilities it would not be obtained and thus the research would not go ahead.

- Requesting and obtaining consent during observation of the actors present in a specific area (regardless of population size) was impractical, as it would have disrupted the space use of those already present, and would have disrupted the data collection process.

Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, pp. 210–212) and Punch (1985, 1986) advise that while consent is preferable, it is not always possible for the reasons detailed above.

It should be emphasised that the library users are not a sensitive group being placed at risk: they are not members of a specific vulnerable population, and the research process did not cause physical or psychological harm to any participants. Analysis was used to create understanding of library use, rather than point accusatory fingers, and anonymisation of actors allowed data to be reported freely to promote discussion and organisational modifications to support current and future service users.

4.5.1 Actions considered suitable as noting for data

As the research questions involved focusing on what may represent studying or personal/private actions and interactions, actions needed to be categorised for the purposes of ethical and methodological considerations. Explicitly stating what may or may not count as 'work' is challenging in nature: how does the observer know whether work or studying is being undertaken, whether an action counts as productive to the actor (and indeed whether the actor realises the action is productive or a hindrance), and whether social interactions are also supportive of work/studying? While many actions may be considered private by the actor, the nature of public spaces often makes many actions visible and audible to all inhabiting that setting. However, as touched on earlier, for the protection and privacy of actors certain behaviours were not logged in the fieldnotes and were thus be disregarded from data. For the purposes of this research, based on pilot data collection, actions were broken down into the following categories

- **Work:**
 - o Using software provided by the institution e.g. word processing, spreadsheets, presentations, image and graphic design, mind-mapping
 - o Writing was assumed to be studying if it was not obviously for any other purpose e.g. content is discussed between actors

- o Explicitly discussing assignments and lecture or tutorial content and university staff when in the context of course content (which may include quality of teaching provision and university policy and/or rules)
- o Highlighting on paper (it was assumed that the material highlighted was connected with studying unless it was obviously observed or discussed not to be so)
- o Hand drawing (i.e. any drawing, sketching, mapping, or similar tasks not conducted on a computer) if carried out in an area of the building specifically connected with artistic or design related subjects. Drawing conducted in other areas may be for study purposes, but could not easily be concluded to be studying without verbal confirmation from the actor. In these cases, noting the occurrence of drawing was unlikely to be harmful to the actor, so it was logged
- o Reading from textbooks, journals, fiction or papers (which may include articles or handwritten notes). Reading without typing on tablet computers, laptops, or computers if the content was not visible was assumed to be contributing to studying unless determined to be otherwise
- o Binding or mounting materials: it was assumed that the action of preparing materials in this manner could be considered presentation for submission or consideration by others
- o Photocopying or printing
- **Personal** (with specific actions labelled as private and thus not detailed in the fieldnotes):
 - o Conversation relating to personal life, which included relationships, social activity e.g. nights out, in person or via mobile phone (private action)
 - **Actions that may blur together or be difficult to define as work.** These were noted, but any further detail that manifested as social was logged in the same way as overtly personal activities:
 - o Collecting textbooks and other materials from the shelves. While these could count as work, they can often merge into socialising if carried out by more than one actor
 - o Using social networks online. Some courses stipulate group collaboration online via networks such as Facebook, and Twitter is often used for research, networking and socialising

- o Using shopping websites such as (but not restricted to) clothing or interiors. Fashion, interior design and students on similar courses may be looking for inspiration or images to use in mood boards, but may also just be shopping!
- o Using email, particularly if using the student email systems are similar to those used for personal accounts, if the student redirects university emails to personal accounts, or if the university account is used for personal purposes.
- o Using a mobile phone: in pilot observations, personal conversations merged with discussion about studying and the requirements for an assignment. Where the conversation was obviously about studying, it was noted but only as a discussion of studying, and reference to content explicitly was avoided as much as possible e.g. 'student moves away from computer to conduct personal conversation on phone, but begins to discuss assignment content and when it is due to be submitted. Conversation content focuses on what materials the student has used for the essay'. Additionally, using a phone to type was more complex to interpret, as, due to the nature of modern smart phones, actions may have included those conducted on PCs such as studying, texting or emailing personal conversations. For the purposes of observation, if an actor was observed to be using their phone for anything other than audible conversation, it was assumed to be a personal and therefore private action.

• **Physical non-verbal actions which may reflect feelings about current activities or situations.** Interpretation of these was problematic as they depended on the culture and many unknown factors personal to each actor, but were also of potential relevance and use to interview discussion:

- o Yawning and stretching
- o Looking around
- o Facial expressions and other non-verbal communications
- o Movement around the area with no obvious purpose
- o Eating, which may be conducted during studying, during socialising, or alone without any obvious intent other than to eat.
- o Listening to music, whether via an mp3 player, a smart/portable device, or through university-provided equipment, could be open to interpretation on many levels. Some people find that they work better with music; some may be using music to block out other sounds. Other students may be listening to music as part of their assignment requirements. The use of mp3 players may not even be for music, but for the transcription of interviews or listening to lectures.

4.6 Chapter summary

In this chapter I have detailed the methods employed, that is, observation and semi-structured interviews, and the sites visited in the data collection process to provide answers to the research aim and questions. The two sites share many of the same library design features, but have different types of student population, providing opportunities for examining what influence library space design may or may not have over inhabitants. I provide definitions of gender (as binary) and race (as ancestral country of origin) for the purposes of this research, including discussions of how defining them as such is problematic, but also necessary for identifying and understanding any marginalisation of each. I have also described the coding process, and how using FST means I have examined library use in contexts of power, of discrimination, and of the socio-economic situation within HE, as well as on more tangible levels of study behaviour, space selection, and environment. Lastly, I detailed what steps I took to ensure the research followed an ethical process throughout: I always intended that this research should be used to benefit and aid library users, and to generate a better understanding of their needs and practices, and to do so includes the need to respect those users, and all participants in the research. It is only through a respectful and ethical research process that we can learn the stories, positions and standpoints of library users.

I will now move to the first analysis chapter. It provides information on patterns of usage across different types of users according to group and individual use, and how space does or does not influence these uses. I also discuss how power in terms of space domination and exerting authority manifest in different ways amongst different types of users.

Chapter 5: Analysis 1 - Gender, Authority and Power.

This is the first analysis chapter of three. Here I will discuss the behaviours that manifest during library use in respect to groups and internal group dynamics, individual users, and how all types of library users interact and impact on each other's use, as per the research questions in section 3.1. I also consider how groups have their own power dynamics that often fluctuate according to their members' gender(s), focussing first on single gender groups, then mixed gender groups. I discuss how the library space does or does not influence these power dynamics, as per my research questions detailed in section 3.1, and how solo use of the library space relates to the power of the individual. Both 'groups' and 'solo users' were identified as key 'patterns of use' themes during the analysis process (as in Figure 1b.). I initially examine group behaviours and patterns, as groups, rather than individual visitors, were most commonly identified during observations. The analysis also identified themes of domination and ownership of space, which constitute both recurring discussions throughout the chapter, and specific focus later in section 5.3. Where appropriate I reference the group use typologies by McKay and Buchanan (2014), as detailed in the literature review in section 2.5. The typologies are not used as a formal analytical tool here, but are of particular use for confirming or questioning analyses of behaviour that might appear unusual in the context of my own observations. The addition of a standpoint-influenced approach adds to understanding those behaviours and their connection to library spaces by examining power. As classified by McKay and Buchanan (2014) and Harrop and Turpin (2013), group sizes constitute two or more people.

Using a feminist standpoint based approach to analyse actor(s) behaviours, actions and interactions between each other, I draw from observational data and interviews to demonstrate that library space can support collaborative, equal relationships²⁷ within groups, and begin to develop an understanding of specific standpoints as they emerge. McKay and Buchanan (2014) refer to logging gender during their observations of group usage patterns, but do not consider this in their analysis or typology construction. I, however, did notice during my own observations that some interesting gender-based dynamics²⁸ arose which will be discussed in the following chapter.

²⁷ When I refer to 'equal relationships', I mean that each individual member of a group can participate and contribute to the success of that group with no discrimination.

²⁸ A reminder is useful here that as most of the data in this section is collected via observation, gender is approached as binary.

I note in particular points where dominance is manifest in library user behaviours. Argyle (1988, p. 97) lists seven main behaviour categories for indicating dominance: spatial position i.e. height, facing a group as in teaching; gaze (in dominance this usually appears as more direct and 'staring down'; face (as non-smiling); touch; voice, usually louder and lower, with more interruptions of the other speaker; gesture i.e. pointing; and posture, which has similarities to spatial position in terms of maintaining height above others, but also includes poses such as placing the hands on the hips. I also show how library space design can both support and disrupt those who endeavour to maintain a role of power within a group, and the implications of this influence over space inhabitants. Primarily, power in this thesis refers to dominance and ownership of library spaces, as defined in section 3.1. For the purposes of this section, power refers to control and dominance over others, whether it be within their own group, or in a broader societal context.

5.1 Patterns of authority and dominance amongst single gender groups.

This section marks the beginning of my discussion of group standpoint(s): it represents various groups whose behaviours are described as per their membership in terms of gender. I address group behaviours in terms of single gender, and in terms of mixed gender, and describe the variety of behaviours that manifest for each, identifying similarities and differences both within and between group types. Interview data in this section provides supporting evidence for my findings on the way staff may approach and interpret mixed behaviours of library users (such as combined social and study use), and for supporting my concerns over male domination of spaces using the body and gaze.

5.1.1 Women-only groups

I frequently observed that in women-only groups, one member would take a leading role, and usually had a common of successful studying planned, often combined with varying levels of social talk. The following vignettes are examples of these occasions.

Observation 5.1, Institute 1.

Two young women of British Asian origin²⁹ are seated at a large round table, surrounded by paper notes, huddled together over a laptop. Around them the library space is of mixed purpose: theirs is the only table that can be overtly used collaboratively and is located in the middle of the area against a wall, the rest of the area being predominantly

²⁹ British Asian for the purposes of this thesis is defined as of South Asian descent (Bangladesh, India, Pakistan) born in the UK.

made up of rows of computers perpendicular to the wall and, further on, windows, with single seat tables with plugs and USB ports running parallel to the windows opposite them. Round the corner out of sight, I can hear other groups talking and often laughing loudly, but here the women are the only people working together on something. Seated with their backs to the wall, staring at the laptop, they talk quietly, and sometimes the softer spoken female of the two bends over a notepad and writes as the other louder female instructs her, discussing formulae and calculations. The louder female sometimes expresses frustration though, raising her voice demanding her peer "read the question!" They move on to another formula, and as the softer spoken female reads out her calculations, the louder female interrupts to correct her. Their collaboration continues for around 80 minutes until they decide to take a break for half an hour, leaving all their property unattended at the table until they return, the louder female putting a headphone into one ear, while the softer spoken female briefly whispers to someone behind me. On her return to the table, the two females whisper to each other, and both pack up to leave after a short time.

Observation 5.2. Institute 2.

In an area made up primarily of rows of PCs, but with some space in the middle with large round tables, a white female sits at the end of a row of PCs, sharing the row with some other white females. They arrived together but work separately and quietly; they have their own work to focus on so carry out their studying individually. The area is very much a thoroughfare: on one side the stairs, lift and bathrooms are housed, and on the opposite there's a separate room leading out of this area that is kept for silent use. The area is open, with books shelved where there's no seating, so visitors can pass through the study area for reasons entirely separate to the use of the PCs and tables. Another white female joins them, remaining standing over her peer at the end of the row, talks loudly about her social life. The conversation moves rapidly to their work and the standing female begins to advise her peers on how they should progress, raising her own plans for a project she needs to work on with the seated female. The seated female volunteers a few suggestions for how to approach the project, while the female standing over her repeatedly exclaims "yes, EXACTLY!" Within five minutes, all females on the row are talking at equal volume as they organise their possessions before leaving together.

Observation 5.3. Institute 2.

In the same area as in observation 5.2 above, I'm sitting at a table in the middle. Four white females arrive and select a row of PCs three to four metres away from me with two sitting on each side to face each other, chatting as they get settled at each machine

and logged in. They are joined not long after by another female, and the conversation becomes loud enough to not be able to distinguish whether they are socialising or discussing academia. One of them starts playing Christmas music [it's November], and while I can't tell where it is coming from, it continues for a couple of minutes until one of the group members asks her to turn it down. She does so, but it is still audible. As I look up, I see one of the females is on Facebook, one is logging into a Google app of some kind [I recognise the 'G' logo]. However, within a couple of minutes, they are all watching a video with music playing, crying "awwwwww!" as they watch! At this point I feel they are definitely *not* working, but as the video ends, I hear one of the females asks if "there's a set brief for it? I promised you'd get work done today!" and they begin to quieten down and discuss their work.

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In each observation detailed above, there has been a clear dominant member of the group. McKay and Buchanan refer to groups featuring scribes (who input data), editors (who suggest modifications to the data), co-ordinators (who helped organise activities), and teachers (who "sat back until they believed their advice was required" (2014, p. 105)). In smaller groups it may be harder to observe who takes each role, as suggested by McKay and Buchanan, but it may also mean that members will take multiple roles or eliminate some altogether depending on the attributions of the space they inhabit. The loud female in observation 5.1(i1)³⁰ was entirely a teacher throughout, and while she did express herself more strongly if she was frustrated at her peer's mistakes, she was taking on a supportive role that could also be perceived as a caring role, and thus a role that conforms to gender stereotypes.

The female in observation 5.2(i2) was a new group member for a comparatively brief period of time, changing the dynamics of how the group was operating and her role was more complex: she interrupted their work pattern to suit her needs, confirming her own plans and dominating by both the volume of her speech and her body language in her physical position above the others. She still wished to maintain a work focus in spite of her initial social chat, but in her adoption of the role of instructing others (as per McKay and Buchanan's teacher role (2014)) she was checking for validation of her own position, ensuring her own route was the correct one, and with the suggestion of ideas from the seated student, confirming her position was indeed correct while ensuring she maintained a dominant position in the group.

³⁰ For ease of reference, each institute the observation is attributed to will be identified as either i1 or i2.

In observation 5.3(i2), the lead female wasn't clearly identifiable until she announced herself as such. The group were primarily engaging in social use of the library, in what could be considered a bonding exercise in the shared enjoyment of videos and music, until she stated she had promised they would achieve study goals while visiting, taking on a co-ordinating role even prior to their visit. Her adoption of that co-ordinating role suggests the group dynamics place her as a leader of the group, but her participation in their social activities also placed her as an equal: she was there to organise, but not necessarily to control the group, yet they responded to her announcement of their real purpose for the library visit.

The lead women observed above were taking a role of domination that could be on the surface interpreted as disrupting female stereotypes, because of their adoption of strength and power over their peers while simultaneously providing support. However, at this point it is worth noting what Walter (2010) refers to when discussing the stereotyping of gender: that there is no convenient template to slot all women into (p. 199), and when examining leadership roles it is easy to represent qualities of leaders as masculine or feminine (p. 210). Perceiving the women's actions as disruptive is problematic, as stereotypes of gendered behaviour are self-perpetuating i.e. if people conform to them, they will enforce the stereotypes further, while non-conformity is disregarded as a meaningless glitch in behaviour (ibid, p. 200, and also Collins (2000)), certain behaviours can more easily be derived as taking a dominant role. Several of these behaviours can be seen in some of the cases above i.e. looking down on or directly at others, creating height above others, and loud voices, with voice levels in particular appearing most frequently amongst the dominant behaviour (as per Argyle's aforementioned categories (1988, p. 97)). The females in observations 5.1(i1) and 5.2(i2) both use volume and interruptions, and the female in observation 5.2(i2) additionally uses spatial position and posture. The dominant women observed were taking roles labelled in McKay and Buchanan (2014) as teachers and/or co-ordinators, taking control of the studying as and when needed. However, as Argyle (1988) notes, dominance can exist in the interpersonal dynamics that have already been established and thus the behaviours listed above are restating that position, or the behaviours can be utilised as a means to try and create a new position for the actor to enhance their status within the group. So the behaviours manifested by the women in a dominant role above could be that they are trying to confirm their roles in the peer group overall, outside of the study activity. Ultimately, the dominant behaviours were not disruptive of patriarchal norms of femininity: the women were still partaking in caregiving norms in their tutor/co-ordinator positions, even when endeavouring to take control. As Collins (1986) suggests when discussing race, one of the purposes of FST is to help contest

stereotyping and identify hierarchies within standpoints. Intergroup dynamics here demonstrate the variety of roles and relationships undertaken, but they are all undertaken by women starting their journey into the working world. The women who adopt potentially self-designated roles ("I promised you'd get work done today!" in 5.3(i2)) have taken on a caring role while also moving towards a career, and while the two may not conflict depending on career choice, there may also be issues in adopting multiple conflicting roles (Bradley, 2013). While the tutor roles can be supportive and sometimes empowering to the tutor, they can also operate in the opposite way and be disruptive and not always helpful, but controlling.

The space use patterns in observations 5.1(i1) and 5.2(i2) demonstrate a usage that takes advantage of the design and furnishings to operate in the manner the groups are studying in. The females in 5.1(i1) are using a table designed for collaboration in an area where rules allow discussion, while the females in 5.2(i2) are using PCs that allow them to work alongside each other but also separately so that they can study independently. Both these design elements appear to have been at the very least sufficient to the needs of their inhabitants. In 5.3(i2), however, while it becomes clearer later in the observation that the intention of the visit is to study, the initial social behaviour and use seems to also be influenced by the capacity to use the PCs for non-study activities, and the female has to actively take a dominant position to encourage a move from social activity to studying. The space use here suggests the design is open to manipulation, that the attitude and perspective of its inhabitants will use the space to their own means, and purposes, whether that use matches the intention of study purpose or the initial social activity seen in 5.3(i2) (which was effectively returned to reflect the primary study design purpose by human intervention). The nature of the spaces used means that while they do not necessarily influence dominant behaviour, their design does not deter the manifestation of dominant behaviours: in 5.2(i2) the nature of the open space with no privacy situated close access to stairwells means a steady flow of traffic through to access resources and facilities, and (un)planned meetings can easily occur. In 5.3(i2) the space is meant to be used for studying on computers, but internet access, rules allowing discussion, and a lack of motivation on the part of its inhabitants easily influences the choice of activity: it takes a motivated individual to curb the behaviour back towards their intended purpose. Human nature is what is influencing power dynamics the most here, but each group is also taking advantage of facilities to stretch the intended use of the design: in itself this behaviour is an expression of power and ownership of library spaces.

There are exceptions to the group behaviours detailed above, albeit partially represented in observation 5.3(i2). Social use of libraries by women can show a slightly different pattern, as can be seen below in observation 5.4.

Observation 5.4. Institute 1.

I'm in a group study area filled with large tables surrounded by chairs. The area has rules that allow discussion, but it is also situated next to a silent PC area, with no way of blocking noise bleed into the silent area. It is mid-morning, and two white females are sitting at one of the tables eating sandwiches, chatting socially. They are soon joined by another white female, and continue their social chat, their voices loud, the chat punctuated by frequent swearing. They occasionally swap to discussing the modules they are registered on, but they aren't formally discussing studying as such: this is more of a sharing of how they perceive the content and lecturers, and social conversation dominates their talk. Half an hour later, the discussion follows the same lines, but they are joined by another white female who was passing by into the PC area, but then redirects towards the group to talk socially with them. Shortly after she arrives, two of the group leave to attend a lecture, and the two remaining females continue to switch topics between social chat and problems with their studies. There is some fluctuation with volume as one of the females (the original female who swore the most) largely talks at greater volume than the other. In spite of their comparatively small group size, and their location at the opposite side of the area, I hear them more than any of the other groups located here, and from what I can observe, they are socialising the most. Later, they are joined by three more white females (increasing the group size to five), and they briefly discuss lecturers again, but conversation continues to be predominantly social, and I note that while it could be the pitch and tone of the speakers that makes them more audible, they as a group are dominating the space. However, a white male warden passes through the area, and asks all the inhabitants of the group space to "keep the noise down". Noise levels drop immediately, but as he passes into a nearby corridor, the noise increases again. A couple of minutes later, when he moves through the area again, he goes to speak directly to the female group, pointing out that "this is a quiet study area". Three of the group leave, heading down the corridor, while the remaining females continue to talk at a lower volume. They discuss their final year projects, and are initially still quieter than when they were at their peak volume, but as they move back to social conversation, their volume increases again. Two white females enter the floor, and the original female calls them over, but they wave and move down the corridor. Shortly after, one of the remaining pair goes to the bathroom, and the two who had waved reappear, and start chatting to the remaining female about tutorials. The female who went to the bathroom returns, and they leave as a group.

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There are several points of interest in this observation. The first is that the use of library space seems an unusual choice for what appears to primarily be a social conversational visit: the group discuss their course content and lectures without being particularly specific about their studying or engaging in studying. The group have chosen to use a 'quiet study' area within the library, which reflects the purpose of the area in itself, but what appears to be purely a social visit conflicts with the concept of using a study area or, indeed, an academic library. The response of the member of staff indicates that while staff are happy to tolerate social use of a library (they are unable to spend time observing library users for a prolonged period thus cannot make definite conclusions about what occurs while they are absent), staff may make judgements according to the volume of the inhabitants. Interview data supports this conclusion: when speaking to Marlon, a member of staff at Institute 1, I asked him what he classed as study behaviours and how he could identify whether noise was disruptive:

you can see and you can hear them talking about their coursework [...]
there's no individual pattern of things you can just tell that they're
working, I mean, might be a group just sat together you can see them
they're working so we leave them, do you know what I mean [BR: even if
they're making noise?] if they bring the noise level down [BR: right] you
see we appreciate, we say 'I appreciate you're working in a group but I just
need you to bring the volume that bit lower,' you know and that's how we
do it.

[Marlon, staff, Institute 1]

Based on what Marlon reported, the staff member asking the group to reduce the noise levels had possibly overheard some content of study discussion. The students' response appears to reflect some level of respect for staff, although their volume was only reduced initially on the first request. Some problems arise here from the proximity of the discussion space to a silent area: the two opposing labelled spaces are conflicting purposes, and without sufficient soundproofing, noise carried easily between the two areas. The design of the discussion area with its large tables lends itself to that purpose of discussion and collaboration, so design does match the purpose, but, in this particular case, the volume and the space design clashed with opposing silent space, leaving library staff to police students.

In terms of the nature of the group's behaviour, the social discussion incorporating sharing of difficulties with the course can be seen as a way of discharging stress.

Additionally, the use of frequent swearing indicates a state of comfort or relaxation amongst the group members: Holmes (1995) suggests that swearing in groups of people can indicate membership. This notion supported by Beers-Fägersten (Beers-Fägersten, 2012), and Stapleton (2003), the latter of whom additionally found that males and females in equal numbers would use swearing as a stress-release and that women in particular would use swearing in certain scenarios to indicate intimacy. Current research suggests that overall use of swearing in conversation differs very little between genders in respect to frequency and type of swear word (Beers-Fägersten, 2012; Jacobi, 2014): the frequency of the swearing within this particular group can thus be considered a means of bonding and potentially a stress release given the discussion of their perceptions of lecturers and module content. However, the female talking the loudest, who remained in the space throughout the observation, was the female dominating the space via volume.

To summarise and return to the behaviour of the women in the observations detailed in 5.1 to 5.4 above, the women are exerting some level of dominance and leadership as per the dominant signals as detailed by Argyle (1988) above, while also conforming to group behaviours as observed by McKay and Buchanan (2014) (thus supporting their findings). Argyle goes on to suggest that there are gender differences in the manifestation of dominance as women consider themselves of lower status than men, and are physically smaller, but that this depends on their role (Argyle, 1988, p. 99), and many of his points are supported by Henley (1995). However, Hall (2006) feels that the research on gender and power communicated via nonverbal cues is problematic, and always has been: "If women do more of a given behavior than men do, then that behavior must be submissive (because women are low status)." (2006, p. 388). Hall refers to the problematic nature of researching differences in gender in the use of nodding and backchannel responses such as 'yes' and 'mmm', where the nod/response has been interpreted as either trying to hurry the speaker along, or as encouraging the speaker to continue while validating their speech (2006, pp. 386, 389). The women in dominance are usually providing supporting roles (if sometimes at the expense and disruption of others), even where in observation 5.2(i2) there are suggestions of self-validation: the nature of her use of backchannels was encouraging of her peer, and confirmation to herself that she was correct in her knowledge of the subject. Perceptions of the women using dominant signals in their behaviour could easily be interpreted by other inhabitants who are not members of the group to be male behaviours and thus actions that stereotype them as unfeminine (as in Walter (2010)). However, Bradley (1998, p. 35) refers to the concept of "personal power" and how some women will use their personal skills and character to engage with other people to elevate their own

status, irrespective of the gender of the people they elevate themselves over, usually in more private spheres i.e. in personal interactions rather than publicly.

However, as per the discussion above, the individuals displaying power signals may be exerting authority, but the nature of their relationships mean the groups as a whole are also likely to benefit from their behaviour and actions. Additionally, Butler (2006) suggests, gender stereotypes can be played with in order to break them down, they are not stable as they are socially constructed, but the behaviours here are largely conforming to stereotypes of women in different forms: those of caring, supportive collaboration, and those of the loud, dominant female attempting to place themselves in power (Collins, 2000). In summary, the female only groups operate in a way that conforms to that found in groups in general by McKay and Buchanan (2014), and appears to match the manner for female learning processes as described in English and Irving (2012), with specific females engaging in dominant behaviour in both study and social situations. The space they inhabit appears to have been selected because it and the designated rule for each space match their intended use, but in some cases (observations 5.1, 5.3, 5.4) the groups as a whole manipulate the function and resources available to their wishes, indicating some level of control and power over their use and the space itself.

Usage patterns and behaviours identified so far imply several potential standpoints: female groups as needing the library for social and study use; and individuals as caregiving leaders. The latter, individual female group members as caregiving leaders (i.e. tutor roles) endorses female stereotypes, but also confirms their capacity to empower themselves and others through taking ownership of the group and directing them towards activities. Certainly Bradley (1998) suggests that, as women progress into the working world, they engage more with HE as a means of improving their power: HE is a means of personal advancement that can lead to a better income and skill set that can provide more opportunities later. Females exerting power while undertaking HE advancement can develop skills they theoretically utilise once they enter a profession that will likely still be male dominated at higher levels (Bradley, 1998, 2013; European Institute for Gender Equality, 2017). Additionally, the changing HE climate, as will be discussed further in section 6.3, will potentially influence student perceptions of the importance of their education in achieving professional goals, thus influence the need to ensure academic success, therefore further developing the need for tutor roles within groups.

So far I have discussed how female-only groups use and behave in library spaces, and how power can manifest within those groups, or from outside of them as membership changes, but how do male-only groups compare to female-only groups in their actions and behaviour? Are there any differences, or do they behave in the same or similar ways in their patterns of power, and in their interpretation of library space?

5.1.2 Male-only groups

Male-only groups are, in some ways, similar to female groups yet also demonstrate distinctive patterns of behaviour. Wright (2006) talks about similarities in same sex friendships between genders, pointing out that groups share: the same values of friendship e.g. trust, expressiveness; agentic i.e. supportive of goal achievement; casual “talk for talk’s sake” (Wright, 2006, p. 44); and fun and relaxation. As the observations below show, there are several behaviours that appear demonstrating these similarities. The vignettes show how groups of males work to reach a common goal, with some level of social activity.

Observation 5.5. Institute 1 (this observation was made at the same time as the females in 5.4, although these males entered the area around 45 minutes after the females so both groups were in the same area at the same time for the most part).

After some walking around the floor as if to try and locate an appropriate seating area, six British Asian males take seats at two separate round tables in a quiet discussion area, four to one table, two to another, around 3 metres away from each other. They move the chairs in the area around to make sure they each have seats at their chosen table. The table of four are furthest from me, and they drink from bottles as they look through some papers they have with them, talking. One of this group waves a document while talking, and the four laugh softly. The group of two also have documents on their table. A male from the larger group gets up, drops something in a nearby bin, and then relocates to the smaller group table. Shortly after the male moves, a British Asian female enters the area, and she sits at the table furthest from me. At this point, around 15 minutes after the group arrived, I log that I have caught the furthest group looking at me a couple of times, and they then move towards the PC area further down the floor. In my observation notes I speculate that it was either an unfortunate coincidence, or they were staring me out because my table may have accommodated their group more easily, or that they had realised I was watching them and assumed I was policing their behaviour. However, the group nearest to me remains at their table. Five minutes after the furthest group leave, a solo British Asian male enters the floor, and on seeing the remaining group, goes up to talk them, sitting at the table. They talk softly, and I log

that they are quieter and less audible than the female group in observation 5.4, who are further away. After a couple of minutes of talking, the solo male leaves the group and heads towards the PC area. Not long after he has left, two more British Asian males enter and go up to the group, shaking their hands with those at the table, then leaving for the PC area. As they leave, the male who had just left after sitting with the group returns, and moves a stool to sit at the table with them, discussing their studying. A moment later, a white male warden enters the floor, and the new male returns to the PC area while the group at the table lower their heads, still talking about studying, making notes as they do so, continuing in this fashion until the observation has ended.

Observation 5.6. Institute 1.

I'm seated in an area where there are mostly rows of PCs, with a couple of round tables, some sofas, and a small set of desks with lids that lift to reveal PCs inside the desk. I'm at a computer in one corner of the area, so I can see more, but it is summer, and most students have just left for the year. However, not so the four white males who enter and sit on the opposite side of the row to me. They talk loudly about their work as they enter the area, and take up the entire opposite side of the row of PCs. Two of them sit down on the outer PCs, but in the middle of the group one male continues to stand as he talks about his studying, slamming his bag on the desk. To his left a second standing male jokingly claims that the desk next to the one the first male had slammed his bag on belongs to him, and they humorously exchange insults. The first 'standing male' leaves with the third male, who took a seat next to the window, to look for a book, and once they have left, the remaining two talk in more hushed tones. On their return, the first 'standing male' empties his bag and slams his books on the desk, making my desk and PC shake, sits down, and starts talking to the window seat male about their social plans. Suddenly, the first 'standing male' announces 'right, work', and talk ends as he puts his headphones on. His desk-claiming friend to his left also wears his headphones, and starts nodding his head as he listens. They are quiet, aside from an occasional whistle. 'Desk-claim' male takes his headphones out, and says that he isn't sure how to reference something, so 'window' male offers guidance. 'Desk-claim' male stands and moves towards the 'window' male's seat, standing over him as they look at an example of how someone else has referenced that kind of item. While they do so, 'standing' male starts singing while still wearing his headphones, and the two looking at referencing look at him and laugh quietly. They finish looking at how to reference, and the 'desk-claim' male moves back to his seat. Ten minutes later, he asks the 4th male, sitting to his left, how he found a piece of information, and they start discussing 'desk-claim' man's writing plans, and what he already has. The 4th male says it sounds good, and they settle down to working individually again.

Observation 5.7. Institute 2 (This observation takes place in the same area and on the same date/time that observation 5.3 took place, although they arrived earlier, with a mixture of group sized tables and rows of PCs).

Three white males enter and go up to a row of computers by the window, selecting seats next to each other on the same side of the row. They start to log in, but the middle male starts to look at the keyboard, lifting and rotating it. The male on the right ducks under the desk, and I hear someone say "it's not logging in". However, between them they manage to get the computer working, and a moment later they are all logged in. They all open Word documents, but the left male moves to stand behind the male on the right of the group and they appear to be looking at what is saved to the computer, working out what to open, and the left male then returns to his seat. A few minutes later, the middle male finds something of interest, and the male on the right leans over in his seat to look at the middle screen, while passing something not visible to the left male. A new male visits the group briefly, standing over them as they talk, but leaves shortly after greeting them. A couple of minutes later, the middle male is watching a football video with the other two leaning over to watch. Over the next hour, they each spend time switching between software and website use, using a mixture of Word, text-based websites, sports websites, and videos. At one point, the middle male is on Word, and the male on the right chats to him, and they all then look at the middle screen. They then move on to using Google to find articles, and show each other what they've found, indicating parts of the text on screen to each other.

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Looking at the male-only group behaviours above, some aspects of their behaviour are similar to those of the female-only groups. Both male and female-only groups demonstrate collaboration and support of each other, sharing what they find with each other as they study (a behaviour that is labelled as co-production by McKay and Buchanan (2014)). Both male and female-only groups approach their studies utilising a mixture of patterns, whether they explicitly work together to support and teach each other, or work individually, only collaborating when they have questions.

However, there are some differences between male-only and female-only groups. In observation 5.5(i1), the males are working together with the purpose of studying together, demonstrating some similarities with female-only groups (5.2(i2) in particular): they talk about their studying, are quiet, will greet any peers passing by, but all this is carried out in fairly hushed tones, and they work throughout the observation even if they occasionally move to social chat as any people appear who are not part of their current study group. These behaviours are similar to those seen in 5.2(i2), where

the female-only group are primarily focussed on their studying, disrupted by other people visiting the group. However, in the case of 5.5(i1), the male group are often audibly drowned out by the noise of the female group in observation 5.4(i1). The women are taking ownership of that space via volume, which seems to override any potential dominance of a small-ish space by numbers by the males in 5.5(i1), but the male-group are a break-off group from the larger whole mixed group (albeit with only one female). They self-police that dominance by splitting into smaller groups and breaking out into other areas, and appear to be able to engage in their studying more frequently as a result. Caldwell and Peplau (1982) talk about how, while conversation is always important amongst both sexes, 84% of males would prefer to engage with friends through activity, in comparison with 57% of females preferring to engage in talk. The males in the observations above are thus behaving in a common pattern: they are together and present during an activity of studying, while the females in the observations detailed in 5.3(i2) and 5.4(i1) have a varied pattern of conversation use that appears to support the variety Caldwell and Peplau (1982) found in their research. The males observed in these groups share a purpose, are visiting the library to work on that purpose, and demonstrate a communality that female-only groups develop through different patterns of supportive/friendship building conversation.

However, the male behaviours vary somewhat in how they establish dominant roles within the groups. In 5.6(i1) the group arrive together, but there is one clear dominant male present in the standing male. His body language in standing, and in making a noise/disruption with his books confirms his dominance but his dominance is tested and disrupted a little by the male who claims his own desk, and when the desk-claiming male and the window seat male laugh at the dominant male's singing (Argyle, 1988). Interestingly, the male who jokes and insults the dominant male is the one who asks for support from the others: they are a supportive group, and the playful element of their interaction is part of their bonding and confirmation of their status as a group. This kind of behaviour is quite different to the bonding behaviour in the female group in 5.3(i2), who bonded by talk and entertainment. Dominance within a group manifests itself in different ways to in female-only groups (as per Wright (2006)) but in an HE setting can be interpreted by outsiders as domination of space too, whether or not the males are aware their actions have that effect. Domination of space by groups in an area situated/labelled by staff in a way that conflicts with other nearby spaces makes it more difficult for other individual users (in particular) to access, or becomes a potential point of conflict, for example noise levels as in 5.4(i1) and 5.5(i1).

The group in 5.7(i2) appear to be about collaboration and support, but seen more here than in other groups was their sharing of information. It's unclear how much of what they are doing is entertainment, and how much is work, given the nature of the videos they are watching and the websites they are viewing, but Institute 2 has a large cohort of sports studies students which could easily mean they are studying. If they are studying, they are sharing work. If they are not, their pattern mirrors that of group 5.3(i2), but the main difference is that the group in 5.7(i2) use headphones to keep sound to themselves, and do not behave in a way that excludes other visitors.

The spaces in these observations are being used to match the intended design: in 5.7(i2) the group choose to sit together on the same side of a row of computers to collaborate, and are quiet but share what they find (whether they are studying or not). It is difficult to speculate over the nature of their activities, but the males comply to the rules of the space more than the female group in 5.3(i2): they are quiet, they do not play loud music. The males in 5.5(i1) operate in a similar contrast to the females using the same space simultaneously in 5.4(i1): they study and collaborate and do so at a volume that does not require policing in the same manner as the female group. In 5.6(i1), the initial noise the males make when they arrive is an action that implies settling down, and moves to purely studying and supporting each other (albeit punctuated with occasional humming and singing from the dominant male). They largely follow the rules of quiet discussion and use the space to work alongside each other. Their use in all these groups reflects the intentions of the space arrangement and the rules designated to those areas. The differences between male-only and female-only groups here is primarily the extent of the manipulation of the space: in these scenarios the males are comparatively minimal in their manipulation, which links back again to Caldwell and Peplau's (1982) findings of male groups focused on gathering together for specific activities.

So far data shows similar usage patterns between genders, but differences within bonding methods. However, what happens in some other cases of male-only group use is notably different.

Observation 5.8. Institute 2.

I'm sitting on a couch in the same study area as observation 5.3, my back to the windows. This time I'm facing the tables I had sat at before, with book shelves, the door to the silent room and a row of computers to my left, and more rows of computers and group study areas further up the floor to my right. Three white males enter the area from the shelves and after briefly looking around, take seats at computers on the row to

my left, on both sides. Within a couple of minutes, the male with his back to me is skimming through a Word document. Facing towards me, one of the males takes a phone call, talking loudly and sociably. A couple of minutes later and he's still talking on the phone, mainly about his social life and its impact on his academic productivity. He ends the call and after a short period, the males start discussing how to structure their essay and the word count requirements. The phone call male stands and announces that he's going to try and locate some equipment from the help desk. He moves off the floor heading downstairs, then returns a couple of minutes later. I look up and he looks directly at me; we have direct eye contact as he moves slowly from the entrance to the floor. He has a relaxed posture, but he's broad shouldered, taking up space as he walks and looks at me, and I feel uncomfortable. As he sits he complains that the equipment he wanted wasn't available, and he starts chatting with the other males about social topics. He then stands again, moves to the printer/photocopier and loudly greets a friend there, and one of them swears. When he returns to his seat, they start talking about their assignments again, moving on to discussing references, swearing regularly throughout the conversation. They quieten down but the phone male regularly punctuates the gaps in conversation with swearing. Then he starts singing a couple of lines of lyrics. He suddenly laughs loudly, and then starts making jokes about something he's looking at, making comments about the main point of the item he's viewing. He makes a derogatory comment about it and they all laugh, and then quieten down again. The phone male then starts singing again, and produces a loud groaning sigh as he leans back in his chair. Things are quiet for around five minutes, then they start to discuss their studying again, punctuating their conversation with swearing and laughter. The male with his back to me is working on Word throughout. Five minutes later the male sat on the same side as the phone male stands and leaves. The male with his back to me switches sides to move to the same side as the phone male, and things quieten down: they continue to chat a little, but they are quieter, and swear less frequently.

Observation 5.9. Institute 1.

I'm carrying out an observation in a small quiet study area with a mixture of non-computer study desks split into 'cubbies'³¹ and PC desks. The area mainly houses shelves of books, with desk space being located in a more condensed and opportunistic manner: the area feels more like a place for textbooks than for desk space, but for much of the observation the noise is very low and it is treated more like a silent space by its inhabitants than a discussion area. There is no reason to pass through the study area unless it is to find a desk or retrieve a book. The quiet atmosphere is broken by a group

³¹ Rows of desks with separators added to each workspace, thus encouraging individual over collaborative use.

of four to five British Asian males walking through the area, slowly moving from the nearby stairs, talking loudly as they do so. One of them suddenly exclaims "quiet area!" and they wander slowly, faux-whispering their conversation as they do so. This group behaviour of slow movement with loud conversation is replicated several times in different observations/areas of the library at Institute 1, albeit with varying group size, predominantly by males.

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In observations 5.8(i2) and 5.9(i1) there are clear examples of domination and ownership of space, whether the groups involved chose to remain in the space or not. In 5.8(i2) the male is disruptive, and his lack of desire/struggle to study conflicts with his fellow group members, potentially excluding others from using the area while he engaged in procrastination activities. Additionally, his domination of the space not only made me feel like I was a guest in his domain as he moved slowly and his gaze met my eyes, but also like I was being critiqued. As discussed earlier at the beginning of this chapter, Argyle (1988, p. 97) states that gaze is an important tool for establishing dominant roles, and this male's use of it, whether consciously or not, placed me in a position of discomfort, as someone of lower status and to be critiqued (Henley, 1977, 1995).

Both the male in 5.8(i2) and the males in 5.9(i1) communicated ownership of space via volume and body language: their slow movements implying they have high comfort levels in the space and thus it was their space. Their posture was that of relaxed, but also of inhabiting the space, maintaining a broad stance to display their strength and increasing their physical occupation of the space they inhabited (something that Bradley (1998) identifies as dominating via an indicator of a physical threat as well as bodily taking up space). Male groups engaging in ownership of spaces were initially implying the need to study together near each other (if not as a group), but were not always actively dominating the space: the fact that as males they possessed the space through the body was enough to imply they owned it to other people. The males in 5.9(i1) subverted the meaning and design intentions of the space (as well as its silent inhabitants) through humour, mocking the quiet discussion rule with their faux whispering. The use of swearing in 5.8(i2) implies some level of comfort with other group members, and some bonding activity from the perspective of the phone male (Beers-Fägersten, 2012; Wajnryb, 2005), but that his fellow group members participate more if the conversation is about studying rather than social activities implies that the phone male's actions could be more than a bonding exercise, and incorporates an attempt to control the group and the area around him. Juhi, an undergraduate student I

interviewed at Institute 1, corroborated the problem of domination, subordination of other inhabitants and self-perceived critiquing of inhabitants. She spoke of wishing that people would communicate they were happy/comfortable in their facial expressions, but also of feeling that she is being stared at, being observed and judged while she occupies her own chosen, familiar space:

sometimes you get put off while you're working [...] and someone just walks past and they look at you for ages and then they walk away I don't like that [...] I think in my religion you should lower your gaze do you get me [BR: mm] do you know what I'm trying to say now [BR: I think so it's the er kind of a respect] basically boys looking at girls, I don't like that

I think I might have drew attention to myself if I'm wearing my Asian clothes [BR: why why would you think that is it] 'cos I look nice [both laugh] [...] I'm not shy of wearing it and obviously they do look don't they but everyone looks at everyone don't they, everyone looks at everyone but sometimes I don't like it because I think in my religion you should lower your gaze [...] they should smile that's all I'm saying, sometimes it has an impact on where you wanna study if people are there you will not study if there's an environment or a group of people that puts you off, luckily that doesn't happen in [her favourite study space in the library] it's more friendly.

[Juhi, student, Institute 1]

Juhi's own discomfort from gaze highlights her response and reaction: her determination to continue to dress as she pleases moves against being made to feel out of place and critiqued, introduces her own power and comfort so that she can maintain her claimed space [Juhi is primarily an individual user of library space, which is discussed in more detail below in section 5.3]. The sense of discomfort Juhi felt could also stem from other people's perceptions of her race and religion: she referred specifically to being stared at when wearing her "Asian clothes", which suggests that anyone staring at her feels some sense of 'other' or discomfort towards her choice of clothing. While Juhi was keen to emphasise that she didn't think she was being bullied in any way, she did feel that she was effectively being judged when people stared at her. Juhi, as a student at Institute 1, was one of many British Asians attending as students there, but a large ethnic population does not necessarily mean acceptance across the rest of the Institute population, and implies larger societal issues of racialization, racism and anti-Muslim

perceptions feeding into her becoming othered (racialization will be discussed further in chapter 7).

Overall, the power dynamics within each library space highlights several issues in single gender groups. Females excluded other inhabitants via their own supportive friendly behaviours, but males excluded via power disputes. Both genders worked to bond and engaged with each other in social ways within their groups, but the dominant females created an environment that allowed support of each other, and the female groups excluded others primarily via volume, in comparison to the males in 5.8(i2) and 5.9(i1) who endeavoured to take ownership beyond their location via the body. Dominant females were appointed as leaders (whether by themselves or by the group) overtly intended as beneficial, while males seemed to have a dominant leader of the group whether for study purposes or otherwise, and would jostle for the role. Both genders created tensions that could disrupt others both within and outside of their groups, but clearly visited with an intention to study, even if that purpose was disrupted at any point. It was the disruption activities within the groups that differed. The women created a community that was predominantly supportive without being mocking of group members (although incidents were observed where people outside of the group and not present were critiqued or mocked by group members), while the men in 5.8(i2) would use mocking of each other to bond but also subvert power and status within their groups and create more control for themselves. In the process of creating a communal spirit the female groups would exclude by volume, which would not be designed to create power disputes with other library users. The males in 5.9(i1) mocked the space rules and inhabitants in their behaviour, ultimately rejecting to use the space. The male behaviours demonstrated in 5.8(i2) and 5.9(i1) were clear examples of space ownership that would intentionally (consciously or not) make other inhabitants feel excluded and require a response to maintain personal space ownership.

The space itself was being used, as in female-only groups, as it was designed to be: in 5.8(i2) the males were logged on to PCs with the intention of studying, but one of the group members was acting in a manner that could have both disrupted his own group members and those outside of his group. He was acting in a way that implied he was at least partially ignoring his peers' study intentions (he was not constantly talking or overtly interrupting them, but he was also not silent and prevented his peers from breaking off from their work of their own intention). In 5.9(i1) the space was being used quietly by its inhabitants: the disruption to use was caused as the males passed through the space and then realised the nature of its rules and usage at the time. Without knowing whether or not they were already aware of the rules in this particular space, it

is difficult to know if they would have used the area had it not already been populated with silent studying, or if they would have complied with those rules once inhabiting the space. However, the rules were already disrupted by the existing inhabitants of the space in their silent use over the allowed discussion. The nature of the desk 'cubbies' with the separators between each desk encourages individual studying without interaction, reducing opportunities for people to converse. The usage pattern of inhabitants in 5.9 thus suggests a conflict between rules, design and use, even if inhabitants demonstrate a unity in their usage patterns outside of the group creating the disruption.

In summary, while male groups still usually visit the library for study purposes, the subversion and power dynamics within the group differ to that of female-only groups, the males taking ownership in primarily physical ways. While the spaces male groups used were usually engaged with for productivity (in the case of 5.9(i1) it is difficult to know what their use would have involved), the subversion and manipulation of the space was most frequently via individual actions. The space design and rules appeared to have more influence over use, but as discussed by Wright (2006), male groups congregate for specific activities (in observations male groups would most commonly arrive and settle down and work), suggesting they are selecting the space explicitly for those activities rather than for the act of manipulating them (hence creating ownership of space via physical means).

The differences between male and female groups here demonstrate that while both male and female groups intend to study when they use the library, and feature specific dominant group members, the approaches incorporate varying power structures and techniques for maintaining those structures. Both males and females most commonly represent ways of manifesting power frequently identified with those gender norms i.e. females will most commonly represent caring and social roles while males will represent physical power. Potential for standpoints still remains the same for females (that they use the library for social and study activities, with an identified tutor controlling activity) but by exerting power on a personal level, but male group power indicates that they maintain oppressing roles by expressing power over other users via body language (Bradley, 1998, 2013). Having looked at single-gender groups, and demonstrated that each gendered group operates in similar ways but with noticeable differences in power and space ownership, I shall now move on to examine how mixed-gender groups use library spaces.

5.1.3 Mixed-gender groups

Mixed gender groups operate, like same-gender groups, with variable success. Mixed-gender groups were seen less frequently during observations than same-gender groups, but those who were observed participated in that familiar mixture of socialising and studying during their visit. They would usually operate as a group very successfully. However, group dynamics could easily be disrupted by people not part of the initial group membership, as the following observations demonstrate.

Observation 5.10. Institute 2 (This observation takes place in the same area that observations 5.2, 5.3 and 5.7 took place)

This observation is in a study area that was a mixed use space allowing discussion, with individual use computers in rows plus several large tables that could be used for group work, but were also often used by individuals who wanted to spread their property out. The area is open, directly next to an entrance from the stairs. A male and female, both white enter the area from the stairwell, settling at a group study table, breaking the rules by eating hot food (which is not commented on by passing staff) once seated. They initially converse on mainly social topics, but after about 10 minutes, they get a laptop computer out, plus some papers, and the female plugs some headphones into something not visible. The female then leaves the area to buy drinks for them both, and in her absence the male plugs headphones into the laptop. When she returns with hot drinks, he asks about how to use the laptop in a particular way, as it isn't a brand he is familiar with. The female instructs him, and they discuss their studying. Not long into their studying the male leaves the area temporarily, and a new male arrives. He starts talking socially to the female, but then notices another male he knows seated at a desktop computer station about 8 metres away, and shouts across to him, discussing his social life including making reference to the previous night and making derogatory sexual comments about a woman he had met. He then jokes about how "this is a library!" and continues his cross-room social conversation. The original male then returns, starts talking socially with the new male, which develops further into a cross-room social conversation between the three males. After around five minutes of this, the new male leaves, and the female tries to take control of the situation again: "right, crack on you two" (referring to the male at the PC as well as her original companion at the table), curbing discussion towards their work again. However, the arrival of two more males entering the floor and moving to talk to them leads her to humorously exclaim that she "will never get anything done with you two around" (indicating the new arrivals).

Observation 5.11. Institute 1 (this observation was logged during the same visit and in the same location as 5.1).

Ahead of me are a few rows of PCs running perpendicular to the wall. Two British Asian males enter the area and take seats at the PCs with their backs to me, logging in and collaborating on a table on the screen. They switch between studying and socialising, the screen going black at one point from lack of use. They continue to return to the table on the screen, although they keep shifting between two PCs. 20 minutes into their visit, a British Asian female joins them, and initially they discuss their assignment topics. She logs in to a computer to the right of them, and all three group members have academic software visible on screen. However, within ten minutes of logging in, the female is checking her phone and has moved to sit in front of one of the male's PCs, turned towards him, chatting socially with him and occasionally laughing. Another ten minutes pass, and her screen has gone black while she chats to the nearest male, sniggering as she does so. They laugh and the volume of their conversation increases. An hour after the males first arrived, the female and male nearest to her are huddled over something directly in front of his PC, still sometimes laughing, while the male on the other end of the row is largely excluded from conversation, using his PC most of the time. She laughs loudly, exclaiming "Don't you dare!" The middle male's screen is black. The male on the end looks over sometimes as they huddle together, continuing his work, while the middle male and the female continue to socialise, leaving their computers logged in but unused for much of their visit.

Katherine's visit (Institute 1) [This vignette is based on an incident she reports during our interview, and uses some direct quotes from her description of what occurred.]

Katherine (a part-time undergraduate working full-time) is up early to visit the library in the hope of avoiding the noise at home. With it being a weekend her family are all in the house, and she has an assignment deadline looming. She likes using the library at this time of day and week because it is quiet. She claims her favourite seat, in a 'hidey' spot on a row of PCs right behind some shelves in a quiet discussion area: she likes that she can't get any phone reception so nobody can bother her. She settles down to work. Shortly after, a mature woman arrives with a younger male, and they take seats together at two PCs on Katherine's row. The woman starts instructing the male, talking loudly as she does so. The male is barely audible as the woman exclaims sharply "be quiet! Let me concentrate!" Katherine, in spite of her irritation at this disruption to her studies, laughs: they are just like an old married couple if it wasn't for the age difference! That poor young man taking the brunt of the woman's 'advice'! The woman doesn't seem to notice her laughing though, and continues to loudly (and badly) instruct the male as to what he should be doing, what he is doing wrong and telling him to be quiet. Katherine wonders whether she could contact someone to report the pair

disturbing her, but isn't sure what would happen. Would someone come to where they are all sat and announce they have come to check on reports of people being loud and disruptive? She doesn't really like the idea of that... It would be obvious it was her when the area has so few people. Eventually, Katherine can take no more, and builds up the courage to ask the (rather intimidating looking) woman to be quiet. The woman seems surprised, and both the male and female are quiet after that.

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In observation 5.10(i2) the female initially takes quite specific roles, as a caregiver in providing the drinks, and as an instructor in providing guidance on how to use her laptop. She and the male's roles were more collaborative when discussing their work, but she appeared to have control in her ownership and knowledge of the technology they were using, and that lent a feeling of control to her taking the caregiver role. However, when the group was temporarily modified by the male visitors the male group member enabled socialising to take place by engaging in it. The female attempted to either ignore their disruptive and misogynistic behaviour (which initially took place in the group male's absence, but continued when he returned) or to retake control and was pushed back against and ignored by the male. The female ultimately was not in the role of control she initially appeared to take, because the visiting males endorsed dominant roles in body language, volume (Argyle, 1988), in their focus on the original male group member, but also as a group excluded her. The male talk took priority over the female talk (Kennedy & Camden, 1983; Spender, 1998), and while she was briefly successful, likely connected to the initial intended purpose of their visit, the return to studying was short-lived as further interruptions with other males created more disruption. The female attempting to maintain a dominant tutor/caregiver role found herself oppressed by the dominant males, mirroring societal gender dynamics.

In 5.11(i1), in contrast to the other mixed group behaviours, the male group is disrupted by the addition of female presence and new membership of the group: she arrives appearing to want to collaborate and social conversation increases with her arrival. The male excluded from social activity continues to study, but is disrupted by the mixed gender conversation: it is unclear whether the disruption annoys, distracts, or makes him feel excluded. The male and female huddling together over the phone screen implies that a strong familiarity exists between them already (Argyle, 1988), but the female turns her back on the other male to face her conversation partner, ignoring the studying male. However, the socialising male appears perfectly happy to socialise with her instead of acting as a collaborator with his peer. It is difficult to know how much the socialising

male would have participated in studying had the female not arrived, but her arrival allowed him to at least avoid studying for a prolonged period.

In both 5.10(i2) and 5.11(i1), even though the groups arrive with intention of studying, disruption is generated by additional group members (irrespective of their gender). The spaces selected in each case are designed to enable collaborations: the large round table in 5.10 means the pair can share resources easily but also have room to work on their own materials. However, the location of the table is in an area that acts as a route to both that space and other neighbouring study spaces, as well as resources: the nature of the space design allows unplanned meetings, and while the design does not act as an encouragement to or the production of misogynistic behaviour or talk, it does nothing to discourage the cross-room, loud socialising. The row of PCs in a discussion area in 5.11 provides opportunities for the pair to sit together but work individually as appropriate. However, the male and female logging into PCs without using them both means that not only are they excluding the other male from their activities, they are also excluding other people from using the computers in that area. In both these observations, the intention is initially to study, but this intention is only carried over by one group member, and new additional (if only temporary) group members disrupt study activities. The space purpose is manipulated, reinterpreted, or disregarded entirely for the benefit of the new group members/visitors. The space is simultaneously inclusive and engaging, yet exclusive as its users manipulate and take ownership of the space, enforcing their own domination and power.

At this point it is worth stating that mixed-gender groups can operate in a co-operative, successfully communal way, and examples of these groups are discussed in section 7 in the context of developing a community. However, one of the key design features of modern academic libraries is intended to reflect of the requirements of HE teaching and learning design, incorporating space intended to accommodate social, informal learning via serendipitous/unplanned meetings (Jamieson, 2003). The observations above (5.10 and 5.11) demonstrate that the very nature of unplanned meetings means they are not always appreciated or successful (a point that is acknowledged by Bryant, Matthews and Walton (2009) and Harrop and Turpin (2013)). Additionally, chance meetings are naturally not restricted to mixed-gender groups, or necessarily prove unsuccessful (as in they are disruptive and provide no study benefits to any participant). However, here the nature of providing a space for chance meetings is clearly not supportive and allows more dominance and power problems to arise. Here we begin to see a position develop for a standpoint of disrupted library users, those who are oppressed by other library

visitors, as they begin as enabled but find themselves disempowered by outsiders (whether their activities are beneficial to others or not).

Katherine's story (i1) is an interesting additional perspective of mixed-gender groups for several reasons, and is deceptively simple on the surface. The vignette incorporates her own use of language, particularly when referring to the other students in that they are "like an old married couple", her description of what the female says to the male, and her sympathetic view of the male. Katherine's need for library space to ensure she could reach her study goals is clear from her personal situation [social and situational needs for library space are discussed in more detail in chapter 6], and while the form of group behaviour she talked about was not something I saw during my observations, it is clear from her telling of it that it had left a mark in her memory. She told it as a humorous story, but she was also disrupted by the actions of the group and torn as to how to react. Katherine's interpretation of their behaviour labelled the female of the group as a very specific female stereotype: the loud, bossy wife, even though we don't know the relationship of the pair. However, the female's actions are also those of a mother figure, taking on a position of power, ordering her younger male peer to behave in a certain way. The woman is taking control acting as a teacher (McKay & Buchanan, 2014) and ordering the male to behave while using volume and talking as he acts (Argyle, 1988) to maintain a ruling role, but is also conforming to another genre of dominant patriarchal labelling, which in turn satirises and belittles women engaging with power (Bradley, 2013). The woman's approach to the teacher role conflicts with McKay and Buchanan's (2014) representation of how the role usually operated in groups, "often [sitting] back until they believed their advice was required." (2014, p. 105): she was highly active in her overseeing of her peer's activity. Katherine's choice of the married couple comparison helped her enforce a specific type stereotype of the nagging wife and her hard put-upon husband, but also demonstrates that she herself had perceptions (conscious or not) of women of power/strength as a dominant negative image. The negative perspective is likely to stem from her experience of the incident as negative, but that she is also a mature woman breaking out of her family role to study at university raises the issue that she is maintaining rather than disrupting female normative roles (something that could have been achieved in her status as a student). The woman to Katherine is a figure of annoyance, of inducing fear, and a source of humour. However, Katherine took control of the situation herself: she asked a dominant woman to change her behaviour, who then complied with the request. In doing so, Katherine found a way to increase her own strength, to become more dominant herself. Her fear of the unknown event that reporting the noise could lead to helped her find strength and empowerment to take control of the situation: she chose to reveal her

concerns about the group herself than have someone else potentially identify her as the complainant. Additionally, Katherine disrupted the group behaviour, and changed their actions to different but nonetheless potentially problematic behaviour for the group: it is unclear whether or not the male was benefitting from the control the female took of his studying, but the change in behaviour would possibly have changed how their studying progressed.

Furthermore, while Katherine chose to use the library space because she considered it a 'hidey' spot where she could study away from people, the area was a row of four PCs, and was designated a 'quiet discussion' area. The female of the group was talking about studying, but her volume was well above a level Katherine could tolerate. Katherine's experiences of using that area were of it being a quiet place to work "nine times out of ten" and she had come to rely on being able to study there successfully without being disturbed by other visitors. She enjoyed the privacy the space provided, with the peace the lack of mobile phone network access and close proximity to shelves allowed. The pressures in her home life meant the library was of particular importance to her to enable her to study, and when other types of user interrupted her studying (even if they were studying themselves), the benefits of using the library were reduced.

Each incident described above demonstrates how the experience of working in a mixed gender group can be problematic, depending on the roles adopted by members. The two groups where the female was a dominant teacher figure differ in how the females (un)successfully maintain their roles, dependent on people who operate outside of the group. In each case, the behaviour of specific individuals (in 5.10(i2) the misogynist male, in 5.11(i1) the female late arrival, and in Katherine's story at Institute 1, the tutoring female herself) cause disruption to the group or the area as a whole. The power demonstrated here by the teacher figures is either ignored by others, or the teacher figures become dominant to the point that they can no longer sustain their power because they disrupt others who must police the behaviour. The behaviours manifest irrespective of whether the library space was designed to support that usage pattern or not. Katherine represents a standpoint of someone whose personal life means the library is an essential space which meant she needed to focus (something I will discuss more in chapter 6), but she also represents a standpoint of an individual user disrupted by outside influence i.e. that of the group (or member of the group) creating disruption. Katherine felt forced to act in order to be able to study without further disruption.

To summarise so far, as per the research questions (specifically how students behave in and use academic libraries, what they do when they visit, and how they interact with

each other) I have detailed observations of student behaviours when they visit and use the library as groups. Both institutes have extensive provisions in their libraries for groups to collaborate in a variety of ways, whether they are actively supporting each other (for example in observation 5.1(i1)), or studying together yet alone in order to achieve their goals (as in observation 5.6(i1)). Observations have helped me discover how students interact within their groups, and how outsiders can easily disrupt the structure and power dynamics of these groups, thus potentially creating or reinforcing inequalities already present in society (such as with gender in observation 5.10(i2)). Up to this point I have only briefly touched on how library space design may or may not have influenced what occurred in the incidents detailed so far, by allowing non-group members to intercept and disrupt group members. I will now move on to discuss in more detail how the libraries are used by groups and how behaviours may manifest within these spaces.

5.2 Space influence on group use

Having discussed the behaviours of groups within the libraries studied, I have found that both genders engage in supportive behaviours in single-gender groups, although in different styles and with varying levels of internal power disputes. I have also investigated how mixed gender groups may encounter problems in terms of how power relations through teacher/co-ordinator roles are adopted: where females adopt a role of teacher, particularly over males, they can find themselves disrupted by non-group members. I have briefly identified how these behaviours and roles manifest in the library spaces. One of the research questions asks what impact library design has on use and perceptions of use, and thus, as in my research aim, whether academic libraries provide a supportive and inclusive learning environment or not. With respect to the aforementioned research question, I shall now discuss in more detail the nature of how library space can support or disrupt, influence or have minimal impact upon the users inhabiting it. I shall also discuss how previous experience can influence perceptions of library space and its purpose.

5.2.1 Helpful or problematic spaces?

The library spaces in the observations above are heavily utilised by groups, and prove popular because they allow people to gather and work in close proximity with their peers or to operate independently if they wish to. Having rows of computers allows each group member to create their own personal space, but also, without the inclusion of separators between desks, allows group members to gather around one computer if they need to, or to refer to their peers for support if they encounter any problems. On initial

consideration, the library spaces might be seen as inclusive and accessible purely on the basis of the range of study space options offered to library users.

However, the group use of rows of computers also creates an opportunity to develop ownership of an area, and exclude others from that area, such as with observations 5.3(i2) and 5.8(i2), and with Katherine's vignette (i1). Behaviour of inhabitants, whether exclusive of others as in 5.8, or inclusive of the group and thus potentially excluding others as a result as in 5.3, influences the feel of a space: the groups utilising library spaces will, whether studying or not, conforming to rules or not, exclude outsiders from their owned space, who will often want to preserve their own personal space while studying (Cohen & Cohen, 1979). Additionally, the group use of rows of computers was problematic in some of the spaces I encountered, as there was not enough room for the inhabitants to gather around a single computer when necessary without blocking access to computers that were freely available for other library users, particularly those with limited mobility who would not have been able to easily negotiate around the groups. The groups would find these spaces awkward to inhabit, but presumably necessary given they remained in the area and there appeared to be no other appropriate space nearby for them to use instead. McKay and Buchanan (2014) had similar findings in that groups would utilise whatever space they could find. Exclusion was not necessarily via overt behaviours that would deter other visitors to the library from utilising the computers, but by the lack of access to those areas that were free. But as discussed in section 5.1 focussing on gendered group use, the variation of usage patterns demonstrates that female use can focus on support within the group, excluding primarily via their bonding and support network building processes. Male use varies between bonding and overt exclusion: males will endeavour to build strength within their groups, battling over who is the leader, but also on occasions battle over their group owning the space itself, using both verbal and non-verbal methods to communicate that ownership. The space design, while not expressly used to encourage that process, does not discourage it.

Other group behaviours appear to be a response to the communication of use/purpose by the space itself. In the case of observation 5.4 at Institute 1, the group were using a space designed to be used by groups for discussion, so they were complying with rules. However, the proximity of the group discussion area to another area of individual quiet use meant they were policed by staff for disrupting use in the quiet area. The environment communicated too many conflicting messages when taken as a whole, in spite of functioning successfully by its own rules and design. Later, the area was updated with soft furnishings to continue the group use concept, with glass walls installed to try and aid the buffering of noise levels, but the noise buffering failed without a door to

prevent any loud bursts of talk escaping. This design problem was warned against by JISC (2006), and yet has been repeatedly reported as an issue in library design (for example see Bedwell and Banks (2013)).

Similarly, a silent area in Institute 2 (that was later modified and moved to a different floor) communicated appropriate use for groups by placing large tables with multiple seats around them, but also with proximity to a classroom. The classroom was situated with an access door within the silent area, and students would congregate in the silent area waiting to be able to go into the classroom. On one occasion early in the research, before I knew the rules of the space, I took a seat at one of the large tables near the classroom door and the stairwell so that I could observe as much as possible. They were angled rather than round so that they could accommodate separators on the table to create some level of solo use, but the separators were short at around 3-4 inches high, so were not high enough to prevent sound or contact. Two people (one male, one female, both white) waiting to access the classroom sat at the table I was using and started conversing, while other tables in the area were empty. At that stage I had no idea they were waiting for the room and felt like my personal space had been invaded, but on reflection it was likely they had chosen it for its proximity to the door and would have sat there whether populated by others or not. Nevertheless, I felt intimidated and out of place, particularly given I was joined by a group rather than individuals separately. The intended use of the space was for individual use, but design and furnishings inadvertently created a waiting area instead, a temporary use area that could thus exclude those wanting to study in that area.

In the case of observation 5.10(i2) where the work of the male and female was disrupted by the arrival of the males, the environment was a multipurpose area, housing computers, group study tables, 'cubbies'/carrels³² and sofas further up the room. It was situated in a high traffic area with people entering to access books, the silent room beyond the open area, printing and photocopying facilities, and other buildings: by its very nature the variety of purpose encouraged meetings whether planned or by coincidence. The space proved supportive in its nature of offering a variety of study options, but to create a multipurpose space in this manner is to create a confusing space that while not encouraging of inappropriate behaviours is also not discouraging of them. In the case of observation 5.10, there is nothing designers could have done to discourage misogynistic speech in developing library space; this incident is primarily about the inhabitants rather than the design itself. However, in the creation of an area

³² A desk designed for individual use, with high barriers on three sides for privacy and noise muffling.

that allows people to discuss their lives across several metres for all to hear, the design does nothing to deter disruptive, inappropriate actions. Additionally, the use of a round table, particularly in the case of 5.10, increases the chance to engage in conversation but reduces the capacity for its inhabitants to maintain personal territory (Cohen & Cohen, 1979). The implication for those using the round table is that those seated at it maintain equal footing in their relationship, no one person is in charge. It does not, unfortunately, work in the same way for other library visitors who may wish to engage with those seated at the table: without them sitting down at it, they maintain power status above them. Juhi, a student at Institute 1, talked about how working in a group with her friends meant her studying capacity was limited by the amount of socialising they engaged in as a result of sitting together in a group space, even though they intended to work. She felt it was expected of her to socialise because of visiting with her friends and using an area where they could talk. The combination of space design and furnishings draws people together, but also generates problematic usage patterns repeatedly.

The use of rectangular tables is no less problematic in terms of power dimensions: Cohen and Cohen provide examples of how seat selection can influence the way the seated person communicates their personal space and power, so those placing themselves in the centre will create dominance of that table, while those seated at ends will dominate less (1979, pp. 24–25). The seating choice will also have implications for rows of desks without any clear definition of separation, such as computer rows where inhabitants can still move into others' territory with spread of their property. In the case of observations 5.8 and 5.9, seating order indicated that those in the centre were of the most power in the group, which in 5.9 seemed to be the case, but in 5.8, the male who was most vocal and behaved with the most dominant and disruptive actions was the male towards the end of the row nearest the centre of the room. 5.8's male was thus testing power within the group and trying to reclaim some dominance in the process.

The inclusion of multipurpose spaces confuses library users – too many purposes in one area create a variety of usage patterns that inevitably disrupt other users within that space at some point. Inhabitant-policing of spaces does happen, as Mahnoor, Ewan, Katherine and others at Institute 1 demonstrated (from the policed on Mahnoor's side, and the police on Ewan's and Katherine's), and observations sometimes showed, but interviewees also point out that they shouldn't have to police behaviours, that space design should be intuitive and library users should understand what are acceptable behaviours in those spaces and thus remove the need for ANY policing. Ewan in particular felt unhappy about self-policing library space:

[...] you don't want to have to ask someone to be quiet because you know that there's other people in there who want them to be quiet who would then expect you to do it the next time someone talks, and you know that's something that did happen while I was doing my Masters is that you sort of... people are looking at you to ask that person to be quiet then you become part of the security staff and I find that really inconvenient.

[Ewan, student, Institute 1]

It was clear in Katherine's vignette that policing worked for her, but she felt very uncomfortable in doing so. If students find themselves in a situation where they need to police a space, it can create tensions between students (as was the case in Bedwell and Banks (2013), and can be found in interview data from staff at Institute 1 when discussing communities in chapter 7), and can encourage a negative perception of staff who seem absent when needed. In an attempt to provide spaces to cater for everyone at once, the space actually caters for very few people in a fully usable manner, thus limiting the capacity for the people inhabiting it to work in patterns that work for everyone concurrently situated within it. Students find themselves forced into a role that they do not want to be assigned, given a responsibility that places greater emphasis on control and dominance of others instead of focus on their own progress and studying.

5.2.2 Environment vs. social climate

In terms of the influence the space design holds over its inhabitants, there are other factors that need to be considered:

- Previous knowledge/use of libraries
- Usage patterns of established inhabitants influencing the use of new inhabitants
- Demographics of library users

In some cases, the design of a space does have influence on its visitors: using soft furnishings will create a more social atmosphere, providing an area with desks with dividers high enough to create a personal space will encourage silent or quiet use (as could be seen in the space visited by the males in observation 5.9), and as already mentioned above, the shape of a table will influence dynamics within groups when used by them (Cohen & Cohen, 1979)

However, students' prior experience of libraries can sometimes be limited when entering HE. Public libraries are being closed or have severely reduced opening hours thus limiting access to their resources. School and college libraries are often labelled with purpose that restricts them to either social use or silent use, with little in between.

School libraries can also be used to house students during bad weather or as a punishment e.g. during detention or at break time instead of being allowed outside. Usage patterns of libraries prior to reaching HE can create a perception that the library space is for a specific positive or negative purpose: "people take with them a socialization process that often overrides the physical aspects of the enclosing space." (Cohen & Cohen, 1979, p. 28). The 'widening participation' approach that both institutions adopt within their student recruitment policies brings in a variety of student backgrounds and thus experience and knowledge of libraries.

For those students used to using 'friendly' libraries as children, they will likely draw on their experience to generate concepts of what is acceptable within libraries at HE level. Others, often from older age groups or from specific educational backgrounds, who remember using the library and being told to be quiet and respect the space and its users will bring that concept with them to HE level. The clash between the different groups means that such a variety of concepts, including incorporating widening participation groups who may have an additional concept of library use (or indeed no experience of library use at all), leads library designers to attempt to create spaces suitable for all. Library space is highly limited, thus 'flexible learning space' is created that is meant to cater for as many needs as possible but develops further confused concepts and clashes between them. Henley talks about classroom design with rows of desks used as "powerful forces in keeping students' bodies and minds functioning in straight-line fashion." (1977, p. 55). The rows of desks concept can also be applied to rows of computer desks in a library, but pairing these with other varieties of furniture and use confuses the concepts of educational space. The rooms I saw function most successfully according to the rules set within them were those that clearly presented their role and requirements of their inhabitants via the traditional rows of desks format. The libraries' successful spaces are effectively trying to force behaviour and control and maintain power over those using the space, which may not sit well with those who have contradictory or limited experience of library use, but instructs them on 'acceptable' use nonetheless. However, when rows of desks are placed in a flexible environment with a mixture of messages, they disrupt that power/control over the users, enabling them to attempt their own control and domination of that space. Once the space is disrupted, those with limited experience of libraries are likely to take cues from those already in place in the space, thus continuing the pattern of power games, and those already exerting power and dominance will continue to do so over those who lack it whether via class or gender domination. Sometimes this will take the form of noise levels being matched across the area, or social use dominating over study discussion, but the power disruption will also allow sexist behaviour to manifest in making it seem acceptable to

those who may not have presented it so publicly/overtly in areas with more transparent rules and purpose. In attempting to create a space usable by all that encourages serendipitous meetings and socialising as well as studying, the flexible learning space is actually a space that excludes.

In summary, the space is intended to provide multiple study options for different people, needs, and practices, and it frequently does provide usable facilities for these different needs and practices, allowing group members to engage with each other. However, group spaces are often situated next to other kinds of study spaces or contain furniture that generates conflicting messages. The intention is to create as many different opportunities for different library user needs as possible in what can often be limited floor space. In these scenarios, even using the space according to design intention still causes problems because of these conflicts in design. In some cases, library design supports interactions, yet in other cases, it causes problems, and does little to nothing to discourage problematic behaviours.

Having focussed so far on group use and behaviours, I will now shift focus to how individual library users study and behave in libraries, who while not observed as frequently as groups, still represented a substantial number of library users at both institutes.

5.3 Individual usage patterns

So far I have focussed on group usage patterns and the power dynamics that manifest when they are using their academic library. Here I address how individual visitors utilise their library. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, individual users were seen frequently within library spaces, as per coding and the emerging themes, so in order to develop an understanding of different behaviour types and patterns, it is important to study individual user practices and needs. Additionally, ownership and dominance were elements in the analysis and themes that I discuss later in this section. Interview data in this section represents a combination of a need for library spaces, the sense of ownership developed over a space, and of how ownership can be perceived as problematic in some contexts. I examine how individuals can generate their own level of empowerment and ownership of space, thus excluding other users, or creating a place for themselves, or a combination of the two. Ownership by individuals in this section primarily manifests through taking control of a computer by logging into it without using it, or by taking over a desk by leaving property there without using the desk. I discuss how the space can be important to solo visitors, but how it can still impede them. I also consider how perceptions of the purpose of a library can influence individual use.

5.3.1 Helpful, essential space

The library spaces where I collected data were designed to cater for a number of usage options, and while group usage patterns were overt by their nature of noise generation and creating a presence by numbers, individual usage was still frequent and noticeable by its contrast to the groups: by its very nature individual use is quiet and often subtle in comparison to groups. When I spoke to students they largely found the library to be a supportive environment, a place that helped them achieve their study goals: very few of those at the time of interviewing at Institute 1 visited the library to study as part of a group, and those who had done so in the past found it too difficult to study with peers/friends due to the nature of the group interactions. The exceptions to solo use preference were Mahnoor, who had endeavoured to use the library for supportive/supervisory meetings, and Robin who felt there was a lack of space in the library to generate supportive problem solving conversations (and thus considered himself a non-user of the library). However, Robin demonstrated a preference for using silent spaces to work in due to the nature of his music studying requirements, automatically excluding himself from being able to use the library simultaneously for silent and social learning. The two interviewees at Institute 2 represented preferences as one white female (Gemma) for group use (although her use was more complex than this as will be discussed below), and one white male (Craig, who was employed at the Institute but had until the year before been an undergraduate student there) with a preference for solo working when his course hadn't required him to participate in collaborative assignments. The small number of interviewees at Institute 2 limits the capacity to draw broader conclusions but can provide some insight into perceptions of group use.

Libraries at their best can empower and enable individual users. Mahnoor found that she needed the library in the early days of her PhD, as arriving from another country with no study or office space available meant the library was essential. Grace and Katherine both needed the library at Institute 1 as they had little to no access to computers and suitable space at home. Juhi found the library essential for her studying because of her learning disability. As will be discussed in more detail in chapters 6 and 7, the library is hugely important for specific groups with a greater need for library space than some, i.e. those returning to education without the resources, experience or knowledge that others may have. Widening Participation strategies employed by HE institutes endeavour to encourage those potential students from under-represented groups, including mature applicants, and therefore there are some groups who can sometimes require more

support and facilities with regards to HE libraries e.g. those who work full time while studying will need longer opening hours and potentially require virtual support services.

I shall start examining student requirements of libraries by focussing on postgraduate students, who often have very specific study needs for their degrees, and then move on to undergraduates, who constitute the majority of library users at both institutes.

5.3.1.1 Postgraduate student perspectives

Mahnoor, as an international postgraduate research student at Institute 1, found the library essential in the early stages of her PhD, as she had no office, and thus no computer. Initially, she used the computers in the library, but she also liked browsing the shelves for textbooks. Once she had a shared office, the need for computer access was removed, but the need for a quieter space away from her colleagues increased, and she would meet with students she was supporting in the library when possible.

Mahnoor's early usage demonstrated an important aspect of the library: it enables and empowers students who have reduced to no access to resources. Once Mahnoor had an office designated to her, she needed the library space less for herself (although she continued to use it for collaboration). Prior to being designated an office space, international research students in particular have access to library space and facilities early after arrival in the UK, meaning they have opportunities to contact family and research participants, start locating information for the literature review, and engage with fellow students using the online networks available, all of which would be more difficult (and possibly costly) without accessing the library facilities. Having access to library facilities helps create a means of being independent, but also helps students become part of a study community: the postgraduate journey can be a lonely one, especially for international students, and developing that sense of community can be important (L. Brown & Holloway, 2008)

Ewan, a PhD student from the UK also at Institute 1, considered himself working class, and felt the Institute's ethos of WP and encouraging applications from all backgrounds had helped give him opportunities to study: he felt, after applying to other HE institutions, that in selecting Institute 1 he had been welcomed into an academic environment that was more accepting of his background and made him feel more comfortable within its environment than other local higher ranking institutes. In spite of this comfort, he had had mixed results studying on campus, but felt it was essential to his success to use campus spaces. Ewan had used the library throughout his undergraduate and Masters degrees, but even with his shared research office space, he

still sometimes needed to use the library for some tasks. He found the library difficult to work in during term time because of social use and noise levels generated by students he assumed were undergraduates, and his office space was not appropriate to his needs for reading. The library spaces were important to him to help create a reading space for himself, and he found that in spite of being designated a group use room, one particular study area was of use to him as it was rarely used as designated when he was there. The area was cordoned off with ceiling height half-glass walls, and had no doors. It contained a mixture of furnishings, primarily desks with computers and round tables, was in close proximity to a staffed desk, and contained an office for a member of staff supporting disabled students. That proximity to authority may have deterred groups from using the space more often out of respect, or possibly out of concern that they may be policed or have their use limited by staff presence. That Ewan could use a group study area successfully as an individual begs the following questions: why were other spaces designated as individual studying not suitable for his purpose?; why was a group space rarely used to full potential when groups were observed in all types of space (including silent space) elsewhere in the building? Ewan was successfully claiming and repurposing a space for his own needs, demonstrating self-empowerment, but his empowerment does not take away from the need to create similar spaces elsewhere in the building specifically designated as reading/silent use. His use of the space also raises questions about whether or not he himself deterred groups from using the space, when he was sat alone quietly reading.

Ewan complained of how the library was configured for undergraduate use, and saw undergraduates as lacking understanding of the needs of anyone studying at a higher degree level. Ewan's descriptions of the undergraduate behaviour he saw did not fully match descriptions of those provided by undergraduates interviewed for this research: as we shall see below, undergraduates I spoke to primarily preferred to study alone with minimal socialising, which would have suited Ewan's quiet use preferences as a postgraduate. However, undergraduate study needs were still likely to be different because of the comparatively lower requirements of studying expected at undergraduate level compared to those at postgraduate level, even if the undergraduates I spoke to needed the library space for quiet study. Ewan regularly encountered problems with studying in the library because of the lack of consideration of other students who would disrupt his work, ignoring noise rules for the space he was using, and causing him to find his use of the library highly limited during term. He felt the noise levels were unpredictable during term, and left him feeling that he had no control over his studying: he spent much of his time anticipating when he might be disturbed. When he did try to use the library and experienced disruption, he found himself policing people making

noise, which simultaneously created a position of power for him while also making him less enabled by reducing his opportunity to work. He felt he should not have to police other users, as rules, space design and staffing should be sufficient to deal with anyone with a tendency to lack respect for other student use, but that other students using the same space as him became what he perceived as reliant on him to police if he was successful in his attempts. They would often look towards him when a visitor became noisy or disruptive and he interpreted that as an expectation for him to respond: he was put under pressure to take control.

To summarise, Mahnoor and Ewan had different postgraduate requirements of library spaces at Institute 1. Mahnoor needed the library initially for the computers before her office was available, and later for collaboration opportunities. Ewan needed somewhere primarily for concentration, and thus preferred to use the library in silence. While the two needs are different, there is no reason the library could not successfully provide both students with the space and opportunity to work in their chosen ways. However, clearly, Ewan had some difficulties with maintaining the type of environment the library space he chose was meant to provide and that he needed to study successfully. I shall now move on to examine undergraduate perspectives: do they have the same need for library space, share the same issues postgraduate students encounter?

5.3.1.2 Undergraduate student perspectives

Undergraduate study requirements can be very different to those at postgraduate level purely based on the varying demands of each degree, but the desire and need to use the library in a constructive way can still be present. Juhi at Institute 1 was a passionate advocate of the library: she saw it as an essential part of her studying. Her learning disability meant that she needed somewhere to concentrate and focus without disturbance. For her the library was a perfect place for achieving her study goals because it provided her with the space, comfort and staff support she needed. She would make a point of visiting the library for set times, treating her visits as a working day so that she could switch off from her studying when she got home and be with her family. Juhi is a specific example of consciously considerate use. Juhi was fully aware of the way inconsiderate use could impact on others as she had observed the frustration experienced by others at inappropriate use, and had experienced problems herself with being made to feel uncomfortable in spaces (see below in section 5.3.2), leading to a desire to be respectful of others and to receive the same treatment. She would eat away from her workstation to avoid disturbing others, and worried when people appeared to be having a difficult time with their studies. Eating in the library was breaking the rules,

which in itself could have been considered inappropriate, but staff seemed to ignore her if she was eating outside of study areas. Acting with consideration of other visitors, Juhi approached her use of the library as if it were an office, a professional environment, which made her feel enabled, focussed, and thus empowered to achieve. She used this approach to help her separate her use between social life and study life, so that she could focus on enjoying her time at home, something that was consistent throughout all student interviewees, but the empowerment she felt from being engaged in HE was important to her. Juhi's perception of the library as a professional environment influenced her own behaviour within the spaces, but also guided her selection of which space to study in, preferring the silent spaces, which in turn is likely to have influenced her perception of library purpose in a cycle. The more she perceived the library as a professional space, the more likely she was to use a space that would support that perception, and thus see that 'professional' element replicated in people using a library to study and engage with work.

Grace, a mature part-time undergraduate (also at Institute 1) working full-time, also preferred to use the silent spaces. She lived with her partner with whom she shared a laptop, and had no place to study at home. She liked visiting the library because of the option for silent studying, given if she stayed at home she had no desk and the television would usually be on. Sharing a space with her partner made it particularly difficult to carry out home studying:

if I am coming to the library it's purposefully to study, I'm not in between lectures and think 'I'll just pop on to it on like that PC and you know read this and check my Facebook and go back to lectures,' I am there for a full day of studying so the silent areas are fantastic for me and they do help me achieve what I want to more than anywhere else across university.

[Grace, student, Institute 1]

Grace would visit the same area every time if possible, in a silent study space with a desk she could stand at if she wanted to. She felt other visitors would normally respect the rules of a space, although on one occasion she had asked a couple to be quiet. They had sat down in the silent area near her, sharing a computer and talking, "and I just said 'well I'm ever so sorry but it is the silent area so' and then they sort of moved apart and he logged on to his own PC." She said they were "quieter" after her request "so 'spose if you just point it out and there's plenty of space for 'em to go and chat." Grace's act of policing was in this case largely successful: the pair reduced their noise levels, even if they did not stop conversing at all. Grace's studying was interrupted, but she was able to

continue to study and the disruption was minimal in comparison to the environment at home.

Katherine was also a part-time undergraduate at Institute 1 working full-time, with a family at home which meant her children would often disrupt her studying. Like Grace, she appreciated that the technology was of higher quality than she could access at home, and she liked the level of privacy and room she could access in her favourite place:

As long as I get my spot I can spread out, it's just it is just like that really, you know, it is your own area so I do like that you make that space your own, yeah and comfortable, I just feel comfortable

[Katherine, student, Institute 1]

A fellow student she was friends with had chosen to use an area on a different floor for studying, in closer proximity to textbooks for their subject, but Katherine found the traffic through the area (she referred to people getting up and leaving the area to answer their phones, the door banging as they left and entered) and the noise levels were too much for her to concentrate successfully. She liked that her favourite spot would allow her to feel safe and secure enough to leave her property, something she didn't feel in other spaces because of the openness and traffic. It is interesting that Katherine referred to "my spot" and "your own area" specifically in the quote above. She had developed a sense of ownership of the location that she associated with comfort and (as will be discussed throughout section 5.3 overall), this type of ownership can contribute to a sense of safety and thus freedom that could assist with study success. She had, as discussed in her vignette in section 5.1.3, felt anxiety about contacting staff about noise issues, but she had also found staff presence a distraction in itself:

I've never really taken them up on having to ask them for help, the only one thing, somebody was showing somebody, so two members of staff talking [at] once but really loudly so they were walking through the area and I just thought that dun't set a really good example or [BR: where were you sat then, in your normal spot?] no it were just in the bigger spot on the normal floor, it was there, some of them came out and they were talking quite loudly then, that isn't example to set.

[Katherine, student, Institute 1]

Several incidents during observations show that Katherine's experience was not unique: sometimes staff would walk through an area without demonstrating any awareness that they might be creating noise that could disturb students in the area, and on some occasions were audible from office space through walls, the noise bleeding into silent areas. However, Katherine found that she had both less traffic and less noise in her "hidey" seat, both in terms of staff noise and student noise. Nevertheless, incidents of staff noise could deter students from wanting to ask for staff to police noise levels from other students if staff were a source themselves. Whether through ignorance or a subconscious sense of ownership, staff could dominate space through their own talking and disruptive behaviour.

There is an interesting contrast between the behaviours of the undergraduates I spoke to at Institute 1 and the experiences of Ewan (as a postgraduate): all spoke of the way some people used the library in ways they perceived as inappropriate, contradictory to the rules and purpose of the space. Ewan struggled to use the library space because of other users, but he had office space he could use in his department (which sometimes still proved problematic, but was for him sometimes the more productive option). However, Juhi, Grace and Katherine were highly limited in alternative options for study space, and while their studying was sometimes disrupted, they found ways of operating in the space available to them. Grace found the technology was considerably better in the library than the options she had at home, and valued the reliability and currency of software and equipment available to her. Both Grace and Katherine needed space away from home to study for concentration. Both had to police usage while studying. Other library users could be problematic, but for Grace, Juhi and Katherine, the space and provisions available enabled and empowered them. Here we see the development of an undergraduate standpoint from the perspective of women in need of the library for lack of a suitable space, a supportive study environment, and reliable technology away from campus: the library is essential for this group to enable and empower them in their education. All three women felt a sense of ownership and dedication to a specific location and seat when visiting the library: their success in studying in these places was high in comparison to elsewhere in the library or at home, but their personal situations meant the library space had to be supportive. 'Owning' a space helped in these circumstances, but ownership can be a problematic concept in library space, supportive, but also exclusive, as I shall now investigate.

5.3.2 Ownership of space

As has been discussed above, undergraduates appear to share a common belief that they can 'own' a space in the library. Ownership of space can take a number of forms,

and one particularly common method was to claim a seat without using it via either leaving property at the desk, ensuring the computer is logged in without using it, or both. Claiming a space in this way implies that the owner of the property/person who logged into the machine is returning shortly: to leave one's property unsupervised or one's work and email open to other people to access assumes a certain level of safety and leaving personal items alone and vulnerable communicates a short absence. One observation in particular at Institute 1 showed a surprisingly high number of incidents of claiming space without actually using it for extended periods. For the purposes of this situation anything longer in duration than a bathroom break or quick visit to the shop for a bottled drink might require, approximately ten to fifteen minutes maximum, could be considered an extended period, but it is debatable as to how comfortably an individual could leave their property alone for what length of time. When observing in a silent use PC lab, one observation on one afternoon featured two computers claimed with property without anyone using them for 45 minutes, and when the owners of the property returned, they used their laptops instead of the computers. One computer next to me was logged in by a student as I arrived who then left and had not returned before I left 2.5 hours later. Indeed, at one point during that observation 4 computers were left claimed but unused in a manner that suggested imminent return. Claiming a space via the notion of it containing property (intellectual or physical) is not a new concept, and is seen frequently in HE libraries (for example see Crook and Mitchell (2012)) to the point where universities like Edinburgh have installed equipment to monitor use and non-use (University of Edinburgh Information Services, 2017). Rivalry and struggle for desk space is high when a library can only accommodate room for a comparatively small percentage of total student body, but claiming for such a lengthy period moves beyond saving a desk for personal use: it is a statement of ownership. Claudia, a member of staff at Institute 1, reported an incident where a student had been found to have claimed a computer for the whole day: they had studied through the night, and returned home to sleep. However, she was also concerned that if staff removed property that appeared to have been left to claim a computer, the process could be treated as a way of ensuring students could leave items in safety without risk of theft.

On one observation during August at Institute 1, a female British Asian student I later discovered to be working on her own, but as part of a postgraduate writing retreat group using a quiet area outside of term time, had reserved her seat at a computer by leaving her scarf and a notepad and pen on the desk. The computer was in a double-sided row, and while the floor normally had a large area filled with computers, the row was the only set available while the rest of the machines were being updated. The rest of the writing retreat group were spread around the floor, using their own laptops. However, when I

arrived in the space, three white males were seated around the row of desks, one of whom was sat at the chair claimed by the female, and they were talking socially without using the computers. In this case, there are two issues to consider. The first is that the female had reserved the computer when there was limited access, but in contrast to her peers, she had no laptop, and thus needed a library computer to be able to work. Her reserving the seat was an indication of her intention to continue studying after a short period away from it, particularly given her participation in the writing retreat, but that would not necessarily have been clear to any other visitors. However, the three males were socialising: it was quiet, and no staff were patrolling the library, because of the time of year³³, so they were using the space without considering the need of others. One male was sat in the chair the female had placed her scarf on. The males were overtly taking over the space for their own purposes, taking ownership, excluding students who had a need to use the computers. They were spreading out along the row of PCs on both sides, with their chairs pushed away from the PCs, thus expanding into and using up the space as per Argyle's writing on physical dominance (by males in particular) (1988), so as well as taking ownership of a space where one seat had been claimed, they were excluding other visitors by using as much of the area as possible. The female was trying to maintain control because of her study needs, the males were taking control to dominate (consciously or not), making a physical statement that the space was theirs, and the chair and computer no longer belonged to the woman even if they didn't need the computers.

The above scenario demonstrates a further issue in the attempt to control space: that of the need for the individual visitor to maintain a study space because they have a specific study need. Individuals have less power than groups in displaying ownership of a space, and making a claim on an area can be key to them being able to access the resources they need, particularly when multipurpose spaces are considered. However, the (perceived) freedom to retain a seat without using it can be counted as a (perceived) freedom of movement, which Argyle (1988) directly links to dominance, where claiming a seat for lengthy periods equals a freedom to move and act as one sees appropriate. At Institute 1 Ewan referred to needing study space that gave him room to both read and write, Juhi needed the silent space to be able to maintain a focus that her learning disability made difficult, but also to maintain separation between study space and recreational space (which would also help her develop consistency in her study habits). Both had witnessed computers being 'reserved' for extensive periods and expressed dismay at this behaviour, but both also left property and a machine logged in to keep

³³ Staff involved in patrolling floors had reduced hours during summer, and so responsibilities changed emphasis to reflect the number of students using the library.

their own claim to a space/computer for periods of approximately 30 minutes so that they could get lunch or take a break. They perceived their own seat reservation pattern as appropriate, but disapproved of longer reservations where nobody was visibly using the computer: their behaviour implies an unspoken approved system where if you have already used a computer extensively for studying you are entitled to reserve it. Here, studying as an actioned purpose for visiting is an essential component of Juhi and Ewan's perceptions of what is appropriate behaviour. Both Juhi and Ewan mentioned students using computers for what they perceive as non-study activities such as using social media and shopping as taking study opportunities away from others, although they did appreciate some people may not have access to a computer at home and that library computers might be their only opportunity to do so. As Juhi phrased it:

I just stay logged on and then I eat my dinner and then I go back, it's quite a, it's a cheeky thing to do, but it's not cheeky because I'm there all day and I deserve it.

[Juhi, student, Institute 1]

Ewan phrased it slightly differently with concerns about "losing your seat" if you do not somehow reserve it. Both these thought processes imply a creation of ownership of one location if only because of the length of time spent within that seat. However, there is no booking system for computers, and visitors must accept that their favourite seat or computer may not always be available, particularly during busy periods. Individuals do feel a loyalty and need to the same location, because of success in studying, and familiarity, the latter of which is also often linked to a need for safety, a comfort from both mentally and physically feeling safe in a space (Elteto et al., 2008; Painter et al., 2013). This is particularly important for those working individually as they do not have the support that working in a group can provide (the importance of community is discussed in chapter 7). Ownership of space is also an exclusive act, something that Juhi knew well from feeling excluded from using a different floor, where group behaviours led her to label it "where the popular people go", labelling them "quite loud and chatty". Using her favourite spot in a silent computer area on the floor below made her feel "safe". Developing a sense of ownership of space is both a supportive act that encourages visitors to return to the library, but also excludes others in the process: an act that is meant to help generate equality in making a space 'home' for all accessing the library results in making visiting problematic for those who struggle to engage with the space. Those who do not already feel comfortable in using libraries will feel further excluded because other people 'know how to use' a library, as implied in postgraduate student Halle's reference to feeling "bewildered" when visiting the library at Institute 1.

Ewan felt excluded because he felt the library (and indeed the university as a whole), while important for him, was also targeted at undergraduate students who used the library socially while they adjusted to HE studying and learnt “what the library’s like”: “it looks like a really enjoyable place to be with those colourful chairs”. Ewan considered his class status and situation as a doctoral student both less privileged than others because of his working class background, and more privileged because many with his background would not have reached studying at doctoral level (if attending university at all). The level of ownership other students felt when using the library in social ways (whether for learning or not) reduced his own feeling of ownership, and in spite of wanting to use the library space to study, he was frequently excluded from doing so, in spite of his reluctant efforts to police behaviours, emphasising inequalities.

Overall, safety and comfort feed into the desire to use a specific space or seat, which then enables the potential for successful studying, providing other library user practices match those of the individual. I shall now move on to discuss in more detail how ownership and comfort combine to create a supportive study environment for individual users of libraries.

5.3.3 Ownership and comfort

The safety and comfort levels generated by familiarity and regular use of a space seem key in helping create a sense of ownership, but Juhi’s (Institute 1) reference to ‘deserving’ a good lunch and to be able to return to ‘her’ computer in ‘her floor’ afterwards is an interesting use of language, mirrored in Katherine’s use of language about ‘her spot’ above in 5.3.1.2. Cohen and Cohen (1979) talk about how personal space can not only reflect a feeling of safety but a sense of (self-perceived) value: creating ownership of a space, particularly via using a large amount of space and taking over the nearest desk space suggests importance and value over the needs of other potential inhabitants. Juhi’s sense of entitlement can be linked to both her fears of lack of safe space and discomfort at the way her peers openly perceived her, mocking her for her desire to study and be successful. Juhi’s educational background was a difficult experience for her, and she was diagnosed with a learning disability on arrival at university having struggled to reach HE levels, so in some respects Juhi’s response to her educational journey is a natural one: the mocking she experienced from her friends combined with the discovery that she had a reason for difficulties studying endorsed the need to feel safe, to find a place where she had control.

Ownership can also take the form of using personal property to create territory. Territory entails the students using a workstation but also taking ownership of further space

around them using their property, such as textbooks, writing equipment, bags, thus attempting to create a bubble of personal space rather than a sense of “this PC is logged in so I’m returning soon” as demonstrated above. Territorial behaviour is recognisable to anyone who might have boarded a busy train only to find occupants using a free seat for their bag, and is common in library use (Bedwell & Banks, 2013; J. O. Cain & Treneman, 2015; Foster & Gibbons, 2007; K. Hall & Kapa, 2015; Hobbs & Klare, 2010; Regalado & Smale, 2015). Ownership in this form represents in part a need for personal space in order to reflect safety, but it also represents creating a territory, developing a small area that carries meaning for the owner, thus leading to a space that can communicate productivity, a time to study. Creating territory can also be achieved by using the same space/seat repeatedly as if it belongs to the individual, increasing familiarity and comfort levels, and thus increasing the sense of personal safety. Juhi talked about how she felt her favourite seat and floor of study made her feel safe and secure. Katherine used her property to make claims on the PC and desk space, and felt secure in leaving them alone for short periods if she needed to due to a combination of familiarity and the nature of the space itself being enclosed: she used a computer facing a wall with shelves directly behind her, leaving little space to create any kind of thoroughfare. Indeed, Katherine discussed a friend using a different, more open floor with high traffic to study, saying if she had used that floor herself, she would not feel comfortable or safe. In order to work independently and alone, a sense of comfort and safety are essential to be able to study successfully. Additionally, the ability to claim territory while using the space supports the opportunity for solo visitors to be able to take short breaks: the statement of territory enables those who need to use the library for lack of facilities elsewhere to ensure they have a space that they can leave without the need for friends or peers to maintain the ownership of that space for them in their absence. Creating territory increases the likelihood that students who need the space can study longitudinally with brief breaks. However, as we shall see next, creating territory can also cause problems in limiting access to others.

5.3.4 Ownership as exclusion

In contrast to ownership as an act of self-protection, as discussed above, ownership can also be an act of exclusion, of preventing others from accessing the limited capacity library spaces. A space that should be inclusive to as many people as possible thus becomes one that excludes because its visitors choose to make it exclusive. On speaking to a member of the patrolling staff at Institute 1, Marlon, the issue of desk claiming in particular was raised several times as a problem. Staff at the time of interviewing were concerned about computers being “dead” because of the machine being left logged on but unused. Incidents of leaving property at desks were also considered an issue. Marlon

reported he and fellow patrolling staff would monitor any computers logged in but unattended and give the logged in student 10-20 minutes to return. Once a second circuit was completed after that period, staff would save any work left and log the machine out. If property was left without any sign of an owner, a similar procedure would be followed, where if no sign of anyone returning after 20 minutes, the items would be moved to one side, although Marlon suggested on some occasions the items would be removed altogether. Claudia, one of the staff at management level at Institute 1, referred to "desk hogging", and how she saw it as an issue being raised across a large number of universities on a regular basis at key study periods of the academic calendar, and did express concerns that students would begin to perceive staff intervention with their property as a way of ensuring it was protected (as discussed earlier). However, what only became clearer when combining interviews with observations was that students could easily switch monitors off after logging a computer in, thus hiding the fact that the machine wasn't available until another student tried to use it. Staff perception of computer/desk reserving was overwhelmingly against it, but there was an understanding that, particularly during times of high pressure from studying, breaks are of importance. As a result, and to help counteract excessive computer claiming, at the time of interviewing staff were creating a programme that would allow students to lock a machine while taking a break, but only for a fixed period. Should the machine be found to be logged in without the programme in operation, staff would continue monitoring the status of the machine.

Interestingly, reserving computers by logging them in did not seem to be an issue at Institute 2, but students were often seen during observations to be moving between multiple computers as if they could log in to multiple machines. Interviewees at Institute 2 primarily used laptops, or computers in specialist rooms where claiming computers was not an issue. When I questioned my gatekeeper at the time whether students were allowed multiple log-ins, she replied in the negative, suggesting the possibility that computers are claimed via the use of multiple log in IDs from their friends.

Staff perceptions of claiming desks and computers were usually negative, as they wanted to encourage access for all students as far as possible, but the student use of desk claiming raises two considerations: the empowerment of students; and the subversion of staff power and rules. Students were using opportunities to claim territory in a process that gave them power, and while it was over a small space the impact on their capacity to study could be extensive. This sense of entitlement, of being free to claim computers and desks which then remained unused for prolonged periods, we can speculate, could be linked to the sense of entitlement developed in increasing fees:

paying fees could be interpreted as paying for the library space, the computer, the desk, the seat. In the process of subverting rules, students were also subverting staff power, particularly in cases where they were switching monitors off to hide their desk claim, where staff were endeavouring to enable other students (who, like Grace and Katherine at Institute 1, may only have had limited access themselves). The students were thus excluding others from library access and creating a power struggle for ownership that crossed both between library users who had and retained a seat, and between library users and staff, the latter of whom tried to re-open access to other library users.

Use of social media and non-studying activities was also considered a problematic activity which could create ownership of a computer. Robin, a Masters student at Institute 1, felt anyone not using a computer for studying was a selfish act:

[...] though I know some people do take the mick [laughs] yeah [BR: how do you mean] well like erm yeah there have been times when people just procrastinate or something and not that it bothers me but then I think 'well someone else could be using that computer' and that's something we do face is a shortage of like computers [...] you sometimes do glance at people using them for all the wrong reasons yeah [BR: how do you mean] like going on Facebook rather than using erm rather than actually doing work [...] if I'm going through a book or anything and I find the information I've done I feel gratified whilst if you're on Facebook obviously that's just burning time, you're consuming rather than producing work.

[Robin, student, Institute 1]

This sentiment was shared with Juhi who saw using Facebook as students "wast[ing] your time" and Marlon. However, Claudia (staff member at Institute 1) and Gemma (an undergraduate at Institute 2) saw using social media as a tool for meeting other students on the same course and collaborating: Gemma and her group would share their essays between them on Facebook for feedback and support. Nevertheless, the use of social media or any similar online resource on a library computer could easily be interpreted as retaining a computer that could be used by other students for studying, and thus creating ownership of a space.

Territory and ownership link into usage patterns of particular furniture/design features. Spaces and/or furniture designed for groups or multiple individuals can be claimed by individuals with property, but also by seat selection. Cohen and Cohen (1979) refer to

traditional rectangular tables creating a hierarchy or overall ownership of the table by not only property (as mentioned above) but via the selection of a seat that generates a personal space that automatically excludes others, or at least places them outside of comfortable levels of use if forced to sit there in close proximity to other inhabitants without knowing the inhabitant. Seat selection in the centre of one side of a table (Cohen and Cohen use the example of a six seat table with three seats each side) can exclude other potential inhabitants entirely if personal property expands far enough into the other seat areas. However, as detailed above and during other observations, I experienced when using round tables at Institute 2 that other library users could still enter my personal space. On one occasion, a female student asked me if anyone was sitting at the other side of the table, and could she use it, and whether I had been researching or situated there as a student I would have answered in the affirmative, primarily because she was polite and asked if it was ok (she later proved to also be visiting the library as an individual user). Had she sat down without asking, I would have felt my personal space had been disrupted, and it is unlikely in this scenario that the disruption would have been intentional: disruption does not have to be a conscious effort to occur, but can still create a feeling of discomfort and even a sense of not belonging.

5.3.5 Space excluding by design

Library space can be exclusive in a number of ways. Sometimes it is not the inhabitants that make the space feel exclusive, but the space itself, despite designer intentions. At Institute 1 Juhi referred to not being able to work on one floor because she couldn't receive texts from her mother there, and she wanted to be contactable (although lack of phone signal was considered a benefit by some students I spoke to who used the library to avoid distraction and disruption from family/home life). Some space is not intended to exclude, but causes problems because of poor design. Silent space was found in both libraries to be in close proximity to spaces for group use, although both libraries after observations concluded had dedicated specific floors as a whole for silent use utilising noise dampening measures like additional walls. As mentioned briefly above, in one space staff in Institute 1 could be heard in a silent space, talking and laughing through the walls in their office. At Institute 2, a silent space next to a corridor with offices and classrooms meant that, even if students were silent, the traffic, environmental, and conversational noises all carried into the silent space.

Some spaces can be designed with specific concepts and user groups in mind: this design ethos encompasses the need for silent or group study, but can also include a purpose relating to a subject or content type, such as archival materials or sections specifically for law students. The design process is meant to encourage specific user

types, but is by its very nature an exclusive process: even archives answer a specific need that might discourage some from entering the space if they are unsure of what the service provides. The design often has input from the department it is designed to support, so that student needs are catered for sufficiently, but often an engaging, attractive space will draw in students from other departments. The intention is not to exclude non-subject related users, rather it is to provide for the subject related visitors. However, at Institute 1, staff resorted to using signage to deter groups of non-subject related visitors who, through a combination of comparative physical proximity to their own subject matter and a desire to visit the new, highly attractive space, prevented students from using an area that was designed for their study activities.

In spite of the effort at Institute 1 to deter non-subject visitors, Grace and Juhi, both students there, had both attempted to engage with an area designed for art students (they were studying on health and education related degrees respectively). When I spoke to Grace, she referred to experimenting with different types of technology the library provides at Institute 1, hoping to learn how to use a Mac. She found that "because of the art and design sort of magazines that were about I felt really, really out of place", and started developing a feeling of anxiety about whether it was actually a wise decision to try using a different type of computer, worrying about whether it would corrupt any work she had if she opened it up on the Mac, and a general feeling of "I don't belong here!" In contrast, she had used an area in the library dedicated to music without discomfort, but had selected it because it was quiet: "yeah I knew it was the music bit but I didn't feel as uncomfortable. Maybe as I've got older I've just gone 'I want to be with my own PCs' [with humour] in the area that I consider my subject area [laughs]!" The implication here is that the technology was the main factor in making Grace feel uncomfortable and adding unfamiliar resources to the environment exacerbated that feeling of not belonging, of being excluded from somewhere. Juhi, on the other hand, was not looking to experiment in using a new space, but had found her preferred floor full the day before our interview, so was looking for somewhere to work that met her personal needs. When she found the art area and saw the Macs, she felt it could be a good place to study, and was happy working in it: she didn't feel uncomfortable using an unfamiliar area, or excluded by the nature of the materials around her. The only issue she had was that she wasn't sure how to log off the machine, so she asked a student near her who was happy to show her.

Creating a subject-specific area or organisation of resources can be important to help develop a community of similar study purposes/uses, such as in creating law libraries or the art area discussed above. Students using these areas may have an increased

awareness of the needs of those on their or similar courses, and an understanding of the nature of study practices that means they may behave in ways that accommodate the practices of their peers. In spite of this, creating spaces that are designed to be inclusive of a specific group endeavours to exclude others, which departs from the ethos described above by staff who wanted to provide access to as many students as possible to the resources they need. It is difficult to cater for departmental requirements of library space in conjunction with trying to provide accommodation for all students (as Robin suggested above, libraries struggle to provide enough computers and study space for the student body).

5.4 Chapter summary

In this chapter I have discussed the nature of group use, individual use, and how each interprets library space. I have identified several practices that contribute to answering my research questions around behaviour, interactions, and the level of inclusion or exclusion of library space:

- **How do students behave in and use academic libraries?** Students will visit the library, usually with the intention of studying, in groups or individually.
- **What impact does design have on use and perceptions of use?** The library space can exclude some users intentionally i.e. by the purpose of the space, or unintentionally i.e. by poor design choices.

Additionally, from these findings, I have found that different patterns of behaviour and needs arise from different types of user. Groups have different ways of creating and maintaining power structures across genders. Females will often engage in more social activities (thus often dominate the space through noise) but will have one member who 'promises' goal achievement. Males will usually move directly to engaging with their chosen non-social activities when they visit the library, but dominate through the body. Mixed-gender groups are easily disrupted by non-members of the group, which in turn disrupts the internal structure and dynamics of the group. All groups depend on their group members to maintain the structure and dynamics of the group to successfully achieve study goals: members themselves can easily cause problems for other group members if they choose not to participate in the study goal.

Individual user needs vary according to the level of their degree, but some will specifically need the library to be able to access the space and resources they require and cannot easily access (if at all) outside of library facilities. Individual users will often have specific personal circumstances that lead them to have this need for the library, be

it as a quiet sanctuary to focus in or an environment that allows collaboration and support.

We can thus form positions for library user standpoints primarily via individual users with specific personal circumstances, and for group members who are excluded or disrupted through power disputes, if we focus on the marginalised. Both these positions use the library with varying success, but the individual users have a need that cannot be met easily, if at all, outside of the library provisions, and require careful consideration for ensuring the library is accessible and inclusive of their study needs. Group users excluded via power disputes are more difficult to support in their access needs, as their success depends on the attitudes and actions of other library users, but careful consideration must be made of the potential for educating students with respect to the importance of inclusive library use, possibly through organisations like the Students Union. Liaison with relevant organisations and internal institutional departments may help improve behaviours and attitudes, make individuals more aware of their impact on others, thus ideally reducing incidents of ignorance and sexism amongst students.

The space itself excludes depending on the confidence of individuals: confidence and comfort levels come from a sense of entitlement and ownership, which in turn help develop a level of power within library users.

In short, the relationship between library space and behaviour is complex, with users manipulating space to suit their needs. Library space design is at its 'best' when it is simple and explicit in purpose, 'best' representing when users conform to its rules and design, thus meeting the expectations of designers and the library staff monitoring it. A silent space is easier to explain to users, and therefore encourages compliance, and empowers inhabitants to police any nonconforming behaviours, if they are willing to take on that policing role. However, placing responsibility on inhabitants is unfair, creating a myth of a self-policing space that in turn produces a situation where inhabitants are expected to police a space, disrupting their own studies to do so. Empowerment here only exists if the inhabitants are able to study successfully without interruption and without the weight of having to regulate the environment. When individual users are often in more need of a space, because access to resources, technology and an environment appropriate to studying is limited outside of campus, the library is essential.

When space purpose becomes more 'flexible' (as in more open to interpretation, incorporating several purposes), or when a space is badly situated, the space communicates too many messages which can conflict. Inhabitants will manipulate the

space to their needs, but will generate more opportunities to dominate the space at the risk of excluding others. By its nature, a multipurpose space invites group use, as talking and collaboration are encouraged with the furniture situated within it. A multipurpose space can help develop a sense of community, of solidarity amongst group members as they support each other. However, a multipurpose space can also allow dominant behaviours to manifest amongst inhabitants, creating an exclusive environment that, even while physically able to accommodate more visitors, may exclude by the dominant behaviours, discouraging others from occupying that space. In these cases, the design of a space has little influence over inhabitants as they manipulate the meaning of a space to suit their needs and personality.

As suggested above, library spaces can be seen as at their best when they successfully support the needs of individuals who have specific personal circumstances. I have touched on these briefly in this chapter, and I shall discuss them in more detail in the next chapter. I shall consider the variety of personal needs such as those of people with disabilities, mature students, and from reduced income backgrounds.

Chapter 6: Analysis 2 - Personal and social circumstances

In the previous chapter, I addressed research questions (as detailed in section 3.1) of how students behave in and use academic libraries, and what impact space has on use and perceptions of use. I discussed student usage patterns and behaviours in a broad context, investigating how groups and individuals use the library space. I found that while the purpose for visiting the library was frequently the same across all types of users, that is to study, the different types of users sometimes experienced conflict between each other that led to difficulties studying and the creation of (unwanted) power dynamics. These power dynamics often led to library design unintentionally excluding some library users over others. This chapter addresses whether academic libraries provide a supportive and inclusive learning environment (as per the overarching aim of this research), with a focus on particular user groups who may be marginalised by either the space provisions or by other users. It addresses the research question of whether differing perceptions of appropriate use create inequalities between students, and between students and staff. The research questions of how students behave in and use academic libraries and what impact design has on use and perceptions of use are also dealt with here in the context of the specific user groups featured i.e. those who have specific personal needs and/or social circumstances.

This chapter was developed based on coding and themes demonstrating that the library was frequently important if not essential for many of the students I spoke to. However, even though interviewees identified the library as important, they also raised issues with other users that meant interviewees were sometimes excluded from studying in the library, linking back to themes of power and domination, and discrimination. This issue was raised in the previous chapter (and suggested for a potential standpoint of individual users with specific personal circumstances), and will be discussed more here, particularly in terms of accessibility, and of limitations of home life. Lastly, one of the parent codes developed during analysis covered socioeconomic and political issues raised by participants (including 'bureaucracy' and 'professionalism' as child codes). This chapter features a section on the marketisation of HE that reflects some of the comments made and lexicon used by participants, and what these imply for library use. Interview extracts are included to represent descriptions of the problems encountered when using the library, and also of issues relating to personal socio-economic status and the impact that can have on perceptions (of both the interviewee and of non-students) of HE.

In this chapter I discuss the nature of how a diverse student population can lead to a greater need for detailed consideration of library space provisions. Students who have

particular circumstances at home or in their daily life can sometimes find studying more problematic. Library staff and designers thus need to consider access to space and resources from a broader perspective beyond the largest (highly generalised) user group of undergraduates. I also discuss how problematic behaviours, such as ignoring space rules on noise levels, can disrupt access and the ability to study in library spaces that are meant to be enabling of study activities.

6.1 The library as a sanctuary for studying

A number of interviewees were returning to HE as mature students. Some were working full time as well as studying, some had families and obligations at home that limited their time or capacity to study. Some students, like Ewan at Institute 1, didn't necessarily have anything that overtly impeded their ability to work at home, but found working on campus allowed them to separate their academic and home lives and thus increase their productivity: they could create spaces associated with specific tasks that allowed them to increase their focus on those tasks. Ewan felt he needed to visit campus as he was alone at home, so while his primary purpose was to visit campus to study, he also wanted to "enjoy [his] university life", meeting and working alongside his friends and peers. However, he felt that Institute 1 overall was "very tailored for an undergraduate experience despite the fact that it's got a continuing to rise number of post grad students coming". That sentiment was mirrored in his perceptions of library use, and he felt that:

there's a very small area for just studying and it's and if it was the other way round I think that'd work better there's a lot more space used for group discussions and I think that should be tailored to what a library actually is which is an area for study and research.

[Ewan, student, Institute 1]

He perceived other university libraries, with primarily silent space but providing discussion areas, as an additional option as being the ideal working space. Ewan had stopped using the library during term time because he was no longer successful in studying there, and found his shared office useful (if problematic because of lack of space and facilities) because "it's in an environment surrounded by people who are doing the same as me and who are just there to get on with their work".

Associating spaces with tasks and specific purposes is not unique to students like Ewan (Harrop & Turpin, 2013), but where he and his peers differed from the students focussed on in this section is that some student groups, in particular females or those from

deprived backgrounds, have limitations at home that mean they have no access to suitable spaces or environments there in which to study. Grace spoke of her need for the library's spaces as important because "it's just me and my husband, but I can't concentrate with the telly on, and if I go upstairs there's no desk", so ultimately it was "impossible" for her to work at home. Grace referred to needing quiet to be able to work effectively, using a silent area to study wherever possible:

I've noticed there's more signs up now about people making noise, 'cos I really hate it when it's noise. I mean I've come here for a reason, at home I get distracted so coming in here I make a concerted effort not to be at home.

[Grace, student, Institute 1]

Additionally, the technology she used was problematic:

we've got a really old [laptop] and the amount of times I've done an assignment on it, it's fine, saved all the way right to the end and then gone 'hang on a minute I don't wanna do anything else now' and you go 'upload it you fool! Come on!' and it's not having any of it.

[ibid]

Grace's difficulties with home technology extended to her needing to share her computer access with her husband, and while she never raised that as a direct issue, it did mean that the laptop was not necessarily always going to be available for studying. Grace relied heavily on the availability of seating in the library to give her the mental and physical room to study. Grace felt in particular that she had to be able to find a seat in the area that worked best for her productivity: if she couldn't find a seat in a silent area, then she would go home and try again the next day, although she admitted that was a rare occurrence ("it must have been the day before that the entire University's assignments were due in"). On one occasion she had borrowed a laptop from the library but she was unable to work out how to log in to it.

Katherine had children at home, and visited the library for the quiet environment, with her preferred spot allowing her to "hide away a little bit more." She didn't use the library for books, but because it allowed her to concentrate:

I'll do some [work] at home, but I find it easier [in the library], I've got children at home so, just the noise I find distracting. But even when I'm

on my own at home I'll go and do 'that' or I'll go, you know, if I can't, if I get stuck or I'm in a block or I need to concentrate, I probably procrastinate and go find something else to do, which isn't good.

[Katherine, student, Institute 1]

Katherine often visited the library on a weekend because:

all the family are round, there's too many distractions, and I haven't got a proper working space at home either, so I've ended up sat on the bed or sat at the back of the room and the telly's on and I just can't do it.

[ibid]

Gemma at Institute 2 was like Ewan in that she did not have any family or technology issues to distract her (although she preferred separating her studying environment from her home environment because she had sleep problems). However, a member of the group of friends she studied with was a mature student with children who she would often meet on Saturdays, particularly when deadlines were approaching:

she does the course part time, she has [children], she has full time job so she finds it really hard, erm and I'm really good friends with her, she's not a very confident person so you know we do our best to help her with the rest and vice versa even if it's just sitting with her.

[Gemma, student, Institute 2]

Because of not speaking directly to Gemma's friend, there is no full information on what her home circumstances were, but Gemma spoke of the woman not being able to attend social events at university, and so the time at the library as a group was time with friends, with peers, in a supportive study network. Given Gemma's group usually worked in an area with no computers, it can be reasonably assumed that her friend had access to a laptop, but visited the space for studying and being able to work away from her family to avoid distractions. Gemma's comments on the reciprocity of her group, in their support of each other in studying and socially, feeds into both consideration of others and community aspects discussed above in chapter 5 and in chapter 7, but they also illustrate the difficulties that can be experienced as a mature student with other commitments. The woman worked full time, had a family, and was studying as an undergraduate: her time was limited, and so the time she spent at the library with her group would have been key to being able to study. Gemma mentioned "just sitting with

her” as a way of supporting the woman, so having that support network as well as the study space were two factors that made being able to visit the library important.

The above comments from Grace, Katherine and Gemma imply the importance of the library in the academic lives of not just these students, but the lives of anyone who shares their home circumstances where it can be difficult to find the time and mental space to study. As Regalado and Smale (2015) and Brown-Sica (2012) have demonstrated in their research on commuter students in the US, study space at home can often be limited or non-existent in terms of noise levels and disruptions. One of the issues the students raised during Regalado and Smale’s research was that of not having space at home to study (2015). Brown-Sica (2012) found commuter students, who made up 99% of the population at a multi-college library in Denver, spoke of needing space to “‘get down to work’ as opposed to socializing” (Brown-Sica, 2012, p. 223). Commuter students in both studies also often had to work to support the family income, adding extra pressure onto splitting their lives into family, work and studying. Access to libraries with quiet or silent spaces for students living at home with family pressures is particularly important. All students have different study requirements from their degrees, but those who have no space at home need to be able to guarantee a space that allows them to focus on their work without disruption. The issue here is that there are several groups of students who have pressures on their day-to-day lives and thus have a need for library facilities to provide quiet supportive environments that allow the students opportunities to study and focus. It is important at this point to reiterate that these students collectively share a standpoint, as a group of people who need the library space because using their home to study is not an option. Libraries need to ensure that they cater for and support these students. Difficulties in designing/providing space arise in particular when individuals also sometimes wish to access support from peers, and thus have surroundings that allow them to work with quiet but the opportunity to collaborate.

Halle at Institute 1 was an anomaly case regarding the student need for library space. Another mature postgraduate student working full time, she lived in a nearby city that would require a commute of just under an hour (depending on mode of transport and time of travel) to reach campus. She had primarily used the library to print documents and borrow books prior to her supervision meetings. She had access to a shared PGR office but she had often found it “a bit work-y rather than student-y” because of the nature of the ‘office corridor’ environment, and so had problems studying there. She talked about a previous degree when she resented having to dedicate time driving into town and studying in the library/on campus on her days off: she had already spent her

week working nearby. However, she had found she could create her own distractions at home, often reducing her productivity levels. She had created a “nice little spot at home” so “I haven’t always felt the need to come into the library”. Still, she was considering using the library more as “it feels nicer in the library actually, among kindred spirits [laughs] [BR: ah right I see] slogging our guts out [both laugh]”. Her library use was directly related to her supervision meetings, so if she needed to prepare, or felt inspired after the meeting, she would visit the library for ‘the slog.’ She would primarily visit on weekends (often on a Saturday night) as, aside from working full-time, she found the library less distracting during those times. She felt the library was populated by people who were there to study yet “there’s a bit of a social thing going on so I avoid them like the plague”:

it’s not a criticism, you know when I was their age I’d probably do the same thing, I think they seem to be like younger ones who will come with their friends, so they’ll all work together but they’ll also be chatting... [and later] I’d be listening to them or watching what they’re wearing or do you know what I mean doing everything but what I’m there to be doing or I’d be getting annoyed with them distracting me when really I could just move.

[Halle, student, Institute 1]

Halle’s comments support Ewan’s (Institute 1) concerns regarding social use of the library, although Halle perceived social behaviour amongst other visitors as inevitable, even if she wanted to avoid it. Nevertheless, Halle’s occasional use of the library was designed to accommodate not just her working pattern, but the usage patterns of other visitors so that being distracted by their behaviour was avoided or minimised. She referred to being able to “just move” if she did find herself near a distracting group when visiting. Halle did talk about there being one room in the library she found useful as the “hardcore silence people” used it, and only conversed to arrange leaving for a break, but the main reason she visited during unsocial hours late on weekends was that other people were either studying in the same way she was, or dropping books off. Halle was confirming what Ewan had complained about: that if he wanted to work in the library he needed to visit prior to or after the “younger people” visited, using the library when the only other inhabitants were there alone to work (Ewan referred to being there during 24 hour opening at 7am or during the night). The issue here is that Halle (or indeed any other student) should not have been placed in a situation that made her feel she had to move: she would use the library at unsocial times to avoid having to deal with being

placed in that situation. Halle was being pushed out of using the library during the day, unable to meet with friends at the weekend on some occasions: she was being excluded.

Even if Halle did not feel she needed the library, timing her visits to avoid the other people means the library space is not supportive of her needs. As a mature, postgraduate student, the library space at Institute 1 is not designed for her user group, something that Ewan raised himself. Since data collection finished, the library has developed PGR-specific accommodation within the building, with limited access via an ID card system. However, the room has been converted from a staff office, and is a comparatively small space of approximately 25 desks/computers. While the desks are wide with plenty of room for notes and textbooks, the room itself is not soundproof, and, like much of the library space, there have been issues with temperatures varying between too hot and too cold. The library is still primarily a place for “younger” students i.e. those who are comfortable studying in a more social environment, rather than those who study best in environments where they can avoid distractions like conversations from elsewhere in the space. However, as discussed above, many undergraduate students I spoke to felt the same way as postgraduate respondents. As Regalado and Smale (2015) discussed, while flexible learning spaces will suit some students, the emphasis has been placed on those spaces over quiet or silent spaces with some level of privacy. The issue is not necessarily one of ‘age’ as suggested by Halle (although the student population and user base of libraries can indicate issues with usage patterns linking to age differences) but goes further than that in terms of the library space providing opportunities for users to focus more easily. Students of all ages should be provided with opportunities to feel that library space is accessible to and inclusive of them, ensuring varieties of spaces sufficiently meet their needs, without othering users who prefer to study in quiet or silent environments. More consideration needs to be made of those people who require both physical and mental room to focus. I will now move on to focus on students with disabilities, who may share many requirements discussed above, but may also have additional needs to factor into space design and services.

6.2 Accessibility

As already discussed in the above section provisions for those who use the library because they need to work away from the distractions of their home life are limited at both libraries, but there are other ways students who need to use the library space are excluded. Students with disabilities can find that they are excluded by the usage patterns of other students, and by the environment. There are legal requirements under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments for anyone with a disability, such

as via room to move through the shelves if using a wheelchair, providing assistive software, and auditory and visual support such as hearing loops and different accessible formats. Two participants I spoke to declared themselves as having learning difficulties³⁴, so my data is limited in respect of disabilities outside of these individuals. However, they both provided insights into how library space and its users could be supportive or disruptive to their studying.

Juhi at Institute 1 was very happy with the support she had received (both through standard library provisions and through additional support networks for students with disabilities), and while she had experienced some difficulties using the library, it was usually connected with other people disrupting her studying. She had had some difficulties with the library space such as lack of a phone signal, and on the tour she provided we encountered some spaces which were uncomfortably hot or too noisy for her, but she was usually very happy in her favourite seat in a silent area. Juhi would find some library furniture deterred her from using a space:

[during pre-interview tour] I don't like this I don't know what this is [conversation muffled as both investigate a convertible desk³⁵] so I don't like them I think it'll put people off using these, I know some students will just come and type they won't be bothered, but with me because I've got like a like a learning disability, I know it doesn't affect you but with me I'll get distracted and want to do stuff [i.e. play around with the desk-opening switches and position of equipment inside the desk].

[Juhi, student, Institute 1]

Juhi found it easier to study in silent areas, although she could still get distracted by other inhabitants of the area, but she found the standard furniture and equipment less distracting, and easier to focus on. She also used the Institute's disability support service to access personal mentors and separate study spaces, where she would set specific goals and work towards them while her mentor sat with her. Juhi did initially try to study with her friends, but felt under pressure to socialise with them as they chatted instead of studying, so preferred to study alone. Silent, individual use was what proved most helpful to Juhi: she was at her happiest and most productive in this type of space, where distractions were at a minimum.

³⁴ Both participants referred to having learning difficulties, but Juhi was specific about her condition of dyslexia, and referred to herself as having a learning disability. The Equality Act 2010 defines dyslexia as a disability.

³⁵ A desk that operates with a flip-up lid, revealing a computer monitor and keyboard inside.

In contrast, Craig (a member of staff who had recently studied at Institute 2) had often been unable to find a suitable space to study unless he used specialist rooms for his subject area. He found it difficult to concentrate outside of the specialist rooms because of other people behaving in ways that prevented him from focussing on his work:

I do find any sort of writing and research difficult, it's not it's not natural it doesn't come naturally, some people can do it and I haven't it's not natural for me, I kind of have to fight that a bit and I do and I enjoy it and then I finish the finished piece I'm really proud of so yeah it's worth it in the end [BR: yeah] but I need that quietness, I need that peace and quiet because I need to, and there's already enough in my head [...]

[Craig, staff/ex-student, Institute 2]

Craig's difficulties in studying in the library primarily stemmed from the noise made by other people. Luckily he lived close to campus and found that if the library environment was too noisy he could go home to study. However, working at home was problematic for him, and he was slightly disappointed the facilities were not improved during the time he was studying there (an area specifically for silent use, fully enclosed and soundproofed, was created shortly after he graduated):

I know for a fact I would have used [the library] more 'cos there's a million and one distractions at home I would have used it more if it were a little bit more quieter but that's something they have done [in reference to the new silent area]

[Craig, staff/ex-student, Institute 2]

Overall, the library space itself was useful to him: it was a supportive study environment, and communicated that purpose to him in its resources and facilities. He appreciated that other people sometimes worked in different ways to him, and needed noise or the opportunity to talk to be able to study. Unfortunately, Craig's personal preferences and needs relating to his learning difficulties frequently left him feeling excluded from the library.

Usually both Craig and Juhi relied on the library to provide them with a study space that would allow them to work successfully, completing their assignments and reading, but sometimes they found themselves excluded by other library users. The environment

itself was useful and supportive. I asked Craig if he thought behaviour of other library users could be improved by modifying the building layout:

you can have the best facilities in the world but that doesn't mean anything [BR: mm] if it's already broken and people, or even if it's just like busy and people are talking and they're not using the library, just checking Facebook or whatever and you know, it's just like I don't think the facilities matter you can have pretty awful facilities just people [unintelligible] you know you do the best out of the situation they've got, that might be a better situation to be in than a fully stocked perfect library that's just noisy and hard to work in.

[Craig, staff/ex-student, Institute 2]

As Craig and Juhi imply, the facilities themselves are not necessarily an issue: they both had extensive support available, both libraries provided access to assistive software should they require it, textbooks and computers, and physically comfortable spaces. Both Juhi and Craig fell into the majority group range as young undergraduate students. However, both also fell into other groups, meaning the libraries they used were not always sufficiently accommodating for them because the spaces were primarily designed for the majority groups who were perceived as requiring largely social learning environments, supporting Andrews' suggestion that students are largely viewed as "a heterogeneous bunch" (2016, p. 114). The problems stemmed from having their capacity to study limited by other people's behaviour and activities, and curbed by the (in Craig's case too late) provision of silent spaces. In these cases, other library users not only focussed primarily on their own use, but were also ignorant of the potential impact their use had for excluding people with (unseen) disabilities trying to share the same environment. Library users cannot be blamed for using a space that encourages social use or loud discussion in a social or loud manner, but consideration of other library users was perceived as lacking by Juhi and Craig. Unseen disabilities do not always receive the same level of support and recognition that visible disabilities might, generating power struggles where, in Craig's case at Institute 2, the marginalised often become further marginalised.

Potential standpoints of disabled students here diverge according to their capacity to use a space successfully, but they share the position of needing silent spaces that allow them to focus on their studying: like anyone else using the library, disabled students would benefit from being provided with a variety of spaces to suit their needs. Additionally, as discussed in chapter 1, library design often involves statement architecture and facilities,

incorporating colour, and new technology where budget allows. However, as Andrews (2016) and Cohen and Cohen (1979) suggest, including high technology and/or strong colour as design features can exclude some library users before they even try to study, something that Juhi confirmed with her rejection of one area because of its facilities. The standpoints encountered in this chapter so far indicate a shared need for quiet or silent facilities, but no guaranteed one-size-fits-all solution in terms of design provision: what stimulates and interests one person may overstimulate another. However, the desire to use a space with other people for quiet or silent use is common and can create opportunities for libraries to rethink their spaces.

Having discussed the influence of library users on the experiences of other inhabitants, I will now move on to consider how a changing Higher Education environment may influence perceptions of HE institution provisions and services, and thus the behaviour within and towards these services. Many participants, including Juhi and Craig above, referred to the library with reference to either professionalism, the influence of a changing HE environment, or social climate overall impacting on their life in HE, and it is important to consider this further.

6.3 The marketisation of Higher Education and inclusion/exclusion

I now move on to discuss how a changing HE environment has potentially influenced the perceptions of students. I raise the issue here because the social circumstances of most student interviewees meant they could be classed as WP (Widening Participation) applicants, and thus targeted marginalised attendees of their institution. They were in HE to further themselves, like most (if not all) students, but because of social circumstances, HE is potentially critical to the ability to access a professional career, and therefore participation in the working world. This is important to consider in terms of the research aim (to discover whether academic libraries provide a supportive and inclusive learning environment) and questions, where power dynamics and inclusivity of libraries are both key issues: library users should feel and be empowered by the space to be able to study successfully. However, empowerment can also reflect a change in perception of entitlement. As discussed in the introduction to this thesis in chapter 1, the Higher Education environment has changed significantly over the last decade. As this section will demonstrate, a marketised educational environment will encourage students to approach their education in relation to what they can gain in economic terms, which inevitably has an impact on their educational life as well as those around them. As Molesworth, Nixon and Scullion suggest, “many HEIs prepare the student for a life of consumption by obtaining a well-paid job” (2009, p. 278), and that consumption is a process that begins before students even begin their course. Consumerism is already

embedded into culture before they leave school, as customers who have 'choice' because they can obtain various products (as long as they earn enough money to do so), including, eventually, the product of a degree. A student arriving at university will immediately feel in a position to make demands on their educational development because they are making a monetary exchange, "Education as a commodity that can now be 'bought' is therefore reduced to just one round of consumer desire in an endless series of consumption experiences." (Molesworth et al., 2009, p. 280). When students perceive their university as a provider of a product, the library becomes part of that product development process, an ingredient in the burger meal of their degree. Because they are paying for a library as part of their degree, students begin to approach the library in different ways, use it in different ways, behave within the library environment in different ways. When also factoring in for Widening Participation schemes in many universities, students can represent a broad spectrum of attendees who ultimately want to successfully apply for a job on completing their degree, but with potentially differing ideals and perceptions of the degree process, and thus differing interpretations of how learning spaces are used.

Widening Participation (WP) is a widely adopted philosophy across many universities, with the aim of supporting and encouraging applications from students in under-represented groups at HE level. WP approaches usually include increasing participation of those from low income groups/working class in an attempt to help them improve their situation and enable individuals to move out of lower socio-economic brackets (which in neoliberal terms would ideally mean they have more opportunities to improve the economy with more income to spend and more opportunities to support markets). Class was one issue raised by Ewan at Institute 1, as he discussed how his progression through the various levels of study in HE helped him realise just how differently teaching and learning operated, and how differently students at various educational levels behaved. Ewan talked of how he had always used the library from his undergraduate days, but felt that the processes within undergraduate teaching were more akin to "spoon feeding", particularly in comparison to research degrees. The concept of "spoon feeding" could easily be closely aligned to the process of creating a group of graduates ready to find employment without questioning the markets they are designed to serve: Molesworth et al (2009, p. 278) argue students see the purpose of undergraduate learning is to "*have a degree*" rather than "*be learners*." [authors' italics], although Ewan did not take into account how some students may need extra support to become accustomed and acclimatised to the nature of HE. Ewan attributed undergraduate students' lack of awareness of others' needs and their lack of respect and ignorance of other people needing the library in different ways from postgraduates to the comparative

ease of their studying (he did not comment on undergraduates who might also struggle to use the library while others behaved disruptively). Nevertheless, when considering his library use as an undergraduate and Masters student, he realised he had never consciously considered whether his behaviour at the time had any impact on other library users. As mentioned previously Ewan labelled himself as working class and remembered that "I went to school and I was told that you go to university in order to get a better job". He felt great discomfort when taking a break between courses and hearing his peers at work in a "low wage job" referring to "bloody students". Ewan felt guilt in being a student because:

having then worked to come in to university I can empathise with how people feel about students er and that makes me feel guilty for being here having known how difficult it is to have money taken out of your wage every month to go towards things like this

yet:

it's very difficult to sometimes remember that you are trying to contribute to society, you're just doing it a different way than going to get a job when you are 16.

[Ewan, student, Institute 1]

What Ewan demonstrated an understanding of was the desire to improve and further one's self for both the self and society, but he was also aware of how privileged he was in comparison to people he met who worked at the university: he expressed a guilt in knowing that he was:

served by people who are probably earning quite a low wage when I'm being paid to read books and I find that quite erm quite an uncomfortable place to be.

[Ewan, student, Institute 1]

He went on to say that he was glad students were employed by the library, as it meant "there's no-one from the outside who looks down on students in any way." Ewan's self-awareness reflects research on class, Widening Participation and identity amongst HE students. Finnegan and Merrill (2015) interviewed working class students in Ireland and England and found that students attending non-elite universities felt more comfortable in student life than those who were at elite universities, who felt they were overtly 'other'

students. They also found that working class students tended to try and use the opportunity to study at HE level as a means of escaping working life, both longitudinally in terms of finding a better life, but also in terms of escaping their current life and creating an “‘in-between’ space, however temporary, for reflection, individual agency and creativity.” (Finnegan & Merrill, 2015, p. 311). As we shall see in a moment, there is some concern as to whether students drawn into HE via WP processes could also have the potential to be disruptive themselves.

However, in contrast to Ewan’s more positive experience of students being encouraged at school to study at HE level to get better jobs, those students Finnegan and Merrill interviewed were often not in a position to apply because of the need to support their family, ending their education at 16. While both men and women were expected to leave school to support their families and follow in their parent’s footsteps, women in particular in Finnegan and Merrill’s study were assumed to be leaving school to help at home, marry and have children, but returned to education later because it “offers a hope of a better and more fulfilling life and a means of escaping ‘dead-end jobs’ or housework and caring” (Finnegan & Merrill, 2015, p. 317). The ethos of hope expressed in Finnegan and Merrill’s research has links with many of the students I spoke to, with most of them coming from groups who could be placed in WP brackets (i.e. class, age, (dis)ability, race/ethnicity), whether they expressed themselves in WP terms or not, but they also often presented themselves as ‘other’ in their own personal experiences. Juhi (at Institute 1) and Craig (at Institute 2) presented themselves as ‘other’ because of their learning difficulties and the need (and sometimes failure) to find supportive learning spaces in the library. Mahnoor at Institute 1 spoke of coming to the UK from a developing country where university life and the amount of technology in the library differed greatly from her own experiences (where there was limited access to computers and online resources), and it felt difficult and “challenging” in spite of her computer studies background (which made her feel more prepared than her peers may have been). The mature home female students I spoke to (Grace, Katherine, and Halle (all at Institute 1), as well as the friend Gemma at Institute 2 spoke of) all were already working but returning to study at varying levels to further their opportunities, and spoke of feeling out of place because of their age or because of feeling confused by the library space. All these students referred to feeling ‘other’ at some point during their studies. Only Robin (Institute 1) and Gemma did not express themselves in terms of feeling out of place because of their personal situation or qualities, but Robin and Gemma were not of mature age for the degree levels they were undertaking, and did not disclose any personal circumstances that would place them as ‘other’. Feeling ‘other’ can disempower students, making them feel like they do not fit in because of their ‘otherness.’ Burke and

Crozier (2014) argue that students attending HE from under-represented groups are already 'othered' in the process of recruitment, and that HE processes endeavour to fit these students into standard teaching approaches that more 'traditional' students already have experience of, such as academic writing skills.

It is important here to remember that all the people I spoke to are complex people who cannot just be labelled by age, gender, class, but most fell into referring to using the library or attending university in a form of consumer/business language. Robin referred to students using social media as "consuming rather than producing work", but was also very aware that companies providing specialist software to students for free/low cost via the IT department implied the companies expected students to buy into and use the software when in professional practice. The companies were effectively being endorsed by the Institute, which can of benefit to students and the Institute in that they have experience of software used in the workplace. However, it was also problematic in that the institution was developing a sponsorship of that software company³⁶, further developing an 'education as commodity' perspective i.e. 'you buy and use this software and you'll be successful'. Mahnoor referred to library visitors as "customers" (although she admitted that language stemmed from her business degree). Ewan frequently referred to feeling under pressure to contribute to society in more monetary terms, linking this to the socioeconomic situation and to his own class concerns. Juhi referred to some student behaviours such as social media use as being "unprofessional", and considered the library a "professional environment", and felt "professional" when wearing a lanyard with her student card attached to it. Juhi in particular was seeking respect from others, and felt a 'professional' appearance aided creating a persona of importance that would generate respect. Gemma referred to her favourite seat being taken when we met, and when we later discussed what happened when she couldn't use that seat, she commented that "everyone pays to use it" and so she felt no grudges against anyone using a space she usually used herself. No matter the approach to or perceptions of HE and academic library use, a consumer agenda is manifest in the comments above, in the need to improve personal situations, in feeling guilt/discomfort about not contributing to the economy, in relating academic studying directly to the working world, in equal access to facilities because of individual investment in HE. That marketisation has seeped into student speak means a (subconscious) awareness of the power the state has over them, and an acceptance of that hierarchy, an acceptance that they must pay to get a [better] job, if the market allows. The impact of marketized HE on perceptions and

³⁶ This is clearly not unique to specialist software, but computer software as a whole. While the endorsement of specific software and products within an HE environment is usual, it endorses the approach of HE as a business model

approaches to education is not overtly problematic in the cases above, but demonstrates the links between self-improvement and economy which can impact on behaviours and shifting emphasis from broader societal needs to economic and personal needs. If students are paying for HE for self-improvement and to get better jobs, they have a perception of what should be available to them, what should be allowed, what behaviours are acceptable and appropriate (which as we will see next, is becoming more fluid for some groups).

Staff at Institute 1 provided an example of an incident that, while a single specific event, was also one that proved to be a common representation of problematic, disruptive behaviour within the library. Marlon, Greg, Muzaffar and Claudia were all staff involved in dealing with a group of students who had behaved in a manner that prioritised their own usage while excluding others. A female student had been working alone in a quiet study area in the evening. Juhi referred to this area as the “crib” space at one point, feeling too intimidated and uncomfortable to study there because of other inhabitants who were rowdy and would stare at her if she tried to work there. A large group of British Asian males were socialising in the same area. The group was comprised of subgroups who were moving around the area to socialise with each other. The female was attempting to study and was already struggling to do so when a male sat next to her began to use his mobile phone. She challenged his behaviour, he left the area, and on his return argued with the female, who felt threatened and left the library, filing a complaint later. All members of above staff referred to the floor the incident occurred on as a problem area. Two of them referred to gendered (mis)behaviour differences: Muzaffar reported females participating in ‘supportive’ rule breaking such as lending their ID cards to friends so they could use the library in the absence of their own ID card, while males were “boys” being “silly” by participating in activities that could disrupt or possibly even endanger others. Greg specifically felt males tended to be dismissive of and rebellious against attempts to police behaviours. All staff at Institute 1 (including Muzaffar, a British Asian himself) primarily referred to British Asian students as being the main perpetrators of problematic actions/behaviours in the library, responding to attempts to curb behaviours with rudeness, answering back, and ignoring staff requests to modify their actions. In the case of the incident above, staff had visited the area twice and spoken to the students creating a disturbance, as well as spending time in the area creating a ‘presence’ to indicate they were observing and monitoring behaviours. Neither of these actions had any particular impact on the students, and as was suggested in one interview with a member of staff that any further actions to deter behaviour were limited because students were “paying” for access. Indeed, Marlon expressed concerns that students who broke library rules would fail to learn how to operate normally in society:

“rules are like a learning curve. If you don’t have rules, how do you learn boundaries? [...] How are you going to be adult enough to take the consequences when you get out there?”

All staff referred to hoping to try and curb behaviours by modifying the furniture and environment to move away from social activity to individual use, but students appeared to either ignore the changes and increased signage or simply move to another area. Changes were primarily made to remove large group study tables and change rows of computers from open desks to ones with separators. The goal was to reduce the opportunities for interaction between students by removing furniture designed to encourage collaboration, while adding ways of reducing conversations via the separators between desks. However, given that Claudia pointed out that there were multiple security cameras in the problem area that did not seem to curb behaviours, the furniture modifications, while worth trying, could have been seen as an attempt still likely to have little impact on modifying behaviour, and indeed the changes to furniture later demonstrated that students who wanted to meet and converse in that area would still find opportunities to do so, albeit in reduced numbers. The disruptive, threatening behaviours, while featuring, to a lesser extent, women in the groups, were primarily produced by young males, and as we will see next, this is becoming a common problem in HE.

As mentioned earlier (see the introduction in chapter 1) reports of laddism and inappropriate behaviour in HE have been increasing³⁷, and while emphasis on solutions tend to be towards addressing drinking cultures and social situations, laddism has become a problem within the HE lecture theatre/classroom (Jackson et al., 2015). Jackson et al (2015) refer to laddism manifesting in the teaching context as behaviour disruptive to other students, with those engaging in inappropriate behaviour as primarily males (some females will engage to a lesser extent, primarily by laughing and making noise, but not to the disruptive levels of throwing things around and making noise during lectures that males do). This kind of laddish behaviour bleeds into the library spaces, as Juhi in particular suggested in her mention of the “cool”/“crib” floor. Interestingly, Jackson et al admitted it was beyond the scope of the research to learn where laddism had arisen from, but they connected policing behaviours of other students to a neoliberal agenda: women, usually mature, were the people who would attempt to police the laddish behaviours in lectures. Jackson et al report that one student interviewed

³⁷ While laddism is not a new concept, for example see Willis (1993), Dolby, Dimitriadis and Willis (2004), or Mac an Ghail (1994) for research into young working class males at school and beyond, laddism in HE is a newer issue of discussion.

implicated it needed to be other students to police behaviours because “‘peer pressure gets them a lot more coz suddenly they’re made to look fools by a girl, and actually, they didn’t like that.’” (Jackson et al., 2015, p. 307). The notion of mature women challenging the laddish behaviours was connected to the women’s need to ensure value was obtained on their investment in HE, so was not for the benefit of all present, but out of concern for their own undergraduate life and personal success: Jackson et al attributed this personal concern directly to fee paying and the neoliberal individualism ethos. The authors also referred to many of the students engaging in laddish behaviour as being from a working class background, and expressed concerns over whether the recruitment of these students through Widening Participation may show a lack of support for the transition to HE levels, as laddish behaviour may stem from feeling ‘other’ in an unfamiliar educational setting. However, the laddism itself is attributed by Phipps and Young (2015) to a neoliberal self-interest, competition and dominance manifesting in a worsening form of sexism/misogyny acting as a backlash to feminism that has increased and become normalised amongst young men in neoliberal HE environments: indeed Phipps and Young argue that modern HE provides an environment in which it can “flourish” (Phipps & Young, 2015, p. 316). Laddism here is from a sense of privilege and entitlement, and in any environment excludes others. In short, while laddism is not acted out by the majority of students, those who behave inappropriately on campus whether in a formal learning space like a classroom or lecture theatre, or an informal learning space such as those in a library, will act with no concerns over respect for other people in that setting. Those engaging in laddish behaviour are unlikely to care what design the environment features: they will engage in those behaviours regardless.

Referring to his experience at Institute 2, Craig attributed the behaviours of students in the library to how the university marketed itself to applicants and thus a problem not easily remedied by changing library space. Applicants perceived the university as having a “more relaxed attitude” than other “more academic focussed” institutions, although he was quick to clarify the university was academic focussed, but that the applicant perceptions of relaxed and social atmosphere were taken too far on attendance. He said a major issue was space and that the university was taking on increasing numbers of students, thus reducing the amount of library space available to accommodate them all sufficiently (as quoted above, he referred to a library being the best it could be in terms of design and resources, but could not be successful if large number of people use it for social and non-academic purposes).

The key problem for HE libraries is that some undergraduates on first starting their degrees will feel a sense of privilege and entitlement encouraged by the paying of fees,

resulting in behaviours that are felt to be appropriate by the actors as consumers/purchasers of a service, but must be policed by staff and other students in order to end that behaviour. Some students may act out of feeling 'other' in order to find a community they can relate to: these students are potentially out of the reach of library support but can hopefully be assisted via various services across the university. Those who engage in laddism out of a sense of entitlement are also out of reach of library assistance, and potentially also of support services: Jackson et al (2015) refer to one interviewee describing a reduction in disruptive behaviour in later academic years, attributing it in part to many students not returning to university after the first year (whether because of failing or choosing to drop out).

The main ways that academic libraries could try to improve the environment in cases of laddism and similar behavioural issues is to create clear, understandable rules within spaces that have overt uses, thus making it easier to identify (in)appropriate behaviours within those spaces, leading to areas feeling safer, more comfortable. However, given the evidence from staff at Institute 1 and the research carried out by Jackson et al (2015), design modifications would be highly unlikely to have any influence over individuals and groups who would behave as they wish. The new silent space created at Institute 2 did appear to have been successful based on observations and Craig's feedback, and could provide an opportunity for students to find a normally quiet place to study, but other spaces would still likely be susceptible to being manipulated. Social spaces should not be eradicated altogether, but as staff discussing the incident at Institute 1 suggested, creating overt silent use areas and overt group/social use areas separate from each other would block noise bleed and (particularly if using Greg's suggestion of using hermetic doors) clearly indicate differentiation in space types/use. Creating a library space with predominantly or more overt silent use areas would match Marlon's and Ewan's perceptions of how a library should be designed, as well as Grace's (who only partially joked when exclaiming "'who brought you up, no-one talks in a library!'") and Katherine's (who partially joked that "I feel like a grumpy old woman sometimes, I'm like 'oh my god I'm too old to be in this library!'" because other people disturbed her by talking). However, there is a risk here of making people who are already nervous or anxious about using a library even more uncomfortable, so finding the line between supportive, clearly designed spaces and mentally and physically comfortable, accessible spaces could be difficult.

To summarise, the changing HE environment has impacted on library provision. In a positive approach, students feel more enabled to attend university. However, the library space is converting from one of educational development to one that is a precursor to

office space, if not effectively an office space itself. The perception of the library as office/professional environment is not always reflected in user behaviour, but the nature of paying substantial amounts for education does appear to have influenced a sense of entitlement and ownership that can exclude. A space that is meant to be inclusive and supportive of students holds little influence over the feeling that someone can develop as they pay for access to resources, services and facilities and thus feel entitled to use the space as they wish. Libraries are designed with the intention of reflecting a variety of learning practices, with the aim that they can be modified by students to suit their needs, which indicates that library visitors can control and thus own a space. This type of ownership not only develops a sense of security and ownership that can positively enable inhabitants, but also one that can negatively enable inhabitants to the point of exclusion of others: in the sense of the latter, the library space has little to no influence over how an inhabitant will interpret the 'appropriate use' of that area.

6.4 Chapter summary

Throughout this chapter, I have discussed the needs of specific groups of students, and found that throughout, the predominant need is that of a quiet place to avoid being disturbed by others. There were exceptions outside of specific groups, where some felt that while they appreciated some privacy sometimes, they preferred to have opportunities to converse and discuss their work, but amongst those interviewed within groups of mature students, and those with learning difficulties, there was a strong need to work within a quiet or silent space. This need varied between finding a place that was unavailable elsewhere, because of family, or because of lack of room at home, and because learning difficulties meant an additional need for space to allow concentration.

However, as has already been seen through observation data in the previous chapter on usage patterns, and throughout this chapter, outside of silent-specific spaces, the use of inhabitants can vary greatly and cause disruption to others whether intentionally or not. The marketisation of Higher Education contributes to behaviours and perceptions of provisions across all aspects of HE, and library services are no exception. The nature of the language used by many interviewees demonstrates that a consumer, business culture has entered into students, whether intentionally or not. In student participants, it frequently represented dismay or disappointment in the way other students behave within their library. Amongst staff, the commodification of library services is represented in references to 'customers' across the field. The increase in tuition fees has led to an increase in a perceived entitlement to make demands of service provisions and spaces, and does, in effect, make students 'customers'. However, a customer approach to library

services can reinforce the perception that students are paying to use resources and spaces and thus create a sense of ownership that excludes others. In some cases, this means the influence of space design on behaviour is minimal to non-existent. In others, the sense of entitlement felt by those who 'own' library spaces through paying for access develops that sense of exclusive ownership through the options to manipulate said space.

With reference to the research questions:

- **What impact does design have on use and perceptions of use?** I have shown that library design has an impact for people who have no other space or opportunities to study elsewhere as it gives them the capacity to use a space to create their own focussed study area. The development of a sense of ownership is important to this group. However, the marketisation of HE has also helped reify a sense of ownership in terms of transactions: those who use and manipulate spaces to confirm their ownership through entitlement exclude others in the process. This ownership can mean an ignorance of the needs of other library users.
- Referring to the research aim of discovering **whether academic libraries provide a supportive and inclusive learning environment**, the library space is here both inclusive and exclusive of those in need and is caught in a dichotomy of encouraging inequalities of access while also trying to discourage these inequalities.

While some students rely on the library to support their solo use, others use communities to collaborate and support each other. Group use has already been discussed in chapter 5, but in the next chapter, I move on to focussing on how larger groups or communities can form and use library spaces with varying success, and varying impacts on other users. Some students and their behaviours have been racialized by staff, and I discuss staff perceptions of student use in several contexts.

Chapter 7: Analysis 3 - Communities of use

In chapter 6 I demonstrated that the library is key in providing access to a focussed, usable study space to those who do not have the opportunity to study at home. I also demonstrated that the marketisation of HE is influencing the perceptions of library users, whether they realise it or not, and generates a sense of ownership in both positive and negative ways. Library users can feel empowered at the access to HE they have been given, and the level of professional development they can reach, but they can also be further marginalised by the process of WP, and the entitlement demonstrated by other (inconsiderate behaviours of) library users can exclude the marginalised further.

In this chapter I focus on how communities can form within or be supported by the use of library spaces. For the purposes of this chapter I define community as a group of people sharing common interests, goals and/or personal values. While communities are common across HE, such as within a subject of study, or social interests, for the purposes of this chapter I refer largely to students of a particular ethnic group, British Asians, primarily at Institute 1, whose patterns of use, while common across different types of users, feature unique properties that have been raised during interviews and were also observed. The university has a large population of students classed as British Asians (as opposed to that at Institute 2), i.e. whose families originally came from South Asian countries including Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh to live in the UK and are second to third generation UK residents (As mentioned in 6.3, staff perceive some British Asian groups using the library as trouble makers, and that perception will be discussed in more detail here, but, perhaps in contrast to some interview data, many observations at Institute 1 demonstrate a sense of collaboration, support and community amongst groups of British Asians using the library who were often considerably larger in member numbers than any other ethnicity. Institute 2 had very little observed library use from South Asian students (who because they were not observed much i.e. only 9 incidents of logging an actor as Asian, they could not easily be identified as British Asian) or large group use in comparison to Institute 1, so it is difficult to know if the practices that appeared in Institute 1 are common beyond this institution, but certainly they were common within that university library. However, interview data from Institute 2 suggested that large groups were not unique to the British Asian usage patterns, and this point will be considered later, in section 7.3. I begin this chapter by discussing the racialization of education and how this might continue to manifest at HE levels, and move on to discussing staff perceptions of student behaviours, using interview extracts to demonstrate how these perceptions manifest. I then move to relating the different patterns of use that were observed, or that were described by interviewees, and how they manifest different aspects of a sense of community in order to justify labelling the

groups as such. I also consider how these patterns support or disrupt library users both within and outside of the group membership, how the library environment enables or disrupts the use of the groups, as well as how the groups' non-traditional/non-conformist behaviours may be perceived in different ways by staff. Gemma's group's use of the library at Institute 2 will also be examined in more detail, based on her interview data: she referred to her group extending to ten people on some occasions.

During the data analysis, interviews and observations indicated usage practices of larger groups manifest in both institutions. One code/theme that emerged in this process was one of discrimination. Sometimes this was subtle, sometimes it was positive, sometimes it was negative. For the purposes of understanding how staff perceptions of student use of libraries, and the inclusivity of library spaces (and the inequalities that can manifest) as per my research questions and overarching aim to discover whether academic libraries provide a supportive and inclusive learning environment, I will discuss how some student behaviours and practices have been racialized (whether knowingly or not). The observation included in 7.3 demonstrates a contrast to most staff comments, in that the students in the group largely followed rules, used the library to study, and responded to staff comments. In this chapter in particular, because of the staff racialization of student behaviours involved, and my whiteness in comparison to the primary student group (British Asians) whose behaviour was racialized, I employed transversal politics methods to try and understand the perspectives of both staff and students. I attempted to consider that the staff members' negative experiences of behaviour influenced their perceptions of all library users matching the race label staff designated them: regular negative experiences of behaviour and lack of respect for staff on a daily basis could easily develop into racialization. However, considering the positive experiences of students of the same race could help staff understand that, because the act of NOT policing students passes without incident, positive behaviours can easily go unnoticed. I also used a transversal approach to understand why some racialized students might need the library space (even if it put others at risk or excluded them) because of lack of opportunities elsewhere: unfortunately interview data with students was not available to discuss group use and investigate further.

I should add a reminder at this stage that I'm very aware of my own whiteness and privileges in comparison to some of the participants detailed below (in both my own data and the data of other researchers cited). While I come from a working class background, I've seen my academic progress supported from many networks in terms of funding and moral support. As a mature female, I might experience some discrimination in HE because of my age and gender, but as white I am privileged because I am not

automatically 'othered' by the colour of my skin in what is a predominantly white environment as a whole. I'm also aware that of my student participants only one was a British Asian and preferred to work alone, and (as touched on above) only one person described their membership of a large group, and they were white, so my first person data is limited in this respect. I acknowledge that this gap in student voice limits the capacity to draw firm conclusions about the patterns of behaviour and usage needs of large communal groups. As a white person, I am also limited in my understanding of how cultural and individual variations impact on personal use, if at all, and while I might endeavour to avoid othering practices identified via racialization, I am still at risk of slipping into racializing behaviours myself (see Troyna and Carrington (1989)). The data analysis process incorporated identification of British Asians and other races in actors, and in interviews regarding references to race by participants, and as shall become clear below, this process was important in terms of addressing racism/racialization of behaviours, including references to large groups at Institute 1. In this chapter I attempt to provide a representation of both staff perceptions and student practices with the hope that it will start to break down stereotyping and help generate conversation on institutional and cultural racism.

7.1 Racialization of education

Prior to discussing the data collected that constitutes this chapter's focus, it is important to consider issues of race and racialization. Racialization is the concept of applying attributes that identify different populations as superior or inferior to others which ultimately skirts around being overtly 'strong' racist and demonstrates that racism isn't always a straightforward dichotomy of racist or not racist (Rattansi, 2007), although racialization is usually a racist process (Troyna & Williams, 1986). Examples of this could be references to Irish people being stupid in jokes to referring to Japanese and Chinese people being very clever. Racialization extends to an educational context when we consider the focus government departments have placed on improving the education of certain groups: in the 1970s and 80s concern was raised through a number of council and Local Education Authority (LEA) reports over what was classed as the 'low achievement' of 'West Indian' children and Afro-Caribbean boys (Rattansi, 1992). Achievement was linked to the capacity for these racialized groups to learn and study, initially without considering whether racism amongst teaching staff or other pupils had any impact on learning. Troyna and Williams (1986) refer to othering pupils based on their ethnicity via the process of LEAs referring to 'special needs' support and funding in an attempt to improve achievement.

Racialization continues today in education, and in HE, particularly with the efforts of Widening Participation in HE, where targets are set by universities to increase applications from ethnic minorities, a process Pilkington refers to as being “colour blind” (2015, p. 8). Increasing applications and attendance in HE through ethnic categories does not equate to addressing improved access to academia without racialization or discrimination. Such measures do not address the (often white-centred) curriculum or identify issues where students are expected to conform with the dominant (again often white-centred) ideologies of the academic institutions (Clegg, Parr, & Wan, 2003; Edmin, 2012). Mac an Ghaill and Haywood (Mac an Ghaill & Haywood, 2014) argue that the use of Prevent training in educational settings has further marginalised young Muslim males in particular, shifting emphasis away from racialization of colour or country of origin and towards racialization of religion. The implications these developments might have on perceptions of student study behaviours must be considered: as will be seen below, racialization was identifiable in staff comments about how students used and behaved in the library, and is presented in the next section.

7.2 Staff interpretation of community use

As discussed in section 6.3, male British Asian students at Institute 1 had been identified in a situation where behaviour became intimidating to an individual woman working in the same area, and the situation had escalated to a complaints procedure. Problematic behaviour amongst students was something I felt important to discuss to learn whether the behaviour was actually an issue, or if it was something that could be attributed to staff perceptions of ‘correct’ behaviour in libraries, and as I interviewed staff I wanted to learn more about how ‘problematic behaviour’ was identified with British Asians. When discussing the behaviour of students with staff, all the staff I spoke to at Institute 1 mentioned some level of non-conformity amongst library users in terms of noise levels, referring to British Asian students as being most common culprits. Two members of staff attributed the noise levels to socialising, and questioned whether the noise could be associated with a lack of opportunity to socialise outside of visiting campus. One British Asian member of staff I spoke to was concerned as to why it did seem to primarily be British Asian students who were acting in an “antisocial” way, and wanted to learn more about what might lead to such behaviour (especially given he did not behave that way or see others do so when he was at university). He felt he was at an advantage in being able to talk to the students who had been acting “silly” when playing with chairs and making noise as they perceived him as culturally senior to them, and they thus “didn’t give me any lip or attitude back”. On confronting them they described their behaviour as a way of reducing stress, so he warned them of the risks to the safety of other library users, and how they could be interpreted by other people outside of their group as

aggressive, but also joked with them and developed a “banter” with them. He used this ‘banter’ to imply he would report their behaviour to their parents, provoking a penitent response from them, the students reacting from fear, but he also pointed out that they “should be making a good example”.

When the staff member referred to a “good example”, I had not yet realised the implications of this statement, but on reading Bhopal’s work (Bhopal, 2008, 2011, 2016), I became more conscious of the implications the students’ misbehaviour had on perceptions of British Asians. Certainly, that all staff referred to British Asian students as appearing to be the main source of non-conforming behaviours in particular types of spaces, and the students’ fears of their parents hearing of their behaviour, suggested serious implications linked to social mobility and concerns about perceptions of race. Whether British Asians behave in ways perceived as non-conforming more often than other students or not, that they are SEEN to do so can have implications for how staff interpret their actions, and potentially how they are monitored in their library use as a result. Staff in interviews referred to large groups of British Asians obstructing access to some areas because of crowding around a computer (and thus preventing access for anyone with visual or mobility impairments), making more noise than other students, or excluding other visitors to an area by numbers, but a large group I observed (detailed below in section 7.3) were studying, and other students were policed alongside them. Staff perceived the behaviours they listed as being non-conforming, and the library as being inappropriate for such usage patterns, but did not question whether or not the library should actually try to cater for these uses: they questioned why the students felt the need to use the library in that manner.

What probably did not aid staff perceptions of the groups they spoke to was that the students were seen as disrespectful towards them and towards authority figures in general. Staff I spoke to felt that in cases where behaviour was extreme they were ignored when trying to control it. Staff talked of a broad range of students who were disrespectful, not just British Asians, but students were referred to as “home”, “Chinese/international” and “Asian”, and the behaviour of home, specifically “Asian” students was lamented:

If I went to a group of international students Chinese students I know I’m going to get a response from them, they’re gonna sit there and they’re gonna listen. If I go to a group of, say, our own students, home grown students, particularly er the Asian students, they won’t acknowledge you they won’t look at you you’re talking to their backs.

(Staff 1)³⁸

There's kind of different cultural aspects but it does seem to be the British Asians I think that you know, certainly the ones I've dealt with and you know most of them have kind of come clean apologised and that's the end of it, but I just felt you know I mean the [time] I've been here it's 'kind of getting a bit silly this, I probably just need to kind of make them a bit aware [of inappropriate behaviour from British Asians]' I think they were actually kind of 'oh really is it' I said 'yeah so you can see why it doesn't look particularly good does it?'

(Staff 2)

I wouldn't say it's always Asian students by any means you know er it's it can be any any students, and we try and be scrupulously fair erm where we can [BR: mm] erm but certainly you know a large portion of our students are from that background and I think because, because of their youth culture some of them at these tend to have a wide network of friends and acquaintances [BR: mm] and then you know erm it only takes a group of them to come into the library to misbehave if they're asked to be quiet by the warden if there's a safety in numbers in that they might feel a bit cocky they can answer back you know and it becomes more difficult to manage than it might be if it was just one or two people misbehaving

(Staff 3)

I think sometimes students from an Asian family background can be telling their parents that they're in the, you know, that the reason they're not at home in the middle of the night is that they're revising in the library, when actually that might be partly true but they're also taking the opportunity for a bit of socialising

(Staff 3)

Identifying 'problem' student groups specifically as "Asian" as a whole links back in to 'othering' of specific groups, staff comments above about providing a "good example" and Bhopal's findings that British Asians in HE are aware that they must work harder and behave in ways that prove themselves (2008). A process of racialization was taking place here where, in the case of Staff 1, behaviours of a number of different races were

³⁸ While multiple quotes from different individuals with pseudonyms are provided here, they are further anonymised here to help protect their identity.

identified with specific responses without any kind of critique or consideration of homogenising people in a racialized manner. The British Asians were a specific band of 'home' students, and at one point during an interview, one member of staff specified even further that they thought Muslim students were the main source of exclusive behaviour within the context of groups of "Asians": could they have identified which students were Muslim and which were not in a group of British Asians? How did they come to this conclusion? Given many of Institute 1's British Asian students are primarily from Pakistan and Bangladesh, countries that are predominantly Muslim, the assumption is not surprising, but also an inappropriate assumption to make. The assumption was based primarily on the large size of the group. Specific groups of British Asians became representative of all British Asians using the library, with staff thus potentially perceiving students they identified as being "Asian" as requiring monitoring for problematic behaviour, just as 'all' "Chinese" students were perceived as responding respectfully. Mufazzar, a British Asian member of staff, was concerned that British Asians were regularly reported for inappropriate behaviour, but British Asians constitute a substantial population of Institute 1: if white students feature less frequently in records of inappropriate behaviour, is that because British Asians are identified more often, or, as suggested by Collins (2000), do they begin to perform to match expectations or racialized stereotypes?

Staff referred to groups of British Asian students taking up a large amount of space on the different floors, dominating some areas to the point where other library users struggled to physically pass the group. Staff spoke about how students could be deterred from using comparatively small areas because of large groups inhabiting the space: even if the group wasn't sitting together as a whole, they were communicating to each other across the area, so any remaining seats may have been rejected by any non-group member wishing to use the space. Youth culture and body language were also described as actions potentially deterring or disrupting other library users: the act of loudly verbally greeting and slapping each other's backs implied to other users as not just audible disruption but the suggestion that groups may engage in distracting behaviours throughout their visit. This sense of youth culture seemed to be racialized, made specific to British Asians rather than one of a broader context of youth behaviour (it was never used in reference to students of, for example white or black origin). Certainly observation 5.10(i2) indicated that white males could behave in a rowdy (and in this case misogynistic) manner, but the 'youth culture' perception amongst staff at Institute 1 seemed to reflect one of camaraderie rather than one that involved sexist behaviours and was only referred to in discussion of British Asian library users. One member of staff questioned why British Asian students in particular felt the need to visit the library in

large groups, citing an occasion when they had seen a group of around 15-16 students attempting to view one PC, and later stated that the library was simply not big enough to cater for student numbers as a whole.

Leading on from this discussion of group size, I shall now identify the one occasion where I observed a large group of British Asians, and discuss how this group could be identified as behaving in a pattern that is not exclusive to BA culture.

7.3 Patterns of use

When I was carrying out observations at Institute 1, it was surprising to see what I would consider to be unusually large groups. Groups usually contained two to four members, sometimes five, but there were a small number of occasions when I saw groups numbering up to ten or even more (for comparison, the largest group size McKay and Buchanan observed during their research was seven (2014, p. 101)). The larger groups would usually split into smaller sub groups, but visited the library together or appeared to have arranged to meet up in the library to collaborate. One particular incident intrigued me in a number of ways, and provides some examples of typical group behaviours I observed amongst British Asians in particular.

Observation 7.1, Institute 1 (see appendix 6 for map of area)

I am seated in a mixed use area, with some rows of PCs running both parallel and perpendicular to the walls to my right. There are some round tables with PCs for small group use on each side (i.e. 2-3 people simultaneously sitting at the computer), some larger group use tables towards the centre of the area, and two couches further away. There are 4 females sat at one round table, and 3 males and one female sat at another table close by. They are definitely studying as I hear them talking about numbers, and they know each other as sometimes one group will refer to another to swap answers. Less than 10 minutes after I begin the observation, two females enter and join the group of females. The mixed table splits so that the female (now known as Female A) is sat at the table with one male (now known as Male A) and they are leaning over something together to look at it. The other two males from that table have moved to a nearby row of computers, standing over someone I can't see who is seated at a PC but who I later find out is another male. Male A asks how to do something, pointing at one of the papers Female A has, takes the paper from her and places it on the table, looking over it. They then move to join the group of females, meaning that there are now 7 females and one male at the table, while there are still 3 males over by the computer. There follows much group-switching from Female A, who wheels her chair between the groups until settling with the males at the PCs. Two new males enter the area, one leaving shortly after, and

one joining the computer group. Male A joins the computer group, standing over them. They laugh and seem to be facing each other more than the computers. The female-only group continue to study, asking each other questions, discussing the answers.

However, they start to talk socially, and just as they do, a white male warden enters the area, speaks to the female group in a tone I can't hear but which prompts one female to move to the bin to dispose of a drinks can (the rules for this library are for bottled water only, but I was told that as long as drinks are in bottles they are usually allowed). He continues to talk to them for a moment, then moves to the other part of the group at the computers and talks to them. He then returns to the female group and says that he appreciates they are doing work but that they are working in a quiet discussion area, and could they please keep the noise down. He repeats his request to two other females not part of the group at a computer row to my right, then leaves the area. Personally, I have never felt any of the conversations to be intrusive, but I don't know if someone has reported the noise as too much, and of course not everyone has the same perception of what counts as noisy. Less than 10 minutes after he first visited the area, the warden returns, using his phone with it held to his ear, but says "thank you ladies" as he passes the group of females. There is a noticeable drop in volume as he passes through the area, and the females look at their papers and notes with heads bent downwards.

Once the warden leaves the area, the group at the PCs moves over to the females for a brief moment to discuss studying, then moves back to the PCs. Male A has returned to the female group and Female A moves to join him, standing over him and ruffling his hair, then returns to the computer. This pattern of various members moving between groups continues: the final group membership overall is 6 British Asian females, one black female, one white female (who works primarily alone at a PC but moves to converse with the females), and four British Asian males. They all stand, and spend around 10 minutes organising themselves, talking and waiting for all group members to be ready before leaving together. The whole observation takes place over a period of 90 minutes.

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Several themes emerge from the observation above: collaboration, break out groups, membership switching, space needed (both the amount of space and the type of facilities available), and interactions with staff.

In the observation above, smaller groups supported each other in their revision actions: they questioned and tested each other, asked each other for information on answers and

reasoning, and acted as a supportive network. They occasionally broke out of study discussion to socialise, giving themselves a chance to relax. The computer-use sub-group wasn't as visible/audible as the revision sub-groups, but the main purpose of their visit was to study, and the collaboration around the PC was physically problematic (I shall discuss this in more detail in a moment), but seemed to provide what they needed for computer access: they could easily have moved to another computer with more room around it to share the screen, such as the group use PC tables (although there would likely still have been the need to have some people standing over to view the screen). Collaboration appeared to be essential for this group. Collaborations were present both within each sub-group and across the entire larger group. Collaboration is a key component for group work: I define collaboration here as the capacity to work together and be able to contribute as individuals to a shared learning goal. It is a mutually supportive process for those who are participating in the collaboration, so even if contributions are not equal, all benefit from the process. Those who ask their peers revision questions are asked questions themselves, and knowledge is confirmed and validated, gaps identified and filled. Those who act as tutors to their peers find again their own knowledge consolidated, while supporting and increasing the knowledge of their tutees. Interactions within the collaboration can only exist if there are pre-existing relationships that allow each participant to trust the others in their knowledge and contributions. Collaboration is thus a result of community, and a way of confirming the relationships within that community: should the collaboration fail, the strength of the community is reduced and the relationships within it may be weakened.

The need for community, particularly amongst British Asians, is a key point here. As Bhopal (2008) points out, communities of the same ethnicity studying at HE level gathered because of a need for shared understanding of familial and societal pressures on their lives. The communities need a space that allows them to bond and support each other, and Bhopal found that the library featured as one of a number of meeting spaces that provided an opportunity to improve bonds and collaboration (2008, p. 189). The group in the above observation were studying, collaborating, and the playful ruffling of Male A's hair suggests strong bonds between members: the library space was large and open enough to allow the group members to switch sub-groups as appropriate and/or necessary, and to let them exist as independent sub-groups as well as one large simultaneous whole. The group were operating with some flexibility, mirroring the flexible design of the space, and represent what can be considered a successful use of design intentions matching use (although the whole group size may not have been expected or planned for in the design process). As we have seen above, while the

existence of study communities of British Asians is important for the community members to help reach those goals, their library use can sometimes be interpreted in different ways by other library users and staff to the point of racialization.

It is interesting that research demonstrates different opinions on whether, even at HE levels, it is appropriate for genders to mix in British Asian groups. Bhopal's research suggests it can be, albeit with greater importance placed on female friendships than those with males because her participants felt they needed support in the "white middle-class (male)" environment of HE (Bhopal, 2011, p. 520), while Basit's work implies the mixing of genders can be frowned upon in school, with genders tending towards separation on reaching post-compulsory education (Basit, 2012). There was no indication in observations that it was inappropriate for genders to mix, but certainly the genders predominantly remained separated yet together, such as in the observation detailed above. The females were primarily using paper notes for revision, the males the computer for unknown but study-related tasks, but the group-switching female who acted as tutor for the male was able to move easily between the female group, male group, and her own mini-group with the male, implying that they had separate yet similar purposes, or at least different methods of approaching the same work. Their study pattern is most closely aligned to what McKay and Buchanan (2014) refer to as "loose study", where they are not collaborating to any formal tangible result such as a project or assignment but are working towards a common goal in terms of revision and consolidation of knowledge. By McKay and Buchanan's definition, the "loose study" groups rely on individual materials, but do share materials and information, and also will form subgroups with different tasks/methods of study where "shared views" (i.e. referring to the same documents or computer screen) are common (McKay & Buchanan, 2014, pp. 100–101). "Loose study" could be applied to a number of other British Asian groups, such as those in observation 5.5 (in section 5.1.2) or in an observation in a silent PC room where a smaller group of males were working individually but liaising to support each other when difficulties arose (leaving the room to talk when necessary), with group membership fluctuating as new people of both genders entered and left). Membership may gravitate towards just one gender, but mixing of genders occurred regularly. It should be noted that gender mix (or lack of it) is often seen across all types of visitors during my observations, but the reasons for separation can differ between different ethnicities, will serve different purposes, and can be a reflection of the gender balance on the course attended. In the case of British Asians, while research implies gender mixing isn't always looked upon with favour because of the implications it has within cultural norms, it was seen frequently across observations, and Juhi's references to her friends suggests she had good friends of both genders.

The British Asians constituting the group present in the observation detailed above showed signs of a community of collaboration. However, where any group practice within a library exists, there are difficulties that arise in attempting to create that provision, as we have already seen in section 5.2. The libraries involved in this study provided 'flexible' spaces accommodating a variety of facilities: indeed, as already mentioned the observation above was situated in a flexible space incorporating soft furnishings, tables without computers, rows of desks with or without computers. However, as in opposing specific use areas in libraries when placed in close proximity i.e. silent next to group use, flexible spaces easily create conflict in usage patterns because of the variety of tasks undertaken in that area. The observation above demonstrates what appeared to be a successful study group operating in the area while concurrently inhabited by individual users (albeit not in close proximity: the nearest was approximately 7 metres away from the group), but other observations on other occasions as well as interviews with staff proved that groups and individual users did not always comfortably co-exist. Students do want collaborative spaces to work in (Montgomery, 2014; Yoo-Lee et al., 2013).

Unfortunately, collaborative 'flexible' spaces can be problematic, with warnings of creating a confusing atmosphere with no study value due to conflicting messages should the space be designed to cater for too many purposes (Joint Information Services Committee, 2006, p. 23). Conflict between uses of space can unfortunately manifest as actual verbally or physically aggressive behaviour between or towards library users, as has been detailed in section 6.3, but has also been observed in other research (Bedwell & Banks, 2013). While there were no overt conflicts of use in the observation above, staff interactions suggested that either someone had reported noise levels escalating beyond their personal comfort levels, or staff had interpreted behaviour as not conforming to rules. The group I observed were respectful of the staff member and responded to his requests. In spite of this, it was clear that the member of staff who spoke to students in the area perceived behaviour as at the very least pushing against the limit of what was appropriate noise/use. He began with asking the females to dispose of their drinks, then policing their volume levels, and moving around the area speaking to groups to remind them of what was considered appropriate noise level by staff.

This group behaved in a manner that contradicts perceptions of staff at Institute 1 in all ways but by number of group members. The students were respectful of other library users and staff, there was no obvious behaviour that would deter other people from using the space (indeed people entered the area to study for prolonged periods). Other

observations of British Asian groups, such as those in observation 5.5, also at Institute 1, demonstrated a desire to study and no issues with behaviour. There might be incidents where students of any race or gender break the rules or disrupt spaces (observations 5.8(i2) with white males and 5.9(i1) with Asian males come to mind as examples of space disruption, which I would identify with gender above all else), as is clear throughout chapters 5 and 6, but does the regular identification of British Asians mean that they genuinely misbehave more than other races, or does it mean that they are noticed or reported more often?

In contrast to large groups perceived as non-conforming, when I spoke to Gemma about the large group ("sometimes [numbering] 10") she was a member of and their library use at Institute 2, they successfully used the library by accessing the social study area. This area had much of the same furniture provision of Institute 1 of soft furnishings with sofas, rows of computers, desks and cubbies large enough to support groups of around 6 members, but it was a large open space, clearly labelled as suitable for group discussion. The area was based on the same floor as the support desk, thus it was clear noise would always be present to any visitor choosing to use that space to study. While I never observed large groups inhabiting this area, Gemma felt her and any other large group could be easily accommodated, use laptops or break out into a cubby to use a computer, use their headphones if they wanted to block out external noise (peers or otherwise) if necessary. The layout of the floor seemed to buffer noise levels within that floor for the most part: sound travelled but was muffled. Gemma's use, combined with my active and passing observations, demonstrated that the space extended far enough to allow a range of different sized groups to claim their own area of collaboration without excluding or deterring others from using that floor themselves. The area was not a perfect study space for everyone given the potential for noise levels with multiple groups, and the design of the building incorporating an atrium above this floor meant that noise would easily travel upwards to other floors, disrupting others. However, the capacity and design of the area meant it provided opportunities for people to collaborate as long as the potential volume of noise was not considered an issue in task completion. Additionally, an important differentiation to make here is that Gemma and her group members were white. Had their group used the space at Institute 1 for social purposes, would they have been policed in the same way the group in observation 7.1 were? Judging by staff behaviour observed at Institute 1, comments would have been made to them, but it is debatable whether they would be policed in the same way. Unfortunately, I saw no staff policing of behaviours at Institute 2, and I cannot answer any of these questions, but

they are important ones to consider. Nevertheless, the behaviour and usage patterns of Gemma's group at Institute 2 further emphasises the level of staff racialization of large group use at Institute 1.

Here we need to consider the standpoints represented in this chapter: those of large communities of practice, and those who are racialized by other's behaviours and practices (an issue that is primarily discussed in the context of British Asians, but appears to be something that can be applied to any race considered 'other' by those adopting racialized perceptions). Both are marginalised at Institute 1 in terms of suitability of library facilities and staff perceptions. Institute 2 did not appear to represent the same problems at Institute 1, but I saw and heard of little to no staff interventions at Institute 2, and as mentioned above and in chapter 4, Institute 2 had a predominantly white population. Both communities of practice and racialized students need representation and identification to help move towards eradication of marginalization and oppression. However, we can also consider a standpoint which locates the racialized behaviours as a way of asserting power and domination of space, in the processes of gestures and noise levels and large groups. This particular standpoint can also be viewed, in combination with the disrespectful manner of responding to policing in some cases, as a means of resisting the dominant hierarchies of (for example) staff and/or whiteness.

From a design perspective, while it seems students like to be able to create a personal space, that should not always be interpreted as a small personal space: the variety of open but self-contained groups of furniture and computers across the whole floor worked well from the perspective of Gemma's large group, but large groups at Institute 1 had no such library space available and were forced into using other mixed use spaces at the possible detriment to other users, leading to problems for everyone inhabiting that space. Should a suitable space be provided, staff concerns over usage patterns could be reduced as the need felt in smaller highly populated areas to control noise or similar non-conforming behaviours would no longer be an issue: the space and overt, transparent rules would allow for such behaviours to manifest within reason (i.e. safe (to the actors and others in the environment), non-intimidating (i.e. non-aggressive) activities). The problem is still that HE libraries endeavour to be social yet studying environments, and while socialising will always exist between students no matter the rules, what is acceptable social, communal activity in a communal space is a moot point. Yet library space is tailored to specific user demographics of the homogeneous undergraduate student population without factoring in for groups who thrive in larger communal groups. Library design is led by the ethos that featuring all different types of study spaces in one place answers all study questions, which are considered answers when these spaces

become highly populated, rather than considering whether they actually serve purposes appropriately and influence behaviours to the desired direction e.g. silent spaces create silent use. As soon as behaviours perceived as non-conformist enter the usage lexicon, they are perceived as a problem to be solved, rather than a usage pattern to be catered for in a more appropriate design/space. It is important for academic libraries to support and provide a variety of space types to suit student needs. However, the question arises as to whether they CAN provide appropriate spaces to the level of diversity of needs demonstrated given the limitations a refurbishment rather than a new build can create.

7.4 Chapter summary

In this chapter I have presented staff reports of problematic behaviour that can be considered racialized. The nature of what is considered problematic behaviour is open to debate, but it commonly involved some level of disruption to other inhabitants or rule breaking: however, is disruption measured by other library inhabitants, or by staff perceptions? Observation data did not present any incidents that staff at Institute 1 could consider representative of the problematic behaviour they encountered, unless they considered the large group problematic via size. Because Gemma at Institute 2 referred to her own large group, using a library in this way is not unique, and not necessarily a racial behaviour (as some staff suggested at Institute 1) just because it is an uncommon/infrequently observed practice amongst students who are not British Asian.

Referring back to the research aim and the point of this thesis, to discover whether academic libraries provide a supportive and inclusive learning environment, there are inequalities developed from staff racializing behaviours and practices. There are also issues arising from facilities that cannot cater sufficiently for larger group use. Leading on from these, library staff need to discuss and address the extent of the racializing process, whether identifying genuine problem behaviour perpetuates more of the same behaviour, or whether staff and students need to meet and liaise in a manner akin to transversal politics in an effort to understand each other better. Both in large group use of the library and in staff racialized perceptions, the library is problematic, unsupportive, and not inclusive. Since concluding the research, Institute 1 carried out racial awareness training. I do not have details on what the training constituted, but it was considered important (if not mandatory) for all staff to attend if available to when the training was conducted.

Chapter 8: Conclusions

The research I have conducted was developed in order to deal with several gaps identified in studies of academic library use in chapter 2 and thus develop a deeper understanding of the use and needs of library users. There is a distinct lack of research into library use that was needed to help address this lack of understanding, over more than one academic year because of changing student populations and because of those who remain studying and have changing study needs throughout their time at university. Library research has frequently glossed over or ignored whether or not all demographic groups are sufficiently catered for in libraries and thus whether libraries successfully create an inclusive, supportive environment (or even attempt to do so to the extent that a library should for its own specific student body). This thesis has described a variety of usage patterns across different types of parties: single and mixed gender groups; individual use; and specific demographic groups. This broad range of users is accommodated within a variety of spaces in each institution. Ethnographic-based methods were employed to observe the nature of use and power manifest within library spaces over two academic years, and to discuss with library users and staff what happened when they used the library. Basing my theoretical approach on Feminist Standpoint Theory has allowed me to begin to develop an understanding of the particular practices and needs of specific groups: of students with limited capacity to study at home (usually female undergraduates who have limited access to reliable technology and study space outside of campus provisions); of large communities of students (who need spaces to gather, support each other, collaborate, and study). This chapter will now summarise the research findings and relate them to previous research, and specify key findings that are areas for concern. It will also examine the limitations of this research and suggest further opportunities for investigation.

I will now return to the research questions and answer each in turn. The first asked:

How do students behave in and use academic libraries?

- **What do students do when they visit the library?**
- **How do students interact with each other when they are in the library?**
- **How do students interact with staff in the library?**

As detailed in chapter 5, students I observed visited the library primarily for studying. Social use was observed, but was often still linked to discussion of study-related topics such as lecture content and academic staff. All students I spoke to visited the library with the purpose of studying. Studying entailed reading, writing, and use of specialist

software, which would sometimes be on personally owned laptops (and could then be used anywhere that suited the study need). When groups used the library, their actions were primarily supportive of group members: guiding roles would be adopted by individuals to ensure the study purpose (if one was specified) was actioned, but bonding exercises (sharing of difficulties, sharing of social activity) would also take place prior to and during dealing with the task, as in McKay and Buchanan's group use research (2014). However, bonding activities would sometimes create an atmosphere that could deter other people from the area, such as the generation of loud conversation, use of videos with high volume sound, loud swearing. This atmosphere could thus lead to an environment dominated by the group via the act of exclusion, and occurred across both female-only and male-only groups. On some occasions, male-only groups additionally excluded others via body language: the nature of this type of exclusion was not one overtly supportive of the group itself, but one of space claiming and endorsing/reinforcing ownership. Female-only groups dominated primarily via volume which was more indicative of bonding processes. Mixed gender groups were more problematic: initially intending to undertake study practices, they could easily be disrupted by newcomers, non-members visiting to talk to group members. In these cases, the power dynamics within the groups were shifted so that females within the group were more commonly individuals with reduced power.

Students with disabilities saw library space as essential (as discussed in chapters 5 and 6), but also encountered issues that, in Craig's case, frequently excluded him from studying in the library, and in Juhi's case left her feeling psychologically uncomfortable if not physically. These issues primarily stemmed from the usage practices of other inhabitants, demonstrating further problems with power dynamics that most often stem from the perceptions of appropriate use those other inhabitants hold. Additionally, the way library space design encourages a variety of usage patterns in some spaces enables the practices of those other inhabitants, but can disrupt and exclude students like Juhi and Craig. Students with disabilities clearly found the library spaces important in their study practices yet problematic⁴⁰. While, as Andrews (2016) states, and is evident in FST discussions (Flax, 1987; Letherby, 2003), we should be wary of being too prescriptive of attributing individuals with their varied circumstances and needs to be representative of all 'students with disabilities', in this case, Juhi and Craig provided important insight into the difficulties encountered in using library spaces. Library spaces should be designed to accommodate a range of needs and accessibility, but currently they focus on visible disabilities, and we should remember Andrews' (2016) point that designing space to

⁴⁰ While I acknowledge that the number of students who participated and declared a disability or learning difficulty to me were small in number, their voices are still an important contribution to this research.

make it as comfortable and easy as possible to use will mean that most user needs from all perspectives will be provided for.

Policing of behaviours was a common interaction, between individual users and other users creating noise, and between staff members and library users. In the case of individual users having to police other library users, individuals would often feel unhappy about having to carry out a task that should have fallen to staff responsibility rather than themselves. What could have been considered by outsiders to policing incidents as an empowering act, one of taking control of the environment and its inhabitants, was actually an unwanted but necessary act, disrupting study processes and inducing anxiety in the individual policing the behaviour. In the cases of staff policing behaviours, students were observed to usually be respectful of the policing, responding with conformity, although staff reported problems with trying to encourage appropriate behaviour with many 'home' students (as discussed in chapters 6 and 7). In all cases of policing, whether they be self or from staff, as Hunter (2006) suggests, all parties need to be aware of what counts as appropriate use. Awareness needs to be developed from a consistent, clear understanding of what spaces serve what purpose and what expectations of behaviour staff and students can reasonably have. However, a combination of a lack of understanding of different user group needs, and (in some cases) the behaviour of some staff demonstrating an ignorance of library rules, suggests that there is no consistency in interpretations of library spaces. This may partly be connected to perceptions of library space inhabitants (both staff and students' perceptions), but may also, as below, be connected to confusion stemming from space design.

What impact does design have on use and perceptions of use?

- **When students use academic library spaces, does the design of the space help or hinder their chosen use?**

In spaces that have overt purposes, communicating via furniture and/or explicit rules, use mirrors that design intention. This happens most commonly within silent spaces, as the rules are clear (no talking), and the design of the space usually incorporates furniture that discourages discussion between users via desks with separators attached. Silent spaces do not incorporate larger tables that could encourage collaboration. Depending on individual preferences, silent space is highly supportive of those people using it, and given that they are usually used as intended, can be considered helpful. Not all students can study successfully in total silence, and in cases where there is no silent rule but the space incorporates the use of furniture designed for individual use, the space also helps generate a study atmosphere where discussion/volume is discouraged

but allowed. Again, not all personal preferences will fit with this environment, but where they do, they are successful. Individuals are empowered in their capacity to study, although this can be easily disrupted by the behaviours of other users (see below regarding perceptions of appropriate use). Users who find the library space essential to their study needs, such as those from certain socio-economic backgrounds with limited access to space and technology at home, use these kinds of spaces more often: they have a need for quiet and focussed study that cannot be met outside of the library space. For these students, the library is essential and they feel it contributes to their academic success (see chapters 5 and 6). This finding mirrors that of Delcore et al (2009), who demonstrated commuter students and those of particular socio-economic backgrounds and situations needed a quiet, study focussed environment on campus to successfully study (naturally the demographics and social background of my research participants differed to those of Delcore et al, but the need for quiet study space was still prevalent).

Where design influence begins to fall short is in flexible, multipurpose areas. These spaces communicate multiple messages, leading to conflicting uses. Providing furniture for many different types of use in close proximity, combining facilities for individual and group collaboration, or placing areas in close contact to conflicting purpose areas (such as silent spaces next to group study areas) will create conflicting use, which leads to empowerment of the dominant users. Groups will (as detailed above) create ownership of a space, which can be to the detriment of others: those who suffer will most likely be individual users who, again according to personal preference, may study more successfully with noise and purposely place themselves within that environment, but may also find themselves excluded from a space because the group use escalates beyond the individual's tolerance or comfort levels. The individual's capacity to study is reduced, passing power to the group(s) in the space. For those groups who have limited access to technology and space outside of libraries, the nature of these spaces will create further difficulties for them to access the resources they need. What is clear is that there is a need for a variety of different types of space in the library (as demonstrated by the ERIAL project (Duke & Asher, 2012) and by McKay and Buchanan (2014)). However, the guidelines created by JISC (2006) specifically warned against creating a layout that placed conflicting intended use in close proximity, and against designs that communicated confusing messages about what use and purpose was intended and appropriate. In spite of these guidelines, the academic libraries I visited still struggled with developing spaces that met with and answered these issues, and were undertaking regular revisions to the space with the goal of addressing the problems that arose. As detailed above and below in the discussion of policing behaviours, libraries

need to ensure that their design is overt, does not conflict with neighbouring space, and that it is clear to all relevant parties (staff and students)

- **How do staff understand and interpret the way students use the spaces in the library, and do they try to modify student behaviour as a result of that interpretation of use?**
- **Do differing perceptions of appropriate use create inequalities between students, and between students and staff?**

Staff primarily interpret use according to the rules of a space, but secondarily use their own judgement to assess whether behaviours are appropriate. Policing actions may reflect the total environment rather than the self-contained space itself, such as in cases of conflicting purpose spaces in close proximity. Staff may intercept behaviours without any clear reason for doing so, interpreting noise levels as inappropriate based on their personal perceptions of what is too loud. However, the nature of the rules of a space can conflict with what is considered an appropriate behaviour: group study and noise levels is one particular area that may even generate conflicting opinions between staff as to what is appropriate. Staff will usually be present to monitor and intercept in what they perceive is inappropriate, or where they respond to reports from inhabitants of problems in specific areas. Where staff are not present, inhabitants must take policing into their own capacity, disrupting their own studying in the process, and taking on a power to police that they may not wish to have, and should not be expected to enact. In these cases, students can develop resentment towards what they may see as ineffective staff processes. Additionally, library user behaviour cannot always be easily predicted by the inhabitants of a shared space, and so if an individual finds themselves policing other inhabitants, they are potentially putting themselves and their personal safety, at risk should the individuals being policed respond negatively: the 'power' of self-policing is a false power, it is action necessitated by lack of support. Bedwell and Banks (2013) expressed concerns over disagreements on appropriate use of a library space between student inhabitants leading to aggression and conflict, and I raise my own concerns here in relation to self-policing in particular. Students should not be assumed to be happy to self-police just because they engage with the process: students should feel confident and satisfied that their concerns about other library users' behaviour can be referred to staff and dealt with in a timely manner with minimal disruption to their studying.

However, the relationship between staff and those being policed is, in most cases, respectful, and policing produces a compliant reaction. In cases where compliance does not manifest, the power of staff is subverted by library users: as described in chapter 7 this was seen most commonly amongst the racialized "problem" groups of British Asians

who subverted power structures both within the library space (to the detriment of some other users of that space), but also to the power dynamics between authority figures and group members. In cases of British Asian groups, and in group use overall, groups manipulated space irrespective of what it was designed for. The space intention was subverted, with groups adopting roles of power, which led to some staff interpreting the nature of this use as common across the majority of British Asians or “Muslims” and thus racializing the behaviours. At Institute 1, a larger group of British Asians demonstrated a community of study practices that was dynamic and supportive of members: these larger groups were not sufficiently catered for in library spaces, and their large number was racialized as a behaviour by staff. However, at Institute 2, the group size was mirrored by white students, as per interview data. Literature on large group use is limited to work by McKay and Buchanan (2014) who only conducted focussed observation on groups of up to 6 members. It is hard to know if groups of the number observed during this research manifest at other institutions, but the fact that they do exist at both institutes in this research suggests larger groups will appear using other libraries. Large groups needed the room to spread out into sub-groups without being split too far apart or having to work away from library resources, and this needs to be considered when designing library spaces.

8.1 Key findings and thesis contribution

Throughout the research, I have endeavoured to discover whether academic libraries provide a supportive and inclusive learning environment. I have identified several positions to base standpoints on. The young, able, undergraduate that features as the most common demographic of HE library use is not the only type of library user that should be catered for. There are many more groups of people who find HE library space essential to their academic progression who start their library use as a marginalised group, or progress into position that leaves them marginalised, representing several standpoints: the student with children at home; the student with limited resources; the student who has learning difficulties and needs library space to develop productive levels of concentration; the student who needs room for their large group of peer support. These are students who need library space to function well, to cater for their needs, as valid as the stereotypical undergraduate persona. For these diverse ranges of groups, the library needs to provide sufficient accommodation.

Institutes need to consider who is studying with them, and create or adapt facilities accordingly. Space design works best and has the most influence when it is clearly defined, and is used by students who have clear purposes and intentions for using the

space. In cases where space design fails, the reasons are twofold. Firstly, the facilities communicate a confusing message for such a prolonged period that the space continues to communicate confusing messages, whether the furniture is moved or removed or not changed at all. Secondly, the nature of library users is not cleanly, simply predictable: some individuals will use an academic library in ways that cannot be planned for, and may result in conflict with other library users and staff. Their purpose for using library space is unclear. These are not, as O'Kelly et al (2017) suggest, students engaging with space in ways that demonstrate space influencing behaviour. They demonstrate that the space has little to no influence over inhabitants who do not wish to use the space for the purposes a designer intended, particularly when that purpose is not clearly communicated.

8.2 Limitations of the research

The number of interview participants was small, and certain groups such as those of minority ethnic groups and students with disabilities are under-represented in the research. Additionally, the preference for individual use was well represented in participants, meaning those who used the library for group work had limited voice. Whether or not this response rate indicates a preference for individual use across the student body of the institutes is not clear, and I cannot make any firm conclusions on this matter. It is also highly likely that those volunteering for participation in the research had some level of personal agenda, be that positive or negative: a passion for the library; a need to communicate problems with library services; a wish to support a fellow student out in their research because of their own experiences of recruiting research participants. All of these reasons became clear as the interviews proceeded. However, volunteering for research participation often means some level of engagement with the research topic, which will often lead to participants representing specific interests. This does not make their participation and experiences less valid, even if the data itself may be limited.

As already discussed throughout the thesis, my own position of research placed me in a position of power. While I was a student at the time of collecting data, I was also the researcher, which holds some level of power and privilege over participants. My own able-bodied whiteness also means that my capacity to stand for students from ethnic minorities or students with disabilities (combined with their limited numbers in participation) and my efforts to represent these groups is limited.

8.3 Suggestions for future research

Future research should focus on finding ways of engaging more participants for interviewing, which was a particular difficulty in this research. It should also consider the possibility of participant observation with groups to gain a better understanding of how members interact. Group members were not well represented in this research and a focus on group use and the structures and power dynamics within groups would be a way of better understanding how larger groups and communities operate.

Additional research could also experiment with manipulating furniture in some spaces: while this research has demonstrated that modifying spaces has little to no impact, that data is anecdotal, and responses to a space when it is changed would be useful data to develop an understanding of what happens in these situations.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Library Spaces Research Information Sheet

Thank you for asking about the research being conducted in this library. I hope that this information sheet answers your questions, but feel free to contact me using the details below if you have any further questions or don't understand anything.

1) Research purpose

This research aims to find out how people visiting the library use its spaces, and whether use matches the purpose it was designed for. It also aims to find out how library users interact with staff, if at all. The data are intended to be used to aid library staff in creating a supportive environment for its users, and to develop a better understanding of how facilities are used, so in the long term anyone using the library will benefit from being observed. There are no disadvantages to groups or individuals: you will not be disrupted, you will not be identified, and your privacy will not be invaded. The data will contribute to a doctoral thesis.

2) How will data be collected?

Data are being collected via observations of various areas within the library. Observations will be conducted discreetly and without announcement. The observer will just sit, use facilities, and act as any other library user would, so there will be no disruption to anyone visiting during data collection.

3) What kind of data will be collected?

Observations will gather information on the nature of the use of a space e.g. studying, socialising, group work, and how these all use the facilities in different ways. Types of studying will be noted, as will collaboration between library users. Conversations will not be recorded, and no photographs will be taken.

4) Do I have to take part?

No. If you do not wish to be included in any observations, please contact the researcher, Bryony Ramsden at b.j.ramsden@hud.ac.uk

5) Do I have to do anything?

Just be yourself! Carry on using the library as you would normally. The research is not designed to judge how people use the library, but to learn how it is used, so just behave as you would on any other day.

6) What if something goes wrong?

If you wish to make a complaint about anything you experience throughout the project or following results dissemination, contact the researcher, Bryony Ramsden at b.j.ramsden@hud.ac.uk or her PhD supervisor, Christine Jarvis, at c.a.jarvis@hud.ac.uk

7) Will I be identifiable in the research?

No – all participants will be anonymised so that you cannot be identified in any reports or publications.

8) What will happen to the results of the research?

The results will contribute to a final PhD thesis, and may also be published in journal articles or discussed in conference presentations. You will not be identified in these publications.

Thank you for your time and participation in this research.

Appendix 2a: Interview information sheet (student)

Interview Participant Information Sheet

1) Research project title and purpose

This research aims to find out how people visiting an academic library use its spaces, and whether use matches the purpose it was designed for. It also aims to find out how library users interact with staff, if at all. The data will contribute to a doctoral thesis.

2) Why have I been asked to take part?

You are part of a sample across the university's undergraduate and postgraduate students studying at the participating institutions involved in the project.

3) Do I have to take part?

No. If you decide to take part and then change your mind, you can leave at any point. Any information you already contributed will be removed.

4) What do I have to do?

You will be asked to take the researcher on a tour of the library, showing where you study or avoid going, and answer a few questions about how you do or don't use library facilities. The tour and interview should take around 30 to 45 minutes. The tour is an optional part of the process, so if you don't think you would be comfortable providing a tour, please let me know. Please try to be as honest as possible. The research aims to find out why you choose to use or ignore various library provisions, and is not meant to be critical of your personal use in any way.

5) What are the possible disadvantages/benefits of taking part?

The only disadvantage should be sacrificing your time when you participate. The data are intended to be submitted to library management to aid library staff to develop a better understanding of how facilities are used, so in the long term anyone using the library may benefit.

6) What if something goes wrong?

If you wish to make a complaint about anything you experience throughout your involvement in the research or following results dissemination, contact the researcher, Bryony Ramsden (b.j.ramsden@hud.ac.uk) in the first instance, or her PhD supervisor Prof. Christine Jarvis (c.a.jarvis@hud.ac.uk).

7) Will my data be kept confidential?

Yes – any information you provide will be kept as confidential, and anonymised so that you cannot be identified in any reports or publications.

8) What will happen to the results of the research?

The results will be disseminated within the doctoral thesis, and may also be released in journal articles or conference presentations. You will not be identifiable via the results published.

9) Will I be recorded? How will the recording be used?

You will be recorded for the purposes of keeping track of the interview, as notes made by the researcher may not be sufficient data alone: the recording will be transcribed for analysis so that any comments you make can be used within appropriate context and will not misrepresent your library use. You will not be identified by name (you may be referred to as, for example, student A). The recordings will not be used outside of this process without your written consent, and will not be made available to anyone outside of the project.

10) Contacts for further information

If you require further information, email the project researcher, Bryony Ramsden (b.j.ramsden@hud.ac.uk).

Thank you for your time and participation in this research.

Appendix 2b: Interview information sheet (staff)

Interview Participant Information Sheet

1) Research project title and purpose

This research aims to find out how people visiting an academic library use its spaces, and whether use matches the purpose it was designed for. It also aims to find out how library users interact with staff, if at all. The data will contribute to a doctoral thesis.

2) Why have I been asked to take part?

You are part of a sample across the university's staff at the participating institutions involved in the project.

3) Do I have to take part?

No. If you decide to take part and then change your mind, you can leave at any point. Any information you already contributed will be removed.

4) What do I have to do?

You will be interviewed by the researcher: the interview will take anywhere between 30 and 60 minutes. Other than that, nothing!

5) What are the possible disadvantages/benefits of taking part?

The only disadvantage should be sacrificing your time when you participate. The data are intended to be submitted to library management to aid library staff to develop a better understanding of how facilities are used, so in the long term anyone using the library may benefit.

6) What if something goes wrong?

If you wish to make a complaint about anything you experience throughout your involvement in the research or following results dissemination, contact the researcher, Bryony Ramsden (b.j.ramsden@hud.ac.uk) in the first instance, or her PhD supervisor Prof. Christine Jarvis (c.a.jarvis@hud.ac.uk).

7) Will my data be kept confidential?

Yes – any information you provide will be kept as confidential, and anonymised so that you cannot be identified in any reports or publications.

8) What will happen to the results of the research?

The results will be disseminated within the doctoral thesis, and may also be released in journal articles or conference presentations. You will not be identifiable via the results published.

9) Will I be recorded? How will the recording be used?

You will be recorded for the purposes of keeping track of the interview, as notes made by the researcher may not be sufficient data alone: the recording will be transcribed for analysis so that any comments you make can be used within appropriate context and will not misrepresent you. You will not be identified by name (you may be referred to as, for example, student A). The recordings will not be used outside of this process without your written consent, and will not be made available to anyone outside of the project.

10) Contacts for further information

If you require further information, email the project researcher, Bryony Ramsden (b.j.ramsden@hud.ac.uk).

Thank you for your time and participation in this research.

Appendix 3: Consent form

PhD Research on Library Space Use Interview consent form

I have been fully informed of the nature and aims of this research and consent to taking part in it.

I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time without giving a reason, and a right to withdraw my data if I wish.

I understand that the interview will be recorded for transcription purposes.

I give permission to be quoted (by use of a pseudonym).

I understand that the recording will be kept in secure conditions.

I understand that my identity will be protected by the use of pseudonym in the research report and that no information that could lead to my being identified will be included in any report or publication resulting from this research.

I understand that someone other than the researcher may transcribe my interview and that data will be analysed by the researcher in a secure location.

I understand that I can request a copy of the interview transcript and that the researcher will check that I still consent to data being used from the transcript.

Name of participant:

Signature:

Date:

Name of researcher:

Signature:

Date:

Two copies of this consent form should be made: One copy to be retained by the participant and one copy to be retained by the researcher

Appendix 4a: Interview schedules (staff)

- Tell me about a typical day at work
 - Do you spend a lot of time on the floors?
- What kind of library use do you see?
 - Are people using the library to learn, to socialise?
 - What do you class as learning?
 - Do you think library use suits the design?
- How much interaction do you have with library users?
 - What kind of interaction?
 - Are you ever asked or do you try to help anyone using the library?
 - Do you try to enforce any rules?
- If you could change anything about the way the library spaces or policies/rules are designed, what would you do?

The following questions were used if the staff had been involved in specific incidents with student policing.

- Tell me about what you experienced recently regarding the inappropriate behaviour
 - Is this a unique incident? Not in terms of speaking to them but in terms of behaviour in the library
 - Why does this happen/do you have any thoughts on how incidents like this happen?
- Do you see much of library use on the floors?
- What do you class as learning?
- What do you think of social use?
 - Are learning and social use separate?
- Do you think library design and use are connected?
 - In the context of the inappropriate behaviour?
- What would you do to try and curb incidents like this in the future
 - Policy change? Design change?
 - Additional provisions elsewhere on campus?
- If you could change anything about the way the library spaces or policies/rules are designed, what would you do?

Appendix 4b: Interview/tour schedule (students)

Preamble: We will start this interview with you giving me a tour of the library, and then we will move to somewhere you feel comfortable in for the interview section. You can drop out at any time if you choose, just say, it won't impact on your eligibility for any prize/compensation. Just sign the consent form before we start – read through it and if there's anything you don't understand just ask me. The purpose of this research is to find out more about how people use university libraries, how people interact in them. The purpose isn't to judge how people use the library but to learn more from it and hopefully offer advice to improve the building or services as a result. If it's ok with you I'll record the whole process with my phone, and I might also make notes by hand. If you want to check the transcription once it is typed up, let me know.

Tour – I want you to take me on a tour of the library, show me places you visit or avoid, tell me about what you like to do in those spots, whether it's for social or study purposes.

Questions:

- Describe a typical visit to the library.
 - How much time do you spend in the library? How often do you visit?
 - What do you do in the library?
 - What about social use?
- What do you see other people doing when you visit the library?
 - How do you feel about what they do?
- Does the library and its spaces help you with what you want to achieve? How?
 - What do you class as learning?
 - [if not mentioned in tour] Tell me more about where you go in the library [with a prompt on why they pick spots or what works best for them]
- How do you feel about the library staff?
- If you were a member of library staff here, what would be the first things you would do to help students use the library?

Appendix 5: Interviewee profiles

Students: university one

Mahnoor

Mahnoor was a female mature student from South Asia, living in the UK to study for her doctorate. She had been provided a desk and computer in a shared office designed specifically for PGR students. When interviewed, she considered herself at that point a low user of the library as she had reached the point of transcribing interviews and was using her office to carry this task out. However, prior to transcribing she had regularly used the library to obtain books for her literature review and to access a computer before she had been provided office space.

Ewan

A male student studying for a doctorate, Ewan had already studied at the university for his undergraduate and Masters degrees, and had extensive experience of using the library. Ewan, like Mahnoor, has a shared office space, but where Mahnoor had her own computer, Ewan used his PGR office on a "first come, first served basis", meaning he could never guarantee access to a computer there if the office was busy. He used the library regularly prior to commencing his PhD, but since moving to doctoral research he has found his use of the library has dropped.

Robin

Robin was a male student undertaking a Masters degree, having already studied at undergraduate level at the University. He considered himself a low user, and had access to an office on campus, visiting the library primarily for textbooks. However, on speaking to him he referred to specific spaces/seats in the library that he had used in the past and considered returning to them again.

Halle

A mature part-time PhD student in full-time work, Halle was in her second year when I spoke to her. She classed herself as a low user of the library space, but with no office space of her own to use on campus, she was trialling using the library space for studying. She did talk about using the library for borrowing books.

Grace

Grace was a mature part-time undergraduate student, working at the University in a full-time role unrelated to her degree. She was a big fan of the library, with a strong

preference for working there whenever she could, always seeking out one particular seat on each visit. She didn't have a desk to study at at home, but did have a laptop that she shared use of with her partner, but considered it out of date.

Juhi

A female full-time undergraduate with a learning difficulty, Juhi was about to enter her final year of her course. Like Grace, Juhi loved the library, and considered herself a regular visitor using the study space and accessing resources, with a favourite spot in the library for studying. She spent most of her free time during the week in the library, treating her studying as a 9-5 job so that she could have her evenings free to spend with her family. Juhi was very passionate about the library and wanted to work there during her studies if possible so that she could help people.

Katherine

Katherine was a mature part-time undergraduate, and like Grace she was working full-time at the University while studying for her degree. She had children at home with no appropriate study space, so preferred to use the library, and considered herself a regular visitor: she would usually study there in the evenings after work, or at weekends. She mentioned that she had the option to study in her office at work, but avoided doing so.

Students: university 2

Gemma

Gemma was in the final year of her full-time undergraduate degree when we met, and spent most of her free time in the library. She used the library primarily for studying and resources, but also used it as a social meeting space to be with her friends, some of whom were on different degrees to her. Unfortunately she was the only student who responded to me at university 2.

Staff: university 1

Marlon

Marlon was a member of security staff in the library, and had been working there for a number of years, seeing it change considerably in his time there. Part of his role was to walk around the building, checking for anyone needing help and any people breaking the rules or causing disruption.

Anna

Anna spoke to me as a member of staff who had spent some time working on the study floors in previous roles, and still occasionally did so. She had also been at the library long enough to see it change dramatically during her working life. Additionally she had visited other libraries as part of her role, and had several useful points of comparison to the environment at university 1.

Muzaffar

When I met with Muzaffar, he had been working at the library for a short period and was recently involved with liaising with other staff regarding an incident involving several students misbehaving. He had liaised as part of his role, but the hope was that he could use his South Asian ethnicity to learn more about issues that seemed to primarily involve students of the same ethnic origin. However, his job meant he had experience of a range of student actions and behaviours.

Greg

Greg had been working at the library for some time, and had been involved in both overseeing changes to the library and campus environment and with dealing with difficult situations like the incidents Muzaffar had dealt with.

Claudia

Claudia had also worked at the library for a number of years, in a variety of roles, but had more recently been a student herself too. She was interviewed with respect to her perceptions of student behaviour and the problematic incidents, as well as the changing environment at the library.

University 2

Craig

Unfortunately I was only able to speak to one member of staff. However, he had an interesting perspective as he had also studied at the university prior to starting his career there. He was able to describe what his student life was like there, but also to discuss how working there had helped him understand and re-evaluate what he perceived as problems with the library as a student.

Appendix 6: Map of space observed in observation 7.1

