

**Student Residential Accommodation
and
Student Engagement:
a study of two cases in England**

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Declaration and word count

I, Zachery Daniel Spire, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

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Date

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Abstract

This thesis explores the relationship between student residential accommodation (SRA) and student engagement (SE) in England. My own experiences living and working as a student and professional in multiple higher education institutions (HEI) in the United States (US) and England inspired the pursuit of this work.

Three key questions emerged from engaging with existing literature and research on SRA and SE for this thesis. The three key questions framing this study were: what factors influence HEI provision of SRA, what is the relationship between SRA and SE, and, what does SE in and with SRA mean to students and staff? To address those three primary research questions, the following were my aims for fieldwork: to gather, synthesise and analyse key texts and institution policy documents related to provision of SRA; to provide a description of two institution provided SRA through the use of observations (including: field notes, photographs of the buildings under study, floor plans and internal design, amenities, students' rooms, student room layout and organization); to collect student and staff feedback on SE in and with SRA, and, to compare and contrast stated institution policy related to SRA with student and staff feedback on institution provided SRA. Reflecting on existing empirical research related to SRA and SE, this study was designed using a qualitative case study lens. The qualitative case study lens was underpinned by three data generation methods, including: observations, interviews and questionnaires. Triangulation of staff and student feedback across these data generation methods provided opportunities to compare and contrast staff and student feedback within and across the two case sites under study.

A number of key findings and contributions emerged from this study. First, the use of SE as a lens provided a novel way of framing and exploring SRA. The use of SE as a lens also illuminated a number of factors influencing staff and students' experiences in and with SRA. Second, the study of undergraduate and postgraduate domestic and international students contributed new data and feedback to the existing literature and research. Third, institutional policy and approach to provision of SRA framed staff and student expectations and engagement in and with SRA. Fourth, practice and practitioner approaches to

SRA provision were key to staff and student's experiences with and in SRA. Finally, the interface of SRA physical, social and personal space were key components of SE in and with the SRA studied for this research. Further research may explore the relationship between SRA and SE across diverse institutional, national and international HE contexts.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background to this study

This thesis was a study of the relationship between student residential accommodation (SRA) and student engagement (SE). The primary research questions framing this thesis reflect my academic and professional interests, experiences and curiosity with SRA, and, the influence of SRA on students' experiences and engagement in and with higher education (HE).

In this Chapter, I discuss my professional and academic experience with and in SRA and propose my research questions. I define SRA and SE for this research, provide the rationale for this research and propose how I will explore SRA and SE in this thesis. After, I raise a number of ethical considerations for this research and outline the remaining Chapters for this thesis. A summary concludes this Chapter.

1.1.1 My experiences of student residential accommodation

The basis for this thesis rests partly in my experiences as a student and professional in higher education institution (HEI) provided SRA. My experiences as a professional and student resident in a number of HEI provided SRA contexts were serendipitous. Serendipitous in that I did not know before I entered my undergraduate and postgraduate institutions that I would meet the peers and professionals who would influence and inspire my interest in SRA, SE and HE.

Student experiences

As a student, my interest in SRA and SE arose first from my experiences as an undergraduate student at the University of California-Los Angeles (UCLA) in the United States (US). As an undergraduate I studied psychology and organisational studies. After taking a number of courses on human motivation and higher education I grew more interested in how I

and other students made meaning and gave purpose to our experiences in and with HE.

This interest in the relationship between 'experience' and 'meaning making' emerged again during my master's program. While prior theory and research I encountered was predominantly quantitative and survey based (Astin, 1984, 1993; Blimling, 1988, 1989), I took a primarily qualitative approach to researching students' lived experiences of SRA. Students' lived experiences of SRA became the focus of my master's thesis, *Students' personal development in residence models*, which highlighted factors students' identified as influencing their living and learning with and in SRA. My findings suggested building maintenance, staff-student relationships and residents' peer-relationships were key to students' experiences in and with HEI provided SRA (and HE). My experiences as a student in HEI provided SRA nurtured my interest in SRA, SE and students' experiences in HE.

Professional experiences

In addition to my experiences as a student, my professional experience in SRA spanned universities in the US and England. My work in SRA began as an undergraduate at UCLA. While living on campus (2001-2006) I held a variety of semi-professional and administrative staff positions in the Residence Life and Housing-Hospitality departments. My work focused on student representation and student programming in multiple types of SRA. Moving forward a few years I joined the department of Residential Education at Stanford University (2009-2010). At Stanford I studied and worked on a set of research-based projects, including: resident assistant feedback on summer and in-service training, coding and analysis of historical documents from the department and a study on peer programming schemes in cooperative and fraternity housing.¹ Later, I worked on the team responsible for student resident assistant summer

1. North American cooperative student housing refers to a type of student housing where students share responsibilities for upkeep of the housing facility. Here, fraternity housing refers to the 'house' where some fraternity members reside and socialise as part of their membership.

training and wrote the manual for incoming resident assistants (2010). Following my time at Stanford I served as a resident minister at Santa Clara University (2010-2011). As a resident minister I served as a live-in professional staff member and provided students with academic and personal [pastoral] support and produced weekly programming for students in the largest all first-year residence hall on campus. My professional positions and experiences regularly placed me at the intersection of theory and practice in SRA and SE.

Through my various academic and professional experiences I learned the importance of context. Diverse contexts (e.g. HEI, departments) may hold different historical traditions, views, ideas, beliefs and interests related to SRA and SE. The meaning and purpose individuals and groups (i.e. students, staff, HEI, policymakers) have and give to SRA and SE may also reflect contextually contingent conditions within and across HEI and HE more generally. To further explore and understand SRA and SE, I looked for an opportunity to study SRA and SE in a new context. After applying to PhD programs throughout the US and England I was offered the opportunity to research SRA and SE at the UCL Institute of Education (UCL IOE). I moved to London in September 2013 and began my research. Alongside my studies, I served as Vice-President of the UCL IOE Halls of Residence Association during my first-year and Postgraduate Student Representative for my department. During my second year I served as the Part-time President of Education & Student Experience for the IOE Students Union (2014-2015). Finally, during my fourth and fifth year I worked as a vice-warden (2016-2018) for UCL student accommodation. Together, my professional and academic experiences at UCLA, Stanford, Santa Clara University and the UCL IOE have shaped and influenced my interest and passion for SRA and SE, past and present. It was my academic and professional experiences of SRA that drew me to explore some key questions related to SE in and with SRA.

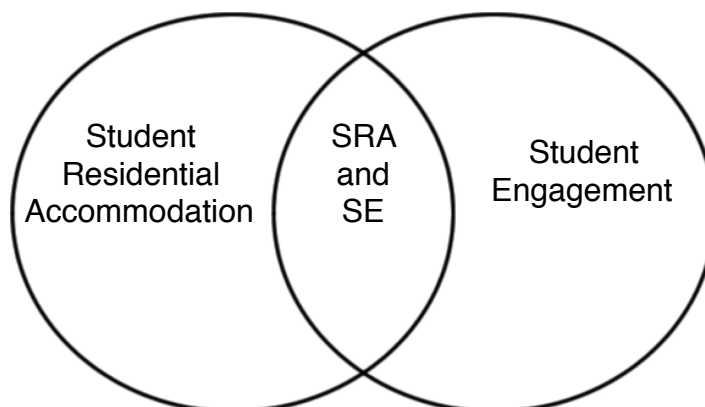
Some key questions

Some key questions and issues arose and persisted across my experiences as a student and professional, including: why do higher education institutions provide SRA? How does higher education policy influence institutional provision of SRA? How is SE in and with SRA defined? How does SRA influence students' experience in higher education? How do students participate in and with HEI provided SRA? How has the form, functions and stated purpose of institution provided SRA evolved across history? And how do students and institutions approach SE in and with institution provided SRA? These questions were the background to my engagement with existing literature and research on SRA and SE in England.

1.1.2 Engaging with the literature

Through my professional and academic experiences in and with SRA, I have found that while the context within which I work and study may change, similar questions regarding SRA persisted. In engaging with existing literature and research, I was interested in whether, and how, others had explored and examined SRA. In addition, I was curious how I might interface the study of SRA with SE. Below, Figure 1 is the area of literature in which my study is located.

Figure 1: The area of literature in which my study is located



SRA= student residential accommodation, SE= student engagement

Figure 1 shows the literature that I accessed to inform the two literature reviews comprising Chapter 2 (A historical review of SRA in England) and Chapter 3 (Existing approaches to SRA and SE) for this thesis. My research was set at the interface of SRA and SE. The choice to situate myself at the interface of SRA and SE reflects my interest in policy, practice and staff/student experiences related to SRA. I am also interested in using SE as a theoretical lens to understand staff and students' experiences in and with SRA, and the relationship of HEI provided SRA to HE more generally. Although I am also interested in students' decision making related to housing, public policy related to public and private funding for SRA, and in students' engagement and experience of higher education institutions broadly, the intersection in the middle shows where my main research questions are situated: the interface of student residential accommodation and student engagement.

SRA and SE in England

In this thesis, my research focused on SRA and SE in the context of England. I conducted a literature review on SRA and SE in September 2013 and again in June 2015 and May 2017. These reviews revealed the breadth and depth of questions a variety of disciplines have brought to the study of SRA. Contributions to research on SRA in England have also been made from other research areas, including: history (see Scherer, 1969; Silver & Silver, 1997), architecture (see Beloff, 1968; Muthesius, 2000), education (see Blimling, 2015; Brothers & Hatch, 1971; Rudd, 1980; Rugg et al., 2000; Moss & Richter, 2010; Richter & Walker (2008); Sanderson, 1974; Stone, 1974; Silver, 2004), public policy (see Morgan & McDowell, 1979) and psychology (see Thomas, 2012). For example, Tight (2011) highlighted some of the key drivers and debates in SRA research in England, including the influence of: changes in architectural and planning conventions, the influence of religion on HE and HEI development, changes to the legal age of majority, changing attitudes towards sexual activity amongst young people, the role of HE in the development of students in a broad sense, funding changes for students and HEIs and the role of HEIs at a local, regional, national and global level. Tight (ibid.)

noted that HEI provided SRA was a microcosm of HEI in society and reflected shifts and changes in broader social attitudes towards the forms, functions and purpose of HEI provided SRA.

Like SRA, study of SE in England has been dynamic. A number of authors have highlighted SE in light of policy (Coates, 2005, 2007; Krause & Coates, 2008) students participation and representation (Little, Locke, Scesa & Williams, 2009), students' sense of belonging (Thomas, 2012), and teaching and learning in formal and informal academic environments (Kahn, 2014). For instance, Trowler (2010) highlighted the role of relationships amongst students, staff and HEI in conceptualising SE research in England. For Trowler (2010), the influence of relationships on individual and organisational behaviour remains a core concern of students, HEI, policymakers and non-governmental organisations concerned with HE in England.

These examples of existing research highlight the diverse approaches to SRA research in England. One example of how research into SRA continues to develop comes from the work of Moss and Richter (2010), who studied how students' perceptions and behaviours adapted to communal life in SRA. The authors examined the influence of SRA on what the authors described as 'young people's transitions through space and time,' located in the context of HEI provided SRA.

Alongside further study of SRA is a growing body of research on SE. This reflects a number of HE and HEI policy and monitoring measures aimed at examining and understanding students' experience of HE in England. For example, a second pilot study of the UK Engagement Survey (UKES) was completed in 2014. Subsequently, a full study was completed in years 2015 and 2016 (Neves, 2017). While the participating institutions were limited and student responses a fraction of the total student population in English HE and FE, both the number of institutions and student responses were rising. These examples illustrate how research on SRA and SE in England continues to be defined and developed in scale and scope.

While research on SRA and what may be broadly defined as SE in England continues to develop in scale and scope, some key tensions, issues, drivers and debates have emerged from existing literature and research. Key issues arising from prior research on SRA and SE included: students' access, participation, recruitment, retention and representation. Moreover, policy, funding and auditing regimes, the socialisation of students, students' academic and personal development, the marketisation of higher education and SRA, and the relationship between SRA and local housing environments have also emerged as key considerations in relation to HE and HEI provided SRA.

This research was proposed as a primarily qualitative approach to SRA and SE at a local and individual level, similar to that proposed by Kahn (2014) and Solomonides (2013). By studying the influence of SRA on SE this research was aimed at generating evidence to inform policy and practice related to HEI provision of SRA and contribute to theoretical understanding of SRA. In order to explore and understand SRA and SE I propose the following research questions.

1.2 Research questions and the aims of my fieldwork

The review of literature at the interface of SRA and SE led me to identify the following research questions:

- What factors influence higher education institutions' provision of student residential accommodation?
- What is the relationship between student residential accommodation and student engagement?
- What does student engagement in and with student residential accommodation mean to students and staff?

To address those research questions my fieldwork aims are:

- to gather, synthesise and analyse key texts and institution policy documents related to provision of student residential accommodation

- to provide a description of two institution provided student residential accommodation cases through the use of observations, including: field notes, photographs of the buildings under study, amenities, student room layout and organization
- to collect student and staff feedback on student engagement in and with student residential accommodation
- to compare and contrast stated institution policy related to student residential accommodation with student and staff feedback on institution provided student residential accommodation.

Following the aims for my fieldwork are the definitions of key terms for this research.

1.2.1 Definitions

Definitions of SRA and SE have been diverse. Several definitions for SRA and SE were present in the literature reviewed for this thesis. Existing definitions include SRA as a type of housing built for the explicit and exclusive purpose of housing students on a course in higher education (Blimling, 2015), as part of a students' housing 'pathway' (Clapham, 2005), related to the discourses surrounding higher education and students (Silver, 2006) and a mechanism for marketing, recruitment and retention of students to higher education (Thomsen, 2008). Similarly, SE has been defined as: resources invested by students and institutions to optimise students' experience of higher education (Astin, 1984; Trowler, 2010), enhance the reputation of institutions (Trowler, 2010), and as the individual effort students invest in their formal and informal learning and related influence of institutional policies and practices on framing students' effort (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). The following definitions for SRA and SE were adopted from existing literature for this research.

- Student residential accommodation for this research is defined as a type of student residence provided and administered by a higher education institution or institutional partner provider where students reside for a

period of time while on a course in a higher education institution (Blimling, 2015: 2).

- Student engagement for this research is defined as the interaction between the time, effort, and other relevant resource invested by both students and their institutions intended to optimise the student experience and enhance the learning outcomes and development of students and the performance, and reputation of the institution (Trowler, 2010: 3).

1.3 Rationale for this study

The rationale for this research is based on three potential contributions to the field of HE related to SRA. First, I aim to produce evidence through which to contribute to SRA practice and practitioners whose work relates to SRA. Second, I aim to generate new data on the lived experiences of undergraduate and postgraduate students residing in student residential accommodation as well as staff members working in student residential accommodation. In particular, postgraduate and international students who are mostly silent in the existing research I have encountered for this thesis. Third, through this research I aimed to contribute to existing theory on SRA provision, in this case, provided by HEI and the influence of SRA on SE in and with HE.

1.3.1 Contributions to policy and practice

This research focused on SE in and with SRA in England. After reviewing the literature on SRA across the United Kingdom (UK), it became evident that the development of HE, HEI and SRA throughout the UK followed divergent pathways. As Perkin (2007) explained, the emergence and diversification of the Scottish universities from the universities of England, Ireland and Wales reflected devolved and localised differences in policy, approaches to government funding, student access and participation. These drivers influenced the forms, functions and purpose of universities (and by extension SRA) within each of these countries. Given the diverse

approaches and traditions in HE and HEI across these national contexts, this research was scoped to universities in England.

Focusing on English universities

Part of the rationale for this research was a gap in approaches to HEI policy and practice related to SRA. Policy has created and sustained funding and auditing regimes that may be influencing provision of SRA in English HEI (Sanderson, 1974). Across history, funding bodies such as the University Grants Committee (UGC), University Funding Council (UFC), the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), and monitoring/auditing bodies such as the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and representative bodies such as Universities UK (UUK), have outlined a desire for further evidence-based research into students' experience and engagement with and in HEI (QAA, 2014). Demand for further research into students' experience and engagement in HEI is evidenced by the United Kingdom Engagement Survey (UKES), in which England is a primary participant. In addition, understanding the relationship between SRA and SE may contribute to awareness of whether, and how, policy bodies and non-governmental organisations (NGO) (i.e. QAA, UUK) may be influencing HEI activities (such as provision of SRA).

Policy, practice and practitioners at an institutional level

At the institutional level, this research may contribute to policy and practice related to the provision of SRA through a focus on SE. SE has become a central concern of policy, funding and monitoring organisations throughout English HE (Thomas, 2013; 2017). The focus of policy, funding and monitoring organisations has had a cascading influence on HEI concerns related to SE, including, SE in and with SRA. While 'how,' 'why' and with 'what' SE may be measured, assessed and evaluated remains contested and dynamic, SE continues to be a key performance indicator for HEI, particularly with regard to the QAA UK Code of Practice (QAA, 2014). Additionally, this research focuses on SRA at a 'local' level. Focusing on SRA at a local level emphasises the influence of staff and students'

attitudes, perceptions and experiences in and with SRA. Staff and students' experiences in and with SRA may provide insight that may inform HEI policy and practice related to the provision of SRA.

Policy and practice in relation to physical, social and personal space

The link between SE and physical, social and personal space has been alluded to, but in the context of SRA rarely, if ever, addressed directly. Themes of physical, social and personal 'space' form a key component of the rationale for the present research into SE in and with SRA. Such a socio-spatial approach reflects a belief in the ecological and multidimensional nature of SE in and with SRA (Barnett, 2011; Solomonides, 2013). This ecological and multidimensional approach may help inform current understanding and operation of SRA. For example, exploring and understanding the influence of physical, social and personal 'space' on SE in and with SRA may inform how HEI draft policy related to 'who' and 'how' students may access and participate in HEI provided SRA. Additionally, how SRA environments may influence (or not) the social communities and personal development of student residents may also emerge from an exploration of these themes. This research may also highlight the influence of different built environment configurations (i.e. en-suite style, shared washrooms, shared kitchens) student residence models on students' perceptions and experiences of SRA. This research aimed to contribute to a greater awareness of 'how' and 'why' policy filters 'who' may participate in HEI provided SRA, and the 'how' policy and practice influence SE in and with SRA.

1.3.2 Contributing to existing empirical research on SRA

This research was also aimed at generating new data and findings from groups who have been historically present (i.e. undergraduates, first-year students) and others who have been largely absent (i.e. postgraduate, international students) in the existing literature and research on SRA in English HE reviewed for this thesis.

Groups who have been quiet in the existing literature reviewed include postgraduate and international students. Moss and Richter (2010) suggested further study into SRA could benefit from more inclusive work on such unstudied or understudied groups. The authors identified a number of additional considerations and factors for potential study, including: socioeconomic status, ethnic heritage, gender, age and race. While Richter and Walker (2007) and Moss and Richter (2010) suggested further study might benefit from the inclusion of more diverse populations and greater consideration of the above-mentioned factors, they noted that groups, such as postgraduate and international students, could be difficult to locate and examine. This may be reflected in how much of the prior SRA literature has focused on undergraduate, largely female samples from existing HEI provided SRA. With a growing international student population in English universities (Universities UK, 2014), including postgraduate students, there is ample space within the field to explore postgraduate and international student SE in and with SRA.

As such, this research aims to contribute new data in two ways. First, through study of undergraduate students this research would contribute a focus within existing literature and research in England. Second, by contributing study of postgraduate and international students this thesis responds to a lack of study of these groups within the existing literature and research on SRA. In addition to policy, practice and new data, this thesis may also contribute to theory related to SRA.

1.3.3 Contributing to theory

To contribute to existing theory, this research proposed an approach to SRA using an ecological/multidimensional/relational SE lens. The proposed SE lens reflects a review of existing literature and prior researcher experiences as a student and professional in SRA across four HEI. Existing theory on SRA has focused on SRA as: transitional housing (see Calvert, 2010; Morgan & McDowell, 1979; Moss & Richter, 2010; Richter & Walker, 2007), a student service (see Blimling, 2015; Silver, 2004; Tight, 2011) a mechanism for student recruitment and retention by

HEI (see Tapper & Palfreyman, 2011; Thomas, 2012), and a teaching and learning space contributing to students' social and personal development (see Astin, Astin and Lindholm, 2011). While SRA and SE have been studied independently, this research aims to use SE as a lens in order to contribute to existing theory of SRA in HE.

The contribution of this research to the theory of SRA in higher education, focuses on SE in and with SRA. Factors related to physical, social and personal 'space' will be highlighted. Focus on physical, social and personal space factors reflects the ecological (Barnett, 2007, 2011) and multidimensional (Solomonides, 2013) approach to SE and SRA as noted above. Exploring staff and students' perceptions and experiences with and in SRA physical, social and personal space is key to understanding SE in and with SRA for this thesis. Chapter three focuses on the theoretical lens for this thesis and Chapter four, the methodological approach for this thesis, will further develop these key concepts in relation to SE for this thesis.

Students' engagement in and with SRA will be explored. This approach aims to contribute to theoretical and operational understanding of the influence of SRA on SE and students' experiences of HE more broadly.

1.4 Chapter outlines

Chapter 1 provided the background and rationale for my study and the context of the work. Key concepts are defined alongside the research questions and aims of fieldwork. An overview of the theoretical lens and an introduction to the research design for this thesis is also proposed.

Chapter 2 is a literature review on the history of student residential accommodation in England drawing on themes of institutional type, policy and practice. The emergence and complexity of SRA in England is explored in depth within this Chapter. The in-depth exploration of SRA in England provides grounding for more recent study of SRA, including the interface of SRA and SE for this thesis.

Chapter 3 presents and develops the theoretical lens (SE) for this thesis. A review of existing literature and research related to SE in and with SRA is presented. After, the SE lens for this thesis is defined and further developed.

Chapter 4 develops the methodology chosen for this research and includes a discussion of the epistemological basis, ontological basis, existing empirical research, ethical issues, methods of data generation and analysis, and mode of disseminating data and findings.

Chapter 5 presents data and feedback generated from an undergraduate hall of residence provided by a post-1992 university near the south coast of England, case study site (I) for this research.

Chapter 6 presents the data and feedback generated from a postgraduate hall of residence provided by a pre-1992 university in London England, case study site (II) for this research.

Chapter 7 is a discussion Chapter where cross-case feedback from staff and students is compared and contrasted in relation to some of the existing literature and research on SRA.

Chapter 8 presents conclusions based on findings in relation to the three primary research questions and related aims for fieldwork. Possibilities for further research related to this thesis are also proposed.

1.5 Chapter summary

In Chapter 1 I have introduced the research field for this study. I outlined my interest and academic experience with SRA and introduced my research questions and the aims for my fieldwork. I defined what SRA and SE is for this research, presented the rationale for this thesis and introduced my theoretical lens (SE). I also outlined how I will study SE in

and with SRA including a reflection on some of the ethical implications of undertaking this research. Following, Chapter 2 is a literature review on the history of student residential accommodation in England.

Chapter 2: A historical review of student residential accommodation in England

Chapter 2 is a literature review tracing the emergence and development of SRA in England across history.

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this literature review is to locate my thesis in the existing literature and research on SRA in England. I have synthesised and analysed key texts related to SRA I encountered during three database searches (October 2013, June 2015 and May 2017). First, I explore the emergence and development of SRA in relation to institutional groups. Second, I explore the influence of policy on SRA. Third, I explore the issue of practice related to SRA. The texts I encountered have been narrowed by theme, concept focus and saturation, and relevance to the current research. I narrowed the available texts to work published between 1960-2017. The construction of this literature review was also informed by my experiences and understanding of SRA from past and present study and work in departments of residence life, residential education and student accommodation between 2002 and 2017. This literature review highlights how issues and themes related to institutions, policy and practice have influenced the forms, functions and stated purpose of SRA in England across history.

2.2 Institutions and student residential accommodation

This section traces the development of SRA in relation to HEI in England across history. Recalling, SRA for this research was defined as a type of student residence provided and administered by a higher education institution or institutional partner provider where students reside for a period of time while on a course in a higher education institution (Blimling, 2015). Below, institutions have been grouped into categories taken from existing literature and research on SRA in England. Tracing the emergence and development of HEI provided

SRA in England across history focuses on factors influencing institutional provision of SRA, the focus of question one for this thesis.

2.2.1 Medieval institutions: Oxford, Cambridge and the collegiate ideal in English higher education

Student residences and residence based higher education in England began with the medieval universities, Oxford and Cambridge. From primitive halls of residence to institutions formed of federated colleges; Oxford, Cambridge and the influence of their collegiate ideal within English HE is explored below.

Emergence of HEI provided student residences in England: Oxford, Cambridge and the collegiate ideal

The historical roots of residence based HE in England date back to the medieval institutions, Oxford and Cambridge. Higher education in England began at Oxford, estimated to have been founded c. 1167 (Stone, 1974: 1). Cambridge followed Oxford c. 1209, composed of a number of ex-Oxford students and staff (Stone, *ibid.*). As Silver (2004) noted, Oxford and Cambridge did not provide SRA directly to students when they were founded. Instead, “the earliest efforts to provide habitation for students [at] Oxford and Cambridge...were with the students themselves” as lodgers (Silver, 2004: 124). Early on in their development, Oxford and Cambridge lacked the physical estate to provide residences. As Stone (*op cit.*) noted, often Oxbridge borrowed from local townspeople, sharing physical spaces such as halls and teaching in whatever community spaces were available. As such, early in the development of Oxbridge students’ residential life was left to the students themselves.

In exploring why accommodation was left to students, Brothers and Hatch (1971) explained, “[Oxbridge] students were men and boys, aged fifteen or sixteen, even younger. They looked after themselves...” (29). However, as “...student numbers grew rapidly—

and soon nearly equalled the number of townspeople” tensions between ‘town’ and ‘gown’ began to put pressure on Oxbridge to respond (Brothers and Hatch, 1971: 29). As student numbers rose, tensions between townspeople and students became acute. These acute tensions between townspeople and students prompted Oxford (and Cambridge) to consider “where and how to accommodate students” (Thomsen, 2008: 35). As the institution acted *in loco parentis* (in lieu of parents) institution provided student residences became a response to control, contain and monitor students’ behaviours outside the formal academic environment. Oxford masters improvised provision of primitive halls of residence. Subsequently, dons and tutors would oversee the development of Oxbridge halls of residence and colleges (Stone, op cit.). Thus, SRA provided a means of containing and monitoring students’ activities. While Oxbridge did not begin with SRA as part of the institutional estate, SRA provision would become a focal point for the institution, institutional staff and student relationships.

Staff and student relationships

Institution provision of SRA at Oxbridge became a central aspect of staff and student relationships within the institutions. Stone (op cit.) noted that the student and staff populations of Oxford (and Cambridge) (i.e. clergy and boys) allowed institution provision of SRA to support a monastic life, cultivating staff and student relationships outside the formal academic environments. For Oxford and Cambridge, rather than attempt to intervene and mediate between students and townspeople, the institutions took a more direct route, acting as a direct provider of residences to students. This would provide both students and students’ parents with assurances that student lodging would be under the control and supervision of the institutions.

Staff-student relationships were also key to the socialisation of students within the institutions. Morgan and McDowell (1979) noted that Oxbridge tutors often positioned the provision of student residences at Oxford and Cambridge as part of the *socialisation* of students into

'gentlemen'. Similarly, Stone (op cit.) proposed that the Oxford dons and Cambridge tutors saw it as their right and duty to develop the young men who came into their institutions with a set of behaviours and ideas that they believed led to control within a person, and to control outside a person. This desire to inform and influence students' socialisation through a set of institutionally defined disciplines, habits and ideals within students' residential environment reflected what might be called a holistic approach to higher education, in this instance, as far back as some of the earliest years of Oxford and Cambridge (Newman, 1992/1833).

Institution provision of student residences held a number of philosophical and pragmatic possibilities for institution, staff and students alike. Students travelling from a distance needed somewhere to reside, a place to 'sleep and eat'. While early on in the development of Oxbridge this had largely been left to the broader community, as much of the institutional estate had been, institution provided SRA afforded students a needed residence and institution a means of income generation (Stone, op cit.). Developing a residential life for students also allowed for staff-student relationships to move beyond the formal learning environments. Taking a more holistic, and in this instance monastic approach, institution provided student residences facilitated members of the Oxbridge teaching community to further influence students' behaviour by blurring the line between students' 'formal' academic and 'informal' residential life.

Influence of social, political and cultural conditions

Broader social, political and cultural conditions also influenced Oxbridge provision of student residences. Provision of student residences by Oxford and Cambridge and the cascading influence on staff-student relationships also reflected a complex set of social, political, economic and cultural conditions and relations. For example, Duke (1992) noted that both Oxford and Cambridge were founded with the aim of educating young men for the clergy and public service. The

rules and regulations that governed student recruitment, access and participation for Oxbridge may have also influenced the purpose and use of SRA for the institutions. For example, religious tests governed access and participation into Oxbridge for some time (students had to identify as supportive of the Church of England) (Sanderson, 1975). As such, becoming and being a student of Oxbridge meant pledging one's allegiance to specific church doctrine that informed who could access an Oxbridge higher education. Enjoining with the institution meant aligning with the religious practices that underpinned the institutional aims, rhythms and routines. SRA acted as a means of facilitating some such practices, connecting students' learning to their broader life. In educating for the whole person, Oxbridge was educating young men to influence and govern public life beyond the institutions.

Oxbridge were institutions in society. As noted above, discussing Oxbridge provision of SRA cannot be abstracted from broader social, political and cultural conditions governing the form, functions and stated purpose of the institutions. Primitive halls of residence would soon give way to colleges. Oxbridge colleges formed the collegiate ideal of HE in England.

The collegiate ideal

The physical and social nature of student residences, as formulated by the institution first in primitive halls of residence and subsequent colleges, is critical to awareness of how, why and with what SRA influenced students' engagement with Oxford and Cambridge. Stone (op cit.) argued the 'containment model' of SRA, emerging from Oxford and Cambridge, defined the ideal of residence based higher education in England. A view shared by Shattock (1996) who cited the Oxbridge colleges as the 'gold standard' of residence-based higher education in England. However, while Oxford and Cambridge are credited for the emergence of residence-based higher education in England, the iconic college system of Oxbridge remained largely at the level of the two institutions. Moreover, across history a number of authors have noted

the divergence and complexity within the colleges of Oxbridge, and the influence of differential resources (economic, social, political) on the development of colleges within each institution (Duke, 1992; Tapper and Palfreyman, 2010). As such, the operation and influence of colleges of Oxford and Cambridge are often treated and explained individually, as part of a federated college system rather than as forming a universal, or 'university'. It has been argued that this stratification of colleges within Oxbridge has itself influenced student recruitment, access, participation and retention across history (Tapper and Salter, 1992). Therefore, rather than a singularity, the Oxbridge collegiate ideal itself operates as a porous construct, open to being debated however influential it has been on the evolution of residence based HE in England (and beyond).

While HEI provided SRA emerged in medieval Oxbridge, subsequent to Oxbridge, other HEI, universities and non-universities alike, produced alternative types of SRA provisions. Several hundred years after the founding of Oxford, University College London, King's College London and the University of London presented alternative locations and possibilities for higher education and SRA in England. A review of the emergence of SRA in these institutions is presented next.

2.2.2 University College London, King's College London and the University of London: SRA emerging from the shadows of Oxbridge

A gap of several hundred years separated the medieval universities and the emergence of additional HEI in the form of London institutions, including: University College London (UCL), King's College (KCL) and the University of London (UL). With several hundred years, and an urban environmental setting, institution provided SRA for UCL, KCL and UL proved to be a means of differentiating from the Oxbridge collegiate ideal while replicating residence based HE in England.

Alternatives to Oxbridge and the collegiate ideal

In explaining the context within which UCL and KCL emerged, Brothers and Hatch (1971) proposed:

“The new colleges and subsequent universities of the nineteenth century came into being because of the failure of the ancient universities to meet existing needs. They differed radically from Oxford and Cambridge in that it was their explicit intention to enable people who were hitherto excluded from the universities by reasons of religion, class, or finance, to obtain training and qualifications” (40).

In this light, UCL, KCL and the UL constituent institutions were established as alternatives to strict faith, economic and class based requirements influencing access to Oxbridge. These institutions addressed a gap in supply and demand for higher education in England. However, the forms, functions and purpose of SRA provided by UCL, KCL and the UL adapted and replicated a residence based HE approach to the environment of London.

University College London

UCL was founded in 1828 in London (Beloff, 1970: 17). As Shattock (1996) noted, London in 1828 was a different physical environment to Oxfordshire in the 12th century. Where Oxford and Cambridge had ‘space’ in the form of land resources, UCL had to contend with layers of existing buildings and policies governing the building of the university estate site. In addition to the contrast in physical environment, UCL founders aimed towards a denominational form of higher education, and by extension, provision of student residences and residential life.

With respect to student residences, the aim of UCL founders towards non-denominational higher education also materialised in SRA. As with Oxbridge, the introduction of denominational student houses and halls

of residence at UCL allowed for the institution to integrate and translate its vision and mission for students' learning into its student residence estate (Brothers and Hatch, 1971). Brothers and Hatch (ibid.) explained:

“At University College [London] it had been envisaged from the start that there should be...halls of residence near the college. A residence hall for the college was opened in 1848...the purpose was to provide accommodation and the social advantages of college residence” (Brothers and Hatch, 1971: 40-41).

Non-denominational halls of residence were one example of how both the physical location encapsulating UCL at the time (nineteenth century London) and the attitude towards differentiation from Oxbridge materialised in the provision of student residences. The city of London did not lend itself to the production of colleges. Instead, UCL set out to provide student residences, amended to the physical location of the institution and founders' vision to provide environments where students could participate in a 'house' environment (Brothers and Hatch, 1971). Moreover, utilising student houses and halls of residences allowed the institution to integrate into the fabric of the city, and set itself apart from the Oxbridge collegiate system. As such, the importance of student residences may taken a different physical form; however, in practice the aim to provide student residences and influence students' residence life still resonated within UCL provided student residential environments.

While UCL may have focused on student houses and halls of residence, provision of student residences by UCL reinforced the idea and ideal of residence based higher education in England. While the physical forms (i.e. student houses, halls of residence) may have been reflective of/adapted to the urban environment of the institution, aims for student residences set by founders and conditions of the time period UCL was situated within did not 'break away' from the collegiate ideal of student residences as a place where students and tutors were engaged in the development of both personal and academic habits (Brothers and Hatch, 1971). The location, physical space and policy limitations on UCL may have influenced the forms of SRA provided by

the institution but still influenced the shape, purpose and functions of institution provided SRA. Like UCL, KCL was bound by similar locational and physical constraints in London.

King's College London and the re-emergence of divinity, college rooms and hall dinners

KCL was founded in 1829 and took a divergent view on student residences from its London-based neighbour UCL (Beloff, 1968). The Anglican KCL “differed from the other new colleges that were to develop in the nineteenth century, not only in teaching divinity and excluding women but also in providing college rooms and hall dinner for a few students” (Brothers and Hatch, 1971: 41).

KCL had distinguished itself from UCL in its admissions criteria (adopting religious tests for student selection criteria similar to Oxford), and its policies for student residences. Student residences at KCL reflected similar conditions to then present-day Oxford, with KCL provided SRA reflecting KCL's relationship with Oxford (Brothers and Hatch, 1971). For KCL, a close relationship with Oxford (i.e. students within the same subject of study) may have had a cascading influence on its vision and provision for student residences. Mirroring some of the Oxford's residence practices (i.e. hall dinners, excluding women) reflected the extent of influence Oxford had on KCL and its approach to higher education and provision of SRA. Subsequent to their emergence in London, both KCL and UCL would become constituent institutions of the UL. However, before integrating UCL and KCL, UL provided an alternative to residence based higher education.

University of London: non-residence based English university education emerges

“The University of London was launched as the property of a joint-stock company, drawing from the start not only local students but also those from farther afield” (Brothers and Hatch, 1971: 40).

Founded by royal charter in 1836, the University of London incorporated University College London and King's College London into a federated system (Beloff, 1968). Student residences were not a primary aim in the early development of the UL. Instead, UL supported local delivery of higher education through several satellite colleges across England. "One of the main functions of the subsequent university colleges was to enable *local* students to receive an education, and so residential provision did not at first come into prominence in their plans. What happened was that local benefactors took the initiative in opening halls of residence, which were usually financed in part by subscriptions (halls often bear the names of local dignitaries who contributed to their building) and were sometimes independent before coming under full university control" (Brothers and Hatch, 1971: 41). While the University of London may not have developed student residences, though some of its constituent institutions maintained student residences independently (i.e. UCL, KCL), the University of London and its constituent institutions benefited from absorbing privately funded SRA development across history.

In light of Oxbridge, UCL, KCL and the University of London, demand for higher education continued to persist and Oxford, Cambridge and London were still not easily accessible for many prospective students. Through support for local colleges, UL had demonstrated there was still a gap between demand and supply of higher education in many English localities. The civic-redbrick universities arose as a means of addressing demand for higher education in several of England's provincial, industrial centres. A focus on 'local' delivery of higher education through the civic-redbrick universities would also influence the universities provision of student residences.

2.2.3 Civic-redbrick universities and trade-offs between SRA, growing access and participation

The civic-redbrick universities grew out of the UL satellite college system. As access and participation in English HE developed, the civic-

redbrick universities highlighted the pressure on HE, HEI provided SRA and tradeoffs in participation and SRA provision by HEI across England.

University 'expansion'

The civic-redbrick universities were aimed at increasing university participation through university expansion. Beloff (1970) explained how, "Outside London, the major result of nineteenth-century expansion was the rise of the provincial universities" also known as the civic-redbrick universities (18). Emerging from the provincial colleges originally formed to prepare students for the UL external degree, the 'civic' or 'redbrick' universities obtained their own royal charter and began to provide university education in a number of large manufacturing zones across England.

"Originally directed to the satisfaction of local needs, these were the prototype Redbrick universities. All these institutions, starting with Owens College in Manchester in 1851, passed through early stages of development as university colleges or federal groupings with their students earning their degrees through London examinations. Many of them were devoted in the first instance to science and technology, though not exclusively. The first full university charter was gained by Manchester in 1880, and by 1909 the Universities of Birmingham, Liverpool, Leeds, Sheffield and Bristol had been added to the list" (Beloff, 1970: 18).

Still, while these "modern universities in...the great provincial centres of modern industry and commerce, notably Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, and Liverpool" were an omission which dissented from a tradition of 'educated aristocracy' they still relied heavily on graduates and ideas of Oxbridge (Shattock, 1996: p. 65). And while these civic-redbrick universities were distinct in their form and stated function to their university predecessors, they were still highly dependent on the legacy inherited from staff whose experiences of English HE had been Oxford and Cambridge. Namely, graduates of the ancient universities who formed a great deal of the 'aristocratic-gentry culture' had taken "hold in the modern universities," (Shattock, 1996: p. 67). Therefore,

while 'expanding' access to university higher education, the civic-redbricks had been imbued with ideas and ideals transported from their heavily Oxbridge educated faculty and staff. These new 'civic' institutions expanded access to HE in England, however, without provision of SRA their status as universities was under pressure.

Separate and unequal?

The arrival of the civic-redbrick universities created a separate but unequal English university system. Where Oxbridge had founded residence based higher education in England, and UCL, KCL and the UL had incorporated residence based education into their university life; the civic-redbrick universities were located, mainly, in industrial cities, supporting local merchant and business contributors, and generally non-residential. These civic-redbrick universities were aimed at serving the local businesses within their cities, not aimed to be 'national' universities like Oxbridge (Shattock, 1996). With a focus on the local provision of university education, civic-redbricks began without institution provided SRA as a central concern.

A focus on 'local' access and participation, aimed at serving local merchant and business interests meant civic-redbricks started with little interest in residential provision (Morgan and McDowell, 1979). The civic-redbrick universities reflected a new formulation and formation of a university in England. Rather than rely upon the church and the teaching of liberal education subjects almost exclusively, the civic-redbrick universities were envisaged to address the demand for university education in areas where population density was high and access to university level education was low (Shattock, 1996). In turn, these universities would be equipped to train students, particularly in the areas of science and technology, in order to prepare them for entry into the local production fields through skills acquisition and development.

While the civic-redbrick universities may have helped generate access and participation to university education, access was aimed at a local level. While civic-redbrick universities were aimed at developing human capital for local business sponsors, with time, desire for HEI provided SRA emerged.

With time, civic-redbrick universities would provide SRA. Taking a more 'local' approach may have stunted the development of student residences by the civic-redbrick universities early in their development. However, the definition of a university and demand by university students for accommodation would soon bubble SRA provision to the surface of civic-redbrick universities. As Brothers and Hatch (1971) noted, "In the older civic universities residential provision grew gradually" (41). This may have come from the aim of the civic-redbrick universities to serve as local 'satellite' institutions for the UL external degree, prior to gaining full university status by royal charter. As such, the rationale for the institution set guidance for slow growth, highly specific degree subjects (e.g. engineering, technology) and a connection to the UL prior to obtaining university status. While the 'local' and 'accessible' approach dominated early development of the civic-redbricks, with time, policy and practice would support civic-redbrick institutions to provide for further residence based HE in England.

2.2.4 Plateglass universities: experimenting with universities and student residential accommodation models, past and present

Following the civic-redbrick universities, the next wave of university growth in England came in the form of the plateglass universities.

The emergence of the plateglass universities in England during the 1960s was the "single largest expansion of higher education that England had ever known. In terms of conscious national policy it was the first" (Beloff, 1968: 15). Again, these 'new' universities were placed within areas of England where the government felt the community could support the introduction and development of such institutions.

Beloff (1968) noted how an investigation was conducted in order to locate the plateglass institutions in areas where resources (e.g. land, lodging) could adapt to the potential for future growth and demand for university education in England. Potential for future growth and demand for HE in England would influence plateglass university development, including, HEI provided SRA.

From the York college system modelled after the Oxbridge collegiate ideal, to the development of lodgings and flat-blocks outside of the University of Sussex, "...The plateglass universities reflect[ed] the spirit of the high Macmillan age" (Beloff, 1968: 20). Experimental, residential, and idealistic; the plateglass universities emerged to opposition by many if not all of the existing English universities. Existing English universities were concerned about sharing resources and talent across a growing university pool. This deficit model approach to the supply of universities, students and staff may have influenced the number and size of the plateglass universities. As such, there were deep concerns and scepticism about the locations and contributions the plateglass universities could make to the English university sector. Besides addressing persistent student demand for higher education, the plateglass universities were marginalised, having not yet developed individual or collective identities and histories.

Replication and further experimentation with SRA

Another key resource that regained attention in the 'new' or 'plateglass' universities was SRA. SRA varied across the plateglass universities. Beloff (1968) characterised plateglass universities (and university provided SRA) as experimental. Student residences were incorporated into the fabric of the institutions. At the University of York, the collegiate ideal was adopted and adapted into the York college system. While York adopted the college model, alternatively, the University of East Anglia erected halls of residence and student houses (Beloff, 1968). While the plateglass universities may have borrowed some of the existing SRA conventions (i.e. model, type, structure), replicating

student residences also reinforced the idea the plateglass universities were created as a response to address student demand for HE and replicate a residence based approach to HE in England. Demand and supply became an issue in economies of space for the 'new'/'plateglass' universities.

New/Plateglass universities: engineering physical and social 'space'

Muthesius (2000) explored the different physical estates that made up the plateglass universities. In his analysis, he paid special attention to how the physical campus was constructed with structures aimed at generating opportunities for 'encounters' between students and staff. He suggested such an approach to the estate planning of the 'new' or 'plateglass' universities was that of physical campuses aimed at utilising architecture for social engineering. While Muthesius (op cit.) touched on SRA and its integration within the plateglass university campuses, he provided a space for greater consideration of the interface and engineering of physical and social space. Such a vision of space, as a means through which to create both expected and unexpected 'encounters' amongst students and staff, relied heavily on an underlying assumption that the physical spaces (such as SRA) could themselves be utilised as tools through which to socialise students and staff, and create a structure, order and identity distinct unto the campuses themselves. Reflecting on the motives underpinning plateglass university estate architecture and planning, Muthesius (op cit.) noted that the physical form of the institutions and their SRA provisions were calculated and constructed in order to contribute to the social relationships of staff and students with and in the institutions. The deep integration and utilisation of HEI provided SRA served as a key component of the definition and delivery of HE for and in plateglass universities.

The plateglass universities continued a tradition of residence based university education in England. While the plateglass universities replicated many of the residence based HE models of prior universities,

such as the University of York colleges, higher education policy in England would soon turn to a 'binary' approach to further and higher education. Expanding access and participation to higher education within a 'binary' policy approach is explored next through a revisiting of colleges and the influence of SRA beyond universities.

2.2.5 Colleges: the influence of SRA beyond universities

While SRA had become embedded in many English universities, teacher training colleges, regional colleges and colleges of advanced technology (CATS) took varied approaches to provision and non-provision of SRA.

The approaches, stated aims and purpose for institutions provided SRA varied within and amongst colleges (Brothers and Hatch, 1971). As Pratt (1997) noted, teacher training colleges, regional colleges and colleges of advanced technology (CATS) developed with a focus on serving people within their 'local' catchment and community. While a number of teacher training colleges and CATS provided students with residences, a number also omitted SRA from their institutional estate. Later, as part of a 'binary' policy in the 1960s, polytechnics were introduced in a policy move that further diversified English post-secondary education opportunities and created further possibilities for non-residence based HE in England.

Colleges and student residential accommodation

Pratt (1997) described colleges in England as a 'tripartite' higher education scheme. Teachers colleges, regional colleges of technology and CATS provided educational opportunities in a number of localities across England.

As Brothers and Hatch (1971) explained "the early history of the colleges from the 1840s reflects the emphasis upon the growing need to train teachers and artisan children in a milieu that would educate and

strengthen them, yet at the same time renew their commitment to the elementary schools and not take them out of their social class” (63). Teachers colleges, residential from their foundational years, made up a significant proportion of the non-university higher education environment prior to the development of regional colleges and colleges of advanced technology (ibid.). Brothers and Hatch (1971) go on to explain:

“...Laterally, the colleges of education were residential from the start, and they still had a high proportion of their students living in college. Originally, the colleges of education occupied a position in the educational system which expressed a distinctive individual tradition; new developments in higher education had led to the recognition that the colleges were an essential part of the national system, and their residential policy had been influenced by such ideas” (63).

Alternatively, unlike the teachers colleges, the CATS began as a way of delivering non-residential further education. CATS were meant to make a substantial contribution to the output of advanced technologists and the bulk of their students were on courses in science and engineering subjects (Pratt, 1997: 51). CATS were envisaged to be local, serving students who commuted from their work and homes. Students who commuted, attended classes part-time, and entered college to develop their trade skills were positioned as a *different population* from students interested in a more traditional, residence based university education. Without the students’ expectation for residence in CATS and regional colleges of technology there was little need for student residence provision by the institutions. Later, the Robbins Report (1963) recommended the immediate expansion of the higher education sector, in part, through re-categorising CATS with university status. Silver (2006) raised tensions around residence provision in CATS, explaining:

“Government designation of colleges of advanced technology in 1956 were conditional on their provision of a year’s residence for students, a condition which they struggled, with difficulty, to implement since they were competing nationally for students” (Silver, 2004: 126).

In addition to the teachers colleges and CATS, the regional colleges of technology may have been slightly more open, however, they were not aimed at national student recruitment. Although neither CATS nor regional colleges of technology were envisaged to provide SRA, an absence of SRA influenced students' access and participation in and with both types of institution.

Colleges aimed to fill a gap in the overall post-secondary education structure, first, for teacher training, and later, for potential contributions to the technological and engineering capacity of England. While the teachers colleges had been residential from the start, CATS and regional colleges were a mix of residential and non-residential. Growing demand for further skills development by individuals and businesses alike may have also contributed to sustaining demand for college education in England. Moreover, this responsiveness at the local level, emerging from continuing demand by individuals and businesses for skilled labour, had been created to be distinctive from the universities in types of subjects taught, aims of the education and number of students who could access and participate the institutions. The trade-off for individuals, communities, regions and England broadly was access to colleges that came largely without student residence provision. Next, how the growth in alternatives to the university and the absence of institution provided student residential accommodation continued with the polytechnics.

2.2.6 Polytechnics: more non-university, non-residence based higher education in England

In his work, *The Polytechnic Experiment*, Pratt (1997) explored how the polytechnics emerged, diverged and ultimately converged with existing colleges and universities in England.

“In April 1965, the then Secretary of State for Education and Science, Anthony Crosland, gave a speech at Woolwich. In this speech he announced the Government's proposal for a 'binary policy' in higher education in England...with two separate and

distinctive sectors based on the universities and the leading technical and other public sector colleges. The speech was followed by a White Paper in 1966, setting out the Government's intention to establish 28 (later 30) polytechnics as the leading institutions of the non-university sector. The 'new polytechnics' were... to be designated by the government and to have distinctive aims and functions outlined in the White Paper" (Pratt, 1997: 1).

The White Paper was a policy directive aimed explicitly at the creation of a 'binary' higher education sector. The White Paper "announced the criteria on which polytechnics would be designated. These included the likely demand for places, the needs of industry, the availability of lodgings and other residences and the desirability of reasonably balanced provision in different fields of study across the country" (Pratt, 1997: 17: emphasis added). Locating and placing polytechnics would reflect the ability of local support, including housing, for potential students. While the White Paper outlined an aim to place polytechnics in locations with suitable housing capacity, given the growth in expected student numbers, it seems curious it did not provide a framework to support SRA provision for students by the polytechnics themselves. As such, the policy prepared to address student demand for HE. However, it provided little planning or support for how new polytechnics and communities would absorb the subsequent increase in students and rise in their local populations.

Pratt (1997) focused on this issue of student numbers, part-time students and students' courses of study within the polytechnics. For Pratt (1997):

"...Far from reversing a hundred years of educational history, the polytechnic policy which framed the development of polytechnics across England mirrored the experience of the [preceding] decade. Then, eight (later ten) colleges of advanced technology had been designated as the leading institutions of non-university technological education. Now the White Paper suggested that some 28 designated polytechnics were to head the whole non-university sector. Referring to the Robbins Report (1963) that outlined how the colleges of advanced technology had been designated as the leading non-university based technological institutions in England, highlighted how distinctions of and

between higher education institutions had created 'separate' and 'unequal' levels to the English higher education hierarchy" (Pratt, 1997: 17).

Like Pratt (1997), the report by Burgess and Pratt (1974) was also critical of the proposals within the 1966 White Paper. Rather than provide for distinctive educational environments the authors argued the 1966 White Paper proposed polytechnics as a type of institution that would dilute further and higher education in England. They proposed this 'dilution' would lead to a pattern of institution development that accentuated the influence of academic drift outside the universities. Pratt would go on to argue "the White Paper indicated...that the polytechnics' distinctiveness would lie in the comprehensive range and character of their work, especially their commitment to non-degree students and to part-time courses" (Pratt, 1997: 24). Aimed at increasing access and participation to post-secondary education across the country, polytechnics received little to no support for the provision of SRA (Robinson, 1968). Instead, polytechnic sites were chosen based on a general determination of the ability of the local environment to absorb student numbers, and student demand for housing. A lack of institution provided SRA provision would frustrate the capacity of polytechnics to grow, and in the future, adapt to changes in student demand for higher education.

Moving in to massified HE: pressure in numbers

As the Robbins Report (1963) had predicted, the total number of HEI in England (e.g. universities, polytechnics and colleges) was still below national demand for higher education. In a period of 'massification' of higher education, even with the introduction of polytechnics, the provision of HEI was under pressure as demand for HE in England continued to develop. However, the polytechnics provided an alternative to the university and college dominated landscape that had existed prior to their emergence. The 'polytechnic' policy strategy was aimed at increasing institutions in locations where existing and increasing numbers of students and student demand for housing could

be met (Pratt, 1997). However, HEI provided SRA continued to be an active constraint on students and institutions, narrowing student access and participation, generally, and to specific institutions and types of institutions across England. As Rudd (1980) argued, policy aimed at supporting and expanding HEI provided SRA had come in to tension with the funding of non-universities in England (i.e. polytechnics). A preoccupation with a tradition of residence based HE was challenging equitable treatment for non-university institutions that reflected a stratification of HE in England, past and present.

The 1960s had seen the emergence of the plateglass universities and now the introduction of polytechnics. Alongside regional colleges, teachers colleges and CATS, access and participation in further and higher education had been extended and expanded across England. A national policy agenda aimed at growing access and participation in higher education, alongside advancements in technology, paved the way for the emergence of a 'distance' based higher education in England. Distance only higher education institution in England, the Open University, is explored next.

2.2.7 The Open University: technology driven distance education without student residential accommodation

An agenda of massification in higher education continued to inspire innovation and change in the delivery of post-secondary education in England. One example of such innovation and change emerged in the formation of The Open University (OU). A central concern of the OU was growing access and participation in English HE, specifically university education, through the use of technology.

Technology, distance education and growing access to English HE

The OU was founded in 1969 (Open University, 2015). The vision for the OU was to “leverage the capacity of communication technology to extend distance education in England” (Open University, 2015). The

formation of the OU reflected a recognition by the state that “throughout the 1970s and 1980s student numbers steadily increased, despite political pressures during the years of Conservative government. Science home experiment kits, late night TV broadcasts and residential schools became part of the OU” (Open University, 2015).

There were a number of trade-offs made in substituting home-based study and use of technology for a traditional institution physical estate. Growing access and participation meant students would largely learn from a distance. The OU physical estate would be focused on administration without secondary services and provisions for students, such as SRA. These and other trade-offs reflected a drive to grow access and participation and experiment with the use of technologies to allow students to engage with and in HE in non-traditional and non-residential ways.

Growing access to university education without SRA provision

With a focus on distance education, SRA was not a central concern of the OU and the OU did not provide SRA. While not being a direct provider of SRA, The Open University did support some students in obtaining residential accommodation. Namely, the institution acted as an intermediary in assisting postgraduate students with obtaining private residential accommodation (Open University, 2015). Instead, the OU would continue to focus on its core aim of leveraging technology in order to increase access and participation in higher education in England. Access and widening participation were seen as acceptable trade-offs, given the history and cost of residence-based university education in England (e.g. Oxford, Cambridge).

While the OU was aimed at meeting rising student demand through widening access and participation, a lack of physical estate and being non-residential meant that OU students were diffused across the English geographic landscape. This diffusion of students and lack of connection (through a large physical estate, and SRA) may have

influenced student recruitment and retention. If the open access policy that defined the OU allowed for substantially more participation, the risk of student dropout was an acceptable challenge. For the OU, it remained unclear how the trade-off between access, participation, recruitment and retention would influence the institution and its students. The tension between traditional conceptions of English universities (e.g. Oxford and Cambridge) and newer versions of universities in England (e.g. plateglass universities) meant that the identity of the OU itself carried weight.

The costs and benefits of the open access policy of the OU and related questions about the influence of no SRA provision on students' learning outcomes and students' experience of HE remained largely at the level of ideological discussion. Still, demand for higher education and a constrained supply of higher education institutions inspired further innovation and change in English university opportunities. Emerging from the still unmet demand for university education were the private universities. The emergence of private universities in England is explored next.

2.2.8 Private universities in England: replicating residence based university education

The emergence of the Open University challenged existing forms and ideas of what an English university education could be. Alongside the emergence of new forms of university and non-university post-secondary education in England was the continuing demand for English HE, nationally and internationally. In recognition that student demand for English HE continued to be robust, and as a wave of rationale and marketisation literature began to creep into the vision for English higher education more broadly, new alternatives to state sponsored higher education emerged in the form of private universities.

Private and residential

The private universities within the HE sector of England began with the University of Buckingham. Originally founded in 1976 as the University College at Buckingham, the University of Buckingham was incorporated under royal charter in 1983 (University of Buckingham, 2015), and remained the only private university incorporated by royal charter in England for some time.

Regarding the SRA provision at the University of Buckingham, the SRA estate was described as diffused and diverse (University of Buckingham, 2015). The University of Buckingham provided a number of alternative types of SRA, including, student houses and student flats dispersed over a set of localities outside of the central campus site (University of Buckingham, 2015). While private, the institution reflected an idea and replicated an ideal of residence based higher education in England.

Once again, the provision of SRA by the institution served to replicate residence based HE and connect HEI provided SRA to English HE. While the University of Buckingham served as an example of private university education in England, public demand, both nationally and internationally, continued to outpace available university sites more generally. A policy solution was proposed in 1992 to address the continued and persistent demand for higher education in England. The Further and Higher Education Act of 1992 influenced the organisation, funding and monitoring of universities and non-universities.

2.2.9 Post-1992 universities and SRA

The Further and Higher Education Act of 1992 introduced a number of significant policies to further and higher education in England (UK Government, FHEA, 1992).

One component of the Further and Higher Education Act of 1992 was to offer existing polytechnics university status (Pratt, 1997). While the attainment of university status offered a number of benefits, such as enhanced reputational position and the title of 'university,' there was less financial support for advancing the new universities in the same way prior waves of new universities had been supported (e.g. plateglass universities). With reductions in state aid (i.e. block grants) for SRA provision, this wave of 'new' universities emerged at a time when HEI provided SRA was being revised as a key component of English university HE.

Policy, reclassification and reduced support for institution provided SRA

Pratt (1997) explained the decision for moving polytechnics to university as a policy response, reflective of a 'pent up' demand for English university education without the requisite spots with which to place home and international students. As before, the solution was not the development and building of additional universities but a policy move using existing institutions, polytechnics, and re-classifying them into another category of institution (i.e. university). The move from polytechnic to university for so called post-1992 institutions reflected a similar proposal from Robbins (1963), moving CATS into university status. However, where the CATS would garner support for the development of SRA, the government no longer approached SRA provision as a 'core' activity of universities. Thus, HEI provided SRA would require no state funding. Instead, SRA would be proposed as a 'self-sustaining' enterprise within post-1992 universities.

While the outcome of government policy may have been changing the name of many polytechnics into universities, the name change did not come with substantive financial resource. Instead, lower levels of state aid and further rationalising through the creation of a competitive funding body environment (i.e. Higher Education Funding Council for England, which will be developed further in a subsequent section of this Chapter) put post-1992 universities substantially behind existing

universities, including in regard to institution provision of SRA. The sharp change in position towards university provision of SRA had materialised in the absence of state support for SRA provision by post-1992 universities (see Dearing, 1997).

SRA in drift

The drift of student residence provision as a focus of the government and HEI was further evidenced some five years after the Further and Higher Education Act of 1992 in the Dearing Report (1997). The Dearing Report (1997) made no mention of student residence provision by universities beyond a line-item consideration in the accounting requirements for institutions.

While the government and state policy towards institution provided SRA had waned, the lack of SRA as a core consideration did not obliterate the influence of SRA on university and non-university development. Underlying the absence of support for higher education institution provision of SRA had been an important assumption that local and regional communities will be best served and best able to provide residences for students independent of government support and sponsorship for SRA, by HEI or otherwise. The implications of such an assumption is yet, unclear. In recognition of the changing funding and monitoring climate surrounding universities, many HEI, such as the post-1992 universities, have elected a self-funded or public private partnership (PPP) approach to provision of SRA.

The issue of private SRA providers, institutions and surrounding communities remains contested and complex. The ideological questions of student socialisation and development had been replaced by growing concern over how local, regional and national supply of housing is influenced by students' demand for HE and residential accommodation (Morgan and McDowell, 1979). The critical, and shared responsibility, for higher education rests with the various stakeholders in and outside HEI. As evidence, these issues are reflected in

persistent concerns for where and how to accommodate students on a course in higher education. Further investigation into the role and relationship of student residences with and in higher education institutions continues to be relevant historically and in the present research.

2.3 Policy

HE policy approaches experienced a number of sharp changes in England across history. One of the formative bodies overseeing government funding for institutions was the University Grants Committee (UGC). While the UGC was broadly in favour of government funding for student residential accommodation, government grant funding for SRA began to wane with successive agencies, including the University Funding Council (UFC), and the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). Some of the drivers, debates and tensions related to the influence of these government agencies related to the provision of SRA across HEI in England are reviewed in the following section.

2.3.1 The University Grants Committee: sustaining the ideal of residence based higher education in England

The UGC and UGC policies played a vital role in the development of a number of institutions in England during the twentieth century. Through the establishment of the UGC, the Government created an intermediary through which to consolidate influence for the funding, monitoring and auditing of institutional activities, including provision of SRA.

The role of the UGC for higher education institutions and the government

The UGC emerged from a consolidation of committees at the turn of the twentieth century. Sanderson (1975) noted "...*Ad hoc*

committees...were the earlier bodies that led up to the formation of the University Grants Committee in 1919" (188). He explained how "for [England] as a whole a...turning point of great consequence for the future development of higher education was the decision of the government to grant state funds to the universities, [later, colleges and polytechnics]" (187). Initially, though the sums involved were small, the establishment of government sponsored post-secondary education set a "principle of the state finance of university education in England" (Sanderson, 1975: 188). Initially, the UGC served as an intermediary between the state exchequer and English universities. "This established the principle of university autonomy in finance and independence at a stage removed from the state paymaster" (Sanderson, 1975: 188). The UGC acted as a mediator between government financial support for universities and monitoring of university activities, aims and objectives.

While a mediator between the government and universities, the UGC was not designed to be a planning body. "Although from time to time it was called upon to advise on where certain facilities and departments should be located. Essentially,...[the] role [of the UGC] was reactive amongst university and colleges for whom the University Grants Committee was the primary means of financial support for the institution" (Shattock and Berdahl, 1984: 472). Whether on ideological or practical grounds, Shattock and Berdahl (1984) argued, "since its creation in 1919 the University Grants Committee has been seen in [England] and many other countries as a model piece of machinery for channelling funds from government to universities. Up to the Second World War the role of the University Grants Committee was to advise on the distribution of recurrent and capital resources from the government in the form of deficiency grants to university institutions" (Shattock and Berdahl, 1984: 471-472). The primary aim of the UGC was as an aid to government and not [to] members of university leadership (Shattock and Berhdahl, 1984: 472).

After the Second World War, “There were calls for the University Grants Committee to play a more positive role in university development and national planning and its terms of reference were changed” (Shattock and Berdahl, 1984: 471). Taking on a more active role in policy and planning, the UGC devised a series of block grants and capital investments in order to encourage university development across England. The UGC was essentially a mechanism for resource allocation at the request of institutional (i.e. university) claimants. The more universities indicated they were in ‘need’ the more the deficiency model may have attempted to meet institutional financial shortfalls. While universities may have received more funding, the deficiency model of funding slowly turned the state-university relationship into one of dependency, inspiring greater scrutiny of resource use.

The UGC would oversee government funding allocation for universities, and many non-universities. Funding would come in the form of a block grant from the UGC to institutions. Block grants to the universities were “calculated on what was known as the deficiency principle, that is, it was designed to meet all essential costs that the universities could not cover out of their other resources...and was intended to provide roughly one-third of the total university income” (Tapper and Salter, 1995: 60-61). Over time, and with the benefit of hindsight, the evolving and rising financial support by the government to universities shaped and reshaped the relationship between the state and institutions across history. The UGC also block granted HEI provided SRA.

The UGC and student residential accommodation development

The UGC provided financial support for institution provision of SRA. The UGC supported the development of SRA provision across a number of universities (e.g. Oxbridge, University of London, Civic-redbrick, Plateglass universities). In addition to allocating state support in capital investment projects and block grants for institution provision of SRA, the UGC established the sub-committee on halls of residence in universities (Niblett Committee, 1957). Chaired by W.R. Niblett, the

sub-committee on halls of residence set the basis through which the New Universities (plateglass universities) were funded and upon which “were major impacts on the rest of higher education” in England (Shattock and Berdahl, 1984: 475). Without the support of the UGC it is unclear if the reemphasis on SRA provision in the plateglass universities would have been financially viable to the institutions.

Over time, the centralisation and rationalisation of funding based on outputs and key performance indicators such as student numbers, student graduates and student satisfaction were concealing and frustrating what Tapper and Salter (1995) identified as a key motivator for state funding of HEI. This critical component which may have motivated the state to invest in further education institutions (FEI) and HE related to universities and subsequent higher education and FEI as some of the primary vehicles for developing the state’s economic, social and political interests. For the state, universities were a resource that had a number of additive benefits, some of which included: developing the human capital of the state, advancing technological and scientific knowledge, and growing the economic, social and political frameworks which the state itself could monitor, measure, evaluate and assess its own development against. In this way, macro and micro level relationships between the government and government funding for HEI were brought into alignment with each other.

The ending of the UGC and state funding for student residential accommodation

Over time, the role and responsibilities of the UGC were questioned. Sanderson (1975) argued the UGC acted as a buffer between the state and universities. Contrasting this ‘buffer’ approach, Tapper and Salter (1995), citing Owen (1980), suggested “the rationale for the creation of the University Grants Committee was purely practical” (60). Echoing Tapper and Salter’s (1995) sentiment, Shattock (1994) noted how the Education Act of 1944, aimed at increasing the number of school leavers eligible for entry into universities, served as a catalyst for

subsequent university and non-university expansion throughout England. With a boom to the number of eligible school leavers, university and non-university expansion would necessitate administrative oversight, and with members of the UGC being past and present members of England's universities, they might have been best suited in expertise and experience to oversee such an expansion of higher education. The UGC was held in place so long as the Government saw it fit for purpose.

As attitudes, beliefs and policies towards HEI and SRA shifted across history so did the relationship between the government, the UGC and HEI provided SRA. State defined needs came to dominate the UGC development of universities. "As the universities were responsible for the transmission and production of knowledge, they performed an essential function for the modern state. It was important, therefore, that the university system developed in a manner that was consistent with national needs" (Tapper and Salter, 1995: 61). In this approach, the UGC acted as protagonist, using its position as intermediary and monitor to guide the development of the universities. Tapper and Salter (1995) noted that while the "Exchequer's annual grant should constitute no more than one-third of university income, [this would become] undermined by the almost complete dependency of the universities upon state monies from 1945 onwards. And yet those who wished to cling to the belief that universities remained autonomous institutions could find comfort in the fact that by the early 1950s earmarked grants were on the decline, and the principle of the block grant had been re-established in 1952" (Tapper and Salter, 1995: 62).

The UGC had been responsive to the direction of the state and the input of the universities and colleges throughout the history of the organisation. "With the important exception of the research selectivity exercises...the University Grants Committee did not construct funding mechanisms which led to norm setting and institutional competition. Rather it established criteria, clearly influenced by public policy, to determine the reorganisation of the British university system" (Tapper

and Salter, 1995: 69). Still, as the government demanded greater accountability the universities were being asked to demonstrate more and more value-for-money. A proposition that the universities appeared to have accepted as part of a cost-benefit analysis around the potential loss of government funding which could have had catastrophic effects on the operations of the universities and colleges, including provision of SRA. Such a dependency by the universities, colleges, and later the polytechnics, on the government created a debate about the intentionality of the state's funding regimes, the relatedness between funding, monitoring, performance, a sense of eroded institutional autonomy, and a growing discord surrounding state funding and institutional activity.

As Morgan and McDowell (1979) noted, "...[SRA] building was curbed by the withdrawal of capital grants for residential building in the late 1960s" (24). Government capital grants for SRA had been extinguished. The state as policy creator, developer and decision maker provided the necessary conditions for the creation and maintenance of the UGC. However, as a statutory body the usefulness of the UGC related to how the Government viewed the agency as fit for purpose. Over time, the UGC had acted as a means of bringing universities and other further and higher education institutions into compliance with the state's vision for higher education.

Up until 1989, the UGC acted in 'partnership' and as an advocate for universities. The UGC played a vital role in shaping HEI, higher education policy and financing of higher education institution activities. One area of investment for the UGC was through block grants to universities for the development of SRA provision. The UGC persisted through a number of sharp social, political and economic changes in England, until its replacement with the University Funding Council (UFC). As such, when the UFC replaced the UGC this may be interpreted as a signal that the funding of higher and further education by the state would reflect new and present drivers, namely, the

commodification and marketisation of higher and further education beginning in the late 1980s.

2.3.2 University funding council: shifting relationships between government and universities

The UGC was replaced by the UFC “As a result of the Education Reform Act of 1988” (Tapper and Salter, 1995: 65-66). Unlike the UGC, the UFC was aimed at consolidation and direction. Consolidation and direction by the government, through the UFC into the activities of the universities, colleges and polytechnics saw the UFC as less of a mediator and more of a policy enforcer, through the application of state finance to universities and colleges across England. Where the UGC was given deferential treatment to act as an intermediary between the government and HEI, the UFC did not maintain such status.

Where the UGC was given input into the use of state financing for institutions, such as the capital investment projects and block grants, the UFC (1989-1992) did not maintain such freedom and influence over government resource. Where the UGC had supported the development of institution provided SRA, the UFC was silent on HEI provided SRA. The reduced support for institution provided SRA may have reflected the economic climate in which the UFC emerged. The UFC emerged at a time of radical reductions in government financial support for higher education and questions of the usefulness and necessity of institution based student residences (Shattock, 1994). As such, block grants and capital investment for HEI provided SRA evaporated.

Like the UGC, the UFC was replaced “In turn...in 1993 by the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE) on the amalgamation of the university and public sectors of higher education” (Tapper and Salter, 1995: 65-66). The following section explores the influence of HEFCE on HEI provided SRA in England.

2.3.3 Higher Education Funding Council for England: HE as a market

The emergence of HEFCE from the Further and Higher Education Act of 1992 reflected a number of current conditions and relations between the government and institutions. Tapper and Salter (1995) noted:

“The current relations between the state and the universities can best be described as an attempt on the part of the government to create a managed market: financed mainly by public money, the universities retain control of their own affairs while operating within centrally defined and regulated parameters that are managed by the funding agencies, such as the Higher Education Funding Council for England (66).

They go on to identify what they believe are the

“Three levels to the current relationship between the state and the universities: (i) the parameters are under the control of the state; (ii) the management of those parameters (which initially included translating them into precise operational procedures) is the responsibility of the funding bodies; and (iii) the universities exercise their autonomy within the framework of the previous two levels of control” (66).

As such, there is a tension between institution discretion and funding bodies with whom the monitoring of institutional activities is tied to the present and future possibility for funding. Thus, “autonomy for the individual universities is, therefore, circumscribed by the broad parameters established by the state, and the mechanisms created by the funding councils to establish those parameters in concrete terms. Therefore, it makes sense to see the parameters as requiring universities to make choices, within a range of options, about their future development” (Tapper and Salter, 1995: 8). Future development reframed state sponsorship of further and higher education sectors into a FE/HE market. Institutional competition and marketisation would soon become the lens of policymakers and practitioners alike.

Economies: institutions and SRA as markets

When HEFCE was established as part of the Further and Higher Education Act of 1992 there was a dissolution of the existing UFC. The

UFC transferred all the “property, rights and liabilities to which either of the existing councils were entitled or subject immediately before that date shall become by virtue of this section property, rights and liabilities of the Higher Education Funding Council for England” (UK Government, FHEA, 1992: 47-48). The Further and Higher Education Act of 1992 provided “transitional arrangements” to see the dissolution of the University Funding Council and support “any and all such assistance as those councils may reasonably require for the purpose of enabling them to exercise their functions on and after the commencement of this Act” (UK Government, FHEA, 1992: 48).

The Further and Higher Education Act of 1992 went on to define the administration of funds by HEFCE. The Act of 1992 defined HEFCE in relation to “...The purposes of providing financial support for activities eligible for funding under the terms of the Act, including: the provision of education and the undertaking of research, provision of any facilities, and the carrying on of other activities which the governing bodies of the institutions deemed necessary or desirable to provide or carry on for the purpose of or in connection with education or research” (UK Government, FHEA, 1992: 62-64). As with the Further Education Funding Council, the HEFCE remit makes no mention of SRA provision, grant, aid or other financial support to HEI provided SRA. SRA was no longer central to the Government’s plans for HEI. Instead, the development of SRA provision became the exclusive responsibility of HEI.

Consolidating a pivot in government funding that had begun in the late 1960s and developed through to the UFC, away from state grant and aid for institution provided SRA, HEFCE reinforced this new ‘institution driven development’ protocol regarding SRA. While the need to submit for funding by HEI was not a new phenomenon, the large absence of state funding for institution provided SRA would affect older and newer institutions differently. This differential effect reflected the ‘old’ ways of funding SRA and the movement towards ‘new,’ institution based funding for SRA. For newer institutions, such as the post-1992

universities, this meant a proposition for loans in lieu of government grants. Where HEI had been required to request, through application, funding from early on in the UGC to 'fill the gaps' in institutional funding need in the past, government aid for institution provided SRA had been eliminated. In its place, the HEFCE, its framework and remit contributed to a vision for higher education development that rationalised competition amongst institutions, perhaps even within institutions, for state funding while still maintaining centralised funding and auditing of HEI activities.

Tensions created by competition within and between HEI for centralised government funding influenced the position and proposition of providing SRA for HEI. The shift went beyond funding institution provided SRA. "Historically university charters have been conferred either by an act of Parliament or by the Privy Council acting on behalf of the crown. By appointing statutory commissioners to change tenure clauses, the Education Reform Act of 1988 challenged this convention, to be followed in a few years by legislation that empowered the Secretary of State to widen club membership, so taking control of entry out of the hands of the established university interests" (Tapper and Salter, 1995: 69).

Questions related to institutional practice reflected a shift towards evaluating and assessing student experience and engagement with and in HEIs. Concerns over institutional practice, monitoring, containment and control extended to HEI provided SRA. These auditing regimes and frameworks were reflected in HEIs practices. The issue of practice and HEI provided SRA is further explored next.

2.4 Practice

Monitoring and auditing institutional activities also featured in literature related to SRA in England. Oversight of institutional practice came into focus through the development of 'codes' which representative bodies

(UUK) and monitoring agencies (such as the QAA) developed in consultation with stakeholders across the HE sector (i.e. private providers, HEI). The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Code of Practice, and Universities UK (UUK) Codes of Practice focused on quality management of HEI provided SRA. .

2.4.1 The QAA

One development of a wider focus by the government on quality management and performance of HEI was the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). From the late 2000s, the QAA was aimed to exploring, examining and understand students' experience and engagement with, and in, HEI across the English HE sector. Students' satisfaction with institutional provision was a key focus of the QAA. "With the activities of the Quality Assurance Agency now a constant feature of the higher education landscape, the politics of governance in higher education is assured a high profile. As part of the continuing power struggle for control over the regulation of high status knowledge, quality assurance combines technical, bureaucratic and value elements in ways which give power to some and remove it from others" (Salter and Tapper, 2000: 66). Similarly, Hoecht (2006) argued "the Quality Assurance Agency does not appear to be involved in a consultative open debate about its policy-making and policy-implementation" functions (546). Instead, the QAA acts as a protagonist to drive HEI and academics into an ideological discourse focused on 'quality' in HE. In this way, the QAA is situated to provide assurances, however true or clear, to the public, vis-à-vis the state, that public resource investment into HEI are not being 'wasted'.

The QAA influences the activities in and across HEI. "Universities... student recruitment ability and financial position is highly dependent on the quality score they achieve in quality audits" (Hoecht, 2006: 546). As such, the universities are chasing key performance indicators and policy "goalposts" that can be "shifted at short notice without

consultation” with varying degrees of influence on institutions who are “better able or less able to defend their interests” (Hoecht, 2006: 546).

2.4.2 QAA and student residential accommodation

The QAA emphasises, through a quality audit framework, government education policy aims and objectives and “directly and indirectly decides on the funding of universities” (Hoecht, 2006: 546). For example, in 2012 the QAA, in partnership with the National Union of Students (NUS), published a report on the first-year experience of students across English universities. Using an online survey and focus groups, the Student Experience Research Project 2012 probed students regarding the quality of their SRA. In addition to questions regarding the quality of students’ residential accommodation, the survey asked questions about the influence of the students’ residential accommodation on the quality of their academic output (National Union of Students, 2012: 12). First-year participants in the Student Experience Research (2012) project identified induction procedures and tours of SRA provisions, and surrounding areas as helpful in assisting students’ integrate into their accommodation, their institution and the community more generally. Such a project demonstrates the relationship and influence placed with the QAA’s work and its relatedness to representative bodies (i.e. NUS).

While the influence of the QAA may be substantive, the effect of the quality assurance framework on the actual quality of HEI activities, including provision of SRA, remains opaque. While the UGC and HEFCE funded and monitored HEI activities, the QAA emerged from a growing interest in managing and auditing ‘quality’ within and across HEI. State funding of SRA had now ended and there was no direct relationship between the QAA and HEI with respect to funding. While the QAA may influence and inform the data and findings the state uses to determine funding allocation, it does not have a direct influence other than to bring awareness to areas in which it considers HEI to be failing,

meeting or exceeding expectations of its monitoring regime, the Quality Code.

2.4.3 Universities UK and Codes of Practice for student residential accommodation

Along with the work of QAA and the NUS, Universities UK have also developed a set of codes of practice related to SRA.

Universities UK codes of practice and student residential accommodation

Universities UK provides “three codes of practice for the higher education sector [regarding student residential accommodation] approved by parliament in April 2006” (Universities UK, 2006). These codes of practice replaced a requirement in the Housing Act 2004 which “Introduced licensing for houses of multiple occupations in England and Wales. Higher education institutions are exempted from licensing providing they sign up to a code of practice that has been approved by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)” (Universities UK, 2016). The three codes of practice included: the Universities UK Code of Practice for University Managed Student Accommodation, the ANUK/Unipol Code of Standards for Larger Residential Developments for Student Accommodation Managed and Controlled by Educational Establishments, and, the ANUK/Unipol Code of Standards for Larger Developments for Student Accommodation not managed and controlled by educational establishments (Universities UK, 2015).

While the Universities UK Codes of Practice exempted education and non-educational establishments from mandatory licensing, the Codes of Management and Practice are “voluntary, aspirational and seek to raise standards above that which is required by law. These codes outlined what Universities UK have defined as good management practice [and]...set out standards to measure the good management practice of student accommodation” (Universities UK, 2015). While these codes may provide a framework for institutional practice, the voluntary nature of the codes of practice and the exemption from further licensing leaves these codes with a lack of enforceability on behalf of the government and students.

Like the QAA, Universities UK has been developing codes of practice in conjunction with the NUS. The NUS have been “involved in developing these codes from the start because these codes and accreditation more widely are essential to ensuring students enjoy a high housing standard during their studies” (Universities UK, 2015). These codes, and the approach of Universities UK and the NUS, framed students as “pathfinders, testing new standards and then carrying over their expectations when they stop being students, this having an impact on the private rented sector as a whole” (Universities UK, 2015). The Codes of Practice offer guidance on good practice related to the provision of SRA by private and institution providers.

While the Codes of practice may provide guidance to institution and non-institution providers of SRA, there is a clear lack of enforceability on the part of Universities UK and the NUS. As suggested good practice, the codes provide for a complaints procedure, however, these are offered through a web-portal and do not outline how complaints will be addressed. In addition, the code relies upon students’ unions to act as intermediary between complaining students and institution or non-institution providers. There is no clear explanation for how students’ unions are to effectively represent students, and if students’ unions are aware of their responsibilities as advocates for students whose accommodation falls under the UK Code of Practice. These intermediary steps may frustrate both awareness of the code, students’ rights and responsibilities and a clear pathway for resolving issues or violations of the code with institution providers.

2.4.4 Limitations of the Universities UK codes of practice

The Student Accommodation Codes of Practice, developed in partnership with UUK and the NUS, provide a framework with which to evaluate and assess management of institution and non-institution provided SRA. These codes of practice outline good practice for the management and operation of institution and private provided SRA. While the Student Accommodation Codes of Practice offer guidance to institutions and private providers, there are limitations to the enforcement of the UK Codes of Practice related to SRA. Given the lack of transparency and clarity around the UK Code of Practice, further research may

help to understand the practical value of the UK Code of Practice related to institution provided SRA. In addition, while the QAA, NUS and UUK may approach students as pathfinders, this grossly underestimates the influence of SRA on students attending short-courses, or, courses limited to a year or less. These 'short-course' students may not fit into the 'pathfinder' approach these monitoring agencies have proposed through their codes of practice framework. Additionally, these codes of best practice, lacking a clear enforcement pathway are largely based on institutions self-monitoring their SRA policies and practice, without a clear understanding of 'who' and 'how' will monitor and govern the institutions outside of themselves.

This research addressed whether, and how, the physical and social standards suggested within the UK Code of Practice influence policy and practice within an institution's provision of student residential accommodation. Additionally, this research shed light on whether, and how, institution policy and practice related to the provision of SRA influences SE in and with SRA for students, including: undergraduate, postgraduate, domestic and international students. A chapter summary follows next.

2.5 Chapter summary

Chapter 2 has been a review of existing literature and research on SRA in England. The acute and persistent questions of *whether, where and how to accommodate students in English higher education* was traced from Oxbridge in medieval times through the post-1992 universities and into the present. Institutional categories from existing literature were used to bring awareness and attention to the diversity in approaches towards institution provision of SRA amongst HEI and FEI. Particular attention was given to 'how' and 'why' some English HEI have provided SRA, taking into account the influence of the government and HE policy. Policy, practice and related themes of monitoring, containment and control of SRA were also raised in relation to government and non-governmental auditing agencies. The result has been an engagement with and exploration of the existing literature on SRA, and some of the

drivers and tensions that have kept SRA in debate throughout history and into the present.

While the existing literature on SRA in England is substantive, there continues to be space to explore the relationship between SRA and SE. Current literature has highlighted the diversity in types of SRA and how the presence, or absence, of SRA may have influenced the development of institutions in England across history. Chapter 3 develops this discussion through a proposed theoretical framework focusing on SE in and with SRA.

Chapter 3: Exploring student residential accommodation and student engagement

The theoretical lens presented in this Chapter provides an overview of the issues and themes from existing literature and research that have been relevant for understanding SE in and with SRA.

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this Chapter is to develop the theoretical lens, SE, for this research. The literature reviewed in this Chapter is organised into the following seven sections. After this brief introduction, section two explores SRA as a student housing pathway. Section three reflects on SRA and students' preferences and satisfaction. Section four focuses on the interface of SRA, student characteristics and identities. Section five reflects on SRA and HEI. Section six explores existing work on SRA and local housing. From these existing approaches to SE and SRA, section seven presents the SE lens for this research. These sections are developed through a number of sub-sections based on relevant themes and issues related to SE and SRA. A summary concludes this Chapter.

3.2 Student residential accommodation as a student housing 'pathway'

This section presents and explores existing literature and research on SRA as a student housing pathway.

3.2.1 Student residential accommodation as a student housing 'pathway'

One approach to HEI provided SRA has been as a 'pathway' between students' origin home and their transition to the private rental sector (PRS). Clapham's (2005) 'pathway' approach considered students' movements out of their origin home, continuing through their career as a student in HE and eventual exit into the broader housing sector as a non-linear and iterative process.

Building on Clapham's (2005) work, Thomsen (2007, 2008) developed HEI provided SRA as a 'pathway' in her examination of student housing. She

suggested that, in order to understand the diversity in and between young people as they transitioned from their origin home into the housing sector, more work was needed to understand factors influencing students' housing decision-making. She looked at students' entry and exit from HEI provided SRA. Citing Clapham (2005), Thomsen (2008) argued that approaching student housing as a 'pathway' created opportunities to imagine students' housing decision-making and choice of accommodation as operating in stages and iterations. This 'iterative' process reflected students' knowledge and awareness around their rights and responsibilities as tenants in institution and PRS accommodation. For Thomsen (2007, 2008) housing pathways provided for the possibility that students were 'testing' different types of residential accommodation, provided by HEI, the private sector and social housing opportunities. Reflecting on the pathway approach, Thomsen (2008) argued grouping 'students' together, even those who entered an HEI provided SRA, was problematic. 'Students' reduced the diversity in and between individuals and groups of participants in SRA. Being a 'student resident,' in Thomsen's (2008) view, became a reflection of the set of measures used to evaluate or assess participants in SRA. Instead, Thomsen (2007, 2008) proposed approaching SRA at an individual and local level as one of a number of possible pathways (housing alternatives/options/opportunities). This approach created sensitivity and consideration around the economic, social, political and cultural factors which may influence students' decision-making related to participation in various types of SRA provision (i.e. HEI, private, social housing and private home ownership).

SRA as a student housing pathway provided a number of possibilities and considerations regarding students' decision-making and the possible influence of SRA on students. However, both Clapham (2005) and Thomsen (2007, 2008) asserted young people, including students, were on a trajectory out of their origin home and into the PRS ultimately finishing their 'path' with home ownership. Homeownership was seen as the ultimate aim of students (and non-students) and influenced the way both authors constructed the stages and iterations in their 'pathways' approach. As such, stages and iterations leading to home-ownership framed both authors' approaches to students' decision-making related to SRA. This 'pathways' approach, bounded between 'origin home' and private home ownership did not clarify or develop whether, and how, students move in to,

through, and around the housing sector and end in home ownership (or not). While asserting the start and end points of students' housing pathway, and utilising iterations/stages to note students' intermediary steps between origin home and private home ownership, how and why students transitioned between these stages remained an open question for both Clapham (2005) and Thomsen (2007, 2008).

3.2.2 Student residential accommodation as transitional housing for students

Related to SRA as a student housing pathway, SRA has also been approached as transitional housing for students (Blimling, 2015). In his work on HEI provided SRA, Blimling (ibid) argued SRA served as one transitional housing option for students. Citing a lack of research on non-traditional student populations, he proposed more work was needed to understand whether, and how, HEI and HEI provided SRA supported students' transition into, through and out of HE. One example he raised focused on 'transfer' students (students who were entering an HEI from another institution) and postgraduate students (Blimling, op cit.). Citing a lack of existing literature and research on transfer and postgraduate housing transitions, Blimling (op cit.) suggested HEI and HEI provided SRA may provide support in the form of education and guidance for students entering and transitioning into and through the housing sector beyond HEI provided SRA, including educating students about their rights as tenants (117-121). For Blimling (op cit.), SRA had the potential to act as an educational opportunity from which students could derive greater awareness and understanding of a number of alternative housing options and housing rights related to the PRS and homeownership.

Contrasting Blimling's (2015) assertions that SRA may provide educational opportunities for students transitioning into, through and out of HE, Christie (2007) explored issues of student housing mobility. Focusing on spatial mobility, Christie (ibid.) examined the influence of students' perceived spatial mobility on their decision to attend local HEI or study at a distance from their origin home. Christie (ibid.) argued socioeconomic status and students' perceived social mobility were key factors influencing students' spatial mobility. Her study of the "theoretical and empirical issues surrounding [the lack of] geographical mobility

amongst higher education students, using non-traditional students who lived at home whilst studying for a degree at a local university” highlighted variances in students’ perceptions of their spatial mobility and HE opportunities (Christie, 2007: 2445). She argued that, far from the normative and class-based assumptions about spatial mobility in HE markets, there remains a strong (and growing) number of students who prioritise HE participation over ‘where’ they participate. A sentiment echoed in the work of Thomas & Jones (2017) on SE of commuter students. This proposition ran counter to the idea a number of students base their preferences for ‘where’ to study on overarching frameworks such as those that rank institutions locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. Rather than institutional ranking, Christie (op cit.) proposed it was the geographic accessibility of an institution from a student’s perspective which mattered *a priori* the reputation, course or broader ranking of an institution. While Christie’s (2007) proposal may contrast with other views on the importance of institutional rank as an indicator of institutional quality (i.e. Oxbridge, Russell Group institutions), she argued a sense of spatial accessibility would be more important to students’ decision on where to attend for further and higher education.

For Christie (2007: 244) there are a number of considerations in relation to the “daily mobility patterns” and the influence of spatial mobility on social mobility patterns and students’ daily experience of HEI and HE more broadly. Experiences of undergraduate students living in their origin home with their parents may foreshadow the influence of housing on future generations and the decision-making around attending a HEI in a student’s local, regional, national or international catchment. Christie (2007) raised an important tension regarding SRA as transitional housing. The tension Christie (2007) highlighted was how, within arguments towards SRA as transitional housing, there is a trade-off a large number of students make to decline to enter SRA in order to participate in HE. Instead of pursuing a ‘better’ course, institution or both at a distance, many students may select local HEI to reduce their total cost of attendance (COA).

Additionally, much of the critical literature, such as Blimling (2015), does little to acknowledge the large proportion of students participating in HE who never participate in SRA, as undergraduate or postgraduate students. Moreover, arguing SRA fails to be a robust form of transitional housing due to the large

number of students who decline to move outside their home geographic region, instead attending a local HEI, does not account for the variance(s) within and amongst different locations and HEI provision of SRA (e.g. Oxford colleges and Plate Glass Universities). Access and participation in local HEI is a different proposition for students and institutions in England, if a student's origin home and local catchment is constituted by an area under pressure for both HE and SRA demand (e.g. London). Christie (2007) does not address the possibility such variance may play an influential part in motivating a prospective student to 'stay home' or 'leave' and study at a distance from their origin home.

3.3 Student residential accommodation and students' preferences and satisfaction

This section explores the influence of students' preferences and satisfaction in relation to SRA.

Student residential accommodation and student preferences

A prominent theme within the current literature on SRA and SE focused on the influence of students' preferences for the development and provision of SRA. For example, in their work *Patterns of Residence: costs and options in student housing*, Morgan and McDowell (1979) were interested in the influence of undergraduate students' housing preferences and demand for various types of accommodation on local and regional housing markets. Morgan and McDowell (ibid.) explored students' preferences for accommodation, including: HEI provided SRA, private flats, bedsitters, lodgings and the parental home. They proposed undergraduate students followed a particular path of preferring HEI provided SRA in the first-year, private flats in year two, and spending third year back in HEI provided SRA near teaching/learning spaces to concentrate on final year course work. Understanding students' preferences for various types of accommodation (i.e. SRA, private flats, bedsitter, lodgings) was key to positioning students' demand and influence within housing sub-markets. While raising the issue of students' demand on housing and position in housing sub-markets, Morgan and McDowell (1979) cautioned against abstracting students' preferences for accommodation from local and regional housing contexts. They proposed policy

aimed at increasing student participation rates in HE had come into tension with available HEI provided SRA and slowing development of PRS housing. In their view, accommodating students' preferences in an unbalanced housing sector was going to be a near (and longer term) issue for students, HEI and housing markets alike.

Alternatively, in his paper *Student Accommodation*, Blakey (1994) discussed growing consideration by HEI and private providers of students' preferences in the design and development of SRA. To explain how student preferences were influencing provision of SRA, he highlighted how some historical elements of HEI provided SRA (i.e. wardens, tutors, academic support) had been eliminated within current provision of SRA. Changes in historical components of SRA related to broader shifts in social attitudes towards HEI provided SRA. While noting wardens and in some cases academic tutors were still part of some HEI provided SRA, Blakey (op cit.) argued the role, rights and responsibilities of these positions had changed and been largely diminished. Instead of focusing on pastoral care, wardens had become policy enforcers. Changes in students' preferences were reshaping the form, functions and constituent elements of HEI provided SRA (i.e. warden pastoral care functions). Alongside changes in pastoral care, Blakey (op cit.) noted a trend in a number of HEI provided SRA to replace catered dining halls with self-catered and shared kitchens. He noted how such a change may have reflected how the influence of changes in social attitudes and education policy had cascaded into organisational policy and influenced the physical form of SRA. The relationship of policy to practice, he noted, had become entrenched in approaching students as 'consumers,' of adult age. Providing accommodation to consumers of adult age positioned students as liable for making explicit their expectations of SRA services, rather than leaving HEI to set expectations of SRA for students.

Similarly, Tight (2011) argued attitudes towards SRA had moved on from *in loco parentis* and towards a vision of students as 'customers'. Alongside a shift towards students as customers, SRA was being positioned as a self-funding student 'service'. Student preferences were being realised in policies, practices and attitudes governing the form and functions within SRA. Both Blakey (op cit.) and Tight (op cit.) argued changes in social attitudes and expectations for SRA

may have influenced these changing trends and patterns in HEI provision of SRA.

Taking a contrasting position, Blimling (op cit.) and Silver (2004) have argued alternative approaches to those proposed by Blakey (op cit.) and Tight (op cit.). Blimling (op cit.) suggested HEI provision of SRA could address student preferences in a dynamic way, pointing to the trend towards building more en-suite style SRA as one example of provision being updated to address student preferences. Additionally, Silver (op cit.) argued that the move by HEI away from active institutional policy regarding SRA and into a reactive policy regarding students' residential accommodation preferences had degraded the ability of HEI to inform the 'how' and 'why' of HEI provided SRA. Moreover, institutions were retreating in their traditional position of shaping SRA (i.e. pedagogical aims, student socialisation) as a component of students' experience of a HEI and HE. The tension raised through this debate regarding student preferences appeared to include the dynamic and contested nature of 'who' and 'what' drives change with and in provision of SRA.

Rather than treat the debate as either 'student' or 'institution' driven, this research aims to explore and understand this relationship of SE in and with SRA as a co-created, dynamic process. This process operates at the interface of policy, practice and staff and students' experiences and perceptions. As noted in Chapter 2, policy has influenced 'who' the students and staff working and residing in SRA are across history. Institutional policy has also influenced the built environment and had a cascading influence on students' preferences, expectations and experiences in and with SRA. Exploring student and staff perceptions and relationships in this research is aimed at understanding the influence of staff and student relationships on SE in and with SRA. Alongside students' preferences, student satisfaction has also acted as a dimension of influence on SRA provision.

Student residential accommodation and student satisfaction

Picking up on the issue of HEI setting clear and accurate expectations of SRA for students, the NUS (2014) produced a report *Homes fit for study: the state of*

student housing in the UK. The NUS report employed Thomsen's (2007) definition for student housing satisfaction across housing options as "the experience of a positive balance between expectations and reality in relation to one's dwelling" (19). The report highlighted students' priority of 'value-for-money' across various types of SRA (e.g. social housing, private flats, purpose-built accommodation) (19-21). The report cited students surveyed as framing satisfaction with housing based on what trade-offs students perceived different types of SRA imposed. For example, a student living with their parents or guardians may perceive the social trade off of less privacy as high; however, if they pay little or no rent to their parents the financial costs are seen as relatively low. In contrast, while purpose-built SRA scored lowest on the value-for-money proposition, it was seen as offering the highest level of amenities (e.g. lounges, tv rooms, cafe) (NUS, *ibid.*). While the costs to students are very high, the provision of community and amenities were seen as in-line with what students expected of SRA. What is unclear from the report was what were the trade-offs students cited, and how and why might such trade-offs influence students' housing decision-making? Underlying the proposition different factors influenced students' housing decision-making and satisfaction was the assertion, economic costs took priority over social benefits of participation in HEI provided SRA. Likewise, the report did not engage with the social and psychological influence of students remaining in their origin home for part or all of their undergraduate degree on students' social behaviours (i.e. social networks within their HEI).

With similar regard for students' satisfaction, Thomsen (2007, 2008) is again helpful in highlighting the importance of students' expectations and experiences of SRA. She argued that their satisfaction with SRA reflected how closely students' expectation and experiences within a SRA were in alignment/aligned. While Thomsen (2007, 2008) suggested student preferences and satisfaction were interlinked, she argued there was a lag between 'historical' or 'traditional' expectations and students' present experience of SRA. She noted, institutions were key to setting and stating expectations of student residents in a SRA, and holding students to account influenced students' satisfaction with their SRA communities. Thus, regardless of how 'managed' a SRA may appear, setting and maintaining clear policy and practice within a SRA may help influence students' satisfaction generally, and create clear boundaries and expectations for students

of other students, staff and the SRA broadly. Related to students' preferences and satisfaction are students' characteristics and identities, explored in relation to SRA in the following section.

3.4 Student residential accommodation, student characteristics and identities

The relationship between SRA, student characteristics and identities has been explored and examined as part of a number of propositions regarding: student housing biographies, student social networks and students' personal development.

3.4.1 Student residential accommodation and student housing biographies

Another approach to HEI provided SRA has been through a student housing biographies lens. In their work on student housing, Rugg, Ford and Burrows (2004) proposed deeper consideration of how students' housing biographies were influenced and constituted within a niche market (i.e. SRA). Rugg, Rhodes & Jones (2000) argued SRA and student housing biographies reflected "the convergence of a student housing market to student housing needs with respect to location and management practice" (24). The nature of the student housing market and its proposed influence on student housing biographies was reflected in the authors' discussion of students' housing biographies and student housing pathways. Similar to Clapham (2005), Rugg et al. (2000) proposed SRA conferred a number of advantages to students over other student housing pathways. The authors noted how other housing options and pathways (i.e. private rental flats, lodgings, bedsitters) did not contain the same mix of support elements from parents and institutions, therefore, may not contribute like HEI provided SRA to students' housing biographies. The authors took up a position that the convergence of a student housing market to student preferences reflected a dynamic set of largely positive elements for students, elements of support from the origin home and other bodies (i.e. HEI) that other people outside of the student housing market did not have access to (i.e. young people not attending an HEI). The long term implications for students, from the authors' perspective, was a clearer transition out of the origin home, and a semi-protected

or intermediary period prior to entering a stage of private renting or ownership in the housing sector.

Similarly, Rugg, Ford and Burrows (2004) again drew on the notion of student housing pathway to explore and construct “five ‘ideal’ typical housing pathways followed by young people, including: a chaotic pathway, an unplanned pathway, a constrained pathway, a planned (non-student) pathway, and a student pathway” (19). The authors discussed how leaving the parental home represents a transition from origin home into ‘adulthood’ for many students, and proposed a number of components they see as favourable to the transition out of the origin home and into the broader housing sector. For Rugg et al. (2004), “...there is a high degree of intervention in the sector by HEIs, which generally takes an active role in supporting students’ moves into private renting. No other group within the rented sub-sector receives the level of assistance afforded to students in this respect. Additionally, even outside the intervention of the HEI, student renting compromises what might be termed a niche market” (23). The authors proposed support from HEIs (as providers and guarantors) acting as intermediaries between students and the PRS as part of a student housing pathway may, in many instances, provide a set of advantages for students over non-students of similar age entering the general housing sector.

Asserting that students have an advantageous position created within a housing hierarchy presumes that students inherently occupy a set of advantages. It remains unclear if students do hold a set of definable advantages through their position as ‘students’ and participation in institution provided SRA. A ‘rights’ and ‘advantages’ approach, proposed by the authors, becomes tenuous when considering the diversity within what is being broadly defined as ‘students’. Moreover, students’ housing ‘advantage’ and ‘pathway’ appeared abstracted from the broader discussion of the housing sector generally. And the authors omitted specific discussion of whether and how various ‘pathways’ conferred advantages and disadvantages to groups (i.e. student, non-student) and individuals. Without a clear, disaggregated picture of how individuals and groups (i.e. domestic, international students, students of various socioeconomic statuses) approach their housing ‘pathway’ and decision-making it remains contested and unclear what, if any, advantages a student housing pathway confers to students.

Adding further complexity to Rugg et al., (2000, 2004) is a lack of evidence, understanding and awareness from the authors in their argument of what is important to students about housing. Students, like non-students, develop their housing biographies through their experiences, decision-making, access and participation in various types of residential accommodation, including, SRA (i.e. private sector lodgings and flats, higher education provided SRA, private student residential accommodation). SRA, as a stand-alone niche market or part of a broader housing sector, does not exist in a vacuum. The influence of SRA may extend beyond students' housing biographies and cascade into the housing biographies of non-students, whether this be conscious or not remains unclear. Still, policy aimed at SRA no doubt influences the housing available to students, students' housing biographies and host communities. This social influence of policy and practice on students' participation in housing is further developed next in relation to SRA and students' social networks.

3.4.2 Student residential accommodation and students' social networks

The topic of SRA and students' social networks has also been raised within the existing literature on SRA and students' characteristics and identities.

Reflecting on the Robbins Committee Report (1963), Brothers and Hatch (1971) proposed a key consideration for HEI provided SRA was the possibility for students from a range of social, economic, political and cultural backgrounds to converge in a community setting. While converging students from various backgrounds could not guarantee interpersonal and intrapersonal development, the authors argued that participation may hold key opportunities for students from non-traditional backgrounds (i.e. lower socioeconomic backgrounds) to benefit from participation in HEI provided SRA. Noting the work of Scherer (1969), Brothers and Hatch (1971) proposed further analysis of the patterns of *group* life in the context of living arrangements, such as a SRA (ibid). Brothers and Hatch (1971) interrogated the assertion that a university and SRA are a community, in the sense when an individual becomes a member there are implicit and explicit social relations which are fundamental to membership and participation, in this

research a university SRA community. However, in their (and this) research Brothers and Hatch (1971) found that students in SRA did not become a community through being in close proximity. Instead, a number of social factors such as ethnic heritage, gender and students' socioeconomic status played a role in filtering *who* participated in SRA, *how* students participated and segmented into social groups in various types of SRA residences. A student's social networks, the authors proposed, reflected a number of social considerations that saw 'like' students congregate with other students they perceived shared similar characteristics and identities (i.e. socioeconomic status, ethnicity, cultural heritage, language).

Brothers and Hatch (1971) noted how, in the absence of stated expectations from an institution for students to integrate and adopt a 'university community' identity (i.e. through a set of shared community standards), or, programming aimed at creating socialising opportunities for students, students may revert back to their positions in a social hierarchy reflective of the broader society. In this way, the promise of SRA to engage students and develop or grow students' social networks could not be decoupled from students' social experiences prior to entering SRA. Instead, students self-selected into types of residences and congregated with 'similar' students, frustrating the argument SRA provided a context within which students could network and benefit socially from intra and inter-group 'diversity' in 'community'. As Brothers and Hatch (1971) noted, a culture of SRA as for the middle class permeated throughout their study. While the Robbins Committee Report (1963) had proposed those students from less advantaged backgrounds might benefit the most from participation in SRA, these students were also the least likely to participate in SRA (Brothers and Hatch, 1971).

A key proposition for HEI provision of SRA has been the potential for student social networking and students' personal and social development within SRA communities. However, prior research noted above does not provide strong evidence co-habitation and close proximity of students in HEI provided SRA automatically compels students into such networks. Rather, prior research found students flock to others of similar dispositions and socioeconomic status (Brothers and Hatch, 1971; Rudd, 1980). While institution provided programming

aimed at creating opportunities for students to socialise may assist in students' social networking, it is not clear that such opportunities create a clear pathway to student social networking and students' integration into an SRA. The present research could benefit current understanding of SE in and with SRA and the effects of SRA on students' social networking. Existing literature and research has related students' social networking as one dimension of SRA influencing students' personal development.

3.4.3 Student residential accommodation and students' personal development

Prior research on a relationship between SRA, student characteristics and identities has also engaged with questions around students' personal development.

For example, Astin, Astin and Lindholm (2011) proposed students' participation in SRA may influence students' personal development. In their work, *Cultivating the Spirit: how college can enhance a student's inner life*, Astin et al., (ibid.) noted the possibilities of co-location and institution facilitated programming within student residences may provide students with opportunities to engage in and with the lives of other students from diverse backgrounds. Such exposure, the authors proposed, may provide opportunities for students to explore what they called 'others' and 'otherness,' potentially leading to change at the level of the individuals (i.e. attitudes, beliefs) (Astin, Astin and Lindholm, ibid.). Similarly, authors have discussed the role of housing in a student's development as an individual and sense of independence (Rugg et al., 2004; Ford, Rugg and Burrows, 2002; Jones, 2002; Kenyon, 1999). While the authors did not argue a causal relationship between participation in SRA and measurable development, they suggested that exposure to 'others' and 'otherness' may lead to students developing a greater sense of self, a sense of equanimity, and religious or spiritual tolerance and tolerance of ambiguity (Astin, Astin and Lindholm, ibid.). Similarly, Blimling (2015) discussed how students' participation in SRA may contribute to their personal development. In his work on undergraduate SRA and student learning, Blimling (ibid.) argued the importance of staffing and the peer environment to facilitating students' personal development while in residence

within an SRA. He discussed how students may benefit from the informal environment of SRA. Where students are coming from a multitude of prior life experiences, HEI provided SRA provides a space for students to 'encounter' and 'engage' with others, facilitated by paraprofessional and professional staff, and in a community type environment where standards for engagement by students and staff could be stated explicitly and monitored across time and space. He proposed SRA was an environment where students could develop awareness around a number of academic, personal, social and housing issues and topics. In this regard, SRA could be a dynamic environment where students were presented with 'opportunities' to engage and explore and 'obligated' only to a set of community engagement standards.

Another important contribution on SRA and students' personal development emerged from the work of Thomas (2012). Thomas (2012) explored and examined student belonging in HEI. Approaching SRA with a lens towards student belonging and retention, she argued SRA had a role in the recruitment, integration and matriculation of students on undergraduate courses. She proposed students who participated and felt integrated into SRA were more likely to remain in university. Highlighting the work of Tinto & Goodsell (1994, 2006), Thomas presented evidence "from across seven 'What Works?' projects firmly points to the importance of student having a strong sense of belonging in HE, which is the result of engagement, and that this is most effectively nurtured through mainstream activities, such as student residential accommodation" (12). Thomas and Jones (2017) later extend and contribute to questions of SRA and students' personal development by exploring SE in HE in relation to commuter students. Their findings suggested commuter students valued their level of 'disengagement' and perceived 'engagement' with non-academic activities as more 'risky' than their non-commuting counterparts. Such findings bring to the foreground the influence of students' characteristics and identities, perceptions and diverse approaches to their expectations and experiences in and with HE and HEI provided SRA. It also provides for a pause to consider how framing students (i.e. commuter, residential) influences the questions asked and subsequent meaning made of students' experiences and integration into the institutional fabric of HEI, including, HEI provided SRA.

While existing literature and research has proposed a number of lenses and questions related to student characteristics and identities and SRA, further study may lead to understanding the dynamic nature, relationships and influence of students' identities on SE in and with SRA. For example, there remains ample opportunity to explore and examine under-researched student groups (i.e. international and postgraduates), and to further explore diverse student residence contexts. Prior study, as yet, is silent on the 'how' SRA may reflect and influence students' identities. While a number of 'why' propositions have been put forward, and three have been reviewed above, this research grounds itself and builds on this existing work by looking at how the interface of physical, social and personal space interface and inform SE in and with SRA.

3.5 Student residential accommodation and higher education institutions

Another key topic within the current literature on SRA and SE focused on the role, rights and responsibilities of HEI. Issues from existing literature and research related to SRA and HEI included: *in loco parentis*, student numbers and student services.

3.5.1 Student residential accommodation and in loco parentis

Recalling from Chapter 1, Stone (1974) noted early in the development of English universities, in particular Oxford c. 1167 and Cambridge c. 1209, HEI came to be viewed as acting *in loco parentis* (in lieu of parents) for students.

As part of the *in loco parentis* role the institutions took up, SRA provided a context where the institutions could contain, monitor and discipline students' activities. In explaining how Oxford and Cambridge may have come into the role of *in loco parentis*, Stone (1974) noted that many students travelled distances which made returning home on a daily basis impractical. Therefore, students would need to lodge themselves near the institution. While early in the development of Oxford students were housed in the town, tensions between the townspeople and students (i.e. riots) created unfavourable conditions for students to be lodged in the broader Oxford community. Instead, Oxford and later Cambridge, built what Stone (1974) referred to as primitive halls of residence.

Following the production of primitive halls of residence came halls of residence and then the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge. Each college operated as an independent entity within the larger university (Stone, 1974). Students participated in courses, and took shelter within their respective colleges' residential accommodation. Oxbridge colleges provided a context where students were provided with study space, eating space and sleeping space. Dons, acting *in loco parentis*, scaffolded students' activities and work in residence. Similarly, for Van de Hurst (2004), the role of the HEI in monitoring and disciplining students was critical to the socialisation of students during the years students participated in a HEI across history. Van de Hurst (2004) noted that tensions arose as sharp changes and shifts in social attitudes towards HEI and HEI provided SRA destabilised historical traditions of HEI as *in loco parentis*. As students of adult age began to enter HEI provided SRA, the historical rules and regulations that had scaffolded the form, functions and purpose of SRA were in tension with students' expectations of a transition to 'independent adult life'. Again, SRA (and HE) as a 'gate' through which students passed from their parental home to adult life was under pressure. Moreover, Van de Hurst (2004) questioned a number of assumptions about the contribution of SRA to students to students' experiences of SRA and HE more generally. Namely, to what degree are the 'contributions' SRA makes to students' experience of HE bound up in the discourses surrounding students', HEI and what a Higher Education is more generally. Instead, proposing further study and questions related to whether, and how, students' experiences and meaning making of SRA aligned (or not) with the historical discourses conceived and constructed around students participating in SRA.

This notion of the institution as often acting *in loco parentis* carried forward into the middle twentieth century. As evidenced in Chapter 2 of this thesis, while the forms of SRA diversified, the relationship of the institution to students remained largely as substitute parent. SRA supported the role of institution as *in loco parentis* by providing a means through which institutional staff could monitor, discipline and socialise students beyond the formal learning environment. Even so, existing literature and research (Van de Hurst, 2004) challenged the assertion that SRA acting *in loco parentis* provided student residents with the guidance and

influence historically ascribed to them. Part of this challenge to existing historical narratives came with changing student numbers and participation in HE.

3.5.2 Student residential accommodation and student numbers

Across history, student numbers in English HEI became an important issue and influencer on HEI provided SRA. For example, Muthesius (2000) noted the influence of changes in student numbers post World War II on HEI and SRA. Muthesius (ibid.) related changing student numbers to new types of HEI (i.e. plateglass universities) and new architectural conventions adopted for SRA (i.e. houses, halls of residence, tower blocks). He argued student numbers accelerated during the post-World War II period, stressing supply and demand of HEI, and HEI provided SRA. Halls of residence began to scale in relation to students' demand for higher education. With a need to 'house' a rapidly growing number of students, Muthesius (2000) suggested halls were 'scaled' to address the growing demand and low levels of HEI provided SRA.

Similarly, Beloff (1968) proposed:

“The opening of the new universities in the 1960s was the greatest single expansion of higher education that England [had] ever known. Secondly, it became apparent that from 1961-62 onwards the impact of the post-war rise in the birth-rate would vastly swell the number of that generation in which university applicants were to be found. This phenomenon was christened ‘the bulge,’” inspiring the birth of Plateglass university into English higher education (Beloff, 1968, p. 15).

With the benefit of hindsight, student numbers were rapidly driving demand for HEI, and HEI provided SRA beyond supply. From the post World War II period into the 1960s, rising demand for higher education pushed new types of SRA, largely aimed at accommodating growing numbers of students in universities. As Muthesius (op cit.) highlighted, new types of SRA and HEI emerged, replicating the ideal of residence based higher education. However, sustaining residence based higher education would come under further pressure, not only in terms of student numbers, but in new attitudes and ideas related to the form, functions and purpose of institution provided student residences.

As student numbers increased dramatically post-World War II, HEI provided SRA came under pressure. Beloff (1968) explained how a number of trade-offs were made in the form, and stated functions, of HEI provided SRA. Namely, an increase in the building of student halls and residences which could accommodate large numbers of students. Halls of residence were a pragmatic means through which to accommodate students and keep costs of building and maintenance lower, in comparison to the existing colleges and student houses that Oxbridge, KCL, UCL and the UL were operating.

Student numbers, access, participation, recruitment and retention have continued to influence the rationale, for and against, HEI provision of SRA across the history of English higher education development and into the present. As student numbers shifted so did the discourses encapsulating SRA. Namely, SRA began to shift from a key dimension of students' experience and participation in HE to a student service.

3.5.3 Student residential accommodation as a student service

Reflecting on the forms, functions and stated purpose of SRA in HE, Blimling (2015) explored a number of issues he believed influenced a shift towards a student service approach to SRA.

First, Blimling (2015) traced a number of historical changes in student participation in higher education. He proposed key factors, such as the integration of women and minorities into higher education, and the students' rights movements of the 1960s as formative in moving the debate regarding HEI provided SRA from a 'pedagogic' aim to a 'student service' aim. Second, he noted how funding from the government for HEI provided student residences had fallen off dramatically from the 1960s and 1970s. Third, he proposed social attitudes towards HEI provided SRA were growing sceptical of the social value-add and benefit of institution provided student residences. Fourth, students were beginning to ask for treatment as independent adults, not subject to the rules and regulations of prior times when higher education institutions were seen broadly as *in loco parentis*. Additionally, work by authors such as Rudd (1980) pointed out a lack of evidence for continued development of HEI provided SRA without a clear

understanding of 'how' and 'why' students and institutions benefited from the arrangement. For Blimling (2015) and Rudd (1980), institution provided SRA as a student service reflected an alignment of contemporary views and attitudes towards HEI provided SRA, and a growing movement towards a focus on administration and managerialism within the operations of HEI. Thus, HEI provided SRA as a student service brought a historical practice up to date with contemporary views and conditions surrounding the operation and administration of HEI.

In contrast, Silver (2004) and Silver and Silver (1997) argued that propositions, such as those presented by Blimling (2015) on HEI provided SRA as a student service, diminished students. Not only did SRA as a student service diminish students' position, it also consolidated a view of students as 'customers' and 'consumers' of, and in, HE. In *Students: changing roles, changing lives*, Silver and Silver (1997) acknowledged the 'changing roles and changing lives' of students in relation to the higher education sector across history. However, they noted funding for English higher education from the government for HEI provided SRA had gone through cycles of more and less state funding and aid (i.e. capital grants for residential development). A move towards defunding HEI provided SRA could have consequences beyond the housing of students attending a higher education institution. However, Silver and Silver (1997) were unclear about the evidence to substantiate the link between defunding from the government and the impact on student and local housing. In hindsight, the possible cascading effects could be seen as robust, HEI provided SRA was not pressured or scrutinised with a view of transforming the provision into a self-sustaining housing project within HEI. For Silver (2004) and Silver & Silver (1997), treating HEI provided student residences as a student service exacerbated rather than confronted the 'managerialism' and 'rationalisation' of HE, for students, institutions and English society more generally. Such tensions between SRA and local housing contexts were surfaced and developed in literature and research related to student residential accommodation and supply, demand and distribution of local housing.

3.6 Student residential accommodation and local housing

As SRA has shifted from independent and insular to in society and related to broader housing discussions and debates, recent research has taken up the issue of interfacing SRA and local housing. The influence of student demand for housing on local communities and regions has become a central concern. While the discussion has focused on physical supply and demand of housing, current literature also examined how policy and practice may be creating tensions between rather than integrating students, institutions and community stakeholders. Existing literature and research has approached the relationship between student demand for residential accommodation and local housing with a focus on relating SRA with and in local housing contexts, 'studentification', and local housing authority policies and practices.

3.6.1 Student residential accommodation and local housing

A growing segment of the literature reviewed for this thesis focused on a relationship between SRA and local housing. In *Growing by degrees: universities in the future of urban development*, Robinson (2009) explored the influence of universities on urban development. One area of particular concern for Robinson (ibid.) was SRA. Where Robinson (2009) indicated institutions were primary providers of SRA across much of the development of HE in England to date, HEI provision of SRA had been extended (substituted) into the local housing sector. This 'creep' of student housing beyond the narrowly defined HEI provision of SRA has posed a number of issues for students, institutions, communities, local and regional housing sectors. Namely, students' market position in housing sub-markets and tensions between students' demand for housing and non-student populations (i.e. single families, social housing recipients). Robinson (op cit.) noted the competitive position students occupy as they may be willing to accept (by choice or not) lower housing standards, pool their financial resources, and maintain somewhat flexible preferences in relation to distance and travel times from institution to accommodation.

Similarly, Christie, Munro and Rettig (2002) noted a trend for undergraduate students who moved into HEI provided SRA to move out into the PRS after their

first-year. The authors noted in their study, students reflected on the 'transition' out of their origin home and to an HEI. The authors suggested students moving out of HEI provided SRA and into the private rental or homeownership sector viewed this move as another step in a 'natural progression' towards further personal independence. In reflecting on the inevitability of such a move, Christie, Munro and Rettig (2010) noted how students' confidence in their housing decision-making into and out of HEI provided SRA may be related to a strong sense of family financial support. A key hypothesis for the authors focused on whether, and how, "housing circumstances constitute a significant indicator of students' quality of life, enabling structural inequalities and differences between students' current circumstances and their capacity to cope with risk to be revealed and explained" (3). The authors noted how institution policy and practice appeared to favour first-year undergraduate students and international students (undergraduate and postgraduate) over 'home' students. It was unclear to the authors whether, and how, institutions' policies and practices were influencing students once they had arrived into HEI provided SRA or had been excluded altogether. Moreover, the policies and practices that favoured first-year students also signposted those same students should expect to move out of HEI provided SRA and into the private rental sector (or back to their parental home) at the end of their first-year. As such, Christie, Munro and Rettig (2010) argued HEI provided SRA was dynamic and bound up in a number of institution policies, practices, and students' expectations.

Taking a longer view across history, the work of Christie, Munro and Rettig (2010) highlighted how SRA and local housing had come full circle. From early Oxford when students lived amongst the townspeople, through a number of HEI provided SRA epochs and into the present, SRA had again brought forward concerns over where and how to house students. Where and how to house students was again interfacing and influencing local housing and the broader community.

3.6.2 Student residential accommodation and 'studentification'

What is 'studentification'? In a report from UK Universities (2006), *Studentification: a guide to opportunities, challenges and practices:*

“Studentification is described as, the growth of high concentrations of students within the localities of HEIs, often accommodated within [Housing Multiple Occupants] HMOs. There are four dimensions to the process with the social tier being the primary factor. Social: the replacement and/or displacement of established residents with a transient, generally young and single, social grouping. Cultural: the growth of concentrations of young people with shared cultures and lifestyles, and consumption practices, which in turn results in the increase of certain types of retail and service infrastructure. The physical: the downgrading or upgrading of the physical environment, depending on the local context. And, economic: the inflation of property prices and a change in the balance of the housing stock resulting in neighbourhoods becoming dominated by private rented accommodation and houses in multiple occupation, and decreasing levels of owner-occupation” (UK Universities, 2006: 12).

Building on this definition of ‘studentification’ was the work of Smith and Holt (2007). The authors proposed ‘studentification’ could be identified across multiple levels of housing in a community. The authors identified three levels of housing in a community within which studentification may occur, including: at the level of a street, a housing block, or groups of housing units where student residents made up the majority of renters and owner occupiers. Focusing on “higher education students and (a) link to provincial gentrification” Smith and Holt (ibid.) examined whether, and how, student housing patterns and selection were effectively turning students into ‘apprentice gentrifiers’ (143-144). It was critical to understand how students’ housing decisions were laying a foundation for a housing life-course, similar to the concepts of housing pathway and housing biographies noted earlier in this Chapter. Smith and Holt (2007) argued that students’ housing patterns, and the ‘studentification’ of areas or regions of local housing were restricting students’ experience of communities. Students were gentrifying areas in towns across England through their patterned use of town housing and other services. The authors proposed that concentrating students with other students created an ‘enclave effect,’ resulting in a ‘gap’ and isolating the general community population and students. This relationship between students’ residential accommodation, social network for housing, and demand on town resources remained unclear. Still, the concentration of students and the robust influence of students’ housing choices outside of institution provided SRA has caused

concern for how 'studentification' may influence local, regional and national housing markets, services and the shaping of a broader local community.

3.6.3 Student residential accommodation and local housing policies and practices

While 'studentification' may approach the influence of students' housing decisions on local housing communities, another approach has looked at the influence of local housing policies and practices on students' housing choices.

Sage (2010) explored the influence of local housing policies and practices on the provision of accommodation to students outside of HEI. She took a view that local housing policies and practices were also responsible for issues with students in urban environments, such as 'studentification'. For Sage (2010), 'studentification,' or the concentration of students into specific areas of urban environments, had been conceptualised and defined at three levels. First, there was the academic conceptualisation of 'studentification,' where Sage (2010) referred to the work of Smith and Holt (2007) on 'studentification' and students as 'apprentice gentrifiers'. Then there was the local communities' experience and conceptualisation of studentification. Here she noted how studentification resisted normalisation, rather, different 'enclaves' of students had emerged through policies and practices which made renting to students, or, producing purpose built student accommodation possible. Finally, she examined approaches to studentification and the link to national higher education and housing policies. In her work, she argued national policies (i.e. UGC grants for HEI provided SRA, student housing maintenance grants) had influenced the development of HEI and housing in a number of urban areas. Rather than assume studentification was the product of students' decision making, independent of local, regional and national housing policy, Sage (ibid.) argued the patterns and trends of concentrating students into specific areas and regions of towns and cities was actually an outcome of local housing authority policies aimed at mitigating the influx and outflow of students on city development. Sage (ibid.) acknowledged that different localities and regions were equipped with different levels of housing, and took different approaches to permitting or supporting the development of purpose built SRA.

While acknowledging that students influenced local housing sectors, Sage (2010) also highlighted the tension between students and single families. A tension, she argued, was the result of landlords aiming to maximise profit, thus, showing a greater willingness to rent to students over single families. This example highlighted the tensions influencing local housing stock and the relationship between SRA and local housing, a tension raised in an earlier study by Morgan and McDowell (1979). Morgan and McDowell (1979) noted that students' market position was often competitive in relation to single families as per head in household, students were on average likely able to pay a higher total rent for similar accommodation than their single family competitors. Sage (2010) raised a key point, that of SRA as part of a broader community housing story that interfaces and inextricably interlinks institutions, students and community housing.

One area where further research on the relationship between SRA and local housing may benefit from the present research is through a proposed look at 'how' and 'why' students engage in and with HEI provided SRA. From a view on local housing policies and practices in relation to SRA, studentification describes a concentration of a specific population in a housing sector. Perhaps, like other specific populations in the housing sector (i.e. single adults, single families), students concentrate or congregate amongst those who are in a similar environment or who have similar interests (i.e. being a student). While this may not resolve questions regarding the influence of concentrating students in urban or provincial areas, it may highlight some complexities and dimensions in debate surrounding the relationship between SRA and local housing communities. Next, how this thesis proposes to approach and explore SRA using an SE lens.

3.7 Exploring SRA through an SE lens

In Chapter 1, I proposed SE as the theoretical lens for this thesis. Recalling SE for this thesis was proposed as a way of exploring the multidimensional, relational and ecological nature of SRA. SE in and with SRA would draw on elements influencing SRA such as: policy, practice, and physical, social and personal space. While SE exists as both a theory (Astin, 1984, 1993), for this thesis, SE is

an approach to explore SRA. The multidimensional, relational and ecological SE approach for this thesis draws on social and spatial themes to help frame staff and students' feedback of their experiences and perceptions of SRA and HE. SRA as a built environment, physical space, social space and personal space will be developed in order to frame SE in and with the SRA case study sites for this thesis.

3.7.1 Student residential accommodation as a built environment

SRA has been approached in existing literature and research as a type of built environment (Brothers and Hatch, 1971; Moss and Richter, 2010; Richter and Walker, 2007). A number of studies have explored the built environment of SRA in England through various empirical methods (Brothers and Hatch, 1971; Holdsworth, 2009; Moss and Richter, 2010; Muthesius, 2000; Richter and Walker, 2007; Sanderson, 1975; Silver, 2004; Silver and Silver, 1997; Tapper and Salter, 1992; Tight, 2011). These studies highlighted changes in the built environment, architectural conventions, social makeup and influence of SRA on students, higher education institutions and the general public across different time periods in English higher education history.

For example, Holdsworth (2009) took an institutional approach, focusing on the interface of admissions and policies aimed at widening participation, and the physical constraints of institution provided SRA. She challenged what she saw as “taken for granted assumptions about student mobility, independence and transition to adulthood, and issues facing student mobility in a time of mass participation in English higher education” (Holdsworth, 2009: 1849-1861). Holdsworth (ibid.) argued, far from a focus on academic opportunity, students in her study on HEI provided SRA reflected on how and why “opportunities of freedom and independence associated with this move away from home that appeal to students” (1861). For Holdsworth (ibid.), SRA had come to represent both a physical space and a place where students could begin a transition from their origin home into their adult lives, and a social space that was adapted to meet current student demand. While institution policy, practice and provision of SRA may be in a dynamic relationship with students and students' demand for accommodation, student mobility, such as that which enabled students to move

beyond their origin home environments, “had come to be an elite practice in English HE” (Holdsworth, 2009: 1849). Growing student participation rates and demand for English HE was once again placing HEI provided SRA under pressure. Buildings designed for single-occupancy rooms were now holding two to three student bed spaces. Students’ expectations of institutions, and institution provided SRA were out of alignment.

Similarly, Moss and Richter (2010) applied concepts from Henri Lefebvre, including: rhythm, routine and ritual to students’ use of the physical and social space within a SRA. The authors attempted to explore and understand how students adapted to communal living in a SRA. Their findings suggested students utilise a set of different strategies to adapt or cope with the built environment (i.e. physical and social components) of a SRA. Earlier, Richter and Walker (2007) had explored what built environment factors influenced student satisfaction in a SRA. Interviewing over 40 undergraduate students, the authors argued maintenance of the building and peer relationships were key issues for students in a SRA. The examples of prior research highlighted two themes regarding SRA as a ‘physical’ and ‘social’ space.

3.7.2 Student residential accommodation as a physical space

In *Impact of space on future changes in higher education*, Barnett and Temple (2006) explored the theme of physical space in the context of HEI. As part of their work, they problematised the notion that institution provision of SRA is a given for many institutions and students across English higher education. Instead, Barnett and Temple (2006) suggested SRA made up a segment of the total physical estate of some HEI. Noting a number of types of HEI that did not provide SRA, Barnett and Temple (2006) challenged several presumptions around the usefulness of SRA to student and HEI alike. Instead, the authors suggested, a recalibration and focus on how institutions’ use of physical space (i.e. classroom space, lecture theatre space, academic offices, SRA) reflect what institutions value about their space. Without diving into an ethical or moral argument, Barnett and Temple (2006) proposed the use of space is not simply about the allocation of ‘physical’ space to different activities within an institution but whether, and how, the allocation of physical space influences social and personal ‘spaces’ within an

HEI. Similarly, Temple (2008) raised important questions about potential social and cultural implications for the institution embedded in the provision of different types of physical space, including SRA.

Likewise, Beloff (op cit.) examined the plate glass universities, strongly referencing their modern architectural design. It was their modern architectural design and use of glass and concrete frames that may have inspired Beloff (ibid.) to call them 'plateglass' universities. Moreover, Muthesius (op cit.) examined the postwar building boom in English HEI. He, like Beloff (ibid.), was interested in how the physical design replicated, rejected, or revised prior institution provided SRA conventions. Muthesius (ibid.) examined how various English universities emerging after World War experimented with the development of the physical space. Included in his work was an examination of how different plateglass universities approached the provision of SRA differently. Muthesius (ibid.) noted how some institutions, such as the University of York (1963), adopted a 'collegiate type' of SRA. Others, such as the University of Warwick, adopted a more pragmatic approach, utilising a mix of halls of residence and student houses (Muthesius, 2000).

SRA, as defined for this research, reflects a type of physical space where students who are attending a HEI may reside for part of their time on a course. SRA is at first a physical place in this case provided by an institution, in the first instance, for students. As others have suggested in prior research, this narrow definition of SRA has been extended to include a number of iterations from the early primitive halls of residence, through the collegiate model, to halls of residence, student houses, and student flats. The integration and disintegration of SRA across different types of English institutions highlighted the diverse approaches to SRA taken by institutions throughout the history of English higher education development.

3.7.3 Student residential accommodation as a social space

SRA has been approached as a 'social' space. Focusing on the social component of SRA, authors have interrogated the social influence of SRA on staff, students, and relationships between staff and students across history.

Brothers and Hatch (1971) compared students living in several types of housing. In explaining the rationale for their work, the authors contended students' participation in SRA did not guarantee social integration. Instead, they argued that students who could benefit from participation, those for whom access to SRA could mean encounters with new and diverse peer populations were often those least likely to enter SRA. Instead, SRA acted as a filter, whereby, students who participated saw participation as a part of participation in a HEI (i.e. Oxbridge colleges). For Brothers and Hatch (1971) SRA acted in part as a social filter, and simple proximity of students was not enough of a catalyst to promote socialisation and sharing amongst students in a SRA.

Taking a different approach, Blimling (op cit.) argued one of the main rationales for encouraging students' engagement in and with SRA related to students' social and personal development. He proposed a number of instruments available to HEI to develop and maintain student communities in SRA. Namely, the training of student and professional staff in SRA to facilitate student engagement with other students. Blimling (op cit.) pointed to a number of programming models within SRA and student residence life and education across US institutions that he felt contributed to an ideal of SE in and with SRA. In contrast, Temple (2006, 2009) argued such claims on the social value-add of participation in space remain unclear. For Temple (ibid.) students may associate influence and significance with their participation in SRA because they see SRA as part of the university, and think universities are important places.

3.7.4 Student residential accommodation as a personal space

Moving from SRA as a physical space, to SRA as a social space, SRA has also been approached as a type of 'personal' space for students.

For example, in *Housing choices and issues for young people in the UK*, Heath (2008) reflected on several factors influencing students' perceptions of their accommodation as a personal space. Heath (2008) examined the influence of housing tenure, changing patterns of relationship and household formation, money, vulnerable groups, and policy on the diversification of young people's

transitions out of their origin homes and into the broader housing opportunities. Citing the work of Ford et al. (2002), Heath (ibid.) included “student (housing) pathways as marked by a high degree of planning, access to the niche student housing market and considerable family support. This pathway plays out on a national and, increasingly, global level” (9). Heath (ibid.) draws attention to the influence of access to resources (financial, emotional, psychological) for students and the approach to SRA as a ‘supported’ personal space for students to enter and begin a process of independent life.

Amplifying themes of transition and independence in *Understanding young people’s transitions in university halls through space and time*, Moss and Richter (2010) focused on students’ approaches and meaning making of their transitions ‘into’ and ‘through’ life in a hall of residence. Moss and Richter (2010) framed their theoretical discussion of students’ transitions into and through the hall using the work of Henri Lefebvre (1991), including: ‘routine’, ‘rhythm’ and ‘ritual’. In their work, they highlighted the co-construction of space, the influence of ‘avoidance’ on monitoring and self-regulation of activities within the hall. For instance, a number of students in their feedback to the authors noted that they changed their routines in order to avoid or encounter other students in their hall. The theme of ‘control’ permeated the text, with students’ feedback noting a lack of control over the shared/communal spaces influencing their sense of personal wellbeing, routines and rhythm within their hall of residence.

Likewise, in *Rhythm, routine and ritual: strategies for collective living among first-year students in halls of residence*, Richter and Walker (2008) explored students’ experiences and negotiation of transition to adulthood and communal living in halls of residence. Their work highlighted the influence of physical and emotional ‘journeying’ for students exiting their origin homes and moving in to a communal living environment. This transition was framed with a number of opportunities and challenges as students’ strategies for adapting to communal life pressed them to develop a sense of personal ‘space’ through strategies to negotiate their collective living environment. Creating a sense of personal space was seen as acting in part to assert a sense of independence, and to assimilate in to a communal living environment “through repetitive social and cultural practices” (22). Richter and Walker (op cit.) noted that this transition into and

desire for personal space in a collective living environment was expressed in how students adapted their behaviours and routines in order to cultivate a sense of personal agency and influence with and in what may be otherwise experienced as SRA communal spaces.

In her work, *'Going away to uni': mobility, modernity and independence of English higher education* students, Holdsworth (2009) explored the influence of what she saw as a diversification in student backgrounds on students' decision to study at a local HEI or 'away' to university. Holdsworth (2009) explained "the expectation that going to university means moving away continues to shape students' experiences of and attitudes to university life" (1849). As such, she examined a number of assumptions related to student mobility and transitions to independence and adulthood for students in England. Finding, availability of local HEI, course desirability and family financial resources were challenges to a 'traditional' pattern of students leaving home to go 'away' to university.

Across these theoretical discussions three themes related to students' personal space in SRA shined through. First, a theme of transition and transitioning out of and away from the origin home was foregrounded as an aim and implicit component of students' motivation to enter SRA communal life. Second, independence was a key driver for students to enter SRA with SRA framed as an opportunity to create and cultivate a sense of personal space in both a physical location and within a communal social environment. Third, students' ability to negotiate transitions into SRA was underpinned by personal strategies and meaning making of SRA physical and social environmental circumstances (i.e. SRA built environment, SRA policy, self-regulating practices).

When discussing personal space in SRA, the above authors highlighted how students' perceptions influenced their adoption of behavioural changes to ease in to communal life in SRA. These themes of transition, independence and mobility were underpinned by concepts of 'routine', 'rhythm' and 'ritual' that highlighted students' adaptations aimed at developing a sense of personal space within the social and physical space of SRA. Following, integrating the study of SRA and SE as the theoretical lens for this research.

3.7.5 Studying SRA using an SE lens: a multidimensional, relational and ecological approach

With a focus on the influence of SRA physical, social and personal 'space' on students' experience of SRA and HE, this research proposed exploring and examining SRA using a multidimensional, relational and ecological SE lens. The application of theory in order to study SE in and with SRA is outlined below.

The SE lens proposed for this thesis was chosen to allow for study of whether, and how, physical, social and personal space factors influenced students' perceptions and experiences with and in SRA. To do so, this thesis reflects on theory and concepts related to SE from the work of Barnett (2007, 2011), Little et al. (2009), Solomonides (2013) and Trowler (2010). Barnett (2007, 2011) and Solomonides (2013) were chosen because they proposed a multidimensional, ecological approach to SE. Similarly, (Little et al., 2009) and Trowler (2010) explored the variety of interfacing tensions, drivers and debates influencing the definition and application of SE in UK HE. This multidimensional, ecological and dynamic approach to SE is applied here in relation to the provision of SRA.

Moreover, these theorists have considered the open and dynamic nature of a number of factors influencing students' engagement in and with HEI (and HE more generally). Through theory and concepts proposed by these authors, I hope to explore and examine a number of factors in relation to SRA and SE, including: policy, practice, staff and student relationships, the influence of physical-social and personal 'space' on SE in and with SRA. Exploring how individuals and groups co-create to transform SRA 'spaces' into 'places' (Temple, 2009).

Trowler (2010) noted, small single case studies has been the dominant mode of SE study in the UK. As such, this thesis proposed a two case study site approach to exploring a relationship between SRA and SE. As noted above, SRA has been explored and examined with a focus on the physical and social elements of SRA. While studies (Brothers and Hatch, 1971; Moss and Richter, 2010; Richter and Walker, 2007) have examined student residential accommodation through theoretical lenses such as Henri Lefebvre (1991) (1991)'s critique of every day life, this research draws on Barnett (2007, 2011), (Little et al., 2009) and Trowler

(2010) to create a holistic, ecological approach to study the influence of physical, social and personal space on staff and students' perceptions and experiences in and with SRA. SE in and with SRA is not abstracted from students' broader experience of HE. Rather, SE in and with SRA is situated, contingent and contextualised within the institution and geographical setting where case study sites (I) and (II) are located.

By adopting an SE lens through which to study SRA, this thesis aims to contribute to institutional practice and that of practitioners/professionals with an involvement in SRA, policy for SRA in the HE sector and theory. Tensions related to student access and participation, recruitment and retention have highlighted a number of environmental factors and conditions influencing SE in and with SRA. While prior work has examined student participation in and with SRA, further research may help better understand the multidimensional and ecological influences on SE in and with SRA. SE theory has been proposed as my primary theoretical lens through which to explore and examine the interface and influence of policy, practice, physical, social and personal space on staff and students' perceptions and experiences (in this instance, SE) in and with SRA.

3.8 Chapter summary

This Chapter has traced existing literature and research relevant to understanding SE in and with SRA and proposed the theoretical lens (SE) for this research. Within this Chapter a number of key issues, topics and themes have been raised relevant to understanding SE in and with SRA, including: student housing pathways, student housing preferences and satisfaction, student characteristics and identities, HEIs and local housing. Additionally, SRA as a 'built environment', physical spaces, social spaces and personal spaces have been identified as key influencers of SE in and with SRA. Together, these issues, topics and themes highlighted some of the important considerations in prior research on SRA in HE and how existing literature and research has informed and influenced the multidimensional, relational and ecological approach to SE in and with SRA chosen for this research. Following, Chapter 4 presents the methodology chosen for this research.

Chapter 4: Methodology

This Chapter details the methodology chosen for this study of SE in and with SRA.

4.1 Introduction

This Chapter details the methodology I chose to address the research questions and related aims for my fieldwork into SE in and with SRA. Recalling my research questions were:

- What factors influence higher education institution provision of student residential accommodation?
- What is the relationship between student residential accommodation and student engagement?
- What does student engagement in and with student residential accommodation mean to students and staff?

To address those research questions, the aims for my fieldwork were:

- to gather, synthesise and analyse key texts and institution policy documents related to provision of student residential accommodation
- to provide a description of two institution provided student residential accommodation cases through the use of observations, including: field notes, photographs of the buildings under study, amenities, student room layout and organization
- to collect student and staff feedback on student engagement in and with student residential accommodation
- to compare and contrast stated institution policy related to student residential accommodation with student and staff feedback on institution provided student residential accommodation.

Following this introduction I will explain my epistemological and ontological position for this research. After, I will present some existing research approaches that influenced the methodology and research strategy for this research. After, I will explain how the research methods will be used to generate data within the two SRA case study sites and respond to the primary research questions and the

related aims for fieldwork for this thesis. Subsequently, I will outline the remaining research phases for this research. A brief summary concludes this Chapter.

4.2 The epistemological basis for this study

In Chapter 3 I introduced my theoretical lens (SE) for this thesis. Recalling SE for this thesis was defined as: the interaction between the time, effort, and other relevant resource invested by both students and their institutions intended to optimise the student experience and enhance the learning outcomes and development of students and the performance, and reputation of the institution (op cit.). SRA was defined as one such resource.

4.2.1 Alternative research paradigms

Recalling, I noted in Chapter I that my worldview might be best characterised as social constructivist. To set the research framework for the work in this thesis, it may be useful to locate my social constructivist within a number of existing research paradigms. In order to define my own SE approach, I engaged with a number of existing research paradigms and lenses, including: positivist, phenomenological, social constructivist, social constructionist and advocacy/participatory.

Figure 2: Alternative knowledge claim positions (adapted from Creswell, 2003)

Positivist paradigm	Phenomenological	Social constructivist	Social constructionist	Advocacy/ Participatory
Quantitative	Qualitative	Qualitative	Quantitative- Qualitative	Political
Objectivist	Subjectivist	Subjectivist	Subjectivist- Objectivist	Empowerment issue-oriented
Scientific/ Experimental	Humanistic	Humanistic	Humanistic-Scientific	Collaborative
Traditionalist	Interpretivist	Interpretivist	Interpretivist- Traditionalist	Change-oriented

Andrews (2012) explains how social constructivism is grounded in aspects of positivist, phenomenological and social constructionist paradigms. In explaining social constructivism versus constructionism, Young and Colin (2004) who

explained “constructivism proposes that each individual mentally constructs the world of experience through cognitive processes while social constructionism has a social rather than an individual focus” (373-388). Therefore, rather than discuss SRA and SE at the level of ‘groups’, ‘institutions’ and ‘structures’, my approach within this thesis focused on individual experiences, perceptions, attitudes and beliefs about SRA and its functions and purpose in relation to SE.

4.2.2 Social constructivism and SE for this thesis

Alongside Trowler’s (op cit.) definition of SE, (Little et al., op cit.) proposed that SE in the English tradition may be related to literature and research on student participation and representation within the governance structure(s) of HEI. Reflecting on Trowler’s (2010) definition and the work of Little et al. (2009), SE for this thesis has been positioned within my social constructivist world view.

Social constructivism for this thesis positions SE as ‘open’ and centred on resource investment by institutions and students to optimise students’ experience of higher education, learning outcomes and development while enhancing the performance and reputation of HEI. However, Little et al. (2009), challenged such an open definition for SE and questioned how it could be adequately addressed in research without adopting an ‘anything’ and ‘everything’ counts approach. While anything and everything will not be counted, a social constructivist approach positions knowledge of SE at the interface of social institutions (i.e. higher education institutions), social groups (i.e. staff, students, lay people) and individuals’ meaning making (see Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Bruner, 1997; Dewey, 1998 [1933]; Vygotsky, 1978). Therefore, knowledge is situated and contingent on the experiences and meaning making of individuals and groups, such as those within social institutions like universities.

A social constructivist approach for this research positions SE and SRA as open, contested and dynamic. This research has foregrounded factors influencing SE in and with SRA across history, such as institutions, policy and practice. Moreover, a social constructivist approach allows for SE to be explored in relation to staff and students’ experiences and perceptions in and with SRA. Staff and students’ experiences and perceptions will be used to inform understanding of the

emergent and complex nature of SE in and with SRA. This approach is aimed at foregrounding personal and collective experiences in order to develop 'what', 'why' and 'how' SE in and with SRA is for each 'case' under study. Later, SE in and with SRA will be discussed by comparing and contrasting staff and student feedback within (case study Chapters 5,6) and across the cases studied for this research (discussion Chapter 7).

The relationship of SRA and SE from a social constructivist approach for this research was underpinned by some of the factors and conditions in focus within existing literature and research across history (see Blakey, 1994; Moss and Richter, 2010; Richter and Walker, 2008; Silver, 2004; Silver and Silver, 1997). From early 'town' and 'gown' tensions to more recent public-private provision substitution, SE in and with SRA has been 'constructed' and influenced by a number of drivers, including: social attitudes (Tight, 2011), historical precedents (Silver, 2004), policy and funding (Sanderson, 1975; Shattock, 1994) such as institutions, policy and practice. Social constructivism works well alongside existing definitions of SE to hone 'who', 'what', 'when', 'where', 'why' and 'how' may be influencing SE in and with SRA for this research. Additionally, a social constructivist approach supports staff and students to explore and explain what factors influenced their attitudes, perceptions, approaches and understanding of SE in and with SRA.

The social constructivist framework adopted for this thesis provides a number of possibilities for my research. First, a social constructivist lens allows for exploring SE as multidimensional, relational and ecological. Factors influencing institution provision of SRA, and the relationship between SRA and SE will emerge from staff and students' feedback in relation to the factors and conditions in focus for this research (i.e. institutions, policy, practice, physical-social-personal space). Additionally, a social constructivist approach allows me to scope the possible factors and influences that may be considered within the research that resonate and respond to the primary research questions and aims for research. In this instance, some themes and issues included policy, practice, and physical, social and personal space. Moreover, a social constructivist approach allows for both the methodology (i.e. qualitative case study) and methods (i.e. observations,

interviews, questionnaires) to work in a dialogic, reflecting back onto and into each other across and through the research project.

The above mentioned possibilities allow for the researcher to make explicit 'what' will be considered, 'why' the selected factors and influences will be considered, 'how' the researcher will go about generating data within the selected sites for study (i.e. case study sites I and II) using the selected methods for data generation (i.e. observations, interviews, questionnaires) and the synthesis and analysis of data generated within and across the research. By foregrounding individual staff and student experiences, perceptions, attitudes and beliefs, this research creates opportunities to reflect factors cited by staff and students related to SE in and with SRA, including: policy, widening access and participation, local housing authority planning, institutional stated practice, social attitudes, student identities, funding and monitoring regimes surrounding SRA and SE.

4.3 The ontological basis for this study

The ontological basis for this study draws on the work of Edmund Husserl. Husserl (1931/2012, 1950/1990, 1960/1982, 1989/2000) proposed three key concepts including: empathy, intersubjectivity and lifeworld. Empathy, intersubjectivity and lifeworld for this research on SE in and with SRA are generative. Lifeworld provides a basis for framing the spatiotemporal world within which students' engage in and with SRA. For Husserl (1931/2012, 1950/1990, 1960/1982, 1989/2000), recognition, awareness and alignment of the 'intersubjective nature' of experience is a key way to explore and understand individuals' experiences as 'objectively existing subjects', their awareness of other 'subjects' and the 'objective' spatiotemporal world. Thus, lifeworld is a way members of one or more social groups structure the world into 'subjects', 'objects' through 'subjects-objects' relationship development. In *Ideas pertaining to a pure phenomenology and to a phenomenological philosophy*, Husserl (1989/2000) proposed empathy is the cognitive move within an :

“Empathy then leads...to the constitution of the intersubjective Objectivity of the think and consequently also that of man, since now the physical Body is a natural scientific Object...”

The Objects of my experience, just as I experience them, are now incorporated in me, the man, as 'appearances' belonging to me and as being in the mode of appearances. If I posit, in my experiential research, a thing as Objectively actual, then I am thereby also positing for every posited subject, existing unities of appearance, i.e., unities of validity which are indices for rules of lived experiences of perception and of possible perception that are intentionally related to these 'appearances'. All these 'phenomenal' things are what they are only as noematic correlates of the perceptual lived experiences of the man in question. They are merely 'subjective,' they have a 'merely subjective truth' (merely subjective being) (178).

He goes on to explore and explain individuals' subjective meaning making through a first-person point of view lens. Intersubjectivity arises through acts of empathy. Intersubjective experience is empathic experience; it occurs in the course of our conscious attribution of intentional acts to other subjects, in the course of which we put ourselves into the other one's shoes. In order to study this kind of experience from the phenomenological attitude, we must bracket our belief in the existence of the respective target of our act-ascription qua experiencing subject and ask ourselves which of our further beliefs justify that existence-belief as well as our act-ascription (Husserl, 1931/2012: 269-273).

Moreover, in *Cartesian Meditations*, Husserl (1960/1982) developed his concept of lifeworld. Lifeworld reflects human experience and meaning making as situated and contextual. Husserl explains (1960/1982):

"Everyone, as a matter of apriori necessity, lives in the same Nature, a Nature moreover that, with the necessary communalisation of his life and the lives of others, he has fashioned into a cultural world in his individual and communalised living and doing a world having human significances, even if it belongs to an extremely low cultural level. But this, after all, does not exclude, either a priori or de facto, the truth that men belonging to one and the same world live in a loose cultural community or even none at all and accordingly constitute different surrounding worlds of culture, as concrete life-worlds in which the relatively or absolutely separate communities Live their passive and active lives. Each man understands first of all, in respect of a core and as having its unrevealed horizon, his concrete surrounding world or his culture; and he does so precisely as a man who belongs to the community fashioning it historically" (133)

Thus, the lifeworld "predelineates" a "world-horizon" of potential future experiences that are to be (more or less) expected for a given group member at a

given time, under various conditions, where the resulting sequences of anticipated experiences can be looked upon as corresponding to different possible worlds and environments. Husserl's concepts of empathy, intersubjectivity and lifeworld open up space to consider 'probabilities' and 'possibilities' within staff and students' experiences and engagement in and with SRA. While SE in and with SRA is irreducible to individuals' experiences, expectations and meaning making, SE nonetheless requires attention to the subjective and intersubjective realities co-constructed through subjective experiences within social realities (i.e. groups, institutions), in this instance, staff and students working and residing in the SRA cases under study.

Husserl (1950/1990) foregrounds the individual's lifeworld, intersubjectivity and empathy as key to understanding the influence of experiences and institutions for individuals in contexts such as SRA. By interfacing individual and social experience, Husserl's concepts of empathy, intersubjectivity and lifeworld allow for sensitivity to individual and group experience and meaning making in SRA. Individual and collective meaning making of and in SRA is a key proposition to understanding SE in and with SRA for this research.

This research draws upon how staff and students perceive and experience SRA. Through foregrounding staff and students' perceptions and experiences this research may illuminate whether, and how, individuals and groups co-create and co-construct SE in and with SRA. The individual and groups are co-creating the purpose and function of SRA for themselves as individuals and as groups. Through this co-creation process and related processes that situate students, staff and institutions in relation to SRA, SRA provision continues to be replicated in the social context (HEI within England) under study for this thesis. In light of the epistemological and ontological basis for this thesis, it may be helpful to examine approaches in existing empirical research on SRA.

4.4 Approaches from existing empirical research on SRA

This section outlines some of the methodological approaches found in existing literature and research related to SRA in England.

4.4.1 Introduction

In the previous sections I have set out the epistemological and ontological basis for this research. In this section I will explore the position of this thesis in relation to the existing empirical research on SRA. To do so I will engage with ‘how’, ‘why’ and with ‘what’ existing research methodologies have approached and studied SRA.

Following, I outline the criteria used for evaluating research. After, I present a number of existing approaches to the study of SRA encountered during my literature review for this thesis. Existing approaches have focused on ‘cases’ and have deployed a number of theoretical positions to understand and represent individual and group experiences with and in SRA. The methodology and methods selected for this research are grounded in existing literature and empirical research on SRA. In my review of the existing literature and empirical research a number of patterns in methodology and methods emerged. Namely, empirical research has focused on case studies (i.e. comparative, multiple, single) (see Brothers and Hatch, 1971; Morgan and McDowell, 1979; Moss and Richter, 2010; Richter and Walker, 2008). Case studies have been underpinned by quantitative methods (i.e. surveys) (see Astin, Astin and Lindholm, 2011), and qualitative methods (i.e. walking interviews) (see Holton, 2016, 2017). Some of the approaches found in existing empirical research on SRA on which this thesis is grounded follow shortly.

4.4.2 Criteria for evaluating research

Here, I explain the criteria used for evaluating methodological approaches and methods used within existing empirical research on SRA. While this thesis focused on SRA in England, empirical research encountered during the course of the literature reviews for the thesis spanned several country contexts, including: Canada, Australia, Scotland, the United States and Wales.

Existing empirical research included for analysis here made explicit the following criteria. First, the author(s) stated their methodological approach. Second, author(s) stated the methods used to gather and generate data for their research.

Third, author(s) stated and maintained the 'boundaries' that defined their 'case(s)' and the 'unit of analysis' for their research. Fourth, the methodology and methods section included some demographic information and/or figures on participants/ respondents (i.e. age, domicile, ethnic heritage, nationality, gender) if applicable. Fifth, use of secondary and historical data was treated as forming its own category (separate from the use of methods to generate data and findings in the present). Studies that did not meet these five criteria were excluded from consideration here. While this thesis focused on SRA in England, a number of international studies encountered for this research were included as they met the criteria for evaluating research and contributed to both the literature review and existing research on SRA. Following, some of the approaches to the study of SRA found in existing empirical research.

4.4.3 Existing approaches from empirical research on SRA

Most existing empirical research in England reviewed for this research has looked at first-year undergraduate students, using quantitative surveys as a proxy to generate feedback on students' experiences in and with SRA. However, additional literature from the US (Blimling, 2015) and Norway (Thomsen, 2007) was encountered during this research. My research is similar to Moss & Richter (2010) in that I am interested in understanding students' experiences in and with SRA. However, I have approached study of students' experiences in and with SRA with an SE lens to consider a number of factors influencing students' experiences of HEI provided SRA including: HE policy, HEI policy and practice, staff and the physical, social and personal 'spaces' of SRA.

Existing empirical research on SRA in England has reflected a number of approaches to the study of SRA across history. Beginning with the UGC sub-committee on halls of residence (1957), study of SRA focused on a 'macro' level, with a strong sector policy focus, often underpinned by 'tradition' and asserting historical norms (i.e. Oxbridge colleges). Later, interest in a more 'meso' level approach based on 'type' of institution (i.e. university, polytechnics, teachers colleges, regional colleges of technology) emerged. More recently, study of SRA has focused on the 'micro', 'local' and 'specific' level of the individual institution and SRA (Holton, 2016, 2017; Moss & Richter, 2010; Richter & Walker, 2008). As

the work of Sage (2010) noted, attention continues to grow towards the 'nested' and 'relational' nature of SRA to housing, for HEI and host communities more generally. As such, this thesis took as its guidance existing empirical research on SRA. There is a sensitivity to whether, and how, existing empirical research nests study of SRA within local, regional and national contexts. Moreover, the 'level' (i.e. macro, meso, micro) at which existing empirical research frames, explores and examines SRA is also considered. When exploring the existing empirical research on SRA across history, it became evident the methodologies and methods deployed often reflected specific epistemological and ontological positions, and acknowledgement of the influence of short-medium range policy aims (Morgan & McDowell, 1979).

In light of these reflections, existing empirical research on SRA encountered through this thesis project utilised a number of methodological lenses, including: social, qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods, case study, comparative case study, historical and discursive. Methods for primary data generation often used interviews, questionnaires, surveys and observations while secondary data analysis and syntheses reflected a historical and discursive approach within existing study of SRA.

4.4.4 A historical approach

One approach within existing empirical research on SRA adopted a historical lens to explore SRA in England. Historical approaches often began with Oxbridge colleges and the 'collegiate ideal' as a starting point (Silver, 2004; Stone, 1974; Tapper and Salter, 1993, 1995). For example, Stone (op cit.) examined institutional documents from early Oxford to contextualise the emergence of SRA at Oxford. Stone (ibid.) noted tensions between 'town' and 'gown' as driving Oxford to provide students with housing. Noting a desire to contain and control student behaviour, Stone (ibid.) positioned Oxford SRA as a means of curbing town-gown-institutional tensions and reducing the threat of the institution being evicted from Oxfordshire.

Similarly, Tapper and Palfreyman (2010) located their study of the 'colleges' as a unit of analysis in examining *The changing collegial tradition in an age of mass*

higher education. Tapper and Palfreyman (ibid.) noted a shifting approach to collegiate university life as an ideal, if even possible, in tension with an agenda aimed at advancing mass higher education. A drive to increase student numbers had put the collegiate ideal and approach to higher education under pressure. Finally, taking a notably historical approach to SRA across history, Tight (2011) traced how SRA had been situated and studied in England from the Robbins Committee Report (1963) up to the work of Rugg et al. (2000). Noting the changing approaches to the forms, functions and stated purpose of SRA for institutions, Tight (ibid.) linked several sharp changes across history to 'changing social attitudes', in particular, post-war attitudes towards HE and SRA. His work highlighted a number of drivers, debates and tensions that have encapsulated existing empirical research on HEI provided SRA and SRA in relation to institutional and government policy and practice post-war into the present, including: shifting social attitudes towards HE and HEI provided SRA, changes in government funding of SRA, changes in staff-student relations, advancing an agenda of widening access and participation and the varied role of HEI in local, regional and national HE debates (Tight, 2011: 119-122). Together, this historical approach provides access to a number of themes, issues and trends that have persisted within the existing empirical research on SRA in England.

Two key points may be made from the existing historical approaches to SRA provision in England. First, from the work of Stone (1974), SRA provision by HEI (including Oxbridge) emerged as a response to tensions between town (host communities) and gown (students). According to Stone (1974), Oxford did not, in the first instance, set out to provide SRA to its students. Instead, providing SRA and what later became the socialisation functions for Oxbridge SRA emerged as an institutional response to discord between its students and wider community. Second, the forms and functions of HEI provided SRA, and SRA more broadly, must be taken in reflection of the 'macro' level policies influencing government support and aid for HEI provided SRA. While the UGC provided financial support to a number of HEIs to develop and maintain their SRA (in the form of capital block grants), reductions in funding and subsequent monitoring regimes reflect the dynamic and contested position of SRA across history in England. Curiously, Stone (1974), and Tapper and Palfreyman (2010) decouple institutions, students and host communities. Rather than describe and discuss local and specific

contexts (i.e. hall of residence, college) Oxbridge and successive HEI are discussed at the institutional level. This institutional approach may be complemented by further study at a more 'local' and 'specific' level, such as that proposed in a comparative case study approach. From this historical lens we visit a case study approach to the study of SRA in England.

4.4.5 A comparative case study approach

A comparative case study approach also featured in the existing empirical research on SRA. For example, in the work of Acland and Hatch (1968), the authors completed a reanalysis of the survey of 1955 university entrants. Acland and Hatch (1968) proposed:

“[Their] analysis has been concerned with three aspects of residence: first, on recruitment it has suggested that students in hall are not exactly representative of the student population as a whole and that halls are likely to confirm a predominantly middle class ethos-second it has shown that halls do seem to encourage participation, particularly in Christian activities-third it has indicated that there is little relationship between residence and academic performance” (12).

Acland and Hatch (1968) concluded:

“These findings are limited in scope, but they provide a useful background for a different kind of study on the socialisation of students-a study which does not abstract the individual from his social environment but pays close attention to the diverse characteristics of particular residential organisations” (Acland & Hatch, 1968: 12)

Brothers & Kendall (1978) followed up based on a questionnaire to universities and college registrars, lodgings officers and college principals across 260 institutions comprising the universities, colleges of education and regional technical colleges of the United Kingdom. 48 universities replied, out of a total of 49. Of 182 colleges of education, 163 replied. 25 polytechnics replied, out of 29. The universities had a larger proportion of men than women students (this is especially true in the technological universities); in six, women formed less than 10% of the student population. The regional colleges of technology were all predominantly male, with the exception of one Scottish college; in a majority of cases, less than 20% of the students were women. The colleges of education

present a different picture. Taking the 150 colleges (other than day colleges) which replied, a little under a third of the colleges are single-sex, the great majority of these being for women. Of the mixed colleges, there are almost four times as many where the dominant sex is female as the opposite.

Utilising a questionnaire, Brothers & Kendall (1978) examined the self-reported figures for students living in institution and non-institution accommodation by type (i.e. college, hall of residence, lodgings) and to “say something about their policies and regulations concerning student residence” (1). Questions were scoped to universities, regional colleges, colleges of education and day colleges of education, including: total student population, the proportion of students living at home and in colleges and halls, students living in flats and lodgings, the proportion of students in hall in voluntary colleges of education, the distribution of proportions of the predominant sex, selection of students for residence, self-catering and catered halls, hall wardens and teaching duties, association of academic staff with residential accommodation, placement of students in different forms of accommodation, approved types of accommodation, distance from university or college students were expected to reside, permissions to leave lodgings, time in halls, time in halls at night, visitor in halls guidance, weekend leave, and if any postgraduate students resided in halls (2-16). Brothers & Kendall (1978) also asked respondents for “general comments on the lodgings situation as it affected their students, and for any plans they might have for dealing with the accommodation problem in the near future” (16-17). This open-ended question was then distinguished based on (I) colleges which had new residential buildings actually under construction or in an advanced stage of planning, as opposed to merely expressing the need or hope for such buildings, (II) colleges which said they had some difficulty or on the other hand no difficulty with lodgings, as opposed to those colleges which made no comment or hedged their statements with qualifications.

Brothers & Kendall (1978) concluded:

“Our survey has shown something of the ways in which universities, regional colleges of technology and colleges of education differ from each other in their policies and regulations concerning student residence. These differences must, of course, be understood in the light of different histories and traditions of these institutions. The limitations of the present

survey are clear. In addition to collecting certain basic statistics we have asked what the official policies of the various institutions are on a number of issues relating to residence. But we do not know, for example, how strictly regulations are enforced, nor do we know the effects on student life of the different policies” (18-19).

For Brothers & Kendall (1978) and Acland & Hatch (1968), a quantitative approach preceded a desire for qualitative research. These studies utilised quantitative surveys and secondary data analysis as background for further study of SRA social policies, practices and processes. The authors suggested the quantitative data used (and generated) reflected ‘soft-statistics’ upon which further study into the local SRA environment may be useful. While the authors were satisfied with providing a ‘typology’ of institutions and comparing and contrasting institution responses at the level of ‘universities, polytechnics, colleges of education’, they admitted such an approach could not adequately account for the local and specific relations of staff and students. As such, the authors proposed further sociological enquiry into the local and specific qualitative experiences and feedback from staff and students (which they proposed was forthcoming) (see Brothers and Hatch, 1971). This thesis took this persistent call for further local and specific study as one of its reference points in devising the methodological approach and methods (single-case studies, pre-post 1992 universities, undergraduate and postgraduate, domestic and international students). Complementing existing empirical research on SRA from the comparative case study approach was the existing empirical research using a multiple case study approach.

4.4.6 A multiple case study approach

A multiple case study approach featured strongly in existing empirical research on SRA. For example, in their seminal work *Residence and Student Life: a sociological inquiry into Residence in Higher Education*, Brothers and Hatch (1971) utilised a multiple case study approach. The authors focused their research on eight cases of study. In outlining their strategies and methods, the authors provided insights into ‘how’, ‘why’ and ‘what’ factors influenced ‘selection’ and ‘exclusion’ of cases studied. They explained they were not as interested in representativeness as they were in contrasting institutional approaches to residence (ibid, 146). The authors argued in non-collegiate universities it is

possible to make comparisons between different forms of accommodation within the institution, but this cannot be done in colleges. As such, the authors chose colleges in pairs, and after a number of exploratory visits settled on: two colleges of education, two Cambridge colleges, a polytechnic, and three non-collegiate universities (ibid, 146). The authors go on to outline each case study followed by an overview of the methods used to generate data and findings.

First, Brothers and Hatch (1971) sought information on the organisational structure of halls and colleges and the roles played by different individuals within these structures, and secondly, information of a more statistical kind about all the students in given residential settings (ibid, 147). The authors utilised extended visits to each of the places studied. During these visits staff and students who occupied key roles, either of a formal or an informal kind, in the various halls and colleges were interviewed, together with others concerned with residential policy (ibid, 147). Interviews with professional staff and students were not structured, and sometimes in the case of groups of students took the form of a quite informal discussion (ibid., 147). Thus, Brothers and Hatch (1971) were able to create a picture of the social structures and patterns of activities across a number of residential units. Systematic sampling appeared second to sampling individuals who the authors felt could supply relevant information about the social nature of the residences. Alongside interviews, the authors utilised a questionnaire to generate data on 'who' the students and staff were residing in the SRA units under study. The demographic information gained from questionnaires was set alongside the data generated through interviews with key stakeholders to create a picture of each case study residence and cross-case comparisons, where relevant and possible. Of note, distribution of respondents and total response rates within and across samples varied. Brothers and Hatch (1971) again noted that their interest was in contrasts, local and specific influences on HEI approaches to residence. As such, they were not dogmatic about ensuring response rates across HEI, nor did they desire to 'generalise' beyond the cases under study except to trouble the 'traditional' approach to student residences underpinning the existing empirical research at the time of their study.

Like Brothers and Hatch (1971), Thomsen (2008) adopted a multiple case study approach. The qualitative part of her study focused on three student housing

projects. The cases were selected based on the characteristics of the buildings under study. She explored whether and how students' satisfaction was influenced by the type of building (i.e. building morphology). For the qualitative component of her research, she utilised interviews and an electronic survey to generate data on students' preferences and satisfaction with and in their HEI provided SRA. Her analysis examined building type (i.e. tower block, small block of flats), building materials and floor plans across the three student housing sites studied. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with residents of the case-study buildings. In site (I), 35 students reported their interest and were asked questions related to where they were staying, their age, gender and length of time in current residence. Nine students were interviewed. Five students lived in a 'shared unit', three lived in flats for couples and two in a unit with its own bath and a communal kitchen shared by six students. An additional four students lived in single units containing bathroom and kitchen. Students had lived in case site (I) for at least 10 months and up to three years. At case site (II), the response rate was admittedly lower. With only 19 units, three interviewees expressed an interest in participating. Ultimately, three students responded (one male and two female) aged 24, 36 and 40, having lived at their current residence for at least one year. Finally, in case site (III) three students, two male and one female between age 22 and 27 agreed to be interviewed several times during the time they spent in site (II). Case site (III) was treated differently from the other cases as it was a temporary and experimental project and she aimed to see if student residents' attitudes changed over time. Group interviews were also integrated alongside individual interviews for case site (III). In addition to individual and group interviews, students in case site (III) were asked to maintain a diary to allow students to elaborate on their experiences without having to interact with their co-habitants or an interviewer (Thomsen, 2008: 50). Interviews were completed both on site and in an office setting. Interviews varied, however, she noted that interviews on site tended to last longer than those carried out in her office setting. After, interviews were analysed using a 'spiralling analysis' method, whereby a 'circular' rather than a 'linear' process was used to refine and interpret the data.

Thomsen (2008) noted that her methodological approach and methods for data generation and analysis reflected a desire to focus and sharpen findings and generate a 'petite generalisation' as one goal of her procedures (51-52). She

concluded by discussing how her findings related to existing theories on young people's housing preferences and pathways, and the meaning of architecture for the appreciation of a place to stay (Thomsen, 2008: 52). These themes and issues were salient to this thesis and will be addressed in later findings (5 and 6) and discussion (7) Chapters.

Alternatively, in their work *Accommodating Students*, Christie, Munro and Rettig (2002) focused on students' housing careers and strategies developed across a student's university career (209). Their work:

“Consisted of semi-structured interviews with 49 students. Respondents were selected from two contrasting universities within the city of Edinburgh; Edinburgh and Napier. Students were recruited from within the Social Sciences and were split (25 Edinburgh, 24 Napier). All the students were in the third year of a 4-year degree programme. All participants were 25 years of age or younger. The sample contained 14 men and 35 women. Interviews took place during the third term of the academic year 1998-1999. Interviews were semi-structured and the majority lasted approximately one hour, were taped, fully transcribed and analysed using the Nud*st, a software package to aid qualitative analysis. The qualitative analysis drew upon themes and codes emerging from the transcriptions” (Christie et al., 2002: 213-214).

In their discussion, Christie et al. (2002) focused on the ways students negotiate their budgets, with particular focus on housing. Alongside their discussion on students' strategies related to financial budgets, the authors noted the evidence indicated that, “Housing choices act as a marker for structural differentiation between students in terms of their differential exposure to, and scope for, strategies to avoid, risk” (231). The authors also make note of a strong student choice to leave home, following a historically persistent traditional student model. Additionally, they point out that in their view, the “specific university locality creates a risk topology” with regard to students' housing choices, strategies and possible consequences for students' financial outcomes in the near and medium life term (in the present and immediately following degree completion). In their concluding remarks, Christie et al. (2002) proposed “choice appeared to depend more on the perception of the city as an enjoyable place to be, or the attraction of particular courses or departments” and “exposure to risk as a student is structured by parental affluence and support, and the particular labour and housing market contexts of the university locality” (233).

An alternative qualitative approach was proposed in the work of Sage (2010). In her work on studentification in Brighton and Hove, Sage (2010) took a mixed-methods approach:

“Initially deploying both quantitative and qualitative techniques (GIS analysis of the spatial patterns of residence of the student population, analysis of 2001 Census Key Statistics, and local media content analysis) to identify and socio-demographically contextualise five case study sites in Brighton (England). This was followed by a phase of qualitative research (adopting focus group and semi-structured interview techniques), enabling the perceptions of student-related urban change among established residents’ in each of the case study areas; and the role played by local institutionalised actors to be captured. Key findings from these data formed the basis for the development of door-to-door survey; the final phase of empirical data collection.

The mixed-methods approach adopted used quantitative and qualitative techniques complementarily, employing mapping and secondary data analysis techniques to initially ascertain a general overview of the socio-spatial patterns inherent in the study population, then shifting away from this approach to ascertain a deeper, more differentiated understanding of the micro-geographic specificities of urban change; and how these may relate to local contingencies in the five chosen research sites” (Sage, 2010: 66).

The multiple case study approach featured prominently in existing empirical research on SRA in England. A multiple case study approach provided opportunities to compare and contrast similarities and diversity within and amongst HEI and HEI provided SRA. Similarly, a number of empirical studies have adopted a single case study approach.

4.4.7 A single case study approach

A number of existing empirical studies on SRA have taken a single case study approach. These studies have defined the ‘case’ for study at a number of levels. For instance, Richter and Walker (2008) took a qualitative approach “designed to accommodate the experiential, biographical nature of the material” (27). All students were studying for an undergraduate degree in Childhood Studies at one institution in England. All but one were female, from the university, white and between the ages of 20 and 34. Richter and Walker (2008) focused on the living strategies of 42 first, second and third year undergraduates living in a hall of

residence. In their work on strategies for collective living among first-year students in a hall of residence, Richter and Walker (2008) used reflective logs, surveys and focus groups to explore how 42 undergraduate students from years one, two and three negotiated their “rhythm, routines and rituals’ in transitioning from their origin home into a hall of residence at Leeds Metropolitan University” (24).

Similarly, Moss and Richter (2010) contributed a qualitative study of a single case. In their single case study, the authors developed their theoretical discussion about young people’s transitions through space and time. In their work, Moss and Richter (2010) draw on two primary research projects (Moss, 2006) and (Richter and Walker, 2007). Moss (2006):

“Focused on a wider analysis of gender, space, time and higher education which took place between 1998 and 2002; part of the focus involved small campus-based halls. The sample was all women from one year of two degrees. Of 46 participants, 12 lived in halls. The research tools were questionnaires and reflective logs (given to the whole sample) and semi-structured interviews with a sub-sample selected to represent diverse social positions related to age, residence, ethnicity and social class. The questionnaire related to snapshot data of different spheres of experience (paid work, heritage, housing, relationship, leisure, community). The reflective log provided data related to the space negotiations involved in producing an assignment. The interviews provided in-depth qualitative data related to the creation of space and time for higher education in the spheres noted” (Moss and Richter, 2010: 159).

Moss and Richter (2010) also drew on their previous work, noting Richter and Walker (2007):

“...Were interested in students’ experiences in off-campus halls. They studied 60 students in the same degree cohort. Using questionnaires, reflective logs, semi-structured interviews and focus groups. Six third-year and three second-year students were involved in focus groups on the basis of self-selection.

There were limitations to both samples, the majority of respondents being white working-class young women. The reasons for the absence of the voices of young men and middle-class young people related to the academic courses respondents were drawn from (social care). Black and minority ethnic students on these courses usually chose to remain in their family homes rather than move into halls for reasons of perceived safety and closeness to home (Moss, 2006). Students from wealthier

backgrounds and male students chose other career pathways, although in the second study there was one young male participant” (Moss and Richter, 2010: 159-160).

The authors go on to conceptualise space and time, citing the work of Doreen Massey (2005) and Henri Lefebvre (1994). Through their application of space-time concepts, Moss and Richter (2010) explored young people’s transitions, including tensions between students negotiating their ‘routine’, ‘representation’, ‘rhythm’ and ‘ritual’ in for communal life in residence halls (172).

Similar to the methodological lens for studies outlined above, Holton (2016, 2017) adopted a single case study approach. In, *The geographies of UK university halls of residence: examining students’ embodiment of social capital*, Holton (2016) used students’ feedback (from interviews) and content analysis (from HEI accommodation website data) for a single institution (University of Portsmouth) in the spring/summer of 2012. Participants were selected through an earlier survey and sent an email with details of the research. Drawing on the work of Pierre Bourdieu, Holton (2016) framed data he generated from 31 ‘walking interviews’ where participants were accompanied on an hour-and-a-half walk around the city of Portsmouth. Of the participants, 10 had resided in halls of residence during their first-year of study (4 male, 6 female) who were identified as white (9), British (9) and under 21 years of age (8) (Holton, 2016: 67). Holton (2016) argued that the depth and richness of the walking interviews was complementary to the secondary data analysis used within his research and provided ample opportunity to understand themes of difference, agency and interdependence. These themes were explored in greater detail as a way of understanding the complex and contested nature of ‘traditional’ and ‘non-traditional’ students’ experiences in halls of residence at the University of Portsmouth.

Similarly, in *A place for sharing: The emotional geographies of peer-sharing in UK University halls of residence*, Holton (2017) utilised a series of “in-depth semi-structured, place-based interviews...conducted in the spring of 2016 with fifteen students from Plymouth University who were living in university managed halls” (6). Alongside the interview responses and observations, photographs were taken of students’ communal spaces (kitchens, corridors and common rooms) during and after the conversation (Holton, 2017: 6). Interviews were transcribed

and juxtaposed alongside observations and photographs in what Holton (2017) called a 'layering of methods' (6). His "sample consisted of seven males and six females but showed a leaning to students being young (14), White (14) and British (12). Holton (2017) goes on to conclude that his paper contributed to understanding "how the complex interactions between people, spaces and emotions might affect living arrangements in peer-shared accommodation" noting "sojourners are not simply passive consumers of shared accommodation but are active agents in the production, negotiation and organisation of home within these (peer-shared accommodation) spaces" (11).

These more recent studies draw attention to the influence of context, however defined, on the situated and contingent nature of SE in and with SRA. Single institutions and single HEI provided SRA featured prominently in the single case study research on SRA in England. Additionally, these studies have relied heavily on the use of interviews, observations, questionnaires and surveys to generate data and feedback. In light of a desire for further study into the local and specific interface of policy, institutional practices and lived experiences were contributions that adopted a 'discursive' approach. Existing empirical research utilising a discursive approach is visited next.

4.4.8 A discursive approach

Finally, a discursive approach also emerged in the empirical literature and research on SRA in England. For example, in his work, *'Residence' and 'accommodation' in higher education: abandoning a tradition*, Silver (2004) traced the "changes in vocabulary [that have] reflected changes in both student constituencies and their institutions. He noted the importance of 'providing or offering somewhere to live' that 'has for some eight centuries in Britain...been part of the need and the mission—even the definition of a university and other forms of higher education' (123). He discussed the 'origin', 'tradition', influence of halls on education and recruitment of students to HEI, financing and marketing, and finishes by revisiting this theme of 'tradition' in light of present policy aimed at widening access and participation to higher education. Like Stone (1974), Silver (2004) made note of "the earliest efforts to provide a habitation for students, from thirteenth century in Oxford and Cambridge...were predominantly those of the

students themselves. They occupied lodgings in taverns, private homes or wherever they could find them, or in the ephemeral houses, halls or hospices hired by some 'regent Masters of Arts'" (124). Silver (2004) highlighted how, "In England, the waves of university and college foundations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries involved moves both away from the Oxford and Cambridge collegiate ideal (for example in the case of London) and towards it (most prominently with some of the 1960s 'green fields' universities).

Through his discursive approach, Silver (2004) examined the vocabulary of stated government policy, institutional policy and practice, and students. In highlighting vocabulary, Silver (2004) underlined the discourses influencing the evolution of student housing from student residences to student residential accommodation (SRA). He noted how sharp changes in the formulation of government policy had trickled down into institutional policy, practice and approaches to providing SRA.

For Silver (2004), words mattered. Words were key to setting expectations, defining the forms, functions and stated purpose(s) of student residences. He sparred with the notion that universities 'accommodate' students in residences and that student residences as 'somewhere to eat and sleep' was sufficient. Silver (ibid.) showed how language was used to frame and locate responsibility for students' experience and learning between institutions and students. He called for greater care and examination into 'how' and 'why' HEI provide SRA, perhaps at a more local and specific level. This thesis reflected on this call for further study of HEI provided SRA, from an institutional approach, accounting for the context and history of the institution and the present conditions influencing institution and students' expectations and experiences of HEI provided SRA.

4.4.9 Issues across existing empirical research on SRA

Existing empirical research on SRA has clearly followed a number of methodological and method pathways. First, from Brothers and Hatch (1971) to Holton (2017), a strong majority of existing empirical studies on SRA have adopted a case study (i.e. single, multiple and comparative) approach. Within these case study approaches, authors have utilised interviews, questionnaires

and surveys in various forms (Brothers & Hatch, 1971; Holton, 2016, 2017; Morgan & McDowell, 1979; Richter & Walker, 2008). Moreover, a number of studies have taken a mixed method approach, utilising surveys and questionnaires and interviews to generate data and feedback. While a number of existing empirical studies called for further case study in the field, to date, no follow up studies were found within the existing empirical research on SRA. In addition to a number of studies adopting a case study approach, these studies also noted their 'cross-sectional' nature, with most focusing on a single SRA, a single institution or a number of institutions through which they compared and contrasted how stated policy, institutional practice influenced and related to staff and students' experiences with and in SRA. While staff and student experience with and in SRA were key to a number of existing empirical studies, and students' movements into and through SRA studied within existing empirical research, the issue of SRA in relation to SE was absent in the empirical research reviewed for this thesis. As such, the research methods presented next outline what factors and influences related to SRA and SE are proposed for study in this thesis.

4.5 Research strategy for this research

A number of research types and strategies were considered for this thesis, including: qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods.

4.5.1 Research types and strategies

In light of existing literature and research, and the research questions and aims for this research I chose a qualitative case study research approach (Creswell, 2013; Denzin and Lincoln, 2011; Stake, 2005). Creswell (2013) proposed:

“Qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. To study this problem, qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is inductive and establishes patterns or themes. The final written report or presentation includes the voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, and a complex description and interpretation of the problem, and it extends the literature or signals a call for action” (36-37).

Creswell (2013) also noted “it is appropriate to use a qualitative approach as reflecting a problem or issue that needs to be explored. This exploration is needed, in turn, because of a need to study a group or population, identify variables that can then be measured, or hear silenced voices...and, [if] we need a complex, detailed understanding of the issue” (39-40).

Moreover, Denzin and Lincoln (2011) proposed:

“Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field-notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (3).

In light of the proposals made by Creswell (2013) and Denzin and Lincoln (2011), and reflecting on existing empirical research on SRA in England, this thesis adopted a qualitative case study research approach. A qualitative case study research design resonated with one ‘strand’ of existing empirical research on SRA (see Moss and Richter, 2011; Richter and Walker, 2008). Moreover, choosing a qualitative case study approach provides opportunities to explore and examine staff and students who have been largely silent in existing literature and research (i.e. postgraduate, international students), contribute a recent ‘case’ to existing literature and research (i.e. undergraduate hall of residence) and provide a detailed description of factors staff, students and institutions who interface in and with student residential accommodation.

The qualitative case study approach chosen for this research is complemented by the descriptive-interpretivist lens of the researcher. The core issue was the relationship between SE and SRA. Here, the issue of SE in and with SRA is complex and multidimensional. As such, one of the aims for this research is to provide a detailed description of each case under study. Additionally, data analysis and synthesis of observations, interviews and questionnaires relies upon the interpretivist meaning making of the researcher. Given the factors under consideration, the historical nature of the institutions and SRA under study, and

the epistemological and ontological approach of the researcher a qualitative case study research strategy was selected as fit for purpose.

4.5.2 A qualitative case study approach

Both case study sites (I) and (II) were purposefully selected. Case study site (I) was an undergraduate hall of residence provided by a post-1992 HEI in the south of England. The purpose in selecting case site (I) was to include an undergraduate hall of residence with both domestic and international students. The geographical location and identity as a post-1992 university were also key factors considered in the selection of case study site (I). Moreover, case site (I) provided an opportunity to contribute another 'case' to the extensive existing empirical literature based on undergraduate student populations. Studying SE in and with SRA in an undergraduate hall of residence was aimed at allowing this thesis to 'speak back and with' the existing literature using feedback on current issues and themes influencing SE in and with SRA.

Case study site (II) was a postgraduate hall of residence provided by a pre-1992 HEI in London England. Case study site (II) was selected primarily because it was a postgraduate hall of residence with both domestic and international students. The geographical location and being part of a pre-1992 university were also key factors influencing selection of case study site (II). At the time of writing, the existing empirical research on SRA was light on the study of postgraduate student SRA provision. Therefore, case site (II) was intended to contribute a 'case' to the low level of existing empirical research on postgraduate SRA, provided by HEI or otherwise, in England.

4.5.3 Rationale for selection of research methods for this thesis

Three research methods were chosen to generate data and findings within each of the two case study sites. The three methods chosen included observations, interviews and questionnaires. As Creswell (2013) noted, "qualitative researchers typically gather multiple forms of data, such as interviews, observations, and documents rather than rely on a single data source..." (38). Therefore, observations, interviews and questionnaires were selected as fit for purpose. The

selection of observations, interviews and questionnaires allowed for an inductive analysis through which to relate staff and students' feedback regarding SE in and with SRA throughout the duration of fieldwork for this research.

Observations

Observations provided an opportunity to immerse myself in some of the day-to-day activities of staff and students in SRA case sites (I) and (II). Appendix B outlines the observation and field-note protocols used during site visits to both cases. When obtaining my access agreement to both cases, the operations director (CS-I) and director of student accommodation (CS-II) agreed I could observe staff and students in publicly available spaces. In case study site (I) this included a reception area and surrounding staff offices, public entryways, public hallways, SRA flats (including rooms and kitchens/social spaces) when students were not residing in the SRA, open public spaces and green spaces within the SRA site. In case study site (II) I was able to access main reception areas, staff offices, public study rooms adjacent to the main reception, the lower level multipurpose room and corridors. In case site (II) I was not permitted in students' kitchens. Through observations and related field notes I aimed to observe some of the interactions between staff and staff, and staff and students (in the reception areas) of case sites (I) and (II). Observations and related conversations and photographs were aimed at assisting in the creation of what Creswell (2013) called a 'holistic account' of the issue under study (SE in and with SRA) (39). Observations are intended to provide one way the research design and strategy for this thesis responded to research aim one for this thesis. In addition to observations, interviews were also used to generate data and findings in the field and are reviewed next.

Interviews

Interviews are proposed as a second and concurrent phase of generating data and findings within both cases. Alongside observations, interviews with staff and students were aimed at creating opportunities to explore and understand a relationship between SE and SRA. Moreover, interviews allowed for individual feedback on what SE in and with HEI provided SRA meant to staff and students.

This research strategy aligned with the research aim three for this thesis, and a number of existing empirical studies on SRA (see Holton 2016, 2017; Moss and Richter, 2011; Richter and Walker, 2008). A copy of the interview guide for case study sites (I) and (II) may be found in Appendix A.

Electronic questionnaire

An electronic questionnaire was sent to residents of both case site (I) and (II) (see Appendix C for a copy of electronic questionnaire I and Appendix D for a copy of electronic questionnaire II). The questionnaires were based on three sources. First, the existing questionnaire found in Brothers and Hatch (1971). From that I drew demographic questions and questions related to type of HEI provided SRA students' were residing in. Second, from the survey questions in Thomsen's (2008) survey on student satisfaction and preferences in and with SRA. Third, the qualitative questions reflected themes and issues raised within the interviews from staff and students for case sites (I) and (II). As such, the questionnaires for both case sites (I) and (II) reflected a number of similarities and differences in their structure and questions asked.

4.5.4 Mitigating risks to institutions, SRA sites and respondents

While the proposed methodology and methods provided ample opportunity to explore and understand a relationship between SE and SRA, these methods are not without risks to the institutions, SRA sites and respondents. As such, care was taken to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. Additionally, the recruitment letter and interview schedule for this research outlined possible risks to the institutions, SRA sites and respondents. Respondents and participants were made aware that they may stop the interview or electronic questionnaire at any time without concern for any consequences to themselves. Moreover, staff and students were provided with a copy of their feedback upon request. Staff and students who wished to have their feedback excluded from this research were provided an opportunity to redact their responses within a reasonable period of time prior to this research entering the public domain. Likewise, staff and student feedback from case sites (I) and (II) was held within the European Union in

accordance with the Data Protection Act of 1998, and EU laws governing research storage and dissemination of findings.

Consideration of ethical issues

There are several ethical issues to consider in the design and completion of this research.

First, I was aware I will be interacting with sensitive materials using my access to operational documents by way of institutional administrators and database access. Second, access to the study sites where students live and study and professionals work was thoroughly considered. Interviews were conducted in an open access community space in order to offset risks to both the researcher and interviewees. Third, the potential to influence students' lived experience by participating in their residential life and engaging in activities on the premises was considered. By actively engaging and monitoring engagement during the research process the research may have influenced the environment around students and staff, particularly as it pertained to student and staff operations during site visits. Care was given to how the presence of a researching third party may have influenced the data and participants on site before, during and after this study.

Alongside considerations of physical presence was discussions of sensitive personal and operational topics and issues with students. Fourth, the impact of testing on site at multiple time points may have influenced data and findings outcomes. Finally, with research aims that focus on policy, provision, staff and students' lived experiences there were potential implications and considerations for how the findings may have had an influence on institutional operations, policy and provision of SRA. Data and findings gathered were intended to inform evidence based practice and policy. However, how the data and findings were used cannot rest only with the originating researcher. Instead, it is hoped this study was performed within the boundaries of good research practice and that those

who may encounter this research at some point upon its completion will use its outcomes mindfully.

Together, these and other ethical considerations are most adequately addressed by following a professional code of conduct and through supervision meetings. The potential harm to students, however minimal or unintended, will be carefully considered and discussed with my supervisors. The professional code of ethics and guidance for conducting research I have chosen to follow are those of the British Sociological Association (British Sociological Association: March, 2002).

While care was given to guard the anonymity and confidentiality of the institutions, staff and students, it may still be possible that some will be able to interpret and identify the institutions studied for this thesis. While this is a possibility, every effort will be made to protect the identity of the institutions and individuals who participated in this research.

4.5.5 Foregrounding staff and student experiences of SRA

The selection of a primarily qualitative research design underpinned by qualitative methods was aimed at foregrounding staff and student experiences and perceptions of SRA. Staff and student experiences and perceptions of SE in and with SRA responded to research aims three for this thesis. While the sample and population provided a cross section within each SRA case site under study for this thesis, a rich description and interview feedback from staff and students was included to contribute to understanding of staff and students' meaning making of SE with and within SRA.

4.5.6 Positioning the researcher

As Creswell (2013) noted, the researcher plays an instrumental role in the generation of data for this thesis. At the interface of the epistemological and ontological approach of the researcher, the researcher acts in and upon the fieldwork undertaken for this thesis. As such, the researcher plays an active role, influencing the generation and interpretation of respondents and feedback.

For this thesis, the researcher has outlined his social constructivist approach, epistemological and ontological position. The social constructivist world view of the researcher explained earlier in this Chapter positions the researcher as a co-creator, with and in the SRA case sites under study for this thesis. Additionally, the ontological position of the researcher outlined earlier in this Chapter situated the researcher based on his empathy, intersubjectivity and participation in respondents' (and non-respondents') lifeworld. The relation of the researcher with and in the fieldwork for this thesis reflects a holistic approach to the generation and interpretation of empirical data within and across case sites (I) and (II) for this thesis. As such, the researcher operated as an active agent, influencing the generation and interpretation of data within and across the case sites under study for this thesis.

4.5.7 Reflexivity for this research

Reflexivity for this research draws on the general principles outlined by Stake (2003, 2005) in his qualitative case study approach. In his framework for research design, Stake (2003) noted the importance of reflexivity for researchers adopting a qualitative-interpretivist approach to research. For Stake (2003, 2005), and this research, reflexivity plays a role in maintaining an awareness on whether, and how, the principal researcher is influencing the research process. Moreover, reflexivity draws attention in this study to the interpretations and meaning made of staff and student feedback across case sites (I) and (II) for this thesis. Being aware of one's own position within the research project, the possible influence of the researcher's political and experiential agenda on the data generated and interpretations arrived at from this research is vital to a holistic approach to this qualitative research on SE in and with SRA. As such, reflexivity here informs the researcher agenda, knowledge claims and interpretation of data and findings emerging from this thesis.

4.5.8 Use of triangulation

Triangulation for this thesis reflected on the work of Jakob (2001) and Denzin (1970). Denzin (1970) distinguished four types or forms of triangulation, including: data (retrieve data from a number of different sources to form one body of data),

investigator (using multiple observers instead of a single observer to generate data), theoretical (using more than one theoretical position to interpret data) and methodological triangulation (using more than one research method or data collection technique).

In light of Denzin (1970), triangulation is proposed here as a mechanism to integrate multiple 'reflection points' whereby data and findings generated within each case site (I) and (II) are revisited in light of the data and findings generated through each step of the fieldwork stage for this thesis. This systematic reflection back on to the data generated throughout this thesis is aimed at ensuring vigilance with the data, and to 'check' emerging themes and issues are consistent in and across data generated across multiple methods within case study sites (I) and (II).

While this thesis took a qualitative case study approach, the use of triangulation was in alignment with the reflexivity and researcher position noted above. Triangulation is proposed as a means of interfacing the three methods to generate data within case sites (I) and (II). Triangulation is proposed as a means of interfacing observations, interviews and electronic questionnaire feedback in order to complete an 'internal check' that the themes and issues emerging from the data and subsequent findings align within each case site studied for this thesis.

4.6 Research phases for this study

Here, I outline the protocol for the empirical research phases of this thesis. Beginning with an overview of the pilot study completed for this research, following is a review of each case study site, observation protocol used, the interview schedule, electronic questionnaire and emerging cross-study issues.

4.6.1 Phase one: pilot study

A pilot study was conducted in an HEI provided hall of residence in April-May 2016. The aim of the pilot study was to test the proposed qualitative interview schedule. Interviews were transcribed, coded and analysed using thematic

analysis. Following the pilot study interviews, an electronic questionnaire was produced and provided to student residents in the hall of residence under study. Electronic questionnaire data was analysed using SPSS (1-Way ANOVA, 2-Way ANOVA). Student feedback helped to clarify questions within the interview schedule and demographic questions within the questionnaire.

4.6.2 Phase two: SE in and with SRA for case study (I) of this research

Phase two of this thesis involved study of an undergraduate hall of residence. The undergraduate hall of residence under study was provided by a post-1992 university near the south coast of England. After contacting the institution in spring 2016, access was agreed from August 2016 through August 2017.

During this phase of research five site visits were conducted between August 2016 and end August 2017. Site visit one was conducted across three days, from 10:00-5:00 PM each day. Site visit two was conducted across two days, from 10:00-7:00 PM each day. And site visit three was a single day visit from 1:00 PM-6:30 PM. During these three site visits, observations and field notes were completed within common reception and working spaces of the SRA. In addition, staff interviews were proposed and completed with members of site staff, including: administrators, caretakers, student warden staff, residence life professional and student staff. After, interviews were transcribed, coded and analysed for themes and issues related to SRA and SE. Themes emerging from staff interviews included the institutional approach to provision of SRA, student numbers, student finances, cost of providing SRA to institution, students' housing costs, students as 'customers' and the institution as 'provider', changing student characteristics and identities, and implementation of a residence life programme across institution provided SRA.

In addition to staff interviews, a recruitment letter was emailed to current student residents for the 2016-2017 academic year. The recruitment letter outlined the aims for this research and the interview with students. Student interviews were completed on-site on a rolling basis between October 2016 and November 2016, resulting in the additional two site visits (site visit four) 1:00-8:00 PM, and (site

visit five) 3:00-8:00 PM. After, students' feedback was transcribed, coded and analysed for themes and issues related to SRA and SE. Themes emerging from student interviews included: cost of SRA, SRA amenities, location and proximity of SRA to academic and non-academic facilities, noise and anti-social behaviour of student residents.

Staff and students' feedback related to SRA and SE informed the development of the electronic questionnaire. Questionnaire one (Appendix C) for this research was developed and an electronic link to the questionnaire was sent to student residents using the UCL Opinio portal. The UCL Opinio portal was selected due to it being supported by the researcher's institution. The electronic questionnaire was emailed to all current residents in May 2017 with a ten day window for completion (5 May 2017 at 12 PM-15 May 2017 at 12 PM, inclusive). Of 29 stored questionnaire responses, 24 questionnaires were completed reflecting a 12 percent response rate for the SRA. Upon the closing of the electronic questionnaire, student responses were analysed using SPSS. After, triangulation of observations and field notes, interviews and electronic questionnaire feedback was completed to cross-reference the themes and issues within and across feedback related to SRA and SE for case study site (I). Data and findings for case study site (II) are explored in detail in Chapter 6 of this thesis.

4.6.3 Phase three: SE in and with SRA for case study (II) of this research

Phase three for this thesis involved study of a postgraduate hall of residence. The postgraduate hall of residence under study was provided by pre-1992 university in London England. After contacting the institution in spring 2016, and meeting with the Director of Student Residential Accommodation in June 2016, access to case study site (II) was secured for the academic year from September 2016 to June 2017.

During the first segment of research in case study site (II), observations and field notes were completed during three site visits in October and November 2016. Site visit one was conducted across three days from 3 PM-8 PM, daily. Site visits two and three were conducted across single days, from 11 AM-7 PM, daily.

Interviews were proposed, agreed and completed between January 2017 and February 2017 with members of SRA staff, including: the director of student accommodation for the university, the SRA hall manager, SRA hall administrators and SRA student warden staff. Like case study site (I), staff interviews were transcribed, coded and analysed for themes and issues related to SRA and SE. Themes emerging from staff interviews included SRA physical, social and personal space, students' as customers, SRA standards, cost of SRA to students, maintenance issues, issues with students' social engagement in and with the SRA, and students' use of communal facilities within the SRA. Following completion of staff interview synthesis and analysis, a recruitment letter was sent to all student residents requesting their participation in a brief interview related to SRA and SE. A total of nine students responded to the proposed interview request and interviews were completed on-site, on a rolling basis during the spring term of 2017 (between 14 and 23 March). This led to three additional site visits on: 14 March 2017 (11:00 AM-7:00 PM), 16 March 2017 (3:30 PM-7:00 PM) and 23 March 2017 (5:00 PM-7:00 PM). Interviews were held in the reception area and common study room of the SRA under study. After, the interviews were transcribed, coded and analysed for themes and issues related to SRA and SE in case study site (II). Themes emerging from student interviews included: cost of SRA, variances in SRA room type and size, noise, SRA policy related to guests and visitors, communal kitchen use, personal time use in study bedrooms and management of communal study and multipurpose spaces within the SRA.

Subsequently, themes and issues emerging from staff and students' interview feedback informed the development of questionnaire two for this research. Questionnaire two for this research was developed and sent across to students using the UCL Opinio portal. The UCL Opinio portal was selected, as for case study site (I), due to it being supported by the researcher's institution. As with case study site (I), the electronic questionnaire was emailed to all current residents in May 2017 with a ten day window for completion (5 May 2017 at 12 PM-15 May 2017 at 12 PM, inclusive). Of 26 questionnaires stored, 15 were completed representing a 10 percent response rate for the SRA. Upon the closing of the electronic questionnaire, student responses were analysed using SPSS. After, triangulation of observations and field notes, interviews and electronic questionnaire feedback was completed to cross-reference the themes

and issues within and across feedback related to SRA and SE for case study site (II). Data and findings for case study site (II) are explored in detail in Chapter 6 of this thesis.

4.6.4 Phase four: comparing cross-case issues

Phase four for this research involved a syntheses and analyses of data and findings generated within case study sites (I) and (II) for this research. After completion of observations, interviews and questionnaires, thematic and statistical analysis were completed. Triangulation was then completed across cases using the three data generation methods. Cross-case themes and issues related to SRA and SE are explored further in Chapter 7, the discussion Chapter for this thesis.

4.7 Chapter summary

Chapter 4 has set out the methodology for this thesis. First, the social constructivist world view of the researcher was proposed as the epistemological basis for this research. Second, the ontological basis for this research touched on the work of Husserl (1950) and his key concepts of: empathy, intersubjectivity and lifeworld. Third, approaches from existing empirical research on SRA were reviewed. Key to existing empirical research on SRA was the prominence of case study research (i.e. single, multiple, comparative) and the use of observations, interviews, and surveys/questionnaires in existing empirical research on SRA. Fourth, I proposed a qualitative case study research approach and the use of observations, interviews and questionnaires to generate data and feedback from staff and students within case study sites (I) and (II) for this research. The methodology and methods chosen for this research aligned with the researcher's world view, and a strong desire to foreground staff and students perceptions and experiences of SE with and in SRA. The two case study sites proposed for this research were touched on briefly, and some of the limitations and risks for respondents and institutions were reviewed. Finally, the research phases for this thesis were proposed in order to set the scene for the following Chapters related to case study site I (Chapter 5), case study site II (Chapter 6) the discussion (Chapter 7) and conclusions and further research (Chapter 8) for this thesis. Staff

and student feedback on SE in and with an undergraduate hall of residence at a post-1992 university on the south coast of England follows in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Students' engagement in and with a hall of residence provided by a post-1992 university in the south of England

This Chapter presents and explores SE in and with an undergraduate hall of residence provided by a post-1992 university in the south of England, case study site (I) for this research. The geographic location (coastal town), type of institution (post-1992) and student population (undergraduate students) were key factors influencing the selection of the SRA site for study. Once under study, the site provided a rich opportunity to explore factors influencing SE in and with SRA for staff and students.

5.1 Introduction

This section sets the scene with a brief background on the university. First, I describe the SRA case study site (I) institutional estate and outline my access agreement. After, I provide a description of the SRA and outline the population and sample for observations and interviews. A set of participant grids follows complemented by notes on the electronic questionnaire used within case study site (I). An outline of the organisation of the remainder of this Chapter concludes this section.

Institutional estate

Case study site (I) is an undergraduate hall of residence provided by a post-1992 university located in the south-east of England. The institutional estate of the university may be characterised as dispersed, made up of multiple 'campus' sites set within a mix of urban-suburban areas across its host town. At the time of this study, a HESA (2017b) estates assessment indicated the university maintained a total of 6 institutional 'sites', composed of 124 buildings (63 non-residential and 61 residential). Institutional documents related to the university estate explained its six institutional sites as related to the university's periodised institutional development. The university originated as an arts college that later merged with a local technical college. Subsequently, a local teacher training college was also

incorporated to form a polytechnic. The university moved from polytechnic to university status as part of the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act.

In addition to its 61 SRA related buildings, the university accommodation documents outlined how the institution has been partnering with Unihomes, homestay and a house share scheme along with private rental providers to accommodate as many students as possible. At the time of this research, the university under study accommodated approximately 50% of first-year undergraduate students enrolled full-time with the university.

The university policy documents on its accommodation website at the time of this study stated that HEI provided SRA will be offered through a random selection process to all first-year undergraduates who have made the institution their first choice, confirmed their enrolment and applied by the stated deadline. With student demand for HEI provided SRA exceeding supply, priority is given to first-year undergraduate full-time enrolled students, full-time enrolled international students and any additional availability will be allocated through random selection of remaining applicants. This cycle and procedure were aimed at providing some transparency to the institution's application and allocation processes.

From the available university provided accommodation options, I proposed an undergraduate hall of residence located near the university town centre institutional site as a 'case' I felt would offer opportunities to explore and examine SE in and with SRA provision for undergraduate students.

Access agreement

In June 2016 I met with the director of operations for student accommodation at case study site (I). We agreed I would be permitted access to observe, interview and survey staff and students within a single institution provided SRA for undergraduate students, both domestic and international. The rationale for selection of the case under study in this Chapter was an opportunity to study undergraduate SE in and with SRA for a student population in light of the existing literature and research reviewed for this thesis.

Description of SRA

The geographic location (south England), student population (undergraduate domestic and international), the institution being a post-1992 university and an institutional access agreement were key to the HEI and SRA selected for study. As noted in Chapter 4, study of this SRA (an undergraduate hall of residence provided for domestic and international students) was intended to contribute a 'case' to the existing literature and research on SRA in England.

According to the university accommodation website, the SRA under study in this research maintained 298 individual rooms, across six blocks. Each block was 3-5 storeys and maintained a set of flats with 6-8 en-suite study bedrooms per flat. A single room at the time of this study was priced at £150 per week. No deposit was collected and rent covered all bills, including building wide wired/wireless internet access. The SRA was described as self-catered and rooms were sized at 10.2m², with the exception of disabled access rooms, which were slightly larger (no exact room dimensions were given as they varied between blocks). Following next, the case study site population, sample and staff-student participant interview grids.

Population and sample

No precise demographic data was available from SRA staff on the student residents living in the SRA at the time of this study. However, staff indicated that at the time of this study the SRA was filled to capacity, indicative of a total student population of 298 residents. Staffing for the SRA was composed of two teams, an accommodation team and a residence life team. The on-site accommodation staff included: a Director of Operations for HEI provided SRA, three Caretakers, three student reception staff and a team of three domestic services staff. The on-site residence life team included a live-in staff resident adviser and three live-in student resident advisers. Staff and student resident advisers, and on-site security were responsible for maintenance and security of the SRA between 17:30-08:30 year-round, including holiday periods.

Observations

As noted in Chapter 4, I spent a number of hours across a set of days observing staff and students in the main reception areas of the student residential accommodation cases I studied for this research. During my time within case study site (I): Site visit one was conducted across three days, from 10:00-5:00 PM each day. Site visit two was conducted across two days, from 10:00-7:00 PM each day. And site visit three was a single day visit from 1:00 PM-6:30 PM. During these three site visits, observations and field notes were completed within common reception and working spaces of the SRA. In addition to staff interviews, a recruitment letter was emailed to current student residents for the 2016-2017 academic year. The recruitment letter outlined the aims for this research and the interview with students. Student interviews were completed on-site on a rolling basis between October 2016 and November 2016, resulting in the additional two site visits (site visit four) 1:00-8:00 PM, and (site visit five) 3:00-8:00 PM.

In the first instance, I walked the perimeter of the building. The building sits on a large rectangular shaped site. The blocks are primarily made of concrete with metal roofing and side-cladding. The site sits on two 'pads', a lower pad nearer a main through road for the town and an 'upper' pad which was elevated to make way for a carpark under the upper pad. The interior of the buildings are carpeted and the walls are a noticeably off-white colour. When one enters, one must access each flat separately through a set of interlocking doors, making it no less than three doors to each flat. When one is inside the flats I was given access to, there is a single long hallway off which are the shared kitchens/social spaces and each of the six to eight student rooms. I include pictures from one flat kitchen, room and interior hallway which I captured during my first site visit in summer 2016.

Besides being able to explore the physical environment of the building, I was able to sit in the small main reception for the building which is adequately sign-posted off the main entrance. There, I spent a number of hours sitting, appreciatively drinking coffee provided by the accommodation staff and talking with staff and observing staff-staff and staff-student interactions. One instance of significance occurred when a student was moving out of the accommodation. At her

'checkout' I asked the accommodation staff what paperwork the young woman had submitted. He explained she had submitted a termination of her lease agreement, and, a one-page A4 sized questionnaire asking what was the reason for her requesting to terminate her lease early (he noted that in his experience most students elect to state this is for health reasons) and a question regarding if she is leaving from the institution and if so, what and where he/she will be going onto next. These seemed like rather important questions to the more general issue of what influences students' participation and retention in the SRA, and, once they have taken a decision to exit the SRA whether or not that has an influence on their decision to remain at the institution or to leave the institution entirely. In addition to staff-student and staff-staff interactions, the majority of the time I observed front-desk staff fielding enquiries for post, third-party suppliers (i.e. building maintenance, cleaning staff) and visitors who were stopping by to see the accommodation prior to their prospective/new student entering in the fall term.

I continued to 'camp out' in the main reception throughout my site visits. The majority of interactions were between student residents making maintenance requests and staff delegating or categorising and prioritising the requests throughout the day/week/month. These interactions formed the crux of my observations within case study site (I) for this research.

Staff-student participant interview grids

Recalling an introduction letter and invitation to participate in interviews was sent to all staff and student residents. From the 298 student residents, four students participated in the interview phase of this research. Additionally, six members of staff agreed to participate and allow their feedback to be included in this research. Of the six, five staff members agreed their feedback to be used for this research. Overnight security and domestic services staff were also emailed and approached on two separate occasions, declining on both occasions to participate in this research.

Below are grids of staff and students who participated in the interview portion of this study. Additionally, a description of the demographic information for student participants in the questionnaire portion of this study is also provided.

Figure 4: Staff and student respondent grids for case study site (I)

Staff interviewees

Pseudonym	Gender	Home Country	Staff position	Years in current position
Jacob	M	England	Director of Operations	2
Robert	M	England	Caretaker	21
Charles	M	England	Staff Resident Adviser	20
Christopher	M	Spain	Front desk assistant	1
David	M	South Africa	Director of Residence Life	8

Student interviewees

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Home Country	Course of study	Year(s) of study	Year in university SRA
Gavin	23	M	England	Media and Visual Arts	3	3
Paul	19	M	Spain	History, philosophy and ethics	1	1
Caroline	21	F	Germany	Psychology	3	2
Amita	22	F	England	Accounting and finance	4	2

Questionnaire feedback

Following staff and student interviews, I created a questionnaire reflecting some of the themes and issues raised by staff and students. Additionally, I included a number of questions from the questionnaire used by Brothers and Hatch (1971) in their sociological inquiry into student accommodation and Thomsen's (2008) survey on student satisfaction and preferences for SRA. The questionnaire was

emailed to all current student residents on 7 May 2017 and closed 15 May 2017 at 12 pm. The questionnaire (Appendix C) contained 41 questions, of which 11 demographic questions were followed by 30 questions related to SE in and with SRA physical, social and personal space.

To ensure that the electronic questionnaire was anonymous, private and confidential, a link to the questionnaire was emailed to students' university email address on file with the student accommodation office. No data was collected on the names or flat locations of students. Students were advised that the questionnaire would take 10-15 minutes to complete and that no remuneration would be offered for their participation.

24 of 29 students who started the questionnaire completed all questions. Of these, 19 self-identified as female, 4 as male and one individual preferred not to state their gender. The average age was approximately 19 years old, with the minimum age being 17 and the maximum age being 20. Of the questionnaire respondents, 18 identified themselves as British, four as members of the European Union (EU) and two 'other, international'. 23 were in their first-year of study and one was in their second year. Six students indicated they attended private/independent schools, five from comprehensive, five from secondary modern, three from grammar schools, one from a technical school and 4 from 'other'. Of these, 18 were on a BA Honours course, four were on a BSc Honours, while individual respondents also indicated they were on a BA, BSc, LLB and Electrical-Computer Engineering course. 14 students indicated their income to be over £900 for the year, four stated their income between £700-899, one individual stated their academic year income at £500-599, two indicated income of £300-499 and two indicated an income of £300 or less. Students indicated these incomes reflected a broad mix of sources, including: government loans (14), parental savings (9), government maintenance grants (8), personal savings (5), part-time work (3), full-time work (1), and 'at will' work (1). Finally, 16 students indicated it was six months or less between finishing pre and entering their current post-secondary institution, while six stated the gap was one to two years while two indicated they had a 'gap' of two years or more between concluding their pre-secondary education and entering university.

Organisation of this Chapter

Following this introductory section one, the three main sections of this Chapter reflect the main themes that emerged from my analysis of data generated through observations, interviews and questionnaire feedback. Section two will focus on findings related to institution policy, practice and students as 'customers'. Section three will present findings related to factors influencing staff and students' sense of community within the SRA. Section four presents staff and student feedback related to factors influencing students' personal wellbeing with and in the SRA. A summary concludes this Chapter.

5.2 Institution policy, practice and students as 'customers'

This section explores data and findings related to institution policy and practice influencing SE in and with case study site (I).

5.2.1 Staff feedback

For staff, institution policy and practice related to SE in and with SRA was mediated by a number of factors, including: student numbers, students' finances and an institutional approach to providing SRA as a 'service' to student 'customers'. Staff noted demand for undergraduate places and growth in student numbers had created a deficiency in available HEI provided SRA and related 'bed spaces'. A lack of institution provided SRA supply was framed as a constraint on the number of first-year students the institution could recruit and admit. Interfacing with student numbers were reflections on students' finances and an overarching institutional approach to SRA as a service and students as customers. Together, these factors influenced staff and student perceptions of SE in and with case study site (I).

SRA and student numbers

One issue raised by staff respondents focused on the influence of student numbers and SRA. Student numbers were cited as a key influence on the relationship of students to the university and institution provided SRA. Staff

highlighted student numbers in discussing demand and supply for HEI provided SRA. Alongside issues of SRA supply and demand, staff positioned HEI provided SRA as part of a student's experience of university and contributing to SE in and with the institution more broadly. While HEI provided SRA was positioned as part of a students' experience of HE, discussions with staff often reflected back on tensions related to staff perceptions of a persistent gap in HEI provided SRA supply. As such, administrators were aiming to grow institution provided SRA in order to balance supply and demand of HEI provided SRA within a five-ten year timeframe.

Jacob, director of operations for the university SRA, was responsible for the operations of all halls of residence across the institution. Jacob highlighted a substantial gap between the number of students applying to the institution (and HEI provided SRA) and the amount of institution provided SRA available. He explained:

“...[SRA is] a big focus at the university at the moment. Currently, the objective is to find enough accommodation that you can offer all first-year students a place. We're a bit short of that. But, it's a major priority for the university at the moment, from the top down” (Jacob, 25 August 2016).

Building on this point of student numbers and institution SRA capacity, he went on to explain:

“Just this year, they've secured about another 600 rooms in the private sector. That's with either small hall [and] private hall providers or with landlords with multiple properties, so that's helped. And we're also investing in the halls estates so we have built about 400 new rooms in the last five years. 200 more under construction at the moment. There's plans for another 800 rooms to be built by 2020” (Jacob, 25 August 2016).

Jacob also noted that, “right now, we're housing a little over 50% of first-year [housing] applicants. This is a major issue for the university recruitment wise” (22 June 2017). Jacob also cited students' accommodation as a key factor influencing student satisfaction with the institution. As evidence, Jacob noted the inclusion of SRA as a central issue in an institution wide survey on student satisfaction undertaken in spring of 2017. According to Jacob, students indicated

their journey to and from the university, lack of secure accommodation and variance in accommodation conditions were key influencers on their engagement (academic and social) with and in the university (Jacob, 22 June 2017).

Similarly, David, the student liaison manager and director of residence life at the university amplified Jacob's sentiments on SRA and student numbers. Regarding HEI provided SRA and student numbers David explained:

“Well, for us it's a very specific pressure at the moment. So we only accommodate about 70-80 percent of applicants (to HEI provided SRA), which is very low...What we'd like, ideally, is to be able to accommodate a hundred percent of our applicants, first-year applicants. So that's very low, so at the moment there's a lot of pressure on us to build new accommodation. We're looking at a variety of accommodations, we've introduced shared rooms this year for the first time, that will increase next year. But yeah, that's definitely our focus now is increasing accommodation availability” (David, 28 October, 2016).

While Jacob and David positioned institution provided SRA capacity as a key driver in relation to student recruitment, Jacob was also optimistic about the local housing authority and council approving the development of more institution provided and private provided SRA in the near future. Jacob explained:

“[As] we're a bit short....this particular council here, has recognised that. So they're far more supportive now as well. So, whereas in the past it might be difficult to get planning permission to build additional halls, now the council recognise that actually some of the issues in the community are probably attributed to having so many students in the community” (Jacob, 25 August 2016).

In Jacob's view, institution provided SRA was a critical component of the university's student services provision. Jacob and David highlighted a tension between student numbers and institution provided SRA, noting a persistent gap in bed spaces as a key concern for the institution. They also highlighted the importance of local housing authority and council support for future development of institution and private provided SRA. Jacob and David cited local housing authority and council support for further development of HEI provided SRA in relation to student numbers and the wider influence of students' demand for local housing on non-university residents. HEI provided SRA was part of a more general five year institution wide strategic plan to recruit and retain students. In

relation to HEI provided SRA, staff feedback also highlighted student finances as mediating students' relationships with and in the SRA.

Student finances

For some staff, students' relationships with and in SRA were also mediated by changes in the ways students financed their HE studies, including accommodation costs. Staff noted changes in student finances as influencing the diversity of students being admitted into the institution and SE in and with HEI provided SRA. When asked to discuss students participating in institution provided SRA, Robert, a caretaker for the hall of residence under study, explained what he felt were changing demographics and characteristics of the student body participating in HEI provided SRA. Robert felt access to various forms of financial support including student loans, bursaries and grants may have influenced students' access and participation in HEI and HEI provided SRA. Moreover, he perceived the ways in which students were financing their cost of attendance at the university, including their accommodation costs, to have influenced students' attitudes, perceptions and participation in HEI provided SRA.

In Robert's view, financial aid and resources available to students from their families and the institution were a primary influence on 'who' made up the student population participating in institution provided SRA. He explained:

“...In the early years, it seemed a bit different in the early years cause I think it was only a certain amount of students used to come [to university and to live in halls of residence]. And...it seems such a strange thing to say, but I think back in the early years it was more parents that had money, their students would be here. So now, I think anyone can come to the university now so it's changed quite a lot. So I think for students that don't have a lot of money, I think they get a lot more help [financial]... from us and from the university. So I suppose in that manner it's changed quite a lot” (Robert, 25 August 2016).

For Robert, provision of SRA by the institution had become a business proposition between the institution and students. He explained that, with student loans and a diversifying student population participating in HEI provided SRA, the relationship between staff and students had changed across his history at the institution. Additionally, HEI provided SRA was being positioned as a 'consumer'

product. Therefore, 'what you get' is what 'you can afford' in relation to the options available (i.e. HEI SRA, private accommodation, House in Multiple Occupation [HMO], en-suite style accommodation). Robert's feedback appeared to follow from a 'marketised' approach adopted by the HEI to SRA as a service for student consumers.

Staff feedback on student finances highlighted shifts in SE in and with SRA related to a diversifying set of financial resources available to students. For some staff, access to new and varied types of financial options influenced the 'mix' of students participating in and with HEI provided SRA. Staff perceived changes in student financial resources as influencing who, and how, students' engaged in and with the SRA. Student numbers and changing student financial profiles had reframed HEI provided SRA as a 'service' and students as 'customers'.

Students as 'customers'

For staff, coping with shortfalls in HEI provided SRA supply and changing student financial profiles materialised in an institutional approach to students as 'customers'. Feedback from Charles, a staff resident adviser for a hall of residence, exemplified this 'students as customers' approach. Charles highlighted the institution's approach to providing SRA as a student service, focused on the 'quality of service' in institution provided SRA. Charles explained:

"I think we're lucky that the university has a plan for increasing residential capacity. But we've got, if you like, a business model behind it, there's a revenue generating system. [But] what's important to students, well, they're paying a lot of money, so, they want a certain level of *service*" (Charles, 25 August 2016: my emphasis).

For Charles, the institution had taken steps to create a policy towards the development and operation of HEI provided SRA. In his view, these steps were critical to developing good practice across institution provided SRA. While he was hopeful regarding the university's policy and plans to increase SRA capacity for expected growth in student numbers, he was cautious about the influence of institution provided SRA. He noted:

“...The people employed to run the systems are embedded within the concept, if you like, the quality of the service” (Charles, 25 August 2016).

For Charles, approaching institution provided SRA as a student service and generating institutional policy and practice through such a lens may discount the pastoral care of students residing in institution provided SRA.

Regarding processes surrounding the HEI's provision of SRA, Charles noted the importance of new efforts in institution provided SRA to develop guidelines, protocols and procedures that could be shared as good practice across all institution provided SRA sites. He noted:

“A lot of it has been made up on the spur of the moment and now we're in the process of having proper procedures, and having some case studies, and knowing about practice” (Charles, 25 August 2016).

Charles's reflections highlighted the open and evolving nature of the institution's policies and practices towards providing SRA. He noted tensions between institutional policy and practice and several factors influencing institution provided SRA, including: student numbers, student finance and the institution's physical estate. These and other factors driving institutional decision-making regarding SRA exemplify the dynamic and contested environment in which the institution and institutional staff are making decisions about what constitutes institution provision of SRA and how to provide SRA to students.

5.2.2 Student feedback

Student feedback on institution provided SRA policy and practice raised a number of issues related to students' individual experiences of the SRA. Some of the key issues raised by students included the cost of accommodation and amenities.

Cost of accommodation

The cost of institution provided SRA was raised by all respondents when exploring what factors influenced their participation in and with university provided SRA. For example, Gavin, a third-year undergraduate studying media

and visual arts, noted how Student Finance England (SFE) was responsible for the total cost of his university provided SRA. As Gavin explained:

“SFE finances [the] accommodation as part of my overall funding”
(Gavin, 27 October 2016).

Likewise, loans through SFE were helping Amita, a fourth-year undergraduate studying accounting and finance, cover her accommodation costs. For Amita, the benefits of living in institution provided SRA outweighed the costs. In explaining her choice to live in institution provided SRA Amita focused on her own ‘space’. She explained:

“Um, I mean don’t get me wrong, I did like living in housing but in halls it’s just my sense of my own space. And you know, I was cleaning up after myself and everything when you’re in a house situation you tend to have rules and some people don’t do their own part. And there can be more arguments whereas I feel that in student accommodation you can talk it through, there are already rules set out from the university itself. So, yeah, I think it’s two different experiences that you need to go through. But I personally prefer halls just because you get to meet people as well but it’s just the sense that I have my own private space”
(Amita, 15 December 2016).

While Gavin and Amita had the totality of their accommodation financed by SFE, the cost of the accommodation for Caroline and Paul was more complex. For Caroline, part of her accommodation costs were covered by her role as a student resident adviser. In addition to being a student resident adviser, both herself and her mom were paying from personal savings to cover the remaining costs. When asked to discuss how she was paying for her accommodation costs Caroline explained:

“I saved up a lot of money. That’s all I did. I was working beforehand. And then I had a bit of support from my mom” (Caroline, 27 October 2016).

Likewise, Paul was very conscious of the cost of his accommodation, and his cost of attendance at the university more broadly. Paul’s accommodation costs were being paid by his parents. Being an international student Paul expressed a deep appreciation for the amount of funding his parents were sending to him to cover his university tuition, fees, housing and maintenance costs. As such, he

had come to be mindful of the value of his time in the university and university provided SRA, explaining:

“We had freshers, and then one week and we started, and then I got on, OK, I have to be here. Because someone told me a story that really brought me back to earth. Like you are here to study, your parents are making an effort for you to study. I’m not even working. I just have one thing to do, and its study. Nothing more, so I’m going to succeed in that, and the other things, the others will come, but the basis of [my] accomplishments [here are] my studies” (Paul, 27 October 2016).

For Paul, his social experiences while living in university provided SRA had brought a new set of perspectives to his own understanding of ‘what’, ‘why’ and ‘how’ he was going to participate in HEI provided SRA. Paul’s experience focused his attention onto his studies and the ‘purpose’ of his being at the university. For him, his parent’s investment in his university education was something he couldn’t take for granted.

Students raised the cost of accommodation, on its own and in relation to their total cost of attendance (COA) at the university, as a key factor influencing their relationships in and with institution provided SRA. Cost of accommodation tied for 4th in students’ questionnaire feedback in relation to factors that influenced their experience of SRA. The relationship between students and the institution provided SRA was mediated by a number of factors, including cost of institutional SRA. Gavin highlighted how Student Finance England provided financial assistance, and how institution provided SRA was not much different from the cost his girlfriend paid for her private rental accommodation. Amita raised ‘space’ as a priority in her decision to return to institution provided SRA. For Amita, having her own space and a sense of predictability and control over her space were key to why she chose institution provided SRA over remaining in the private rental sector. For Caroline, costs of institution provided SRA were covered by herself and her mom’s personal savings. Like Caroline, Paul noted the significance of familial financial support in shaping his expectations and approach to living in institution provided SRA. Students’ feedback highlighted the diversity in perceptions of the ‘cost’ of accommodation, including the cost-benefits for some of living in university provided SRA and the diverse approaches to dealing with the costs associated with participation. Student perceptions of cost also

linked with another key theme, amenities, and students' evaluations of the amenities provided in their SRA.

Amenities

Amenities were another key factor in students' assessment of why they chose to live in HEI provided SRA. For example, Gavin had lived in HEI provided SRA throughout the course of his studies (three years). As a disabled student managing a number of physical and neurological conditions, he highlighted how being in an en-suite style accommodation provided a sense of relief from the challenges of communal toilet and showering units. Gavin noted:

“I think having your own bathroom and shower is a big positive. I'd be worried if I were sharing a shower or a toilet for example. There are six people in my flat, if we were all sharing one bathroom between six, which I know at the other campus SRAs that was the deal there...they would all have to share. Being able to take your own time is a massive factor. And I think its great, made the most of it” (Gavin, 27 October 2016).

Similarly, Amita noted the value she placed on having her en-suite room. For Amita “just for my own toilet...” was also a key amenity influencing her sense of well-being in her SRA (Amita, 15 December 2016). Amita explained that, the ‘predictability’ of what she perceived as her private space and her general sense of personal responsibility for its cleanliness reduced her worries about ‘how’ her personal space would be managed. For her, an en-suite style study bedroom meant having private space and exercising a degree of control over its use, alleviating her concerns about how ‘others’ may use and leave the space. For Gavin and Amita, privacy and a sense of personal control in relation to the management of their study bedrooms was a critical component to their well-being as students.

Likewise, Caroline, found the privacy afforded by en-suite style accommodation appealing. In her second year, Caroline had moved into a private shared house with peers from her first university provided SRA. The experience was not what she had hoped for. Namely, she felt that levels and expectations of privacy and cleanliness were not the same for herself and her housemates. As such, she sought out a way of re-entering university provided SRA and applied to be a

student resident adviser for the university provided SRA under study. Key factors influencing her decision to apply and accept the student resident adviser position in this SRA was the self-catered option and en-suite style room provisions. When asked about the factors that influenced her decision to apply, accept and move in to university provided SRA she stated:

“It was my own bathroom, I have to say. Sorry, that was one factor that I was sure I would get my own bathroom. Because of my experience I had before, living in a shared house. And, um, sharing a toilet and shower wasn't a great experience I have to say. It didn't feel like a home in a way, because it was with people who were maybe like not really clean and stuff. So now here I just take care of my own things. I can shower whenever I want, I don't have to wait until another person is finished with showering. I don't have to worry that its kind of dirty in a way. So that was really important” (Caroline, 27 October 2016).

Like cost, amenities featured in student feedback on policies and practices within case study site (I). Students related the cost of their accommodation to the value they felt the amenities provided them in terms of privacy and control over personal space in study bedrooms. Students articulated they valued their 'own space' and self-regulated and monitored activities of their SRA.

Additional feedback received through the electronic questionnaire submitted to students across the SRA also raised a number of issues mediating the influence of SRA policy and practice on SE in and with SRA.

Questionnaire feedback related to SRA policy, practice and students' relationships

Student questionnaire feedback highlighted a number of issues mediating institutional policy, practice and SE in and with case study site (I). For example, when asked what issues most influenced students' experience of their SRA, students indicated their flatmates (14), the cleanliness of shared spaces (i.e. communal kitchens) (13) noise (13), expense (11), lack of space (6), poor study facilities (5), distance from university facilities (4), physical comfort (4), monitoring by staff (3), rules and restrictions (2) and lack of privacy (1) were key considerations. Moreover, when asked about factors that influenced their experience of the SRA, students indicated its convenience to other university facilities (20), convenience to non-university facilities (13), a sense of

independence and freedom (12), the quality of the provided room (11), cost (11), communal life (9) and privacy-physical comfort (9) ranked high in students' feedback. Alongside costs of accommodation and amenities, students highlighted these factors as influencing their SE in and with case study site (I).

5.3 Fostering students' sense of community

In addition to institutional policy and practice, staff and students raised a number of issues related to the theme of community, including: staff-student relationships and SRA sponsored social events.

5.3.1 Staff feedback

For staff, staff-student relationships and SRA sponsored social events contributed to the social 'ecology' of the SRA.

Staff-student relationships

Staff highlighted their relationships with students as a key component of students' sense of community with and in the SRA under study. When asked to explain what steps the institution had taken to support staff-student relationships, Robert explained there had been a review and re-investment in student resident advisers across institution provided SRA, including the one under study. Robert was hesitant about the possible contribution(s) and influence student resident advisers could have in the residence. He explained:

“...This new semester...starts in September, so we're getting a lot of student advisers starting. I mean we had them years and years ago. When I first started we had a few student advisers that used to live on site, and in my opinion they didn't really work back then”
(Robert, 25 August 2016).

When asked to explain why he felt student advisers (SAs) 'didn't work', Robert stated:

“Back in the old days they used to just sit in a flat and you'd phone them. And if you got ahold of them you did and if you didn't you didn't and that was that. These new SAs are meant to be doing a lot more with the students. I think they've been given a budget, so they can start doing

activities with students, can be more involved so the students are more involved and a bit more under control on the site”
(Robert, 25 August 2016).

Robert explained how he felt incorporating more live-in student-staff was a return to prior institutional policy and practice related to providing SRA. This ‘re-investment’ into student staffing across institution provided SRA was a recycling of prior institutional practices early in Robert’s career at the institution. Robert’s attitudes appeared to reflect a view that, if it didn’t work then, why should we expect it to be helpful now? Robert was sceptical about the functions, responsibilities and role of increased live-in student staff on site. He felt that the increase of student-staff was a move by the institution to maintain closer peer-to-peer relationships between students and student-staff in halls. Thus, student-staff may be in a position to relate and ‘control’ students’ behaviours better than their more senior professional staff colleagues. Control was interpreted as being aware of and visible to SRA staff. This visibility amongst students and staff (professional and student) may be related to the interpersonal relationships between students and staff in institution provided SRA.

Similarly, Charles situated staff as a component of a students’ total experience of institution provided SRA. Charles explained:

“The thing I think we all aim for is that [students] enjoy their time here. And, there’s, when it comes down to it, it’s a series of rooms around a kitchen, on a floor in a block on a street. So once you get over the novelty of that there’s very little you can do to make that spellbinding. What we can do is we can try [to influence] their interaction with others...their interaction with others therefore has to be enriched by the people they work and communicate with” (Charles, 25 August 2016).

This facilitator role is something staff perceived as part of their duties and responsibilities within the SRA. Staff participants situated their roles as supporting the personal and social development of students living in their SRA.

While Charles was hopeful of the contribution staff could make to students’ engagement in and with peers and staff within the SRA, Christopher, a receptionist for a hall of residence, took a contrasting view and raised the issue of a ‘gap’ between staff and students. He explained:

“I think that it’s very difficult to engage with students being a member of staff at university because they see a gap between you and them. So it’s very difficult to understand them as they are, because they don’t show you their true colours. They just, I don’t know how to say this, but I would say they use you as a provider more than as an adviser. So, they know they are paying for this. They know they are getting something. And they will ask for it, but engaging with them in a more, deep way, I think it’s very difficult...” (Christopher, 25 August 2016).

Similar to Charles and Christopher, David explained the development of student and staff relationships in institution provided SRA across his time at the institution. The introduction of the residence life scheme and its aims for peer-to-peer support, programming, students helping students and staff emerged from a more reactive model of staffing institution provided SRA. David explained:

“Before, we just had wardens that live in staff accommodation on site. But that’s more of a reactive role, so if they had to respond to any emergencies. But nothing proactive, they didn’t organise or deliver any social events. They didn’t do, they did less general welfare visits. Yeah, it was just mostly reactive” (David, 28 October 2016).

For David, more community engagement work, more development and delivery of social events for student residents in the SRA, increasing staff and student staff visibility within the SRA were manifestations of a residence life scheme implemented with a more ‘proactive’ approach to student engagement.

Adjustments to SRA staffing in the upcoming year to add more live-in student-staff has been met with both optimism and scepticism by staff. Jacob and Charles see the potential for new student-staff to support the overall aim of the institution to enhance students’ experience in and with institution provided SRA. In contrast, Robert and Christopher were hesitant that additional student-staff would be able to overcome a ‘gap’ which they felt was implicit between students and staff members. The way staff framed their relationships with students and students’ relationship with the institution provided SRA under study underpinned a ‘student service’ approach. Staff identified SRA sponsored social events for student residents in the SRA as another driver of community within the SRA.

SRA sponsored social events and SE

For staff, provision of social events was seen as an unclear means of generating and supporting students' engagement in and with the SRA under study. Staff highlighted the potential of SRA sponsored events to contribute to students' peer relationships, 'belonging' and connection to the SRA.

As a student resident adviser, Caroline noted the challenges associated with programming for student residents in the SRA. When asked if the residence life team provides programming for student residents Caroline explained:

"Yes, we do have to organise events once a week. So we are student resident advisers staying here so it's one of us each week, in a way, sometimes we pair up, but we are supposed to be at one event per week. So it could be like, we did a bit of meet and greet, with a bit of speed-friending. Which was successful so far, we had nine people out of three hundred students. Which isn't a lot, but at least it's just a few. And we had a laundry tour at the beginning, just showing students how to work the laundry, you know the washing machines and stuff. But not many people turned up, but that is something that we advertise on Facebook, we talk to people when we do our flat visits, we tell them, oh yeah, we have a self-defence session for example. And that if they're interested they can come down and participate. But, um, they're not really up for it" (Caroline, 27 October 2016).

Likewise, Amita picked up on the issue of space and programming within the institution provided SRA. For Amita, community spaces or 'common rooms' were ideal locations to foster planned and unplanned meet ups with other residents. She explained:

"And we do have a common room, I've seen people use it. We hold our events in there but that's it. And people like it for movie night. [The other halls]...have a lot of different study rooms, and I think that's great, that's great space over there actually. You can either do work or events, group presentations" (Amita, 15 December 2016).

Amita goes on to explain how programming in the halls has helped students, in particular international students who she explained were looking for ways to 'locate themselves' in what was for many a new but foreign home. She elaborated:

[Staff and student staff] create events. This can be a movie night...a bus tour to show everyone around the different campuses, to welcome students in. And it's mostly engaged international students...And it comes to, not just events, but it's about [students'] social well-being. So...if they have any questions, or if, just like an example, they may be homesick... [and] they may just want to speak to [someone], they may just want to be able to speak to an actual staff member. So being able to have a student 1:1 relation, because they know that [student resident advisers] are students, they know that [they] understand what they're going through they [and] may be able to speak to us a bit more" (Amita, 15 December 2016).

For Caroline and Amita, both student staff members, providing events in the SRA generated opportunities for students to participate in the social life of the hall. While participating in the social life of the hall was a key aim for providing the student resident advisers a small budget for the year, opportunities did not generate obligations for student residents to participate. Similarly, David was sceptical of 'programming' in order to 'develop' student residents. Instead, David highlighted a relationship between institution provided SRA and student recruitment, retention and engagement. David explained: "I think the principles are a bit deeper than just providing support or engaging students, it's probably centred around student retention, student experience and the standing of the university as a whole" (David, 28 October, 2016). For David, SRA provision and a 'student residence life' were, in principle, aimed at student recruitment, retention, experience and enhancement of students' perception of the institution more generally. He noted that the institution recruited a number of international students, and whether or not students' expectations of 'residence life' at the institution were being met through programming and provision for student residents. Focusing on students' expectations, David explained:

"We have a variety of students, and again I think the international students, we have some students from the States, I do wonder what they expect when they arrive here. Do they expect some system that they have in the States, or a lot more involvement from staff. Do they feel we're not doing enough. But I have a sense students don't think about that continuum, or they're not aware of the continuum, but I've never asked them" (David, 28 October 2016).

The diversity of the student recruitment also may be reflected in David's scepticism that programming for student resident engagement leads to clear outcomes, both personal and social, for students. David explained:

“I don’t know if it’s a problem, I don’t see it as an issue. It might not be something that needs to be addressed. Um, this sense of independence, just providing people with a room, secure, comfortable space might be sufficient. I don’t, I’m wary of the word programming. This American word programming, creating this better individual, more rounded, successful, individuals. It’s not, I don’t know, I’m somewhere between the two. Between just providing them with a room and than a sense of programming, it’s probably somewhere in the middle. It’s more than providing them with a room, it’s providing them with some social opportunities. But I’m a bit more sceptical about programming creating moral, successful, academic individuals” (David, 28 October 2016).

For David, the residence life program was again in its infancy. The institution was still generating data and seeking student and staff input into how the scheme may be changed and improved to meet student resident needs into the future. Instead there were two overarching aims for developing relationships between staff and students within institution provided SRA. First, for SRA to act as a ‘home base’ for students to participate in the institution (i.e. academics, clubs, societies, sport). Second, for residence life to ‘add value’ to students and the institutions’ policy and practices aimed at students’ engagement and experience of HEI provided SRA. In short, staff positioned SRA and residence life as providing for the possibility to create and cultivate a sense of institutional community within and across the university.

5.3.2 Student feedback

Students indicated interfacing with and in the SRA community was wrought with tensions. Tensions centred on: flat based communal kitchens, an absence of a sense of building-wide community, and students’ perceptions of anti-social behaviour.

Flat based communal kitchens

For students, the flat kitchen was the ‘hub’ for social engagement in their SRA. For example, Gavin noted how shared kitchen space allowed him to be selective about when and how he wished to socialise with his flatmates. He noted:

“[I’m] able to socialise a lot in the shared kitchen space. I mean we could [before some of the renovations and changes], but the changes that have

happened since I've been here that I've seen, like there's been televisions that have been fitted in. And you can see there's a big difference in socialisation just from that, along with the individual people as well" (Gavin, 27 October 2016).

Caroline also noted this trend of students to be selective about their social behaviour. Regarding students' use of communal kitchens she stated:

"They can just go into their room if they don't want to like, be in the kitchen for example, and talk to others, because it's just big enough that you can spend your time in there. It's not like you feel, oh I need to get out of here, I need space. They do kind of feel free...[However], its kind of hard to get them out of their rooms because they are really comfortable in their rooms. So I'd say like, when we have to do events, its kind of hard to get them out of their privacy and comfort zone because they just feel right in there. I'm not sure how it is in like the kitchens and stuff, how different flats handle it in the way, and if they're really open. I know in my flat it's, we meet in the kitchen when we cook our food. But then we have a little chat. Then we just go to our room. So its like, we meet there if we meet there and if we want, and that's fine as well. But everyone seems to be happy with it, in that sense (if it happens it happens, but it's not contrived)" (Caroline, 27 October 2016).

While the vision and aim for 'communal' or 'shared' kitchen space may be to create community, students' feedback highlighted how their communal kitchens often served as a dynamic and contested communal space within the SRA under study. Students indicated a number of variant approaches to the use of communal kitchens across the SRA. For Gavin, the communal kitchen was an opportunity to cross paths with his flatmates from time to time. Caroline, a student and student resident adviser, positioned communal kitchens as places where students could socialise, however, it was on their terms and students were not obligated to 'contrive community' in these communal spaces.

Building community

Students' feedback indicated a narrow view of what defined community and relationships within the SRA. For example, Paul indicated a lack of building-wide community. When asked about building community in the SRA, he responded:

"I would say, in this certain place, there is no sense of community. There is maybe a sense of community in the flats, but in that restricted area that

is the flat. There is no community of, 'hey, the flat 7' and 'hey, the flat 6'. No, no, no, they don't know each other. Maybe me, I know who is in each flat because I am interested, I am when I meet, because I am really open and if I see someone in the stairs and I say 'hey, my name is Paul' what's your name. I think I haven't met you before. And like that I get to meet some people but there is not activities" (Paul, 27 October 2016).

Student feedback from the electronic questionnaire echoes Paul's sentiments. Students indicated a number of issues influencing their experience and engagement with the SRA community. For example, of the 24 respondents, 14 indicated their flatmates were a key influencer on their sense of community within the SRA, followed by the cleanliness of shared space and noise. Moreover, when asked about the number of SRA sponsored social events student participants attended over this academic year, students' participation ranged from none (14) to 1-2 (4) events. Student feedback also highlighted issues with noise pollution within and between flats, especially on particular nights and early mornings of the week when students 'went out' on the town. As such, student feedback noted a number of influences within and across flats that fragmented a sense of community across the SRA under study. Following on from contested perceptions of community, students also highlighted perceptions of anti-social behaviour in their SRA.

Students' perceptions and attitudes towards anti-social behaviour

Echoing students' feedback on building community, students expressed concern over anti-social behaviour within the SRA. For students, anti-social behaviour influenced their relationships with other students in the SRA under study. Students also noted a weekly 'cycle' of anti-social behaviour influencing their sense of social life in the SRA. For example, when asked about the greatest disadvantage of their present accommodation (Appendix C, Question 25), respondents wrote in their open feedback that the hall "...Is 'not homely at all'".

Flatmates and noise (inside and outside) the building were also raised as key influencers on students' experience and engagement with the SRA. One student respondent stated in their questionnaire feedback that there was "too much noise at 2 am from people coming back drunk from clubs and no-one doing anything about it. And the hall "...is known as the 'party halls', it's always noisy and my

flatmates are dirty and never wash up, and don't appear to care about their course” (Appendix C, Question 25).

Another student respondent perceived a lack of care by the institution regarding students' health and wellbeing, commenting there are “a lot of crackheads in the halls which the university doesn't care about” with “no security at all in the block (there has been issues) and easy access [to the block and flats]” (Appendix C, Question 25). If, as staff suggested above, the institution is working to raise the level of their SRA provision service beyond ‘simply a bed in a room’, students are sensitive to the tensions created when the physical form of the building, the low level of professional staff and disbursement of student staff may be unable to ‘control’ or otherwise adequately influence student residents’ behaviours to an exact standard across an SRA.

Likewise, Paul also raised issue with what he perceived as anti-social behaviour within his flat. He explained some of the tensions he was having with his flatmates and his perception of their behaviours. Paul explained:

“...Well, the thing is, at first my flatmates, like, everything was really happy. But then we discovered that we are really different persons. OK, the situation is, my flatmates are always going with friends into the flat, drinking, having fun, but. I really want to go to concerts, I want to go to water polo, I want to go to the sea and do standup paddling, and now I can feel that. Yes, I've gone out with them two times, and it's OK, but its like, well, you are not so much of our kind. So, now it is just the relation of ‘how was your day’ or ‘how was that concert that you went to’. But there is not this reciprocity...” (Paul, 27 October 2016).

Paul was an exemplar who raised tensions between his approach and the approach of his flatmates to living in SRA. He raised issue with the behaviours and activities of his flatmates. For Paul, his focus was on his studies and engaging with other social aspects and opportunities within the institution. Alternatively, he perceived his flatmates were more interested in a ‘student life’ that centred on socialising within the SRA at the expense of the academic side of ‘student’ life. For Paul, this imbalance created a gap between himself and his flatmates, which had an effect on his residential life. Moreover, Paul raised concerns about how his residential life may be influencing his academic

outcomes, as he noted a preference for studying in his bedroom over visiting university libraries or other institution study spaces.

Additional questionnaire feedback from students echoed tensions related to anti-social behaviour among peers. For example, several responses drew attention to noise, smoking and fire alarms as influencing students' residence life in the SRA. Student residents commented:

“Noise, people smoking inside the building which activates fire alarms repeatedly, shower and toilet with same floor”

“A lot of crackheads in the halls which the university doesn't care about... [and] flatmates are unclean”

Of 21 responses to question 25 of the electronic questionnaire, 14 responses mentioned flatmates, students and anti-social behaviour as a key issue negatively influencing their engagement in and with the SRA. As such, anti-social behaviour, irrespective of the presence of overnight security, student and staff resident advisers and policy related to quiet hours was not deterred and students appeared to be challenged to find an adequate solution to the issue.

Students' feedback highlighted a sense of disconnect between residents related to perceived anti-social behaviour. For example, Paul explained how the introductory phase of transitioning into life within the SRA under study had shifted for him from drinking and watching movies all day to using his study bedroom as a focal point for work. Similarly, student feedback from the electronic questionnaire highlighted the weekly routine disruption of communal life related to students returning from a 'night out'. Students' feedback highlighted a tension around learning to negotiate and express their own wants/needs/desires of the space with their peers who had adopted other diverse approaches to living within the community. A lack of building-wide community may reflect this tension between individual and groups of students feeling unable to approach or being unheard in the discussions around mitigating and minimising perceived peer anti-social behaviour patterns.

5.4 Influencing students' sense of personal wellbeing in SRA

Staff and students raised a number of issues related to students' personal wellbeing in and with the SRA under study.

5.4.1 Staff feedback

Staff highlighted their pastoral care of student residents and reinforced an institutional approach to students' personal wellbeing with and in the SRA under study.

Pastoral care of student residents

In light of student numbers and institutional policy and practices, staff conceptions of pastoral care in SRA also related to the institution's duty of care towards student residents. Staff raised the issue of students' welfare and the institution's duty of care towards students residing in institution provided SRA.

Pastoral care of students in institution provided SRA materialised in the experience of staff participants in various ways. For example, when explaining their role in institution provided SRA as it related to the pastoral care of students, Charles explained:

“Our job, primarily, is to be a waypoint for students. So, whether they be facing financial, emotional, spiritual or existential dilemmas then hopefully we can build up a relationship with them (students). We're not seen as being intimidating or external, and we can steer them towards the people that can give them the help they need”
(Charles, 25 August 2016).

Christopher echoed the sentiment of Charles, noting:

“I remember that we had a few students that they would feel like very comfortable coming to reception to talk to me or to anyone in reception. I think that is because they are away from home and they feel like staff where they live are going to be the closest thing to family, if you like. Not as in that kind of connection you have with your family, but if I don't know, you know, how to register with the GP, or I don't know where to go and buy my food, or how to cook, they will come down here and ask for that type of advice. And I just think its part of halls really. The way

you do this it comes with halls. Because you live in a flat, you live in a shared flat with other people, you don't know them, and you kind of feel that need of having someone supportive there”
(Christopher, 25 August 2016).

While Charles and Christopher cited pastoral care and student welfare as central to their role in institution provided SRA, Jacob and Robert positioned student welfare and pastoral care of students in the remit of their colleagues. Jacob explained:

“So I have day to day responsibility for the management of the day to day operations of the university...owned accommodations. So that's from largely a facilities perspective, So I'm responsible for things like maintenance, cleaning, staffing, front of house. Things like organising when students are arriving, so kind of facilitating their arrivals and departures. Keeping records and following up with things that happen in the halls. For example, things that happen overnight, we have a record of that and we follow that up and we keep records of that. I'm the budget manager for the halls. So generally I kind of report to the deputy head of department, but on a day to day basis I'm the head manager for the halls” (Jacob, 25 August 2016).

Similarly, Robert explained:

“Yeah, day to day I suppose, little pickings, start off in the mornings, a bit of general stuff. A bit of handing out keys to maintenance people that turn up, than we do a block check for fire safety stuff, health and safety stuff. And then, um, as the day goes on, it's mainly maintenance in students' rooms or around the site. Moving things about that need doing...

I think, I suppose just everything, everything here is for. At this site... everything here is ready for the students when they arrive, there's so much information for them. So much stuff for them for their stay. We have a lot of parents turning up on the first day. And you end up comforting some of the parents, as I say they get quite emotional, mums get very emotional. And you have to, we end up supporting the students, and I guess it's just one of those [nervous laugh]”
(Robert, 25 August 2016).

For Charles and Christopher, their job responsibilities situated concerns for the pastoral care of students at the forefront of their role. Alternatively, Jacob and Robert saw pastoral care as more of a peripheral focus, positioning their focus on the operations of the institution's provided SRA (i.e. maintenance, health and safety of facilities). Together, these individual concerns created an

ecological approach to the institution's provision of SRA. While pastoral care alternated between a central and peripheral focus of staff participants, it nonetheless related to the role and responsibilities of participants' work in institution provided SRA, and to the ecological nature of staffing in institution provided SRA.

Staff reinforcing institutionalised rationale for HEI provided SRA

Staff respondents highlighted the institution's duty of care as key to supporting students' sense of personal wellbeing with and in the SRA. While staff noted a number of influences as 'the way things are', they often did not relate their actions, activities and approaches to the construction of students as 'customers' having a 'student experience', within which HEI provided SRA played a key role. As such, staffs' notions of 'duty' and 'care' materialised and replicated a broader institutional set of policies and practices, working to maintain a level of *service quality*. These institutional policies and practices related to the provision of SRA, while perhaps underpinning a set of ideas and ideals that co-create students' as customers. Students participated in an 'experience' but were unclear as to the influence of staffs' approaches, policies and practices on students' personal wellbeing in and with their HEI provided SRA.

5.4.2 Student feedback

Students discussed time-use in study bedrooms, room conditions and noise as factors influencing their personal wellbeing with and in the SRA under study.

Time use in students' study bedrooms

For students, time use in their study bedrooms fell on a continuum. For some students, their study bedrooms were a personal space to concentrate on their academic coursework. For example, Paul explained how there was a clear divide that had developed for him, his room in the flat was a study-space as he preferred it to the library study spaces he had visited on campus. He devoted the majority of his time to study in his room, noting:

“...I try to study in my room and not go to the library. I don't go to the library because I really like to alternate in my study, like one hour study and then I can sing for like fifteen minutes. And that's my relax [time]. Or I can stretch, because I do a lot of sport, two hours study than I stretch half an hour. And then two hours study, and half an hour stretch. So I don't lose time going to the library. Also, the library is always really social, and me when I want to socialise I say 'hey, Laura, Maria; do you want to go to this place?' And we go, and that's it” (Paul, 27 October 2016).

While Paul highlighted his room as a place to study, feedback from students in the questionnaire indicated study bedrooms may not have been the focal study space for many student residents. When asked about daily average study time in their rooms, students' study time ranged from: less than one hour (6), 1-2 hours (3), 2-3 hours (3), 3-4 hours (2), 4-5 hours (3) and 5 or more hours (1) Appendix C. As such, students (such as Paul) who expected their study bedroom to be a silent (quiet) study space came into tension with flatmates who treated their residences as more of a social hub than a quiet study area. The variability in approach towards time-use in flats and study bedrooms may have created tensions between student residents. As Richter & Walker (2008) noted, this may change the habits, routines and ritualised use of time in students' SRA. Where Paul perceived and expected his room to be a private study space this came into tension with how his flatmates used the flat. Paul noted that he felt his flatmates often skipped classes and spent significant time in the kitchen, watching television or movies and cooking. Subsequently, Paul felt his 'student lifestyle' in disharmony with his flatmates, causing a shift in his perception and approach to his own studies and his treatment of flatmates. Paul's adjusted expectations of his flat had brought his worldview into tension with the lifestyle and choices of his flatmates. Parallel to personal relationships with flatmates, study bedroom conditions also factored into students' sense of personal wellbeing in and with the SRA under study.

Students' study bedroom conditions

Room condition was a key consideration for students. Paul noted that while his room was close to the main entry for the flat and directly across from the kitchen, he was in a room that had been configured for a student with disabilities. As such,

he paid the same rent as his flatmates but perceived his room to be slightly larger than average. Paul noted:

“I’m very happy that my room is a disabled room and it’s bigger than the others. Also, I had some problems in my toilet. And I wrote the things that weren’t working. And I went to the reception and I [asked] the manager, when are these things aren’t working going to be fixed? And he said we have a lot of rooms and a lot of things, and yes, OK. That’s fair...now that it’s been a month, that they aren’t going to be fixed. Because they are not such serious issues like the toilet. So they are not going to be fixed” (Paul, 27 October 2017).

For Paul, the location of his room exposed him to noise pollution from flatmates using the kitchen, and entering and exiting the flat. He took account of these negative influencers, however, he felt the additional size of the flat and his belief that the ‘sounds’ were not so bothersome that they should inspire a room-change request. Paul remained in his originally assigned study bedroom for the academic year. The maintenance issues Paul raised appeared to highlight the influence of an ‘ad hoc’ or ‘as and when’ approach to building maintenance. That is, rather than a systematic review of the building, maintenance issues were dealt with ‘as and when’ they occurred and prioritised based on a set of criteria as: emergency and non-emergency, needs to be done ‘today’ or can be done when ‘parts come in’. This approach may aim to maximise the longevity of use, however, it leads to incidents of ‘minimisation’ of ‘minor’ issues related to room and flat conditions across the SRA.

Students echoed Paul’s concerns in their questionnaire feedback. When asked about the greatest disadvantage of their SRA, students indicated their flatmates, noise, and lack of uniformity of rooms across flats (Appendix C). Students were also sensitive to the amount of physical space within their study bedrooms. One student noted there was “little space to accommodate my work and personal belongings”. Thus, students’ perceptions of physical space influenced students’ sense of personal space in study bedrooms. Students’ perceptions of physical and personal space raises up the issue of adequate accommodation in light of rising student numbers, local housing rules and regulations regarding housing for multiple occupancy dwellings such as this SRA, and students’ sense of ‘adequate’ personal space.

Noise and students' wellbeing in and with their SRA

Noise pollution was also a key factor in students' assessment of the quality of their personal space within the SRA. From the electronic questionnaire, of 29 student responses, 13 indicated noise was the second most important factor influencing their use and experience of the SRA (Appendix C).

Gavin also raised the issue of noise pollution in the flats he had lived in within the university provided SRA under study. He explained that during his first-year he lived in the block of flats farthest from the reception area/security officers. While living in that block, parties and noise complaints from other flats and the surrounding neighbourhood were more frequent. He explained:

“In my first-year there was obviously, there was more kind of because I was more engaged with the kind of freshers or party scene, and the first. Well, in my view, in the first-year I was in D block which was away from reception, whereas this year I'm above reception. So I think that dynamic changes completely, being above a certain area or further away. Cause you'd have, there'd be parties in kitchens, and then people would be loud outside and we'd have the security guard coming around to tell us to be quiet because it's a residential area as well” (Gavin, 27 October 2016).

Student feedback raised noise pollution as a key issue in both interviews and electronic questionnaire feedback. Student interviewees noted how different 'zones' of the SRA were more or less conducive to resident activities producing greater amounts of noise. Similarly, five students' raised noise as the greatest disadvantage of their accommodation in their questionnaire feedback (Appendix C, Question 25). Several students' questionnaire feedback noted frustrations with a lack of policy enforcement by staff regarding perceived anti-social behaviours by residents. Students noted noise pollution within and from the SRA as having a cascading influence affecting social relationships within and between flats as well as the surrounding neighbourhood community. A number of students expressed unease with confronting other student residents about noise, expressing concern this would generate instability and unease with their flatmates. These expressed tensions appeared to reflect students' approaches to negotiating their social relationships with other residents in light of a number of preferences and expectations for the use of study bedrooms and shared social spaces (i.e. shared

kitchens). Students also noted that they expected staff to mediate between themselves and 'noisy' fellow residents. This tension appeared to reflect a 'gap' between student resident expectations and experiences of physical boundaries between private study bedrooms and shared/communal spaces.

5.5 Chapter summary

This chapter has explored themes and issues arising from an undergraduate hall of residence provided by a post-1992 university in the south of England [case study site (I) for this research]. The hall of residence included both domestic and international undergraduate students and a number of accommodation and residence life staff. Interviews, observations and an electronic questionnaire aimed to generate staff and student feedback in order to understand some of the factors influencing SE in and with the SRA under study.

Themes and issues raised included drivers and tensions around institutional policy and practice, development of a 'student community' and students' personal wellbeing with and in the SRA under study. In relation to institutional policy and practice, staff participants highlighted how rising student numbers and the shifting landscape of student finances had created the conditions for students as 'customers'. Alternatively, students highlighted the cost of their accommodation, amenities and governance of public-private spaces as key factors influencing their engagement with and in the SRA studied for this research. For students, the physical layout of the SRA, maintenance issues and the mix of personal and shared spaces influenced their engagement in and with the SRA.

Regarding students' community in and with the SRA, staff noted the interface of staff-student relationships and provision of social events for residents. Staff feedback highlighted staff-student relationships as vital to the organisation, daily operations and students' satisfaction with the SRA. Student-staff relationships underpinned the institution approach to SRA as a student service, with students as customers. While students were seen as central to the institution's approach to providing SRA, there seemed to be little in the way of SRA provided social events aimed at cultivating a sense of community amongst student residents. Students also raised a number of issues and themes related to social space,

including: flat based communal kitchens, an absence of building wide community, and students' perceptions of anti-social behaviour. Students defined their 'social' space largely at the level of their flat kitchens. Student interview and questionnaire feedback highlighted issues with the use, maintenance and influence of communal kitchens on a sense of shared and personal space. Students also perceived the influence of others' anti-social behaviour as having a disproportionate influence on their definition and engagement in and with the SRA community at large.

Tensions around physical and social space had a cascade effect on students' perceptions of their personal wellbeing with and in the SRA. Staff highlighted pastoral care towards student residents as their contribution to influencing students' personal wellbeing with and in the SRA under study. In this case, institutional policies and practices related to the complex inter-relationship between access, allocation and the institution's 'students as customers' approach to providing SRA. For staff, institutional policies and practices shaped 'who', 'how', 'where', 'within what' and 'why' students were able to access HEI provided SRA. While these reflected a consistent student as 'customer' framework, staff were also clear they felt a duty of care towards students in the SRA and aimed to 'serve' students in order to enhance their HE experience and success with their courses. While students discussed personal wellbeing in relation to: time use in study bedrooms, study room conditions and noise. For students, variances in flatmates use of communal kitchens, study bedrooms, habits related to socialising in the flats, room conditions and noise pollution across the SRA all influenced the overall sense of 'personal' wellbeing with and in the SRA. In this case, 'personal' space became a contested 'place' whereby students were constantly challenged to negotiate the use and demands of others on the space. Often, students indicated that this negotiation created tensions amongst flatmates and had a disproportionate influence on students' sense of personal wellbeing and engagement in and with the SRA.

The triangulation underpinning this Chapter involved comparing and contrasting staff and student interviews, a building-wide questionnaire for student residents and observations from site visits between August 2016 and June 2017. Next,

Chapter six explores student engagement in and with a university provided postgraduate hall of residence, based on a comparable methodological mix.

Chapter 6: Students' engagement in and with a hall of residence provided by a pre-1992 university in London England

This Chapter explores SE in and with a postgraduate hall of residence at a pre-1992 university in London England. The geographic location (city centre), student population (postgraduate domestic and international students) and university status (pre-1992) were primary factors influencing the selection of the SRA site for study. Once under study, the site provided a number of opportunities to explore SE in and with SRA for postgraduate students.

6.1 Introduction

This Chapter presents data and findings generated from observations, interviews and an electronic questionnaire with staff and students between November 2016 and May 2017 in a pre-1992 university SRA provided to postgraduate students. As with case study site (I), the observations, interviews and questionnaires used to generate staff and student feedback were aimed at responding to the three primary research questions, including: what factors influenced institution provision of SRA, the relationship between institution provided SRA and students' engagement, and what student engagement in and with the SRA meant to students and staff. Additionally, the opportunity to study the perceptions, attitudes and experiences of postgraduate students, both domestic and international, was also key to the selection of the SRA as a 'case' for study. These key considerations underpinned the rationale and purposeful selection of this case for study (Teddlie & Yu, 2007).

Institutional estate

Case study site (II) for this research is a large, pre-1992 university in the south of England. From the HESA (2017b) estates management record for environmental data 2015/16; the university maintained in a range of 220 buildings, 180 (non-residential) and 40 (residential) dispersed across a decentralised university estate occupying approximately 50 hectares at the time of this research. Of the 40 residential buildings, 2 were postgraduate specific halls of residence at the

time of this research. The university also partnered with a number of intercollegiate halls (University of London) and private providers (e.g. Unite, Liberty) to provide postgraduate and international students with accommodation at the time of this research. The site chosen for this research was maintained exclusively by the university.

Access agreement

In August 2016 I met with the Director of Student Accommodation at the university. In our meeting it was agreed I would be permitted access to observe, interview and survey staff and students within a single institution provided SRA. From the available university provided accommodation options, I proposed a 'case' I felt would offer opportunities to explore and examine SRA provision for postgraduate students, both domestic and international. I was aware prior to my selection that my first case would be a traditional hall of residence with undergraduate students (domestic and international). The rationale for selection of the case under study in this Chapter reflected variation from case study (I), and the opportunity to study postgraduate SE in and with SRA for a student population light in existing literature and research reviewed for this thesis.

Observations

During my time within case study site (II), observations and field notes were completed during three site visits in October and November 2016. Site visit one was conducted across three days from 3 PM-8 PM, daily. Site visits two and three were conducted across single days, from 11 AM-7 PM, daily. Interviews were proposed, agreed and completed between January 2017 and February 2017 with members of SRA staff, including: the director of student accommodation for the university, the SRA hall manager, SRA hall administrators and SRA student wardenal staff. This led to three additional site visits from 11:00 AM-7:00 PM, 3:30 PM-7:00 PM and 5:00 PM-7:00 PM. Interviews were held in the reception area and common study room of the SRA under study.

Similarly, in case study site (II), I was able to walk the main site of the building on two sides. The site buttresses up against other buildings on two sides (East-

West) and is fronted by a road (North) and a small garden on back (South) side of the site. When you enter, the reception is noticeably larger than case study site (II). During my time observing, the reception was undergoing a number of small renovations to the 'mailboxes' and the installation of a large glass chandelier in the main reception area. Like with case study site (I), I observed a number of interactions between students and staff. Mainly, in regards to small issues of maintenance within students' study bedrooms. In addition, staff were fielding queries related to mail and giving guidance on resources within the institution for students. The few instances students asked a resource question centred mainly on where to go to study and what form of transport to take if they were traveling out of the area to another part of the city or another town/city in the UK and EU. Though primary interactions related to post, maintenance and a small number of queries about noise and kitchen use by other student residents and student residents' friends.

I was able to open up a small number of side-conversations with reception staff and administrators to ask if they noticed any patterns in their discussions with students related to the student residential accommodation. These informal conversations related to the time of year and how students' queries early in term one were noticeably distinct from their questions in term two/three. Specifically, early on staff noted that students were interested in where to shop for groceries, places to study and eat, and distance/time required to travel into other areas of the city to see their friends. Later, staff noted that as papers/exams were approaching students were more focused on noise complaints and issues of maintenance that disrupted their ability to focus on their studies. Staff articulated that students were focusing on their studies, in their view, working hard to get the most out of their time in London and their course. Students' ability to undertake their coursework and feel, as one student resident adviser noted, that the accommodation was their 'home base' was central to students' experience and educational outcomes while at the institution.

As in case study site (I), I continued to 'camp out' in the main reception across a number of days and observe these interactions until it seemed that I had observed the typical routines and rhythms of the staff and students.

Description of the SRA

The SRA chosen for study was the postgraduate hall of residence nearest the main quadrangle of the university. Hall staff included: one warden, four vice-wardens, one hall manager and three rotating reception administrative staff members. The SRA included 165 rooms, classified as: small single (23), single (73), twin room (20) and en-suite single room (49). At the time of this study, the hall was at full capacity, supporting 185 student residents. The fees (per week) ranged from just under £125 to £235. The facility was self-catering with shared kitchens serving 7-10 residents per kitchen. The hall also utilised third-party maintenance contractors for repairs, and employed third-party domestic services staff who clean the communal spaces during weekdays.

Population and sample

First-year postgraduate students were eligible to apply for HEI provided SRA. For 2016-2017, the university registered approximately 12,000 first-year postgraduate students across all departments. As such, the SRA under study (185 possible participants) reflected approximately one percent of the total postgraduate students enrolled in the university. Acknowledging the sample size was in no way generalisable, the findings and data derived from this case study site were aimed at contributing to the range of staff and student perspectives on university provided SRA. As with case study site (I), these findings are not intended to be generalised beyond the participants and SRA presented in this study.

Staff-student participant interview grids

Recalling an introduction letter and invitation to participate in interviews was sent to all staff and student residents. From the 185 student residents, nine students participated in the interview phase of this research. Additionally, four members of staff agreed to participate in the interview phase of this research. Overnight security and domestic services staff were also emailed and approached on two separate occasions, declining on both occasions to participate in this research.

Below are grids of staff and students who participated in the interview portion of this study. Additionally, a description of the demographic information for student participants in the questionnaire portion of this study is also provided.

Figure 6: Staff and student respondent grids for case study site (II)

Staff interviewees

Pseudonym	Gender	Home Country	Staff position	Years in current position
Charles	M	England	Director of Accommodation	1
William	M	England	Hall manager	2
Fiona	F	Israel	Hall administrator	17
Anna	F	England	Vice Warden	1

Student interviewees

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Home Country	Funding	Course of study
Ansley	26	F	South Africa	Scholarship	MA, Education and Global Development
Solon	29	M	Pakistan	Self-funded (savings)	MSc, Dental Public Health
Kim	22	F	New Zealand	Self-funded (savings)	MSc, Economics
Krista	22	F	United States	Self-funded (loans)	MA, Global Health and Development
Areum	37	F	South Korea	Government scholarship	MA, Political Science
Rada	33	F	Iran	Self-funded (savings)	PostDoc, Institute of Archaeology
Aaliyah	24	F	Palestine	Scholarship	MA, Global Health and Development
Bao-Zhi	24	M	China	Scholarship, Parents	MA, Political Science
An	23	F	China	Parents	MA, Linguistics

Organisation of this Chapter

This chapter is organised around three key themes raised by staff and students through observations, interviews and questionnaires, including: physical, social and personal space(s). What follows is a presentation of some of the key themes and issues raised by staff and students through a series of observations, interviews and questionnaires. Interviews were aimed at understanding what SE in and with the SRA meant to students and staff, and what factors influenced SE in and with the SRA under study. These conversations explored ‘who’ the students engaged with in the SRA under study were, ‘what’ SRA meant to students and staff, ‘why’ students and staff engaged with this SRA, and ‘how’ student SRA influenced a student’s relationship with the institution. In addition to the interviews, observations were conducted across a series of days in order to understand the general ‘tempo’ and ‘flow’ of students and staffing in the SRA. Photographs of several key spaces within the SRA were also gathered in order to provide physical references for the private and communal spaces students and staff discussed during our conversations. Staff and students’ use of the SRA revealed a ‘hive’/‘hub’ or ‘centre’ base from which students regulated their behaviours and shaped their interactions with the SRA, the institution and other social spaces outside the SRA.

6.2 SRA and physical space

A key theme emerging from staff and student interviews focused on the SRA and physical space.

6.2.1 Staff feedback

For staff, physical space related to the management of access to the SRA, SRA maintenance issues, SRA proximity to university and non-university facilities and monitoring student residents’ activities in the SRA in relation to community standards of policy and practice.

Staffs' perspectives on SRA physical space management

The relationship of staff to the physical space of the SRA centred on maintenance of facilities. Maintaining SRA facilities was set as part of the creation and guarantee of a 'service standard'. As the hall manager William explained, his role focused on:

“Maintenance and keeping the standard. We have a set operating procedures. Also...we sort of provide a guarantee [of] service [to students]” (William, 22 November 2016).

For William, maintaining the building was a challenge. The building, originally five distinct Georgian style flats, was not built for the purpose of SRA. Instead, the university had renovated and adapted the original buildings into a 'block'. Renovations had added on significant numbers of communal kitchens and bathrooms to the pre-existing structures. The cascade effect of the SRA as 'fit for purpose' was evidenced in discussions on the plumbing of the building. William noted plumbing throughout the building was a constant source of work for himself and his administration team.

Staffs' perspectives on the location and proximity of the SRA to university and non-university facilities

Staff also picked up on the importance of location and proximity of the SRA to other university and non-university facilities to students' selection of this SRA. Fiona, a SRA administrator, noted the importance of location and proximity to the university, in particular, for international students arriving into England. She noted that students arriving in to London, often for the first time without any prior experience of the city or housing in the capital, felt the HEI provided SRA offered an 'anchor' and 'support' they could not find in the private housing market. Regarding students' valuing of the location and proximity of the SRA to the university and non-university facilities Fiona explained:

“Often, they want to be closer to the university. Understandable, they don't want to spend time going far away from here, so they all want to be in this area. That's important for international students, and it's also safer for them. They don't have to go far from the library.

They don't have to travel, so it's really good to be around the university" (Fiona, 22 November 2016).

In Fiona's feedback, safety and security were of prime importance for students. Fiona noted how, in her experience, students had expressed concerns about traveling, especially late in the evening. The distance of housing from university and a lack of familiarity with the university and surrounding area were key concerns for students. As such, living near the university academic facilities they most frequented and being close to their SRA were key criteria for their decision to apply and accept a place in university provided SRA.

Staffs' perspectives on community policies within the SRA

Staff also highlighted community policies within the SRA. Administrative and student staff noted their responsibilities to maintain and enforce SRA policies and community standards. For example, Anna, a Vice Warden within the SRA, noted her role and responsibilities for 'out of hours on call support'. Part of her role was to enforce community standards when day administrative staff were not on duty. This could include emergency maintenance issues, emotional support for students and addressing personal disputes amongst residents. She explained her role and responsibilities aimed:

"To ensure that you are there for when the students need you on out of hours as sort of practical support, as well as, providing emotional support briefly to those students who might need it or help settle students' differences if it's a kind of personal dispute amongst friends or to them or help them seek further help should they need it" (Anna, 2 February 2017).

When asked to elaborate on her role and duties Anna suggested that her role was part administrative and part pastoral. She noted her role as Vice Warden was to support a:

"Safe and friendly environment for students...to facilitate a good environment for students during their time at university. Both in terms of socially and academically" (Anna, 2 February 2017).

For Anna, students' experience of the SRA was integral to their experience of the university. Maintaining community standards and enforcing SRA policies were

important, not only to maintaining the building, but to setting a standard for students' conduct and use of the SRA. She reflected on her work as helping to create and sustain a culture of support around students and also to ensure that students felt they were accountable for their actions and aware of how their actions and activities influenced the experience of other residents within the SRA.

6.2.2 Students feedback on physical space within the SRA

Students' feedback also focused on the SRA as a physical space. For students, SRA physical space related to: architecture, building layout, and location of the SRA in relation to external facilities (university and non-university).

Students' experience of SRA architecture: fitting in to a repurposed building

SRA architecture was a key issue raised by students. As noted earlier in this Chapter, of the approximately 165 student rooms: 73 were single room (non en-suite), 49 single room (en-suite), 23 single room (small with shared bathroom) and 20 twin (non en-suite). The rental fee (per week) ranged from £125 to £235. Each room included internet/wifi (wifi was also available throughout the building common rooms) wash basins in some rooms, CCTV and electronic key card entry systems, game facilities, study rooms, a TV room and lounge. Additionally, the SRA included a set of small gardens at the rear of the building, an in building laundrette and recycling facilities (University website, 2017). The student population was postgraduate students, domestic and international, who largely prioritised 'proximity to campus' in their rank ordering of preferences for what type of HEI provided SRA they would prefer to live in.

The SRA, a Georgian period building, was built in the late eighteenth century. Rather than a single purpose built accommodation, the SRA was the result of several renovations to a continuous series of Georgian flats that had been converted into the current HEI provided SRA. The SRA consisted of four stories, 'long hallways', 'multiple-staircases, and a small lift that reaches the second floor. Students raised several issues with the architecture of the SRA. For example, Rada highlighted the historic significance of the building, noting:

“The building itself...I love this building. This is a period house. This is such a beautiful, important...it is like...its heritage” (16 March 2017).

She also expressed concern about a tension between the nature of the building and its renovation to being ‘fit for purpose’ as an SRA. Rada explained:

“I feel so sorry and I feel so sad that honestly it has been converted to a hall of residence. Because this building is not meant for something like that. It is not meant for so many people living there, and the adjustments are not quite right sometimes. The bathrooms always make problems. You see several, at least twice, that the water comes from the ceiling and they have to destroy the ceiling and fix things, why? Because this building is not designed to support that. And the way that they’ve made these bathrooms, no. It doesn’t work...” (Rada, 16 March 2017).

She explained how, as an archaeologist, she felt sensitive to the significance of the form and type of structure envisioned in the original set of buildings. In her view, the type of building and its architecture did not align with the function the building was now being used for. There was something out of alignment between the original purpose of a set of Georgian flats, and the conversion of those flats into a monolithic SRA structure.

Also highlighting the architecture of the SRA was Areum. She noted how her previous experience of university SRA was less than impressive. Coming from South Korea, she found the issues with the building (i.e. lack of light, mixed gender bathrooms, faulty kitchen appliances) reflected students being made to fit into the SRA, rather than the SRA fitting the needs of students. She felt that the style of the building did not lend itself to personal privacy and social engagement amongst students. While imperfect, the incidental inconveniences posed by various issues with the physical environment cascaded into students’ experiences and engagement in and with the SRA. She noted:

“The exterior of the building is very elegant and it’s really a privilege for us to live in this very old, Georgian building...The condition, of my room and the building. It looks nice condition, on the inside on the ground floor when you enter/exit into the building I was really surprised by the condition [and] elegance of the reception...” (Areum, 14 March 2017).

Like Rada and Areum, Aaliyah was sensitive to the physical influence of the built environment. Where Rada and Areum had taken a building level approach and

noted the style and type of period building of the SRA, Aaliyah focused on the influence of the building architecture on her engagement with and in the SRA at the level of her room. She noted:

“I think the room I’m located in, the windows in the room, they’re quite tiny for the size of the room. And it doesn’t really, the sun really doesn’t go into the room because there’s a wall tilting into the room next to the window. So you have the light coming into one side of the room and the rest is a bit dark” (Aaliyah, 14 March 2017).

When asked if the lighting and overhang within her room influenced her use of the room, Aaliyah confirmed that issues with lighting and the ‘cramped’ feeling of the space ‘pushed’ her to study outside of her room and in other spaces on campus.

Questionnaire feedback

Complementing students’ interview feedback, students’ questionnaire feedback for case study site (II) highlighted a number of factors of the SRA as a physical space influencing their engagement in and with the SRA. For example, when asked to describe the amount of physical space in their study bedroom (Appendix D, question 15) 12 students responded that there was adequate space while two stated their was less than adequate space and one more than adequate space. However, lighting in study bedrooms was an acute issue from student respondents. When asked to describe the lighting in their study bedroom (Appendix D, question 16) nine students cited the lighting as less than adequate, five adequate and one more than adequate. In students’ open-response questionnaire feedback (Appendix D, question 20), students noted a number of salient issues, including: cleanliness and amenities provided in their kitchens, the side of the building their room was on (street side or courtyard side) and flatmates as influencing their engagement and experience with and in their SRA.

When asked about the physical environment, the architecture of the SRA was a key issue for a number of students. Students highlighted the beauty of the approach, entrance and reception and overall style of the SRA building. However, Rada (16 March 2017) noted that the building(s), depending on how you wish to

interpret the structure, was being stressed by the volume of people living in the accommodation. While the SRA was fitted to fulfil a purpose (as an SRA), this purpose came into material tension with the physical elements of the built environment, causing a number of mechanical and maintenance issues for student residents.

SRA physical layout and pathways of student participants

Students also noted how the physical layout of the SRA influenced their 'pathways' in and through the SRA. Entering through a single main door, students move into a reception and proceed through a number of fire doors. A large number of fire doors, a lack of lifts and issues with common study and social spaces were also raised by students. For example, Kim explained:

“All the fire doors...I find are a bit frustrating, especially if I'm like carrying something and I've got to go up to my room and back. I think [to] minimise the [trips and effort]....so if I'm in my room I stay in my room kind of thing. Being up on the fourth floor and the laundry being in the basement, whenever I'm doing laundry I have to go up and down like five flights of stairs like four or five times, so again minimising how many times I do laundry. But other than that, those are the kinds of things...”
(Kim, 16 March 2017).

Kim highlighted the sense of inconvenience having to get through a number of fire doors had on her interactions and engagement with and in the SRA. She also noted her annoyance with having to make multiple trips from her room (top floor). The distance between herself and reception (where she could retrieve mail) and the on-site laundry facilities influenced her use of both.

Likewise, Bao-Zhi raised the issue of the fire doors. He noted:

“One thing that really bothers me, but I don't think I can complain, is that there are so many [fire] doors” (Bao-Zhi, 14 March 2017).

In addition to the fire doors, Bao-Zhi referenced his prior experience in a dorm in Beijing, China. Bao-Zhi spent four years as an undergraduate in the “dorms” of his university. When asked to elaborate on how the physical environment of his

past dorm experience compared to his single-room on the basement level of his current SRA, he explained:

“...Those dorms [in China] are, in my own words, quite small. We have like four people sharing a room, but I’ve only got a bed [bunked] and a desk down here [below bunked bed]. And there is a wardrobe, a small one, so it’s not meant for personal space, it’s not so private, but it’s really cheap. It is like I can pay £100 and live for a whole year. Maybe not £100, well yes, maybe £100” (Bao-Zhi, 14 March 2017).

He emphasised the ‘utilitarian’ approach to SRA he felt in his previous dorm. The physical environment was a five-story ‘block’ with 50 rooms on either side of a central lift system. Students would enter through a single entry point and make their way up to their room. There was no assumption of privacy, space was utilised to maximise the number of rooms available. Within those rooms male (or female, in a separate block) students (four to a room) were assigned without concern for personal preferences. Lacking a ‘choice’, Bao-Zhi argued students were expected to participate in university provided dormitories as they provided the most economical option for students within his university. This ‘pathway’ approach highlighted the way in which the physical layout of the SRA may influence the use and engagement of students in and with different communal elements of the SRA.

Beyond the fire doors and laundrette, other students raised issue with the communal bathroom facilities. For example, Areum explained how her experience of communal bathrooms in her home country influenced her perception and attitudes towards shared bathrooms for non en-suite rooms in the SRA. She cited her first university SRA in London experiences of shared bathrooms had pushed her to look for private accommodation. Taking a gendered approach, Areum noted:

“In my country, it is just totally unacceptable to use a toilet and bathroom with males, yeah, so I had a really difficult time. And than the bathroom, there was toilet, so it [is] not separate...the shower and the toilet [are] together, so all males and females should use [these] together. And they use, like 20 people, in one bathroom. So it [is] not, no, so I cannot really stand to live there so that was why I was trying to find a private flat because I thought every accommodation was in this shape” (Areum, 14 March 2017).

However, for Areum, finding a private flat at the time of the year when a large number of students were also seeking similar accommodation proved challenging. Additionally, being an international student meant that Areum had no credit history or guarantor within the UK at the time of her private accommodation search. Moreover, she was looking for a private flat in the city centre, within a price range more in line with her current SRA than the local private rental market. She explained:

“...It was also difficult for me to find a private one in the centre, and the price was higher than university accommodation, and it was only 10 months so not many people want to accept students from abroad. Yeah, so I think in this sense, university accommodation is really nice, in terms of price and location” (Areum, 14 March 2017).

Difficulty with finding a suitable accommodation (within budget and to her expectations of location and privacy) pushed Areum to re-apply for institution provided SRA.

Student feedback on the physical layout of the building highlighted how the physical organisation of the SRA influenced students' pathways and routines within the SRA. While communal bathrooms raised concerns with students like Areum (i.e. mixed gender, cleanliness, hygiene), still others like Bao-Zhi were less concerned about issues within communal spaces, referencing prior experiences in institution and non-institution provided SRA where there was no assumption of privacy and space was utilised to house the maximum number of students in order to reduce the overall rents per student resident.

Relations between SRA physical space and students' engagement

Alongside building architecture and the physical layout of the SRA, students highlighted the relational nature of their SRA to the broader campus and community environment. Students noted how their SRA served as a 'home base' from which they coordinated their academic and social activities in and beyond their SRA. For example, when asked to explain what factors influenced his decision to engage with an institution provided SRA, Solon explained:

“The biggest reason was because it’s on campus, no traveling time, plus access to libraries, [university] libraries, some of the libraries are twenty-four hours, so access to libraries and these types of things. [So] location and proximity to university resources” (Solon, 14 March 2017).

For Solon, location and proximity of the SRA to other university facilities was a key factor in his decision to reside in institution provided SRA. When asked about why location and proximity to the university were important to him, he noted:

“I just wake up five minutes before my class and I am into class on time, that is the biggest strength of the hall and my studies. No traveling, no traveling costs. You know in London, in the morning rush hour, traveling time is too much. And, everything that comes with traveling. The biggest benefit is that [closeness to classes and little daily travel]“ (Solon, 14 March 2017).

Likewise, Ansley also emphasised the proximity of her department in the university to her university provided SRA as key to her decision to take residence in the SRA. Solon noted:

“The location is perfect, in a way you save in terms of transport, when you are doing things around Zone 1 or within central London because I walk everywhere, I literally walk everywhere” (Ansley, 14 March 2017).

For Solon and Ansley, electing to live in university provided SRA near their departments on campus meant fewer travel costs and potential disruptions to their daily commute. Thus, they explained their trade off of location, price, access and convenience of university and non-university facilities. While the university provided SRA was higher in cost than their friends’ accommodations in Zone 4 and Zone 5, when including time and travel costs, students felt the difference in accommodation costs versus increased time and travel costs was ‘mostly a wash’. As such, university provided SRA provided a rationale alternative to a simplified ‘cost’ comparison.

Alternatively, when asked to describe the influence of living close to where you study in the institution on the use of her institute Kim stated:

“I definitely use it, I don’t know, I want to say more often but then again it might balance out saying that its like close so I can just pop there and do some study, but also its close, so I can just pop home. So compared to

other people on my course who live farther away, I'd say it probably evens out to be about the same, the same use... Well, they'll just...they come in for the day and stay for the day whereas I might come in for the day and come home for lunch or go in the evening and study..." (Kim, 16 March 2017).

Kim highlighted how the close proximity of her university provided SRA may have an influence on her routine and rhythm between her institution and residence. However, she was sceptical if this meant she was 'on campus more' or 'studying and working longer hours' than her peers who were commuting from farther outside central London. Additionally, 'more time studying' was not equated to higher quality learning. For Kim, hours spent studying didn't mean she was at an advantage because she didn't have to spend chunks of her day commuting from a distance.

Location and price (relative to similar accommodation in the private rental market) were also important for Krista and Areum. Krista noted:

"...I wanted to be central and close to my classes so I picked location as a main priority..." (Krista, 14 March 2017).

Likewise, Areum mentioned:

"I think location and price were main priorities. It is like a students' privilege to live in accommodation, so, I think [if] they can it's the best option to live in accommodation..." (Areum, 14 March 2017).

Location, proximity to the university was also key to An. She noted that because she had never been to England prior to moving here for her MA in Linguistics she felt university provided SRA was the best option at the time of her application. She noted:

"...Because I've never been abroad before. I've never been here, so I think it's just more convenient to apply for some student hall. My priority was to be close to campus" (An, 14 March 2017).

Physical space was a significant issue for students in case site (II). Student respondents were sensitive to the proximity of the SRA to 'campus' and academic facilities, the physical layout, size, location, shape and construction of study bedrooms, shared communal study and recreation spaces and kitchens. Physical space had a cascading influence on student engagement with and in the SRA.

6.3 SRA and social space

In addition to physical space, social space was a key theme raised by staff and student participants.

6.3.1 Staff feedback

For staff, the SRA and social space centred on their relationships with student residents, domestic services and maintenance staff.

When asked to describe their relationship with student residents, staff were generally positive. For example, when asked to describe his relationship with students William noted:

“It’s quite good, actually. We [are] basically helping each other, we provide a service, but at the same time, like in this hall the students respect the staff” (William, 22 November 2016).

Likewise, Fiona held a similar positive view of her relationship with students and staff. For Fiona, her relationship with students was key to her role within the SRA. She explained:

“We have to take care of students, we have to listen to them, to make them feel comfortable, to feel safe. It’s just basically, it’s important for the students, even to say good morning, it makes them feel they are OK, and that they can come and talk to you. I always make them feel like they can come ask me whatever they need, no matter what” (Fiona, 22 November 2016).

When asked to explain why she felt so strongly about her relationships with students and fellow staff Fiona noted that it was important for students to feel:

“At ease to come and talk to you if they have a problem. I mean before, they would come talk to me about any, their personal problems. When they are close to you, it’s important, especially for international students, they don’t have mum next to them to talk to them. Even this morning, this girl from Syria, she come and hug me, she says she misses her mum. Those kinds of things, its good for them to have someone they can talk to in case they need to for any reason” (Fiona, 22 November 2016).

For Fiona, creating and maintaining positive relationships with students, domestic services staff and maintenance staff created a culture of support within the SRA. Positive relationships made life for all members of the community better. She noted that staff were all working together to support students and students appreciated the work of staff to maintain the building, address issues with maintenance, find solutions to issues with the SRA and student residents. Mutual respect and appreciation went along with a culture that maintained what William called the community 'standard' of the SRA.

Moreover, William and Fiona noted the influence of communal kitchens on students' sense of community within the SRA. Fiona explained:

"Like the kitchen, they can cook with each other, speak with each other and learn from each other" (Fiona, 22 November 2016).

For Fiona, in addition to the communal kitchens, communication was key.

"As I say, communication that's what I say always, try to make students feel home, feel safe. Say good morning, how are you, that's important for students. For me, that's not my job, that's natural for me. So I think I always say its good for the students to feel that way"
(Fiona, 22 November 2016).

For staff, community and communication were vital to the ordering and development of social space within the SRA. Community for residents often emerged from students' communal kitchens. Additionally, good communication between students and staff was vital to maintaining student-staff relationships. Together, staff expressed social space in the SRA as co-created through the development of positive relationships between students and staff. Like staff, students held a variety of perspectives on aspects of the SRA related to social space.

6.3.2 Students' feedback on social space

In this SRA, students' feedback on social space centred on three primary themes. First, communal kitchens as 'hubs' for community across floors. Second,

communal study, computer and social activity rooms. Third, issues related to student social engagement in and with the SRA.

Shared kitchens within the SRA: 'hubs' of the community

When participants were asked to describe their social space(s) within the SRA, the shared kitchens dominated their responses. For example, Solon explained:

“The kitchen in this hall, you could say the kitchen is the main hub for everything. There might be ten people but everyone has a different timing. Like you won't find, I think, you might meet everyone coming and going coming and going, but, there is no, you can say congestion. I think some of them (of the ten) have never even used the kitchen, out of the ten” (Solon, 14 March 2017).

Solon was asked to elaborate on why he felt that his shared kitchen formed the social centre of the SRA. He highlighted how the focus of his discussions in his kitchen centred on studies and travel. He explained:

“I mean when everyone is studying, talking about studies, discussing and planning around the studies, like in my kitchen, where we usually get together and have a chit chat, what are we discussing? Oh, I want to go to Spain. Oh, I want to go to Amsterdam. But, everyone is planning according to the same holiday and timing, that everyone is experiencing. So if you want to change something or add something, you can all add on it. It's not like, everyone has different timing, all are together in it” (Solon, 14 March 2017).

For Solon, the kitchen provided an opportunity to cross paths with his neighbours. He expressed a deep appreciation for the opportunity to discuss his studies and experience of the course with other students whom he felt could relate to his experience (i.e. stresses around writing papers and taking exams). To clarify the conditions of the communal kitchens as a social space, Solon also noted the exclusionary nature of kitchens, stating:

“The kitchen is a social space for only those ten that are part of that kitchen, because you can't enter anyone else's kitchen. It's locked, the keycard that we have for our room is the same that we have for our kitchen. We can't go to any other kitchen” (Solon, 14 March 2017).

While a resident may not key into any but their assigned kitchen, residents noted that a number of their neighbours have residents and non-residents into the kitchen for meals. This created tensions between different groups of residents. For example, Areum explained:

“Chinese people they really like cooking together and they are all from the same country and they speak Chinese and I think, in this matter, it can make other people feel a bit isolated...yeah... Yes, like for me, people are Chinese and one is Taiwanese but Taiwanese are basically Chinese and I am the only one who is from Korea. And Chinese people do not really speak or want to communicate in English, so it can be a bit like, isolating...In anywhere if the majority are some people it happens. If it is all mixed they want to mix with others or they want to do something. But if they are the majority and they cannot find any problem to communicate in Chinese, No, why not?” (Areum, 14 March 2017).

An alternative perspective regarding ‘Chinese people’ was raised by Bao-Zhi. Himself Chinese, Bao-Zhi noted:

“For people like me, from China, we would cook more complicated things but people from other parts, they seem to be doing some very simple cooking that finishes quickly, and most of the time, the microwave oven. And I think it’s good. And I even invited some of my friends here too, I cook, and one or two friends and we can have that time I think it’s quite good “ (Bao-Zhi, 14 March 2017).

Preferences for style and type of cooking, ‘more complicated things’ and sharing with others led to concentrations of ‘Chinese’ in his kitchen. Where Areum raised the concentration of Chinese student residents in her kitchen as problematic, at times, making her feel isolated...it was this community Bao-Zhi noted kept him from feeling isolated. On the surface it appears paradoxical, some residents interpreting their cooking with other students from their home country as a positive for their social wellbeing. In contrast, the concentration of specific groups of students, namely Chinese, served to raise a sense of marginalisation and alienation amongst other residents. Therefore, variation in cultural approach and disposition expressed in students’ feedback reflected on the tensions faced by student residents within their floor and communal kitchens.

An, also from China, had a contrasting experience to Bao-Zhi. In An’s kitchen:

“...There are seven residents sharing one kitchen but most of them do not use that kitchen. I think normally there will be four” (An, 14 March 2017).

Even with only four residents she was aware of using the kitchen, she cited cleanliness as an issue. When asked if there were any issues with her experience of the kitchen, An noted:

“...That’s annoying [to] me...but I think that’s common. Like somebody does not clean their dishes or leave some rotten food or vegetables [are left] in the fridge...yeah, but that doesn’t happen often” (An, 14 March 2017).

Communal kitchens were the hub of participants’ social life in the SRA. For Solon, the kitchen was an integral component of his ‘student life’ as a postgraduate. While Areum noted she felt, at times, isolated by the concentration of a specific student group (i.e. Chinese students) in her kitchen. Alternatively, Bao-Zhi explained the importance of his kitchen in being able to continue his Chinese cultural practice, ‘making complex meals’ and sharing food with friends. Finally, An noted that while the kitchen wasn’t being used by all members of the floor, there were still issues of cleanliness related to students leaving their unwashed dishes for several days and rotten food stuffs in the fridge. Overall, the kitchen provided a social hub rife with both positive and anti-social behaviour, often reflecting the views, approach and attitudes of residents.

In addition to the kitchens, the SRA maintained a number of communal study, work, and social spaces throughout the building.

Students’ social engagement with and in SRA communal space: dealing with ambiguity

In addition to communal kitchens, the SRA maintained two study rooms, two computer rooms and a large basement level multipurpose room. Where the kitchens were clearly defined common spaces (only certain residents could key into each kitchen), study rooms, the computer room and the multipurpose room were more ambiguous. This ambiguity left a number of students unclear how to negotiate different and at times competing demands for the space.

For example, Solon noted:

“We have one computer room which is linked to the [University] network for data access, plus we have printing facilities. And then we have the stella room, this one is specified for only...educational gathering. But the large downstairs room [i.e., the multipurpose room] is not specified. Like, for example if I am studying there and someone is having a gathering or playing table tennis or something, I can't stop them. I have to shift to the stella room because I know no-one can make a sound over there”
(Solon, 14 March 2017).

In Solon's view, there were clear spaces reserved exclusively for study and educational activities and gatherings. If someone was studying in the multipurpose room, as residents noted occurred often, students who came down to play the piano, watch a movie on the television or play ping pong could not be prevented from carrying on in their activities. This issue of the use and function(s) of the multipurpose room was also raised by Rada. Rada explained:

“The only thing I don't like about the studying, and we have one big common room, I don't know what to call it downstairs. But then you really don't know what is the function of these rooms. You don't know if they are for studying or for hanging out and have your friends over to watch TV, because there's one big TV [and]...one piano downstairs, table tennis down there [in the multipurpose room]...so I want to go and play with my friends table tennis, but if people are studying or I want to go and practice piano but people don't like it. So, this is what I don't like about here, because the studying area and common room are mixed, you don't know what to do. I personally really like going somewhere to practice the piano but you cannot use them, you cannot use the TV, you cannot use the table tennis they're not properly [defined spaces]...”
(Rada, 16 March 2017).

While Rada felt she could access all of the communal study and social spaces easily, she felt there was a lack of clarity around the functions and use of each room. Additionally, it was unclear which took precedent, studying or socialising, if two or more individuals or groups wished to utilise the communal spaces at any given time. This created tension between students who were expecting to be able to socialise and/or study. In addition to tensions around definitions and usage of communal space was the element of surprise for some students. When explaining how he came to practice piano and singing in the multipurpose room, Bao-Zhi noted:

“What surprises me is that there is an old piano in the common room of [the] Hall, I even use that sometimes. That common room is quite big and sometimes it is empty and no-one would be bothered if I sing in there to practice my voice...” (Bao-Zhi, 14 March 2017).

For Bao-Zhi, access to a piano and free space was an escape from the confines of his small single basement room. For him, the multipurpose room provided a space and place where he could engage with his work and practice his art without being concerned his neighbours may be bothered. He also noted the value of the networked computer rooms and access to printing. As he explained:

“There’s a study room, there’s a printer and computer room. I think that’s quite helpful, I do not need to go to the library just specifically for printing. That’s really helpful” (Bao-Zhi, 14 March 2017).

Not having to leave the SRA allowed Bao-Zhi to spend more time in his study bedroom doing his work. He noted that he often now downloads articles and reads them on a large computer monitor he purchased shortly after moving in to the SRA.

Study spaces, computer rooms and a multipurpose room provided three types of communal space outside the kitchens in SRA. While these three different types of spaces could be utilised for study, clashes in demand for use to study and socialise created tensions within and between residents. Some of the issues related to social engagement in and with the SRA cascade from this point.

Student residents’ social engagement in and with the SRA

Students raised a number of issues related to social engagement in and with the SRA. First, a lack of social engagement in and with the SRA by residents and staff came through strongly in students’ interview and electronic questionnaire feedback. Second, there was a strong desire to develop a social network and engage students socially in and across the SRA. Third, there was a general feeling the hall lacked a coherent sense of community. Students expressed a desire for more socials and for accommodation staff to facilitate social

engagement, however, there were no proposals on 'how' and with 'what' the accommodation staff might carry this desire for social activities forward.

A lack of socials frustrated students' engagement with their floor and neighbours.

Ansley noted:

"We hardly have socials. Like, I don't even know who lives on my third floor" (Ansley, 14 March 2017).

To provide a counterpoint, Ansley went on to explain the influence of a university facilitated trip to Paris on her sense of class cohesion with her peers at the institution. She explained:

"...They should have more socials, people should come together and yeah, socials bring, like, it brings team building. Like I remember we had a tour at school...because they took us to Paris, for like six days but we paid. We came back, we were just this one big family, and after that it created friendships a lot of friendships" (Ansley, 14 March 2017).

Likewise, when Solon was asked if he thought the SRA is suitable for social activities and events he responded:

"Not exactly, because our hall doesn't have any social activities, planned social activities. So if there is any social activities, like someone will be inviting their own friends, and like that...Like, a few days back, I don't know, someone, maybe the new warden or something, she made a Facebook page and she was trying to gather some support for a gathering, but I don't think she got any support right now. Its end of term, everyone is busy, everyone is busy with exams. This is the wrong time... this hall doesn't have any parties. This hall doesn't engage in social gatherings or something...it's late now so no one is going to even bother to answer..." (Solon, 14 March 2017).

Without SRA sponsored social activities, residents were left to develop their own social activities within the SRA. Students noted that this may have had an influence on 'who' they knew within the SRA. When asked what social activities would bring to students' engagement with and in the SRA, Solon explained:

"...It would be another way to meet everyone else around. Like right now, I only know the ten people of my kitchen and the few guys who come out to

have a smoke outside. Only those five-six guys from the whole hostel, and I think they're around a couple hundred people in this building" (Solon, 14 March 2017).

The lack of a sense of building-wide community had influenced students' social networking within the SRA. As such, students were left to form 'micro-communities' as Rada explained, these micro-communities developed as anchor points, operating at the most local level of students' engagement in and with the RA. She noted:

"I moved twice but I still keep friends with my old flatmates and hall mates [from down the corridor], we always have our own small community. So we have made our own WhatsApp group, we call it ...University Hall Squat. We talk about this, and one of the big issues this building has is that none of the halls, one of the I don't know how to tell you, one of the floors they are not secluded" (Rada, 16 March 2017).

This lack of a building-wide sense of community had left gaps in the interpretation of some residents towards their fellow residents. When asked how satisfied she was with the sense of community and socialising in and with the SRA Rada expressed her doubts about the social component of the SRA, stating:

"This is, I think the lowest point goes to this, there's nothing happening, as long as I know. Nothing is happening here and students don't really hangout because there is no common room, I told you, there is no place for students to go and sit and you know, and hangout. We only have the kitchens and everyone is cooking in their kitchen and so there is not really a common room, there is not a place to go and sit and watch the TV and socialise and find other people and become friends with them. I don't find that, and the downstairs place I don't know what it is for..." (Rada, 16 March 2017).

For clarity, the student SRA representative, Kim, was asked about social engagement in and with residents in the SRA. Kim noted that her training as a hall representative had only been completed in the past two months. As such, the only programming she had been involved with was volunteering at the induction party and accommodation introduction gathering at the start of the academic year. After, she had applied for her current position as hall representative and only recently completed training which led her to start a Facebook group to attempt to engage students in possible future programs in the SRA. Students appeared disinterested in this as it was 'too late in the year' and too much time

had passed, they had already established their social networks, largely outside of the SRA and primarily amongst their peers in their university course.

Questionnaire feedback

Student questionnaire feedback echoed sentiments of differentiated levels of social engagement with and in the SRA. For example, when asked to describe their community within their current SRA (Appendix D, question 22), students noted their sense of community was largely situated within their kitchens and along the corridor or hallway they lived on within the SRA. Students noted that if they had a bathroom they felt less likely to encounter other residents as frequently as those who shared communal shower and toilet facilities. Interestingly, one student noted a lack of diversity in nationalities, with a specific nationality being portrayed as colonising the respondents' kitchen. Moreover, when asked if they had participated in any SRA sponsored social events (Appendix D, question 23) nine respondents stated they had not, whilst four indicated they had participated in an SRA social event and one respondent answered that there had been no social events in the SRA this year. When reviewing the open-response segment of question 23 students cited a welcome party (three of five responses) as their participation in an SRA sponsored social event this year. Notably, when asked how they felt about the level of social engagement in their SRA this year (Appendix D, question 24), seven students responded that this was less than adequate and seven students responded that there was adequate levels of social engagement while one student responded that the level of social engagement within the SRA was more than adequate. Similar to students' interview feedback, students situated social spaces within the SRA as dynamic and contested.

6.4 SRA and personal space

A third key theme in staff and student feedback centred on students' personal space within the SRA.

6.4.1 Staff feedback

For staff, personal space within the SRA centred on students study bedrooms. When explaining the importance of upholding the ethos or culture of the SRA , one conducive to studying within the SRA, Anna explained:

“I think coming to university, and that sort of environment, it can be quite difficult for some people and can be made more challenging if they’ve got to deal with additional noise complaints or anything like that. That can just disturb how they want to and that sort of background, like this is a very important environment for them because this is where they’re going to spend a lot of their time when they’re not in lectures and not out with friends. They’re going in their rooms in halls. And they have to feel comfortable here to get their sleep and nutrition properly, and that kind of, all that side of health and wellbeing” (Anna, 2 February 2017).

Anna positioned the importance of students’ personal space within the SRA as integral to students’ ability to balance and maintain their health and wellbeing. She noted that students expected to be able to study, sleep and eat comfortably within the SRA. As a Vice Warden, her role was to support an ‘ethos’ within the SRA to help ensure students could expect the residence to support an ideal of wellbeing. Similarly, Fiona explained students’ personal relationship with her and the SRA created a sense of ‘home’ for students. She reflected on the evolutionary nature of students’ relationship to the SRA as a personal space, noting:

“Now they are new, we start knowing them, but as my previous years, we always have a good relationship between students and staff. They [are] always sad when they leave. Students even visit us, like this guy who came from Australia in 2001, and he came back this summer, so we have that kind of relationship. They always remember it like [it was their] home. They always feel like home here” (Fiona, 22 November 2016).

Fiona saw much of her work as personalising the SRA for students. She explained it was creating and maintaining personal relationships with students that allowed for staff and students to get along. Taking a sort of ecological view, there was a sense of mutual assured appreciation between staff and students, facilitating a sense of home and personal connection between the SRA, students and staff. Personal space within the SRA was also raised by students.

6.4.2 Students' feedback

Students' feedback on personal space in their SRA focused on three issues, including: student rooms, study patterns 'in' and 'out' of the SRA and tensions with policy and practice related to the use of students' private space.

Student rooms and student engagement in and with the SRA

Personal space for students in this SRA centred on their study bedrooms. Students expressed various levels of satisfaction with the size, rental costs, location and proximity to other spaces (i.e. kitchen, multipurpose room, main access points, fire exits) within the SRA. For example, when asked to describe her room Ansley noted:

“Our rooms are spacious. Like I'm happy with my room. And you know how girls are, having a lot of stuff and the room has accommodated everything I have, like my big cases, my clothes, you know, plates, cutlery, everything. The room is accommodative of that” (Ansley, 14 March 2017).

For Ansley, her room was a sanctuary she cycled from and to on a daily basis. She was a full-time MA student from South Africa studying Education and Global Development, a part-time teacher and participated in football and other social activities with friends. For Ansley, her study room was a personal space where she could pray, sing, rest and relax from all of the responsibilities of the day.

While Ansley found her room to be a sort of sanctuary space, Krista, an MA student from the United States studying Global Health and Development, the journey was more challenging. In discussing her satisfaction with her present study room, Krista noted that the room she moved into upon arrival had caused her some concern in the first academic term. When asked what issues her original room presented to her she explained:

“I dislike rooms that are, I don't do well with very quiet, tucked away rooms and it was fairly dark and it was in the corner in the attic and I did not want that “ (Krista, 14 March 2017).

When asked what influence the physical characteristics of her room had on her study experience Krista noted:

“I mean the room is small but I do most of my work in my room. And it gets the job done” (Krista, 14 March 2017).

Krista explained that she had discussed being moved with the SRA administration. They explained they were at full-capacity but would work to swap Krista to a study bedroom nearer reception on the first floor. Krista expressed a sense of relief when the move was completed, as she had worried she may not be able to move compounding her distress. When asked if there were any other issues related to her personal space she would like to raise Krista also noted that she felt the rules regulating her overnight guests were more appropriate for an ‘undergraduate’ hall of residence, rather than a postgraduate student accommodation. She noted that a number of students were either unaware of the rules regulating overnight guests, ignored the rules or relied on student resident advisors to enforce the rules related to overnight guests. She felt this created an undue and unnecessary burden on her and other students who would frequently have visitors from other countries who wished to stay with them in the accommodation.

Additional student feedback on study bedrooms included concerns over issues with roommates. While the majority of the room in the SRA were ‘singles’, one student participant living in a twin room discussed her journey from her original twin room assignment to her current study bedroom. Rada, a post doc candidate in the department of Archaeology explained:

“Because the first room I went into I was unhappy with my roommate. And I had, I asked them to move out because I didn’t want to...I don’t like to make trouble...so I prefer to leave as soon as I see something is wrong... they changed my room to another twin room and I’m very happy now” (Rada, 16 March 2017).

Rada continued by critiquing the elements of her study bedroom she felt influenced her work and use of the space, explaining:

“[Study] rooms are too bright, we have too many lights and we have all of the lights, the electricity usage is too much. It’s just so much, maybe the ground floor rooms, because I love natural light, because we are on the ground floor, if I don’t use the curtains it is harsh, so I was thinking if they would give us these small little curtains, these half curtains...half shades...” (Rada, 16 March 2017).

For Rada, there was a high level of importance placed on a sense of control over her private study room space. She explained sharing a twin room was not ideal and she would have preferred a single study bedroom. However, this was not an option at the time she applied (in the middle of the academic year). Moreover, she wanted a greater degree of control over the environmental conditions of her study bedroom. Namely, a greater level of control over the lighting in her room. The curtain provided appeared to be an ‘all or nothing’ option, providing for a ‘fully open’ or ‘fully closed’ option, potentially exposing the room at the ground level of the building to those outside at street level.

Taking a more accepting approach, Bao-Zhi explained his main expectations of the space pre-arrival. He noted:

“I had the anticipation that I’m going to a private room, I think. I don’t need it to be very big, because I’m still considering spending less, and all I need is just a comfortable bed, enough room to store my clothes and a desk that I can work on. And than maybe a little bit of space for some indoor workout, yeah that’s it. Quite enough for me” (Bao-Zhi, 14 March 2017).

While Bao-Zhi began open to the components of his study bedroom and its location, later in our discussion he elaborated on the influence of room on his ability to work and study in the space. He explained:

“There are some concerns, first there is not much light because I live in the basement. I sometimes would feel it’s too dark. And I do not want to keep the [bedroom] light on all the day I find it quite irritating because there are two lights in my room, and if I open it all, both of the two [bedroom lights] will be open and I cannot adjust the [brightness of the] light, turn off one of them or make it softer. It would affect my sleep in the night if I keep them on all the day. But there’s not enough light, and that’s one of the reasons I don’t print things now. I read it on the screen and it doesn’t matter if I have light. But it would make me happier and more energetic to work [to have more natural light or control over the light in my room]” (Bao-Zhi, 14 March 2017).

Beyond the light, Bao-Zhi discussed the influence of the size of the physical space on his activities and use of his study bedroom, recalling:

“And the second problem is that, that my room is a bit small, so if I were to sit for too long, I would forget about getting up and stretching myself a bit. If I had a bigger room, I would do that more often. That’s instinctive, if I have the instinct to do that and if I look around and I find that there’s not enough space, I will forget about that” (Bao-Zhi, 14 March 2017).

While generally positive about the space, the physical nature, characteristics and location of Bao-Zhi’s room in the SRA informed his practices and use of his study bedroom.

Similarly, when An, a student resident, was asked to compare and contrast her room with other study bedrooms she had visited in the SRA, she explained how her perception of space had been more practical, and reflected an ‘efficiency’ approach. An explained:

“...Because I’ve been to the en-suite rooms, yes. Some of them are too large for me, it looks a bit empty. And some are the optimal, like the best I would ask for. But I think it’s a bit expensive so I’m happy with my room. It’s a bit smaller but it’s much cheaper” (An, 14 March 2017).

An evaluated her satisfaction with her study bedroom against other study bedrooms within the SRA. She explained while she might have preferred to have her own en-suite room she was content with her small single room given what it provided relative to cost. For her, different rooms (even of the same type, such as an en-suite) were not uniform across the building. As such, students may pay the same rate for rooms that have considerably different spatial formulations. Rather than be concerned with a private bathroom, An was content with her ‘floor to ceiling’ windows and ‘faux balcony’. These aesthetic elements of the building offered her a deep level of satisfaction, and a benefit for which she was paying less than her peers in large, en-suite rooms just down the corridor from her study bedroom.

Study bedrooms were an integral part of students’ reflections on their personal space within the SRA. Student participants discussed the physical location, environmental factors and cost-benefit of different sizes and types of study

bedrooms when explaining how they perceived and understood the influence of their study bedroom as a private and personal space in the SRA. Study bedrooms also influenced the study patterns of student participants 'in' and 'out' of the SRA.

Study patterns in and out of the SRA

Building on the influence of study bedrooms on students' engagement with and in the SRA are students' study patterns. Student participants explained the significance of their study bedroom and communal study spaces on their study patterns in and outside the SRA. For example, Krista explained:

"I mostly study in my room...Here, [in the SRA], three to four hours [per day]" (Krista, 14 March 2017).

Likewise, when asked how the SRA was as a place to study and work, Solon was positive, noting:

"For studies it's perfectly fine...[I study in my room] two to three hours maximum [per day]" (Solon, 14 March 2017).

While Krista and Solon felt their rooms adequate spaces to study, Aaliyah expressed a sense of being "pushed out" by her room to alternative study spaces on campus. She explained:

"I don't study in my room, like, at all. Light wise, for me, my preference is to study...I'd rather be surrounded by other students but in a quiet area, rather than being all by myself in my room...It's about the light, the natural environment and...co-locating with other students in a shared space" (Aaliyah, 14 March 2017).

The physical environment was key to students' study patterns in and out of their study bedrooms. Personal preference appeared to dominate students' perceptions and attitudes towards what made their study bedrooms 'optimal' and 'sub-optimal' environments for their studies and work. Where Krista and Solon were content with their study bedrooms as places to work, Aaliyah preferred to study on campus, outside of the SRA. Krista explained she preferred more control over external factors, suggesting studying in the libraries was distracting

as people were constantly moving and shuffling about the space. Where Krista was frustrated in her attempts to study in more communal spaces, Aaliyah preferred these social study spaces over her room.

Questionnaire feedback

Student questionnaire responses echoed student interview feedback. When asked how many hours per day students studied in their study bedroom (Appendix D, question 27), five stated 2-4 hours, three stated 4-6 and 8 or more, whilst two students stated 6-8 and two student respondents stated two or less. When asked how many hours students study away from their current accommodation per day (Appendix D, question 28), four students stated 3-6 hours, 1-3 hours and less than 1 hour. While two students stated they did not study away from their current SRA, and one student stated they spent 6-8 hours studying away from their current SRA. Ultimately, the physical space of students study bedrooms amplified students' use of their study bedrooms to study and work, or, pushed students to seek alternative study space outside of the SRA.

Finally, student participants raised issue with the regulation of private space by the SRA. For some students defining the purpose and use of their private space was in tension with the policies and practices outlined in the community expectations for the SRA.

Regulating the use of private space in the SRA: issues with policy and practice

A third emerging issue for students was the regulation of their private space by SRA policies and practices. For some residents, the SRA policies and practices encroached on their use of what they felt was private space. Having private space regulated, in the name of community standards, imposed unnecessary and unwelcome expectations on students' use of their study bedroom spaces.

For example, when asked if there were any issues not covered by our discussion Krista wished to raise, she noted:

“The only thing that I think that I was a little irked by about the regulations was that I think as a post-bac, not a post-bac, a graduate hall...I found that some of the regulations were a little restricting. So one of them in particular says that you can only have a guest over for three nights. And I believe that if you are paying, and you’re not an 18 year old but you should theoretically have some say in your life that that is kind of a very restricting enforceable rule in this hall which I think is kind of absurd because we have family members or friends that are coming. So some of the rules that I’ve seen seem a little catered more towards younger students. But I think they could maybe make those regulations a little more [relaxed] with graduate students” (Krista, 14 March 2017).

Similarly, when discussing how she internalised and monitored her use of her study bedroom to sing and pray, Ansley expressed concerns over whether and how she might be disturbing her neighbours. She explained her perspective:

“I mean this is living with students, I’ve lived at student accommodation for four years when I was doing my undergrad from South Africa and this is nothing...students make noise. And for me noise is not a big issue because I know I’m a student...” (Ansley, 14 March 2017).

For Krista and Ansley, concerns over whether their actions and activities would be out of alignment with SRA policies created a sense of self-monitoring. This self-monitoring reflected a contrast between their desired use of their study bedroom space, and the policy framework of the SRA. Both expressed a desire ‘not to do harm’ to other student residents, however, they felt the rules and restrictions on guests and noise put an undue pressure and burden on themselves to monitor and self-regulate their actions and activities within the SRA.

6.5 Chapter summary

This Chapter has explored some of the issues and themes raised by student and staff participants in a university at the heart of a large city centre in the south of England. Three themes emerged from staff and students’ feedback related to the SRA and ‘space’, including: physical space, social space and personal space.

For staff, physical space related to the management of access to the SRA, maintenance issues and monitoring students’ activities in the SRA in relation to

community standards of policy and practice. Staff stressed the importance of addressing maintenance issues, creating and maintaining a community standard in relation to policy and practices that supported an ethos conducive to students' study and residential life within the SRA. Staff also noted the importance of the social within the SRA. For staff, social space centred on their relationships with student residents, domestic services and maintenance staff. By creating and maintaining positive, respectful relationships with students and staff, staff participants explained how this ecological perspective helped them to respond to students' maintenance or interpersonal issues better. Personal space was also a key issue staff highlighted in their feedback. For staff, personal space within the SRA centred on students study bedrooms. Staff noted how their role was, in part, to help create and support an ethos that student residents could rely upon as conducive and supportive of their studies, health and wellbeing within the SRA.

Like staff, students' feedback also addressed issues related to the physical, social and personal space of the SRA. In relation to physical space, students explored the influence of the architecture, building layout and specific elements of the SRA they felt influenced their engagement in and with the SRA. Students also discussed the social space within the SRA, highlighting communal kitchens as 'hubs' for community, tensions around communal study and multipurpose facilities within the SRA and a lack of social activities and programming within the SRA. Community for most student participants materialised at the level of their communal kitchen. While communal kitchens were hubs for social activities, students also raised issue with the concentration of specific student groups (i.e. Chinese students) and how concentrations of students from a particular cultural background may create the possibility for students to feel isolated in the kitchen from other student residents. Students also raised issue with what some perceived as an ambiguity in the definition and purpose of communal study and multipurpose space in the SRA. Without clear guidance on whether individual and group study or socialising activities take precedent, students felt they were left to negotiate with other residents over the timing and use of communal social spaces. This led some students to feel in tension with other students. Finally, in relation to social space, students expressed a desire for more opportunities to socialise across the SRA. Students noted the introduction meeting and start of year party put on by the accommodation office were the only building-wide social

events to date. As such, they felt more social events may help with a sense of community and cohesion within the SRA.

Finally, students raised several issues with their personal study bedroom space. Student participants reflected on whether and how private study bedroom space influenced their engagement in and with the SRA. Moreover, students explored how the physical environment of their study bedroom influenced their study patterns in and outside the SRA. Student participants also highlighted the influence of SRA policies and procedures on their practices and use of their private study bedrooms as creating, at times, a sense of self-regulation and monitoring of their actions and activities. For some student residents in the SRA, SRA policies and practices put an undue burden on their use of what they termed their 'private space' within the SRA. Next, Chapter 7 discusses the similarities and differences between Case Study I and Case Study II for this research.

Chapter 7: Discussion

In Chapter 7 I discuss findings from this study in relation to existing literature and research on SE and SRA in England.

7.1 Introduction

The purpose of this Chapter is to discuss some of the cross-case issues arising from the empirical work for this study and relate these back to key themes identified in the existing literature and research reviewed for this thesis. The empirical work in this thesis explored students' engagement in and with HEI provided SRA. Recalling SE for this research was defined as the interaction between the time, effort, and other relevant resource invested by both students and their institutions intended to optimise the student experience and enhance the learning outcomes and development of students and the performance and reputation of the institution (Trowler, 2010). The headings of institutions, policy and practice, SRA physical spaces, social spaces and personal spaces, and residence life are used to frame and interpret staff and student feedback. The Chapter synthesises these themes.

The literature reviewed in Chapters 2, 3 and 4 explored existing approaches to SRA provision and SE in England across history. In particular, the literature focused on students' preferences, satisfaction, expectations, experiences, attitudes and perceptions of HEI provided SRA. The literature and research highlighted a number of drivers, debates and tensions surrounding HEI provided SRA across history. In particular, the evolving relationship between state policy and HEI provided SRA, broader societal attitudes towards HEI provided SRA, and students' expectations, experiences, attitudes and perceptions of HEI provided SRA in England. Throughout the existing literature and research, HEI are operating at the interface of a number of drivers and debates, negotiating their approach to provision of SRA within evolving frameworks of HE policy, HEI policy and practice related to providing SRA, and students' experience of English HE and HEI provided SRA.

HEI, staff and students are embedded in a set of relationships framed by policy, practice and provision of SRA by HEI. Diverse operational and conceptual understandings of HEI provided SRA amplify the dynamic and contested nature of SRA, the influence of staff and student relationships and tensions between institutional staff and student expectations and experiences of HEI provided SRA. These drivers, debates and tensions background this discussion Chapter.

7.2 Policy and Practice

Staff and student feedback from case study sites (I) and (II) highlighted the influence and relationship of HE policy to HEI provision of SRA. HE policy had a cascading influence on institutional and HEI provided SRA policies and practices related to SE in and with the SRA studied for this thesis. HE and HEI policy and practice featured prominently in the cross-case feedback from staff and students regarding students' engagement and experiences in and with the HEI provided SRA for this thesis.

7.2.1 Higher education policy

Staff and student feedback from both case sites (I) and (II) highlighted the influence of HE policy on HEI provision of SRA, and students' engagement in and with HEI provided SRA.

HE policy and HEI provided SRA: from student residences to student accommodation

Cross-case staff and student feedback highlighted how HE policy situated HEI provided SRA as one of a number of housing alternatives. As Silver (2004) noted, HE policy had revised HEI provided SRA from a type of student residence to one alternative of student accommodation. For Silver (ibid) and a number of staff and students in this research, this pivot from student housing to student accommodation reflected a move towards a marketised, 'service' approach to HEI provided SRA. Brothers and Hatch (1971) raised a similar point with HEI provided SRA as one of a number of students' residential accommodation alternatives. Moreover, staff and students situated student residents of HEI

provided SRA as 'customers' paying for a 'service'. Situated as providers and customers, supplying and demanding accommodation in a housing market, HEI and students had become disaggregated and decoupled. In this disaggregation and decoupling, HEI and students' interests are positioned as distinct, separate and often in competition, contested and dynamic. Thus, the move from student residences to student accommodation qualified and codified the influence of wider social movements to reduce and eliminate state aid for SRA as a component element, in this instance, of an English higher education.

A marketised approach surfaced in staff and student feedback. Staff and students positioned students' housing alternatives within the local housing market. With regard to case site (I), HE policy at the time the institution became a university (1992) offered no state support for HEI provided SRA. Alternatively, case site (II), a pre-1992 university, had experienced periods of state supported investment in HEI provided SRA (i.e. UGC block grants) through to the elimination of state funding for HEI provision of SRA. From the literature reviewed, state aid for HEI provided SRA allocated by government bodies such as the UGC had been reduced and eliminated. Substituting for state block grant funding for SRA, including funding for students' maintenance and residential accommodation, were personal savings, private and government loans (Sanderson, 1975). Helping a shift towards a marketised approach, substituting state aid for personal payments may have also been helped by changes to the age of majority. With the age of majority being 18, case site (I) and (II) were no longer *in loco parentis* for all but their under-18 students (a fractional minority for both institutions, and not present in either case site (I) or (II) of this research). Therefore, HEI were not situated as institutions in care of students; rather, HEI were providers and purveyors of a good, a higher education, themselves and their students operating within so called market pressures. As the Dearing Report (1997) codified, SRA had now become a line-item on the balance sheets of universities, funded through public and private student loans and grants from HEI and private benefactors (Shattock & Berdahl, 1984). HE policy influenced SRA beyond HEI and into housing communities more generally. HE policy, HEI provided SRA and local housing authorities is developed further next.

HE policy, HEI provided SRA and local housing authorities

As Blakey (1994) and Tight (2011) emphasised, HE policy continued to influence institutional approaches to SRA provision for both cases. For instance, staff feedback from the post-1992 university noted the influence of an absence in state aid for HEI provided SRA. Additionally, staff cited low levels of local housing authority support for the institution provided SRA as constricting HEI provided SRA development. Staff and student feedback from both cases reflected pressures foreshadowed by Morgan and McDowell (1979) who cited a lack of HEI provided SRA and slowing private rental sector builds as pressurising HEI and local housing authorities to find suitable housing for students (and non-students) alike. Citing HEI provision of SRA and local housing authority data, Morgan and McDowell (1979) highlighted how a simultaneous slow down in HEI provided SRA and private rental sector housing builds may have related to a growing imbalance in the mix and types of housing available to students and non-students.

For this research, case study site (I) staff noted no state aid for HEI provided SRA and little local housing authority support for HEI provided SRA with a 'slowing' of the development of HEI provided SRA, compounding issues of housing availability for students and non-students in the community. Staff feedback indicated they perceived the 'slow' development of HEI provided SRA as in tension with continuing demand by students for HE, SRA and, in this instance, HEI provided SRA. Similarly, in case site (II), staff and student feedback acknowledged the influence of HE policy on the institution's approach to providing SRA. Like case site (I), case site (II) staff and students stressed how the current HE policy environment had formulated HEI provided SRA as a 'service'. For case sites (I) and (II), higher education policy operated at a 'macro' level, however, staff and students' experiences across both cases reflected how their institutions negotiated HEI provided SRA within the broader HE policy framework.

HE policy and the marketisation of HEI provided SRA

Reflecting on HE policy, staff and student feedback from case sites (I) and (II) suggested HEI provided SRA was situated within a marketised approach to HEI provided SRA. This policy approach towards HEI provided SRA as part of a housing market appeared to influence institutional, staff and students' expectations and experience of HEI provided SRA.

Specifically, access to HEI provided SRA included consideration of policy changes influencing students' access to loans and maintenance grants. For example, in case site (I), Gavin noted that he received full coverage of his accommodation costs as part of his disability funding from SFE. While Gavin was fully covered by the state, Paul (a first-year international student) was self-funding his accommodation costs using parental savings. As such, two student residents living in the same HEI provided SRA operated under distinctive financial conditions they noted had an influence on their expectations, experiences and engagement in and with HEI provided SRA. Additionally, student resident advisers who provided feedback noted that one of the major factors influencing their decision to apply and take on the student resident adviser role was a discount on their SRA costs. HEI provided SRA costs as part of students' total cost of attendance (COA) were often at the forefront of student and staff feedback regarding the influence of policy on the two HEI provided SRA under study. Similarly, staff from case site (II) cited the cost of accommodation and students overall COA as reflective of a 'business' model and market approach to HEI provided SRA. Together, staff and students' attitudes, perceptions and experiences reflected a dynamic and complex milieu of policies and personal considerations surrounding funding access and participation in and with HEI provided SRA.

Cross-case feedback from staff and students also highlighted the influence of HE policy on reduced state funding for HEI provided SRA. Alongside reductions in state funding of HEI provided SRA, HE policy reframed HEI provided SRA as part of the overall housing market. As such, HEI were free to provide (or not) SRA for their students. Students also saw their maintenance grants reduced (or eliminated) and replaced with personal loans, including personal loans for HEI

provided SRA costs. Compounding £9000 tuition-fees at the time of this research were the additional fees and costs associated with students' engagement in and with HEI provided SRA. While case site (II), a pre-1992 university, had established HEI provided SRA across periods of state/no state funding, case site (I) became a university at a time when there was no state funding for HEI provided SRA. As such, shifting government support for HEI provided SRA across history had relocated the total cost of HEI provided SRA out of the state and into individual HEI (and students). The implications for access, participation, recruitment and retention across HEI would clearly reflect how institutions' adapted to the policy conditions across history. Reflecting on institutions' adaptations to shifting state funding and aid for HEI provided SRA is explored next through the institutional policy approaches for both cases.

7.2.2 Institutional policy

Adapting to HE policy, institutional policy related to provision of SRA materialised in two ways cross-case for this research. First, for both case site (I) and (II), institutional policy set out students' eligibility to apply for HEI provided SRA. Eligibility preferences for case site (I) and (II) were broadly set to first-year undergraduates and international students. Second, once students had agreed and enjoined HEI provided SRA, institutional policy framed students' engagement in and with HEI provided SRA for staff and students across case sites (I) and (II).

Institutional policy regarding students' engagement in and with HEI provided SRA related to the institutions' duty of care and students' responsibilities as residents. Staff perceptions of the institution's duty of care varied. While accommodation staff across case sites (I) and (II) took a decidedly operational approach to duty of care, residence life staff foregrounded the opportunities to provide students with pastoral care and social events. Social events were aimed at generating a sense of community within and amongst within and across the flats and blocks of case site (I). Similarly, students provided feedback on SRA policy. Students from case site (I) noted a lack of policy enforcement across the SRA, citing differential treatment of blocks and flats 'closer to reception'. While students from case site (II) noted the approach of policy within the SRA felt aimed at an 'undergraduate' student population rather than a hall of postgraduate, international students. As

such, policy continued to be a contested component of student residents' engagement in and with their SRA.

Institutional preferences for student engagement in and with HEI provided SRA

Institutional policy for case site (I) set out a number of conditions and preferences for student applicants to HEI provided SRA. As noted above, institutional policy screened applicants based on a set of preferences and a prioritisation of first-year undergraduates, domestic and international students on a full-time course, students whose homes were outside the local geographical area as defined by the institution, and students who had made the institution their first choice during applications. The institution providing case site (II) set out similar eligibility criteria, with a preference for first-year undergraduate and international students. While the institution prioritised first-year undergraduate and undergraduate-postgraduate international students, case site (II) was a postgraduate hall of residence.

This preference for first-year undergraduate and international students (UG/PG) appeared to reflect a number of cross-case issues. For instance, staff in case site (I) noted at the time of this research HEI provided SRA was constrained, with availability for approximately 50% of its overall first-year undergraduate student applicants. Moreover, preference was given to students traveling from outside the local community and abroad as a way of supporting institutional recruitment from outside the HEI's local student catchment. Institutional policy for case site (II) also referenced first-year undergraduate and international undergraduate and postgraduate students as having priority and preference in the institution's SRA allocation process. However, both case sites (I) and (II) noted that, should circumstances arise that they had remainder SRA, they would provide this based on a case by case basis. These preferences for first-year and international students reflects on the issues of recruitment and retention raised by Thomsen (2008), Thomas (2012) and Thomas & Hovdhaugen (2014).

Institutional policy and students' engagement in and with HEI provided SRA

Feedback from staff and students across both cases highlighted institutional policy as framing the forms, functions and purpose of HEI provided SRA within the institution. Staff feedback from case site (I) noted a revived institutional concern for the development of more HEI provided SRA. Additionally, staff noted a renewed interest within the institutional policy for students' residential life, with increased institutional spending on the provision of 'residence life staff' across HEI provided SRA. These shifts in institutional policy were reflected in staff feedback for case site (I). Staff in case site (I) noted a growing focus on the institution's 'duty of care' towards residents, and how their work related to students' engagement in and with the SRA and institution more broadly (i.e. academic outcomes, participation in non-SRA activities across the institution).

Similarly, staff in case site (II) highlighted their institution's approach to HEI provided SRA as a student 'service'. Staff noted that their duty of care to students reflected a 'provider' and 'customer' relationship between the institution and students. As such, staff in case site (II) situated their duty to help create and sustain a 'home' for student residents and provide a place where students felt comfortable and were able to focus and complete their academic work, while participating as part of an SRA community.

Alternatively, students from case site (I) described their relationship to institutional policy as reflecting their 'responsibilities' as residents. This included requirements to follow a payment schedule for SRA fees, to abide by SRA community policies and procedures to redress issues with other residents and maintenance. Likewise, student feedback from case site (II) reflected on issues arising from institutional policy related to SRA provision, including: issues with the timing of students' payment schedules, move in and move out dates and centralised pricing of rooms that varied in size and location within the SRA. As such, where cross-case staff feedback took a more general 'community' approach, students' feedback reflected their individual relationship to SRA issues arising from institutional policy frameworks.

Student feedback also noted the influence and importance of their relationships with peers and staff. In discussing their relationship to policy, students from both cases highlighted their personal relationships with peers and staff as reduced the sense of 'disconnect' between HEI as providers and students as 'customers' of the SRA. Namely, a drive to cultivate a sense of relationship with peers and staff was related to policy and practice within the SRA.

7.2.3 Policy and practice within SRA

HE and institutional policy had a cascading influence on SRA policy and practice for case sites (I) and (II). As Blimling (2015) noted, institutional policies and approach to providing SRA had an influence on SRA policy, staff and student practices. Key themes emerging from the interface of institutional and SRA policy and practice, included: staff practices, staffs' relationship to student residents, and students' expectations and experiences of HEI provided SRA policy and practice.

Staff practices

For case site (I), staff took various positions on the institution's approach to students residing in HEI provided SRA. Operations and caretaker staff in case site (I) aligned their practices with institutional policy related to HEI provided SRA. For operations and caretaker staff in case site (I), responding to students as customers reflected a managerial approach to HEI provided SRA. Staff reflected on this managerial approach when describing their practices around addressing maintenance issues, providing a clean and hospitable environment, and providing SRA as a student service. Alternatively, case site (I) residence life staff framed their practices as generative, contributing to students' experiences of community in HEI provided SRA and supporting students' engagement in and with HEI provided SRA and the university more generally. Residence life staff highlighted their 'out of hours support' and SRA sponsored social events as complementing the 'managerial' and students as 'customers' approach of accommodation colleagues. Residence life staff in case site (I) saw their practices as providing opportunities for students and contributing to students' social and personal development within HEI provided SRA.

Similarly, staff from case site (II) noted their role and practices as supporting a 'home' environment for students. Like prior research by Blimling (2015), Brothers and Hatch (1971) and Richter and Walker (2008), staff in case site (II) suggested that creating and maintaining a good home environment manifested in addressing maintenance issues in a timely manner, supporting the hall representative's social event agenda, and cultivating a warm and welcoming atmosphere within the SRA.

While accommodation and residence life staff in case sites (I) and (II) related their practices and contributions to SE in and with SRA to their job roles and responsibilities, the overwhelming sense from staff was a desire to contribute positively to students' experience of the residential accommodation, learning aims and outcomes, the HEI and surrounding community. Staff practices related to this overarching aim to support students' multidimensional and relational experiences of SRA and HE infused staffs' relationship to student residents.

Staffs' relationship to student residents

Staffs' relationship to student residents also emerged as a key issue for students' engagement in and with HEI provided SRA.

For staff and students across case sites (I) and (II), staffs' relationship to student residents related to: the financial investment by students and the university in the provision of SRA, professional and student staffing of HEI provided SRA and programming provided by staff aimed at engaging students in the broader residence life of the SRA.

First, staff and students across cross-case sites (I) and (II) foregrounded the influence of student and university financial investments in the 'type' of relationship staff had with students. As noted above, a student as customer approach dominated accommodation staffs' reflections on their relationships to student residents. Alternatively, residence life staff within case site (I) noted the contribution of their focus on student support and wellbeing as framing their relationships with students.

While Blimling (2015) argued for greater attention to the possibilities for HEI provided SRA to contribute to students' personal and shared (social) development, this research did not find clear evidence SRA provided social events aimed at students' engagement in the HEI provided SRA correlated to greater SE in and with the HEI provided SRA under study. As such, it remained unclear if and how SRA provided social events correlated with students' learning outcomes and personal development within HEI provided SRA. While it appeared that there was ample opportunity to create and contribute to students' engagement in and with the social space of HEI provided SRA, staff and students also noted that whatever students make of their time in HEI provided SRA now rests largely with them.

Such a neoliberal view may reflect the individual centric approach of students as customers and the marketisation of HE and HEI provided SRA. HEI provided SRA would benefit from allowing for a diverse set of student aims for HEI provided SRA. Namely, allowing students who are interested in a place to 'sleep and eat' to co-exist without feeling obligated or coerced into participating in HEI provided SRA social events and programming. This 'allowing' appeared to run into tension with some staffs' managerial approach and rationalisation of HEI provided SRA as a service, where events and budgets are measured against quantity of students 'served' and students' feedback on the quality of their experiences and engagement in and with HEI provided SRA. Focusing on student feedback regarding the quality of students' engagement of HEI provided SRA related to students' expectations and experiences of HEI provided SRA policy and practice.

Students' expectations and experiences of HEI provided SRA policy and practice

Students' expectations and experiences of HEI provided SRA policy and practice across case sites (I) and (II) also featured in student and staff respondents' feedback on the relationship of students to SRA policy and practice. Students' feedback across case sites (I) and (II) regarding their expectations and experiences manifested in whether, and how, expectations of SRA and expectations proposed by SRA aligned with students' experiences of their SRA.

For example, student feedback from case site (I) cited issues with staff enforcement of policies (i.e. quiet hours) throughout the year. Some students cited their physical location within the SRA and the presence and activity of security, student resident advisers, and the resident adviser on their experience of policy enforcement within the SRA. Different experiences of policy enforcement within case site (I) reflected in students' feedback regarding their relationships with peers and flatmates. As such, students' perceptions of their residence life in their SRA was mediated by the SRA policies and the variance in enforcement of those policies across the SRA. While some students noted a lack of enforcement and tensions with their flatmates, other students in case site (I) explained that part of their reasons for moving back into halls was related to poor experiences with housemates and roommates in private accommodation. They noted that HEI provided SRA had a set of defined rules and expectations related to students' behaviours and activities in the SRA. While this didn't result in 'perfect' enforcement of the 'rules', they felt an expectation that students be aware and abide by the community standards provided a degree of 'transparency' and 'security' or standards for behaviour within their SRA.

Alternatively, students in case site (II) noted that they felt some SRA rules and regulations, such as those related to 'overnight guests' and use of communal kitchens (i.e. students may only use their assigned kitchen and should not bring guests into the kitchen) were either ignored by choice or lack of awareness by students such guidance existed within the SRA. Instead of abiding by the rules and regulations, students would simply 'do as they pleased' perhaps expecting and receiving little resistance from their peers. Similar to the tensions raised by Moss and Richter (2010), this attitude and approach by students resulted in tensions between student residents. Tensions between student residents evidenced changes in students' behaviours and use of communal spaces (i.e. shared kitchens and common rooms). Feedback from students indicated SRA rules and regulations appeared helpful and adequate when and if students were self-monitoring and self-regulating. However, as was raised in student feedback for case site (I) (i.e. 'crackheads and noise in the hall') and case site (II) (i.e. Chinese students' use of shared kitchens), students often felt that the rules were not followed or enforced by staff adequately to be confident in them. Therefore,

while students felt some support from stated SRA rules and regulations, in practice, a gap in application of these rules and regulations was evidenced across both SRA case sites.

Still, students' engagement in and with HEI provided SRA as a contributor to students' social and personal development was opaque. Student feedback from case site (I) highlighted a number of instances when students reflected on how their engagement in and with HEI provided SRA had influenced their social and personal development. Similarly, student feedback from case site (II) highlighted how the absence of a social network within the SRA influenced students' perception and social engagement across the SRA. As such, staff and students' feedback highlighted how students' social opportunities in and with the SRAs were just that, opportunities without obligations. Such an approach, for a number of staff and students, reflected the types, qualities and relationships of 'space' within the SRA.

7.3 SRA physical, social and personal spaces

The topic of 'spaces' was raised across case sites (I) and (II). Staff and students from both SRAs highlighted the influence of physical, social and personal space on students' engagement in and with SRA.

7.3.1 Physical spaces

SRA physical space played a key role in students' engagement in and with SRA case sites (I) and (II).

For example, in case site (I), staff respondents noted how building architecture influenced students' engagement in and with the site. Recalling case site (I) was an SRA composed of 'blocks' that were situated into clusters (three blocks per cluster, 3-4 stories per block, with 3-4 flats per story and 6-8 rooms per flat) with clusters nested across the split-level SRA development. Similar to the way in which Moss & Richter (2010) found physical space influenced students' use of the SRA by virtue of 'routines', 'rituals' and 'rhythms' students (in both interviews and the questionnaire) noted the influence of physical space on their use and

non-use of communal and private space within the SRA. Students' cited the physical location of their room in relation to the SRA reception as influencing students' activities. Students living 'nearer' reception perceived their activities were being monitored by staff at reception. Additionally, students noted tensions with over-night security at case site (I), who students stated was stationed at reception but did little to affect the activities in the more distant residential blocks and flats. As such, the physical location of the SRA reception area had a 'halo' influence on students' patterns of use and self-regulatory behaviours across the SRA.

Accommodation staff and residence life staff from case site (I) noted that their primary concern was noise pollution from the SRA into the surrounding neighbourhood. They noted that one of the challenges they faced was the communal kitchens facing externally or 'street side'. SRA blocks and communal kitchens were primary gathering points for student residents. As such, noise from communal kitchens spilled out into the surrounding community. The architecture and design of the blocks with kitchens facing on to the adjacent residential streets was a persistent concern for residence life staff. While SRA residence life staff could monitor students' activities (especially on mid-week 'nights out'), they were constantly working to mitigate the negative influence of students' activities in communal kitchens and meeting 'zones' facing side streets across the SRA. Thus, the organisation and orientation of SRA physical space influenced students' patterns of physical space use, and influence of students' activities within the SRA on the surrounding neighbourhood.

Similarly, physical spaces emerged as an important theme for staff and students in case site (II). In particular, students noted the 'size of their room' and the use of communal kitchens and toilet/shower facilities. For students, there were three key notes made regarding the influence of physical space on their engagement in and with the SRA. First, similar to issues noted by Marmot (2014); students raised the location of their room (i.e. attic, basement) as key to their exposure to natural light, heat and air flow. Study room amenities (i.e. number of lights, location of lighting, desk and wardrobe fixtures) were also raised as physical elements of student study bedrooms influencing students engagement in and with their SRA. Second, students reflected on the use of communal kitchens and

shared facilities (i.e. toilets, showers) as influencing their experience and engagement in and with the SRA. For some students, their shared facilities had come under pressure from use as students gravitated towards those common facilities that were perceived to be of higher standard (i.e. new showers, working toilets). This resulted in a number of issues related to students' perception 'their toilets' and 'their kitchens' were being colonised by 'others'. Third, students also raised the issue of a lack of clarity regarding policy and procedures to negotiate use of communal multipurpose and study spaces.

Students and staff noted that tensions arose when students wanted somewhere to 'study' while multipurpose and common study spaces were being utilised for events such as socials and music practice. Students across case sites (I) and (II) also raised how, on a number of occasions, use of common facilities influenced their use of study bedrooms. In this instance, students cited noise pollution and a lack of exposure to natural light as key influencers on their engagement in and with the SRA. Staff noted how they fielded a number of enquiries regarding the use and appropriation of common spaces. Their general response was to suggest students follow the community standards guidance and 'work it out amongst themselves'. Such a 'hands off' approach did little to ameliorate students' concerns regarding responsibility for oversight of common spaces.

7.3.2 Social spaces

Within case sites (I) and (II) staff and student feedback highlighted social space as a key issue for students' engagement in and with SRA.

For staff in case site (I), social space reflected students' engagement with other students and staff within the SRA. At the time of this study, social space for staff in case site (I) highlighted an emerging residence life program and presence of residence life teams across HEI provided SRA. Staff noted a desire on behalf of the institution to develop greater SRA sponsored social programming within HEI provided SRA in order to engage students and contribute to students' experience of SRA and the HEI more generally.

While staff focused on the provision of social events within the SRA, students in case site (I) highlighted a diverse set of expectations and experiences of social space within their SRA. For students, social space encapsulated their relationships with staff and peers across the SRA. Students noted that they didn't feel a building-wide sense of community. In fact, community was most aptly defined as those whom shared the same flat and/or kitchen. For students, tensions in and with the community reflected a number of approaches to what SRA 'residential life' meant and diverse personal uses and practices within the SRA. Echoing existing findings from Richter & Walker (2008) and Moss & Richter (2010), students noted how they monitored and regulated their activities in relation to their flatmates, citing a desire to avoid other residents whom they felt maintained a 'different lifestyle'. This contradicts Astin, Astin & Lindholm (2011) and Blimling (2015), both of whom positioned SRA as a 'melting pot' of 'others' and 'otherness' that had the potential to contribute to students' personal development and worldview. The issues and tensions raised by students in case site (I) highlighted the diversity of expectations and subsequent experiences of students sharing in the communal residence life of the SRA under study.

Similar issues arose in case site (II). Students noted an absence of social space, a fragmented sense of community and challenges with negotiating communal life in a postgraduate SRA. Students' feedback highlighted a sense that there was little support within the SRA to develop a sense of community. As such, students felt left to generate their own 'micro-community'. These micro-communities were, like in case site (I), often found at the level of the shared kitchen and floor. Students who noted they had friends across the SRA often cited a similar culture (i.e. Chinese) and a shared course or module as their shared common identity. When asked if there was support for social events within the SRA students and staff noted that there was a 'rep' for the SRA, however, they did not take up their position until late in the fall term. As such, students had established their social network(s) within the SRA and felt they lacked motivation to engage with the hall representative and the hall representative's proposed social events. Thus, students' feedback related a sense of social space in and with the SRA to existing identities (i.e. cultural, institutional, course of study) and only indirectly linked with their SRA.

Staff respondents from case site (II) took diverse approaches to the social space within the SRA. The hall manager noted that, where the social space of the SRA was concerned, their role was to be accessible to students, to address students' questions and concerns and to support the resolution of issues within social spaces (i.e. use of communal kitchens, use of communal study spaces and multipurpose space) as and when they arose. Alternatively, a reception administrative staff member positioned their role as someone who 'welcomed students' and worked to create a 'home away from home' for students. Citing the significant international student population, this staff member felt that it was important to create and maintain a 'home' environment in order to support students' overall academic success and experience of the institution and city (of London) more generally. Such a position resonates with the work of Blimling (2015) who argued the social support of staff within HEI provided SRA was key to students' relationships in and with the SRA.

Still, student and staff respondents noted a 'gap' between their respective groups. Student feedback explained this gap as a lack of consistency in how students felt they were treated by other student residents and staff. Staff in CS (I) noted students' perceptions of 'us' as 'provider' and 'them' as 'customers' was the reason for such a gap. With particular focus on the management and maintenance of shared facilities (i.e. communal study spaces, communal kitchens), students cited a lack of transparency and consistency regarding whether, and how, these spaces were managed as influencing their perception of the roles and responsibilities of staff in maintaining the social environment within the SRA. Staff were framed as policy enforcers and responsible for emergency response (i.e. water leaks, lockouts) with little input into the social environment of the SRA.

These findings highlight two key factors influencing students' engagement with the social space of case sites (I) and (II). First, as Massey (2005) noted, physical spaces appear to frame the social space within the SRAs studied. Physical space, tensions around the location, use and 'colonisation' of communal and shared physical space had a cascading effect on students' perceptions of social space within the two SRA under study. Second, like the issues raised by Blimling (2015) and Thomsen (2008), students in these cases cited a lack of consistency

in the treatment of their individual 'cases' and 'issues' within the SRA as influencing their sense of relationship to the social environment within case sites (I) and (II). These fragmented and fractured relationships amongst students, and between staff and students influenced a collective sense of community and relationship to the social space of the SRAs studied in this research.

As physical spaces influenced social spaces, so both had a cascading influence on students' perceived personal space within both SRAs studied in this research.

7.3.3 Personal spaces

Nested within the physical space and social space of the SRAs under study, personal space arose as a key issue for students and staff.

For staff and students in case site (I), students' personal space was defined as students' study bedrooms. Staff noted that their interactions with students rested largely on issues in and with students' study bedrooms. As noted above, issues within students' study bedrooms were mainly maintenance of the physical environment and enquiries regarding noise transfer from surrounding rooms, SRA frontage streets (especially late at night when some students were returning from an evening out) and adjacent communal spaces (i.e., kitchens, multipurpose rooms, open green space adjacent the SRA).

Likewise, students from case site (I) raised their study bedrooms as key to their engagement in and with the SRA. Students mentioned that they positioned their study bedroom as a contested site, 'land locked' by the various surrounding rooms and against the external SRA environment. Students noted that the quality of their personal space reflected a sense they could maintain 'control' over the space. Control over private study bedrooms for some students centred on cleanliness and the use of an en-suite bathroom. Students noted that having 'private' and 'personal' space was vital to their wellbeing, noting the importance of 'being able to take one's time' and were key to their academic outputs. Similar to the findings of Marmot (2014; 2016), students across case site (I) took various approaches to study in their study bedrooms. One student noted that their study bedroom was more adequate for their study practices, noting that he preferred

the quiet of his study bedroom to the hum of the library. While other students took a more compartmentalised and divided approach, noting that they spent the majority of their study time out of the SRA, and approached their study bedroom as a 'sanctuary' where they could rest away from their academic life and responsibilities. The diverse approaches to the functions and purpose of students' private study bedrooms denoted the dynamic and contested nature of students' private study spaces within the SRA under study.

Issues in and with students' personal space also emerged from case site (II). Staff from case site (II) noted that students raised a number of enquiries regarding the location, size and maintenance of their study bedrooms. Staff feedback reflected the embedded and relational nature of students' study bedrooms, highlighting the dynamic and contested nature of such spaces as 'private' in an absolute sense. Instead, staff positioned students' concerns regarding their private study bedrooms as not reflecting on the realities of life in such a communal living environment. Staff noted the location of the SRA (on a street) in the centre of the city of London as possibly influencing the irregularities in students' experiences of noise and reduced sense of privacy in their study bedrooms. Still, staff feedback from case site (II) appreciated how students may feel about their study bedrooms as a students' 'home base' within the SRA and HEI more generally.

Similarly, students' feedback from case site (II) denoted a clear concern for their study bedrooms. Student feedback from case site (II) focused on: the location, size and organisation of their study bedrooms. First, due to the nature of the SRA as 'fit for purpose', students noted that there were variances within and amongst rooms that were sized as 'small', 'large' and 'large en-suite'. Second, students noted the location of their study bedrooms influenced their engagement and experiences in and with the SRA. For instance, students living in the basement raised the issue of a lack of natural light affecting their ability to study in their study bedrooms. On the ground level, a student respondent noted that she could not leave her curtains open as her room faced the street, and at street level passersby were able to look in to her room. A student respondent living in the 'attic' level of the SRA noted that her room did not have adequate ventilation and became very warm during high temperature days. With no lift to her floor in the

building, when she left her room she 'left for 'good'. She noted she hesitated to return up four flights of stairs in order to retrieve any items and found her location less than ideal when having to complete her weekly wash. Students also noted issues with noise from surrounding common spaces (i.e. communal kitchens, communal washrooms) that 'leaked' into adjacent study bedrooms. Students feedback denoted a clear sensitivity and awareness of the interface of the physical environment on students' expectations and experiences of personal space in and with the SRA. While maintenance as a principle issue for students' wellbeing in their personal study bedroom space resonates with existing research by Brothers & Hatch (1971) and Blimling (2015), surprisingly, students' feedback around the location and comparable size of study bedrooms was the first known finding of this kind in relation to SRA for this research. These findings suggest the interface of the physical environment, social space and personal space are critical to students' engagement in and with HEI provided SRA in this instance and perhaps SRA more generally.

7.4 Residence life: a relational, multidimensional and ecological approach to SE in and with SRA

The socio-spatial lens adopted for this research captured some of the influence of policy, practice, physical, social and personal spaces on SE in and with the two HEI provided SRA case study sites for this research. Emerging from the interface of policy, practice, physical-social and personal spaces was this idea of students' residential life within HEI provided SRA. Exploring residential life within case sites (I) and (II) for this research provided a way of approaching and understanding the ecological nature of students' engagement in and with HEI provided SRA.

7.4.1 Residence life (I): existing approaches

A key driver for students' engagement in and with the HEI provided SRA under study in this research was an overarching ideal of students' residence life.

In particular, staff at case sites (I) and (II) related students' participation in HEI provided SRA as part of a students experience of higher education in England. For example, staff at case site (I) drew on a set of discourses, including students'

'experience' and students' as 'customers' when explaining the rationale for institutional policy and practice that preferred first-year undergraduate and international (undergraduate and postgraduate) students. Still, data and findings for this research found a number of 'cases within a case' when this general framework was challenged. For example, in case site (I) Gavin (a disabled student funded for three years of HEI provided SRA by SFE) and several questionnaire respondents who noted that they were from an area within the supposed excludable geographic catchment surrounding the university.

Two points may be made here. First, it is clear that the 'hard' and 'fast' rules of institutional policy and practice related to 'who' was allocated a space within HEI provided SRA may be generally taken as read, however, there are a number of individual cases and circumstances that challenge a totalising approach to institutional policy and practice related to provision of SRA. Second, it remains unclear how many students self-exclude from HEI provided SRA, and what reasons they might have for their decision to pursue alternative housing opportunities. This will have clear implications for students' access and participation, recruitment and retention (here, engagement) in and with HEI provided SRA. This may also have a cascading effect on the student populations available for study, and how data and feedback generated from distinct SRA student populations may be localised or generalised across 'cases' and HEI.

Students' inclusion and exclusion (by choice and as a product of HE/HEI policy) will no doubt have an influence on students' residence life and 'experience' of university. As this research has argued, staff and students' expectations, experiences, perceptions and meaning making of HEI provided SRA will have a disproportionate influence on how research such as this study interprets and understands residence life within HEI provided SRA. Two interpretations, HEI provided SRA as part of a housing 'market' and HEI provided SRA as student housing 'pathway' are explored next.

Housing markets and pathways

Drawing on the work of Clapham (2002, 2005) and Kendig (1984), residence life has been conceived of as a 'pathway' with students' engagement in and with HEI

provided SRA having implications for students' housing 'biographies' and spatial 'mobility'.

Taking a marketised approach, Kendig (1984) argued access to housing options (such as HEI provided SRA) reflected an individual's relationship to the housing market and relative level of economic resources. Moreover, his work highlighted how individuals, such as students engaging in HEI provided SRA, negotiate their market-position and available housing options with their individual perceptions of 'value for money'. Key to this proposition is whether, and how, students may vary in 'what' they prefer and how much they value various elements (i.e. private en-suite washroom, private kitchen) of each housing option available to them. As student feedback for case sites (I) and (II) noted, students are comparing within and across housing options, including HEI provided SRA. As such, students' housing choices are complex and dynamic, reflecting more considerations than a students' financial means and the affordability of housing, such as the type(s) and availability of HEI provided SRA to students.

Students are surveying a number of housing options, including HEI provided SRA. As students are not obliged to participate in HEI provided SRA in many English HEI, even where available, there is no certainty that students will experience HEI provided SRA. As the HESA (2017) data highlighted, the discrepancy between supply and demand for HEI provided SRA continued to reflect the dynamic and contested relationship between students' choice of housing, availability of various housing options (i.e. HEI provided SRA, private SRA, private housing) and students' preferences for engagement in and with HEI provided SRA. Pressure on HEI provided SRA, locally, regionally and nationally across England, persists and influences students' engagement in and with HEI provided SRA such as the case sites studied for this research.

In light of Kendig's (1984) marketised approach, Clapham (2002, 2005) called for consideration of whether, and how, students' housing preferences and choices influenced a students' housing 'pathway'. For Clapham, students' housing pathway started from their 'origin home', carrying in to a students' housing choice out of their origin home (in this instance, in to HEI provided SRA) and out of HEI provided SRA into the private housing sector. Students' housing pathways were

taken as 'privileged', reflecting students' ability to access HEI provided SRA as a housing option. Moreover, Clapham saw a number of social advantages to students' housing pathway into HEI provided SRA, including, lower levels of social dissonance with 'returning home' during holiday periods and at the end of the academic year. As such, students received a great deal of 'support' in to, through and out of HEI provided SRA. These atypical levels of social support made a 'hard break' from 'home' into the broader housing sector less difficult on students, constituting what Rugg et al. (2004) called students' 'housing advantage'.

Together, the work of Kendig (1984) and Clapham (2002, 2005), highlighted the complex, dynamic and contested nature of HEI provided SRA residence life. Students' residence life reflected the interface of students' housing sector options and availability of HEI provided SRA. The availability of HEI provided SRA reflected supply of SRA and institutional policy and practice related to students' access, recruitment, participation and retention in and with HEI provided SRA. Clapham (2002, 2005) also highlighted gaps between HEI provision and students' expectations and experience of HEI provided SRA. Rather than a strictly financial proposition, HEI provided SRA was underpinned by social attitudes and expectations of 'what' and 'how' is meant by 'student' (Silver, 2004; Tight, 2011). Further, HEI policy and practice within case sites (I) and (II) for this research highlight how specific groups of students (i.e. first-year domestic, international) were given institutional preference for access to HEI provided SRA. As such, the accessibility in to and expectations of HEI provided SRA reflected a 'university relationship' embedded within HEI provided SRA. Next, HEI provided SRA as 'containers within containers'.

Containers within containers

HEI provided SRA as part of housing markets, and students' access and participation in HEI provided SRA as a pathway have been two key approaches to conceptualising HEI provided SRA in England. However, both approaches treat HEI provided SRA in an instrumental way, bereft of engagement with the local and personal factors shaping staff and students' engagement in and with HEI provided SRA.

For example, in case site (I), staff and students acknowledged a number of tensions between and within their groups. These tensions related to individual attitudes, perceptions and relationships with SRA policy and practices, physical-social and personal spaces. From staff feedback, students as customers reflected a broader discourse being propped up by the institution, locating the institution within even more general HE policy discourses around 'what' a university higher education is aimed at providing students, 'how' an institution may approach such provision and 'why' the approach reflected current social attitudes towards HE and HEI provided SRA (Tight, 2011). Alternatively, some staff focused their attention on students' engagement in and with the SRA at a social and personal level, explaining the importance of students' social engagement and personal development whilst in HEI provided SRA (Astin, Astin & Lindholm, 2011; Blimling, 2015). In case site (I), students' feedback resonated with existing research by Richter and Walker (2008) and Moss and Richter (2010), taking a notably personal turn. Students highlighted tensions in their engagement in and with their SRA as they negotiated personal and cultural expectations and experiences with the attitudes, use and engagement of their SRA by peers.

Similarly, case site (II) staff noted the 'costs' and 'fees' international students were paying was a fundamental consideration for 'why' and 'how' they approached HEI provided SRA as a 'service' and students as 'customers'. Such a turn in institutional approach resonated with Silver's (2004) tracing of HEI provided SRA from student 'housing' to 'accommodation'. As Silver (2004) alluded to in his work, feedback from staff and students in case sites (I) and (II) reflected a shift in attitudes and approaches towards HEI provided SRA away from what Blakey (1994) noted as 'in loco parentis', and into a service-provider framework. This service-provider framework echoes a broader marketisation and commercialisation of HEI provided SRA. Shifting HEI provided SRA into a service-provider framework amplifies what Shattock (2015) called 'sharp change' in and with students' engagement of HEI provided SRA. Such sharp changes break the containment of debates and discourses surrounding institutions such as those providing case sites (I) and (II) and their provision of SRA. Still, breaking

containment revealed ruptures and resistance to totalising policy discourses and institution specific practices.

Breaking containment: ruptures and resistance

Ruptures and resistance reflected whether, and how, individual interpretation and creativity protected HEI provided SRA from 'totalising' discourses. Existing literature and research on HEI provided SRA relied heavily on 'general' approaches to HEI provided SRA. Across history, HEI provided SRA for different student populations, under varying state policy and funding regimes, reflected the tension between social attitudes and state sponsorship of higher education and HEI provided SRA (Blakey, 1994; Sanderson 1975; Shattock, 1994). Both cases for this research reflected similarities and differences in how a pre and a post-1992 university interpreted and provided SRA in the present. The methods (i.e. observations, interviews and questionnaires) generated a number of moments of rupture between institutional and individual approaches to HEI provided SRA. For instance, staff feedback from case site (I) noted their personal relationships with students were a vital component to their 'work' and the 'job' of HEI provided SRA for students. In case site (II), a staff member noted that their aim to create and cultivate a sense of 'home' for students reflected HEI provided SRA as more than a 'service' as student residents were often from 'abroad' and creating and sustaining a sense of home was a means of supporting students' personal and academic development whilst in HEI provided SRA. Student feedback highlighted similar tensions between 'policy', 'practice' and personal 'interpretation'. Student feedback from case site (I) highlighted a number of 'flat' and 'block' based differences in student populations, attitudes and uses of HEI provided SRA. While student feedback from case site (II) noted how individual and shared use of communal kitchens, study and multipurpose space was dynamic and often passively and actively contested by residents through their use of these spaces. Thus, the methodology and methods underpinning this research foregrounded whether, and how, individual staff and students' use and attitudes towards others influenced whether, and how, staff and students 'broke' from broader policy frameworks, interpretations and uses of HEI provided SRA.

While residence life may be framed as the outcome of policy, practice, students' expectations and preferences, broader social attitudes and individual ideals of HEI provided SRA, such an approach still focuses on disparate 'elements' of residential life within HEI provided. What is needed now is an understanding of the ecological nature of students' engagement in and with HEI provided SRA. Such an ecological approach to residence life within HEI provided SRA would approach students' engagement in and with HEI provided SRA as relational, dynamic and under constant pressure to reflect on the elements influencing HEI provision of SRA and students' access, recruitment, participation and retention in HEI provided SRA, and if HEI provided SRA may have an influence on students' engagement with HE more generally. Such an approach is proposed and developed next.

7.4.2 Residence life (II): a relational, multidimensional and ecological approach

In his work, *A Will to Learn*, Ronald Barnett (2007) proposed a need for attention to students' engagement in and with their higher education. For Barnett (ibid.), students' experience of higher education was irreducible to single moments and experiences. A student's will to learn was *a way of being*. A way of being higher education institutions fostered through 'what' and 'how' and 'why' they provided elements, such as SRA, for students.

Like the ongoing maintenance of institutional policies, practice and physical buildings; a student's *will to learn* required consistent care for the unpredictable and at times unstable nature of students' experience of higher education. Barnett (op cit.) argued, rather than focus on singularities, it may be helpful to approach the 'totality' of a students' engagement in and with higher education using a language mindful of the various opportunities, experiences and meanings students made of their engagement in and with higher education. Such an approach to residence life would appreciate the factors and influences that underpinned students' encounters with 'others', 'ideas' and challenging academic experiences.

Similarly, the work of Solomonides (2015) proposed a relational and multidimensional approach to student engagement in higher education. Like Barnett (op cit.), Solomonides (ibid.) foregrounds the influence of policy on students' access and participation in HE. He also draws attention to the influence various relationships, such as those of staff and HEI, students and HEI, and staff to students within HEI. For Solomonides (ibid.), student engagement is irreducible to the often favoured quantitative survey approach. Instead, students' experiences reflect what may be characterised as students' 'way of being' within a university. Said another way, the character or 'ethos' of an HEI that pervades the attitudes, values, priorities and beliefs regarding 'what' a higher education is and is for comes to take on a dominant role in staff approaches, and has a cascading influence on students' engagement in and with HEI and opportunities (such as SRA). As such, it may be helpful to understanding students' engagement in and with HEI provided SRA to explore the interface and relationships of policy to practice, and staff and students' experience of student engagement in and with HEI provided SRA.

What students' experienced and the meanings they gave to those experiences reflected institutional *leadership* and *relationships*. Institutional leadership set the guidance for 'what' was important, 'why' it was important, and 'how' the institutions within this research would create and sustain their SRA provisions. This guidance materialised in the form of policy and practice related to SRA provision. Institutional policy and practice set a general framework and approach to providing SRA, with staff and students' personal approaches, attitudes and perceptions reflecting the diverse topography of individual and group meaning making within those institutional policies and practice in and with the SRAs under study. Leadership in the form of policy and practice at the institutional level is a key influence on staff and students' engagement in and with HEI provided SRA.

Leadership

For this research, leadership is forged out of institutional policy and practice. Institutional policy and practice set out guidance for HEI provision of SRA. Within the institutional approach and guidance to providing SRA, staff and students' negotiate between their expectations and experiences of HEI provided SRA.

In case site (I), a 'student as customer' approach reflected what staff noted was the institutions' attention to HEI provided SRA as a consumable good and service. For some staff, HEI provided SRA centred on budgets, available supply and demand of HEI provided SRA and addressing operational and maintenance enquiries. While other staff focused on provision of student-staff social events and students' 'experience' of HEI provided SRA and the university more broadly. These diverse views highlighted the tensions between two dominant discourses within the HEI provided SRA. First, students as 'customers', and second, students' 'experience'. Students as customers and their experience appeared to reflect students' engagement in and with the HEI provided SRA. Student feedback in case site (I) noted the influence of communal and social spaces on students' use of their private spaces to study. While students for case site (II) highlighted challenges arising from residents' use of communal kitchens, washrooms and study rooms on their individual access and participation in these spaces. The cascade effect appeared to influence students' sense of wellbeing in the HEI provided SRA. A number of students mentioned that there were policies in place and staff were 'kind', however, when issues and tensions arose from students' engagement in and with the communal spaces staff seemed slow to act, if they acted on students' queries at all.

Within case sites (I) and (II), students' engagement in and with their SRA reflected on whether, and how, students located and negotiated their expectations and experiences within the SRA. Relationships also played a key role in understanding the ecological nature of students' engagement in and with HEI provided SRA.

Relationships

In view of the ecology of students' engagement in and with SRA, relationships formed a key part of staff and students' engagement in and with HEI provided SRA.

For both cases, staffs' relationship to students appeared to reflect individual approaches embedded within the policy and practice framework outlined by the

institutions. While staff in case sites (I) and (II) reflected on their desire to 'meet' students' requests and develop a shared sense of community, this materialised in different ways. For some staff this was 'operational' and centred on 'care taking' within the SRA. Alternatively, some staff were focused on students' engagement with peers and sense of community within the SRA. There were clear tones of 'recruitment' and 'retention' within staffs' feedback on student engagement in and with HEI provided SRA. For instance, staff in case site (I) noted that the institution was taking action regarding provision of SRA to increase 'residence life' as part of a holistic approach to students' engagement in and with the institution. While staff noted that integration of a 'residence life' approach was in early stages, experience from prior attempts to integrate residence life were helping to ameliorate issues within the SRA and staff were hopeful that with greater funding and clarity of purpose, residence life staff could make meaningful contributions to students' engagement in and with the SRA. Alternatively, some residence life staff in case site (II) noted that their role was largely operational, focused on student 'lockouts' and managing 'emergencies' as and when they arose on site. As such, case site (II) reflected a markedly operational approach to support for student residents' residential life within the SRA.

Given the tensions surrounding students' access and participation, staff were acutely aware of the pressure to 'provide' a 'product' and contribute to students' experience of HEI provided SRA and the institution more broadly. Still, the various approaches adopted by staff reflected both an alignment with and at times a challenge to the overarching approach of the institution to SRA provision. This alignment and challenge appeared to be guided by an overarching desire to 'serve' students and develop a sense of community and home in and with the SRA.

A desire to engage and cultivate community also emerged from students' feedback on their relationships in and with the SRA under study. Students also noted the importance of their relationships with staff and other student residents as vital to their engagement in and with the SRA. For students in case sites (I) and (II), relationships reflected their 'community' at a floor, flat and block level within the SRA. Students noted several tensions in their relationships arose from negotiating ambiguities in policies and practices with other student residents. In

particular, use of communal spaces arose as a key consideration for students as they negotiated personal and communal life in their SRA.

Relationships were a key influence on students' engagement in and with the SRA under study. For staff, relationships with students cascaded from an institutional policy to SRA operations and provisions underpinning students' residential life. For students, relationships with staff were often instrumental and where there were substantial lifestyle differences and variances in preference for use of time in the SRA under study, tensions arose in and with students' engagement with their SRA. Still, relationships with and between staff and students were vital to understanding the aims, objectives, expectations and experiences of staff and students within the milieu of the HEI provided SRA studied for this research.

7.4.3 Boundaries and limitations of this ecological approach to residence life

The aim for this research was to contribute to operational and theoretical understanding of students' engagement in and with HEI provided SRA. The nature of this research limits its generalisability and claims. While this research reflected a social constructivist approach, utilising case studies and qualitative research methods, the nature of case study and the small sample sizes pose limitations for the applicability of this research and its findings. However, the 'limitations' for this research reflected an effort to foreground the institution and individual attitudes, perceptions, expectations and experiences of staff and students within the HEI provided SRA under study.

The case study approach aligned with existing research (Brothers & Hatch, 1971; Moss & Richter, 2011; Richter & Walker, 2008). Specifically, this study aimed to generate data and feedback from an SRA 'case' of undergraduate 'domestic' students. While existing research has generated data and feedback from small, domestic undergraduate student populations, this research included several instances of 'international student' feedback. Additionally, case site (II) was selected as it was a postgraduate hall of residence with 'domestic' and 'international' student residents. The aim for including this 'case site' was to contribute feedback from a student population (e.g. postgraduate students,

domestic and international) silent in existing research on HEI provided SRA in England. The cross-case issues that arose (i.e. policy, practice, physical-social-personal space) highlight similarities and differences in students' expectations, experiences, attitudes and perceptions of HEI provided SRA.

This study was able to take incremental 'snap shots' of residence life within the two SRA case sites under study. These snap shots reflected a set of observations, interviews and questionnaires proposed in and with the two SRA case study sites across various time points from summer 2016 to summer 2017 and highlighted the diversity within and amongst staff and student groups across the two case sites studied for this research. This diversity appeared to reflect the cultural, social and physical characteristics of both the HEI provided SRA studied for this research, and the participants who composed the samples for both cases.

The 'bounded' and 'limited' nature of the chosen approach to study of student engagement in and with HEI provided SRA was intentional. The aim with this approach was to contribute to the existing literature and research a set of 'cases', and to include a student population silent in the literature and research reviewed for this study. Of note, this approach aligns with an epistemological position that 'truth' as it is found in the world upon reflection and study, is not 'static'. Rather, truth as it is found is dynamic and contested, and rests largely at the level of individual institutions, groups and individuals who are 'engaging' and 'experiencing' with such educational opportunities as HEI provided SRA. The aim for this research was to contribute to operational and theoretical understanding of students' engagement in and with HEI provided SRA. Given the nature of the approach, methodology and methods utilised within this research, this research has challenged the existing discourse on HEI provided SRA as a service, and highlighted the ecological nature of staff and students' relationships within and between their respective groups, and in and with the respective SRAs studied for this research.

7.5 Chapter summary

The purpose of this Chapter was to discuss some of the cross-case issues arising from the empirical work for this study and relate these back to key themes

identified in the literature reviewed. The empirical work for this thesis explored students' engagement in and with HEI provided SRA. Key themes identified from the existing literature and research on SRA reviewed included: policy and practice, physical spaces, social spaces and personal spaces.

The interface of these key themes and issues was dynamic and contested. At the 'macro' level, discussions of HE policy highlighted how policy may shape and drive institutional and individual approaches to HEI provided SRA. Picking up on the influence of policy on the 'meso' level of institutional policy and practice, staff and students highlighted how their diverse attitudes and approaches to HEI provided SRA informed their expectations and experiences of SRA across time and space. Staff approaches varied in their focus from students as 'customers' to students' social and personal development. These individual expectations and experiences of HEI provided SRA problematised a 'generalisable' approach to framing HEI provided SRA. Clear boundaries between 'policy', 'practice' and 'personal experience' were difficult to define. Instead, an ecological approach highlighting the topography of staff and students' feedback amplified how dynamic and contested HEI provided SRA can be, at a 'micro' level of individual SRAs, students and staff. The cascade effects of macro level policy on meso level institutional policy and practice found its way into the lived experiences of staff and students across the two HEI provided SRA studied for this research.

Policy and practice were key considerations for staff and students from case study sites (I) and (II). Staff from both sites cited HE policy related to students' tuition and fees as influencing their 'students as customers' approach to HEI provided SRA. While staff approached policy and practice as a means of framing students as customers, students indicated they understood HEI provided SRA policy in light of expectations for use of communal and private study bedroom spaces within their SRA. For students, policies and practices came in to tensions with their social relationships in the HEI provided SRA. Students' understanding and expectations of HEI provided SRA policies and the enforcement of these policies or 'rules' left something to be desired. As such, when some students held to the policies and others did not, there was a 'gap' between some students' expectations and experiences of HEI provided SRA. This students as customers approach came in to tension with students' expectations and experiences of HEI

provided SRA. Where staff were operating in and with an approach to provision of SRA as a 'customer service', students cited the university policies for provision of SRA, proximity and convenience of their SRA to academic and non-academic resources as the primary considerations for choosing to live in HEI provided SRA. Students individual expectations and experiences of HEI provided SRA in case study site (I) highlighted a sensitivity to how individual expression/approaches to study in the SRA and use of SRA communal spaces within did not always align across 'flats' or 'blocks' within the SRA. Students in case study site (II) also noted a 'territorialisation' effect within communal kitchens and study spaces, influencing their access and participation in communal space. Students noted how they revised their use of their study bedrooms and communal kitchen and study spaces, similar to the ways Moss and Richter (2010) found students adapted their 'routines' and 'rhythms' to engage and avoid other student residents.

Physical space was a key driver of staff and students' experience of HEI provided SRA. For staff at case study sites (I) and (II), key issues included: maintenance of the building, size and location of students' study bedrooms, operation and use of communal kitchens, communal study spaces and multipurpose space use. Staff and students highlighted maintenance of students' study bedrooms as key to their operation of the SRA. Additionally, staff noted that where policy was unclear which took precedent in a multipurpose space, study or social activities, students were left to organise their use of the space amongst themselves. Additionally, staff noted issues with the location and size of students' study bedrooms. Students often raised issue with the location of their rooms (i.e. access to natural light, noise pollution from surrounding study bedrooms and streets) and the size of their rooms in relation to their rental costs, noting that their rooms varied in location and size, at times expecting an adjustment to their rent. Students also noted the quality of natural and artificial light in their rooms, physical size of their rooms, and in the case of site (II) the use of shared facilities as issues influencing their use and engagement with HEI provided SRA. Staff were placed in tension with their students, noting how often the 'size' and 'price' schemes were decided at a 'central' level within student accommodation and not reflective of students' sensitivity to individual study bedroom differences at the SRA level. Moreover, when staff were asked to elaborate on any other issues with physical space, they noted that communal kitchens were a site of contested space use. Staff noted

that they received a number of complaints regarding the use of communal kitchens by residents, often in light of non-resident or non-flat students' use of the kitchen to 'entertain' friends from across and outside the SRA. This caused tensions, as often specific groups or cultural backgrounds (i.e. Chinese students) were singled out as territorialising and de/re-territorialising communal kitchen spaces.

Three key issues emerged from a cross-case comparison. First, staff and students influenced the co-construction of their individual and group identities within HEI provided SRA. In this research, staff in both case study site (I) and (II) amplified a 'student as customer' approach to the provision of HEI provided SRA. Staff reiterated students were paying substantial fees to live in HEI provided SRA, and they aimed to meet the 'costs' with 'value'. Second, students were very sensitive to the interface of physical, social and personal 'spaces' within their HEI provided SRA. Students at case study site (I) noted how different rooms were exposed to different levels and degrees of sound from surrounding rooms, shared kitchens and policies and practices. While students from case site (II) focused on tensions and ambiguities regarding use of communal kitchens, communal study spaces and multipurpose spaces within their SRA. Third, residence life in and with the two case sites for this research reflected the interface of policy, practice, 'spaces' and staff and students' meaning making of their engagement and experience in and with the SRA under study. The interface of these factors highlighted the relational and ecological nature of students' engagement in and with HEI provided SRA for this research. Next, Chapter 8 concludes this research and proposes possibilities for further study.

Chapter 8: Conclusions and possibilities for further research

Chapter 8 concludes this thesis by reflecting on the contributions of this research to understanding of SRA and SE. First, SE in and with SRA for this research will be reviewed in relation to the three primary research questions and related aims for this thesis. The influence of the qualitative case study approach and selected methods will also be revisited. After, a number of opportunities for further study of the relationship between SRA and SE will be proposed. Some final reflections on this research conclude this thesis.

8.1 Introduction

In Chapter 1 I proposed this exploratory study of the relationship between SRA and SE in England. Chapter 2 was a historical review of existing literature and research on SRA and traced the emergence and complexity of SRA in England across history. Chapter 3 was a literature review of SE and SRA highlighting existing approaches that influenced the SE lens for this thesis. SE for this thesis was framed as ecological, multidimensional and relational. In light of existing literature and research, and the social constructivist world view and co-constructed, co-created approach to knowledge of the researcher, Chapter 4 proposed the methodological approach to SRA and SE for this thesis. Subsequently, a qualitative case study design underpinned by observations, interviews and questionnaires was used to explore SRA and SE for two cases in England. Chapters 5 and 6 presented staff and student feedback from case study sites (I) and (II) for this research. The qualitative case study design and selected methods allowed for a rich exploration of the issues, tensions, drivers and debates influencing SRA and SE for staff and students working and residing in case sites (I) and (II) for this thesis. Chapter 7 discussed staff and student feedback generated within and across case sites (I) and (II). Comparing and contrasting staff and students' feedback provided opportunities to explore factors influencing SE in and with the SRA cases studied for this research.

Below, Chapter 8 presents findings from this research in relation to existing literature and research encountered in this thesis. The research questions and

aims for this research frame the discussion. Findings indicated that SE in and with the SRA studied for this research was influenced by a number of factors, including: government policy, local housing authority policy, institutional policy and practice, the SRA built environment, preferences and expectations of SRA social and personal space, and a personal sense of control and privacy in SRA. Leadership and relationships also featured prominently in staff and students' feedback from case study sites (I) and (II). These findings may have implications for institutional practice and that of practitioners and professionals with an involvement in SRA, policy for SRA and theory. Possibilities for further research could explore the relationship and implications of SRA and SE within and between institutional cases of study. Additionally, there remains ample space to explore the implications of SRA and SE for local, regional and national housing contexts, and national and international HE sectors.

Primary research questions and aims for this research

Recalling, the three primary questions that have framed this thesis were:

- What factors influence higher education institutions' provision of student residential accommodation?
- What is the relationship between student residential accommodation and student engagement?
- What does student engagement in and with student residential accommodation mean to students and staff?

To address those research questions my fieldwork aims were:

- to gather, synthesise and analyse key texts and institution policy documents related to provision of student residential accommodation
- to provide a description of two institution provided student residential accommodation cases through the use of observations, including: field notes, photographs of the buildings under study, amenities, student room layout and organization
- to collect student and staff feedback on student engagement in and with student residential accommodation

- to compare and contrast stated institution policy related to student residential accommodation with student and staff feedback on institution provided student residential accommodation.

The next section reviews findings for this thesis related to factors influencing institution provision of SRA.

8.2 What factors influence higher education institution provision of student residential accommodation?

At the beginning of this thesis, a review of existing literature and research on SRA in England highlighted a number of factors influencing SRA across history, including: policy, practice, social attitudes, state funding and auditing, and the forms, functions and stated purpose of HEI provided SRA. A number of authors brought attention to tensions, drivers and debates surrounding SRA in England across history (Brothers & Hatch, 1971; Sanderson, 1973; Scherer, 1969; Shattock, 1994; Stone, 1974; Tapper & Palfreyman, 2011; Tapper & Salter, 1992, 1995; Tight, 2011). Tensions, such as those between 'town' and 'gown' were not locked into particular historical periods. Instead, drivers and debates surrounding SRA (i.e. housing supply and demand, cost of housing, SRA as a means of socialisation, SRA and student experience of HE) have been present throughout history. Such tensions, drivers and debates were redressed through policy and practice frameworks introduced (largely by the state and local housing authorities), reflecting numerous and often sharp changes in social attitudes towards HEI provided SRA (Silver, 2004; Tight, 2011). Therefore, highlighting the dynamic and contested nature of SRA across history.

Responding to primary research question one for this thesis has occurred through consideration of several influencers on HEI provided SRA, including: government, institution and local housing authority policy. In addition to policy, SE in and with SRA was influenced by social attitudes, institutional practice, changing student characteristics and identities. Contributions from each of these themes toward understanding factors influencing HEI provided SRA are presented below.

Policy

A number of authors have noted the influence of government and institutional policy on HEI provided SRA and SE across history (see Brothers & Hatch, 1971; Morgan & McDowell, 1979; Rudd, 1980; Sanderson, 1975; Silver, 2004; Scherer, 1969; Tight, 2011). For example, Morgan and McDowell (1979) traced changes in SRA provision by HEI to sharp changes in government and institutional policy approaches related to various drivers (i.e. SRA supply and demand, social attitudes towards HEI provided SRA) and amplifying tensions between stakeholders (i.e. students, lay community members, institutions, government policymakers). As staff from case study sites (I) and (II) noted, changes in government policy related to funding of HEI provided SRA (i.e. UGC block grants for SRA) have had a cascading influence on institutional policy related to SRA provision. In case sites (I) and (II), approaches to HEI provided SRA have been influenced by a shift from public to private funding for HE, HEI and HEI provided SRA. Moreover, staff from case study site (I) noted that students' demand for accommodation within the local housing authority had again brought HEI provided SRA to the foreground of policy discussions. Student competition for various types of housing, and supply and demand of SRA within the local housing market continued to pressure the institution and local housing authority administrators to redress the mix and availability of housing options to students and non-students alike. As staff in case site (I) noted, student demand for local housing had compelled the local housing authority to support further development of HEI provided SRA as one measure to relieve some demand from students' for local housing stock.

Substitution of public for private funding and the rise of an audit culture in English HE has altered the proposition of SRA, for institutions and students alike (Duke, 1992; Sanderson, 1973; Tapper & Salter, 1992, 1995; Tight, 2011). Additionally, staff from case study sites (I) and (II) noted students' access and participation had been influenced by institutional aims to recruit and retain students. Particular focus in existing literature, research and staff feedback from case study sites (I) and (II) for this thesis was paid to first-year undergraduate and international undergraduate and postgraduate students. Across history, and evidenced in this research, shifts in government funding of HE and HEI provided SRA continued to

have a cascading influence on institutional policy frameworks and practice related to SE in and with HEI provided SRA. The influence of government and institutional policy had a notable effect on staff and students' perceptions, attitudes and experiences of HEI provided SRA.

Across history, government and institutional policy has situated different stakeholders with an interest in HEI provided SRA and SE. Policy has shaped state funding for HEI provided SRA, what defines SE in and with HEI provided SRA and the importance of HEI provided SRA as part of a students' engagement and experience of HE in England. Policy has defined the terms for funding, monitoring and auditing HEI provided SRA and SE in England across history and into the present research. Government policy has guided and responded to pressures on HEI provided SRA (i.e. student numbers, building costs), setting a tone and terms for HEI, students and communities to engage with HEI provided SRA. Thus, highlighting the ecological and multidimensional nature of policy, HEI provided SRA and SE throughout history.

In fundamental ways, policy has influenced what defines a 'student' in English HE, and by extension the rationales for SE in and with HEI provided SRA across history. To do this, policy has informed the various financial resources available to students and HEI across history. Thus, policy in England has been both a leading influence and a responding reflection of current social attitudes towards HEI provided SRA and SE. Social attitudes has been embedded and continued to dominate much of the literature on HEI provided SRA.

Social attitudes

Social attitudes across history have been a key influence on the development of HEI provided SRA and SE. The dynamic nature of social attitudes towards HEI provided SRA and SE continued to permeate HEI provided SRA for this research.

A review of the literature indicated early social attitudes towards HE and HEI provided SRA were related to the institution as 'in loco parentis' (Stone, 1974). During the early history of Oxford and Cambridge, tensions between 'town' and 'gown' prompted the institutions to provide students 'somewhere to live' (Silver,

2004). Subsequently, the institution approached providing students somewhere to live as an opportunity to develop adolescent 'boys' into 'men,' engineering the social environment within the HEI provided SRA to support Oxbridge students' academic and personal development (Tapper & Salter, 1992).

As institutions beyond Oxbridge began to emerge, the purpose, form and functions of HEI provided SRA took on new institutional approaches. Rather than 'in loco parentis', SRA were beginning to be formulated in relation to diverse institutional ethos, cultures, student populations and student characteristics. For example, UCL built 'houses' in central London, aiming to provide 'somewhere for students to live and share in communal student life' (Brothers & Hatch, 1971). Similarly, a focus on the ethos of SRA was found in case study sites (I) and (II) for this research. For example, one staff member in case study site (I) noted SRA as a vital component of students' experience of higher education. For this staff member, HEI provided SRA was co-extensive of the institution and supported students' academic and social outcomes. Similarly, students from case study site (I) highlighted the proximity of HEI provided SRA to university and non-university facilities as key to their participation in HEI provided SRA. Likewise, staff in case study site (II) noted the proximity of the SRA to university facilities (i.e. libraries, academic buildings) while students also noted the value of being 'close' to these academic and non-academic facilities.

In contrast, a member of staff from case study site (I) noted how changes in student finances and access to self-funding opportunities may have influenced 'who' was able to participate in HEI provided SRA. As such, this member of staff noted changes in the student population. This staff member, and the hall manager of case study site (II), noted how changes in the student population may have influenced students' attitudes and approach to HEI provided SRA as a service. Perceptions of HEI provided SRA as a student service managed by the universities highlighted tensions between staff and students across case study sites (I) and (II) for this research. These tensions manifested in some staff members from case sites (I) and (II) positioning themselves (and students) in an institutional discourse of provider and customer, focused on managing and maintaining staff-student relationships in order to maintain students' satisfaction

in and with their SRA. Not because this is key to SE in and with SRA but because it is key to their role and job responsibilities.

Findings from both cases studied for this research highlight the influence of HEI provided SRA for student-institution relationships. Across history, sharp changes in social attitudes have influenced the development of HEI provided SRA. From *in loco parentis* through the massification of higher education, attitudes towards 'what,' 'why' and 'how' HEI provide SRA have been dynamic. Changing social attitudes manifested in staff and student feedback in case study sites (I) and (II) for this research. Staff and student feedback highlighted tensions in perceptions, attitudes and experiences of 'what' SRA is for, 'why' the institutions provided SRA, and 'how' HEI provided SRA influenced relationships between staff, students, the institutions and host communities. Social attitudes also manifested in institutional practice.

Institutional practice

Institutional practice was a key factor influencing SE in and with SRA. Institutional practice within case study sites (I) and (II) for this research influenced students' access and participation in HEI provided SRA. Institutional practice also influenced staff roles and responsibilities and staff-student relationships within the SRA case sites studied for this research.

A number of authors have highlighted the influence of institutional practice on SE in and with SRA (see Blimling, 2015; Brothers and Hatch, 1971). Likewise, institutional practice manifested in staff and student feedback across case study sites (I) and (II) for this research. For example, staff in case study site (I) cited a persistent gap between HEI provided SRA supply and student demand. This gap between supply and demand of HEI provided SRA had a subsequent effect on students' eligibility to apply and participate in HEI provided SRA. Accommodation staff noted that students who had made the institution their first choice, applied by the set deadline and paid their deposit would be eligible to apply for but not guaranteed a place in HEI provided SRA. Priority was given to first-year undergraduates from outside the institution defined catchment area and international (undergraduate and postgraduate) students. Similarly, staff in case

study site (II) noted that priority for the SRA was given to postgraduate students. Staff cited institutional policy prioritising international students, followed by domestic postgraduate students. Staff from both case study sites (I) and (II) positioned SRA as a student service, with students as customers and the institution as provider. Staff described rent levels for both case study site (I) and (II) were in line with local housing market rates.

Institutional practices for case study sites (I) and (II) also related to students' participation in and with HEI provided SRA. For example, residence life staff within case study site (I) noted the recent re-investment in student resident advisers across the institutions provision of SRA. Student and professional residence life staff explained their role as complementing the operations focus of accommodation staff to support students' personal and social engagement in and with the SRA. Similarly, student residence life staff in case study site (II) explained their role as 'out of hours' emergency support for students, addressing issues that ranged from disagreements over kitchen use to emergency maintenance response. Residence life and accommodation staff for case study sites (I) and (II) highlighted how their role and responsibilities facilitated students' personal and social engagement in and with the SRA.

From eligibility requirements for student applicants to number of bed spaces available, institutional practice related to HEI provided SRA manifested in the similarities and differences within and across HEI provided SRA staff and students' experience and engagement with and in SRA. Moreover, a number of respondents indicated through their feedback that the institutional approach to providing SRA and practices directly related to their SRA provision were heavily influenced by local site-staff approaches to students' experience of SRA and SRA as a means of supporting students' academic and personal experience of HE more generally. Relating HEI provided SRA to SE and students' experience of HE more generally reflected the nature of HEI provided SRA as a means of recruitment and retention, access and participation with and in England HE.

Adapting institutional practice appeared to respond to a number of changes in student population characteristics.

Student characteristics and identities

Across history, student characteristics have influenced the forms, functions, stated purpose and aims of SRA (Blakey, 1994; Silver, 2004; Tight, 2011).

Likewise, student characteristics have influenced SE in and with SRA.

During the middle ages, Sanderson (1974) noted that students were generally adolescent boys of aristocracy, holding specific religious beliefs and sent to Oxbridge to study for future work in public service and the clergy. However, 'servant boys' who came to Oxbridge to serve the aristocratic 'elite' were also assimilated into college life by institution staff (Stone, 1974). Servant boys participating in and being integrated into collegiate life throws questions of student characteristics and identities and SRA into debate. After a number of centuries, women would also be permitted to access and participate in English HE. The first instance of women in English HE emerged from University College London (UCL) (Sanderson, 1975). Social status and now gender began to trouble ideals of 'who' and 'what' and 'why' students would attend an institution of higher education.

Findings from this research reflected tensions arising from an ever growing number of characteristics and identities present and accounted for in HEI and SRA. Accounting for emergent characteristics and identities reflects the tension between historical tradition and ideals of 'who' and 'what' HE, and by extension HEI provided SRA, are for and current trends in SE in and with HEI provided SRA. For example, staff and student feedback from case study site (I) noted the variability in student and staff approaches to SRA. For staff, the influence of institutional policy and practice had 'filtered' 'who' could and would be eligible to participate in HEI provided SRA. Alternatively, student feedback from case study site (I) noted the diverse approaches to 'residence life' in HEI provided SRA. For instance, students cited the use of flat kitchens and social spaces as often in tension interests in studying in the SRA. Similarly, students in case study site (II) noted the diversity in cultures and cultural approaches to patterns of use and sharing in social spaces throughout the SRA (i.e. multipurpose, study rooms).

Alongside use of social space, students in case study site (II) noted the territorialisation and deterritorialisation of communal kitchens and washrooms. Of note, student feedback located responsibility for tensions between individuals' use of communal social and study spaces with students. The idea that the built environment had situated individuals and narrowed individual use of communal spaces was not evident in staff and student feedback. This appeared to be a paradox emerging from staff and student feedback. While student feedback from case study sites (I) and (II) cited individual approaches to students' use of communal spaces in SRA, a gap emerged in how locating responsibility in the individuals' preferences and satisfaction with the use of such spaces meant that each individual may be 'free' to choose whether, and how, they will engage (participate) in and with SRA social and personal space. Thus, while staff and students shared a number of characteristics (i.e. work and reside in an SRA, share communal kitchens, use of shared washrooms, en-suite style rooms), SE in and with SRA was challenged by student characteristics present in the SRA studied for this research.

While there was a clear shift in the 'visible' diversity of HEI and HEI provided SRA, it is both possible and probable that this sense of individual and internal diversity had been present for some time. That is, variance in approach, attitudes, perceptions and meaning making amongst students engaging with and in SRA may have always been present. With time and shifting social attitudes towards HE and SRA, students who had to 'hide' or 'mask' certain personal identities were provided the physical, social and personal space to express identities that had been previously hidden or made invisible in order to allow engagement in HE and, by extension, SRA.

Changing student populations within HEI provided SRA appeared to reflect greater allowance, awareness and accountability for diversity in HE and HEI more generally. While it is unclear how this materialised at the institutional level, no doubt there is a case to be made that many of the more socially elite institutions still 'prefer' and recruit students from particular social classes and families (i.e. Oxford, Cambridge) there remains the possibility for growing diversity in both visible and invisible identities present in SRA. For instance, students may present with greater diversity in sexual behaviour, sexual

orientation, socioeconomic status, first-language and first-generation to attend higher education. While findings from this thesis reflected SRA as an incubator for students' engagement with diverse identities, evidence from this research reflected a low probability for SE in and with SRA to result in integration and encountering of 'others' and 'otherness' within the SRA studied for this research (Astin, Astin & Lindholm, 2011). Here, diversity was not just in students' identifiable characteristics but diversity in ideas and approaches to the form, functions and purpose of SRA for students, staff and institutions more broadly.

One key contribution of this research was highlighted by the presence of diverse student populations within each of the case study sites. This thesis challenged a totalising approach to 'students' within SRA by amplifying students' individual and collective characteristics and identities across the cases studied for this research. Student and staff respondents within the two case sites self-identified as members of a number of distinct cultural, ethnic, social and economic backgrounds. Staff and students' resisted being reduced to any specific singular identity. Instead, the richness of respondents cultural, social, economic and political heritage shined through in the diverse approaches, experiences, issues and meaning making each group highlighted in their feedback. As such, student characteristics and identities in this thesis have raised the issue of challenging a static, normative approach to SE in and with SRA.

8.3 What is the relationship between student residential accommodation and student engagement?

The relationship between SRA and SE in this thesis centred on students' access and participation, recruitment and retention to the SRA case sites studied for this research.

Access and participation

Access to and participation in SRA were key to understanding a relationship between SRA and SE.

First, access was a key factor relating SRA and SE. As existing literature and research has noted, 'who' has access to SRA influenced the student populations engaging in and with HEI provided SRA studied for this thesis (Richter & Walker, 2008; Moss & Richter, 2011). While existing research has focused on access of undergraduate first-year students, this thesis also proposed study of postgraduate (domestic and international) students). Students across case sites (I) and (II) noted the importance of access to SRA, HEI provided SRA in particular, as influencing their decision to attend their selected HEI.

Second, staff and students' perceptions of student participation in the SRA studied for this thesis were diverse. Staff and students' sense of participation across cases (I) and (II) reflected a number of individual and collective approaches to and identities within each case study site. Feedback from staff and students highlighted how placing a number of 'strangers' into an SRA did not automatically, as Blimling (2015) had suggested, 'create community'. Instead, a number of respondents within this research noted their movement into, through, out of and even returning to SRA had shaped and influenced their rationale and preference for participating in HEI provided SRA. Respondents foregrounded their individual experiences and histories in HEI provided SRA, while simultaneously relating themselves to a 'bigger picture' and shared experience within their SRA communities. Thus, this research highlighted how co-existence and community may not be adequate concepts to describe SRA, as individuals and micro-communities within HEI provided SRA (i.e. communal kitchens, floors, flats) may reflect varied experiences within and across an SRA case study site such as those studied for this research. These diverse experiences may reflect the contingent nature of HEI provided SRA, and the meaning staff and students make of their experiences.

Students' approaches and experiences of HEI provided SRA influenced the relationship between SRA and SE. As existing research has noted, for some students HEI provided SRA was a transitional housing opportunity that contributed to their academic, social and personal development (Rugg et al., 2004). Participants and respondents across the HEI provided SRA studied for this research echoed how their social beliefs in HEI provided SRA as transitional housing, with semi-structured policies framing expectations of the SRA and co-

residents, were key to their decision to apply and accept a place in HEI provided SRA. Staff and students across the SRA case sites studied for this research noted the supply and demand of HEI provided SRA, and housing more generally, as influencing students' participation in HEI provided SRA. Groups across both case sites studied for this research noted the pressure on HEI, HEI provided SRA and housing more generally in surrounding communities. Students who had lived in HEI provided SRA and exited HEI provided SRA before returning noted the value they placed on HEI provided SRA as a type of semi-structured housing environment. Adequate access, physical space, social space and personal space were all key factors influencing staff and students' perceptions of participation in SRA across the cases studied for this research.

Reflecting on the data generated in this thesis, findings from case study sites (I) and (II) contested Blimling's (2015) argument HEI provided SRA contributes to students' experience of HE/HEI. Rather, it appeared staff and student perceptions, attitudes and experiences of SRA framed the influence of HEI provided SRA on students' engagement with and in HEI provided SRA. This thesis challenged 'students' as a singularity, instead, focusing on how staff and students situated SE in and with SRA against institutional policy and practice, attitudes and beliefs related to HEI provided SRA. Similarly, findings from this thesis challenged Astin, Astin and Lindholm's (2011) proposal that HEI provided SRA influenced students' personal development. While staff related students' access to and participation in and with HEI provided SRA as part of students' experience of higher education, students' academic outcomes and personal development, the actual outcomes for students appeared to reflect their individual expectations, experiences and meaning making of HEI provided SRA. Existing beliefs and ideas of 'what' and 'how' an HEI and HEI provided SRA may contribute to students' personal and academic development appeared contingent on 'where' staff and students situated their expectations and experiences of their HEI provided SRA. Practically, guaranteeing students a place to live appeared to be vital for students traveling a distance from their origin home that would have made travel between home and HEI (for both undergraduate and postgraduate international students) unsustainable. These 'push' and 'pull' factors appeared to be highlighted by staff and students as part of the rationale for HEI provided SRA and students' participation in HEI provided SRA.

Recruitment and retention

Access and participation in HEI provided SRA underpinned recruitment and retention efforts across the cases studied for this research.

SRA was influential in institutional recruitment efforts for both case sites (I) and (II). Staff positioned SRA as central to institutional recruitment efforts of first-year undergraduate and international undergraduate and postgraduate students. Staff also proposed SRA as part of a student's experience of higher education and an HEI. Similar to the arguments proposed by Silver (2004) and Stone (1974), staff across case sites (I) and (II) for this research referenced HEI provided SRA as an extension of the HEI beyond the formal academic setting. Through this extension of the institution beyond the formalised academic setting, HEI provided SRA was set at the interface of students' academic and non-academic (residence) life.

Additionally, SRA was also positioned as a long standing component of students' transitioning from their origin home into higher education. Similar to existing literature and research, staff feedback from case site (I) positioned HEI provided SRA as a 'surrogate', assisting students as they were exiting their origin homes and entering into HE (Clapham, 2005; Rugg et al., 2004). Clapham (2005) conceptualised this transition as part of a students' housing pathway. This student housing pathway, related to students entering a semi-independent life(style) through their engagement in SRA, appeared to reflect general ideas of students' privileged and protected transition out of an origin home into the broader housing sector, in this thesis, via HEI provided SRA.

Retention was also an important part of the rationale for HEI provided SRA in this thesis. Staff and students framed HEI provided SRA as part of creating and cultivating relations between students and the institution. As existing research on student residences and retention highlighted, HEI provided SRA may contribute to the relationship between a student and an HEI (Blimling, 2015; Thomas, 2012; Tinto & Goodsell, 1994). However, correlations such as those proposed by Thomas (2012) between HEI provided SRA and students' retention in HE and HEI remain opaque. Notably, as HE and HEI provided SRA are embedded systematically across research as 'marketised' and 'commodified', it has become

challenging to disentangle the various influencers HEI provided SRA contributed to students' retention in HE and in particular HEI within this thesis and across history.

8.4 What does student engagement in and with student residential accommodation mean to students and staff?

SE in and with SRA for staff and students in this thesis centred on: physical space, social space and personal space.

Students' engagement in and with physical space

Physical space was a prominent theme in staff and student feedback across case sites (I) and (II). Staff positioned the influence of physical space on students' engagement in and with HEI provided SRA as related to building maintenance and monitoring of students' communal and personal spaces. For staff across both case sites (I) and (II), attending to maintenance issues was a top priority and a clear operational aim that supported students' satisfaction with the SRA cases studied for this research. Staff were also conscious of students' engagement in and with communal spaces (i.e. shared kitchens, multipurpose facilities, study and reading rooms). Alternatively, students' feedback on their engagement in and with communal spaces varied. Students in case site (I) held diverse views and experiences of physical spaces, noting the kitchens were the most common communal space they used and generally provided some social engagement with other residents. Similarly, students in case site (II) noted how the use of shared kitchens and multipurpose space was often contentious as student residents were not always clear about the precedents and policies for use (i.e. study, social programs). Similarly, students noted that a lack of clarity and enforcement of SRA policies and practices related to communal spaces across both case sites (I) and (II) made negotiating the use of shared facilities challenging. Negotiating with and between student residents appeared to be a point of contention across both case sites (I) and (II) for this thesis.

A sense of territorialisation and de/re-territorialisation emerged from the tensions surrounding student residents' use of communal facilities across both case sites

(I) and (II) for this research (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). For example, in case site (I), student feedback noted the value and importance of physical space expected but not always afforded by private study bedrooms. Student residents noted noise pollution from outside and within their flats and issues of building maintenance that impinged on their ability to study in their study bedrooms. This challenged students' expectations of their private study/physical space as being private. Similarly, in case site (II), students and staff raised the issue of how the fit for purpose nature of the SRA was not optimal/conducive to the amount of use placed on the building's communal facilities (i.e. washrooms, study rooms, multipurpose room) by residents. Instead, students noted that some facilities were over-demanded upon as residents gravitated towards the use of a small number of working facilities within the SRA. This over-demand may have been correlated with residents being 'pushed' to the use of these facilities because their 'own' were not working properly. As such, some shared facilities (i.e. communal washrooms, shower facilities) were sites of contestation within and across case site (II).

For staff and students, physical space posed a number of challenges and was often situated as dynamic and contested amongst staff and student residents. Feedback from staff and students highlighted the 'push' and 'pull' influence of physical spaces, a reliance on stated policies, and a lack of enforcement of such policies across the case sites studied for this research. Next, issues related to social space and student engagement with and in the SRA studied.

Students' engagement in and with social space

Paralleling physical space was students' engagement in and with social space across the SRA case sites studied for this research.

Students' social space was conceptualised by staff as students' engagement with other student residents in and across the SRA sites studied for this research. In case site (I), residence life staff respondents noted a lack of social engagement by student residents in SRA provided social events and programmes was an issue. For staff, SRA provided social events was aimed at creating opportunities without obligation for students to actively engage in and with the broader SRA

resident community. In case site (II), students highlighted a lack of SRA provided social events and programmes as frustrating their sense of community within and across the SRA. Instead, students worked to create their own 'communities' within the SRA. Indeed, there was little sense of a holistic SRA community across either case site (I) or (II). As such, a number of 'micro-community' arose and operated at the individual flat, kitchen or block level of the SRA case sites studied for this research. However, even with respect to communities within and across the SRA studied, a number of students noted they didn't feel a strong pull to participate or identify with an SRA community in any regard. This speaks strongly of the importance and influence of individual perceptions and meaning making of participating in SRA. Where authors (Astin, Astin & Lindholm, 2011; Blimling, 2015) proposed that HEI provided SRA could be a dynamic place for students' personal development, linked to shared living in SRA communal life, it appeared that in the SRA cases studied for this research it was plausible SRA may have a direct opposite influence. The SRA cases studied for this research appeared to allow students to individualise their habits and behaviours with a cascading influence on students' perceptions of their participation in and with SRA social space. Indeed, non-participation may be conceived of as a form of participation itself. Therefore, non-compliance with assumed norms for participation (including being part of a 'community' howsoever defined) challenges the assumptions and assertions that reduce students' participation in HEI provided SRA as partly underpinned by their opportunities to engage with others and encounter what Astin, Astin and Lindholm (2011) defined as 'otherness'.

While existing literature and research has foregrounded students' social engagement in and with HEI provided SRA (Astin, Astin & Lindholm, 2011; Blimling, 2015; Moss & Richter, 2011; Richter & Walker, 2008), a number of students noted a lack of social engagement in and with their SRA. Staff from case site (I) proposed their reinvigorated residence life scheme/strategy as a way of enhancing students' social engagement in and with the SRA. For staff, student participation in SRA sponsored social events was a proxy indicator of SE in and with SRA. However, students cited a lack of SRA sponsored social programmes and low attendance to such programmes as indicative of a low level of social engagement by students in and with the SRA. Likewise, students from case site (II) noted an absence of social programmes and support from the SRA as

influencing their sense of engagement in and with SRA social space. Instead, students raised the issue of 'personal space' as key to their experience and engagement in and with SRA.

Students' engagement in and with personal space

Students' engagement in and with personal space was key to understanding what SE in and with SRA meant to staff and students. Staff and student feedback from the SRA case sites studied for this research noted the strong influence of students' personal space on defining whether, and how, students engaged in and with the SRA studied for this research.

Staff and students defined personal space within the SRA as students' study bedrooms. While case site (I) was composed of en-suite type individual study bedrooms, case site (II) was largely composed of individual study bedrooms and shared facilities, with a small number of en-suite type study bedrooms available. As such, personal space itself became dynamic and contested within and across the SRA case sites studied for this research.

Feedback from students indicated a high value was placed on a student's personal space within an SRA. Students valued a sense of 'containment' and 'control' over their space. Students' study bedrooms were also framed as a place of private retreat from social and shared spaces. One student noted that part of her rationale for returning to HEI provided SRA was her experience of living in a private house and sharing a bedroom with flatmates that had varying approaches to the use and cleanliness of the shared bedroom, kitchen and other communal living spaces. A desire and reliance on personal control of private/personal space within the SRA appeared to be key to students' overall wellbeing and engagement in and with the SRA case sites under study. Both staff and students noted the influence of students' experience of personal space on their reported expectations and experiences of the HEI provided SRA case sites studied for this research. Individual study bedrooms allow for an 'individualisation' of students' experience, a means of using shared and social spaces as and when desired (i.e. kitchens, multipurpose rooms, laundry facilities), and treating individual study bedrooms as a means of retreating from the collective spaces into private and

personal space. As in existing literature and research, personal space continued to be a contested space within the HEI provided SRA studied for this thesis.

8.5 Some limitations of this research

Several limitations influenced the data generated, findings, outcomes and interpretations of this research. Some of the limitations influencing this thesis included: methodological issues, the case study approach and methods used.

Methodological issues

A number of methodological issues have influenced the findings and possible implications for this research, including: number of cases studied, institutional access to HEI provided SRA, methodology and methods used within this research, and the researcher's world view.

First, the researcher's agenda, world view and existing experience of working in SRA across multiple HEI (in the US and UK) framed this research. The research questions and aims for fieldwork for this thesis, the selection of methodology and methods used to generate data, the theoretical lens adopted and subsequent meanings made of staff and students' feedback on SRA and SE reflected the researcher's agenda and approach to the study of SRA and SE. Holding a social constructivist world view, using a case study approach, underpinned by qualitative methods had an influence on 'what' was discovered and encountered, 'how' the data and findings were interpreted, and 'why' factors were included and others excluded from consideration within this thesis.

Second, several methodological approaches were considered for this research, including a number of qualitative, quantitative and mixed-method options. Considered approaches, included: descriptive, correlational, ethnographic, phenomenological, narrative, grounded theory and case study. Given the focus of the research questions for this thesis and the researcher's social constructivist world view, resource and time constraints for the completion of fieldwork, a case study approach was selected as fit for purpose.

Third, two case study sites limit the cross-case comparability of the SRA studied for this thesis. Initially, this research was proposed as a multi-case study using 3-5 cases. Each 'case' would be drawn from an example of an institution type (i.e. Oxbridge, University of London, Civic-Redbrick, Greenfield/Post-Robbins Report, Post-1992). In the early stages of this research it became clear after contacting a number of institutions through email and phone calls that institutional access was going to present a challenge. As such, the total number of 'cases' was revisited and three sites were proposed. Following up with the three sites proposed, directors of accommodation for two institutions agreed to permit access to one HEI provided SRA. While I continued to be in touch with members of the third institution, and attempted to find access to an alternative third case study site, I was unable to secure an agreement despite my best efforts.

Fourth, several issues arose with the research methods during the fieldwork stage of this research. For example, distance between case study sites required 'visits' which limited both the number of times and amount of time spent within each case study site. Additionally, the use of email to recruit potential participants and set up interview timetables across both case study sites may not have reached all student residents within each case site. As such, the methods used and resulting participant pools (both staff and students) may be viewed more as 'opportunistic' and influencing both the respondent and participants sample for interviews and questionnaires.

Finally, the length of the questionnaire may have influenced completion rates across both case study site (I) and (II). Several students [11 from case site (I) and 9 from case site (II)] started but did not complete the electronic questionnaire. This may have been a byproduct of fatigue and an inadequate amount of time for completion proposed in recruitment materials. Next, the influence of a case study approach within this thesis.

Case study

One aim for this research was to contribute 'cases' of study to the existing literature and research on SRA. The selection of the two cases studied for this research was influenced by the geographic location of the institutions studied,

institutional 'type' (i.e. pre and post 1992 university), the location of each SRA, and the student population of each SRA (i.e. undergraduate and postgraduate domestic and international students). Case study site (I), a hall of residence in a post-1992 university on the South coast of England was selected because it provided an opportunity to explore SE with and in an undergraduate SRA. The existing literature and research reviewed for this thesis was almost entirely composed of the study on undergraduate HEI provided SRA. As such, case site (I) provided an opportunity to reflect back into and upon some of the themes and issues raised in relation to undergraduate SE in and with SRA provision.

Case site (II), a postgraduate hall of residence for domestic and international students in a pre-1992 university in London was selected in order to contribute study of a type of SRA that had not been reviewed in the existing literature and research backgrounding this thesis. As such, it was hoped case site (II) might provide some useful information on postgraduate domestic and international students' perceptions, attitudes, expectations and experiences of SRA. Indeed, student feedback surprised both in its depth of care and concern for the social environment within the HEI provided SRA, and the influence of physical space organisation and use of facilities on students' social interactions and personal experience of the HEI provided SRA under study for this thesis.

While case study sites (I) and (II) made useful contributions to the existing literature and research on SRA in England, as Yin (2013), Denzin & Lincoln (2011) and Stake (2005) noted, case study research is inherently limited in its generalisability beyond the people and the place at the time this study was conducted (i.e. the case). By defining the two HEI provided SRA as cases for study, this research provides little opportunity to generalise beyond the cases themselves. Still, each case study site was aimed at contributing to the overall case studies within the field. A number of recurrent themes, issues and tensions were raised by staff and students within both HEI provided SRA cases studied for this research. As such, a historical approach may find some repetition in the outcomes from the cases studied for this research and existing case study research on HEI provided SRA in England (Richter and Walker, 2008; Moss and Richter, 2011).

Together, case site (I) made a useful contribution as a current example of study into undergraduate HEI provided SRA, while case site (II) contributed usefully to understanding some of the attitudes, perceptions, expectations and experiences of postgraduate students to HEI provided SRA.

Observations, interviews and questionnaires

The methods chosen for data generation also limit this research. Data generation for this research was completed using observations, interviews and questionnaires. While observations, interviews and questionnaires provided an opportunity to examine SRA and SE in a 'holistic' way, they do not provide a means of overcoming the low level of generalisability and what some have called 'low levels of scientific rigour' associated with the case study methodology (Noor, 2008). Additionally, the size of my staff and student interview samples and survey response rates limits the generalisability of my findings. In case study site (I), the number of student interviewees (4) represents a 0.02% response rate with survey responses (18 completed) representing a 12% response rate. Similarly, in case study site (II), the number of student interviewees (9) represents a 0.05% response rate with survey responses (15 completed) representing a 0.09% response rate. Still, the aim of this thesis was to explore and understand SRA using an SE lens. As such, the use of 'cases', observations, interviews and questionnaires provided for a multidimensional and ecological understanding of the relationship between SRA and SE. Additionally, observations-interviews-questionnaires did provide a means of comparing and contrasting across the two case study sites for this research, and triangulating similarities and contrasts in staff and student feedback related to SRA and SE. As with the selection of a case study approach, the methods used to generate data within each case site were aimed at foregrounding staff and students' attitudes, perceptions, expectations and experiences of SRA.

Together, these methodological issues may have influenced: the population and sample of respondents and the data generated within and across both case study sites for this research. While these factors may have influenced the generation and interpretation of data and findings for this research, the tradeoffs they reflect were similar to those in a number of existing studies of SRA. As with existing

literature and research, the methodological issues posed within this research were balanced against the contributions made to understanding of practice, policy and theory related to SRA and SE. However, they fulfilled key aims to reflect on and foreground the context, respondents' experiences, expectations, attitudes, perceptions and meaning making of SE in and with SRA.

8.6 Implications of this research

This research holds possible implications for institutional practice and that of practitioners and professionals with an involvement in SRA, policy for SRA in the HE sector and a number of empirical and theoretical contributions.

Contributions to institutional and professional practice

This research has a number of implications for institutional and professional practice. Namely, a need for further student participation and representation with and in institution governance related to HEI provided SRA.

Staff from both case site (I) and (II) noted the importance of students' participation and satisfaction with HEI provided SRA to the institutions' current plans for recruitment, retention, access and participation. As such, staff were sensitive to the implications of HEI provided SRA for cultivating and sustaining a relationship between students and the institution more broadly. Students also noted how important their SRA was to their academic and social experiences with and in the HEI. Both staff and students across cases noted that institutional practice may benefit from a less 'top-down' and more 'ecological and relational' approach to HEI provided SRA policies and practices. By this staff and students could benefit from greater study of students' expectations of HEI provided SRA, the multitude of student approaches to 'living in HEI provided SRA' and some of the strengths and limitations of living in HEI provided SRA. While a number of authors (Astin, Astin & Lindholm, 2011; Blimling, 2015) proposed ways HEI provided SRA may contribute to students' experience of HE, personal and social development, understanding the nature and value of such contributions needs to go beyond theoretical abstractions and as Clapham (2005) has proposed, into the real life experiences of students. This research approached students'

engagement in and with HEI provided SRA as dialogical, that is, underpinned by policy and practices that reflect the relationships and ecology of HEI provided SRA within HEI. Institutional practice related to HEI provided SRA has implications for staff and students, relationships within and across these (and other groups). As noted by (Little et al., 2009), a dialogue that can better represent both staff and student issues throughout the year may provide HEI and students a useful mechanism to see whether and how changes in policy and practice are being implemented and with what effects.

Contributions to policy: literature and lessons

This research has three clear implications for literature seeking to understand policy and policy lessons related to SRA and SE. First, there is the relationship between macro level HE policy and institution policy approaches. This research has thrown some light and brought greater awareness to whether, and how, individual institutions understand and translated so called sector policy in the context of their institution. Rather than simply adopt government policy, the HEI providing SRA studied for this research translated government policy as guidance and adapted to (and with) changes in government policy towards SRA. Translating government policy into institutional policy has become necessary as the state has tied funding to institutional compliance with government directives related to the use of state funds within the institution. This has been tracked across history, as Sanderson (1975) and Shattock (1994) have noted several iterations and adaptations of government policy approaches to HEI and HEI provided SRA across history in England.

Second, there is the relationship within the institutions between various stakeholder groups. Within the two case study institutions studied for this research there is a clear need to consider consistent means of reflection and embed reflexivity into the policy-practice at an institutional level. Across both cases studied for this research, a 'push-pull' between institution policy and what respondents noted as their lived reality were in tension. The forms, functions and purpose of HEI provided SRA for staff and students remained in debate. Moreover, staff highlighted the institutional constraints and expectations for the HEI provided SRA often came into conflict with what they and students expected

of the SRA. Staff felt that these tensions reflected an institutional drive to maximise the economic value of SRA to the overall revenue generation of the institution. This aligns with the substitution effects noted within existing literature and research on how HEI have pivoted from approaching SRA as 'housing' their students to SRA as 'accommodating' students (Silver, 2004). The values and principles the two institutions studied for this research reflect an approach that accounts as much for the economic implications of providing SRA, as the possible contributions of SRA to student residents' social and personal experience and development within HE.

Third, this research raised the issue of a relationship between SRA and local/regional housing contexts. Clearly, the HEI provided SRA studied for this research did not exist outside the local/regional housing contexts where they were embedded. Indeed, as a number of authors have noted (and research participants across both case study sites reiterated) pricing for HEI provided SRA across both institutions has become aligned with local housing price ranges (Blakey, 1994; Rugg et al., 2004; Sage, 2010; Silver, 2004). As such, the institutional position on HEI provided SRA sets the institution (staff and students) as provider. As a provider of accommodation for students, the institution looks to its local housing context to set rent rates, terms and conditions of renting, and the policies influencing accessibility and participation in HEI provided SRA. While both HEI noted they had a 'privileged' position [privileged in a consistent, often over demanded upon supply of HEI provided SRA and prospective student residents] they noted the influence of inadequate supply of HEI provided SRA on students' demand for alternative types of accommodation (i.e. shared flats, houses, single room bedsitters). Respondents across both institutions were clearly aware of the dialogic between HEI provided SRA and the influence of students' demand for housing broadly on the influence and purpose(s) for HEI provided SRA, now and into the next five years. Additionally, respondents were sensitive to the tradeoffs of students accruing large sums of personal loan debt to subsidise their participation in HE, and by extension, HEI provided SRA. While these are only some of the policy implications emerging from this research, they reflect staff and student feedback on the debates, drivers and tensions between the government, institutions, students and HEI provided SRA.

Empirical and theoretical contributions

Empirical research on SRA in England across the last decade has been light (see Holton, 2016, 2017; Moss & Richter, 2011; Richter & Walker, 2008). Recent work on SRA in England has adopted a case studies approach (Richter & Walker, 2008), utilising small sample sizes (Moss & Richter, 2011) and often underpinned by qualitative methods (Holton, 2016; 2017).

As noted earlier in this thesis, theoretical approaches have conceptualised SRA in a number of ways, including: as a student pathway, as part of students' housing biographies, using student preferences and satisfaction, student characteristics and identities, and SRA in relation to local housing contexts. While these existing approaches offer a multitude of helpful lenses, this research has aimed to bridge the theoretical and the operational components of SRA. Bridging the theoretical and the operational reflected what Clapham (2005) called a need for "further empirical work on how different households perceive and react to their housing context" (59). Household was defined at three levels, including: the case sites (I) and (II), at the level of the group (i.e. staff and students), and at the level of the individual.

This research contributed to theoretical understanding of SRA by exploring two cases of HEI provided SRA in order to understand the relationship between SRA and SE. To understand the relationship between SRA and SE, some of the factors influencing HEI provision of SRA were explored. In addition, this thesis explored staff and student residents' attitudes, perceptions and experiences across two HEI provided SRA. The case study approach adopted, and related methods deployed for data generation, reflected a focus on the experience and meaning making of some of those present in the HEI provided SRA studied for this research. Syntheses and analyses of data generated within this thesis has challenged the totalising discourses emanating from existing theory and research on SRA (in England and more globally). Rather, this thesis has challenged 'totalising' approaches to treating students as a normalised, homogenous group. 'Domestic' and 'international', 'undergraduate' and 'postgraduate' became insufficient labels, incapable of capturing the nuances and 'stories' of staff and students. As such, work at the margins of SRA and SE made note of the role

students' identities have on students' engagement in and with SRA, and the meaning and purpose individuals (staff and students) ascribe to their participation in SRA. Without oversimplifying, and being at risk of arguing against by arguing with a similar line of logic, this research simply served to posit and position staff and students' expectations, experiences and meaning making in understanding SE in and with SRA.

Rather than explain my findings, the multidimensional, relational and ecological lens adopted for this research aimed to clarify 'what' student engagement in and with student residential accommodation meant for staff and students. Namely, what were themes, issues and topics raised by staff and students who were observed, interviewed and surveyed across case study sites (I & II) for this research.

As noted above, much of the existing literature and research is dominated by a case study approach. The strategic selection of the two cases for this research followed from themes and issues raised within existing literature and research regarding institution type (i.e. pre or post 1992 university), geographic location (i.e. town, city) and student population (i.e. undergraduate and postgraduate, domestic and international).

Data and findings generated within and across cases studied for this research challenged existing theory related to SRA as influencing student residents' social and personal development (Astin, Astin & Lindholm, 2011; Blimling, 2015). Additionally, this research has challenged a focus in existing literature and research on undergraduate first-year students by introducing study of postgraduate, international students. Study of postgraduate international students revealed a need to extend the expectations and assumptions around 'who', 'how' and 'why' students engage in and with HEI provided SRA across their post secondary educational experiences. Next, contributions of this research to knowledge warrant some further discussion and are explored next.

8.7 Contribution to Knowledge

The contributions of this research to knowledge include: SE as a framework for approaching HEI provided SRA, the ecological and relational nature of HEI provided SRA, and relationships between HEI provided SRA and local housing contexts.

Student engagement as a framework for approaching SRA

Within this research, SE has been proposed and used as a framework for exploring factors influencing SRA. SRA has been constructed at the interface of policy, practice, relationships and leadership. Policy has had more than a 'top-down' influence on the practices, expectations and experiences of staff and students within SRA. There has been a dialogic between policy and practice which amplifies the dynamic and contested nature of SE in and with SRA. Moreover, it has been noted above that there remains ample opportunity to explore possible feedback mechanisms with and in SRA, to generate feedback from staff and students across the history of built environments, and institutions. A clear need for systematic study and analysis of students' engagement in and with SRA has permeated this and related studies.

Ecological approach to SE and SRA

SRA provided by HEI and alternative providers does not exist in a vacuum. Instead, SRA has been provided across history as a response to changing relationships between institutions, students and the lay community. This thesis has focused on higher education institutions and how they have responded to issues of supply, demand and shifting relationships between themselves, students, policy and local housing contexts.

The ecology of SRA reflected on the interface of policy, practice, attitudes, perceptions and meaning making within a set of HEI provided SRA. While care was given to the policy and practices informing expectations and experiences, time and space was also purposefully given to explore staff and students' meaning making of their experiences within particular SRA environments.

Through these dialogues, a number of possibilities have been created to explore and examine the various types of individual and shared relationships and meaning making with and in SRA. By extension, this work has aimed to appreciate the relationships between higher education institutions, stakeholders such as staff and students, and the relatedness of SRA to the local housing contexts within which the two case study sites were embedded.

There has been a defined and sustained effort to propose and focus on this ecology of relationships, policy, practice and meaning making of SE in and with SRA. This work has shined a light on staff and students' lived experiences of working and living in SRA. While a number of existing studies have utilised a case study approach (Richter & Walker (2008), 2007) and explored students' behaviours within SRA (Moss & Richter, 2011), this study has extended existing conceptualisations of students' engagement in and with SRA by foregrounding staff and students' lived experiences in explore and understand how policy, practice and built environment spaces (physical, social and personal) influences students' engagement in and with student residential accommodation.

Relationship between HEI provided SRA and local housing

As noted above, HEI provided SRA does not exist in a vacuum. Provision of SRA by HEI has been in relation to local, regional and national housing policy and practice. Indeed, a number of Green and White papers (2000, 2003a, 2003b) have highlighted a desire to create a 'bifurcated' approach to housing across local, regional and national contexts.

SRA influences the accessibility and use of local housing stock. Throughout this research, the issue of HEI provided SRA has been situated within consideration of local housing and the influence of student demand for housing on local housing contexts across history. 'Push' and 'pull' such as the shifting approach to student financing and demand for single-family homes have been noted influences on local housing council approaches to SRA.

Ample space remains for continued study of the evidence-base used to inform local housing decision-making and the short-medium term time frames under

which policy may be implemented towards the development of HEI and third-party provider SRA. Possibilities for further study of the evidence-base and HEI approaches to SRA provision make up one component of the potential for future work regarding student residential accommodation.

8.8 Possibilities for future research

This thesis may act as a catalyst for a number of possible future research pathways. Future work may approach a number of factors and influences on provision of SRA. Some possible pathways for future work, include: policy, institutional practice, students' expectations and experiences of SRA across institutions and institutional types, further work on international and postgraduate students' expectations and experiences of SRA.

Policy continues to be an important means of qualifying and codifying the relationship between SRA, HEI and the lay community. Policy remains dynamic and contested, influencing institutional, local and regional rationales for provision of SRA.

Institutional practice varied across the two case sites studied for this thesis. Future work on institutional practice may explore and examine whether, and how, various higher education institutions 'localise' the 'global' policies set by national bodies.

Students' expectations and experiences of SRA remain dynamic and contested. There is no clear understanding of 'why' students' engage in and with SRA beyond desiring 'somewhere to eat and sleep' while on a course in higher education. The discourses and debates surrounding students' expectations and experiences themselves have created a self-sustaining logic of 'students' who utilise 'student residential accommodation'. Students and SRA have been constructed in and through discourses, discourses that several authors (Silver, 2004; Tight, 2011) have noted shifting across history. As such, future work on students' expectations and experiences may challenge the very general and totalising approaches to 'students' and 'student residential accommodation' which

have been propped up by privileged types of institutions within a number of social contexts (including England).

Need for further case studies would account for additional institution types. A pre and post 1992 university were selected to draw attention to the changes in policy, institutional practice and approach across history. The development of SRA in England has been influenced by changing government policy and funding regimes across history. A case study approach has persisted as a methodological means of resisting a totalising approach to the definition, forms, functions and purpose of SRA. As Clapham (2005) noted, much housing literature attempts to operate and generalise individual and group expectations and experience of SRA. What may be useful is a means of exploring and examining whether, and how, individual institutions adapted state policy into their local policy and practice related to SRA, how this is sustained (or not) over a period of time and the outcomes of various approaches for institutions'. Institutions as distinct and reflective of their physical, social and cultural contexts is fundamental to such an approach. Rather than treating 'institutions' as needing to align a 'sector' and 'system' logics towards SRA, future work may trouble such an assertion and allow for the possibility institutions are 'adapting' and 'localising' policy to suit the conditions of their 'case'. This does not assert that all institutions are somehow 'islands' in a large 'ocean' of state higher education, situated in a global higher education. Rather, this proposed approach aims to account for the 'human' element influencing whether, and how, higher education policy informs and influences local housing across various HEI contexts. Some concluding comments follow.

8.9 Concluding comments

This thesis has highlighted a number of persistent themes and issues related to SE with and in SRA. SE was defined as the investment (i.e. time, funding, mental and physical resources) institutions and students make in educationally purposive activities. SRA was treated as an educationally purposive activity, connecting students to the institution and broader community. Close analysis of staff and student feedback from the case sites studied for this thesis reflected a number of key themes and issues from the literature, including: policy, institutional practice,

social attitudes, student identities and physical-social-personal space. The research questions and aims for research framing this thesis foregrounded staff and students' perceptions, attitudes and experiences of SRA and SE.

Factors of the SRA, such as physical, social and personal space featured prominently in staff and student feedback. First, themes and issues around physical space highlighted a territorialisation and de-territorialisation of personal and social space. Tensions arose within and between a number of students across both case study sites. Of note, staff and students located the 'responsibility' for tensions raised with and in the HEI provided SRA studied for this research in the physical built environment and institutional policy aimed at governing and guiding student residents' behaviours in SRA. Students indicated they felt policy and practice was the remit of staff members, who should be aware of and responsive to student relations.

Second, social space was a key issue raised across both case sites (I) and (II). The findings of this thesis challenge assertions made by Astin, Astin & Lindholm (2011) and Blimling (2015) that SRA is a clear incubator for students' peer-to-peer engagement. Instead, these multiple alternatives emerged from staff and student feedback on undergraduate students moving away from SRA social programmes and events and postgraduate students noting a desire for SRA provided social events and support for social engagement. These findings challenge the ideal that a primary aim for HEI provided SRA is to assist and support the personal and social development of student residents. Instead, awareness and allowing for the individual approaches towards SE in and with SRA staff and students hold would allow for an 'opportunities' without 'obligations' lens to provision of SRA and SE.

Third, personal space featured prominently in staff and student feedback. For staff, students' study bedroom was a student residents' defined personal space. Students' feedback highlighted a desire for study bedrooms to be self-contained and for students to be able to exercise a degree of personal control over these spaces. While staff were conscious of students' desire for privacy, a number of students noted a lack of total privacy within their study bedrooms. Instead, noise, maintenance issues, and tensions with fellow student residents were all factors students' indicated influenced their engagement in and with their SRA. Rather

than confront individuals regarding their actions, students pivoted away from a confrontational approach and into a so called 'avoidance' approach. This again challenged assertions made by Astin, Astin and Lindholm (2011) and Blimling (2015) that student residents would engage one another, debate and resolve tensions influencing their daily life in SRA. Instead, evidence from this research was more in line with the findings of Moss and Richter (2010) who found students' strategies for resolving issues with and between residents reflected a number personal (and at times cultural) habits of (i.e. rhythm, routine and ritual) within the HEI provided SRA studied for this research. If SRA is to achieve the lofty aim of providing opportunities for students to develop personal and social awareness and allowing of 'others' and 'otherness', more work is needed to understand what policy and practice influencers develop students' personal and social development.

SRA has been and may continue to be one key issue within a broader debate on the development of HE in England. With low levels of recent research on SRA in England (Holton, 2016, 2017; Moss and Richter, 2011; Richter & Walker, 2008) there continued to be ample opportunity to explore the relationship between SRA and SE. Persistent and recurring tensions between students, institutions and the broader community have dotted the literature and research landscape on SRA in England across history. Through this thesis, SE has been proposed as operating at the interface of a dynamic and contested set of tensions, drivers and debates related to the forms, functions and stated purpose of SRA across history and into the present. Staff and students' experiences of SRA have been foregrounded. The research methodology and methods used reflect a desire to locate and understand the value individuals, groups and institutions studied for this thesis placed on SRA and SE. Findings from this research have challenged some of the longstanding assertions regarding the forms, functions and purpose of SRA for England.

The relationship between SRA and SE continued to unfold. Further research may seek to contribute further case studies, explore some of the issues between built environments and SE in and with SRA, the implications of policy and institutional practice on SRA provision, and student approaches to defining SE in and with SRA. Such work would continue to open up possibilities for further questions and

the debates regarding the aims of SRA and the relationships between SRA and SE in various higher education contexts.

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Appendix A: Student and Staff interview guides

This interview guide includes questions from the interview questionnaires of: Brothers & Hatch (1971) and Thomsen (2008)

Purpose

The purpose of this interview guide is to create a conversation with participants regarding student engagement in and with student residential accommodation. Through this conversation I aim to understand student and staff perceptions of student engagement in and with university provided student residential accommodation, and their experience of a higher education institution more generally. These interview schedules acted as guidance for 'creating conversations' with staff and students. After preliminary remarks, students were asked questions from sections (I, II, and III). Questions from the remaining sections were asked as the conversation between interviewer and interviewees developed. Similarly, staff interviewees completed questions from sections (I, II, III) and questions from sections (IV, V, VI) were drawn upon to develop staff's responses to primary questions in section (II). As such, not all questions were posed to all respondents with these 'guides' acting to create and sustain conversations with respondents.

INTERVIEW GUIDE-STUDENT RESIDENTS OF SRA

Note time/day/place interview is conducted:

I. My introduction

- Introduction to the topic
- Structure of the interview and its aims
- Mention that: interviewees will be anonymous and all feedback is confidential
- Inform that interviewees do not have to answer each question and may stop the interview at any time

II. Demographic questions: to be recorded in writing/verbal

- Age
- Gender
- Nationality (home country)
- Socioeconomic status
 - o Can you tell me how you have financed your accommodation this term? Who funds your accommodation costs? How?
- Course (undergraduate or postgraduate, and type: BA, BS, BSC, MA, MSC, MRES, PhD)
- Field of study
- Year of study

III. General questions

- In what accommodation are you living this term?
- What kind of accommodation would you most like to live in?
 - o Home with parents
 - o Home with spouse
 - o Hall of residence
 - o Lodging
 - o Bedsitter
 - o Flat-university owned
 - o Flat-privately owned, owner occupied
- How long have you been living in your current residential accommodation?
- Where did you live before your current residence?
Clarification: what type of tenancy or dwelling?
- Could you mention your reasons for moving to your current residential accommodation? Clarifying with: how important is the location of your residence to the university? How often do you visit the university?

IV. Aspects of the student residential accommodation and student engagement

- Imagine that I do not know the residence you currently live in? How would you describe it to me?
 - o Location, type of accommodation, building environment, (shared/private) room? (shared/private) kitchen? (shared/private) bathing facility?
- How satisfied are you with your present accommodation with respect to the following:
 - o As a place to work
 - o For social activities and relationships
 - o General comfort and convenience to the institution
- To what extent would you say your hall:
 - o Formed a community
 - o Generated the loyalty of its members
 - o Maintained traditions (i.e. student programs in the hall)
 - o Fosters certain standards of behaviour
- What is your opinion about the rules and regulations concerning students in your accommodation and the way they are enforced
 - o The stated policies
 - o The way policy is enforced
- Do you use areas outside of your student accommodation? Which?
 - o Common rooms, public spaces, private spaces, meeting places, coffee houses, dedicated student study space, library facilities at the institution
- When you think of the residences exterior, how would you describe it?

- How would you describe the contact among students living in your student residence?
 - o Do you know many other students in your student residence?
 - Where do they live? Same floor?
 - Different floor? Your neighbours in the rooms to the right/left/across from you?
 - Do you often see people congregate?
 - Where do students congregate in your residence?
 - o Have you attended a hall meeting or induction meeting for your accommodation?
 - o Have you used any of the common spaces in the residence?
 - o Do you know your Warden? Have you ever interacted with your Warden, and how did that interaction with your Warden go?
 - o Do you feel a sense of community amongst students?
 - o Do you hold any office or post in hall (i.e. member of a hall committee, officer in a hall society or sports club)?
 - o How would you describe your engagement with your student residential accommodation?
 - o What is important for you to be satisfied with your accommodation? Are you satisfied with your current accommodation? What are some of the things you are most satisfied with? Least?
 - o Could you name the three physical characteristics of your accommodation that you feel influence you most? And the least?
- How would you describe your engagement in your current residential accommodation?
 - o What are some of the activities you have participated in within your residential accommodation?
 - o How often do you participate in events and programs within your residential accommodation?
 - o How would you describe the community in your residential accommodation?
 - o What is your relationship with staff and administrators in your current residential accommodation?
 - o How would you describe your residential accommodation as a place to study? As a place to rest?
- How would you describe your engagement with the university more generally?
 - o How much time do you spend at the university each week outside your scheduled lectures, classes and tutoring?

- o What are some of the activities you participate in when you're not studying at the university?
- o Do you know many students who do not live in institution provided student residential accommodation?

Can you say where they live? What are their experiences of accommodation like?

V. Some matters of opinion and belief

- Do you have a faith, spiritual or moral system to which you adhere or subscribe? Which one?
- How often do you, if ever, attend religious services?
- Do you feel you are able to adhere to your faith, spiritual or moral system whilst living in your accommodation?

VI. Comparing current accommodation to alternative accommodation within the institution

- Have you visited other university provided student residential accommodation?
 - o How would you describe your accommodation in comparison to other [X] accommodation you have visited?
- Could you imagine living in another residence provided by [X]? Why and why not?
- What characteristics have influenced your sense of connectivity to your accommodation? To other residents? To staff members of your accommodation?
- Have you any further comments to make about
 - o The accommodation in which you are now living
 - o The policies related to student residential accommodation at [X]
 - o General issues or concerns regarding student accommodation

VII. Conclusion

This concludes the interview. I will be transcribing your feedback for use in my research. Please get in touch with me via email if you have any questions or concerns after today.

Interview close: note time.

INTERVIEW GUIDE-UNIVERSITY STUDENT RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION STAFF

Note time/day/place interview conducted:

I. My introduction

- Introduction to the topic
- Structure of the interview and its aim
- Mention that: interviewees will be anonymous and all feedback will be treated as confidential.
- Inform that interviewees do not have to answer each question and if they do so, all their feedback will be excluded from my study.

II. Demographic questions

- Age
- Gender
- Nationality (home country)

III. Questions about staff position the accommodation

- In what accommodation are you working this term?
- How long have you worked in your current accommodation?
- How long have you worked in your current position within the accommodation?
- Have you held other staff positions in student residential accommodation at [X]?
- Have you worked in student residential accommodation at another institution(s)? Where? When?

IV. Questions related to student residential accommodation policies

- To the best of your knowledge, can you describe the students' application process for student residential accommodation at [X]?
 - o Who can apply?
 - o What are the eligibility requirements?
 - o When do students submit their applications?
 - o How are students assigned to a student residential accommodation?
- Does your accommodation follow a code of practice (i.e. student accommodation code of practice)?

V. Questions regarding student engagement in student accommodation

The following questions refer to students' engagement in and with student residential accommodation provision at the University of [X].

- Are you aware of a student association in the accommodation you work in?
- What is your role in relation to the warden team within your accommodation?
- How would you describe the role of the warden in your accommodation?
- Does your accommodation have a sense of student community? What do you attribute the presence or absence of student 'community' in student residential accommodation to?
- Do you have a member of faculty residing in your accommodation? If so, who are they? What are some of their responsibilities in your accommodation? How would you describe their role, if they have one, in your accommodation?
- From your experience, how do students participate in their residential accommodation?
- How would you describe students' relationship with staff?
- How would you describe the influence of institution policy related to student accommodation on your relationship with students?
- How would you describe the influence of institution policy related to student accommodation on your relationship with staff (e.g. colleagues in your accommodation, central student accommodation administration)?
- Can you describe the guest access policy?
- Can you describe the type and frequency of incidents where students were cited in reference to the student accommodation community standards policies?
- What do you feel is important to students in a student residential accommodation?
- From your experience, what are some of the ways students engage in and with their accommodation?
- What does student engagement mean to you?
 - o How would you describe student engagement in your accommodation?
 - o Do you have a stated policy regarding student engagement in student residential accommodation?
 - o Does your department have expectations around programming in student residential accommodation for students?

VI. Closing questions

- Have you any additional comments to make about:
 - o The accommodation in which you are now working
 - o The policies related to student residential accommodation at [the university]
 - o General issues or concerns regarding student engagement in and with student accommodation

VII. Conclusion

This concludes the interview. I will be transcribing your feedback for use in my research. Please get in touch with me via email if you have any questions or concerns after today.

Interview close: note time.

Appendix B: Guidance for observations

Guidance for on-site observations

Below I explain my aim for observations, protocol for on-site observations and outline the format for my field notes.

Aim of the observations

A key question in this research is: what is the relationship between student residential accommodation and student engagement? Building on this question, what does student engagement in and with institution provided student residential accommodation mean to students and staff?

The relationship between student residential accommodation and student engagement may be related to the physical organization of space, and whether the physical organization of space influences the social relationships in and amongst a university provided student residential accommodation. As such, understanding how the physical space is organised may provide insight into understanding whether, if and how, physical space influences social relations in and amongst different participant groups within this study (i.e. students, staff, administrators).

The aim of the observations, field notes and photographs are to provide context to the questions I am studying. Namely, how physical space is organised, and how different groups (i.e. students, staff, administrators, contracted staff) are organised within the physical space of university student residential accommodation.

Observation protocol for site visits to student residential accommodation sites

Check in with on-site staff to indicate date(s)/time(s) I will be present for observations.

Research question: what is the relationship between student residential accommodation and student engagement?

Field notes

- How is space organised? How are bodies (i.e. students, staff, administrators) organised in ‘space’ within a student residential accommodation?
- Notes on the approach (entryway) to the student residential accommodation?
- Staff space in the student residential accommodation
 - o Where is staff space physically located?
 - o How is staff space organised?
 - o How many members of staff are present?
 - o Is there security? When, where and for what purpose?
 - o Where are Warden, Vice Warden and Faculty in Residence residences located within the student accommodation?
- Students’ pathway(s) through from entry to their private rooms/suites?
- Floor plan and organization of rooms: male, female, mixed floors
- Information is on display for the public (i.e. notice boards) and what do they contain?
- Shared facilities located within the student residential accommodation?
 - o What is provided in each shared facility?
 - o How many students share each communal kitchen? Bathroom?
 - o Are the facilities in operation in order, meaning, is there any issues with maintenance within the facility (feedback from staff, students)?

Photographs

- Approach to student residential accommodation
- Entrance (outside)
- Entrance (inside)
- Access (i.e. hallways, corridors)
- Communal spaces on each level
- Interviewee student room
 - o Layout of amenities (e.g. bed, wardrobe, desk)
 - o Organization of students’ private space
 - Did students leave as it was when they arrived?
 - Changed the layout? How so, and why, did a student change it or leave it as it was upon arrival?
- Interviewee staff spaces

Appendix C: Case study (I) electronic questionnaire

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Question 1: What was your age (in years) on October 1st 2016?.....	2
Question 2: What is your gender?.....	3
Question 3: How would you describe your nationality?.....	4
Question 4: Are you an undergraduate student?.....	5
Question 5: What is your year of study?.....	6
Question 6: What town or city were you living in when you applied to university?	7
Question 7: What type of secondary school did you last attend?.....	8
Question 8: What type of course are you taking (e.g. B.A. Hons, B.A. General, BSC Hons, BSC General).....	9
Question 9: Please estimate your total income for the academic year 2016-2017.....	10
Question 10: How are you funding your student residential accommodation for this current academic year.....	11
Question 11: What time period elapsed between your leaving school and coming to university?.....	12
Question 12: What type of accommodation do you live in?.....	13
Question 13: What type of accommodation would you prefer to live in?.....	14
Question 14: Approximately how much time does it take you to get from your current student residential accommodation?.....	15
Question 15: When did you first move into your present accommodation?.....	16
Question 16: What methods did you use in your search for your present accommodation (please select all that apply).....	17
Question 17: By which method did you obtain your accommodation?.....	18
Question 18: How many student rooms are in your flat?.....	19
Question 19: Do you, and those who share your accommodation, have use of the following facilities?.....	20
Question 20: Do you know your student resident advisers?.....	21
Question 21: Do you know your staff resident adviser?.....	22
Question 22: Which of the following factors influence your experience of your current student residential accommodation.....	23
Question 23: Please indicate whether any of the following issues influence your experience of your current residential accommodation.....	24
Question 24: What is the greatest advantage of your present accommodation?.....	25
Question 25: What is the greatest disadvantage of your present accommodation?.....	26
Question 26: If you moved, what were the reasons for your move(s)? (Please select all that apply).....	27
Question 27: About how many weeks in the last academic year (i.e. 2016-2017) did you spend in the local area	28
Question 28: If you were free to choose your ideal kind of accommodation for different years in higher education.....	29
Question 29: How do you usually get to your place of study?.....	30
Question 30: How long does it take you to travel from your accommodation to your	

place of study?.....	31
Question 31: How much does, or would, this one way journey cost by public transport?.....	32
Question 32: How important was the proximity of your accommodation to other university facilities?.....	33
Question 33: How close to your present place of study would you prefer to live in terms of traveling.....	34
Question 34: How important was the proximity of your current accommodation to non-university facilities.....	35
Question 35: If a place for the subject you most wanted to study was only offered to you by an institution.....	36
Question 36: How many hours of study time per day do you average in your room?.....	37
Question 37: Are there any amenities in your room you feel are important to your sense of wellbeing?.....	38
Question 38: How does your current accommodation compare to alternative types of accommodation you considered?.....	39
Question 39: How many student residential accommodation sponsored social events have you participate in this year?.....	40
Question 40: Do you use any of the following common spaces to socialise? (select all that apply).....	41
Question 41 Do you use any of the following common spaces in your accommodation to study outside your study bedroom.....	42
Question 42: Please use the space below to provide any further feedback you have on your experience.....	43

Appendix D: Case study (II) electronic questionnaire

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info.....	1
Question 1: What was your age (in years) on October 1st 2016?.....	2
Question 2: What is your gender?.....	3
Question 3: How would you describe your nationality?.....	4
Question 4: Are you a postgraduate student?.....	5
Question 5: What is your year of study?.....	6
Question 6: Were you living in your home country when you applied to study at 'X'?.....	7
Question 7: How are you funding your student residential accommodation for the current academic year?.....	8
Question 8: What time period elapsed between your leaving your first degree institution and coming to your current institution?.....	9
Question 9: What type of accommodation do you live in?.....	10
Question 10: What type of accommodation would you prefer to live in....	11
Question 11: Approximately how much time does it take you to get from your current student residential accommodation?.....	12
Question 12: When did you first move into your present accommodation?	13
Question 13: What methods did you use in your search for your present accommodation (please select all that apply).....	14
Question 14: What type of room do you currently reside in?.....	15
Question 15: How would you describe the amount of physical space in your study bedroom? Please elaborate.....	16
Question 16: How would you describe the lighting in your study bedroom? Please elaborate in the text box below.....	17
Question 17: What floor do you live on?.....	18
Question 18: With regard to the street, which side of the building are you on?.....	19
Question 19: Do you share a kitchen?.....	20
Question 20: Do you have any issues or comments regarding your experiences within your shared kitchen.....	21
Question 21: How many people share your kitchen?.....	22
Question 22: How would you describe your community in your current accommodation? Please elaborate below.....	23
Question 23: Have you participated in any student residential accommodation sponsored social events?.....	24
Question 24: How do you feel about the level of social engagement in your current accommodation? Please elaborate below.....	25
Question 25: What, if any, of the shared study spaces do you use in your current accommodation?.....	26
Question 26: Do you have any comments regarding the hall policies and practices within your current accommodation?.....	27
Question 27: Approximately how many hours per day do you study in your study bedroom?.....	28
Question 28: On average, how many hours do you study away from your current accommodation per day?.....	29
Question 29: Current guest policy limits the number of days a student may have a guest residing in their room.Do you feel this policy is adequate?.....	30
Question 30: Please use the space below to provide any additional comments, concerns and issues or that you might have with your current student residential accommodation.....	31
Question 31: Please use the space below to provide any further feedback you have on your experience of your current student residential accommodation.....	32