Negotiating Power, Resistance and Control
Young Women's Safety in Bars, Pubs and Clubs

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Acknowledgements

Abstract

Contemporary young women would appear to enjoy greater freedoms to consume alcohol and socialise in bars, pubs and clubs than their predecessors. However, concern about women's level of alcohol consumption, drink spiking and drug-assisted sexual assault have contributed to a renewed focus on safety advice for young women in these social settings. This thesis examines the views, experiences and behaviours of 35 young women in relation to their safety in bars, pubs and clubs using qualitative data from interviews and focus groups with young women (18-25 years) in Scotland. Exploring the divergent claims made within feminist structural and poststructural perspectives, this thesis develops a nuanced understanding of young women's safety in bars, pubs and clubs by drawing upon the theoretical concepts of power, resistance and social control. Constraints on women's leisure imposed by patriarchal structures, safety concerns and notions of 'appropriate femininity', formed a significant focus of early feminist theorising in this area. More recently, however, poststuctural feminist theorists have highlighted the opportunities that leisure experiences may offer women for liberation by providing a means to resist conventional cultural discourses around feminine identities.

To a certain extent, the findings from this study challenge the conventional construction of consuming alcohol and socialising in bars, pubs and clubs as a masculine leisure pursuit, by identifying this leisure activity as a central aspect of young women's social lives. However, young women's experiences and behaviours within bars, pubs and clubs remain significantly structured by gender and young women perceive the risks that they experience in these settings to have increased over time. The continuing salience of gender is evident in the way that women access bars, pubs and clubs, their safety concerns and experiences, and ultimately their behaviour within these venues. Young women's safety concerns in this context are overwhelmingly related to the fear and reality of sexual violence, lending credence to social control theories espoused by radical feminists. These concerns and the individualising discourse embodied within safety literature results in women normalising and taking individual responsibility for preventing sexual assault. This reflects the positioning of sexual violence as an inevitable fixed reality, thus evading the need to question the behaviour of men who choose to sexually assault and harass women in bars, pubs and clubs.

Safety behaviours adopted by young women in bars, pubs and clubs are complex and contradictory in that they simultaneously adopt, resist and transgress those advocated within safety literature. Since these safety behaviours are inextricably linked to normative femininity and gendered expectations of women's behaviour in bars, pubs and clubs, they are more adequately theorised as 'accommodating techniques' than 'resistant practices'. These findings pose significant difficulties for locating women's experiences of consuming alcohol in bars, pubs and clubs within a poststructuralist framework of liberation and freedom; in some respects, it would appear that women's behaviour within these social spaces is subject to heightened regulation and control. While poststructural theorising about power and resistance is of some assistance in illuminating the process of how safety concerns regulate women's behaviour, alongside the possibility of resistance, understanding young women's safety is best served by an appreciation of feminist structural perspectives which highlight the salience of gender, and in particular the power of gendered norms and taboos which continue to operate with regard to women's sexuality. Ultimately, bars, pubs and clubs remain a social space infused with gendered expectations and risks.

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Chapter One
Introduction

Introduction

This thesis is based on a qualitative study, which examined the views, experiences and behaviours of young women (18-25 years) in relation to their safety while socialising in bars, pubs and clubs in Scotland. This chapter introduces the main aims, context and rationale for the study. An overview of subsequent chapters is also given to assist the reader in navigating the thesis structure.

Aim of the study

The aim of this study was to understand how young women view, experience and negotiate their safety while socialising in bars, pubs and clubs. This aim was addressed by exploring the following key research questions:

1. What are participants' views on socialising and drinking in bars, pubs and clubs as a leisure activity for contemporary young women?

2. What are young women's safety concerns and experiences in bars, pubs and clubs?

3. Which safety strategies and behaviours (if any) do young women use to negotiate their safety in bars, pubs and clubs, and why?

4. What are the theoretical implications of the study findings?

In the UK, there is a lack of research which explores young women's safety within the context of bars, pubs and clubs. This is a surprising omission given the contemporary concern about this issue within media and policy discourses focusing on young women. This study sought to address this gap by considering the issue of safety in bars, pubs and clubs from the perspective of young women themselves, using focus groups and semi-structured qualitative interviews. By exploring young women's accounts of these issues, this thesis contributes to a greater understanding of the complex and diverse responses

which women make when faced by the often contradictory gendered discourses around safety when socialising in bars, pubs and clubs. Research in this area has the potential to inform safety initiatives, and contribute to understanding young women's behaviours and concerns in relation to their safety in bars, pubs and clubs.

By considering young women's views on this issue, this thesis also contributes to attempts to theorise the social position of contemporary young women from a feminist perspective. While bars, pubs and clubs are by no means the only spaces where young women may have safety concerns, they provide a particularly interesting site for the examination of contemporary gender relations since they represent a social and public space which has traditionally privileged male access. From a theoretical perspective it will be argued that the concepts of power, social control and resistance found within feminist structural and poststructural theoretical frameworks[1] have the potential to assist in understanding and contextualising the responses of young women in the current study. More specifically, this study provides an opportunity to examine poststructural discourses of leisure as a site for liberation and identity formation for young women, against a backdrop of earlier feminist theorising about the constraints experienced by young women in relation to socialising in bars, pubs, and clubs.

Context and background for the study

It would appear that contemporary young women enjoy new freedoms in many aspects of their life, including education, work, leisure and political participation (Measham, 2002; Jackson & Tinkler, 2007). It is argued that feminism has resulted in women's greater participation within social structures, and their increased use of public space (Watson, 2000). The apparent new freedoms enjoyed by contemporary young women have even led to debate about whether we are now living in a 'postfeminist' era (Griffin, 2004; Tasker & Negra, 2007; McRobbie, 2008). Post-feminism represents a new form of anti-feminist sentiment, transgressing the earlier 'backlash' (Faludi, 1992)

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[1] Postmodernism and poststructuralism are terms which are often used interchangeably. While these concepts share an overlapping theoretical foundation, Aitchison (2003: 31) usefully highlights that the distinction between them lies in the object of their study: postmodernism is centred around the critical study of modernity and the deconstruction of the grand theories and meta-narratives of modernity, whilst poststructuralism is concerned with the critical study and illumination of power relations inherent in, and emanating from, the structures of modernity. For clarity, this thesis is primarily concerned with poststructuralism rather than postmodernism on account of its focus on power relations.

against the apparent gains made by feminism, by suggesting that feminism has in fact been "taken into account" and is therefore no longer needed (McRobbie, 2008: 1). Central to postfeminist culture is the positioning of women as empowered consumers (Tasker & Negra, 2007). Young women's apparent freedom to socialise and consume alcohol in bars, pubs and clubs is one aspect of this commercial 'empowerment'.

Indeed, women do now appear to have more opportunities to engage in the traditionally male activity of socialising and consuming alcohol in bars, pubs and clubs (Plant, 1997; Lyons & Willot, 2008), and there appears to be more social acceptance of them doing so (Day et al., 2004). The UK has witnessed an expansion of the night-time economy (Winlow & Hall, 2006), and bars pubs and clubs have become more 'women friendly' through a process of feminisation (Chatterton & Hollands, 2003). Meanwhile, alcohol advertising targeted specifically at women depicts alcohol as fashionable, glamorous, and used by women who are independent, fun-loving, desirable and in control (Day et al., 2004). This presents a stark contrast with observations from earlier studies which position drinking in pubs as a male privilege, and an expression of patriarchal society (Whitehead, 1976; Hey, 1986). Earlier feminist studies which emphasised the salience of gender in structuring women's experiences of leisure, and their use of public space more generally, have been called into question by poststructural theorists on account of the potential leisure offers women for liberation. In other words, leisure has been positioned by poststructural feminists as a site whereby women can challenge and subvert the burdens associated with normative femininity (Wearing, 1998). The extent to which this has occurred within bars, pubs and clubs, however, is unclear and postfeminism has been challenged by McRobbie (2008: 2) on account of the fact that it calls upon women to suspend their critique despite their inequality and subordination remaining "unequivocal and substantial".

In order to disentangle these debates in the context of young women's safety in bars, pubs and clubs, it is necessary to have some understanding of contemporary developments in this area. To this end, three key developments are outlined below: concern about women's increasing levels of alcohol consumption; the emergence of

drug and alcohol assisted sexual assault (DASA)[2] as a 'new' risk; and a renewed focus on safety campaigns directed towards young women socialising in bars, pubs and clubs.

Contemporary developments

Concern about women's alcohol consumption

Getting drunk has been described as an integral part of the social scene for young people in the UK (Kitzinger & Powell, 1995), whereby drinking alcohol and intoxication are perceived as the norm, and as a leisure activity (MacAskill et al., 2001; Engineer et al., 2003). High and increasing levels of alcohol consumption are a particular feature of UK drinking culture, described by some as a 'culture of intoxication' (Measham, 2006), which is not necessarily shared by other countries[3]. Scottish culture, in particular, has been described as one in which heavy drinking is commonplace and two-thirds of respondents in the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey (2004) agreed that "Drinking is a major part of the Scottish way of life" (Bromley & Ormston, 2005). Scotland has also been described as having a 'binge drinking'[4] culture, with young adults aged between 18 and 24 years being more likely to 'binge drink' than other adults (Moore et al., 1994).

Significant concern has been expressed about male and female drinking within the UK in terms of the detrimental impact that it may have for health (Plant & Plant, 2001; Leon & McCambridge, 2009) and social (dis)order (Deehan, 1999; Richardson & Budd, 2003). Alcohol consumption has traditionally been positioned as a 'male endeavour' (Day et al., 2004: 166), and heavy drinking is typically equated with masculinity (Montemurro & McClure, 2005). However, recent research has documented a marked

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[2] The term DASA is used throughout this thesis, except when participants or other studies refer to alternative terms. Alternative terms which are commonly used in the media, research reports and awareness raising materials, when referring to DASA, are 'drug rape', 'date rape drugs' and 'spiked drinks'. These terms have been discounted since they place an emphasis on the drugs used, rather than the perpetrator of the assault.

[3] A 2005 Datamonitor report (cited in Institute of Alcohol Studies fact sheet *Women and Alcohol)* estimated that young British women (under 25 years) already drank substantially more than their counterparts in other European countries, and that they are projected to increase their intake by an additional 31% over the next five years, drinking more than three times as much as young women in France and Italy by 2009.

[4] There is no internationally agreed definition of binge drinking. However, in the UK binge drinking has been defined as women who consume 6 or more units and men who consume 8 or more units in a single drinking session.

increase in the amount of alcohol consumed by young women (Richardson & Budd, 2003; Mathews & Richardson, 2005; McKenzie & Haw, 2006). In the UK, the General Household Survey (2002) indicates that the vast majority (91%) of young women in Scotland report drinking alcohol, although women still drink significantly less than men[5] (Rickards et al., 2004).

The Institute of Alcohol Studies (2008) suggest that a range of factors have contributed to the upward trend in women's increased alcohol consumption including: more women participating in the work force leading to higher disposable income, fewer family responsibilities, more 'women friendly' pubs and drinks, and media endorsement of a heavy drinking culture. It would appear that changing patterns of women's alcohol consumption and socialising in bars has been influenced by a hybrid of social and commercial imperatives.

However, within the media and public health discourses in the UK, much concern has been expressed about the implications of women's rising alcohol consumption, 'ladette'[6] behaviour and 'binge drinking' (Measham, 2006). Despite the greater likelihood of men engaging in violent or offending behaviour when they have consumed alcohol (Deehan, 1999; Richardson & Budd, 2003), particular concern has been voiced about women's levels of drinking, accompanied by substantial media coverage of a growing and problematic 'ladette culture' (Day et al., 2004; Jackson & Tinkler, 2007). According to press reports, 'ladettes' are an undesirable by-product of women's increasing independence and equality with men in late modern society (Jackson & Tinkler, 2007). The following news headlines demonstrate the nature of the press reporting around this issue:

The ladette takeover
(Daily Mail, 19th January 2004)

Ladette girls 'outdrink the boys'
(BBC News, 26th January 2006)

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[5] Women's lower levels of alcohol consumption is not restricted to the UK; in a comparative study across 29 countries Rahav et al. (2006) reported men's alcohol consumption to be heavier than women's in all of the countries studied although there was some variation according to the social position of women within each society.
[6] The *Oxford English Dictionary* describes a 'ladette' as 'a young woman who behaves in a boisterously assertive and crude manner and engages in heavy drinking sessions.'

Ladette binge-drinking violence soars by 300% in just seven years
(Daily Mail, 8th March 2009)

Ladette culture to blame for women binge-drinking
(North West Evening Mail, 26th March 2009)

Alcohol consumption is conventionally associated with masculine identities (Gough & Edwards, 1998; Lyons, 2006), and women who drink (particularly to excess) subvert virtues typically associated with normative femininity, such as modesty, caring and nurturance (Day et al., 2004). More specifically, Jackson and Tinkler (2007: 259) argue that 'ladettes' have been subject to negative commentary within the media due to the association of this hedonistic lifestyle with health problems, social dis/order and most significantly, gender dis/order. Some sociologists have argued that a 'moral panic'[7] (Cohen, 1972) exists in relation to women drinking due to continuing associations of normative femininity with motherhood (Abbott & Wallace, 1996; McConville, 2008). After all, as Curlee (1968: 16) notes, "no one likes to believe that the hand that rocks the cradle might be a shaky one". Ladette culture, whereby young women are perceived to adopt behaviours conventionally associated with working class masculinity, is considered to be inherently 'unnatural'. The term 'ladette' itself exemplifies the use of 'male' as the 'norm'; a diminutive suffix is added to produce a female version of this term (Day et al., 2004).

Paradoxically, this concern about women's 'laddish' drinking behaviour has also been accompanied by a focus on women's vulnerability to sexual assault when they drink alcohol (Payne-James & Rogers, 2002). Tenuous links between these issues have also been made in the media, as illustrated by the following headlines:

Drink biggest cause of date rape
(Scotsman News, 7th July, 2002)

Rape danger of being a ladette
(Daily Mail, 29 September 2004)

Police tell women to 'be sensible' as binge-drinking leads to rape rise
(The Times, 3rd May 2005)

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[7] The key elements of Cohen's (1972) definition of moral panic can be surmised as follows: something or someone is defined as a threat to moral values or interests; this threat is depicted in an easily recognised form by the media; there is a rapid build up of public concern; there is a response from the authorities or opinion makers; and the panic recedes or results in social changes.

Rape warning over binge-drinking
(BBC News, 9th October 2007)

Sociological and criminological research literature around the issue of alcohol and sexual violence, as discussed in Chapter Two, suggests that the relationship between these two variables is not as simplistic as these media headlines might suggest. Nonetheless, women's increasing levels of alcohol consumption has been identified as a policy concern, and a number of initiatives, including safety campaigns, have been developed in a bid to counter this problem. Relatively little research, however, has addressed this issue from the perspective of young women themselves.

Drug assisted sexual assault as a 'new' risk

Drink spiking and drug assisted sexual assault (DASA) entered the public consciousness in the UK primarily through press reports in the 1990s highlighting the danger of 'date-rape drugs' such as Rohypnol and GHB[8]. Despite ambiguity about the nature and definition of drink spiking and drug-assisted sexual assault, exacerbated by methodological difficulties in establishing the prevalence of this phenomenon (Fitzgerald & Riley, 2000; Benyon et al., 2005), considerable media attention and a spate of preventative advice on this issue has been administered to young women. For this reason, the popular presentation of this issue in the media requires some consideration prior to reviewing the nature of the safety advice which has been directed towards women. The following description of the information typically available to the public about 'drug rape' by Welner (2001: 40) provides some context for understanding this issue:

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[8] Rohypnol is a member of the flunitrazepam family of sedative-hypnotic drugs used in the treatment of anxiety and insomnia. It has a pronounced amnesiac effect that is beneficial in a medical context, as it can be given to combat the effects of unpleasant procedures such as changing dressings of burn victims and the realignment of broken bones. GHB (gamma Hydroxybutyrate acid) is a central nervous system depressant that was initially developed as an anaesthetic (Finch & Munro, 2005).

It was only several years ago that the news media raised public awareness about drug facilitated sexual assault. The information available to the public suggested that the typical scenario involved a social setting, such as a singles bar or a party, at which a male would target a woman, surreptitiously spike her drink with a sedative, and then, when the woman was incapacitated, sexually assault her. In this scenario, the perpetrator often had no previous contact with the victim. The perpetrator was in effect, a stranger. Because the drug often affected the victim's memory, the perpetrator at least in some instances, remained a stranger. This frightening prospect – that a rapist could so furtively offend and remain at large because victims could not remember the rape – focused early attention on the bar and club scene.

This depiction of DASA has simultaneously been accompanied by media reports which suggest that the incidence of this type of offence is increasing (Beynon et al., 2005)[9], and that it is a particularly serious offence, with some commentators describing DASA as "the perfect crime in a pill" (Sturman, 2000: 9). In relation to 'drug-rape', Graham Rhodes of the Roofie Foundation[10] warns, "If you are a woman living anywhere in Britain you should be afraid, very afraid"[11]. However, some commentators have questioned the legitimacy of drug-assisted sexual assault, suggesting that it is no more than an urban myth (Kasteel, 2004; Taylor et al., 2004). Kasteel (2004), for example, notes that police forensic scientists have dismissed 'drink spiking' as an 'urban myth', which has been used as, "an excuse to hide abhorrent behaviour or inexperienced drinking, as a way of explaining or trying to explain away, what young people were doing when they shouldn't be". Meanwhile, other commentators contend that women have been sexually assaulted in this way throughout time, although the development of a discourse to frame this phenomenon is relatively new (Lawson & Crookes, 2003). To this end, alcohol has been identified as the most commonly used 'date-rape drug' (Hindmarch & Brinkmann, 1999; Sturman, 2000; Hindmarch et al., 2001; Lovett et al., 2004).

The existing research evidence in relation to DASA is reviewed in more depth in Chapter Two. For the moment, it is the policy and practice implications of identifying DASA as a new risk to women, which are noteworthy. At a policy level, there is

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[9] Reviewing UK press reports about this issue Beynon et. al (2005: 2-3) report that prevalence estimates of drink spiking or drug facilitated sexual assault vary enormously within press articles, although all articles which make reference to the frequency of these incidents suggest that it is increasing.

[10] The Roofie Foundation is a UK based support agency which deals with issues surrounding drug rape and sexual abuse.

[11] Rhodes, G., in publicity materials for the Roofie Foundation, quoted in Greer, G. (2000), *The Whole Woman, London*, Anchor, p.353.

growing recognition that the complex area of sexual violence and the use of intoxicants require attention. This attention has taken the form, not only of proposed legal reform in the area of sexual offences[12], but of a renewed concentration of safety advice for women who socialise in bars, pubs and clubs. The implications of this 'new' risk and associated safety advice for young women socialising in bars, pubs and clubs is a central concern of this thesis.

A renewed focus on safety advice for women

Recent years have witnessed a spate of advice and warnings about DASA, alcohol consumption, and personal safety being issued to young women who socialise in bars, pubs and clubs. This advice needs to be viewed in the context of a tradition of safety advice directed towards women and a growth in self-help crime prevention literature more broadly. To a certain extent, it could be argued that the recent preoccupation with safety advice for women drinking in bars, pubs and clubs is a reflection of a broader concern with crime prevention amidst claims that we now live in a 'culture of fear' (Furedi, 2002). Beck (1992) argues that as contemporary western societies have become increasingly modernised, they produce more risks for their members, and that members of society become more aware of these risks. For Giddens, (1991), these modern societies are associated with insecurities and uncertainties as old traditions have been questioned. Hence, we live in increasingly individualised societies, whereby individuals are increasingly viewed as responsible for their own affairs and destinies (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1996). Within the context of crime prevention, O'Malley (1996) contends the burden of responsibility for minimising the risk of crime has shifted from the state via the criminal justice system to individuals in the form of self help crime prevention. Similarly, Garland (1996: 446) posits that, "crime has become a routine part of modern consciousness", leading to the "criminology of the self". In essence, by encouraging

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[12] There is no specific definition or offence of drug assisted rape or sexual assault in Scotland. However, following the Lord Advocate's Reference (No.1 of 2001), the common law definition of rape was amended, from 'sexual intercourse with a woman against her will', to 'without her consent'. This removed the implication that force is required for a rape to take place even if the woman has not consented, challenging the relegation of sexual intercourse with a woman who is sleeping, unconscious or self-stupefied by intoxicants to clandestine injury rather than rape (Finch & Munro, 2005). Further changes to existing law are proposed in the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Bill, introduced to Parliament in June 2008. Proposed changes include reforming the definition of rape, and the introduction of a definition of consent as 'free agreement'. A set of circumstances whereby free agreement is absent are attached to this definition, including when a person is incapable due to the effects of alcohol or another substance. An offence of 'administering a substance for sexual purposes' is also proposed.

individuals to moderate their lifestyles crime prevention literature shifts the emphasis from offender to victim (Campbell, 2005).

However, from a feminist perspective, it could be argued that women have always been held individually responsible for preventing the violence which is inflicted upon them. A great deal of crime prevention literature focuses on the threat of sexual violence, and is overwhelmingly directed at women (Campbell, 2005). Indeed, Yeater & O'Donohue (1999: 17) assert that a "veritable cornucopia of advice has been given to women over the years", while "experts in the field have suggested everything from self-defence training to vomiting or defecating on oneself to appear unattractive to a would-be assailant". Reviewing a range of police and other governmental crime prevention literature disseminated to women during the 1980s and 1990s, Stanko (1996: 11) categorises safety advice issued to women around three main themes: "suggestions about how to conduct oneself when home alone, fending off exterior intrusion; advice about how to walk on the street, carry one's handbag, and how to travel by car or public transport; and reassurance if an assault happens, with a description of the partnership the victim will have with the police to solve the crime". Using Taxonomic research, it has also been suggested that a typology of rapists based on their motivations to rape (Knight & Prentky, 1990), could be used to teach women how to respond effectively with each type of rapist (Yeater & O'Donohue, 1999). In the event that a woman should experience a sexual assault, conflicting advice about whether women should fight back or not has also been issued over the years (Campbell, 2005).

While preventative advice of this nature is by no means homogenous (Campbell, 2005), the common denominator within such advice is the suggestion that women can, and should, be individually responsible for their own safety. This philosophy represents a departure from feminist approaches to rape prevention which emphasise the importance of a gendered analysis of sexual assault, challenging rape supportive attitudes and debunking rape myths (Neame, 2003). Perhaps most significantly, feminist activists have highlighted women's right to live free from the threat of sexual violence, irrespective of their lifestyle choices. Feminist critiques of conventional safety advice for women reflect four key concerns: the individualisation of responsibility (and blame); the gendering of risk and responsibility; the adoption of a limited conceptualization of sexual violence; and the absence of any focus on men who choose to perpetrate sexual assault. These critiques of safety advice directed towards women were developed in the

1980s and 1990s, prior to the current raft of safety advice and the contemporary concern with women's increased levels of alcohol consumption, drink spiking, and DASA. Public concern about DASA has been particularly prominent in recent years. This concern has prompted a range of agencies, including the police, sexual assault support services, universities and the government, to develop awareness raising campaigns about this issue. In the UK advice has received little theoretical scrutiny, although a body of literature examining these safety initiatives has emerged in Australia (Lawson & Crookes, 2003; Neame, 2003; Carmody, 2003; Lawson & Olle, 2005). Critiques of conventional safety advice are outlined below alongside reflections on contemporary safety advice directed towards young women in bars, pubs and clubs, including whether this contemporary advice represents a departure from conventional prevention literature.

Individualising responsibility and limiting conceptualisations of sexual violence

The theme of individualised responsibility is evident in some aspects of situational crime prevention advice, and early sociological analyses such as Amir's (1971) theory of victim-precipitation in rape, with their inherent focus on the contributory role of the victim. In keeping with conventional sexual assault prevention approaches, a key reoccurring theme within contemporary public education campaigns about DASA, and women's safety in bars, pubs and clubs more generally, is a focus on how individuals can behave in a way that will prevent their drinks from being 'spiked', resulting in a sexual assault or rape. Arguably, the development of these preventative campaigns represents a renewed focus on individual responsibility for safety in bars, pubs and clubs. The following messages are typical of the safety advice found in contemporary awareness raising materials[13]:

> *Don't be a target, be pub and club savvy, don't lose it!*
>
> *Plan your night out if you can and let someone know where you are going and what time you expect to get home.*
>
> *Drug rape is rare: don't let it happen to you!*
>
> *If you do wish to accept a drink from someone, make sure it is in a bottle and that the bottle is opened in front of you. Better still, open it yourself and always carry your own bottle opener.*

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[13] To view more examples of safety advice issued to young women, see Appendix 1.

Just who has bought you that drink, can you trust them?

Such an approach has been critiqued by feminist commentators on the premise that it positions women as responsible for stopping sexual violence (Neame, 2003). It is argued that this approach limits women's freedom and autonomy in public space and invokes a victim blaming discourse should a woman fail to adhere to these standards of conduct (Campbell, 2005). This is particularly problematic given the limited, and arguably distorted, conceptualisation of sexual violence found within prevention literature. Dekeserdy et al. (1992), are critical of crime prevention literature which focuses on women's vulnerability in public spaces when women encounter more prevalent threats to their safety in private spaces at the hands of known men. Meanwhile, Campbell (2005: 129) describes the lack of advice given to women about the risks of marriage and dating as a "remarkable oversight". In other words, the expectation that women can be individually empowered to prevent sexual assault in this way is fundamentally flawed on the basis that it presents women with an inaccurate model of risk (Lawson & Olle, 2005). Yet, contemporary advice in relation to DASA represents an extension of this flawed model by adopting a limited definition of this phenomenon. In Scotland, the majority of these campaigns have adopted a limited definition of DASA in line with popular media representation of the issue. That is, a scenario whereby a drug is surreptitiously administered to a woman's drink (via 'drink-spiking') by a stranger, leaving the woman incapacitated and vulnerable to a premeditated sexual assault. As will be discussed in Chapter Two, this scenario does not reflect the reality of the risks most commonly facing women in this regard.

However, recent safety advice issued to women has also evolved to adopt a new dimension. Current advice impresses upon women the need to take responsibility not just for their own safety, but for the safety of their friends. The following extracts from safety leaflets and posters illustrate the nature of this advice:

> *When going to a pub, club or party avoid going alone; you are far more vulnerable on your own. If you are with friends, then you are with people who can look out for each other.*

> *If out with friends, appoint a drinks' watcher (perhaps someone who is not drinking alcohol) who can ensure that the drinks of everyone in your party are looked after.*

> *Girl's night out? Have fun, be aware and take care.*

It is important to look after not only yourself, but your friends as well. If you all keep an eye on each other, then you will be safer.

Go out in a group and have a 'sober' friend who can look after you.

Safety advice which recommends that women look after their friends however, may be something of a double-edged sword; while it detracts from the notion that women are solely responsible for their own safety, it simultaneously increases women's responsibility for preventing violence which is perpetrated against other women, by men.

The gendering of risk and responsibility

Conventional crime prevention literature has been critiqued by feminist writers on account of gendered notions of risk behaviour. Walklate (1997: 38) argues that the masculinist stance adopted in conventional criminology had led to understandings of criminal victimization and criminal behaviour being associated with a presumption of risk avoidance. This has, in turn, resulted in "a masculinist interpretation of what counts as risky behaviour, thus endorsing some behaviours for men as acceptably risky and some behaviours for women as unacceptably risky" (Walklate, 1997: 38). For women, risky behaviour has traditionally been positioned as behaviour which strays beyond appropriate feminine behaviours into behaviour which may be viewed as 'unrespectable' (e.g. alcohol consumption, wearing 'provocative' clothing, or going out unaccompanied). Recent awareness raising campaigns, which have focused on women and alcohol consumption, appear to focus on a hybrid of risk of sexual assault, and damage to social and sexual reputation by alluding to 'respectable behaviour'. This is exemplified by the following excerpts taken from recent campaigns:

Keep your valuables under wraps – don't tempt a thief to pinch your assets. (accompanied by an image of a woman's bottom on show from a short dress)

(Safe! Magazine, Issue 1, June 2006)

Drinking too much can be extremely dangerous. What starts off as a good night can lead to embarrassment, regret and even harm.

Say when . . . A night to remember should be just that, not something that you can't remember or something you just want to forget. Drinking just to get drunk, it's not sexy or glamorous.

(West Lothian Drug Action Team leaflet)

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It would seem from these messages that the risks women face are multi-dimensional in that it is not only their physical safety which is threatened when they socialise in bars and clubs, but also their sexual reputation and their moral safety. Lawson and Olle (2005) argue that the belief that women should modify their 'risky' behaviour upholds the myth that men are unable to control themselves if women are sexually provocative.

Surveying crime prevention literature directed towards women, Gardner (1990: 313) offers an insightful critique, arguing that this literature acts as "a body of normative beliefs about women, crime, and conduct in public places". Utilising Goffman's notion of the 'situated self' Gardner (1990: 312) contends that, "For women, both advice and experience combine to affect the particular incarnations of the self appropriate to the situation of being in public places – a socially situated self, as Goffman (1963: 112) defines it". Perhaps most significantly, Gardner (1990: 324) highlights some of the difficulties and tensions women encounter, should they follow crime prevention advice:

> *Thus women who attempt to be crime conscious, and simultaneously who are attempting to give the appearance of attractive and casual self-contained non-involvement in public, understandably find it a strain simultaneously to prime themselves to run, scream, enter the nearest building, stand in a carefully considered "safe" spot, walk in the middle of the street with dignity, and refuse apparently innocent (and perhaps actually innocent) requests for aid, matches, and information.*

The implications of a preventative approach, which focuses on women policing themselves, their friends and their social and sexual reputation, has been given relatively little consideration within recent research literature in terms of its impact on women, and their behaviour. Furthermore, the reasons why DASA has emerged as a new risk to women in recent years has not been questioned, despite evidence to suggest that women have been assaulted in this way throughout time (Lawson & Crookes, 2003). It could be argued that recent prevention initiatives about DASA, with their inherent focus on women preventing an assault from happening to them, have the potential to act as a mechanism of social control over women by reminding them of their vulnerability to sexual violence, and the ways in which their own 'risky' behaviour may 'provoke' such a situation. Berrington and Jones (2002: 309-10) identify women's rejection of patriarchal values and their increasing independent use of public space as a potential threat to male status, power and control arguing that, within the context of DASA, fostering fear amongst women, "instils insecurity, undermines their autonomy and reinforces patriarchal ideology that presents men as their 'natural' protectors". By

highlighting particular risks to women, while obscuring others, feminist theorists have argued that rape, and the fear of rape, acts as a measure of social control over women, limiting women's participation in public life. These arguments are particularly relevant to this thesis and will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three.

The omission of the behaviour of abusive men

Tensions exist in terms of how to raise awareness about the issue of women's safety in bars, pubs and clubs without simply raising women's fear, or holding women responsible for the violence which may be inflicted upon them. It would seem that the logical solution to this difficulty would be to target the men who perpetrate sexual assault. However, in contrast with the safety advice issued to women and their friends, there is no safety advice issued to men which suggests that they keep an eye on their friends to ensure that they do not sexually assault a woman despite the fact that 99% of sexual assault perpetrators are male (Lovett et al., 2004). In critiquing police advice as failing to condemn male violence as indicative of women's subordinate position in society, Stanko (1996: 17) objects to the message that 'prudent' women can avoid men's violence since it individualises responsibility and avoids any "collective comment on *the problem of men*". Within contemporary safety advice, the role of men who sexually assault women who are intoxicated is largely obscured by the focus on women's 'risky' behaviour or the drugs which are used to facilitate sexual assault, leading to a 'spiked drink as offender' paradigm (Lawson & Olle, 2005). Drawing upon Cohen's (1972) concept of 'moral panic', Berrington and Jones (2002) conclude that, in terms of 'drug rape', chemical substances, rather than the men who use them, are identified as new folk devils.

Berrington and Jones (2002) also note that there is an absence of any discussion about masculinity in any press reports about DASA. Where male perpetrators are alluded to, they are depicted as deviant and quite distinct from normal men. Yet feminists have, since the 1970s, disputed the demarcation of 'normal' men and men who rape women (Griffin, 1971). This challenges the view, often articulated by the media, that men who perpetrate sexual assault are 'sex beasts' or 'monsters', portraying them as the demonic 'other'. The recognition that rapists are 'normal' men is in keeping with research findings which have consistently demonstrated that women are most likely to be assaulted by men who are known to them as husbands, partners, former partners,

brothers, friends, fathers, uncles and work colleagues, rather than by predatory strangers (Painter, 1991; Myhill & Allen, 2002; Greenan, 2004; Kelly et al., 2005; Paget, 2005).

Carmody and Carrington (2003) contend that preventative work on sexual assault should focus not on the individual pathology of certain men or the 'risky-behaviour' of certain women, but on cultural beliefs which normalise intimate sexual violence as a natural or exaggerated expression of innate male sexuality. Such an approach would challenge the cultural norms that sanction exploitative sexual behaviour. This is an approach endorsed by Flood (2003), in arguing that violence against women cannot be eliminated without focusing preventative work on male behaviour. In a stronger critique of crime prevention literature, Campbell (2005) argues that compelling women to behave in certain ways constitutes femininity with weakness and vulnerability, which then furthers the possibility of rape rather than preventing it. This forms part of 'gendered configurations' which reify male dominance and female rapeability by constructing 'masculinity-as-aggressive' and 'femininity-as-vulnerable' (Campbell, 2005: 134). Central to Campbell's (2005: 119) critique of crime prevention literature is the belief that by naturalising rape and (re)producing gendered bodies in this way, prevention literature unwittingly installs rape as a 'fixed reality' through the casting of male sexual behaviour and feminine vulnerabilities as inevitable.

Despite this critique, with the exception of a campaign developed by the Home Office in 2006[14], which attempted to address the issue of men's responsibility to consider the implications of intoxicated sexual consent, a focus on the behaviour of abusive men, or masculinity more generally, is entirely absent from contemporary UK safety campaigns. The implications of safety campaigns which focus almost exclusively on the behaviour of women are a central concern of this thesis.

Summary

This chapter has highlighted the key aim of this study. That is, to understand how young women view, experience and negotiate their safety while socialising in bars, pubs and clubs. The context and rationale for the study has been outlined, highlighting three key contemporary developments in this subject area: concern about women's increasing

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[14] To view material from the Home Office 'Consent' campaign, see Appendix 1.

levels of alcohol consumption; the presentation of DASA as a 'new' risk to women; and a renewed focus on safety advice directed towards young women socialising in bars, pubs and clubs. These developments have been located within a context of apparent new freedoms enjoyed by young women, and key areas of debate have been highlighted in relation to these developments. The content of the remaining chapters is outlined below in order to assist the reader in navigating the layout of this thesis.

Thesis structure

Following on from this introductory chapter, Chapter Two reviews sociological and criminological literature relevant to young women's safety in bars, pubs and clubs. In doings so, gaps within the literature are highlighted as the basis for the current study. Chapter Three explores theoretical frameworks and concepts which have the potential to assist understanding of existing literature and the research findings presented in subsequent chapters. It is proposed that the contrasting ideas within feminist structural and poststructural perspectives provide a particularly useful framework for understanding and contextualising the current study. Key theoretical concepts from these frameworks are identified as: power, social control, and resistance. These concepts will be explored within this chapter, and it is argued that understanding these concepts in relation to gendered identities is particularly important.

The methodological approach taken by this study is outlined in Chapter Four. The rationale for the chosen research strategy and design is presented before discussing how participants were recruited to take part in the study, and how the fieldwork unfolded in practice. The process of data analysis is then outlined in order to facilitate understanding of how the study findings were reached. Adopting a reflexive approach, this chapter concludes by reflecting upon the challenges encountered during the research process, within the context of adopting a feminist methodological approach.

Chapters Five through to Eight present the findings of the study, based on the focus group and interview data. More specifically, Chapter Five explores the role of socialising and consuming alcohol in bars, pubs and clubs in the lives of contemporary young women. The reasons why young women choose to attend, and indeed avoid, particular bars, pubs and clubs are considered alongside the significance of who young women choose to attend bars, pubs and clubs with. The role of safety considerations and gendered expectations of young women's behaviour in these venues discussed within

this chapter. Chapter Six moves on to explore the question of whether socialising in bars, pubs and clubs is understood and experienced as a safe leisure activity by young women. This chapter begins by firstly exploring young women's own understandings of the risks encountered by young women socialising in bars, pubs and clubs, including how they may have changed over time. Understanding participants' safety concerns in and around bars, pubs and clubs and their experiences of their safety being compromised forms a key focus of this chapter. Consideration is also given to whether young women reported any of these incidents to the police, or to staff at the venues where they occurred.

Chapter Seven documents the safety strategies and behaviours young women use to negotiate their safety while socialising in bars, pubs and clubs. Particular attention is given to whether young women adopted the safety strategies most commonly advocated in safety literature. These strategies relate primarily to the prevention of drink spiking, looking out for friends, limiting alcohol consumption and seeking assistance from bouncers or bar staff, if required. The rationale for adopting or rejecting these strategies is also considered to assist in understanding whether these behaviours can be theorised as forms of resistance, or repressive regulation of women's behaviour. Responding to unwanted sexual attention from men emerged as a key concern for young women in this study. Chapter Eight, therefore, addresses how young women accommodate, resist and challenge unwanted sexual attention from men in bars, pubs and clubs, including the tensions involved in doing so.

Finally, Chapter Nine discusses the key findings from this study as presented in Chapters Five through to Eight, and highlights the relevance of these findings to existing theoretical and empirical knowledge. The chapter is structured by the key themes which have emerged from the study findings, and situated in the context of the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter Three. The central themes which have emerged from this study are grounded in the implications of young women's safety concerns and experiences for their freedom to socialise in bars, pubs and clubs, and whether their use of this social space can be theorised in terms of gendered resistance or repression. Feminist structural and poststructural theoretical perspectives are drawn upon to facilitate a nuanced and theoretical understanding of the study findings in this regard. Chapter Nine concludes by highlighting the theoretical and empirical

contribution of this thesis, including the implications for future research, policy and practice.

Chapter Two
Understanding Women's Safety in Bars, Pubs and Clubs
An Overview of Existing Research

Introduction

Drawing upon a range of sociological and criminological literature, this chapter reviews literature relevant to young women's safety in bars, pubs and clubs. Although there is a lack of literature which specifically considers the issue of women's safety within the social space of bars, pubs and clubs, related bodies of literature can be drawn upon to facilitate our understanding of key elements of this problem. To this end, this chapter begins by examining gendered disparities in the fear of personal victimisation, and sexual violence in particular. Studies which have measured the extent of sexual violence are then reviewed and contextualised by exploring the cumulative impact of sexual violence on women's safety concerns. The work of feminist theorists relating to the nature, extent and impact of sexual violence at an individual and societal level makes a significant contribution to this body of literature.

Turning to consider the social space of bars, pubs and clubs, literature specific to safety in bars, pubs and clubs, and women's use of public space more generally, is then reviewed. Literature from the field of leisure studies makes the most substantial contribution to this aspect of the review. Finally, literature which explores the links between alcohol, sexual violence, and DASA, is also examined. This chapter concludes by highlighting gaps within the literature reviewed, presenting this as the basis for the current study.

Understanding women's safety

Gendered disparities in the fear of personal victimisation

It is impossible to consider the specific question of women's safety without some contextual understanding of what it means for women to be safe or unsafe. What it means to be safe is likely to vary between individual women, and between different

groups of women. However, the meaning of safety differs significantly between men and women, in that women understand it to be both sexual and physical while men tend to understand it to be physical (Stanko, 1990; Tulloch, 2004). In this regard, Stanko (1990: 72) argues that the reality of sexual assault is "a prime feature of women's understanding of their personal safety". Indeed, the British Crime Survey consistently documents rape as the crime feared by most women (Hough, 1995; Myhill & Allen, 2002).

Understanding and explaining the gendered fear of violence has been a concern of criminologists and sociologists alike in recent times. Perceived anomalies between the level of women's fear and the actual extent of risks to women's safety represent a particular area of contention. Women perceive themselves to be at a significantly greater risk of criminal victimisation, despite the fact that men appear to be at greater risk of personal victimisation (Stanko, 1990; Valentine, 1992; Walklate, 1997; Tulloch, 2004)[15]. Following analysis of victimisation surveys from Scotland, England and Wales, and the USA, in which men's reported fear of personal victimisation is approximately one third of women's, Stanko (1987: 126) contends that the most significant predictor in understanding fear of crime is being female. Meanwhile, Campbell (2005) describes the gap in male and female fear of crime as a function of gender.

Pain (1997b) notes that women's seemingly disproportionately high levels of fear have led some commentators to suggest that women's fear of criminal victimisation is therefore irrational, contributing to debates within criminology about the 'rational/irrational' fear approach (Tulloch, 2004). This perspective has been critiqued by feminist commentators who advocate the need to understand women's fear of criminal victimisation in the context of their lived experiences and actual high levels of violence perpetrated against them (Hanmer & Saunders, 1984; Stanko, 1987). Indeed, numerous feminist studies have documented high levels of sexual violence experienced by women (Hanmer & Saunders, 1984; Hall, 1985; Kelly & Radford, 1990; Painter, 1991; Henderson, 1997). The gendered disparity in concern about personal safety is contextualised by Stanko (1990: 86) as follows:

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[15] In the Scottish Crime Survey (2000) for example, only 3.5% of men said that they felt 'very unsafe' walking alone after dark compared with 16% of women, despite the fact that men were reported to be more than three times as likely to experience a physical assault.

Women's heightened level of anxiety is born of an acute reading of their relationship to safety. It is not a misguided hysteria or paranoia. Women's life experiences – as children, adolescents and adults – are set in a context of everpresent sexual danger. Worry about personal safety is one way women articulate what it means to be female and live, day-in and day-out, in communities where women are targets of sexual violence.

Indeed, victims of sexual assault in the UK and globally are overwhelmingly, although not exclusively, female (Amnesty International UK, 2005). Meanwhile the majority (99%) of perpetrators are male (Lovett et al., 2004). Violence against women is also known to transcend social boundaries and is, therefore, experienced by women of all ages, social classes, races, religions and nationalities, all over the world (Greenan, 2004: 8)[16].

Examining women's fear of sexual violence

On the basis of actual high levels of sexual violence reported by women, Stanko (1987: 130) asserts that, "women's subjective estimate of their risk of rape may indeed be an objective risk, not a perception of risk". That said, the notion that women's heightened risk estimates mirror the actual high level of violence experienced by women can only provide part of the explanation as to why women's fear of victimisation is particularly high, otherwise men's fear of victimisation would also be high in accordance with the higher levels of crime perpetrated against them. This would suggest that there are other processes at work which contribute to women's heightened risk assessments. These processes can be explored further by considering the location of women's fear. That is, what, where and who women fear. This requires a critical, gendered understanding of risk, which Walklate (1997) argues has been neglected within conventional approaches to risk assessment within criminology.

Women's fear of victimisation is paradoxical in that women's perceptions of their own safety are significantly at odds with where the risk to them is located (Greenan, 2004: 24). Most women feel unsafe or fear being attacked in a public space (Hanmer & Saunders, 1984; Gordon & Riger, 1991; Painter, 1991; Seabrook & Green, 2004; Green

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[16] Some women may be targeted because of factors such as their race, class, culture, age or sexuality (Amnesty International, 2005), and these factors may also mean that different groups of women may experience specific issues (Reid, 2003), or that the impact of sexual violence may be compounded (Watson, 2000).

& Singleton, 2006), yet the risks of violence are greater in a private space (Dobash & Dobash, 1992; Myhill & Allen, 2002). The findings of the British Crime Survey (2000), for example, indicate that the most common location for a rape to take place was victim's home (55%), followed by offender's home (20%), while the number of rapes that took place in a public space was much lower (13%).

The spatial location of perceived risk has also been documented by theorists within the field of leisure studies. Being safe or comfortable in public space is something which women have not been taught (Wesely & Gaarder, 2004), and is unusual for women (Wearing, 1998). Indeed, Skeggs (1999) argues that public spaces are masculine and most women learn that they do no belong there. In a public space, women may feel particularly vulnerable to unpredictable violations of her self, ranging from sexual objectification to physical assault (Gardner, 1990). The way in which constructions of public and private space influence risk assessments made by women has been described by Valentine (1992) as the 'geography of fear'. Valentine (1992) argues that women's inability to control who they interact with in public spaces profoundly affects their sense of security. The spatial location of perceived risk, therefore, is a particularly significant consideration for women's use of leisure spaces. Ultimately, what is perceived to be risky is real in its consequences (Burgess, 1998).

The spatial location of sexual violence is closely associated with women's relationship to the perpetrators of these offences. Numerous research studies have confirmed that women are most likely to be assaulted by someone who is known to them (Walby & Allen, 2004; Greenan, 2004; Kelly et al., 2005; Paget, 2005), and most often by a partner or ex-partner (Painter, 1991; Myhill & Allen, 2002; Walby & Allen, 2004) Moreover, attacks by partners are more than twice as likely to result in physical injury as attacks by strangers (Myhill & Allen, 2002). This paradox in women's fear of sexual violence can be attributed to cultural stereotypes about rape and other forms of sexual assault. Central to rape mythology is the notion of 'real rape'. Susan Estrich (1987) coined the term 'real rape', highlighting the phenomenon where only certain types of rape are considered to be 'real'. The 'real rape' template can be described as an assault "by a stranger, outside, at night, involving a weapon and injuries" (Kelly, 2002: 13) Sometime previously, Smart and Smart (1978: 91) also argued that:

> *... perhaps the most significant prevailing cultural stereotype of rape is that involving a brutal assault where the aggressor is a sexual psychopath unable to contain or control his desires and the victim is a woman innocent, naïve or 'foolish' enough to leave herself vulnerable to attack by being in an isolated space (socially or geographically), usually after dark or 'curfew'.*

This stereotype of 'real rape', perpetuated by the media representation of rape, continues to be pervasive today, impacting significantly upon women's fear of sexual violence in public spaces, despite evidence from empirical research which testifies that this scenario does not reflect the reality of most women's experiences.

The extent of sexual violence experienced by women

Reviewing attempts to measure the extent of sexual violence provides a useful platform not only for considering the scale of the problem, but also for defining sexual violence and understanding what it means in the context of women's everyday lives. Sexual violence has come to be recognised as a serious public health and criminal justice problem (Finney, 2004). However, due to the nature of sexual violence, and the significant under-reporting of sexual offences, it is difficult to measure the true extent of sexual violence experienced by women. Although rapes reported to the police have risen over time (Temkin & Krahe, 2008), it is estimated that as few as one in five rapes are reported to the police in the UK (Myhill & Allen, 2002)[17]. In 2000 the British Crime Survey, for the first time, incorporated a specific module concerning sexual violence. The findings from this module suggested that 1 in 10 women in the UK have experienced some form of sexual victimisation (including rape) since the age of 16 (Myhill & Allen, 2002)[18]. The prevalence and incidence rates reported to the British Crime Survey, however, are likely to be conservative estimates of the full extent of sexual violence in the UK.

Attempts to measure the extent of sexual violence experienced by women face particular methodological and conceptual challenges. Indeed, there is evidence to

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[17] Reasons why women may not report to the police, as evidenced by crime surveys and sexual assault support services, include feelings of shame and embarrassment, knowing or fearing the offender, concern that they will be disbelieved, and fearing their treatment by the legal system (White, 2004: 9).

[18] More specifically, the incidence and prevalence findings of this study, reported by Myhill and Allan (2002), indicated that 0.4% of women were raped in the year prior to the interview and 4.9% of women (approximately 1 in 20) have been raped in their lifetime, since the age of 16.

suggest that violence against women is minimised and denied both at a societal level, and by women themselves (Kelly & Radford, 1990). From a feminist perspective, Kelly and Radford (1990) argue that the law, by constructing a very limited definition of sexual violence which excludes all but the most 'extreme' forms of sexual violence, trivialises women's experiences. Indeed, women may not define sexual violence as 'criminal' and thus may not report it in a 'crime' survey (Myhill & Allen, 2002)[19]. It has also been documented that women are reluctant to use the term 'rape' to define their own experiences (Schwartz, 1997), opting to use terms such as "unwanted sexual experience," "unpleasant sexual encounter", "sexual miscommunication" and "sexual assault" instead (Koss, 1998: 209).

A number of smaller scale dedicated surveys, specific to violence against women, have attempted to measure the extent of sexual violence against women in the UK by refining their methodology in a way which acknowledges the challenges associated with defining sexual violence. These dedicated surveys have typically utilised a feminist theoretical understanding of sexual violence. Key to this theoretical position is the adoption of an inclusive definition of sexual violence, sensitive to the connections between, and the collective impact of, different forms of male violence (e.g. domestic abuse, sexual harassment, rape, incest, sexual assault). In practice, this has entailed placing an emphasis on defining violence on the basis of women's subjective experiences of violence, including non-criminal and marginally criminal acts (Smith, 1994: 111), highlighting the importance of asking respondents about experiences of violence in different ways throughout the survey (Hanmer & Saunders, 1984; Kelly, 1988; Smith, 1994). As such, feminist surveys have tended to uncover very high levels of violence as compared with crime surveys or reports made to the police. Findings from these research studies have uncovered the following figures: 1 in 6 women have experienced rape, and 1 in 3 have been sexually assaulted at some point in their life (Hall, 1985); 1 in 4 women have experienced rape or attempted rape in their lifetime (Painter, 1991); and over 1 in 4 women have been made to take part in unwanted sexual activity (Henderson, 1997). Meanwhile, both Russell (1990) and Painter (1991) report a prevalence figure of 1 in 7 women experiencing rape in marriage.

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[19] Only 70% of women in the British Crime Survey (2000) who classified themselves as having been the victim of attempted rape also self classified this incident as a crime (Myhill & Allen, 2002). Of further significance, is the fact that in the same survey, only 60% of female rape victims were prepared to classify their experience as rape.

These findings would suggest that sexual violence is a pervasive feature of women's lives. It is perhaps unsurprising then that, according to the British Crime Survey, rape is the crime most feared by women (Hough, 1995; Myhill & Allen, 2002) and that women's fear of victimisation is greater than that of men's (Segal, 1990). On this basis it is entirely feasible to concur with Stanko's (1987: 130) proposition that "women's subjective estimate of their risk of rape may indeed be an objective risk, not a perception of risk".

The continuum of sexual violence

The validity of adopting a broad definition of sexual violence has been contested within the literature (Segal, 1990; Pain, 1997a; Kelly & Radford, 1998). A range of terms are used to identify and describe violence which is perpetrated by men, against women. These terms include "domestic violence/abuse; rape, sexual assault and sexual harassment; genital and sexual mutilation and harmful cultural and/or traditional practices; trafficking in women for sexual exploitation/domestic slavery" (Reid, 2003: 12). Central to feminist analyses of violence against women is the recognition that these different forms of violence against women are connected. The concept of 'sexual violence' has been adopted by some feminist commentators as a broad conceptualization of male violence against women (Kelly, 1988; Stanko, 1990; Kelly & Radford, 1998). Sexual violence has been described by Kelly (1988: 41) to include:

> *… any physical, visual, verbal or sexual act that is experienced by the woman or girl, at the time or later, as a threat, invasion or assault, that has the effect of hurting her or degrading her and/or takes away her ability to control intimate contact.*

This concept has been developed further by Kelly (1988: 97) in establishing sexual violence as a 'continuum', which ranges from "extensions of the myriad forms of sexism women encounter everyday through to the all too frequent murder of women and girls by men". Establishing a continuum of sexual violence is a prerequisite to understanding the interconnections between different forms of male violence. Rather than focusing on the different forms of violence and abuse as discrete issues, the continuum recognises commonalities between them in women's experience and theoretically as forms of violence underpinning patriarchal power and control (Radford et al., 2000). That is, different forms of violence against women reflect, and also serve to maintain, structural gender inequalities (Skinner et al., 2005).

However, the use of 'sexual violence' as a broad conceptual term has been contested. Segal (1990), for example, contends that while sexual harassment shares with violence a common basis in gendered power relations, it must be viewed as separate if experiences of sexual violence are not to be trivialised. Meanwhile Pain (1997b) argues that there are difficulties at an operational level with describing experiences of violence and harassment as sexual violence, since most women would draw distinctions between them, and they are very different experiences. Pain (1997b: 209) does, however, acknowledge that "sexual harassment, as a reminder to women of their social and physical vulnerability, has a role in increasing fear of more serious violent attack". Similarly, Segal (1990: 217) recognises that a continuum of men's violence does exist:

> *. . . if we include all the forms of intimidation women suffer at men's hands – the smacking of lips, muttering of obscenities, kerb crawling, grabbing of breasts and so on – women are subject to a kind of constant intimidation. When a flasher jumps out at a woman, or a voyeur lurks at our window, he is usually not a rapist or a killer. But he just might be. . . .There is a continuum of men's violence in so far as the effects of the variety of men's intrusive acts all contribute to women's experience of a lack of safety.*

Similarly, Kelly and Radford (1990: 42) assert that when women state that "nothing really happened" following intimidating encounters with men, they do so because they are aware that they were not raped[20]. The continuum of sexual violence is, therefore, a particularly useful concept in terms of contextualizing women's fear of sexual violence since it has the capacity to acknowledge the cumulative effects of men's behaviour on women, rather than considering acts of violence, intimidation, harassment or abuse as isolated incidents. For this reason, 'sexual violence' is a useful term to use in the context of understanding what may lead women to feel safe or unsafe. That is not to say, however, that women will experience individual acts of sexual violence within the continuum in the same way, or even define them as sexual violence. Radford et al. (2000: 2) contend that although the continuum facilitates theorization of commonalities and connections between different forms of sexual violence, the continuum is "constituted through difference: the different forms of sexual violence, their different impacts, and the different community and legal responses to women, positioned

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[20] Based on women's accounts collected during a community safety study, Kelly and Radford (1990: 43) highlight the way in which women continually minimise their experiences, stating that "nothing really happened" when they describe incidents where as a result of men's behaviour towards them they have experienced intimidation, felt sick and angry, been in tears and been unable to safely inhabit public space.

differently, within cultures and through history." This refutes the notion that radical feminists using the term 'sexual violence' in a broad sense have falsely universalised women's experiences. Rather, understanding sexual violence as a continuum acknowledges the complexities of the lived reality of women's experiences as Liz Kelly (2000) reminds us:

> *Whilst clear categories and definitions are important for statistical and research purposes, we must never forget that these are abstract analytic concepts developed for a specific purpose - to count the extent of violence. They do not reflect experiential reality, which is always more complex....*

(Liz Kelly, Domestic Violence: Enough is Enough Conference, London: October 2000, cited in Greenan, 2004: 14)

Women's safety in bars, pubs and clubs: existing research

A number of studies have given specific consideration to women's experiences and fear of crime, including violence (McLaughlin et al., 1990; Henderson, 1997), and specifically sexual violence (Stanko, 1985; Pain, 1997b). However, these studies have not given specific consideration to women's safety in bars, pubs and clubs. Conversely, research addressing safety in bars, pubs and clubs has not typically considered women's safety, or safety as a gendered experience. Studies looking at safety in licensed premises have instead tended to focus on intra-male violence (Graham et al., 1980; Tomsen, 1997; Graham & Wells, 2003; Winlow & Hall, 2006). This is perhaps indicative of the conventional association of alcohol consumption and aggression with masculinity (Strate, 1992; De Visser & Smith, 2007).

Other studies concerned with safety in bars, pubs and clubs have drawn upon environmental and situational crime prevention approaches, focusing upon aggravating features of the premises themselves (Forsyth et al., 2005), arguing that different bars carry different risks for aggression and that a typology of bars could, therefore, be a useful tool for developing prevention initiatives (Parks et al., 1998: 715). Research by Graham et al. (1980) represents one of the earliest studies of aggression and public drinking. Utilising observational methods in 185 drinking establishments, Graham et al. (1980) concluded that violence in these settings was strongly correlated with

environmental factors[21]. Other studies have replicated this approach although they have differed in emphasis. It has been suggested, for example, that unsafe environments in bars, pubs and clubs correspond with management and licensing practices (Homel et al., 1992; Hauritz et al., 1998), the physical design of premises (MacIntyre & Homel, 1997), permissive environments (Homel & Clarke, 1994), levels of intoxication (Wells et al., 1998; Hoaken & Pihl, 2000), and the behaviour of door staff (Marsh & Kibby, 1992; Graham et al., 1996; Wells et al., 1998). While this growing body of research makes a valuable contribution to attempts to reduce violence and disorder in the night time economy, it focuses predominantly on observable intra-male violence. It may, therefore, be of less value in understanding and responding to the more subtle, less observable aspects of women's safety concerns.

Parks (1998) critiques existing research on public drinking settings on the basis that it typically ignores observations of women or gender differences in favour of a focus on male drinking patterns. Meanwhile, Watson (2000: 2) contends that there is a "dearth of research" on young women's experiences at and around licensed premises. Although a significant body of research exists in relation to the links between alcohol consumption and victimisation (Grubin & Gunn, 1990; Ullman et al., 1999; Abbey et al., 2001; Finney, 2004), it has been argued that there is a lack of research which considers victimisation within the context of social drinking settings (Parks et al., 1998). This represents a significant gap in research literature in light of the considerable attention recently given within sociological and criminological literature, and the UK media, about the links between alcohol and sexual violence, women's increased levels of alcohol consumption and DASA.

Following a study, which elicited young women's views about their safety in Australian licensed premises from a feminist perspective, Watson (2000: 1) concluded that:

> *The most striking finding of this research is the extent to which young women are expected to tolerate sexual violence and harassment if they want to exercise their right to go out and party. . . . .The implications of this report are that for young women to participate fully in a range of recreational activities, they must be prepared to sacrifice their own safety.*

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[21] These factors include levels of drunkenness, poor ventilation, lack of cleanliness, the amount of sexual body contact and a hostile atmosphere.

The extent to which this finding can be applied to the experiences of young women in bars, pubs and clubs out with the Australian context, however, is unclear since there is a lack of comparable research in other countries[22]. A study conducted by Parks et al. (1998), which examined the risks and reasons for women drinking in bars using focus groups revealed high levels of victimisation: 48% had experienced physical violence and 33% had experienced attempted and completed rape. The average age of participants in this study was 31 years, and although the sample size was small (n=52), these findings indicate that safety, or rather a lack of safety, is a significant problem for women socialising in bars, pubs and clubs. Further, these findings concur with earlier research about the victimization experiences of women in bars which concluded that women who drink in this environment are subject to an increased risk of aggression (Fillmore, 1985; Parks & Miller, 1995). Issues surrounding women's use of public space, and their safety within these venues, are arguably heightened when they seek to socialise in bars, pubs and clubs. This is ostensibly due to these spaces being associated with a sexualised environment, the links between alcohol and sexual violence, and the identification of DASA as a 'new' risk to women. Existing research around these three issues is reviewed below.

Bars, pubs and clubs as sexualised environments

Given that it is the fear of sexual violence and harassment which underpins women's fear in public space (Pain, 2001), the sexualised environment of bars, pubs and clubs represent a particular concern. Bars, have been described as environments which are a high risk environment for women, characterised by heightened sexual expectations (Parks et al., 1998). It has been argued that women who attend bars, pubs and clubs are subject to heightened (wanted or unwanted) male attention (Snow et al., 1991). This is an area which has received relatively little specific attention within leisure studies, or indeed sociological studies more generally.

In a study designed to explore women's reasons for drinking in bars, Parks et al. (1998) report that women themselves described seeking a romantic or sexual encounter as a reason for going to a bar (although this was a motivation which tended to be attributed

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[22] It should also be noted that this study by Watson (2000) was based on young women who had presented to a sexual assault support service.

to 'other' women). Similarly, Watson (2000: 31) notes that young women described going to bars and clubs as an opportunity to socialise with friends and "meet guys". However, studies which have focused on the way in which women occupy bars, pubs and clubs indicate that this is an area where women are subject to particular risks. Following an ethnographic study of singles bars and nightclubs, Snow et al. (1991: 428) observe that:

> *. . . the generalized public accessibility of women is even heightened in drinking establishments and nightclubs frequented by both males and females. From the vantage point of men, women in such settings, whether in the role of patron or employee, constitute "fair game".*

Green et al. (1987: 86) also note that women who attend pubs are expected to be 'available', and in an earlier ethnographic study of bar behaviour, Cavan (1966) notes that although numerous public places can be the setting of a "pickup", public drinking places are infused with such expectations. Further, feminist geographers Mehta and Bondi (1999) (cited in Wesley, 2004) observe that the public spaces of streets and pubs were identified by college-age women as potentially hostile to women.

More recently, it has been argued that a shift in club culture reflects the potential for destabilising conventional gender relations within these traditionally sexualised environments (Thornton, 1995; Pini, 1997; MacRae, 2002). The growth of the 'rave scene' in the early 1990s, prompted some optimism that new modes of femininity would allow women the freedom to dance and take drugs without fearing sexual harassment or negative judgement of their sexual reputation (Pini, 1997). However, these claims have been met with caution. Studying clubbing identities, MacRae (2002) observes only small changes in gender relations, relating to a shift in emphasis from 'sexual intent' to 'sociability', in some contexts. Similarly, although McRobbie (1994) acknowledges the potential for conventional femininities and masculinities to be contested within club culture, she also points to tensions for women in relation to freedom and control (e.g. the freedom to dance and a need to remain in control).

Alcohol and sexual violence

The sale and consumption of alcohol is a significant feature of the night-time economy (Hobbs et al., 2000), and the association between alcohol, violence and disorder is well documented (Plant & Plant, 1992; Wells et al., 1998; Budd, 2003; Forsyth et al., 2005;

De Visser & Smith, 2007). Within sociological and criminological research literature, particular attention has been given to the relationship between alcohol and sexual violence. Alcohol is considered to be an important dimension in sexual violence (Finney, 2004), often with both offender and victim drinking in incidents of sexual violence (Abbey et al., 2001). Research exploring the relationship between alcohol and sexual violence had been undertaken most substantively in the US, although there would appear to be a growth in research interest in this area within the UK.

In a UK study of 142 men imprisoned for rape, 58% of men reported drinking 6 hours prior to the rape (Grubin & Gunn, 1990)[23]. Further, in a survey of victims of sexual assault, it was reported that 55% of victims and 73% of offenders were drinking or using drugs at the time of the assault (Koss, 1998). There is also some evidence to suggest that alcohol consumption by the perpetrator is associated with more significant injuries being sustained by the victim (Martin & Bachman, 1998; Ullman et al., 1999)[24]. Not surprisingly, licensed premises are associated with a greater frequency of sexual attacks (Combs-Lane & Smith, 2002), and alcohol-involved sexual assaults tend to occur in bars or in parties rather than in the victim or perpetrator's home (Abbey et al., 2001).

However, studies which quantify issues such as the levels of alcohol consumption of the perpetrators and victims of sexual violence, or the levels of violence perpetrated can only provide part of the picture. Reviewing research about alcohol and sexual assault, Abbey et al. (2001) conclude that alcohol consumption and sexual assault do co-occur, although this does not mean that alcohol causes sexual assault; they may operate in the opposite direction, or other factors may cause both. Indeed, alcohol consumption and sexual assault do not occur in a social vacuum. It has been suggested that alcohol and sexual violence co-occur as a result of the social contexts in which alcohol is consumed (Finney, 2004), the disinhibiting properties of alcohol (Parks et al., 1998), and the inability of intoxicated victims to assess risk and defend themselves sufficiently (Testa & Parks, 1996).

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[23] Given that relatively few rapes result in a criminal conviction, men who are imprisoned for rape may not be representative of men who rape women generally.
[24] These studies have methodological limitations in that they did not determine the amount of alcohol consumed or when it was consumed.

However, feminist theorists commenting upon the link between alcohol and sexual violence have highlighted negative evaluations of women who drink as particularly problematic. Day et al. (2004) observe that associations between alcohol and women's sexuality have been made throughout the ages. It has been argued that for women, alcohol consumption is not related to respectability; male disapproval is particularly marked in relation to women drinking, and negative consequences exist for women who "contravene the commonly accepted limits of appropriate or 'decent' behaviour" in leisure venues such as night clubs (Green et al., 1987: 85). There is evidence to suggest that these consequences include disbelief, or even blame, should a woman experience a sexual assault after consuming alcohol (Parks et al., 1998). Quite simply, Arbarbanel (2001: 23) states that, "Incapacitated victims who have voluntarily ingested alcohol or drugs are often viewed as 'asking for it'", or are at least viewed by men as being more available for sexual acts because they are of lower character than women who do not consume alcohol (Schwartz & DeKeseredy, 1997; Abbey et al., 2001). It has also been suggested that the appearance of intoxication conveys vulnerability for victimisation (Homel et al., 1992; Parks et al., 1998).

A survey of public attitudes towards sexual assault conducted by Amnesty International UK (2005) suggests that problematic attitudes towards women and the use of alcohol prevail in the UK: 30% of respondents thought that being drunk makes a woman in some way responsible for being raped. Similarly, research commissioned by Rape Crisis Scotland (2007) revealed that 26% of people questioned agreed that women contribute to being raped if they are drunk[25]. Indeed, some media commentators have contended that "Alcohol is being paraded as the new short skirt"[26]. Women who drink alcohol are frequently viewed as being more sexually available and promiscuous than women who do not consume alcohol (Testa & Parks, 1996; Abbey et al., 2001). The existence of these attitudes may, in part, explain why recent research by Lovett et al. (2004) has confirmed that rape cases involving alcohol or drugs are still less likely to progress through the legal system, and more likely to end in acquittals[27]. This echoes the assertion by Watson (2000: 12) that, "The role that alcohol and other drugs play in

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[25] Over 700 participants between the ages of 18 and 65 years were surveyed, reflecting the age of eligibility for jury service in Scotland.
[26] Julie Bindel "We must rethink rape" in *The Guardian*, 30/03/06.
[27] Other factors such as impaired memory are also likely to contribute to the difficulties in prosecuting sexual offence cases where intoxicants are involved.

sexual assault is most apparent in the area of perceived culpability." This is a matter of significant concern in light of women's increasing levels of alcohol consumption and the identification of drug and alcohol assisted rape and sexual assault as a new risk to women.

Drug-assisted sexual assault (DASA)

In contrast to the level of media attention around this issue, a limited amount of research about DASA exists within the UK and elsewhere (Gauntlett-Gilbert et al., 2004; Beynon et al., 2005). In terms of empirical research, there are methodological difficulties in determining the prevalence and incidence of DASA. These difficulties include under-reporting, difficulties in verifying whether a reported incident actually occurred due to a lack of forensic evidence or memory loss on behalf of the survivor[28] (Beynon et al., 2005: 3), evidence collection being hampered if victims have taken drugs willingly (Fitzgerald & Riley, 2000), and law enforcement agencies being unsure of how to collect evidence effectively (White, 2004).

The Sturman Report (2000) represents the earliest and most comprehensive study relating to DASA published in the UK. Questionnaires from a self-selected sample of one hundred and twenty three 'drug rape' complainants[29] (11% male, 89% female), provided research evidence about the nature of DASA: 70% of the assaults were committed by acquaintances[30], and around 50% of the incidents were in bars or clubs[31]. Since the publication of the Sturman report, other studies which have addressed the issue of DASA or 'drink-spiking' have been conducted on a smaller scale, local to

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[28] The amnesic properties of the drugs typically associated with drink spiking, are thought to compound difficulties in detecting the presence of drugs such as GHB and flunitrazepam (Rohypnol), which are quickly metabolised and eliminated from the body (Beynon, 2005).

[29] Although the Sturman Report uses the term 'complainants', which is typically used to denote individuals who have made a complaint about a criminal offence to the police, 58% of the sample had not reported their experience to the police at the time of the study.

[30] Assailants are usually friends (27%), work colleagues (15%) or fellow students (15%); strangers (8%) or individuals met for the first time (11%) are far less common (Sturman, 2000).

[31] There is evidence to suggest that significant commonalities exist between the profile of DASA offences and other non-drug assisted sexual assaults in that the notion of both types of offence being committed by a dangerous stranger, outside, at night, is not substantiated by existing research evidence. Recent studies of rape and sexual assault indicate that assaults by known men account for 73% of self-referrals to Sexual Assault Referral Centres (Lovett et al., 2004), and findings from the British Crime Survey demonstrate that only 8% of rapes are committed by strangers (Myhill & Allen, 2002).

specific geographical areas[32]. A survey of 235 young men and women conducted by Mentor UK (2004) in Portsmouth suggests that there is, at the very least, a perceived problem of drink spiking in that area: 53% of respondents thought that there was a drink spiking problem in the local area, with 60% saying that they, or someone known to them, had experienced their drink being spiked. However, this study neither provided a gendered analysis of the issue or a breakdown of the survey responses by gender. In light of the relationship between drink spiking and sexual assault, a gendered analysis of drink spiking would be valuable. Similarly Beynon et al. (2005: 5) report that drink spiking is occurring in Merseyside, and that anecdotal reports suggest drink spiking is increasing, although there is no empirical evidence to support this at a local or national level.

Evidence from sexual assault support service providers indicates that reported incidents of DASA have increased since the 1990s. The St. Mary's Sexual Assault Referral Centre in Manchester report an increase in drug-facilitated sexual assault referrals, from 1 in 24 cases in 1994 to 1 in 6.5 cases in 2004, while the Roofie Foundation also document a steady increase in the number of people who have telephoned their helpline, claiming to have been the victims of drug related rape and sexual abuse through having their drink spiked. However, it is difficult to determine whether an increase in reports of DASA to agencies is indicative of an actual increase in offences of this nature, or simply an increase in public awareness about the issue.

Difficulties also exist in relation to how DASA is defined, particularly in relation to the contentious issue of voluntary and involuntary intoxication. Arbarbanel (2001: 22-23) classifies three different conditions which the term 'drug-facilitated sexual assault' can be used to refer to, based on the notion of voluntary and involuntary intoxication: involuntary ingestion of incapacitating substances; voluntary and involuntary ingestion of incapacitating substances; and voluntary ingestion of incapacitating substances. The portrayal of DASA in the media narrowly restricts this as an encounter whereby the victim unknowingly and involuntarily consumes an intoxicant and is then subjected to a sexual assault, locating DASA within condition one or two of Arbarbanel's classification system. However, differing and more comprehensive definitions of

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[32] There is no suggestion, however, that DASA is a problem particular to the geographical areas where these studies happen to have been conducted.

DASA, which incorporate voluntary and involuntary intoxication via alcohol or drugs, exist within the research literature (see Sturman, 2000; Hovarth & Brown, 2004).

The drugs used to assist the completion of a rape or sexual assault have attracted a significant amount of attention, with Rohypnol acquiring a reputation as "the date rape drug" (Berrington & Jones, 2002: 314). It has been suggested that drugs such as Gamma Hydroxybutyrate (GHB) and Flunitrazepam (Rohypnol) have properties which make them particularly amenable for the purpose of drink spiking and the facilitation of sexual assault since they act rapidly to reduce inhibition, cause relaxation of voluntary muscles and cause victims to have lasting anterograde amnesia[33]. Beyond these pharmacological properties, which are by no means unique to recognised 'drug rape' drugs such as GHB or Rohypnol, it is not particularly clear what makes a drug become a 'drug rape' drug. In fact, Moore and Valverde (2000: 514) contend that "date rape drugs" are an "ill-defined set of substances and behaviours". Nonetheless, these drugs have attracted significantly more attention than the men who may use them to facilitate a sexual assault. Drawing upon Cohen's (1972) concept of a 'folk devil', Berrington and Jones (2002) conclude that, in terms of 'drug rape', chemical substances, rather than the men who use them, are identified as new 'folk devils'. A 'folk devil' is described by Heir (2002: 313) as "an identifiable object onto which social fears and anxieties may be projected". Indeed, focusing on the drugs used to facilitate sexual assault may be more palatable than focusing on the men who choose to sexually assault women.

It would also appear that the focus on the drugs used to facilitate sexual assault has overshadowed the role of alcohol as a drug used to facilitate sexual assault, despite numerous studies concluding that alcohol is the main intoxicant present in sexual assault cases (Hindmarch & Brinkmann, 1999; Sturman, 2000; Hindmarch et al., 2001; Finch & Munro, 2003; Lovett et al., 2004). Finch and Munro (2003) observe that despite evidence of the prevalence of the misuse of alcohol to facilitate sexual activity, it would appear that spiking drinks with alcohol, even as part of a deliberate strategy to obtain intercourse, does not attract the same level of condemnation as the use of 'proper' date-rape drugs. This narrow construction of DASA is one which Finch and

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[33] Anterograde amnesia is a condition in which events that occurred during the time the drug was in effect are forgotten, in contrast to retrograde amnesia, in which events prior to the intervening agent are forgotten (Fitzgerald and Riley, 2000: 9).

Munro (2003: 781) challenge, suggesting that the common denominator in scenarios involving drugs, alcohol and sexual activity is the validity of intoxicated consent:

> *..if the wrong that characterises drug assisted rape is the deliberate use of intoxicants to facilitate intercourse with someone who would otherwise refuse, it would appear that spiking a victim's drink with alcohol with the purpose of making her more amenable to sexual advances (or unable to resist if she is reluctant) should fall squarely within the parameters of drug assisted rape.*

This broader conceptualisation of DASA has the potential to challenge behaviours which are otherwise considered to be 'normal' aspects of heterosexual relationships. This hypothesis is substantiated by earlier research conducted by Mosher and Anderson (1986), into the role of intoxicants in acquaintance rape, which revealed that 75% of men were prepared to admit that they had used alcohol to increase the likelihood of intercourse with an 'initially reluctant woman', suggesting that 'loosening-up' women with alcohol is considered to be socially acceptable. More recently, Abbey et al. (2001) report that many 'date rapists' admit deliberately getting a woman drunk for the purpose of having sexual intercourse with her. These findings have significant implications for women's safety in bars, pubs and clubs.

Summary

Safety is a gendered concept which, for women, is influenced by the fear and reality of sexual violence. Sexual violence against women is a significant social problem, and a pervasive feature of women's lives in terms of violent situations which they may fear, have experienced, or take measures to avoid. Theorising sexual violence as a continuum facilitates understanding of the cumulative impact of different aspects of sexual violence on women's sense of safety. Paradoxes exist in relation to women's fear of sexual violence: women are most fearful of being attacked by a stranger in a public place, yet they are more likely to be sexually assaulted in their own home by someone known to them. However, this fear impacts upon women's sense of personal safety and their use of public space. This is particularly significant within the context of the current study given the public nature of bars, pubs and clubs.

There is particular cause for concern about women's safety in bars, pubs and clubs due to the sexualised environment within bars, pubs and clubs, the links between sexual violence and alcohol, and the identification of DASA as a new risk, particularly to young women in bars, pubs and clubs. Yet, there is a lack of research which specifically

examines the issue of young women's safety in bars, pubs and clubs. Studies which have addressed safety and violence in licensed premises, have typically focused on the problem of intra-male violence or aggravating features of the premises themselves, obscuring the deeply gendered nature of safety in these venues. This study aims to address this gap within existing literature by exploring these issues from the perspective of young women themselves.

Chapter Three
Feminist Structural and Poststructural
Theoretical Perspectives

Introduction

This chapter explores theoretical frameworks and concepts which have the potential to facilitate understanding of the research findings presented in subsequent chapters. It is proposed that the contrasting ideas within feminist structural and poststructural perspectives provide a particularly useful framework for understanding and contextualising the current study. Essentially, feminist structural and poststructural theoretical frameworks highlight the tensions inherent within the classic sociological structure 'v' agency debate. In other words, to what extent are individuals constrained by structural factors such as gender, and to what extent are individuals endowed with agency to resist repressive power relations? For the purpose of the current study, key theoretical concepts from these frameworks are: power, social control and resistance. These concepts will be explored within this chapter, and it will be argued that understanding these concepts in relation to gendered identities is particularly important. In turn, the insights gleaned from young women in the current study will provide an empirical lens with which to critically evaluate the relevant ideas and concepts contained within feminist structural and feminist poststructural perspectives.

Structural constraints and social control

Fundamental to structural theory is an appreciation of societal structure and the way in which the interests of those in power are constructed, legitimated, normalised and reproduced through the dominant codes within society (Aitchison, 2003: 31). In this regard, structural theory is the bedrock of sociological arguments found within Marxist, socialist and radical perspectives. For feminist structural theorising, the system of patriarchy is a central focus. Put simply, "women's lives are seen to be *structured* by gender within a society *structured* by patriarchal relations" (Scraton, 1994: 252). Structural feminist arguments articulated within sociology, criminology and leisure

studies, which are relevant to theorising women's experiences of their safety in bars, pubs and clubs are discussed below.

Radical feminist perspectives: sexuality and social control

Radical feminist accounts have particularly emphasised the relationship between the patriarchal construction of society and the existence of male violence against women and children, arguing that this can only be understood as part of a system of power (Berrington & Jones, 2002: 308). This system of power relies upon the social control of women. From a structural feminist perspective, social stratification and social control are considered to be fundamental elements in the sexual domination of women (Ward, 1995: 4), which in turn maintains and produces a patriarchal system of gender inequalities. This perspective is pertinent to the current study since bars, pubs and clubs are characterised by a particularly sexualised environment (Snow et al., 1991), and the fear of rape or sexual assault has been identified as a central safety concern for women (Stanko, 1990; Myhill & Allen, 2002; Tulloch, 2004).

In order to fully understand the idea that the fear of rape, and other forms of sexual violence, act as a form of social control over women it is necessary to consider the ideology and mythology which permeates our understanding of rape and other forms of sexual violence. This ideology was scrutinised most substantively by feminist scholars and activists in the 1970s, highlighting the extent and reality of rape and sexual assault through consciousness raising and encouraging women to 'speak out' about their experiences of violence (Neame, 2003: 8), discrediting the prevailing mythology surrounding sexual violence. The work of Susan Griffin (1971) represents one of the earliest contributions to feminist literature on rape. In an article titled *Rape: the All American Crime,* she argued that the basic elements of rape are present in all heterosexual relationships, highlighting the exploitative nature of accepted gender relations. In other words, "in our culture heterosexual love finds an erotic expression through male dominance and female passivity" (Griffin, 1971: 318). Subsequently, Susan Brownmiller's (1976) book *Against Our Will,* provided a further landmark in the feminist contribution to the literature on rape, by contextualising rape as an act of power and intimidation as opposed to sexual gratification. Brownmiller (1976: 389) argued that "the ideology of rape is fuelled by cultural values that are perpetuated at every level of our society", and highlighted links between rape and other forms of sexual violence

such as prostitution and pornography. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, feminist writers continued to highlight the reality of male violence and the links between different forms of male violence and patriarchal social relations (Daly, 1978; Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Dworkin, 1981; Hanmer & Saunders, 1984; Barry, 1984; Hanmer & Maynard, 1987; Kelly, 1988; Hanmer et al., 1989).

With the ultimate goal of eradicating sexual violence, the feminist movement has worked to expose prevalent myths and stereotypes about rape. Russo (2000: 2) defines rape myths as, "false beliefs about rape and sexuality that disadvantage women, and are incongruent with the experience of people who have been raped". As discussed in Chapter Two, the concept of 'real rape' whereby only certain types of rape are considered to be real is central to rape mythology (Estrich, 1987). It is argued that cultural norms of respectability and femininity compound the notion of 'real rape' by constructing the concept of a 'real rape' victim, whereby, only 'decent' women can be raped (Smart & Smart, 1978).

Smart and Smart (1978: 5) refer to this as a "double standard of morality", whereby society's code of social mores condones sexual promiscuity in men as a display of "masculinity", while condemning it in women as a display of "unfeminine, shameful behaviour". Elements of the social control of women's sexuality can be found in numerous aspects of society including the media, education, the legal system, advertising and the use of everyday language. Smart and Smart (1978: 5) illustrate the way in which social control operates through informal group processes, with the use of language:

> *The 'promiscuous' or simply the potentially 'promiscuous' woman or girl becomes the slut, the slag, the whore, the scrubber and so on. There are no comparable derogatory terms for males.*

Smart and Smart (1978) also note that press reports remind women of their vulnerability and implicitly caution women about the parameters of acceptable behaviour (e.g. in terms of what they wear and where they go). Griffin (1971) contends that the threat of rape keeps women passive and modest for fear that they be thought provocative. In this regard, it is argued that rape and the threat of rape, as depicted in the media, film and literature operates as a highly effective mechanism of social control (Smart & Smart, 1978; Radford, 1987). More recently, Watson (2000: 31) has argued that whilst society generally accepts the right of young women to independence and sexual equality, an

insidious double standard is invoked if they are sexually assaulted in or around bars, pubs and clubs. This is largely due to the perceived connection between alcohol consumption, sexual promiscuity and a lack of 'respectability'. These issues have particular implications for women socialising in bars, pubs and clubs.

Social control of women's leisure

Radical feminist perspectives have contributed to a significant body of literature within sociological and criminological debates about social control, sexual violence and gender inequality, although these perspectives have been less prevalent within leisure studies (Aitchison, 2003). However, theorising about structural constraints on women's leisure formed a dominant theme within leisure studies in the 1980s, albeit from a socialist feminist perspective, which seeks to highlight the relationship between patriarchy and economic determinants (Deem, 1986; Green et al., 1987). Wimbush and Talbot (1988: xvi) highlight the significance of patriarchal gender relations in the realm of leisure:

> *Patriarchal relations, like class relations, are culturally reproduced, even magnified, within leisure and recreation. They are legitimated and sustained by a complexity of ideological and material forces which help to shape our social institutions – the family unit, the media, the education system, the legal system and so on.*

Constraints on women's leisure, and women's unequal access to leisure opportunities, imposed by (capitalist) patriarchal structures, formed a significant focus of early feminist theorising within leisure studies (Deem, 1986; Green et al., 1987). Green et al. (1987) give particular consideration to women, social control and leisure; utilising a feminist analysis, they observe that leisure is one of the areas where women's behaviour is most closely regulated. Social control is defined by Green et al. (1987: 79) as "an ongoing process, one element in the struggle to maintain male hegemony[34] which sets the limits of appropriate feminine behaviour". Green et al. (1987) also introduce the concept of a continuum of social control. At one end of the continuum, there are 'non-coercive' forms of social control, called "control through consent". At the other end of the continuum, are forms of behaviour "which use physical violence to compel women

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[34] The concept of 'hegemonic masculinity' has been developed by Connell (2005) as a means of theorising gender relations. The term hegemony itself derives from Antonio Gramsci's analysis of class relations, referring to the cultural dominance of one group over society as a whole.

to behave in certain ways". Green et al. (1987) note that the implicit or explicit threat or use of physical violence can be used to back up 'non-coercive' forms of control. Social control can, therefore, rely on norms of 'respectability' to control through consent, as opposed to coercion. Accepted standards of femininity and masculinity are hallmarks of this system; women who do not conform to these standards of femininity risk damage to their sexual and moral reputation.

In describing the operation of a 'continuum of social control', which relies on coercive and non-coercive forms of control, parallels can be drawn with the concept of 'symbolic violence' or 'symbolic power', articulated by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1979). Symbolic violence refers to a tacit form of domination which relies upon social restraint rather than coercive social control. Patriarchy is, therefore, maintained through a process of 'misrecognition' whereby women and men understand gender norms as the 'natural order'. By internalizing these norms, women appear 'complicit' in maintaining the gender order. These tacit, or 'non-coercive', mechanisms of social control have particular implications for women who socialise in bars, pubs and clubs given the recent individualised focus in safety campaigns and the conventional alignment of drinking in public with unfeminine behaviour, as discussed in the previous chapters.

From a feminist perspective, it is argued that one of the dangers for women who step out with the "normal parameters of male control" is that they are frequently denied the kind of protection afforded by the legal system to 'innocent' or 'decent' women (Radford, 1987: 43). A woman's right to withhold her consent is frequently challenged should she fail to meet the standards of 'appropriate femininity' as depicted in social mores and cultural discourses of morality (Malloch, 2004: 111). Women who deviate from accepted standards of social and sexual respectability (e.g. by drinking heavily or dressing in a 'provocative' way) may also risk social exclusion by other women. Sexual reputation is deemed to be an important criterion by which young women assess their own and other women's actions (Kitzinger & Powell, 1995). As such, the risks which women encounter when socialising and consuming alcohol in bars, pubs, and clubs are multi-dimensional; it is not only their physical safety which may be threatened, but also their sexual and moral reputation. Stanko (1997: 481) suggests that women are aware of these risks:

> *Woman - as subject, multiply positioned and fluid - recognises that what is at risk is more than just an encounter with men's violence, it is also a risk of self, a fear of being judged to be imprudent or to be exposed as being beyond prudence. Safekeeping, I argue, is 'performative' (Butler, 1990) of respectable femininities.*

Feminist theorists within leisure studies and beyond have argued that women's awareness of the risks associated with 'imprudent' behaviour has a profound effect on their use of public space, ultimately acting as a measure of social control over women (Smart & Smart, 1978; Deem, 1986; Green et al., 1990; Valentine, 1990; Wesely & Gaarder, 2004). Bars, pubs and clubs are traditionally constructed as masculine spaces (Whitehead, 1976; Hey, 1986; Green et al., 1987; Plant, 1997; Parks et al., 1998). This is, in part, due to bars, pubs and clubs being constituted as public spaces and positioned as oppositional to the domestic spheres of women (Guyatt, 2005, cited in Lyons, 2008). Wesely and Gaarder (2004) contend that women are not taught to be comfortable in public space and have instead learned that private, domestic space is their rightful domain (Valentine, 1992). Further, Gardner (1990: 311) argues that although women have advanced in many aspects of life, they remain subject to inferior treatment in public places by men through behaviours such as "catcalls" and "evaluative compliments". It has been argued that women's ability to "fend off men and parry their advances" is a prerequisite to their successful negotiation of public places (Snow et al., 1991: 424).

Research carried out, primarily by feminist leisure theorists, has identified a range of risk avoidance strategies which different groups of women employ to ensure their 'safekeeping' in public spaces (Wesely & Gaarder, 2004), which appears to include a hybrid of self-surveillance and surveillance of their environment. Wesley and Gaarder (2004: 657) refer to women occupying "a state of hypervigilance" in outside spaces, and by following 'self-policing' strategies they argue that women "create a restricted world that further limits their opportunities". Seabrook and Green (2004) also note that, due to fears about inhabiting public spaces, girls tend to restrict themselves to indoor opportunities which, in turn, limits their scope for developing skills to cope with the outside world.

Meanwhile, Tulloch (2004) documents the strategies adopted by young women when they travel at night as including, travelling in groups, avoiding eye contact with males, discouraging conversation with people who sit next to them, and keeping alert at all times. Further, Gardner (1990: 320) reports that in order to prevent crime in public

places, young women try to avoid "provocative" clothing or behaving in an "overly friendly manner". Gardner (1990: 324) argues that the self which women adopt in public places is mediated by a combination of experience and advice in women's lives, which in turn means that women "can experience public places primarily as an exercise in self-defense, spoiling other possible gains". Similarly, Stanko (1990: 53) contends that women are acutely aware of the threat to their personal safety, and that they adopt a range of precautionary safety strategies in response to the fear of sexual assault, physical assault and sexual harassment. In effect, women are expected to see the ordinary as risky, and "as all women reach adulthood, they share a common awareness of their particular vulnerability. Learning the strategies for survival is a continuous lesson about what it means to be female" (Stanko, 1990: 85)[35].

Feminist structural perspectives: critical debate

The extent to which structural arguments and, in particular, feminist ideas about the social control of women, which were initially articulated thirty years ago, alongside developing theories of masculinities and femininities, can explain contemporary experiences of young women is subject to debate. Tensions exist between recognising the discrimination and oppression that women encounter in their lives and the level of resistance to oppression which they have the capacity (and desire) to utilise. Modernist feminist concerns about the impact of patriarchal gender relations in structuring women's lives have been critiqued on account of their over reliance on structural arguments (Rojek, 1991). The 'grand narratives' associated with this type of theorising have been accused of falsely universalising women's experiences, and indeed their oppression (Wearing, 1992), paying insufficient attention to difference, diversity and women's capacity for agency and resistance.

It is apparent, however, that some early feminist theorising in leisure studies did at least attempt to address the differences *between* women in the way that they access leisure and public space, in addition to gender differences between men and women (Deem,

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[35] Arguably, Stanko's notion of women engaging in a continuous safekeeping process begins prior to adulthood. In a study of young people's (aged 14 – 21 years) attitudes towards violence and relationships, Burton and Kitzinger (1998: 40) observe that young women had "detailed ways of monitoring their own behaviour to avoid 'attracting abuse'". Meanwhile young men, when discussing sexual harassment policies which asked them to monitor their own behaviour, "often resented this as an infringement on everyday activity and ways of enjoying themselves".

1986). Similarly, Wimbush & Talbot (1988: 49) conclude that women's leisure opportunities are circumscribed primarily by their gender, although their age, ethnic origin and class also play a significant role. Feminist attempts to recognise and theorise the interrelationships between the grand theories of race, class and gender in the 1980s are also acknowledged by Scraton (1994: 256), noting the concern by feminists within leisure studies not to reduce their analysis solely to gender by recognising the way that differing systems of oppression intersect with one another. Giving specific consideration to violence, Stanko (1990: 85) acknowledges that women occupy different positions in relation to safety and violence according to features of their lives such as race, class, sexuality, physical ability and direct experience of violence. Crucially, Scraton (1994: 255) argues that many of the debates central to postmodern theory are those which feminism has been engaged with for some time (e.g. rejection of the dichotomy between public and private, the need to attend to difference and diversity, and the difficulties associated with 'grand theory').

Feminist theorists have also worked to highlight the way gender identities, and in particular normative femininity, are also constituted through other structural factors such as race and class (Skeggs, 1997). Skeggs (2002), for example, provides an insightful account of historical and contemporary constructions of femininity and the way in which feminine identities intersect with class. Reflecting upon the emergence of femininity in the 18th century, Skeggs (2002) describes white middle class femininity, associated with dependence and passivity, as the respectable ideal. In the 19th century, Skeggs (2002: 312) describes the way in which white middle-class women used the concept of femininity:

> *Investments in the ideal of femininity enabled them to gain access to limited status and moral superiority. It was their desire for value that led them to evaluate others. Their take-up of their positioning and their display of it through appearance enabled them to judge those who were lacking in femininity, hence respectability.*

Drawing upon an ethnographic study of young working class women, Skeggs (2002) highlights that femininity can operate as cultural capital and in order to avoid jeopardising their investments, young women sometimes colluded in its production. Skeggs (2002: 323) concludes that for these young women, "their forays into femininity were immensely contradictory", and although they saw femininity as a "structural inconvenience", they did at times perform and take pleasure from aspects of femininity.

In relation to the current study, it is particularly interesting to note that with regard to socialising in pubs and clubs in female groups, Skeggs (2002) identifies young women's simultaneous adoption and rejection of femininity; on one hand, the young women in this study had the physical appearance of femininity while their performance and conduct was definitely not feminine.

This observation by Skeggs (2002) is significant since it offers an insight into the way that women simultaneously accommodate and resist gender norms, highlighting the complexities and contradictions of women's lived experiences. Meanwhile, it has also been argued that young women's contemporary efforts to "produce themselves as successfully feminine" is indicative of the extent to which young women can collude in their own subordination (Holland & Ramazanoglu, 1994: 132). Such contradictions present a challenge for feminist theorising, reflecting a predicament encapsulated within what has been branded 'victim feminism' and 'power feminism'. 'Victim feminism' (sometimes referred to as 'victimhood feminism') is a term which Kitzinger (1995: 194) contends has been used to present "a caricature of old-fashioned feminism" which, "insists that women are totally powerless in a man's world". Bell Hooks (1984), for example, has been particularly critical of white feminists' inclination to relate to one another in terms of a common victimisation rather than in terms of capacity to act against perceived oppression. 'Power feminism' on the other hand "focuses on the endless transformatory possibilities of personal liberation strategies" (Rophie, 1994: 101).

However, Kelly and Radford (1998) argue that debates about 'victimhood feminism' have ignored the history of women's organised and collective resistance to sexual violence citing actions such as 'Reclaim the Night' marches as one example of the way in which women demonstrated collective resistance to their use of public space being restricted by the fear of sexual violence. In the context of sexual violence, Kelly (1988: 161) identifies resistance as a coping strategy, which "involves active opposition to abusive men's behaviour and/or the control they seek to exert". Challenging the view that women are simply passive recipients of oppression, Kelly (1988) describes women's safety behaviours as active resistance to violence.

Within the realm of leisure studies, early feminist texts also acknowledged the way in which women resist and subvert male domination of public space (Dixey & Talbot, 1982), and the potential for women to exercise freedom and autonomy within

patriarchal social structures (Wimbush & Talbot, 1988). This goes some way to refuting the charge that early feminist theorising universally constructed women as the hapless victims of patriarchal domination. Moreover, it could be argued that critiques levelled at early feminist theorising, due to a perceived lack of acknowledgement of women's scope for agency and resistance to patriarchal structures, are ill-founded. The potential for emancipation and change has always been at the very heart of feminist research and activism (Stanley, 1990; Skinner et al., 2005; Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2006). Further, radical feminist theorising highlighted male sexual domination of women in order to challenge it; uncovering the nature and extent of discrimination is arguably a precursor to resistance and change rather than a rejection of it.

Women's individual resistance to sexual violence, however, is a complex area. Kelly and Radford (1998) contend that it is possible for both normalization and resistance to co-exist in women's lives, although the prominence of these concepts may vary over time. Women's attempts to tolerate the reality and prevalence of sexual violence, can have the "unintended additional consequence of a level of 'acceptance' of the reality of sexual violence" (Kelly & Radford, 1998: 74). This normalisation of sexual violence can be reinforced by women minimizing, and being encouraged to minimise, experiences of sexual violence as a coping strategy. It could also be argued that a routine expectation on women to adopt safety strategies reinforces the 'normalisation' of the threat of sexual violence. In this regard, women could be viewed as complicit with their own subordination, simply accommodating threats to their safety within their everyday lives.

Poststructural perspectives: power and resistance

The growth and appeal of poststructural theories

Critiques of structural feminist arguments, arguing that they falsely universalise women's experiences and are overly deterministic have led some feminist theorists to engage with postmodern and poststructural perspectives in search of an alternative means with which to theorize women's experiences (Weedon, 1987; Butler, 1990; Wearing, 1998; Nicholson, 1999; Aitchison, 2000). This engagement with postmodern and poststructural perspectives, however, is by no means confined to feminism; towards the end of the 20th century theorising social relations across a range of academic

disciplines was significantly influenced by the concept of postmodernism[36]. As discussed in Chapter One, although postmodernism and poststructuralism are terms which are often used interchangeably, this thesis is primarily concerned with poststructuralism rather than postmodernism on account of its focus on power relations.

Poststructural feminism attempts to uncover the cultural codes which construct, legitimate and reproduce the gender order rather than focusing on the political, social and economic manifestations of the gender order (Weedon, 1987). Thus, there is a shift from thinking about 'patriarchy' and the associated male domination of the structures of society (Wearing, 1996), to a concern with the way in which cultural relations serve to shape gender relations (Aitchison, 2003). This mode of theorising attempts to accommodate "the interrelationships between specific cultural contexts and networks of wider social structures of power" (Aitchison, 2000: 134). It is argued that this emphasis on culture rather than structure allows theorisation of women as "active agents involved in the construction of their own lives" rather than "passive victims of overdetermined structures" (Green, 1998: 173-174). Crucially, contemporary individuals are construed as being able to utilise choice and self monitoring to fashion identities (Green & Singleton, 2006) in a society characterised by increased reflexivity and 'individualisation' (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1996). In practice, drawing upon postmodern and poststructural discourses has meant that feminists have engaged in greater depth with concepts such as identity, agency and subjectivity (Green, 1998: 173).

Foucault: 'technologies of power' and 'technologies of the self'

The work of French philosopher Michael Foucault has significantly influenced poststructural feminist theorising. Foucault's theorization of power and resistance are particularly relevant to the feminist project, although Foucault's construction of these concepts has been subject to considerable debate amongst social theorists. Batchelor

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[36] Postmodernism is a term which originated in the arts in the 1960s although it has been adopted by social theorists to reflect a change in society, a move away from 'modernity' in contemporary western civilisation. Postmodernity refers to cultural change in Western societies since the Second World War, and it is associated with the growth of the global economy, technology, popular culture and a sense of risk, ambivalence, uncertainty, multiple realities, playfulness and irony. Baudrillard (1988) contends that postmodernity rejects truth, logic and reason in favour of fragmentation, dedifferentiation and hyperreality.

(2007) notes that differing readings of Foucault's theorization of power are, in part, attributable to the evolving nature of his work, which reflects a shift in emphasis from 'technologies of power' to 'technologies of the self'. In 1977 Foucault published *Discipline and Punish,* highlighting the phenomenon of 'disciplinary power' whereby individuals exercise power over each other through social surveillance rather than physical force. Thus social norms facilitate self-surveillance, producing subjected and practised bodies (Foucault, 1977).

Using the example of the 'panoptican' prison design, Foucault illustrated how macro-level social structures can be maintained through micro-level cultural practices (Aitchison, 2003: 21). The panoptican was designed to allow prison guards to view all prison cells, without prisoners knowing whether they were being watched at any given time. This design gives rise to a state of self-consciousness amongst prisoners. Prisoners therefore engage in self-surveillance and self-policing to evade deviating from permitted behaviour. Thus disciplinary power operates as a form of social control. From a feminist perspective, this facilitates theorisation of the way in which gender norms operate to constrain the behaviour of women. In other words, women may appear to choose or conform to normative femininity (e.g. by avoiding 'provocative' clothing in bars, pubs and clubs), self-policing their own behaviour in order to avoid the risk of being deemed imprudent or promiscuous. To a certain extent, parallels can be drawn between Foucault's conceptualisation of 'disciplinary power', Bourdieu's 'symbolic violence' and social control theories initially articulated by feminist theorists in the 1970s and 1980s since these theories highlight the way in which individuals come to regulate their own behaviour, omitting the need for coercive controls to compel individuals to behave in a particular way.

In his later work, however, Foucault broadened his theorisation of power from the repressive effects of power in the form of 'technologies of power' to the productive potential of power in the form of 'technologies of the self'. Technologies of the self embody resistance and empowerment on the part of the individual (Jordan & Aitchison, 2008: 331), allowing scope for resisting oppressive 'technologies of power'. In other words, Foucault (1978: 95) acknowledges that "where there is power, there is resistance". For Foucault, power does not exist separately from the body, operating as an oppressive constraint. Rather, power is an ever-present and complex force which operates directly on and through bodies; the 'self' and 'identity' are always embodied

(Pini, 2000). In this regard, bodies are subject to 'knowledges' which regulate and normalize bodily practices (Campbell, 2005). The related concept of self-government is examined by Foucault (1987) in his final work *The Use of Pleasure, The Care of the Self*, through elaboration of a notion of the self. Foucault (1988: 11) acknowledges that practices of the self are shaped by the social context in the following way:

> *I am interested . . . in the way in which the subject constitutes himself in an active fashion, by the practices of the self, these practices are nevertheless not something that the individual invents by himself. They are patterns that he finds in his culture and which are proposed, suggested and imposed on him by his culture, his society and his social group.*

Drawing upon the ideas of Foucault, Campbell (2005: 123) contends that bodily practices become a 'technology of the self' through a process of normalization. Applying this logic to safekeeping strategies employed by women to prevent rape, it is argued that these strategies become 'embodied acts' rather than a coercive form of regulation (Campbell, 2005). In other words, the threat of rape or sexual assault is naturalised, leading to the normalisation of women's safety strategies and the non-coercive regulation of their behaviour.

Poststructural theory and feminist leisure studies

Poststructural perspectives: cause for optimism?

The capacity for women to exercise 'technologies of the self', and therefore resistance to oppressive patriarchal structures, has been of central importance to feminist theorists who have drawn upon Foucault's ideas. Within the realm of leisure studies, engaging with these ideas facilitates a repositioning of the way in which women's leisure can operate as resistance to traditional gender norms, rather than maintain and reproduce oppression (Green, 1998). Aitchison (2004) notes that in contrast with the tradition of leisure studies and the associated concern with macro, structural analysis, recent contributions from social and cultural geographies have highlighted micro analysis of daily life, situating leisure within the cultural concepts of consumption, risk and identity formation. Meanwhile, Wearing (1998) documents a transition within leisure theorising from a largely feminist focus on the structural constraints on women's leisure, to a consideration of the opportunities that women's leisure experiences may offer for liberation. For Wearing (1998: xi) this transition reflects an examination of the following poststructuralist ideas:

. . . multiple subjectivities of women and multiple femininities; the possibilities of resistance to and subversion of male domination through leisure; possibilities through leisure of rewriting masculine and feminine scripts; access through leisure to alternative discourses which challenge dominant discourses on gender; sites of leisure as culturally generated enclaves which also offer opportunity for struggle and resistance to hegemonic masculinity; and the productive as well as the repressive aspects of power relations.

Drawing upon a hybrid of interactionist theory and Foucault's ideas on power, subjectivity, discourse and resistance, Wearing (1998) is optimistic that contemporary women can resist directed feminine subjectivities, and that this is something which leisure can help to achieve. From this perspective, leisure can be situated as an activity which can provide young women with a means to contest and resist cultural discourses around feminine identities (Green & Singleton, 2006). For postmodern theorists identity is fluid and there is greater scope for individual lifestyle choices (Green, 1998: 173). In this context, Wearing (1998: 149) conceptualises leisure as physical or metaphorical 'personal space', which "one has the control to fill with whatever persons, activities or thoughts that one chooses". Further, Wearing (1998: 51) emphasises that, for Foucault, "people are never just victims – they are free subjects with an ever-present possibility of alternatives through resistances". In this context, resistance refers to the notion that individuals can resist the power they are subject to. Thus, leisure can also be considered as a site for developing female identity and self esteem (Aitchison, 2004; Seabrook & Green, 2004). Kelly (1983: 119), positions this as an enjoyable process:

In this sense much leisure is both personal and social in meaning. We present ourselves in a role, develop and establish an identity, receive confirmation or correction on our performance and enjoy the process. We enjoy the experiences of successful role enactment and find our self-concepts enhanced in the process.

Implicit within the belief that women can fashion their own identities, subverting dominant gender discourses, is a sense of agency. Wearing (1998: 56) suggests that in Giddens' (1991) terms, "human agency is based on the idea that an individual could always act otherwise, thus suggesting an 'I' who acts rather than merely reacts to the social impetus". Meanwhile, Aitchison (2004: 109) argues that,

This scope for agency allows us to see leisure as a continually evolving landscape with space for resistance, contestation, disruption and transgression of dominant discourses and wider hegemonic social, cultural and leisure relations

Belief in the ability of individual women to move beyond notions of prescribed, oppressive femininity to embrace new femininities is rooted in a sense of optimism. Wearing (1998: 144) applies this optimism to women of the 1990s:

> . . .women in the postmodern world means a diverse range of women of the 1990s who have a new self-confidence to challenge the givens of their existence, to resist what they have been told they are and to reach what they should be.

Alongside the logic that agency can be utilised in this way by women, parallels can be drawn with the poststructuralist feminist work of Butler (1990), which suggests that gender is accomplished through repeated performances which allow for the feminine to be reconstructed beyond male dominated cultural definitions. In her deconstruction of sex and gender, Butler (1990) posits that gender is performative, rather than being part of our inner essence: to be feminine is to perform femininity. Performativity, in turn, reiterates known gender norms. However, Butler (1999) locates resistance within this process of reiteration. By revealing the mechanisms which "keep gender in its place", it is argued that naturalised notions of gender that sustain masculine and heterosexist power can be subverted and challenged (Butler, 1999: 34).

Poststructuralism: a threat to the feminist political project?

Alongside the optimism within poststructural and postmodern theorising, it is widely recognised that postmodernism has represented a challenge to conventional feminist theorising, and postmodern theories have been resisted by some feminist writers (Walby, 1992; Scraton, 1994). This resistance reflects an underlying concern about the potential for postmodern discourses, with their emphasis on micro rather than macro structures, to undermine feminist work which has strived to expose gendered inequalities and discrimination with a view to improving women's opportunities and their fundamental human rights. It is argued that poststructuralism is viewed by some radical feminists as "one of the greatest current threats to the feminist political project" (Aitchison, 2003: 32). Nicholson (1990: 6) posits that the deconstructionist approach inherent within postmodernism has particular implications for theorising women's social position in that "for women to take on such an approach is to weaken what is not yet strong". Meanwhile, McNay (1992: 2) contends that tensions exist between poststructuralist perspectives and "more politically engaged forms of critique". Scraton (1994: 255) echoes these concerns, arguing that "one of the problems with the

postmodern discourse is that political and material reality appear to be being lost in the theorizing".

Butler (1990), for example, has been critiqued for neglecting to identify where gender norms come from (Ramazanoglu, 1995), why they are sustained, or why gender is hierarchical (Jackson and Scott, 2002). In a similar vein, it has been argued that Foucault lacked appreciation of the gendered character of disciplinary power (Bartky, 1990) and Harstock (1990) questions the use of Foucault's poststructural analysis of power in feminist theorizing. For Harstock (1990), the systematic nature of power relations is not adequately addressed by contextually and locally specific forms of analysis inherent within poststructuralist discourses.

Foucault's notion of the way in which individuals can exercise techniques of self-government is eloquently critiqued by McNay (1992) in relation to the realm of sexuality, arguing that when located within a wider social context, the taboos and injunctions that operate around masculinity and femininity make certain practices more imperative. In the context of gender norms, Foucault (1988) does not discriminate sufficiently between practices which are proposed or suggested and practices which are imposed. McNay (1992: 72) argues that "...the social constraints on gender compliance are so powerful that it is difficult to exist to a socially meaningful extent outside of gender norms". Similarly, Holland and Ramazanoglu (1994: 131) acknowledge Foucault's contribution in highlighting the significance of power relations in the social construction of sexuality and the body, but contend that, "his own gender blindness allowed him to ignore the ways women experience men's power over them". On this basis, it would seem that there are difficulties attached to the uncritical acceptance of poststructural optimism about leisure as a site of freedom and liberation for women.

Summary

This chapter has identified two contrasting theoretical frameworks which have the potential to facilitate a nuanced understanding of young women's views, experiences and behaviours in relation to their safety in bars pubs and clubs. These theoretical perspectives emanate from feminist structural (and in particular radical feminist perspectives), and feminist poststructural perspectives. Structural and poststructural perspectives highlight the tensions between the extent to which individuals are constrained by structural factors and the capacity that they have to resist the repressive

power of these structural forces. This thesis is particularly concerned with the power of gendered norms and expectations in the context of safety in bars, pubs and clubs and the capacity that young women have to resist threats to their safety and associated constraints on their leisure.

Radical feminist ideas about the social control of women through the fear of sexual violence are particularly relevant to this thesis in the sexualised context of bars, pubs and clubs. The conventional alignment of drinking in bars as an unfeminine leisure pursuit means that women may risk their moral reputation in addition to their physical safety when they consume alcohol and socialise in bars, pubs and clubs. In this regard it is argued that the fear of sexual violence and the risk of being deemed imprudent operate as a form of social control over women.

However, the notion that women are passive victims, unable to resist repressive power relations, has been critiqued by poststructural feminist theorists who have argued that leisure is a site where women can transgress gender norms and be who they want to be. Poststructural feminists theorists have drawn extensively on the work of Michael Foucault in exploring the potential that poststructural ideas have for facilitating our understanding of women's lives, and in particular their capacity to resist social constraint. Foucault's presentation of 'technologies of power' and 'technologies of the self', are particularly pertinent to this thesis. Technologies of power highlight the operation of 'disciplinary power' and 'self-surveillance', in a similar vein to theories of social control articulated by radical feminist theorists, and Bourdieu's conceptualisation of 'symbolic violence'. In contrast, 'technologies of the self' allow for resistance of repressive 'technologies of power' by acknowledging individual agency and empowerment.

However, the resistance of women at an individual level is a complex and contested area. This thesis will critically draw upon feminist structural and poststructural theoretical concepts to contextualise the views, experiences and behaviours of young women in bars, pubs and clubs, which are presented in Chapters Five to Eight. Adopting a critical approach, these frameworks will also be evaluated in terms of the contribution which they can make to theorising the experiences of contemporary young women. Firstly, however, the methodological approach adopted by this study is outlined in Chapter Four.

Chapter Four

Researching the Lives of Young Women

Feminist Theory, Practice and Challenges along the Way

Introduction

This study draws upon feminist research methodology, and the current chapter outlines the approach taken by this study in detail. The rationale for the chosen research strategy and design is presented before discussing how participants were recruited to take part in the study, and how the fieldwork unfolded in practice. The process of data analysis is then outlined in order to facilitate understanding of how the study findings were reached. Adopting a reflexive approach, this chapter concludes by reflecting upon the challenges encountered during the research process, within the context of adopting a feminist methodological approach.

Understanding feminist methodology: diversity and debate

Considerable debate exists in relation to what constitutes feminist methodology, and indeed whether a distinctive feminist methodology exists (Wise & Stanley, 2003; Delamont, 2003; Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2006). It is necessary, therefore, to review key aspects of this debate, highlighting what a feminist methodological approach means in the context of the current study. Appreciation of what feminist methodology entails requires a prior understanding of what is meant by the term 'methodology'. As Skinner et al. (2005: 9) assert, "methodology is not simply a posh way of saying method". The choice of research method for collecting data (e.g. interview, focus group, survey) is informed by methodology, which in turn can be described as:

> . . . a complex political process concerned with establishing the contested connections between epistemology (questions about what can be known, and the interrelationship between knowledge, experience and reality), theory (ideas about how things work), ontology (categorisation and classification of these ideas and how they fit together); as well as reflections on the validity, ethics and accountability of the knowledge that it produced.

> (Ramazanoglu and Holland 2002, cited in Skinner et al., 2005: 9)

Thus, understanding methodological issues requires a focus on philosophical assumptions rather than simply a focus on methods and techniques (Kamarae and Spender, 1993 cited in Webb, 2000). Feminist critiques of mainstream, androcentric sociology provide a means of analysing not just the content of this knowledge, but the means in which research is conceived, produced, placed in the public domain and justified as knowledge (Millen, 1997: 2). Since the 1970s, feminist social science researchers have extended the anti-quantitative and anti-positivist methodological positions developed within perspectives such as ethnomethodology, poststructuralism and hermeneutics (Oakley, 1998: 724). Feminism, in itself therefore, has not introduced an entirely new critique of the scientific method; it echoes much of the concern voiced within other methodological positions that can broadly be defined as interpretive. That is, a position that requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of the social action (Bryman, 2001: 504). Ann Oakley (1998: 717) offers a telling description of 'popular conceptions' of science, typically associated with positivism:

> *Popular conceptions of science portray scientists as 'reasonable men' searching for causal laws with the goal of predicting and controlling nature, and doing so themselves almost like machines, without reference to values or to their own experience. The scientist 'himself' is context free, and science itself has a linear and evolutionary shape, according to which its knowledge gets better and better all the time.*

Feminism's critique of positivist approaches, which favour quantitative methods as a means to access reality and marginalize 'subjective knowledge' (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2006: 155), has led to a tendency to associate feminist research with qualitative research methods. Qualitative methods have been instrumental in giving women a voice, particularly in relation to male violence (Griffiths & Hanmer, 2005). However, the sole reliance on qualitative methods has since been challenged (Gelsthorpe, 1992; Maynard & Purvis, 1994), and the use of quantitative research methods in feminist research is widely evidenced and documented (Jayarantyne, 1983; Smith, 1987; Walby & Myhill, 2001). Ultimately, feminist research uses a multiplicity of methods and may be transdisciplinary (Reinharz, 1992).

Consequently, it is difficult to substantiate any claim to a unified feminist methodology or a distinct set of feminist methods. The notion of a distinct feminist method has been described by Delamont (2003: 75) as a 'straw position' set up for dismissal by 'male hysterics'. Indeed, many of the concerns and visions of feminist research overlap with those of other approaches to research (Wise & Stanley, 2003; Ramazanoglu & Holland,

2006). However, if there is no single or inherent feminist methodology, what are the factors which differentiate feminist research from other forms of research? Liz Stanley (1990: 14) asserts that what is distinctive about feminist expositions lies in the relation between epistemology and ontology:

> . . .the experience of and acting against perceived oppression gives rise to a distinctive feminist ontology; and it is the analytic exploration of the parameters of this in the research process that gives rise to expression of a distinctive feminist epistemology.

Arguably, the most significant distinguishing feature of feminist research is a shared appreciation of women's oppression (Stanley, 1990), and a willingness to challenge this oppression in its myriad forms; feminism is the ideology of a social and political movement, committed to the emancipation of women from oppressive gender relations, rather than a discipline per se. In the words of Liz Stanley (1990: 15), "knowledge is not simply defined as 'knowledge what' but also as 'knowledge for'. Succinctly, the point is to change the world, not only to study it". Ramazanoglu and Holland (2006: 147) contend that although feminist research does not have to study women or gender, research projects which seek to "produce knowledge that will be useful for effective transformation of gendered injustice and subordination" can be described as feminist.

The current study was conducted within a framework which acknowledges women's oppression with a view to challenging this oppression by attempting to understand women's beliefs from their own point of view, and within the context of their own lives. More specifically, the questions asked in this study were informed by feminist theory about violence against women, power and control, which locates violence against women as a result of, and contributor to, women's subordination. My appreciation of the nature, extent and impact of violence against women stemmed from a combination of my own personal experience, eight years that I spent working in a local Rape Crisis Centre, and my reading of associated academic literature. Adopting this perspective has significant implications for the way in which data was collected and interpreted. These issues will be explored further in this chapter.

With regard to feminist epistemology, Harding (1986) has developed a typology consisting of three epistemologies: feminist empiricist; feminist standpoint; and feminist post-modernism. As with many other typologies, Harding's model can be critiqued on the basis that it fails to represent the complexity of individual positions within the

typology, and that there are a range of feminist epistemologies apparent within documented research which shade into one another (Stanley & Wise, 1993). Nonetheless, Harding's typology does offer a useful framework for understanding key points of contention between different feminist epistemologies. The current study can be most closely aligned with feminist standpoint epistemology, which calls for social science to be conducted from the "standpoint' of women, preserving subjects as 'knowers' rather than as 'objects of study'" (Smith, 1987: 105), thus refuting the patriarchal notion that feminine or female experience does not constitute a valid basis for knowledge (Millen, 1997: 11). Significantly, feminist standpoint epistemology also acknowledges the researcher's subjectivity as a resource and an object of the research (Burton, 2000), and 'scientific' notions of objectivity and 'value-neutrality' are challenged (Harding, 1986: 249). As such, feminist standpoint epistemology is favoured over a feminist empiricist approach, which adheres to the use of existing methodological norms of scientific inquiry as a means of eliminating the sexism in research. By making the ontological assumption that social reality is independent of the researcher and focusing primarily on the power of research methods, feminist empiricism overlooks the fundamental concern of which issues are selected as the focus for sociological inquiry in the first instance (Rorty, 2000).

However, feminist standpoint epistemology is not without its own critique. From a postmodern perspective, essentialist categories of womanhood and a unified category of 'woman' have been disputed (Millen, 1997), on the basis that the experience of 'women' is ontologically fractured. Gelsthorpe (1992) reminds us that "women are never just women". Feminist postmodernism advocates a nonuniversalist approach (Nicholson, 1999), and abandons the pursuit of unitary notions of 'truth' in favour of developing multiple and fragmented discourses. Such an approach, favoured by Lather (1991) in its rejection of universal criteria for privileging certain knowledges of gendered lives, however, can in turn be critiqued on account of its relativist stance.

Holland and Ramazanoglu (2006: 57) argue that "Feminism is politically dismembered by relativism". Similarly, Benhabib (1992: 230) cautions feminists against "being deflected by postmodernism into only focusing on fragmentation and the local". Oakley (2000: 298) regards the apolitical nature of postmodernism as problematic for the feminist project of emancipation, asserting that "If there really are no such things as 'facts' about the way people are treated, then there is also no such thing as

discrimination or oppression". For these reasons, a postmodern epistemological approach is of limited value to the current study, although it is acknowledged that different women will experience gender, and gendered oppression, in different ways depending upon their individual characteristics and circumstances. Their experiences will also be shaped, for example, by factors such as age, class, ethnicity and sexuality. Stanley (1990: 14) defends a specifically feminist ontology by saying that it is not intended to be an ontology attached to all women, and that in fact this is a state which most women do not share; that is, "the experience of and acting against perceived oppression".

In addition to the ontological and epistemological perspective adopted, other central tenets of a feminist methodological approach can be described as a way of doing research which empowers participants, enables their voices to be heard, works reflexively, and rejects the distinction between the researcher and the researched (Skinner et al., 2005). Reflexive research can be described as "research that looks back at itself" (Alexander, 2001: 355). Crucially, the subjective position of the researcher is acknowledged and documented so that the way in which the research process affects the research results is apparent. Such an approach is conscious of the potential power of the researcher over the researched (Stanley & Wise, 1993), and is concerned with the emotional wellbeing of the researcher and the researched (Skinner et al., 2005).

Feminist methodological principles were embedded in the design of the current study. Crucially, the emotional and physical wellbeing of the researcher and the research participants was prioritised throughout the study. Specific attention was also given, as far as possible, to redressing any power differentials between the researcher and the researched, and to adopting a reflexive approach throughout the study. Mindful of potential power imbalances between the researcher and the researched, care was taken in the current study to minimise this dynamic by working to ensure that the research participants were able to exercise their own discretion, choice and control in the research process. For example, participants engaged in the study on a voluntary basis and were free to withdraw from the process at any time. Choice was also exercised by participants in terms of whether they participated in an interview and/or a focus group, and where and when this should take place. Participants were also encouraged to ask the researcher questions, and provide feedback about their experience of taking part in the research via an anonymous questionnaire. In order to give something back to

participants, and allow them to contextualise their experience of participating in the study, all participants were given the option of receiving a summary report of the main research findings. Moreover, the content of focus groups and interviews was guided by a combination of what the researcher and the participants considered important to discuss. Adoption of a feminist methodological approach, however, was not without its challenges. These issues are reflected upon at the end of this chapter following further discussion of the research design.

Research design

Research strategy

In order to answer the questions posed by this particular study, it was crucial to grasp the complexity of the factors and processes which influence women's perceptions and behaviours in relation to their safety in bars, pubs and clubs. Fundamental to this was the need to understand the way in which young women construct and negotiate meaning within this particular social context. For this reason, a qualitative research strategy was used to "access the 'world' in terms of those people being researched" (Stroh, 2000: 197). A quantitative research strategy could have usefully been employed to elicit some dimensions of participants' experiences and views. However, the use of quantitative methods was disregarded in this study since these methods were unlikely to capture the level and depth of data required to fully explore the perceptions and understandings of young women, with which to then answer the research questions set out by this study. As Ramazanoglu and Holland (2006: 155) assert "quantitative methods offer limited access to accounts of experiences, nuances of meaning, the nature of social relationships, and their shifts and contradictions". Further, it has been argued that measuring 'safety' is not assisted by a quantitative survey approach since it is a 'transitional and situational' concept (Falton and Sacco, 1989: 211). In other words, safety is not a static concept; its very meaning is likely to vary across individuals, time and place. Quantitative survey based approaches assume that social phenomena are stable and external in form (Lee, 1999), rendering surveys inappropriate for examining

fluid and internal processes (Graham, 1983)[37]. Key to this study was understanding the factors and processes which influence women's safety perceptions and behaviours within a particular and fluid social context, rather than quantifying how safe women are when they socialise in bars, pubs and clubs.

Some consideration was also given to utilising observational methods in bars, pubs and clubs. This is an approach which has been adopted by a number of studies addressing the issue of violence and aggression in bars, pubs and clubs (Graham et al., 1980; Tomsen, 1997; Graham & Wells, 2003; Winlow & Hall, 2006). However, these studies have typically focused on male experiences of violence and aggression, which tend to be more visible than the subtle forms of intimidation and harassment experienced by women. The perspectives of young women could not be obtained from observation alone, and there were also concerns about researcher safety in these environments as a lone female researcher.

Research methods

In keeping with a qualitative research design, this study gathered data through focus groups and semi-structured individual interviews with young women. Participants were given the option of participating in a focus group and/or an interview, depending upon their own personal preference. Focus groups were designed to concentrate primarily on young women's views about women's safety in bars, pubs and clubs generally, and their views about associated safety advice for women in these venues. Meanwhile, individual semi-structured interviews were designed to elicit participants' personal experiences of socialising in bars, pubs and clubs, safety concerns and safety strategies in these settings[38].

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[37] It is acknowledged that quantitative methods, however, would not have been without their own merits. For example, there is some evidence to suggest that self-completion questionnaires may negate the interview bias associated with conducting interviews on sensitive topics (Tourangeau and Smith 1996, cited in Bryman, 2001), and have the advantage of being a relatively inexpensive and time-efficient tool (Bryman, 2001). However, these pragmatic benefits were not enough to outweigh the epistemological needs of this study.

[38] To view a copy of the focus group and interview topic guides used, see Appendix 3.

Focus Groups

Focus groups have traditionally been used by market researchers operating within a positivist paradigm (Cunningham-Burley et al., 1999), and relatively limited use of focus groups has been made by feminist researchers (Wilkinson, 1999). However, it can be argued that focus groups have particular characteristics which make them compatible with feminist research methodology, and a study of this nature. In keeping with feminist methodology, focus groups are a *contextual* method. In other words, focus groups locate individuals within a social context, and focus on individuals' interactions with others (Wilkinson, 1999). The use of group interaction, around a specific set of issues or some form of collective activity, to generate data has been described as a distinguishing feature of focus groups (Barbour & Kitzinger, 1999: 4)

It has also been argued that focus groups are useful when it comes to investigating *what* participants think, but they excel at uncovering *why* participants think as they do (Morgan, 1988: 25, cited in Oates, 2000), since participants tend to explain and justify their viewpoint to other respondents within the group. Focus groups, therefore, provide an opportunity for researchers to examine the ways in which individuals, as a member of a group, discuss a certain issue, rather than simply as individuals (Bryman, 2001). It was anticipated that this feature of focus groups would be particularly relevant to this study in terms of developing an understanding of the culture and expectations of young women's individual and group behaviour in bars, pubs and clubs, and contextualising young women's views and experiences. In addition to being a contextual method, focus groups are also a relatively non-hierarchical method (Wilkinson, 1999). Again this aspect of focus groups is in keeping with feminist methodology, due to the potential to reduce power differentials in the research process (McCarry, 2005), between the researcher and the researched[39].

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[39] There is some debate about the suitability of focus groups for researching sensitive topics, and although focus groups can be used in this way not all writers would agree on this point (Oates, 2000: 188). Kitzinger and Farquhar (1999: 170) acknowledge that group work may not be an appropriate means to answer all research questions and that "There is a thin line between creating the opportunity for a group to discuss a difficult issue and foisting a discussion on people that they would really rather not have". However, Farquhar and Das (1999) contend that individuals may be more likely to disclose personal experiences in group rather than dyadic settings since groups may create a relatively safe space to discuss issues and experiences which may otherwise be seen as taboo.

Interviews

The study design incorporated the use of qualitative semi-structured interviews with young women in addition to focus groups. Individual interviews were intended to allow participants to share information, which they may not feel comfortable sharing in a group (e.g. situations where they have experienced violence or harassment), and acknowledge the possibility that some participants may feel less confident about sharing their views in a group situation (Michell, 1999). Interviews also have the advantage of allowing further exploration of issues which have arisen in focus groups, and have the potential to allow exploration of women's views and experiences in greater depth than focus groups might allow, particularly given that this is a potentially sensitive topic. In this regard, Barbour & Kitzinger (1999) contend that interviews are more effective than focus groups for exploring the individual biographies of participants. Interviews were designed to follow a semi-structured format, with a view to ensuring consistency across interviews (Bryman, 2001), while also allowing for the interview to be guided by what the interview participant considers to be relevant and important[40].

Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations were of paramount importance in the design of this research study, particularly in terms of considering potential benefits and harms to the participants and to the researcher. An intended benefit for research participants was the opportunity to express their views on a subject matter where their behaviour is often scrutinised, but their voices overlooked. Feedback received from participants suggests that they welcomed this opportunity (see Appendix 7 for further details of participant feedback). Prior to approaching any potential research participants or conducting fieldwork, the study design was submitted to the Department of Applied Social Science (DASS) Ethics Committee at the University of Stirling for ethical approval[41]. Following submission of a research protocol detailing the study design, including the participant

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[40] Face to face interviews, rather than telephone or online interviews were deemed to be the most appropriate interview format since this would allow the researcher to pick up visual cues from participants and adapt the flow of the interview accordingly.
[41] The DASS ethics committee is remitted to oversee ethics of research carried out within the department in accordance with the ESRC Research Ethics Framework. Membership of this committee comprises of both experienced social researchers and lay people.

recruitment strategy and fieldwork tools, full ethical approval for the study was granted by the DASS Ethics Committee in April 2007.

So how were ethical considerations treated in practice? As a starting point, particular care was taken to ensure that informed consent was secured from all participants. In effect, this meant that all participants were informed, verbally and in writing[42], of the nature and purpose of the study, and given the opportunity to request further information about the study prior to, during, or after participation in the study. Participants were asked to give their written consent to take part in the study on the understanding that this would not infringe their right to withdraw from the study at any time, without any obligation to state their reasons for withdrawal[43]. In this regard, consent was viewed as an ongoing agreement, which was actively negotiated throughout the research process[44].

It was acknowledged that due to the subject matter of the study, participants could become distressed, or at least seek further support around particular issues. Although no participants exhibited signs of distress, or requested further support around any particular issues, all participants were given an information sheet detailing sources of support in relation to a range of issues as a matter of course[45]. To help ensure the smooth running of the focus groups, a second researcher provided assistance at all four

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[42] An information sheet for participants was devised for this purpose. To view a copy of this information sheet, see Appendix 4.

[43] To view a copy of the consent form for participants, see Appendix 5.

[44] This approach to informed consent was considered to be essential, in view of the chosen research methods: semi-structured interviews and focus groups. In using these methods, it was anticipated that new themes and issues for further discussion would emerge as the interview or focus group progressed. It would have been impossible, therefore, to predict all of the exact topics for discussion prior to the start of the interview or the focus group. Clearly, this has particular implications for what is meant by informed consent (Lee, 1999).

[45] This information sheet detailed the contact information and a brief description of potentially relevant agencies such as Drinkline Scotland, Rape Crisis Scotland and the Scottish Association for Mental Health. To view a copy of this information sheet, please see Appendix 6.

of the groups[46]. All participants were also asked to complete an anonymous feedback form based on their experience of participating in an interview and/or focus group. The information given in these forms was intended to inform best practice for current and future fieldwork[47].

Confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed to participants during data collection, data analysis, writing up and dissemination of findings. Data gathered was stored in a locked file for the duration of the study. Further to this, data collected during the course of the study was stored in compliance with the Data Protection Act (1998), and upon final completion of the study, data will be destroyed or stored in secure DASS archive facilities as appropriate. In any reports produced as a result of this study, participants' responses have been anonymised through the used of pseudonyms and the removal of any details which would allow participants to be identified.

Procedures to minimise potential harm to the researcher were also incorporated into the research design. All focus groups and interviews were carried out in agency premises (e.g. a college or youth group) or public places (e.g. a café) to ensure that the researcher was not working in an isolated environment. It was also acknowledged that conducting research primarily as a lone researcher can be a difficult and testing process (Lee, 1999), and that the potential for participants to disclose distressing information can compound these difficulties (Brannen, 1988). A supportive environment, where the researcher was able to discuss any personal difficulties raised by carrying out the study, was established through regular meetings between the researcher and her supervisors.

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[46] The second researcher was identified on the basis of their experience of researching relevant issues with young people, and was required to sign a confidentiality agreement. The remit of the second researcher was to take notes, which would allow the responses made by individual participants to be identified during transcription and analysis, and also to be available in the event that any of the participants became distressed and required individual support. Although there were no participants who became distressed, the presence of a second researcher during focus groups was particularly valuable in terms of note taking and general support, given the demanding and intensive nature of facilitating focus groups. At points, the second researcher was also able to ask participants to clarify points and ask follow-up questions. This resulted in some valuable insights, which may not have emerged otherwise. The remit of the second researcher was explained to all focus group participants, and there was no indication that their presence inhibited responses in any way.

[47] To view a copy of this feedback form and responses from participants, see Appendix 7.

Sampling and recruitment of research participants

Profile of research participants

Research participants in this study were young women who socialise in bars, pubs and clubs. The terms 'young women' and 'young people' are somewhat ambiguous terms in that they can be simultaneously used to refer to a range of different age categories. For the purpose of this study, 'young women' were defined as women between the ages of 18 and 25 years. The lower limit of 18 years reflects the legal age for drinking alcohol in licensed premises[48]. However, the three main reasons for focusing upon women in this particular age group relate, firstly, to the vulnerability of this group to sexual assault. Research suggests that although men can and do experience sexual assault, women are overwhelmingly the targets of sexual assault (Amnesty International UK, 2005). Further, according to the British Crime Survey (2000), age (presumably after gender) is the biggest risk factor for sexual victimisation; women aged 16-24 were more likely than any other age group to say that they had been sexually victimised in the past year (Myhill & Allen, 2002). Existing research evidence also suggests that it is primarily, although by no means exclusively, young people who are vulnerable to experiencing sexual victimisation in licensed premises (Schwartz, 1997; Sturman, 2000; Moreton, 2002). Secondly, as discussed in Chapter One, there is an upward trend in levels of alcohol consumption amongst young women, and young women constitute a significant proportion of the bar, pub and club population. Thirdly, young women within this age group form the primary audience for safety campaigns and advice in relation to socialising and consuming alcohol in bars, pubs and clubs.

A total of 35 young women participated in the study: 20 of these women were recruited via universities; six via colleges; five via personal contacts; three via youth organisations and one via circulation of information 'flyers'[49]. All of the participants in this particular study were living in Scotland at the time of taking part in the research. Participants' views and experiences, therefore, relate mainly to their experiences of socialising in bars, pubs and clubs in Scotland. However, a small number of participants referred to experiences that they had of living and socialising out with Scotland.

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[48] It is acknowledged that women may socialise in bars, pubs and clubs when they are under the age of 18 years. The experiences of women in this age group may merit further research.
[49] To view a copy of the 'flyer' used during the recruitment process, see Appendix 8.

Following their participation in a focus group or interview, all women were asked to complete an anonymous participant profile form, with the option of completing and returning the form at that time, or returning it at a later date in the SAE provided[50]. The majority of the participants (33 out of 35) completed and returned this form, allowing the researcher to gain a demographic profile of the women who had taken part in the study with regard to their age, occupation, ethnic origin, sexuality, relationship status and disability status[51].

Participants were primarily white, heterosexual women in further or higher education. This is a limitation which should be borne in mind when reflecting upon the findings of this study. A more diverse sampling frame in terms of race and class, for example, may have produced different findings given the construction of respectable or successful femininity through race and class (Skeggs, 1997; Griffin, 2004; Jackson & Tinkler, 2007). Moreover, it is acknowledged that sexuality impacts upon definitions of safety and the identification of safe spaces in the night-time economy (Corteen, 2002; Moran et al., 2003). Nonetheless, the sample used in the current study provided a valuable opportunity to examine the views and experiences of a key population within bars, pubs and clubs, since the consumption of alcohol is an acknowledged feature of student life (Gill, 2002; Piacentini & Banister, 2008), and young women are a key target audience for safety campaigns in these social settings.

Recruitment strategy

Consideration was given to recruiting participants directly from bars, pubs and clubs. However, this method of recruitment was discounted due to ethical concerns about the safety of the researcher and potential participants[52]. Research participants were instead recruited in the following four ways: through universities and colleges; through youth groups; by distributing information leaflets ('flyers') about the research in locations

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[50] To view a copy of the participant profile form, see Appendix 2.

[51] This information is summarised in Appendix 7.

[52] Recruiting participants for a study of this nature while young women are socialising has the potential to be unnecessarily invasive. There was also a concern that potential participants could have consumed alcohol or other drugs at the time they initially met the researcher, which would compromise their capacity to give informed consent. In addition to these ethical issues, practical issues such as being able to maintain conversation over loud music and other distractions were considered to be potentially problematic.

where young women tend to congregate; and through personal contacts and snowballing to recruit unknown others. This sampling and recruitment strategy was not intended to produce a representative sample of young women from which inferences about the wider population could be made. Rather, the intention was to undertake an in-depth exploration of the views and experiences of a range of young women. The specific approaches used to recruit participants, and the outcome of these approaches is discussed in more detail below.

The study was introduced to potential participants as a study about young women's safety in bars, pubs and clubs. While it is possible that presenting the study in this way may have sensitized participants to the issue of safety, it was ethically important to offer clarity to the participants about the nature of the study, and in particular the focus on safety, as part of the process of obtaining informed consent. Discussing safety may have particular implications for young women based upon their own personal, and potentially distressing, experiences. Participants were not required to have had a negative or violent experience in a bar, pub or club to take part in the study. However, in viewing the responses made by participants, consideration should be given to the fact that participants in this study were self selecting. In other words, participants volunteered to take part in this study, and it is possible that women may have been more likely to participate in a study about women's safety if this was an issue which was of personal interest to them, perhaps as a result of having experienced a situation where their safety was threatened or compromised. It should be noted, however, that only two women, stated that a negative experience which they or a friend had encountered influenced their decision to participate in the study.

Colleges and Universities

The educational establishments approached comprised of three colleges and three universities across Scotland. Initial contact with colleges and universities was made in writing, and access was granted at all six institutions approached. To ensure the anonymity of these institutions and the individuals within them, they are referred to as University and College A, B and C respectively in the discussion which follows. Appropriate members of staff, usually teaching staff, for the researcher to liaise with

were identified by each institution. These members of teaching staff were identified, in part, on the basis that they taught on courses where women were well represented[53]. The specific means of recruiting participants within each educational institution was negotiated with each institution on a flexible and individual basis; the researcher was guided by recommendations from each institution as to the most appropriate and least disruptive method of recruitment for their students. However, an information sheet about the study was used to ensure that accurate and consistent information was given to all potential participants regardless of whether they had personal contact with the researcher. After receiving this information, students were then asked to contact the researcher directly by e-mail or by telephone if they were interested in taking part in the study, or simply wanted to find out more about what participating in the study would involve.

Across University A, B and C, 20 young women were successfully recruited to take part in the research study. Meanwhile, six participants were recruited across Colleges A, B and C[54]. Overall, participants recruited from colleges and universities comprised a relatively high proportion (26 out of 35) of the participants in the study. This should be borne in mind when analysing the responses made by participants. Women in further or higher education, for example, are more likely to be representative of higher socio-economic groups. However, particular benefits were brought to the study by participants at colleges and universities; socialising in bars, pubs and clubs was recognised as part and parcel of the student lifestyle and many of the student participants lived away from home, and were able to situate their responses in the context of their experience of socialising in different geographical locations.

Youth organisations

A range of youth organisations across Scotland were also contacted with a view to recruiting young women who were not currently in education. A total of 27 youth organisations were identified, including health based projects, women's groups,

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[53] In effect this meant that participants from Colleges and Universities were recruited from the following courses: Nursing, Social Care, Child Care, Working with Communities, Leisure and Fitness, Health Care, Beauty and Hairdressing, Sociology, Social Work, Criminology, Psychology, Anthropology, Social Policy, Marketing, Research Methods, Film and Media Studies, Architecture, and English Literature.
[54] A higher number of participants were recruited from universities compared to colleges. It is possible that participants from universities identified more with a 'fellow' university student.

homelessness projects, and general information and advice services. Of these 27 organisations, 24 were local agencies and three were national agencies. On the whole, youth organisations were responsive to the nature and purpose of the study, and responses were received from 24 out of the 27 organisations contacted by the researcher. However, it proved to be particularly difficult to recruit women from these organisations to take part in the research despite considerable effort being channelled into doing so; only three women from these organisations agreed to participate in the study. One of the key problems in recruiting participants from youth organisations was the dearth of women over the age of 18 years who accessed these services. Almost half (11) of the 24 organisations who responded to the researcher's access enquiry stated that no women above the age of 18 were in contact with their service, despite the organisation's remit stating that they worked with young people up to the age of 25 years. Further, one organisation felt that it would be inappropriate to recruit women from their organisation for a research study since two large research studies had just taken place.

However, 12 organisations did agree to assist with recruiting research participants. Of these 12 organisations, seven agreed to display information about the research study in their organisation's premises, and three agreed to meet with the researcher to discuss the research generally, and to assist in suggesting other appropriate organisations to contact. None of this correspondence, however, resulted in participants being recruited to take part in the study. A further two organisations offered to speak with women accessing their service, which resulted in three interviews taking place: two at a local women's group and one at a homelessness hostel. In the two organisations where women were successfully recruited, workers within the organisation played a key role in introducing women to the research study verbally and passing on written information about the study.

Distributing information leaflets about the research

Further efforts were made to recruit participants from out with educational institutions by distributing information leaflets ('flyers'). Flyers were distributed in three ways: by requesting that they were displayed in venues which were typically visited by young women (e.g. cafes, hairdressers, clothes shops, health centres and leisure centres); by suggesting to women who had taken part in the research that they could be passed on to

their friends if they wished to do so; and by sending them to youth organisations in contact with young women as discussed. The flyers were designed to resemble the type of flyer typically distributed by bars and clubs to publicise their venue and events, and were intended to have greater appeal to young women than a standard information sheet. Particular attention was also given to selecting an image which represented a 'clubbing' scene and diversity amongst young women; the images selected were deliberately ambiguous in terms of race and sexuality.

It is difficult to evaluate the overall value of the flyers in the recruitment process. Only one woman contacted the researcher as a direct result of seeing the flyer at her university gym. However, three of the non-educational organisations contacted commented upon the attractiveness of the flyers, and it is possible that the flyer contributed to the generally positive response from organisations. The flyer was also displayed on PowerPoint during the inputs given to students at University C and College B. Again, it is possible that this influenced participants' responses, although it is difficult to say this with any real certainty. Upon reflection, it may have been more effective in terms of cost and impact to have designed posters for display. Although the colour and design of the leaflet were eye-catching, they were perhaps too small to have enough impact.

Personal contacts & snowballing

Five participants were recruited through personal contacts of the researcher. However, to protect the integrity of the research, no women who were known to the researcher in a personal capacity were permitted to take part in the research. Four participants, who happened to be studying at University B, were recruited via a personal contact (a colleague) of the researcher. A 'key' participant was initially identified and this participant identified three friends who were willing to take part in a focus group. In this instance, snowball sampling (sometimes known as network sampling), where contact is made with a suitable respondent, and that respondent is then asked for other contacts with the characteristics required by the study (Burton, 2000), worked particularly well in terms of recruiting participants for a naturally occurring focus group. The fifth participant was recruited via a personal contact of the researcher.

Data collection: out in the field

Recruitment of participants and fieldwork, in the form of focus groups and interviews, was carried out over a seven month period (May to December 2007). During this time, four focus groups (with an average of four women in each group) were carried out and 29 young women participated in an interview[55]. As previously noted, women were given the option of participating in a focus group and/or an interview. Nine women participated in both a focus group and an interview, six women opted to participate in a focus group only, and 20 women participated in an interview only[56].

Focus groups

Four focus groups, with three or four young women in each group, were carried out. The first focus group was carried out with young women from a college, the second and third groups were carried out with women from universities, and fourth group was carried out with young women recruited through personal contacts and snowballing. Two of the focus groups were naturally occurring groups. That is, the women who participated in the groups were an existing group of friends. The remaining two groups, recruited from universities, were not naturally occurring although the women in these groups did have a shared frame of reference since they were all studying at the same university. This meant, for example, that participants were able to share accounts of local bars, pubs and clubs which were commonly known to them

The differing composition of the four focus groups provided an opportunity to gain insights in to any variations in the process and outcome of naturally occurring and non-naturally occurring focus groups. While the 'roles' of individual women within their friendship groups were more apparent within the naturally occurring groups, participants in the non-naturally occurring groups engaged with one another surprisingly well considering that they were previously unknown to each other. This

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[55] Two women participated in a joint interview. This was due to a focus group being scheduled with four women, two of whom were unable to attend at short notice. The two women who were available chose to go ahead with a joint interview instead.

[56] Focus groups and interviews took place in locations which were agreed with the individual participant. Care was taken to choose venues which were comfortable and convenient for the research participants, while also providing a space where privacy and confidentiality could be protected. In practice, this meant that interviews were carried out in quiet rooms within colleges, universities, youth organisations, cafés and women's organisations.

level of engagement may in part be explained by participant's shared frame of reference as discussed, and the small size of the groups. It had originally been intended that focus groups would have between four and six women in each group. However, logistical difficulties prevented this and it became apparent that groups ran well with only three or four women in them. One advantage of the smaller group size was the ease with which participants' responses could be attributed to individual participants during transcription. Perhaps more significant, however, was the ease with which participants appeared to share information with each other, and with the researcher.

Each focus group typically lasted for two hours, including a mid-way break. During the first part of the focus group, discussion focused mainly upon views about women's safety in bars pubs and clubs generally, personal safety concerns and safety behaviours. During the second part of the focus group, discussion was based upon safety advice directed towards young women socialising in bars pubs and clubs. To aid this discussion, examples of safety advice and awareness raising materials were provided, in the form of leaflets, posters, drink stirrers, drink coasters, bottle stoppers and drug detection kits[57]. These materials were divided in to three main categories: advice about drink spiking; advice about preventing sexual assault while socialising or consuming alcohol; and advice about alcohol consumption generally. These materials were discussed in terms of whether participants had any prior awareness of the materials, what the main messages were, and how appropriate and effective the materials were thought to be. However, the focus groups were not designed to evaluate specific safety campaigns, but to gauge awareness and perceptions of main messages and facilitate discussion about key issues. This aspect of the focus group appeared to work well and lively discussion often ensued.

Interviews

A total of 29 women participated in interviews, each lasting between 30 and 90 minutes. At the outset of the fieldwork, it was intended that where women opted to take part in a focus group and an interview, the focus group would take place first. The rationale for the interview following the focus group was that it would allow issues which had arisen during the focus group to be followed up in more depth with individual women at

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[57] To view copies of these materials, see Appendix 1.

interview. In practice, where an interview followed a focus group, this worked well and tended to result in interviews being longer on average than if a participant had taken part in an interview only. This contradicts Brannen's (1988) assertion that interviews dealing with sensitive topics should be one-off encounters, so that the interviewee need not fear seeing the interviewer again. The apparent success of a follow-up interview in this study may be due to a greater level of rapport being achieved at the second meeting, or the research participant being more 'tuned-in' to the focus of the study.

Interviews followed a semi-structured format and the interview guide was adapted depending upon whether participants were taking part in a focus group and an interview or an interview only[58]. Although a flexible, semi-structured approach was adopted with regard to the questions asked during interviews, and the order that they were asked in, the following main topic areas were covered during interviews: socialising in bars, pubs and clubs; general views on women's safety in bars, pubs and clubs; perceptions of personal safety; experiences where safety may have been compromised; views on safety advice and awareness raising materials; and safety strategies used.

Data analysis

Preliminary analysis of data from focus groups and individual interviews was integrated with data collection as part of a process of continual reflection. Simultaneously collecting and analysing data allowed for further exploration of new themes, or themes identified as particularly important by participants, as they emerged. During the first focus group, for example, the issue of a 'top half/bottom half' clothing rule emerged allowing this phenomenon to be explored in the focus groups and interviews which followed.

With regard to the data analysis process Strauss (1987) describes a three stage model: open coding, axial coding and selective coding. During the initial open coding process, data is organised into broad analytic themes and coded on that basis. At the axial coding

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[58]Where participants had taken part in an interview only, an extended version of the interview guide, incorporating some of the focus group topics, was used to optimise data collection. Meanwhile, when participants had taken part in a focus group and were due to also take part in an interview, the interview guide was adapted to specifically take account of areas to follow-up, based on contributions made by the individual participant during the focus group, or discussion within the focus group more generally.

stage, a second pass through the data develops the links between the emergent themes. During the third phase of analysis, extracts from data which best illustrate the main themes identified are selected for inclusion in the final report. Broadly speaking, interview and focus group data from the current study was analysed in this way. However, in reality, this was not a linear or straightforward process and I moved back and forth between these phases at various stages of the analysis process.

The qualitative data collected from interviews and focus groups was fully transcribed and coded using the computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) package NVivo. Prior to using NVivo however, the analysis process started by identifying a broad set of thematic categories. These categories were derived from a hybrid of themes which emerged from observations made during the data collection process, preliminary analysis of focus group and interview data, the reading which informed the development of this study, and my own feminist ideological perspective. These broad categories were translated into 'nodes' within NVivo. During a second pass through the data, all transcripts were coded, and links between these themes emerged alongside the development of new themes. In this regard, the approach taken in this study cannot easily be described as 'inductive' or 'deductive' since data analysis was approached with theoretical concepts and themes in mind, although it was anticipated that new themes would emerge along the way.

While using NVivo allowed data to be coded and retrieved more efficiently than if this task had been undertaken manually, it was difficult to avoid the sense that the data was being 'fractured' in a way which meant that it would be easy to lose sight of individual participants 'as a whole'. For this reason, the 'Framework' analysis method was also drawn upon. Framework is a matrix based approach for analysing qualitative data developed by the National Centre for Social Research[59], which allows data to be synthesised and charted in a way that allows the researcher to 'read across' data without losing sight of individual participants (Ritchie et al., 2003). Using this method was particularly important for highlighting connections and contradictions within participants' accounts (e.g. where a participant said that they were not concerned about

[59] A 'Framework' software package for qualitative data analysis has now been developed by NatCen, although this was not available during the data analysis stage of the current study.

their safety, yet went on to describe a range of safety behaviours which they routinely adopted when socialising in bars, pubs and clubs).

Challenges encountered in the research process

For the most part, adopting a feminist methodological approach provided a positive framework for the design and conduct of this study. However, adopting a feminist ethos and framework was not without its challenges. From one feminist perspective, it is argued that women, as interviewers and interviewees, "share a subordinate structural position by virtue of their gender", which can facilitate shared identification and rapport (Finch, 1984: 76). Being female was the most obvious similarity shared by the researcher and each of the research participants. Echoing the experiences of other feminist researchers interviewing women (Oakley, 1981; Finch, 1984), responses and feedback from participants would suggest that participants were able to identify with the researcher on this basis, and were comfortable in disclosing particular information that they may not have done with a male researcher (e.g. male behaviour which makes them feel uncomfortable but tends to be trivialised by men).

In contrast, the most common dissimilarity between the researcher and the participants was that of age; on average, the researcher was 10 years older than the research participants. It is difficult to ascertain whether this disparity inhibited participants' responses in any way. It may even be possible that participants gave greater detail in certain areas where they assumed that the researcher had little or no knowledge (e.g. descriptions of clubs and bars where they socialised). During one focus group, for example, the researchers were asked what it was like when they used to go out to bars and clubs, suggesting that participants considered the researchers to have different patterns of socialising to their own. Further, Wise (1987) critiques the assumption that power imbalances are not dissipated by shared gender alone. While women may occupy a subordinate structural position as a result of their gender, it does not necessarily follow that they share the same experiences of oppression, discrimination, and powerlessness as Finch (1984) would suggest. Essentially, the power dynamic within the research process is likely to be influenced by a range of structural factors such as sexuality, ethnicity or economic position (Millen, 1997: 3), and situational factors (e.g. interviewer skill, time and location of interview).

Minimising power imbalances within the research process is a fundamental concern of feminist methodology (Skinner et al., 2005). However, power is a complex and dynamic concept (Millen, 1997), and it is acknowledged that the measures undertaken within this study do not automatically generate an equal and reciprocal relationship between the researcher and the researched. The issue of power in the research process has been given particular attention in methodological research literature by feminist writers (Oakley, 1981; Finch, 1984), suggesting that the qualitative interview process has the potential to overcome the asymmetrical balance of power typical within survey based interviews, which limit women's self expression (Lee, 1999) and hinder the formation of a reciprocal relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee.

In reality, however, the researcher and research participants may agree or disagree on a range of factors that impact upon the possibilities of interaction (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2006). Indeed, it was apparent within this study that shared gender between the researcher and research participants did not necessarily equate to a shared view of the world. During focus groups and interviews, for example, some participants expressed views about appropriate behaviour for women, which were not in keeping with my own personal values; women who wear 'revealing' clothing were described as 'slappers', and it was suggested that women commonly make up stories of rape, particularly if they have been drinking alcohol. Prior to engaging in fieldwork, I had anticipated this type of predicament, and given thought as to how best to respond in this situation. I considered it appropriate to explore why participants held particular views, but not to criticise participants' perspectives, or silence them in any way[60]. In contrast with methodological research literature which highlights the powerlessness of the researched, such situations highlighted the relative powerlessness of the researcher, enforced by the etiquette of the interview (Lee, 1999). Ramazanoglu and Holland argue that "feminists have had to come to terms with the discomforts of producing knowledge of how women exercise power, promote injustice collude in their own subordination, or benefit from the subordination of 'others'" (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2006: 148). Nonetheless, this aspect of the fieldwork was particularly challenging, and raised questions about the feminist principle of "allowing women's voices to be heard" when women's 'voices' may serve to intentionally or unintentionally discriminate against other women. Millen

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[60] The only exception to this would be in a situation where a focus group participant adopted an inappropriate or discriminatory stance towards another focus group participant

(1997: 9) describes this tension between the 'twin aims' raising the feminist consciousness of women and preserving their own account of their experience as 'an internal contradiction'.

One aspect of conducting research, which is given relatively little attention within feminist methodological literature, is whether the feminist theory and principles guiding the research should be shared overtly with research participants. Millen (1997) acknowledges that some 'methodological difficulties' emerge when doing feminist research on non-feminist populations, and Ramazanoglu and Holland (2006) note that unfavourable perceptions of feminism can mean that such research will be met with suspicion by gatekeepers, resulting in access being denied. However this observation is not extended to research participants. So, should the researcher openly identify themselves as a feminist? In this particular study, this was not disclosed to participants. The decision not to identify the research as feminist research to participants was partly borne out of concern that doing so might inhibit participants' responses by suggesting to respondents that particular types of response were sought, or at least that participants responses would be viewed in a particular way. Further, and disappointingly, identifying the research project as a feminist study may have alienated women. For many women, especially young women, feminism has negative connotations, and feminists are constructed particularly negatively (Riley, 2001). Angela McRobbie (2004: 512) goes as far as to suggest that feminism has been expelled to a state which can be likened to "a retirement home in an unfashionable rundown holiday resort", which repels young women. Priority was given, therefore, to conducting fieldwork in a way which reflects the ethos of feminist methodology, while identification of the study as grounded in feminist theory remained implicit. Adopting this approach, however, gives rise to questions about the extent to which this study was complicit in the distancing of feminism as an accepted and positive identity for young women.

Further questions exist in relation to whether my own feminist interpretation of the data adequately represents the perspectives of the participants within this study. Arguably, the matter of interpretation is where the power of the researcher is most acute (Smith, 1989). In exercising this power, Ramazanoglu and Holland (2006: 161) note that apparently simple decisions about what to include, exclude, or categorize carry theoretical, ethical and political implications. On the basis that researchers have the time, skills and resources to make sense of individual experiences within a historic and

social context, Kelly et al. (1994: 37) contend that researchers occupy a position which makes the notion of an equal relationship with participants an illusion.

While it can be argued that individuals do not always have the knowledge and resources to be the best interpreters of their experiences (Maynard & Purvis, 1994: 6), it could equally be argued that on the basis of an interview, neither do I as the researcher. In this regard, I consider the task of interpreting the data and presenting findings based on my own understandings to be both a daunting responsibility and a privilege. In doing so, I acknowledge that my interpretation of participants' experiences may well differ from participants' own interpretations, and indeed those of other researchers. However, my conclusions are grounded in a thorough analysis of participants' views, and participants' interpretations of their experiences are also represented in their own words through the use of verbatim extracts from their interviews and focus groups.

A noteworthy difference in my own interpretation of participants' experiences and their own interpretations lay with the greater tendency of participants to locate their experiences at an individual rather than a structural level. This is a particularly contentious issue. Empowering women is a central tenet of feminist research, although there is scope for women's participation in research to be a disempowering experience. The impact that taking part in the study would have on participants was a key concern in designing this study. Highlighting women's structural disadvantage or feminist ideas such as the way in which women's fear of sexual violence acts as a measure of social control over women, for example, may have eroded notions of power and control which participants held at an individual level. Millen (1997: 2) articulates this point of contention in the following way:

> In any event, what we as researchers and as feminists might see as empowering women by giving them the tools to analyse their situation in terms of gender and power may actually disempower them in the short term by undermining immediate coping strategies which do not involve any long-term structural change for women and which the researcher has therefore judged as being based on sexist or non-feminist beliefs or actions.

In the context of the current study, it is not difficult to imagine why acknowledging the nature and extent of sexual violence within our society is perhaps an unappealing prospect for individual women to confront. My own initial experience of doing so was in many ways liberating, although it was also overwhelming and at times I wished that I was 'blissfully ignorant' to this reality.

For participants, it was also possible that discussing safety directly sensitized them to this issue, leading them to focus more on their concerns about this issue than might otherwise have been the case, or introduce fears where none existed previously. As discussed earlier in this chapter, for ethical reasons the study focus was introduced to participants as 'young women's safety in bars, pubs and clubs', and during focus groups and interviews participants were asked directly about their safety concerns and experiences. While at some level this may have sensitized participants the issue of safety, care was taken not to ask direct questions about their experiences. For example, participants were asked questions such as, "Have you ever experienced a situation in a bar pub or club where you felt unsafe or your safety was compromised" rather than, "Have you ever had your drink spiked/been assaulted in a bar, pub or club?" Care was also taken not to dramatise any potential risks to young women, and to monitor women's reactions to issues discussed. However, it is the case that some respondents did comment that they had not thought of many of the issues until now and, in any similar future work, the appropriate balance between fully informed consent and the risk of sensitisation should be considered carefully:

> It was all enjoyable. It also made me think of several factors which I had never considered before (e.g. drink spiking).

> It highlighted the importance of my safety when out at night and I am more aware of people around me as a result.

> It gave me a chance to really think about how safe me and my friends are when we go out.

> I hadn't really thought about this topic in any great detail before and was glad of the opportunity to do so.

In some respects, however, this feedback could be regarded as a positive outcome of the research since women may be more aware of safety issues, having had a safe space to discuss them. Feedback from some participants also suggested that the opportunity to reflect upon these issues was welcomed, and that this was an aspect of the research which they had particularly enjoyed. In keeping with feminist research, which strives to address issues which affect the day to day lives of women and move towards social change, it appeared that participants welcomed research on this topic and were able to identify its relevance to their own lives:

Interesting to hear other peoples point of view on topics which affect us all each week on a night out and be part of research which asks women their views on safety as opposed to telling them what they should/shouldn't do!

It was a good way to sit down and chat about a subject that we all deal with but which is very much a taboo and not spoken about.

I liked talking about things that happen every weekend to myself, or my friends and expressing my views on it.

I thought it was a really interesting subject and one that definitely needs more work done on it – look forward to seeing the findings!

It was a great chance to talk about a serious topic and have my comments valued.

Mason (1998) describes this as 'ecological validity' within qualitative research. Further, as a result of participating in this research study, one young woman made the decision to volunteer for her local Rape Crisis Centre, and two women decided to develop their own research project on a similar topic within their local area. A number of other women also commented that, following their participation in the study, they had raised the issue of women's safety with their male and female friends. For these women, it would seem that participating in the research had a positive outcome. However, Kelly et al. (1994: 37) remind us that despite feminist aspirations of empowerment, participating in a research study is unlikely to directly change the lives of participants: "We [researchers] cannot for example, provide access to alternative housing options, childcare places, or a reasonable income". While this pragmatic conclusion is difficult to refute, it is hoped that the current study makes a positive, if small, contribution to understanding the concerns of young women in relation to an issue which they themselves perceive to be important within the context of their own lives. To this end, the following four chapters outline the key findings of this study.

Chapter Five
The Experience of Socialising in Bars, Pubs and Clubs
Young Women's Perspectives

Introduction

This chapter explores the way that contemporary young women socialise in bars, pubs and clubs, including the significance of this leisure activity within their lives. Early feminist studies of women's leisure document the way in which women are frequently positioned as the facilitators of others' leisure opportunities, and rarely perceive themselves to have the right to such leisure opportunities (Deem, 1988). Socialising and drinking in bars, pubs and clubs, in particular, has conventionally been considered as a male preserve and a reflection of patriarchal society (Whitehead, 1976; Hey, 1986). Socialising in bars, pubs and clubs is inextricably linked to alcohol consumption; an activity traditionally steeped in gendered meanings, expectations and patterns of consumption (Plant, 1997). For women, consumption of alcohol has been linked with notions of sexual promiscuity, a lack of respectability and gendered double standards (Smart & Smart, 1978; Green et al., 1987). Hence, women entering pubs on their own or with other women have traditionally been subjected to stigma in a way which does not apply to their male counterparts (Stanley, 1980; Hey, 1986). Feminist studies from the 1970s onwards have highlighted the way in which norms of appropriate femininity and respectability have acted as a form of social control to regulate women's behaviour (Smart & Smart, 1978; Green et al., 1987; Connell, 2005). Further, it has been argued more recently that for women, notions of 'respectable' femininity are connected to class as well as gender (Skeggs, 1997).

However, it would appear that contemporary young women enjoy new freedoms in relation to their leisure. Amidst what has been described as a 'culture of intoxication' (Measham & Brain, 2005), the current generation of young women consume more alcohol than their predecessors (Richardson & Budd, 2003; Mathews & Richardson, 2005; McKenzie & Haw, 2006), and bars pubs and clubs have become increasingly feminised (Forsyth et al., 2005). Jackson and Tinkler (2007: 254) note that representations of the 'ladette' have suggested that women are in fact 'taking over' the

once male preserve of pars and pubs. From a liberal feminist perspective, it would appear that the goal of equal rights for women to access bars, pubs and clubs has now been achieved; women are not only free to socialise in bars, pubs and clubs as they wish, they are encouraged to do so via the marketing strategies of the alcohol industry. Women are recognised as a lucrative consumer group, and young women in particular have been described as "a powerful economic force" (Jackson & Tinkler, 2007: 16). Some commentators have even argued that we are now witnessing a post-feminist era whereby young women are deemed to be able to exercise freedom and individual choice as liberated and empowered consumers (Tasker & Negra, 2007).

However, questions remain about both the nature and extent of women's enhanced freedom to partake in a conventionally masculine leisure pursuit, which is at odds with normative femininity. In recent years much concern has been voiced about the normalised 'determined drunkenness', which characterises UK drinking culture (Measham, 2006), although particular concern has been expressed about a growing and problematic 'ladette culture' whereby women are seen to embrace reckless behaviour and high levels of alcohol consumption (Day et al., 2004; Jackson & Tinkler, 2007). This perceived shift in women's behaviour has been linked to social disorder and vulnerability to sexual assault. Hence, young women have simultaneously been positioned as 'a risk' and 'at risk'. Clearly, contemporary changes in women's patterns of socialising in bars, pubs and club is a contentious issue.

Drawing upon focus group and interview data, this chapter explores this issue from the perspective of young women themselves, beginning with the role that socialising in bars, pubs and clubs plays in their lives. The reasons why young women choose to attend, and indeed avoid, particular bars, pubs and clubs are considered alongside the significance of who young women choose to attend bars, pubs and clubs with. The role of safety considerations and gendered expectations of young women's behaviour in these venues is drawn out during these discussions.

Socialising in bars, pubs and clubs: 'it's just what people do'

All of the young women who participated in this study socialised in bars, pubs and clubs. Indeed this was described as a normal, and in many cases, predominant leisure activity:

> *Louisa (INT):* I don't really go to any other places, any other leisure places. Yeah that's about it, it's all around drinking!

> *Judith (INT):* …it's everything to a social life. I mean, if you try and think of the occasions where you meet somebody that doesn't involve going out into a bar and involving alcohol, I think that's really rare. Really rare. I mean you can go and meet someone for a coffee, but in general if you go out anywhere after five o'clock it's gonna be for a drink.

Going to bars, pubs and clubs provided an important social function for the young women in this study; meeting people, socialising and networking were highlighted as particularly important aspects of going to bars, pubs, and clubs. Having a suitable venue to meet with groups of friends was particularly important given that women within this age group may not have their own home at this point in their lives:

> *Alison (INT):* …now it really is quite important 'cause we don't really do anything else with your friends, if you're going out you'll go to a pub or a club or something,… because none of us have actually got our own house, it couldn't be that you all just go round there. So it's our way of socialising with each other really.

> *Lorna (INT):* I think it's really important because I think as soon as you reach the age of 18 it's somewhere that you can go and you can just sit and be with all your friends … because no parent want you to have like 16 or like 20 like folk sitting in their house… socialising in the pub is a great way to have those like 16, 20 folk just sitting around and just having chat that they would have when they were like four years younger probably out in the streets.

Conversely, where young women did have their own home, bars, pubs and clubs were also viewed as a more appropriate venue to meet new people, acquaintances, or work colleagues than the private space of their own homes:

> *Lily (INT):* … it's just what people do in terms of when it comes to socialising. People don't really… like especially if it's more acquaintances from work and things like that, you wouldn't really be saying, "Oh let's go to each others home and hang out", so it's always public places and public places generally will sell alcohol and generally everybody wants to drink anyway so it just tends to be the norm, yeah, to go to those kind of places.

Bars, pubs and clubs provide an important space for young women to socialise in, and doing so was identified as a central aspect of their social lives. Lily encapsulates this point when she asserts that, "it's just what people do". To a certain extent, these findings challenge the conventional understanding of socialising and consuming alcohol in bars, pubs and clubs as a masculine leisure pursuit. Socialising in bars, pubs and clubs also appeared to play another important function in the lives of the young women in this study, in that this was an activity which was equated with fun, and contrasted with time spent working or studying:

> *Debbie (INT):* Well, I think it's really important just because you get to meet so many new people, and it's just something fun to do when people are working or studying during the week. Even if it's just once a week or something, it's quite good just to have a bit of fun.

> *Lisa (INT):* …at Uni, in first and second year, we went out what, three, four times a week and it's just part of meeting people… everyone says that about university, like you go out and it's part of your social life… I mean you wait for Friday night and then just go mad.

Both Debbie and Lisa draw distinctions between the constraints of the working week and the freedom to have fun at the weekends. Similarly, Katy highlights the importance of having enough money to go out, with this being the reason to work:

> *Katy (INT):* I like to party [laughter], go out and have a few drinks and things, so yeah it's quite a big part of my life especially now, you know, being a student or my gap year as well, you worked but only to have money to go out kind of idea [laughter].

In claiming their right to socialise and have fun, these findings represent a departure from earlier feminist studies which explored women's access to leisure opportunities, concluding that women are frequently the facilitators of others' leisure and rarely perceive themselves to have the right to such leisure opportunities. Where young women's accounts of socialising in bars, pubs and clubs were described in positive terms, these accounts were frequently accompanied by laughter which denoted a sense of mischievous fun. This is highlighted in the extracts above when Debbie laughs after saying 'it's quite good just to have a bit of fun' and Katy asserts that 'I like to party'. Some young women also positioned their desire and ability to have fun against that of their male counterparts. The following focus group exchange between Katy and Eilidh illustrates this point:

Katy (FG02): …the boys don't like to party as much as the girls do, they're pussies, honestly. They can't hack it! [laughter] …

Eilidh (FG02): It's true, like, you know, I try and get my boyfriend to go out and he'll be like, "Oh we'll go to the pub" and I'm like, "No, I wanna go out, out." He's quite happy just sitting at the bar, but if I want to go out properly I've usually gotta go with my girl mates instead.

For these young women it would appear that socialising in bars, pubs and clubs is equated with having fun, and there is a sense of pride associated with their ability and desire to go out and party. Again, this would appear to represent a departure from earlier studies which have suggested that there is a stigma associated with women who socialise in bars, pubs and clubs. However, as will be discussed in the following section, a more complex picture emerges when social perceptions of women who consume alcohol are subject to greater scrutiny.

Young women and alcohol consumption

The role of alcohol in young women's social lives

All of the young women in this study had experience of drinking alcohol in bars, pubs and clubs. For most of these women, drinking was a routine part of socialising in bars, pubs and clubs, although a diverse range of meanings were attached to this activity. For some women, alcohol played a positive role in their social lives:

Lisa (INT): … it's part of being social and…you have more confidence when you're drunk and it's fun when you have less inhibitions and things are funnier.

Melissa (INT): … if we're going out on the town on a Saturday then usually we'll drink a bottle of Lambrini or something. Something cheap just to start the night off, just so we can get in the party mood.

For Lisa and Melissa, drinking is equated with having fun, and getting into the "party mood". However, some young women expressed frustration that going to bars, pubs and clubs and consuming alcohol was such a pervasive feature of their social lives, or at least that of their friends:

Tessa (INT): It's actually something that I've got a little bit of a bone of contention with. I mean, don't get me wrong, I do enjoy going out for a night out and I do enjoy having a drink, and sometimes if I've had a hard week it can be like a release to go out and get like really pissed or whatever, but it's…I actually find it quite difficult to get my friends to do other things.

Further, pressure to consume alcohol appeared to be a source of concern for some of the young women in this study:

> *Judith (INT):* … the drinking culture here… it makes me feel sometimes like quite depressed about…about being here [Scotland], you know, you can't really do anything that doesn't involve going out and drinking and…it takes a really sorta strong person to say… "Do you know what, I'm just gonna have like two beers all night", or whatever.

The concern articulated here by Tessa and Judith about the social pressure to go out and consume alcohol was echoed by other participants. These concerns resonate with recent research, which positions heavy drinking as a significant part of Scottish and UK culture whereby drinking alcohol and intoxication are perceived as the norm. However, it is clear that this is not a culture welcomed by all young women in this study, challenging the notion of a 'ladette culture' where young women are assumed to embrace high levels of alcohol consumption and reckless behaviour.

Levels of alcohol consumption

It was not the intention of the current study to measure levels of alcohol consumption amongst young women since other studies have documented this issue in some detail (Richardson & Budd, 2003; Mathews & Richardson, 2005; McKenzie & Haw, 2006; Rahav et al., 2006). Therefore, participants were not asked about their own levels of alcohol consumption, or that of other women. However, young women frequently referred to a perceived rise in alcohol consumption by women; none of the participants suggested that women now drink the same amount, or less, than they did in the past. Perceived increases in women's alcohol consumption were often described in terms typically employed in media representations of women drinking such as 'ladette' culture and 'binge drinking':

> *Debbie (INT):* …you hear about women and the binge drinking thing… the figures are just getting higher and higher for that, and it is so normal to be able to do it from quite young ages now, male or female. It's just normal in society. It's weird. It's not a good thing, but it is what's happening.

> *Fiona (FG03):* It's a new phenomenon, you know, women binge drinking and everything like that, it never used to really happen as much as it does now. It's quite the norm for a woman to just go out and get drunk, just as drunk as men these days, but it never used to be that case.

The extracts above highlight women 'binge drinking' as a new, but increasingly normalised phenomenon. That is, it has become more acceptable for women to behave in the way that men do. Recent research has indeed documented a rise in women's levels of alcohol consumption, although the notion that women now drink as much as men do does not concur with existing research evidence as discussed in Chapter One, which consistently demonstrates that men drink more than women do across all age groups. However, given the high level of media attention given to women's increased levels of alcohol consumption, it is perhaps unsurprising that participants hold this view.

Perceptions of women who consume alcohol in bars, pubs and clubs

Participants were broadly in agreement that there is now more social acceptance of women going out and drinking in bars, pubs and clubs. For some participants, this was a reflection of women's increasing independence:

> *Lily (INT):* I think women were a lot more… conservative before… I don't think they'd be drinking as much when they'd be going out… some things like that have changed a lot because I think generally attitudes about women going out is seen in a very different way.
>
> *I:* And do you have any ideas about why attitudes about women going out might have changed?
>
> *Lily (INT):* …I suppose there's more women living independently in terms of, you know, earning their own income and maybe marrying later so they're not necessarily connected to someone from such an early age. So I think women are just making the most of their independence for longer in their lives.

Lily locates women's increased capacity to go out drinking within the context of broader social changes which have contributed to greater independence for young women. On the whole, these would appear to be positive changes. However, there is evidence to suggest that gendered expectations and stereotypes in relation to alcohol consumption continue to impact upon the way in which women who drink, particularly in public, are perceived by others. Young women in this study were acutely aware that different meanings are attached to men and women who consume alcohol, despite the identification of alcohol consumption in bars, pubs and clubs as a normal leisure activity for young women, and their perception that it is now more socially acceptable for women to consume alcohol:

Suzanne (INT): I think obviously girls are allowed…I mean you're allowed to do anything really, but I mean it's just not as acceptable for a girl to get drunk still. I think sometimes with certain people I do feel a little bit ashamed "oh no, I wasn't, no, I wasn't drunk last night", still…you still say that when, you know…'cause I think it's just viewed as unattractive by some people.

Here Suzanne highlights the tension between 'girls' 'being allowed to do anything really', and remaining conscious that drunkenness may be viewed as problematic, shameful and unattractive for 'girls'. The following exchange between Fiona, Ruth and Lorna during a focus group highlights how this process may operate in practice:

Fiona (FG03): I don't know if it's just in my personal experience, but I think I'm more likely to hear people saying, slagging off a drunk girl than a drunk guy. You know, you hear people saying … "What's she doing?", or, "She needs to go home". I don't think you really hear that about a guy as much.

Ruth (FG03): No, I agree. They're more likely to say, "Oh, look at the state of her", rather than, "Oh, look at the state of him". The guys would just be look, "Oh, you were so drunk last night", whereas the girls would be, like, "You were really, really bad last night", as in, "Sort yourself out". Yeah. It's more seen as funny….if a guy's really drunk. For a girl it's, they should be ashamed.

I: Why do you think that is?

Ruth (FG03): I don't know. Girls are still supposed to have this innocence about them, where they don't do…

Lorna (FG03): Where it's not still quite caught up with change and stuff like that, and they're still expected to be seen as, you know, the person on your side. You know, we've to look good as opposed to, it's maybe still perceived that it's the men that should be out drinking, possibly and stuff like that.

It would seem that although the consumption of alcohol by women is perceived to be generally more acceptable than it may have been in the past, these young women believe that a double standard persists in the form of differing attitudes towards men and women who consume alcohol; women are judged more harshly than men, particularly when they are seen to be 'drunk'. It is interesting to note that Lorna suggests that attitudes towards women drinking lag behind broader social change. Further, Eilidh alludes to the idea that concern about women's safety while drinking has led to a heightened scrutiny of women's behaviour:

Eilidh (FG02): … if you look at it, like, historically… women are seen as equals, on the whole, in society now, and it's not unusual for a girl to go out and get drunk, but people seem to think now it's like it's a problem, you know, women shouldn't be going out getting drunk… it's all about women's safety and it's like kind of putting the pressure on yourself almost like if something happens to you it's your fault 'cause you were out drinking, and…I don't know if that's right, because it doesn't seem to work the same way with men.

Here, Eilidh also highlights the application of double standards to the behaviour of men and women in relation to alcohol consumption. One reason for the persistence of this double standard may be the perceived connection between alcohol consumption and sexual promiscuity, as illustrated in the following focus group dialogue:

Suzanne (FG02): I think there's still a lot of kind of, like pressure on girls, you know, like even the whole getting drunk thing, people like still kind of look down their nose on girls like that and I think it's… it's OK for a guy to get wasted and go and sleep with someone, but for a girl I think they still feel they should be quite embarrassed about it.

Various (FG02): Yeah.

Katy (FG02): Yeah, they're seen as a whore.

This perception of how society views women who are drunk was also expressed in interviews:

Melissa (INT): … now, it's kind of, if a girl goes out and she gets drunk, she has a one night stand, yeah, so what? I mean, it's still looked down upon, but not as bad. And if she does it as a regular occurrence then she's seen as a tramp or whatever. But most of the time it doesn't bother people, but if that was done years ago she probably would have been condemned for it or something.

Both Melissa and Suzanne allude to the notion that equating women who drink alcohol with sexual promiscuity is a view which is an outmoded and changing way of thinking. However, Suzanne also referred to pressures experienced by girls, and some of the women in this study disclosed that they themselves also held negative perceptions about 'other' women:

Esther (INT): For me, if I see a girl really…I mean, if it happens once OK, but if you see a girl really getting drunk every weekend, for me it says something about her personality that she is…probably…I don't know if it's very fair to say, but maybe she's more willing to do things, yeah.

It is interesting to note that both Esther and Melissa indicate that a woman will not be judged too harshly if she is drunk or has a casual sexual encounter as a one-off incident.

This may suggest that judgement or blame of a woman's actions are related to the nature of her intentions: if this type of behaviour happens as a one-off incident, it can be attributed to being a regrettable incident, which she will presumably learn from. If this behaviour is repeated, it is more likely to say something about her character. Similarly, other conditions also appear to be attached to women drinking alcohol in public:

> *Marion (INT):* I think if a girl's wearing skimpy clothes and she's drank a lot, you do tend to… I mean, me and my friends are quite…we don't…we do maybe drink a lot when we go out, but we don't tend to wear like little clothing …but I know if we see a girl who's really drunk and she's wearing next to nothing, you do sort of think, "Oh God, what's she like?!"

This statement from Marion highlights one of the 'conditions' of a woman or girl being drunk; that it is particularly unacceptable if she is also wearing 'revealing' clothing. This was a recurrent theme in young women's descriptions of acceptable behaviour when drinking, and an area where women's judgements of 'other' women were particularly acute.

Deciding where to go: issues of safety and identity

Distinctions between different types of bar, pubs and club

Young women in this study described where they would choose to go on a typical night out, and also where they wouldn't go. Decisions about where not to go were particularly informative, providing insights into their safety concerns and the implications for their feminine identities. Bars, pubs and clubs were differentiated and accorded status on the basis of their clientele, type of music and the drinking culture within the establishment. Young women in this study were readily able to identify bars, pubs and clubs that they would avoid. This was particularly apparent in focus group discussions where participants demonstrated a shared knowledge among the group about where not to go; these places were typically denigrated on the basis of the 'type' of person who went there, and their reasons for doing so. The association of particular bars, pubs and clubs with a 'type' of person that goes there would suggest that there are implications for young women's identity on the basis of the 'type' of bar, pub or club attends. Particular references were made to avoiding 'sleazy' bars, pubs and clubs where people went to take advantage of drinks promotions, to get drunk and seek a sexual encounter:

Louisa (INT):   Particularly avoid places like [Club] and [Club]. They're like huge clubs… it's just like such cheesy crappy music. All the men are lecherous and you just can't wait to get out, it's not a pleasant experience.

Alison (INT):   There's a couple of nightclubs that you'd avoid just 'cause of the people that they…that they have there, the guys especially are really quite sleazy, and a few pubs that, you know, the sleazier people go to, you just kind of stay away from them.

Debbie (INT):   I think some of the clubs or the main one anyway, just because the kind of guys that you get there, and the kind of women as well. I think it's to do with the way people dress and the way people act when they're drunk, because when I'm drunk I'm just a bit silly and then go off and have a dance, whatever. But you get a lot of sleazy guys and a lot of really tarty girls which is a bit annoying.

Louisa, Alison and Debbie express their dislike of particular bars, pubs and clubs with a sexualized environment where 'sleazy' people go. Going to a bar, pub or club with this intention is contrasted with just going to have fun, enjoy the music, and dancing. Here Debbie refers to 'really tarty girls' as a source of annoyance, thereby distancing herself from this type of girl as 'other'. By distancing herself from 'other' women who are not appropriately feminine, Debbie is able to inhabit the public and traditionally masculine space of bars, pubs and clubs without jeopardising her own feminine identity.

Bars, pubs and clubs with cheap drinks and particularly drunken environments were also considered by some participants to be unsafe. Louisa, for example described these venues as having "more aggression everywhere", while Lily was cautious of going to such venues on the basis that, "things can slip up a lot more easily". This type of venue was also associated with places where 'younger' people would go:

Rachel (INT):   A lot of the kind of…the pubs on [Street] or places like [Club] … [are] I don't know how to put it… not rowdy, but kind of, you know, lots of quite young people in very skimpy outfits drinking lots .

Karen (INT):   I really have a tendency – even when I was working – to avoid the kind of big drinking establishments that are really geared… You know, like 50 pence shots, everybody getting really hammered, you know, that kind of, um, you know, really loud kind of dancey music, apart from when I was really very much younger and didn't know any better.

Avoiding places where younger people go was also equated with avoiding places with less stringent security measures, reflected in their tendency to allow even underage people entry to the venue. In contrast to avoiding venues where 'younger' people tended to go, young women also highlighted 'old men's pubs' as venues, which they would not go to:

Melissa (INT): There's certain local pubs that I just don't really like, just by the look of the people that go in there. Purely being snobby . … there's a local pub there which is basically a seasoned hard drinkers pub that you just wouldn't want to go in by yourself or just with a couple of the girls. It's just not a kind of friendly sort of place. Well, that's just us looking at it, but I wouldn't feel safe going in that pub.

Suzanne (INT): … there's certain pubs that I wouldn't go to as a girl because I know they're kind of like… very working class boys' pubs, you know, they're not…and they're really not places that girls are seen in really.

Here Melissa and Suzanne describe how they sense that they would feel uncomfortable or 'wouldn't feel safe' in these pubs which are again, equated with heavy drinking. These pubs were also identified as masculine, working class environments. The issue of class in relation to safety is elaborated upon further by Tessa:

Tessa (INT): I hate saying things about people as if I'm like a total snob, but …you know like if you go somewhere like maybe like the [bar], it's maybe a more of a kind of middle class crowd and even if they are trying to chat you up… there's a certain line they're probably not gonna cross, whereas, you know, maybe like one or two of the bars that my mum drinks in because like she…as I said, she lives in the [area],… it's just the kinda general atmosphere seems to be… people just will be a bit more forward, you know, or maybe just a bit drunk or whatever else, and you know it's not like…it's not like anybody's trying to ravish you or do anything really bad, but you're just like a bit uncomfortable… you are just quite conscious that you're being blatantly ogled, people will… you know, just like look at your chest and make what they think is a complimentary kind of comment, but it's just a bit much. You know?

Safety comparisons between bars, pubs and clubs

In addition to being able to name particular bars, pubs and clubs to avoid, women described clubs as being less safe than bars. There were three main reasons for this. Firstly, participants described nightclubs as an environment which was conducive to being watched:

Lisa (INT): The [Club] is set out like that. So basically…and it was all the girls in the middle of the dance floor and all the guys lined up, and so they can just look at you and point you out and it's horrible.

Eve (INT): I think that was one o' the reasons I felt like everybody was looking at me and I was like, "Right, it's quite intimidating in here and just, let's go." 'Cause it is, it's like a big circle, the dance floor, but then right round about it was like railings where everybody was just standing watching and it was like a bit intimidating.

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Here Lisa and Eve describe the infrastructure of a club being set up in a way which allows them to be watched, usually by men. Secondly, men were thought to be more likely to make physical approaches in a nightclub, than they would be in a bar or a pub:

> *Lorna (INT):* Whereas in a club I think you'll get like all the other kind of guys that are there and are just kind like dancing next to you and stuff and it gets more kind of like physical 'cause they'll be like touching your arms and stuff like that and your waist and things… I don't like that, I just…I think it really depends though where you are, like in a club or a bar.

> *Lisa (INT):* I think in clubs they tend to touch you, or grab you or fall into you, like…and because obviously the music's really loud, but they can be quite…they can grab you and it's just…they've got no right to do that, whereas in bars I think they're more likely to say something or come and sit next to you.

Thirdly, in the event of an incident where a woman's safety could be compromised, it was thought to be more likely to go unnoticed in a nightclub, as illustrated by the following quotes from Lynn and Judith:

> *Lynn (FG01):* I can't remember the name o' the club, but it's really…it's got loads of levels and it's really dark so there's like a lot of corners, they've got like, sort of seats like enclosed. I've heard people…like a few people have been attacked there just because it's so dark and hidden away, people might not know you're there… I heard that like a few girls had got raped in there without people even noticing. Quite scared me when I heard about that.

> *Judith (INT):* Maybe just in pubs and stuff it's…it's slightly more safe than like being in a nightclub in terms of like just the number of people, so it being easier to sorta maybe spike a drink and go more unnoticed.

Lynn and Judith's descriptions of drink spiking or rape going 'unnoticed' alludes to a sense that they may need to rely on others for protection; they cannot be protected from harm if no-one notices what is happening to them. This also has significant implications for who young women feel most comfortable going to a bar, pub or club with. This will be explored in more detail within the following section.

The implications of who you go with

Gendered expectations of women's space and place inside bars, pubs and clubs

Although socialising in bars, pubs and clubs was acknowledged by the young women in this study as a routine leisure activity, it was apparent that their presence in bars, pubs and clubs was mediated by gendered expectations of the way in which women should

inhabit these spaces, particularly when they are unaccompanied by a male. This is reflected in the following statements from Sophie and Lorna:

> *Sophie (FG03):*   I think if girls go out, just girls, then like maybe other guys who don't know them, they take that as a sign "oh they're going out just to pull" or "they can't possibly be going out just because it's a night out" or anything, so it's almost like…you know, it's a signal "oh come and talk to me" or…so they feel they have a right to make a move.

> *Lorna (INT):*   I don't think a lot of guys can understand why you would want to go out and just be out with your friends, just singing and dancing and drinking, 'cause I think a lot of the time guys are always thinking "Oh, who's gonna be my mission tonight?" or whatever… whereas girls aren't really like that...or they can be like that, but it's not like a theme for them so much.

These comments by Sophie and Lorna indicate that women are still not perceived to have a legitimate purpose in bars, pubs and clubs. There remains an expectation that a woman should be accompanied by a male, otherwise she is perceived to be intent on attracting a member of the opposite sex. Focus group and interview responses around the issue of whether the young women would ever drink in a bar on their own provided further insights into the gendered nature of socialising in bars, pubs and clubs. This issue was initially raised during a focus group by Katy when she described a scenario where her mother was reluctant for her to wait for her friends in a bar on her own due to an incident where staff asked a female friend who was in a bar on her own to leave the premises since they assumed that she was a 'hooker':

> *Katy (FG02):*   She [mother] was like, "That's, you know, you don't want that kind of stereotype and ideology of people thinking you're standing at a bar by yourself trying to pick someone up". I was like, "I'm waiting on my friends for a drink!" … if a guy was standing at the bar they wouldn't have that kind of stereotype that they think you're a hooker, you know. I was like, "Cheers, Mum!"

Katy is aware that the same derogatory sexual stereotype would not be applied to a man who was in a bar on his own, although in describing this scenario Katy indicates that she would be content to wait for her friends in a bar on her own, and conveys a sense if incredulity that her mother should be concerned about her doing so. The fact that Katy is prepared to wait in the bar on her own implies some level of resistance to gendered norms on her part. Other focus group and interview participants also describe situations whereby they, or their female friends, had encountered difficulties when they were in a bar on their own:

Tessa (INT):   … one of my friends was just saying the other day that she's had a lot of hassle for, you know, doing things like that, sitting reading a book in a pub, you know, during the day, and thinking she's just gonna sit and have a wee quiet time and before she knows it there's this arm stuck around her waist and somebody thinking that she's basically trying to pull or whatever because she's a girl sitting by herself.

The encounters described by Katy and Tessa concur with the notion that women who attempt to drink in a pub or bar on their own are still viewed with a certain level of suspicion, particularly with regard to their intentions for doing so. Lorna articulates this point when she recalls a situation where she had arranged to meet her cousin in a pub, and was waiting for him at the bar:

Lorna (FG02):   … I was at the bar, you know, having a drink and thinking "This is what it feels like to be like a woman at the bar on her own" and I was like, "It's a bit etchy", you know, people are just like looking at you thinking "Why is she at the bar on her own having a drink?" It's not like a common picture… I think it would always look like you were waiting for someone. I think you would always just be expected to have someone with you… 'cause I don't think a lot of people would understand why a woman's going into a pub on her own.

The sense that people would not understand why a woman would go to a bar on her own would appear to stem from two main assumptions. Firstly, it is not expected that a woman would want to go to a bar or pub with the active desire to drink. Secondly, it is then assumed that women must have an ulterior motive for going to a bar on her own, namely, in Annabelle's words 'to get picked up':

Annabelle (INT):   Well, there's still a lot of attitude, if you see a woman alone at a bar, yes, she's obviously there to get picked up. So if she's gone for a quiet drink, like the way that men do, then obviously she's going to get propositioned a bit more; unwelcome attention.

Young women in this study were very much aware that different meanings were attached to men and women who may drink in a bar or pub on their own. It was understood that it was more acceptable for a man to drink in a bar on his own, and young women articulated their discomfort at the prospect of doing this. Debbie goes as far as to describe this as a 'scary' prospect:

Debbie (INT):   If I was sitting by myself, anybody could come over and say anything, especially if they're really drunk, they could. It would be quite scary actually. I'd be really nervous if I was doing it. I don't think I'll ever try it. I expect maybe I'll try it, but…I don't know .

Debbie's assertion that she may try going to a bar on her own, accompanied by laughter suggests that this would be an unusual or even daring thing to do. Similarly, Suzanne makes the following point about waiting in a bar on her own:

Suzanne (INT): I don't think I'd feel comfortable because I think that people still look at you and think it's a bit out of place, you know, a bit kind of,… And I think maybe not my parents, but my grandparents, but I think there probably are parents still, different generations that think that it's still not fully acceptable for girls to get really drunk or be in pubs and things like that on their own.

Suzanne highlights her sense that it's still not acceptable for 'girls' to be drunk or in pubs on their own, although she also indicates that this may be an outdated way of thinking, which belongs to her parents' or grandparents' generation. This sentiment is echoed by Lorna and Katy:

Lorna (FG02): Like when she [mother] was younger and growing up like it probably won't have been thought of for a woman to go to the pub on her own.

Katy (FG02): I don't know if that's a generation thing, you know, things have moved on and changed where, you know, now you can sit at a bar by yourself and not be thought of but, I suppose, you know, place and time, it all changes.

Despite the sense that it may now be more acceptable for women to drinking in bars or pubs unaccompanied, this acceptance appears to be subject to certain limitations. These limitations are apparent in women's descriptions of how they would choose to occupy the space within a bar or pub, if they were there on their own. Suzanne articulates this in the following way:

Suzanne (INT): …I would never stand at the bar, but I don't know why not though. I don't think anyone would say to me, you know, "Why are you stood…?", no-one's gonna say that, but you just don't feel comfortable. I don't…I don't really know why, I just think that's more of a kind of, confident like drinkers spot , do you know what I mean? I mean a girl can be that, you've got to still be at the table and just pretend you're just there for a chat.

It is particularly interesting to note Suzanne's assertion that she would "never stand at the bar", although she didn't think that she would encounter a direct challenge if she chose to do so. The use of the expression "pretend you're just there for a chat" by Suzanne is also interesting in that it alludes to an unspoken expectation of providing a gendered pretence for drinking in the bar. Young women's descriptions of where they would specifically position themselves in a bar appeared to be related to embedded gendered assumptions about the purpose and legitimacy of a woman's presence in a bar.

Jessica also describes how she would feel more 'comfortable' if she wasn't standing at the bar:

> *Jessica (INT):* I'd feel on edge, like, everybody coming in the bar, whereas if you're sat down I'd feel a bit more comfortable. I suppose the barman could be there for protection if you're on your own, but I wouldn't mind sitting at the table. I think if I was waiting for someone I wouldn't feel as bad as if I was there on my own.

In keeping with the notion that women don't belong standing at a bar, Jessica and Suzanne express their discomfort at the prospect of doing so. It could be argued that this discomfort arises when they consider the notion of straying beyond this gendered expectation of their behaviour in a bar or pub. In contrast, however, some young women said that they would be more comfortable sitting at the bar area if they were on their own:

> *Annabelle (INT):* I think you'd be more likely to sit at the bar because the barman's there so he can keep an eye on you and if you get hassle and you think something's wrong, you can go like, "er, excuse me". Whereas if you sit away in the corner then you're a lot less visible.

The only reason offered by women for why they would be most comfortable at the bar area on their own was the potential 'protection' offered by bar staff. This point is reinforced by the following focus group exchange:

> *I:* And if you were waiting for someone in a bar, would you wait for them at the bar or would you find a table?
>
> *Lucy (FG04):* At the bar, I would.
>
> *Lisa (FG04):* At the bar, so you could at least talk to the bar staff or something if it wasn't that busy.
>
> *Various (FG04):* Yeah.
>
> *Lisa (FG04):* Like so you had got someone to talk to.
>
> *Lisa (FG04):* Because also if you're on your own then that is also another excuse for men to come up and sit at the table
>
> *Yvonne (FG04):* 'Oh are you on your own?'
>
> *Lisa (FG04):* 'No, just waiting for someone. Piss off.'
>
> *Yvonne (FG04):* Yeah. Yeah.
>
> *Lisa (FG04):* So yeah, I'd wait at the bar.

Lucy (FG04):   Or in the toilet.

Various (FG04):   [laughter]

This focus group discussion illustrates that young women viewed bar staff as a potential means of protecting against unwanted attention from men. This discomfort of waiting in a bar on your own is reinforced by Lucy's comment that she might wait in the toilet, alluding to the idea of hiding, or at least evading male attention. The laughter in the group at this point, suggests a level of identification with Lucy's comment that she might wait in the toilet rather than on her own. Overall, although there was no clear consensus among the young women in this study about where they would be most comfortable sitting in a bar, pub or club if they were on their own, the rationale for where to sit was always underpinned by a concern about attracting unwanted male attention, feeling "uncomfortable" or "on edge".

The role of male protectors

Participants were in agreement that they felt safest in bars, pubs and clubs when they were accompanied by friends or acquaintances, endorsing the principle of 'safety in numbers'. However, the gender composition of the group they socialised in was particularly significant; the vast majority of the participants in the current study were in agreement that they felt safer in bars, pubs and clubs when they were accompanied by a male. Only two women said that they felt less safe in male company, and two women said that they thought it made little difference. Therefore, a recurrent theme within young women's accounts was that they felt safer when they were with a male:

Gillian (INT):   Aye, when I've got a guy out beside me I feel like I'm safe.

Marion (INT):   Yeah, it definitely does feel safer going out with my boyfriend.

Jessica (INT):   But I'd still rather go out with the guys to feel more protected. Definitely.

Ruth (FG03):   I feel safer when I'm out with some of the boys as well, as opposed to just going out with my girls. I like the boys out. I don't know why, but I just tend to feel a little bit safer that they'll stick up for you a little bit more than what the girls would.

The feeling of protection and safety, which resulted from being accompanied by men, was contrasted by women with the relative vulnerability which they experienced when

they were out with only one other female friend, or in female only groups. This influenced the nature of the night out that young women might have:

> *Annabelle (INT):*   Thursday night is more chilled out night. Go out with the boys. So you always feel kind of protected when you're with the boys, which is probably why I try and keep with some guys sometimes. Saturday nights is more the girls' night out so we try and watch what we drink more on a Saturday night.

Annabelle's description of nights out with the boys as a 'more chilled out' night is contrasted with the control exercised on a girl's night out, which is indicative of the vulnerability experienced without the presence of a male protector. Exploration of why women feel safer when accompanied by a male revealed that this process operates on two levels; the male acquaintance acts as both a deterrent and a defender against unwanted attention from other (usually unknown) males. The following example from Jessica highlights the way in which even the suggestion that a woman is 'spoken for' is enough to act as a deterrent against unwanted male attention:

> *Jessica (INT):*   I always wear a ring on my engagement finger because if a guy was to like…you know, he was going…Oh, I'm sorry, I'm engaged. So that's the way I do it most nights.
>
> *I:*   Right. And are you engaged or is that…?
>
> *Jessica (INT):*   No, but that's what I do just to get them…It usually works so that's the best way I always do.

Further, the following dialogue with Lily highlights the dual role of the male protector as a deterrent and a defender against approaches from other males.

> *Lily (INT):* I guess just 'cause of the stereotype of…of males, you know, you just think males…physically are stronger so if you do get into a situation where you're in a fight you just hope that, you know, a man's gonna step in, even if he's not your friend…
>
> I: Yeah. So it's about them being able to intervene?
>
> *Lily (INT):* And also just I suppose if you're out with guy company, I think less guys approach you because they seem to think that somehow there's a relation going on there, even if it is just friends. So you won't get as approached or harassed at all by…by other males if you're out with men, I think.
>
> *I:*   Yeah, so if you go out in an all-female group…
>
> *Lily (INT):* Yeah.
>
> *I:*   ..you think that maybe…

Lily (INT): Oh the chances are much higher, I think, that guys are gonna come up or just provoke you or whatever, you know what I mean, pinch your bum and stuff. But I think if you've got a guy walking behind you they're gonna be a lot more cautious about it.

The expectation that a man will intervene in such a situation, irrespective of whether he is a friend, highlights the attribution of this expectation to norms about the male role beyond personal friendships or obligations. References to the physical characteristics and, in particular, the strength of men who intervene in such situations is also indicative of a reliance on conventional ideas about masculinity, whereby physical strength and power are masculine attributes. This emerged as a recurrent theme within young women's accounts:

Esther (INT): …well especially the guy that we have, our guy [laughs], he's very protective. If he sees that even when you like a guy coming to you to have a chat or whatever, he always looks at you and always keeps an eye on the guy who you're talking with. So he's very, yeah, he's very protective. And, he's just...he's a very big guy, he's quite impressive also, very tall… everyone looks up to him.

Annabelle (INT): … if you've got boys there you're less likely to get a whole group of lads going 'alright sweetheart?'. A couple of my friends are quite burley, so its like maybe they wouldn't say that in case they thought they were going to get lamped because one of them happened to be your boyfriend.

In discussing why they felt safer when accompanied by a male, young women drew upon essentialist discourses about the natural male role, and in particular, notions of men protecting women:

Tessa (INT): …guys can be more sort of chivalrous about it, they kind of want to protect you, whereas I think girls are more just kinda like, well let's all stick together sorta thing, you know?

Jessica (INT): … I think it's that protective instinct for the guy as well and I think for the girl it's that little bit of a back up that at the end of the night I've got someone to walk me home or somebody to make sure at the end of the night I'm okay. It's that little bit of stability there.

Lorna (FG03): … I mean a lot of the times with a lot of my friends the guys don't like dancing, so then like I suppose you would just go like the girls and you would just dance away, so then that way you'd probably get approached more, but then you can just kind of retreat back to your male warriors.

Related to the understanding that male acquaintances will adopt a protective role, is the assumption that women require protection. There was also some suggestion that female friends were less likely to adopt this role:

Shona (FG01):   ..more likely a woman would leave you behind. They would go away and do whatever. But a guy would probably wait for you or if they lost you they would try and find you. That's what I've found, my guy pals will do that for you.

Lynn (FG01):   Aye, I would say most o' my guy pals, they never let you walk home yourself. They'd always either share a taxi or walk you home.

Nadine (FG01):   Or walk you to the bus stop or something.

Lynn (FG01):   And wait 'til you get on the bus. I think they just think that they've got to look after you. Like it's their responsibility to look after you in case something happens.

I: So do you think that some of your male friends take on a kind of protective role…?

Shona (FG01):   Definitely.

Nadine (FG01):   Aye.

Lynn (FG01):   Definitely.

Nadine (FG01):   I think so, yeah.

I   Does that make you feel better or…?

Shona (FG01):   You don't really think about it, you just think 'whatever'.

Nadine (FG01):   Nuh.

Shona (FG01):   You're just like, "Aye, whatever"

Nadine (FG01):   It's just what they're meant to do [laughter].

Within this focus group exchange there is a sense, or at least a display, of ambivalence about the protective role that male friends adopt. Young women's views and understandings of the male protector role were complex in this regard. As discussed, many of the young women appreciated the sense of security and safety it afforded them while socialising in bars, pubs and clubs:

Fiona (INT):   …'cause I appreciate it, like I like it and I think there's a lot of girls that don't really like it 'cause…for obvious reasons, 'cause they feel like they're being hassled or whatever and that they don't really need them and they should be independent or whatever, but I…I think it's…I…I don't mind it at all and I think if there's a guy that's maybe a bit dodgy or my friends think they're a bit dodgy, I like that…I think it's nice of them to step in. That's their role, if you know what I mean, and I don't mind that.

Again, there is an understanding of male acquaintances intervening in situations as a natural part of their 'male protector' role. Fiona does allude, however, to the tensions inherent within this position. These tensions emanate from the question of whether women should be dependant or independent from men. Some women were clear that women were in need of protection:

Eve (INT): I watch out for my male friends as well, but I'm more protective of my female friends 'cause I think…they're more gullible [laughs] It's probably a bit of a stereotype, but I would say that males can protect themselves more than females.

This perspective suggests the necessity of a paternalistic approach towards women. By positioning women as dependant, it could be argued that this undermines women's autonomy. Indeed, Annabelle expresses her annoyance at this predicament:

Annabelle (INT): But it does actually really annoy me, the fact that it seems like you need to have a boyfriend in order to feel safe in some cases, if that makes sense. If you go out, people just assume that if you're single, you're looking for someone and they can come on to you and stuff. And it's like sorry, I'm not interested. 'Oh, what are you, a lezzer?' Be gone! [laughter].

The expectations that young women have of their male friends can also be problematic. Sophie describes her response to a male friend who failed to adopt the male protector role when they were out for the evening together:

Sophie (FG03): I was feeling a little bit uneasy for some reason and I just wanted him like…like I didn't ask him, but I expected him to like offer to walk me back… and I was actually really annoyed with him that he didn't offer to walk me back and I though that was quite selfish, but that's maybe my fault as well for expecting him to take responsibility, but I know that other male friends would always, no matter what, like offer to walk me back, but he didn't and I took that as an insult.

It is interesting to note that Sophie was insulted by the fact that her male friend did not offer the protection of walking home with her. It is possible that male protection has the potential to affirm a woman's value or worth. Further, at times young women's descriptions of the way that their male acquaintances would 'protect them' suggested a possessive aspect to this behaviour:

Katy (FG02): I feel that the boys are quite good as well when we're all out in a group, that they're always keeping an eye on you and they've always like…"Ah, who were you talking to?" and "Oh, where've you been?".

Marion (INT): …so I just think they're just always kind of there. Whether that's to keep an eye on them for flirting or not, I don't know, but at least they're there (laughs).

Sophie (INT): I think if it's girlfriends/boyfriends, the boyfriends, I've noticed, do get very kind of over-protective and they'll…they'll be very kind of vigilant, like they'll be constantly watching like to make sure that the guys aren't like, you know, checking out their girlfriend or vice versa.

While the protection offered from male acquaintances was generally welcomed by the young women in this study, the sense that this could sometimes go too far emerged as a feature of discussion about this issue:

Ruth (FG03): But sometimes they can be a little bit too over-protective as well. Like if a guy comes up and starts talking to you they're like right behind you "Who's that? Who are you talking to? Are you OK?" It's like "I'm fine."

During the focus group which Sophie participated in, she described a situation where two of her male friends had intervened unnecessarily in a situation where she was enjoying 'friendly banter' with a man having a cigarette just outside a pub. She reflected upon this scenario in the following way:

Sophie (FG03): … I mean, it's nice, it's flattering as well, but sometimes you're like "It's OK, just…" it shouldn't be so tense, just calm down. But it's funny.

This reflection encapsulates the contradictory and complex nature of young women's understandings and perceptions of the 'male protector' in action; this behaviour is simultaneously described as 'nice', 'flattering', 'tense' and 'funny'. Nonetheless, almost all of the young women said that they felt safer when accompanied by a male, with only two women who said that going out in male company made them feel less safe. For one participant, this was due to the greater likelihood that male friends would get in to a fight (even if it wasn't their fault). For the second participant, this was due to negative experiences with male friends who had made unwanted sexual approaches when they had been out drinking.

Summary

Young women in this study expressed a sense of entitlement to leisure time, and described socialising and consuming alcohol in bars, pubs and clubs as a central feature of their leisure. Socialising in bars, pubs and clubs was equated with having fun, and

participants displayed a sense of pride in their ability to do so. To a certain extent, these observations challenge findings of earlier studies which identified consuming alcohol and socialising in bars, pubs and clubs as a primarily masculine leisure pursuit.

Participants reported a perceived rise in alcohol consumption by women, although they did not necessarily perceive this to be a positive development. Indeed some women expressed concern about the current drinking culture and pressure from friends to consume alcohol. This indicates that 'ladette culture', characterised by high levels of alcohol consumption, is not universally experienced or welcomed by young women. Despite a consensus among young women in this study that there is now more social acceptance of women drinking alcohol in bars, pubs and clubs, and a sense that women can 'do anything really', young women in this study were acutely aware of the gendered risks involved in consuming alcohol in this context. Young women's understanding of these risks relate, in the first instance, to negative perceptions attached to women who drink alcohol, particularly those who are seen to be 'drunk'. More specifically, it is understood that women who are drunk risk being viewed as unfeminine, unattractive and of questionable sexual character. These risks are exacerbated if women are also judged to be wearing 'revealing' clothing while drinking, due to the perceived association with promiscuity.

In deciding where to go on a night out, women sought to avoid bars, pubs and clubs, which could be characterised as having a drunken or sexualised environment due to safety concerns, or at least a sense that attending these venues would not be a comfortable experience. These venues were denigrated, mainly on account of the 'type' of person who would go there, and their reasons for doing so (i.e. to get drunk and seek a sexual encounter). As such, these venues and the people who attend them carried working class connotations, which conflict with notions of 'respectable' femininity. Nightclubs were described as potentially less safe than bars or pubs for women for three reasons: they are environments which are conducive to being watched; it was thought that men would be more likely to make physical approaches; and incidents would be more likely to go unnoticed.

Who women attend bars, pubs and clubs with has a significant impact on their sense of safety. Young women in this study described the way in which the legitimacy and purpose of a 'girl's night out' remains subject to suspicion, while women drinking in a bar on their own are likely to be subject to unwanted male attention and judgements

about their intentions. This in turn has implications for where young women feel comfortable positioning themselves in a bar. The vast majority of young women in this study said that they feel safer when they are accompanied by a male, irrespective of the particular relationship that they have them (e.g. friend, acquaintance, brother or boyfriend). Having a male protector was described as fulfilling the dual role of a deterrent and a defence against unwanted male attention. Participants described this role by drawing upon essentialist discourses about masculinity and male strength. Although this was generally welcomed by participants, some women resisted the idea that they should be dependent on a male for their safety and it was acknowledged that sometimes there was a possessive element to the behaviour of male protectors. This was a particularly complex and contradictory issue for the young women in this study.

Overall, for the young women in this study, deciding which bars, pubs or clubs to go to and which ones to avoid was significantly connected to the gendered dynamics they are likely to encounter in different types of venue. In effect, these issues are about safety, the legitimacy of women's presence in bars, pubs, or clubs, and the consumption of alcohol as a conventionally unfeminine activity.

Chapter Six

Bars, Pubs and Clubs: A Safe Space for Young Women?

Introduction

This chapter explores the question of whether socialising in bars, pubs and clubs is understood and experienced as a safe leisure activity by young women. There is a relative lack of research which has specifically considered the issue of women's safety in bars, pubs and clubs from the perspective of young women themselves. Studies addressing the issue of safety in licensed premises have instead tended to focus on intra-male violence (Parks et al, 1998), the impact of alcohol consumption on violence and aggression, or aggravating features of the premises themselves such as physical design, cleanliness, temperature and music (Forsyth et al., 2005; Graham & Homel, 2008).

Studies which have addressed the issue of women's safety in broader contexts have consistently demonstrated that women's primary safety concern is the threat and reality of sexual violence (Stanko, 1990; Tulloch, 2004). In recent years, new risks to women have been identified in the form of drink spiking and drug and alcohol assisted sexual assault. However, some commentators have suggested that these 'risks' are no more than urban myth; an excuse for women's irresponsible and shameful behaviour (Kasteel, 2004). A further risk which has been given an increasing amount of attention, particularly within the media, is the threat of violence and aggression from other women (Tisdall, 2003; Jackson & Tinkler, 2007). It is not clear what impact the identification of these 'new' risks has had on women who socialise in bars, pubs and clubs in terms of how they understand and experience threats to their safety in these settings.

From a feminist perspective, it has been argued that sexual violence is most adequately theorised as a continuum (Kelly, 1988). Conceptualising the individual acts of violence and intimidation which women experience at the hands of men (e.g. stalking, sexual harassment, rape, obscene comments etc.) as a continuum usefully facilitates an understanding of the collective and ongoing impact of sexual violence in women's lives. It is argued that sexual harassment, for example, serves to remind women of their vulnerability and increase their fear of a more serious violent assault since it shares a common basis of gendered power relations with other forms of sexual violence (Painter,

1991; Pain, 1997b). From a primarily radical feminist perspective, it is important to understand women's safety concerns and experiences within and across different social spaces since it has been argued that the fear and reality of sexual violence acts as a measure of social control, which in turn regulates and restricts women's behaviour (Smart & Smart, 1978; Green et al., 1987). Such accounts, however, have been critiqued for over emphasising women's victimisation (Kelly, 1988).

Defining and categorizing women's experiences of sexual violence is a contested area and considerable debate exists with regard to the validity of differing definitions (Segal, 1990; Pain, 1997b; Kelly & Radford, 1998; Reid, 2003). For clarity, the categories used in this thesis are rape, attempted rape, sexual assault and sexual harassment. Sexual assault is defined here as a physical assault with a sexual element (e.g. grabbing breasts, groping), while sexual harassment is defined as unwanted attention or comments of a sexual nature (e.g. sexual comments, flashing, being followed by men, leered or shouted at in a sexual manner). Experiences of drink spiking are also discussed, irrespective of whether a rape or sexual assault followed these incidents since participants clearly connected drink spiking to the fear of rape or sexual assault.

This chapter begins by firstly exploring young women's own understandings of the risks encountered by young women socialising in bars, pubs and clubs, including how they may have changed over time. Participants' safety concerns in and around bars, pubs and clubs are then reviewed and contrasted with the safety concerns which they perceive men to have. Participants' experiences of their safety being compromised are also examined, and attention is given to whether young women reported any of these incidents to the police, or to staff at the venues where they occurred.

Young women's understandings of safety in bars, pubs and clubs

Bars, pubs and clubs: a safe space for young women?

Discussion about whether bars, pubs and clubs are safe places for women elicited mixed responses from participants. However, none of the young women in this study stated that bars, pubs and clubs were safe places for women without this being qualified in some way. As discussed in Chapter Five, some bars, pubs and clubs were considered to be safer than others, with establishments characterised by heavy drinking and a

sexualised environment being regarded as less safe. Sophie highlights the issue of a sexualised environment within bars, pubs and clubs as follows:

Sophie (INT): It's not necessarily that they're [bars, pubs and clubs] not safe, but I just think they definitely promote something about females being sexually objectified and…it's just accepted within the bar and club atmosphere for men to just behave whatever they want and they…they seem to have this impression that they can get away with groping females when they're dancing, and if you're dancing then that means that you want to go and sleep with them afterwards.

Where participants described bars, pubs and clubs as mostly or generally safe, two explanations were given as to why this was the case. Firstly, bars, pubs and clubs were described as safe so long as women were vigilant in these environments:

Marion (INT): I generally do think they are safe places. I mean, I suppose it depends… I think as long as you don't be silly…you're not gonna be silly and walk off by yourself, or go home by yourself, and you keep an eye on your drinks.

Annabelle (INT): I think maybe you've got to be a bit more wary in a pub or club, just in case. So, yeah, I'd say you feel a little less safe. But on the plus side you're expecting…Well, you're not expecting, but do you know what I mean? You're thinking right, okay, I might get my drink spiked, watch out for it, as opposed to if you're walking around campus you're not going to be like oh god, "I'm going to get jumped". Touch wood [laughs].

These extracts highlight the belief that being safe in bars, pubs and clubs is conditional upon women 'watching out' for potential risks such as drink spiking, and ensuring that they are not alone. As will be discussed later within this chapter, these are not concerns which men are perceived to have. The second reason given for why bars, pubs and clubs could be considered to be relatively safe related to the protection that other people could offer women in terms of acting as a deterrent and a defence against being harassed or assaulted. This theme resonates with the finding that participants valued 'safety in numbers', and feel safest when they are accompanied by a 'male protector', as discussed in Chapter Five. Thus, participants' descriptions of bars, pubs and clubs as being reasonably safe rest upon women being vigilant to potential risks, engaging in safety behaviours or depending on others to protect them, rather than bars, pubs and clubs being viewed as safe environments per se.

Safety comparisons with other women

Participants drew comparisons between how safe they thought they were in relation to other women. The majority of women who made these comparisons believed that they

were as safe, or more safe, than other women. Two key themes emerged as the rationale for these beliefs. Firstly, participants indicated that they thought they were able to protect themselves and, on this basis, considered themselves to be safer than other women:

Tessa (INT): I would say that I probably feel more safe, but I think that's 'cause I'm quite a confident person, which isn't to say obviously that I can Kung Fu people or anything, but… I'm not shy to tell somebody where to go if they're annoying me and I think because I come across as confident, I don't really get that much hassle, you know?

Gillian (INT): …well I think like I can keep myself safe. I know it sounds weird, but I seem to think I'm strong and I can keep myself safe.

Mellissa (INT): I would probably say I'm more safe than other women because of the friends that I have and, I know that quite a lot of women say this, but I think I can handle myself. Because physically I'm quite strong and I'm used to having toy fights with the boys and stuff like that. But I think I could handle myself if somebody tried anything on with me.

Tessa, Mellissa and Gillian describe themselves as having personal attributes such as being strong or confident, which they believe makes them safer than other women. These attributes are typically associated with masculinity, rather than femininity. The second reason why participants described themselves as being safer than other women, was due to having a heightened awareness of potential risks that they may encounter:

Jessica (INT): More [safe], because I carry a personal alarm on my nights out and when I'm walking on my own, but I think it's just I'm more aware… more aware of things that are around me than some girls. Some girls just seem to let go too much when they're out.

Annabelle (INT): I think maybe I'm at an advantage because I'm sort of paranoid about this sort of thing. Because if you read the papers, which I've done since I was quite young, you see all these guys and it's like oh, man. You get paranoid, you know … I think I'd probably feel safer if I knew self defence.

It is implied by Jessica and Annabelle that they have a certain advantage over other women, since their heightened awareness allows them to be more vigilant to potential risks. In this regard, women's accounts of how safe they think they are in bars, pubs and clubs can be located with an individualised discourse; their sense of safety is dependant on their own levels of awareness and personal attributes, which endow them with the capacity to protect themselves. This raises questions, however, about the potential for blame to be attributed to women who fail to keep themselves safe, or in Jessica's words, "just seem to let go too much when they are out".

Only one participant felt that she may be less safe than other women due to not having a boyfriend who could deter unwanted sexual attention from other men. As discussed in Chapter Five, young women tended to feel safer when they socialised with male acquaintances due to their capacity to act as both a deterrent and a defence to unwanted male attention. Thus, for the young women in this study, it appears that any sense of bars, pubs and clubs being a safe space is contingent upon their own ability to implement safety strategies and the ability of others to protect them. Little reference was made by any of the young women as to *why* they would need to defend themselves or be defended in the first instance.

Perceived changes in risks encountered in bars, pubs and clubs.

Participants reflected upon whether the risks faced by young women in bars, pubs and clubs have changed in recent years. With the exception of two participants who thought that risks had remained the same and one who thought that women may be safer now, most of the participants held the view women face greater risks in bars, pubs and clubs now than they did in the past. The belief that women face increased risks in bars, pubs and clubs stemmed from three perceived social and cultural changes: an increase in drink spiking; an increase in women's alcohol consumption; and a shift in social relations between men and women. These perceived changes were interrelated. The emergence of drink spiking and 'date rape drugs' as a relatively new problem represented a particular shift in risks which young women may encounter while socialising in bars, pubs and clubs:

> *Lorna (INT):*   I think it's changed in the way that more women are now aware – like publicity through the media and stuff – of the risks that can happen to them. But I also think it's becoming easier to, like, take advantage of women whether in pubs or clubs. Like, I think Rohypnol now is, like, very easy to get hold of.

> *Cara (INT):*   I think now the focus has kind of shifted more towards date rape drugs and drinks being spiked… I remember before, the stories were more focused on women that went missing, or were like raped on the way home because they were by themselves. But now, it's probably more in the clubs themselves. I don't think being inside a club or pub was so much of a worry because you thought you were safe because you were in an environment where you're watched by CCTV and things like that. But now, obviously, you read all the effects of what happens to you if your drink is spiked.

The interview extracts above highlight the influence of the media on participants' perspectives of risks. While drink spiking may be a legitimate concern, it is also a phenomenon which has received substantial media coverage, with Rohypnol being cited as the primary 'date rape drug', despite a lack of evidence to suggest that it is widely used for this purpose in the UK. The current study did not seek to measure the extent of the drink spiking problem although participants' reported experiences of drink spiking are discussed later in this chapter. Cara's observation about the heightened focus on 'date rape drugs' and drink spiking is particularly significant since it is indicative of an extension to the boundaries of women's safety concerns; women are now perceived to experience greater risks *within* bars, pubs and clubs in addition to more established concerns about how to get home safely, which remained a significant concern for participants in this study.

Young women in the current study were in agreement that women's levels of alcohol consumption have increased in recent years. As discussed in Chapter One, this perception is indeed verified by recent empirical research around this issue. However, participants articulated particular concerns about their inability to remain 'in control' when they consumed alcohol. These concerns related primarily to the deterioration in their ability to remain vigilant to potential threats to their safety, unwanted male attention, and drink spiking. Higher levels of alcohol consumption by women were, therefore, identified as key contributors to risks, which women may currently face. Judith describes these changes in the following way:

> *Judith (INT):* I definitely think the biggest problem is that women aren't … a lot of the time when women are out they're not really in control of what they're doing and so it's much, much easier for people to take advantage of them. Obviously like, you know, women were being like, you know, assaulted or whatever, you know, before when there wasn't so much alcohol consumption, but I think it just makes…it just puts them in such a vulnerable position, it's so easy for people to…to take advantage of them, I think.

While Judith alludes to the new freedoms that women have to go out and consume alcohol in the same way that their male counterparts do, a sense of vulnerability is embedded in these new freedoms. Accounts from other participants about their own conduct, and that of other women, suggests that this manifests itself in women remaining vigilant during their leisure time in bars, pubs and clubs:

> *Eve (INT):* I do go out and enjoy myself and I can get drunk and stuff, but I'm always watching what's going on round about me.

Rachel (INT):　　I think that you do have to be kind of a lot more aware of what you're drinking, where you've left your drink, kind of what's going. Yeah, it's definitely changed I think.

Debbie (INT): I think it's worse to see a woman really drunk than it is to see a man drunk, just because you don't know if she can look after herself.

Again, it would appear that women's safety is conditional upon remaining vigilant and 'in control'. The way in which drunk women are evaluated by men was also identified as a concern by young women, particularly in terms of 'attracting' unwanted sexual attention:

Evelyn (INT): I know friends that do have a big cleavage and the guys are just like 'hi' and then the drunker they get, the more the guys seem to take an interest. They're not interested when you're sober but as soon as you start getting drunk… it's, "how are you getting home?"

Lisa (FG04):　　And then how can you be safe, like when you're in that state? You're not, especially if you go off on your own. And guys are gonna take advantage of people when they're drunk.

Susan takes this point further by describing the way in which a woman who is drunk may be targeted by men for sexual assault:

Susan (INT): If a girl is obviously like a bit drunk, and they [men] think that might…that maybe like they could get away with it like more easily, she won't resist so much because she's had a lot to drink and things like that. Maybe also if like the combination of being dressed like say a bit trashy or something and, um, if she's like downing drinks one after the other then they might think, "Oh, she's easy" and like would just, I don't know, when she comes outside, try and persuade her to come back with us and just kind of force her, even if she doesn't really want to.

It is suggested by Susan that from a male perspective, women who have had a lot to drink will be less likely to resist sexual advances, and are more likely to be sexually available; a view reinforced by the particular clothing that she may be wearing. This endorses the association between women, clothing, alcohol consumption and perceived promiscuity as discussed in Chapter Five.

In addition to the sense that women were now more vulnerable than they were in the past due to their increased level of alcohol consumption and the threat of drink spiking, some young women noted that the risks for young women socialising in bars, pubs and clubs had increased due to a perceived change in men's behaviour:

> *Jessica (INT):* I think it was always probably going on, but I think probably…definitely like in my mum's era, and she's like fifty now, but I think when she was…probably more guys would be a bit more reserved. Okay, still go out, but I think they would still be less in your face and a bit more "alright love, I'll leave you alone". Definitely I think it's changed a lot.
>
> *Melissa (INT):* … men's chivalry is totally dead now. Years ago, when my mum used to go out, people she didn't even know would make sure she got into a taxi safe. Guys would wait with her by the taxi to make sure she was safe. If you did that now, guys would probably jump ahead of you in the queue to make sure they're home safe.

Both Jessica and Mellissa draw comparisons across generations. Melissa's assertion that "men's chivalry is totally dead now" contradicts the finding from the current study that the majority of participants feel safer when they are accompanied by a 'male protector' in bars, pubs and clubs. However, both Melissa and Jessica's assertions are reinforced by the following observations from Sophie and Alison about changes in male behaviour:

> *Sophie (INT):* I think it would be worse now and also like we seem to live in a very kind of sexualised culture, so that men now compared now to like men a few years ago think that they can get away with a lot more because females have been objectified.
>
> *Alison (INT):* I think probably they [risks] have changed over time 'cause it's now more common to get your drink spiked and, you know, for guys to try things on, you know, and you're not asking them to or you're not even going near them. So I think now it's more common than it was before.

Although it could be argued that the sexual objectification of women is by no means a new phenomenon, the assertions above resonate with recent commentary and concern about an increasingly sexualised culture within the UK and elsewhere, characterised by the proliferation of sexualised images of women within the media and the growth of sexual entertainment venues such as lap dancing clubs.

While the majority of participants believed that women now face greater risks when they socialise in bars, pubs and clubs, one participant thought that women may now be safer in bars, pubs and clubs than they used to, although she expressed uncertainty about this due to the 'date rape drug' phenomenon. Two participants believed that risks were the similar to what they were in the past; perceived changes which have taken place were attributable to an increase in awareness about risks, rather than an actual increase in risks for women:

Shirley (INT):　　　I think the risks have always been there, but I think they're just more publicised now whereas maybe like in the '70s and even the early '80s it was like, if you maybe had your drink spiked you could still get it spiked anyway with like acid and stuff like that… I think drink-spiking was still going on, but I think it was more a hush-hush and a lot of the blame was passed to the women for being promiscuous and, "Oh what was she doing, she was in a nightclub anyway, she must be a tart" kind of thing, whereas like now it's more like it's different, it's like we're not so victimised by it. I think the risks have always been there, I just think we're more aware of them now and we're more…it's not our fault any more.

From Shirley's perspective, it could be argued that social conditions for women have improved; although risks have always existed for women socialising in bars, pubs and clubs, women blaming attitudes which are synonymous with women's sexual reputation are no longer so problematic. Like Shirley, Louisa also believes that the risks women encounter in bars, pubs and clubs are not necessarily any worse now that they were in the past. However, Louisa has a sense that the risks have been exaggerated:

Louisa (INT):　　　… you've also got like the date rape drugs all over the papers and in the news and everything, but I don't necessarily think that its any worse than it's ever been, I think its just a bandwagon that's been jumped on. I started going out when I was far too underage, like 14 or 15… and it was all still going on nine years ago… I think it's a hype.

I:　　　And why do you think that it has become this hype? Where has it come from?

Louisa (INT):　　　Well I think it's a backlash, it's like if ever like a case, this is how I always feel, I just think its like the media trying to make women scared of leaving their houses every single, its like you've got to be careful, don't be by yourself, get a rape whistle, be scared of everyone around you because everyone's a danger to you, whereas they're not. You've got to be sensible, but they've created too, I think they've created too much of a problem out of it.

Here, Louisa expresses her frustration that media attention around the issue of women's safety has made women more fearful in their daily lives. While maintaining a balance between the positive outcome of raising awareness and the negative outcome of increasing fear is a matter of contention within safety campaigns, Louisa implies here that there is a 'backlash' to women's freedom which manifests itself in attempts to restrict women's movements through fear. In other words, it could be argued that there is an element of social control in these awareness raising initiatives. Moreover, the finding that most participants perceived the risks that young women experience in bars, pubs and clubs to have increased, or at least that their awareness of the risks has increased, poses difficulties for notions of women's empowerment and freedom in these

settings. As discussed in Chapter Two, the fear of crime alone (particularly the fear of sexual violence) has a significant impact on women's lives.

Young women's safety concerns in and around bars, pubs and clubs

Participants described a range of safety concerns which they had when socialising in bars, pubs and clubs. The main concerns identified were drink spiking, rape or sexual assault, and getting home. The vast majority of the 35 young women who took part in this study referred to at least one safety concern, which they had when socialising in and around bars, pubs and clubs; only three of the 35 participants didn't note any specific safety concerns[61]. Drink spiking and getting home safely were the most frequently cited personal concerns, with 18 and 17 young women respectively noting this as a concern. Meanwhile, almost one third of participants stated that they were concerned about rape or sexual assault, with seven women being specifically concerned about rape and three women being concerned about sexual assault. Further, two young women stated that they were concerned about sexual harassment in bars, pubs and clubs. Participants' safety concerns were overwhelmingly related to the threat of sexual violence and harassment, although three participants did note concern about encountering violence from other women. The only other safety concern raised by participants was theft of personal belongings such as a mobile phone; two young women said that they were concerned about this on a night out.

Sexual violence: an implicit and explicit concern

All of the young women in this study were aware of the risk of drink spiking, and just over half (18) of these women cited drink spiking as a matter of personal concern. Participants' concerns about drink spiking, getting home, and rape or sexual assault were interrelated. Some women were clear that the concern about having their drink spiked or going home alone was directly related the possibility that they could then be raped:

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[61] It should be noted that only women who took part in individual interviews were asked directly about their own personal safety concerns. Six women took part in a focus group only; three of these women chose to discuss their own personal safety concerns anyway.

Alison (INT): … it's more, you know, they're going to spike your drink or they're going try and do something to you, they will, you know, try and rape you or anything like that. It's always at the back o' your mind.

Esther (INT): Well, I'm always… quite scared about walking over the street alone. I'm afraid that maybe someone would…rape me or something I guess.

Jessica (INT): … if I'm out with the guys, they'll always walk me home. That would probably be the biggest fear if somebody's drunk and I was a bit drunk myself and that happened.

I: Yeah. And what is it you would worry about happening if you were walking along on your own?

Jessica (INT): Rape or attacked or something like that. Because you're a bit drunk yourself, you're not going to be aware what's going on as much either.

While Alison, Esther and Jessica explicitly make the connection between drink spiking, going home alone and rape, they each use gender neutral language to describe the potential perpetrators of rape (e.g. 'they', 'somebody' or 'someone'). Conversely, where participants explicitly referred to potential perpetrators as male, the connection between drink spiking or going home alone and the possibility of rape remained implicit:

Susan (INT): I guess if you were to go to a bar by yourself or like maybe just two girls and you met some guys that maybe were…didn't really have such honourable intentions and could spike your drink or something like that.

Lily (INT): I guess it happens more often to women that their drinks get spiked than men, but I think men should just be as aware about their safety as women. I don't think it should be really that one-sided, although I think that the consequences can sometimes be worse for women.

Lynn (FG): … if there's a guy following me I kinda do get freaked out and like cross over the road and try and get away from him even though he might not be doing anything like wrong, he might just be walking behind me, but even in a small town it can still happen, maybe just as much.

Sophie (INT): … so I just ended up walking home myself and I felt really just…I felt so insecure. Nothing happened, but I just like I was just fearful of every single like…if there was a man on their own and they were walking like towards me and they were gonna walk past me I would feel quite like tense and…and I just couldn't wait to get home.

Within these accounts references to sexual assault are implicitly made through references to intentions, consequences, and possibilities. It is apparent that young women's concern about drink spiking and getting home (or being alone) is rooted in a concern about rape or sexual assault. It could, therefore, be argued that one third of

young women in this study being concerned about rape and sexual assault is a very conservative estimate. If concern about drink spiking and getting home were used as a proxy for concern about rape or sexual assault, a total of 33 out of the 35 participants in the current study could be said to be concerned about rape or sexual assault when they go out to socialise in bars, pubs and clubs.

Encountering violence from other women

Although participants' safety concerns were overwhelmingly related to male behaviour, a small number of participants did raise the issue of violent female behaviour. Five participants, for example, commented upon a rise in the use of violence by young women. Only two participants however, asserted that there had been an actual increase in 'girls violence', with three participants referring to suggestions within the media that this was the case:

> *Eilidh (FG02):* There's been a lot of press interest recently about like…from girls becoming more violent… they say like girls are drinking more now.

> *Judith (INT):* I suppose now, obviously, there's more about women going out and getting violent and, you know, beating each other up as well, but I think in general you're not really at risk from any other women, so it's like…you're…probably it's the men that are posing a threat to the women who are out…drunk or whatever.

Only three participants reported being concerned about their safety being threatened by other women. These concerns were articulated as follows:

> *Jessica (INT):* Other girls… sometimes get worse than guys.

> *Gillian (INT):* Anyway I'd be like sorta scared to go into a nightclub because I used to get bullied by girls in school, and I think they girls wouldn't like me if I had a guy with me. They'd be probably end up starting on me.

> *Marion (INT):* I'm probably more scared about approaching groups of girls rather than groups of boys, 'cause they can be quite…loud sometimes [laughs].

Overall, encountering violence from other women was not a significant concern for the majority of participants in the current study. With the exception of two examples, none of the references to girls' use of violence were substantiated in participants' accounts of their time in bars, pubs and clubs. Tessa and Cara described specific instances where

they had witnessed a woman being violent in a bar pub or club. The first incident was described by Tessa as follows:

Tessa (INT): I was in a pub like years ago… like an Irish pub, it was like quite rough… I saw a girl pull like a six inch knife out and try and stab this guy, like it was only a couple of feet away from us and it was quite hectic, you know? I don't really like being in places where you do feel that that sort of stuff can happen.

In describing this scenario Tessa notes that it occurred in a 'rough' pub, highlighting the role of the environment rather than the woman who attempted to stab a man with a knife. Similarly, Cara described an incident in a club with "not that great a reputation", where a girl started a fight with one of her friends:

Cara (INT): It's just really frustrating because we were there to kind of enjoy ourselves and she started a fight. So sometimes you have to be aware of other girls as well because there's a certain type of girls that just look to start trouble… But she was a complete nutcase really… I would say it's quite common, but only in certain types of places you'll see fights. It's closed down now, the place that we used to go to when we were underage, because it had a bad reputation for fights. And the fact that she could just stay in there while we had to go. But, oh well. She'll probably always be like that though, start fights for no reason. It's pathetic [laughs].

In addition the nature of the club being highlighted here, Cara refers to the individual pathology of the girl who started the fight. Attributing female violence to individual pathology or the nature of the establishment where it occurs suggests that female violence is not typical or expected out with these conditions. However, one participant suggested that girls can be worse than boys when it comes to violence, and one participant thought that women were just as likely to be attacked by other women as they were by men.

It is also interesting to note that accounts of women being violent are described as women 'getting into fights', which would suggest a reciprocal relationship with this type of violence. When referring to male violence, participants did not describe this as 'getting into fights with men'; accounts of male violence tended to be one directional (e.g. 'I was sexually assaulted', 'this guy grabbed me'). This would suggest that different power dynamics operate when women experience male and female violence. Although relevant data about this specific issue is limited within the current study, it would appear that the nature of violence perpetrated by girls is also different. References to violence between women were very limited, and none of the young

women in this study cited any examples of situations where they personally had actually encountered violence from other women in bars, pubs or clubs (although two participants referred to being barged out of the way in toilets or 'elbowed' on the dance floor).

Comparing safety concerns with men

Participants were asked to draw comparisons between the perceived safety concerns of men and women, providing further insights into the gendered nature and extent of young women's safety concerns in bars, pubs and clubs. Participants were in agreement that women are more significantly more concerned about safety than men:

> *Rachel (INT):* I'd say probably women are a lot more concerned about their safety like, I don't know any girls that would walk home after a night out or, on their own, but I think a lot of guys don't really think about it so much and just think it kind of wouldn't…like nothing's going to happen to them 'cause they're guys. But I think women are a lot more aware that, something could happen to them.

> *Cara (INT):* I think they're far more concerned than men are, yeah. Especially having a drink. This is just from my own opinion, but men seem to get more confidence when they're out and start drinking and they're not really too bothered about…I just don't really see men worrying too much about their safety.

It should be noted that the current study did not seek to measure the nature and extent of women and men's safety concerns; the extracts presented here are simply participants' *perceptions* of differences in safety concerns between men and women. Nonetheless, as discussed in Chapter Two, the perception that women are significantly more concerned about their personal safety in bars, pubs and clubs resonates with other studies which have addressed this issue in more detail across different types of social space (Stanko, 1990; Valentine, 1992; Walklate, 1997; Tulloch, 2004). Reflecting on the reasons why women are more concerned than men about their safety in bars, pubs and clubs, participants attributed women's heightened concern to three key beliefs: women have a heightened awareness of the risks they may encounter; the nature of risks for women is different; and women are less able to defend themselves than men. These three perceptions will now be explored in more detail.

Firstly, higher levels of safety concern for women in bars, pubs and clubs was thought to be related to women having a heightened level of awareness of the risks that they may face. This was attributed in part to the media:

Suzanne (FG02): … in women's magazines, it's all, you know, there's all the real life stories about all the bad things that have happened, whereas boys don't have that, that they don't read about terrible like fights that they've got into, whereas we kind of read about it every week.

Shona (FG01): They [men] don't really bother, eh?

Nadine (FG01): They just wander away.

Shona (FG01): They just do what they want, eh?

Lynn (FG01): If they can't find their friend they'll just buy another drink, speak to somebody else…just wander about 'til they find them. I don't think they seem that…that bothered.

I: So why do you think they're not as fussed then?

Shona (FG01): I think it's no…like you don't hear anything on the news about anything happening to men very, very often...and if you do it's maybe one…once in a blue moon. But they're not aware o' anything

While some participants expressed the view that it was useful to be aware of potential risks, this was not an opinion which was shared by all participants. Indeed some young women in the current study resented the disparity in the level of concern that they have compared with their male counterparts:

Annabelle (INT): You're effectively a target if some pervert wants to put something in your drink or attack you outside or whatever. The other female friend smokes, but she won't go outside to smoke unless someone goes with her just in case, outside the bars and stuff if we're in town. And when we're walking back, we both get walked back to our place by the guys and they walk off themselves. It's kind of annoying, the fact that the boys don't have to worry about that sort of thing as much whereas we obviously do.

Sophie (INT): I think it's terrible that I have to feel that way, I have to feel afraid, because I don't know if men feel that way, but I know that a lot of females, a lot of my friends, like they hate walking through the town centre by themselves.

Rachel (INT): You just kind of learn really quickly that, I don't know, that drunk people are harmful, basically, and you kind of always have to…watch yourself… and, you know, as soon as you've had a bit of hassle in a club from some pissed guy, I think you kind of realise that you have to kind of keep it together, which doesn't always mean that you do, but I think…you all know that you do…which, again, is rubbish! Guys don't have to think about this.

These extracts also point to the imposition that concern for safety has on young women's capacity to act freely while socialising in bars, pubs and clubs. Annabelle, Sophie and Rachel express their frustration that men do not have to worry, or engage in

safety behaviours such as being accompanied by others in the same way as they do. The second reason that women's safety concerns were thought to be heightened in comparison to those of men's, stemmed from the belief that the nature of their concerns were different to men's:

> *Fiona (INT):* I've never really heard of…men being concerned when they're out really, unless it's…they're talking about kind of fights or anything like that, worried about that sort of thing, but with women it's more about their safety in the bar and, you know, keeping their drinks safe and that sort of thing, whereas you don't really hear men talking about that.

> *Karen (INT):* I think that men do have different kinds of kind of threats when…when they go out drinking… but certainly as far as spiking of drinks goes, you know, obviously women are more susceptible to that.

Here, Fiona and Karen indicate that women are more concerned about drink spiking than men, and Fiona suggests that men are more concerned about fights. Other participants also expressed a clear view that women were primarily concerned about threats to their sexual safety, while men are more concerned about physical assault:

> *Gillian (INT):* Probably women worry more about their safety.

> *I:* And why do you think it is that women worry more?

> *Gillian (INT):* Because guys usually like sex so they would spike your drink.

> *Tessa (INT):* I think women worry more about like being abused, really, guys trying to take advantage and things like that. Whereas I think with men it is more a…they're worried about aggression and things like that.

The belief that women are more concerned about sexual safety, rather than physical safety, provided the rationale for why women would be more concerned about their safety than men: rape or sexual assault was perceived by participants to be a more serious type of risk:

> *Suzanne (INT):* I think boys are at risk, but just from maybe different thing, maybe less severe things.

> *Judith (INT):* … I think it's really different… men are obviously probably more likely just to get into a fight or whatever, but…with women there's the issue of like, you know, obviously the kind of worse case scenario like being raped or whatever.

In addition to the perception that women faced different and more serious risks than men in bars, pubs and clubs, participants also suggested that women's heightened levels of concern could be attributed to women's inability to protect themselves:

> *Cara (INT):* They [men] always seem to be a lot more confident so if they do get in a confrontation with anyone then they're always up to fight back and things, but I don't think they're concerned as women.

> *Judith (INT):* I suppose men just… I think maybe they think they are tougher or whatever, they can go out and, you know, defend themselves, whatever, whereas… I suppose women always know that they could be quite easily overpowered by…by a man.

The paternalistic notion that women are unable to defend themselves draws upon essentialist discourses of feminine passivity and weakness contrasted with masculine strength and power. However, there was some resistance to the idea that women are necessarily more vulnerable than men as illustrated by the following focus group dialogue:

> *Katy (FG02):* I think it's more stereotype that women should look after themselves more because at the end of the day it's normally the guys that are drunker than the girls when you're on the way home and they're the ones falling about the place, starting the fights. I… kind of know my limit… I wouldn't say…we are aware of it, but I don't know if that's more that we're pushed, that we have to be more aware of it and look after ourselves than… we can't handle it.

> *Eilidh (FG02):* I think you're right because I mean there's the whole thing about stereotyping women as, like, this innocent victim when…

> *Katy (FG02):* I know a few girls that could give you a run for your money!

Young women's experiences of their safety being compromised

Young women in this study described a range of ways in which their safety had been compromised while socialising in bars, pubs and clubs[62]. These encounters included drink spiking, rape, sexual assault, and sexual harassment. Participants also discussed

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[62] During individual interviews, participants were asked about their personal experiences of situations in bars, pubs or clubs where their safety had been compromised, or where they had been made to feel uncomfortable. Due to the potentially sensitive nature of this area of questioning, participants were not asked about such experiences during focus groups, although some participants did choose to disclose discuss experiences where their safety had been compromised in the focus group setting.

situations where people known to them (e.g. friends or family members) had experienced a situation where their safety had been compromised.

Overall, 80% of the participants in this study reported an experience of drink spiking, sexual assault or sexual harassment. Further, only one out of 35 women reported no experience of either their own safety, or the safety of a female friend or relative, being threatened while in and around bars, pubs and clubs. The one woman who did not report any such experiences had heard about a friend of a friend who thinks that their drink had been spiked. These findings indicate that awareness and experience of drinks spiking, sexual violence and harassment while socialising in bars, pubs and clubs is extremely high among the young women in this study. These experiences are discussed in more detail below[63].

Rape, sexual assault and sexual harassment

Nine of the 35 young women in this study disclosed a personal experience of rape or sexual assault. One woman believed that she had been raped following a night out although it is not clear where this happened since the young women could not remember the incident fully. Meanwhile, eight young women had experienced a sexual assault in a bar, pub or club. With regard to female friends of young women, a further five incidents of rape, one attempted rape, five sexual assaults, and one suspected sexual assault were disclosed. Two physical assaults on male friends were also noted.

Sexual harassment in bars, pubs and clubs was reported by almost two thirds (22) of the 35 young women who took part in this study. Further, five references were made to sexual harassment experienced by friends of young women in bars, pubs and clubs. Given the high levels of sexual harassment reported by participants, it is somewhat surprising that only two participants stated that they were specifically concerned about sexual harassment. As discussed earlier in this chapter more participants were primarily concerned about drink spiking, getting home safely, rape and sexual assault. It is

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[63] Young women did also make reference to incidents which they had heard about via the media, friends of friends, or acquaintances. These incidents merit further discussion since they contribute to young women's awareness and understandings of safety issues. However, they are differentiated from those incidents which had happened to women personally known to participants as friends and relatives, since they are more difficult to verify and are likely to impact upon participants in a different way.

possible that participants' concerns about sexual harassment have been overshadowed by other concerns such as drink spiking, which could be perceived to have more serious consequences. Alternatively, the frequency of sexual harassment experienced by young women may also result in this type of behaviour being normalised and, therefore, deemed less worthy of recognition. Nonetheless, participants did voice their frustration about persistent unwanted sexual attention from men as illustrated by the following interview dialogue with Sophie:

Sophie (INT): I get really tired of like guys coming up to me and just expecting some, you know, attention… and it's the fact that they're so sure that they'll get it, it really does put me off …one night some guy basically slapped my backside, like really hard, but I was so disgusted I walked out, I just walked out the club… it's about respect and there seems to be no respect between females and me…you know, guys, like in a nightclub… it's a shame.

I: So how common would you say it is to experience that kind of behaviour from men when you go out?

Sophie (INT): In the bar scene? Every time.

I: Every time?

Sophie (INT): All the time. Yeah. I would be surprised if nothing… even if I don't make an effort like to look and nice or I'm just going out for a casual drink after work or something then…you know, if you get whistled at down the street or wolf-whistled or whatever, it's just…it's always there. It's just… I think it's just part of the night, you know, you just accept it, so…

Sophie highlights how frequently she experiences sexual harassment from men in bars, pubs and clubs to the point that it is an expected part of the evening. This theme reoccurred in other participants' accounts:

Alison (INT): I mean there is always hassle. You know, if you're standing at the bar and a guy'll try and chat you up or be too touchy feely.

Annabelle (INT): I think everyone gets that at some point. It's the most horrible kind of men that do it as well, really horrible.

I: And so is that something that happens quite often do you think, when you are your friends are out…

Annabelle (INT): Well, it usually happens to at least one person anyway on the night at some point. It's just annoying.

Like Sophie, Annabelle highlights her annoyance at the frequency of receiving unwanted sexual attention from men while socialising in bars, pubs and clubs. For other participants, however, this seemed to be of less concern:

Rachel (INT): There's been times… it's usually kind of in clubs where you do just get very kind of drunk it's mostly guys, just being kind of sleazy or kind of very drunk and not leaving you alone, but I've never felt…really threatened because there's always someone I know nearby or there'll be stewards nearby… I've been quite lucky. I've not really had much trouble.

Esther (INT): you just walk in…into a club or whatever and they slap your butt or something like that, but it's really scary now… I take it not very seriously, it's for me like, OK, that just happens, I know this is how it goes and I just look at them maybe once or twice quite angrily and then they stop, hopefully. But I never had someone who really went too far, no, no.

Sexual harassment would appear to be of less concern to Rachel and Esther, since they feel able to respond to this behaviour by calling upon friends or staff for help, or giving signals which suggest that they want the behaviour to stop. However, it is apparent from these accounts that young women are routinely expected to tolerate unwanted sexual attention from men if they choose to socialise in bars, pubs and clubs. Rachel, for example, considers herself to be "lucky" not to have had too much trouble. The impact of sexual harassment is also minimised through a discourse of normalisation. Yet, these women are aware that sexual violence exists upon a 'continuum' and that, in Esther's words, a situation could go "too far".

Drink spiking

Incidents of drink spiking were also prevalent in young women's accounts of their time socialising in bars, pubs and clubs: nine participants suspected that their drink had been spiked. Due to the difficulty involved in proving that a drink has been spiked, it is not possible to ascertain how many of these incidents involved drink spiking with any certainty. However, four participants stated that their drink *had* been spiked[64] while five participants said that they *thought* their drink had been spiked, although they couldn't be sure. The reasons given by young women for thinking that their drink had been spiked included feeling unaware of surroundings and collapsing while only drinking soft drinks, being violently sick, or being unconscious and unable to remember the

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[64] This includes one incident where a male admitted that he had spiked the young woman's drink.

evening after a relatively low level of alcohol consumption (these women reported having between two and four drinks)[65]. None of the nine women were tested for substances in their system or taken to hospital. Of the nine women who believed that their drink had been spiked, eight were unaware of any further assault (these women were taken home by friends or family), and one woman recalled an attempted sexual assault. None of the nine suspected drink spiking incidents were reported to the police.

In addition to the nine young women who thought that their own drink had been spiked, 22 women (two thirds) reported someone personally known to them (i.e. a friend or a family member) who thought that they had been spiked. Six out of these 22 young women referred to two people personally known to them who had been spiked, giving a total of 28 reported incidents of drink spiking. All but one of these 22 incidents had happened to a female friend or relative. In the one drink spiking incident which had happened to a male friend, he believed that the intention had been to spike the drink of the woman he was with. The 28 drink spiking incidents included two rapes, one attempted rape, one sexual assault, one suspected sexual assault and five women being taken to hospital.

Further, six women mentioned hearing about a friend of a friend who had their drink spiked, or a story about drink spiking (four of these participants also reported a suspected incident of drink spiking experienced by themselves, a friend or relative). Overall, 80% (28) of the young women in this study reported thinking that their own drink, or the drink of someone personally known to them had been spiked. A further two women reported hearing about a friend of a friend or an acquaintance (e.g. someone at university) having their drink spiked. Only five of the 35 young women who took part in this study did not describe an incident of drink spiking, which they had either experienced or heard about.

Reporting incidents to the police or staff within bars, pubs and clubs

None of the 40 incidents outlined above, where participants reported experiences of their safety being compromised through rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment or drink

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[65] The type or strength of the drinks consumed is unknown. It is also not known whether the young women who suspect that their drink had been spiked had any medical condition or medication which could have caused an adverse reaction.

spiking in bars, pubs and clubs, were reported to the police. As discussed, participants' experiences included one rape, eight sexual assaults, 22 instances of sexual harassment, and nine suspected incidents of drink spiking. Where young women referred to incidents of drink spiking, rape and sexual assault, or sexual harassment experienced by friends or relatives, full information about whether these incidents were reported to the police was not always available. However the information that was given about these incidents would suggest a very low rate of reporting to the police. A total of 44 incidents were reported to have been experienced by friends and relatives, comprising of five rapes, one attempted rape, five sexual assaults, five instances of sexual harassment, and 28 instances of drink spiking. Yet only six incidents experienced by friends and relatives were confirmed as having been reported to the police; these six incidents were all cases of drink spiking. For three of these drink spiking cases, the outcome of reporting to the police was not known. In the three remaining cases, there were no prosecutions. This was thought to be due to a lack of evidence.

Participants' reasons for not reporting the vast majority of the incidents which they experienced in bars, pubs and clubs to the police, or indeed to staff within bars, pubs and clubs centred around four key themes: fear of being blamed or disbelieved; a sense that nothing would be done; uncertainty about what had happened; and minimising what had happened. Responses from participants which illustrate these four themes will now be considered in more detail. When participants described suspected drink spiking incidents in particular, they typically commented that "nothing happened":

> *Susan (INT):* … one of the girls, she thought that her drink might've been spiked because she didn't drink all that much and she felt really, really drunk by the time she got back and she kind of like passed out and stuff… but nothing happened luckily 'cause she just went home with her friends and things like that and she was…she was all right.

It is curious that in this scenario, Susan comments that "nothing happened" when she indicated that her friend was rendered unconscious following a suspected incident of drink spiking. Louisa makes a similar observation when she refers to a scenario where her friend suspected that her drink had been spiked:

Louisa (INT):   Basically all of a sudden she like ran, and we only had 4 maybe 5 drinks that night, and she ran to the toilet to be sick, she felt really drunk all of a sudden and blacked out, and she wet herself while she was blacked out and then came to and had to be dragged into the staff room by one of the staff members, and there's no way that 4 or 5 drinks, there's no way that would have happened, so definitely she thinks that she was spiked... I think she did say to bar staff but I don't think they necessarily took it too like seriously or anything, and she didn't report to anyone else like the police or anything, no.

I: And do you think she would have thought about doing that, like was there any discussion?

Louisa (INT):   No, because like nothing happened to her.

This phenomena whereby women state that, "nothing happened" following a suspected incident of drink spiking whereby a woman may have been sick, unconscious and unaware of her surroundings, is reminiscent of the way in which women 'minimise' acts of male violence or intimidation since they are aware that they were not raped (Kelly & Radford, 1990). Another reason which women gave for not reporting drink spiking incidents was that they were uncertain about what had actually happened, and reluctant to report something which may not be true.

It is perhaps unsurprising that participants felt unsure about whether or not their drink had been spiked, particularly when they had also consumed alcohol, since both alcohol and the drugs typically associated with 'date rape' and drink spiking could have a similar effect on potential victims, and alcohol has been described as the drug most commonly used in drug-assisted sexual assault. Participants in the current study were also unconvinced that reports of drink spiking would be taken seriously by the police or by staff within bars, pubs and clubs. Ruth describes her experience of the response from bouncers when her friend suspected that her drink had been spiked in a club:

Ruth (FG03):   my friend, she had her drink spiked and it wasn't even as if she was just really, really drunk, you could just tell by the way she was acting that it wasn't drink, it wasn't alcohol or anything. She just...she couldn't physically hold herself up at the door. And we were out with boys as well, so they like took her up to hospital and everything, but it was just...it was horrible, it was absolutely horrible, she didn't have a clue where she was, what she was doing, and just the fact that she couldn't hold herself up or do anything, it was horrible.

I: And was that reported to the bar staff?

Ruth (FG03):   I don't think so. I think the bouncers just assumed she was really, really drunk and it was kind of left to us to sort her out and take her to the hospital.

The assumption that a women is probably just drunk, rather than that she has been spiked, underpinned participants' beliefs that reports would not be taken seriously. Following Louisa's earlier account of her friend's suspected drink spiking incident, she went on to say that to the bar staff, "It was just like another drunk girl throwing up , so it wasn't like, no not taken seriously at all". Although some of the safety campaign materials around drink spiking recommends reporting suspicions of drink spiking to bar, pub and club staff, participants were sceptical about the response that they might receive:

> *Katy (INT):* … if you go to the pub or the club management there'll be like "oh you're drunk", you know, "go home" idea, they're not going to… I don't know if they would take that so seriously.

Participants' experiences of the response from bouncers or bar staff largely confirmed that reports of drink spiking were viewed with scepticism. However, two participants did report a positive response from staff within bars, pubs and clubs:

> *Ruth (FG03):*   I was out with three guys and I was completely out of it, and the bouncers were pretty like…they were quite good… my three friends said that they had said like "Look, she's had her drink spiked, she's not just drunk" sort of thing and… like they challenged my friends 'cause he asked them who…if they knew me and who they were and obviously 'cause they were guys they were quite worried about me 'cause they just…they obviously didn't know who…what they were doing with me 'cause they were literally just kind of carrying me… they asked for like ID and everything from them and asked, you know, where they were taking me home and everything, which was really good.

Ruth was the only participant who reported a positive response from staff when she suspected that her own drink had been spiked. Heather, however, recalled an incident which had been experienced by her mother's friend in a bar. In this situation, upon returning from the toilets, the friend had noticed a male who they had met in the bar that evening sliding her glass back over to her side of the table. This was reported to the barman who then called the police. It is difficult to say whether the same positive reaction from bar staff would have been encountered if the woman had reported the incident later in the evening, perhaps appearing to be drunk.

In addition to the sense that staff within bars, pubs and clubs were unlikely to take reports of drink spiking seriously, participants were not confident of the response that they may receive from the police. Eilidh, for example, makes the following observation

in relation to the assurances offered by an awareness-raising poster devised by the police:

> *Eilidh (INT):*　　But then it says like "All complaints of this nature will be treated seriously", but then sometimes I think sometimes like they can be like "Oh, she's just gone out and got drunk". You know, sometimes I don't think they are treated as seriously as they try to say they're going to be.

Eilidh goes on to suggest that women may be deterred from reporting a sexual assault to the police, as a result of the procedures that they may have to endure:

> *Eilidh (INT):*　　… you have to kind of weigh up the what could happen if you do go through with it, you know, and the people that've done it are, you know, are caught, then you may have to go through a court case and explain it all again. So that could turn people off actually reporting it because they know what kind of avenue they're gonna have to go down. Like invasive procedures to see if anything's kind of been left behind, so they can say, yes, you have been, you know sexually assaulted, you know, and you've got strangers that'll be poking and prodding you and taking pictures and things like that.

Given the necessary, but invasive, procedures which a woman would have to endure in reporting a recent rape or sexual assault it is perhaps unsurprising that a woman may choose not to report to the police, particularly if she fears that she may not be taken seriously. Further, Annabelle indicates a lack of faith that rape cases will be responded to appropriately within the criminal justice system, including the possibility of a conviction:

> *Annabelle (INT):*　　And it's like there have been a few false cases where a woman's made a false accusation against a man, but they're the ones that are always dredged up. And they bring in a woman's sexual history into it. And solicitors not cross examining people carefully, like being complacent about it. It's like shit, you know, if something like that happens to you, you're going to remember that for the rest of your life, but it seems like it's not particularly important… But if you actually think about it, you read all these cases where…What's the proportion of cases that actually get a conviction? Tiny isn't it?

At 2.9%, the conviction rate for rapes reported to the Scottish police forces in 2006/07 is indeed low, as Annabelle suggests[66]. Nonetheless, Eilidh questions the legitimacy of the claims that some women make with regard to sexual assault:

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[66] Annabelle's observations about a woman's sexual history being introduced in sexual offence trials are evidenced by research on this issue, despite the introduction of legislation within the Sexual Offences

Eilidh (INT): I think because there's the whole thing about we need to be protecting women in society, if a woman claim's that something's happened to her, you're automatically gonna side with her even though she could be making it all up.

Given the extremely low conviction rate for rape, it would seem unlikely that most people automatically side with women who report rape. A number of participants, however, also thought that spiking could be used as an excuse by women for simply being drunk:

Suzanne (INT): I think maybe more girls are saying that they've been spiked when they haven't, they've just embarrassed themselves or something.

Rachel (INT): I think she [friend] kind of…leans more towards the, "Yeah, my drink was spiked" 'cause it's just, I don't know, not less embarrassing, but kind of a bit more, "Well, it wasn't me just getting really, really drunk."

However, this contradicts the finding from the current study that none of the nine participants who suspected that their drink had been spiked reported to the police. The belief that women may say that they have been spiked rather than admit that they were drunk also raises questions about why women would find it necessary to go to this length to conceal that fact that they were drunk. This would allude to the idea of drinking in public being particularly shameful for women. As discussed in Chapter Five, participants were in agreement that it is now more acceptable for women to consume alcohol than it was in the past, although stigma through the association with promiscuity is still attached to women who drink, particularly if they are seen to be drunk. Moreover, participants were also conscious of the potential for blame to be attributed to women in the event they were sexually assaulted when they had been drinking:

Annabelle (INT): I would be really scared of getting my drink spiked and getting attacked, because – I know this is going into some weird other issue here – but if you did get attacked, there's no guarantee it would make it to court and there's no guarantee the guy would be convicted because you'd been drinking. You know, the like 'oh, well, she was asking for it wasn't she?'… 'She shouldn't have been drinking, she shouldn't have been wearing a skirt'. But I think a lot of people would probably say that.

(Procedure and Evidence) (Scotland) Act 2002 to restrict evidence of this nature, which typically discredits complainers within sexual offence trials (Burman et al., 2007).

Tessa (INT): It quite infuriates me, actually, to be honest… for years and years it has been an accepted thing really for a man to do, and if he's like falling about and rolling about in the gutter, he rips his clothes, blah-de-blah, it's a big laugh, it's all quite funny and he's one o' the boys… whereas when a woman gets in that state I think it's viewed certainly by a lot of people with a certain amount of disgust, especially maybe older people… I think that there…there's quite a big segment of the public that would actually say that a woman that did get raped or something when she was falling about like that had kinda deserved it, which I think is pretty disgusting, you know?

For Tessa, the notion of blame being attributed to a woman who is raped when she is intoxicated is a source of anger and frustration, and she highlights the 'double standard' which may apply to men and women in this regard. However, the belief that women should take responsibility for their own safety in such situations was also expressed by some of the participants in this study:

Suzanne (INT): I think it's really harsh, but if you've had that much to drink, I just think it's a bit kind of tough luck, but that sounds really horrible, but I just think that if you've had that much to drink you should have people around you that are, you know, are looking out for you. I think you shouldn't put yourself in that situation to start with… but if it does happen I really don't think that it is rape or sexual assault… I think that it's a mistake, I think that it's a bad decision, you know, you shouldn't have drank that much in the first place that…you maybe shouldn't have slept with a person if you regret it then that's that, isn't it? But I don't think it's something the Police should be getting involved in at that level.

Judith (INT): I would never say like, oh, you know, if a woman went out and she was totally drunk and she got raped it was her fault, but, you know you do have to look at, well if you are putting yourself once or twice every week in a position where you're really vulnerable, you know, women also have to do something about that.

It is apparent that young women's views on this issue are varied; while some participants attributed responsibility and blame to women who are raped or sexually assaulted while intoxicated, others expressed their anger about this attribution of blame. The reasons given by participants in the current study for not reporting rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment and drink spiking resonate with findings from other studies which have examined the issue of reporting sexually violent crimes to the police in greater depth. However, findings from the current study indicate that reporting offences which have occurred in and around bars, pubs and clubs, typically following alcohol consumption by young women, is particularly problematic.

Summary

The evidence reviewed in this chapter suggests that socialising in bars, pubs and clubs is not a safe leisure activity for young women. None of the young women in the current study described bars, pubs and clubs as safe spaces without some form of caveat; bars, pubs and clubs were only considered to be safe spaces as long as women are vigilant to potential risks and engaged in safety behaviours. Whether or not bars, pubs and clubs could be considered safe or not depended largely on whether women were able to protect themselves or had people who could protect them. Women's ability to protect themselves depended on individual characteristics i.e. being strong or confident/having a heightened awareness of potential risks, and women who characterised themselves in this way considered themselves to be safer than other women. However, this individualises responsibility for safety, heightening the potential for blame to be attributed to women who fail to keep themselves safe. Little reference was made as to *why* women would need to defend themselves or be defended in the first instance.

Participants reflected upon whether risks faced by women in bars, pubs and clubs had changed in recent years. Almost all of the young women in this study believed that women faced greater risks in bars, pubs and clubs now than they did in the past due to a perceived increase in drink spiking, an increase in women's alcohol consumption and a shift in social relations between men and women. The perceived increase in drink spiking and the use of 'date rape drugs' is particularly significant in that concerns *within* bars pubs and clubs appear to have been heightened, in addition to continuing concerns about getting home after a night out.

Almost all (32 out of 35) of the young women in this study noted at least one safety concern which they personally had while socialising in and around bars and clubs. The main safety concerns identified by the women in this study were drink spiking, rape or sexual assault, and getting home. Half of the young women expressed personal concern about getting home from bars, pubs and clubs and half of the young women also expressed concern about drink spiking. Further, almost one third of these young women were concerned about rape or sexual assault. However, it could be argued that this is a conservative estimate about the fear of sexual assault since references to rape or sexual assault were implicit within women's descriptions of their concerns about drink spiking and getting home. Participants were ostensibly concerned about the impact that men's behaviour could have on their safety, although a small number of participants referred

to the problem of female violence. However, none of the participants had actually experienced violence from other women in a bar, pub or club.

Drawing comparisons with the perceived safety concerns of men, provided further insights into the (gendered) nature and extent of young women's safety concerns. On the whole, young women believed that they were significantly more concerned about their safety than men. This belief stemmed from an understanding that the risks faced by women socialising in bars, pubs and clubs were sexual rather than physical and therefore perceived to be more serious. Young women also articulated the view that men were less concerned about their safety since men were more likely to be able to defend themselves in the event that their safety was threatened, and risks to men were highlighted less in the media. However, there was some resistance amongst participants to the idea that women were more vulnerable than men, and some women resented the fact that men were less likely to have safety concerns.

The majority (80%) of the 35 young women in this study reported personal experience of their safety being compromised while socialising in and around bars, pubs and clubs. One young woman disclosed a suspected personal experience of rape, eight reported a sexual assault, nine reported a suspected incident of drink spiking and almost two-thirds (22) of the young women reported an experience of sexual harassment. In addition to the 40 personal experiences reported by young women, the majority of participants reported incidents experienced by someone personally known to them. In total, 34 of the 35 participants reported an experience whereby their own safety, or the safety of a female friend or relative, had been threatened while socialising in or around a bar, pub or club. These findings indicate that young women's experiences and awareness of sexual harassment, drink spiking and rape or sexual assault are extremely high. To a certain extent safety concerns were normalised by participants as 'part and parcel' of a night out.

Participants were not confident that a report of drink spiking would be taken seriously by bar, pub or club staff, and with some notable exceptions, this was largely borne out by their experiences. None of the 40 personal experiences of rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment or drink spiking described by participants were reported to the police. Participants' reasons for not reporting the vast majority of the incidents which they experienced in bars, pubs and clubs to the police, or indeed to staff within bars, pubs and clubs centred around four key themes: fear of being blamed or disbelieved; a sense

that nothing would be done; uncertainty about what had happened; and minimising what had happened. These reasons resonate with earlier studies which have examined the difficulties in reporting of sexual offences to the police in more detail (Koss, 1993; Schwartz, 1997; Myhill & Allen, 2002; White, 2004; Kelly et al., 2005). However, it is a matter of concern that these difficulties appear to be exacerbated when the offence occurs within the bar, pub and club environment.

Chapter Seven

Young Women's Safety Behaviours in Bars, Pubs and Clubs

Introduction

This chapter examines the safety strategies and behaviours young women use to negotiate their safety while socialising in bars, pubs and clubs. In recent years safety advice has been offered to young women who socialise in bars, pubs and clubs by a range of agencies including the police, drug and alcohol agencies, the government, and community safety partnerships (Brooks, 2005). Such advice is intended to equip young women with knowledge and awareness of how to avoid or prevent drink spiking, unsafe drinking practices, or sexual assault.

Research which has explored the safety strategies used specifically by women in public spaces contends that women are acutely aware of their vulnerability, and that they adopt a range of 'safe-keeping' strategies in response to their fear of sexual assault, physical assault and sexual harassment (Stanko, 1990). The safety strategies used by women in a range of different leisure spaces and contexts has been addressed in relation to areas such as travelling alone, participating in outdoor recreational activities and occupying public space more generally (Seabrook & Green, 2004; Wesely & Gaarder, 2004; Tulloch, 2004; Wilson & Little, 2008). However, there is a lack of research which specifically examines the safety strategies women adopt in bars, pubs and clubs, or the reasons why they may engage in some safety behaviours while rejecting others.

From a theoretical perspective, it is particularly important to consider whether young women's adoption of safety behaviours can be located as a measure of resistance or restriction within their lives. Within the realm of leisure studies it has been argued that by adopting 'resistant practices' (Jordan & Aitchison, 2008: 343), women use safety strategies in order to address their fears and facilitate their participation in leisure activities (Bialeschki & Hicks, 1998; Mehta & Bondi, 1999). However, by drawing upon Foucauldian concepts of 'self-policing' and 'self-surveillance' it can also be argued that women self-regulate their behaviour in public, thus detracting from the benefits typically sought from leisure time and space (Mitchell et al., 2001; Wesely & Gaarder, 2004).

This chapter begins by considering young women's reflections on the issue of who should take responsibility for their safety, before examining whether young women adopted the safety strategies most commonly advocated in safety literature. These strategies relate primarily to the prevention of drink spiking, looking out for friends, limiting alcohol consumption and seeking assistance from bouncers or bar staff, if required. The rationale for adopting or rejecting these strategies is also considered within the context of other influences upon women's behaviours such as messages from their families, the media and their own experiences in bars, pubs and clubs.

Responsibility for women's safety

The young women who participated in the current study described an extensive range of safety behaviours, which they used when socialising in bars, pubs and clubs including: watching drinks, only drinking out of bottles, covering the tops of bottles, taking drinks to the toilet, not dressing 'provocatively', going out in a group, staying with friends at all times (including going to the toilet), limiting alcohol consumption, pretending to be engaged to be married, seeking protection from male friends, leaving bars, pubs and clubs to escape unwanted male attention, humouring men, wearing shoes that you can run in, pretending to spill drinks bought for you, not accepting drinks from unknown men, and seeking assistance from bouncers or bar staff.

The wide range of safety behaviours employed by women is indicative of young women taking responsibility for their own safety. A total of 25 participants[67] commented directly on the question of who should be responsible for women's safety in bars, pubs and clubs (e.g. women, men, the government or bars, pubs and clubs). All 25 of these participants agreed that women were at least partly responsible for their safety, and 16 participants believed that women were mainly or solely responsible for their own safety:

> *Shona (FG01):*   Folk have got to take their own responsibility…look after themselves and if everybody does that, does their wee bit…
>
> *Katy (FG02):* You've got to take responsibility for your own actions.

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[67] This number of participants is lower than the total number of participants (n=35) in the study as a whole, since some focus group participants did not comment upon this issue.

Suzanne (FG02): Yeah, uh-huh. It's all very well like, you know, you go out with your friends and you all keep an eye on each other, it's still…if something happens, if your handbag gets stolen or, you know, someone takes advantage of you, you shouldn't really have put yourself in that situation to start with, I think.

This individualisation of responsibility reflects the dominant discourse within contemporary safety advice. Young women's apparent acceptance of this discourse, however, was also influenced by a sense that taking responsibility for your own safety was a necessity:

Sophie (INT): I think…that you're forced to think about it [safety], you have to think about it. Unfortunately it's just part and parcel of the going out situation. So I think you…you could put yourself in a very vulnerable position if you don't think about it, if you don't think about who you're talking to, who you're going with, how you're getting back home.

Eilidh (INT): … the only person you can really trust wholly is yourself, you know, you only know what you are capable of, you don't know what anybody else is, and it's kind of like a bit pessimistic and a bit sad really, but I've always kind of been brought up to believe that you can only really trust yourself completely and you always have to be kind of wary of what other people are doing.

However, some participants also expressed the view that the government should take some responsibility for women's safety in bars, pubs and clubs. Ten participants articulated this view, although two of these participants conceded that the government 'could only do so much'. Four participants believed the government could do more to raise awareness about women's safety issues and four participants believed that the government could do more to regulate bars, pubs and clubs (e.g. limiting irresponsible drinks promotions).

Further, there was some agreement that bars, pubs and clubs should take some responsibility for women's safety. Eighteen participants believed that bars, pubs and clubs had a role in protecting women's safety, although four participants conceded that there was a limit to what bars, pubs and clubs could actually do, or would be prepared to do. This was partly due to the existence of a heavy drinking culture, and partly due to the potential conflict with the commercial interests of licensed premises:

Rachel (INT): I think with regards to kind of bars and clubs, they…I don't know, it kind of just goes against what they're there to do. Like, they're there to sell alcohol and to make as much money as they possibly can… if you're standing up then they'll serve you.

Two participants specifically suggested that bars, pubs and clubs should serve alcohol more responsibly and eight participants suggested that bars, pubs and clubs should have better security arrangements. The gendered nature of the incidents which bouncers typically intervene in emerged as a particular concern:

> *Marion (INT):*   I think clubs do need to take more of a…a stance… sometimes I feel quite safe if there's extra bouncers and there's bouncers on the floor of the club, or around the toilets, …but definitely if clubs took…like had more bouncers around or something, like on the floor, not just looking at guys who are too drunk, but looking at girls' safety as well.

Here, Marion differentiates male and female safety concerns, implying that bouncers are preoccupied with monitoring the behaviour of men who are intoxicated, rather than being concerned with "girls' safety". Alison and Judith also take issue with this point, and elaborate on the rationale for the gendered priorities of bouncers:

> *Alison (INT):*   I've never seen a bouncer yet stepping in and saying, "Look, she's not interested, stop hanging over her." You know, a bouncer has never certainly done that to anyone in my group of friends if a guy's done that… I've never seen a bouncer…they'd just rather stand there and watch… Probably 'cause if it's not physical then it's not going to hurt anybody, in their eyes anyway.

> *Judith (INT):*   I think like on the one hand they have the potential by being there to make a difference to safety, but… I mean maybe they're just looking out for trouble, so trying to break up fights or whatever. I don't think they're…watching girls leaving. I mean I think just as long as there's no sort of fights or major incidents on like the premises they're working, I don't think they really care if a girl walks out totally drunk, even if she goes out on her own… I don't think… it's really their priority to go around looking for guys that might be spiking a drink or whatever. It's more just fights and stuff.

Bouncers were perceived to be generally effective in intervening in physical fights, which typically involve men, although they were thought to be less likely to intervene where women may be vulnerable to sexual harassment or assault. This may be partly due to the relative difficulty in detecting this type of incident, although it is also possible that it is just perceived to be 'part and parcel' of socialising in bars, pubs and clubs, as described by participants in Chapter Six. The belief that women must take responsibility for their own safety also stemmed partly from an understanding of men's behaviour, or at least the behaviour of some men, as inevitable. This will be discussed further in Chapter Eight.

Learning to be safe: 'it's mainly just common sense'

Young women's safety behaviours in bars, pubs and clubs were informed and influenced by a range of factors. Safety campaigns, families, the media and personal experience were key influences on young women's behaviour, although much of the advice contained within safety campaigns was thought to be 'common sense'. However, it could be argued that advice such as staying with friends at all times, not accepting drinks from strangers or leaving your drink unattended is only really common sense behaviour for women, not men.

Safety campaigns

On the whole, participants' recall and recognition of specific safety campaigns was very low. However, participants were aware of the key messages within these campaigns, particularly with regard to watching drinks, and some thought that safety campaigns had played a useful role in raising awareness:

> *Fiona (INT):* I think that campaigns have definitely like opened your eyes to the fact that they, like, you know, to keep everyone safe and you don't know what's going to happen, especially when everyone's drinking heavily or that sort of thing.

Much of the advice contained within safety campaigns, however, was considered to be common sense behaviour:

> *Katy (FG02):* A lot of it's common knowledge, though, isn't it? You do without thinking of it, you know, this is one of the steps on the poster, you know. Go out in bunch, go out in a group – yeah; keep your drink with you – yeah.

> *Belinda (INT):* I mean, I think the only things are pretty much like common sense, like not going away on your own… and just, like, things about your drinks, like making sure you're leaving them with people… One of my friends has, like, a panic alarm, but I don't carry anything like that, or, I think it's just mainly common sense, safety, than really thinking about my safety when I'm going out.

Both Katy and Belinda highlight the way that they consider behaviours such as going out in a group and keeping your drink with you to be not only common sense behaviours, but taken for granted behaviours which they do without thinking about it. This highlights the embedded nature of these safety behaviours. Following on from this, Katy and Belinda also suggest that safety campaigns are relatively ineffective, or

perhaps unnecessary, since the information contained in them is nothing that women don't already know:

> *Katy (FG02):* I'm always like, "Just be careful when you're going out, you know, watch what you're about", you know, watch, and it is, it's something you're always brought up on, it's not just been the last year, you go to uni and, you know, drink, watch you don't get spiked, watch this, watch each other, you're always…it's been a constant thing that, I dunno, people are now just pushing the campaign, but you've always known about it, you know, everyone's aware of, you know, watch yourself.

> *Belinda (INT):*   …some of it you just know from other situations, some if it you hear from your parents or friends or you even see it on TV. It's never really…I mean a lot of this you already know before you see these posters and I think that's why people probably don't take as much attention to them, 'cause they think…they probably read the first line and think, "Well I know all this", so it never really sort of hits home.

Young women's assertions that they were already aware of the advice contained within safety campaigns was largely based on receiving messages from their family and the media at an early age. Some young women, however, had modified their behaviour in response to negative experiences which they, or their friends, had encountered. These influences on women's behaviour in bars, pubs and clubs will now be considered in more detail.

Family messages: 'getting it in early'

Advice given to young women by family members replicates the advice typically found in safety campaigns. Young women described the way in which their family had given them advice in relation to watching their drink, not drinking too much, staying with friends, keeping their phone with them, and getting home safely. This advice was given by a range of family members including brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers and grandparents, although this advice was issued most often by parents. One particularly striking feature of young women's description of the advice they received from their families was the force with which this advice was given:

> *Esther (INT):*   …personally I've been always taught to be very careful when you go out. My parents were always very protective. You know, my father, even when sometimes he maybe over-reacted a little bit, like, oh, and that, you know, he was like…putting it very straightforward, "Please watch out that you're not getting raped", that sort of things he said. And I'm like, "OK, I'm just going out," you know?

Annabelle (INT):   I'm the only daughter in my family so I've had it drummed into me by my dad. 'There's a lot of perverts out there. Be careful' …   So obviously, you know, my parents aren't trying to be nasty about it, but they do sort of hammer home the fact that look, you're a young girl, you're more vulnerable than your brothers will be.

Lorna (FG03):   It's always stuff that you think about before you go out, you're always thinking…and it's always been hammered into you from such a young age, I think. My mum's always hammered into me stick together, go to the toilet with your friend, you know. But yeah, I think it's kind of stuff that you know and I think.

It was evident from participants' accounts that their vulnerability as a young woman was emphasised in advice from family members. Where participants had male siblings, such advice was rarely given to them. Another feature of the advice given to young women was that it was given to them by their family from an early age:

Melissa (INT):   I've had everything installed into me since I was about five years old so [laughs], making sure they're getting it in early.

Marion (INT):   I think mums and dads say that all the time when you go out, they just say…they just go through the list, just be careful, don't leave your friends, don't put your drink down, don't drink too much, don't talk to any strangers – which of course you're gonna talk to people, but you know what they mean and you do take it…you do take it in, especially if it's drummed into you since you were like 15 going out.

Yvonne (FG04):   My dad said that to me when I was about 14, about drink-spiking and all that kind of stuff, so…

Safety messages given to women at an early age were also described as being reinforced by media accounts of women being raped or sexually assaulted:

Rachel (INT):   Again, I think the media is a lot to do with it 'cause you do hear a lot about, you know… this person was raped, blah, blah, blah, they'd been drinking for, you know, six hours, blah, blah, blah. So I think you do…I think from quite a young age… realise… the dangers behind kind of going out.

Gaining experience: 'I've learned my lesson'

Young women also described the way in which they moderated their behaviour as a result of their experiences of socialising in bars, pubs and clubs. This was, in part, a response to negative situations which young women themselves, or their friends had encountered:

Karen (INT): I'm super aware, you know, and…that's from experience. I would say you do learn, like, and I still get very drunk sometimes, but I'm…less inclined to…be with a group of men… I would never go anywhere with anyone now, you know, ever. You know, I've kind of learned my lesson on that one. I used to be inclined to go back to people's houses for parties or, you know, stuff like that, but unless I had a group of my female friends with me I wouldn't now. And I wouldn't encourage anyone else to either, so…

Alison (INT): Yeah, I think that's happened as I've got older, though. Before, when I was younger, it didn't bother me, but I think after my friend getting her drink spiked and me thinking…I don't know if I did or not, I think it's just, it's natural that you become more suspicious of other people and what you're drinking.

While young women described moderating their behaviour in response to particular situations, there was also a sense that as you get older, you naturally become more aware of potential risks. Young women also tended to contrast their own level of awareness of potential risks with that of younger women, or with when they themselves were younger and more 'naïve':

Alison (INT): Yeah, especially now when you see the younger…I mean, I'm only 21, but there's girls who are, you know, age 16, 17 going out and you look at them and you can tell they don't have a clue what they're doing or who they're with or… I think that's just… Probably we were like that at that age as well though, it's just as you get older and you start looking at things more.

Following safety advice: 'it's all good in theory'

The key safety behaviours advocated within safety advice relate to the prevention of drink spiking, looking out for or staying with friends, and limiting alcohol consumption. Participants' accounts of whether they engaged in these safety behaviours, or resisted such advice is discussed below.

Safeguarding against drink spiking

Thirty one (89%) of the young women in this study said that they watched their drinks in bars, pubs and clubs. In this context, watching drinks relates to being vigilant to the possibility that a drink could be spiked, usually with a 'date rape drug'. This is distinct from young women watching how much they have had to drink. Watching drinks incorporated a range of behaviours, such as young women keeping drinks in their hand, drinking out of a bottle rather than a glass, keeping a thumb over the top of a bottle, using bottle stoppers, taking drinks to the toilet, asking friends or bar staff to look after

drinks, disposing of drinks which have not been watched, and finishing drinks before going on to the dance floor or outside for a cigarette since drinks are not permitted in these areas. The following extracts are typical of participants' descriptions of how they watch their drinks:

Nadine (FG01):   I carry it [drink] everywhere I go.

Eve (INT): I never leave my drink sitting anywhere… I'll have it in my hand all the time, or, like, if I maybe go to the toilet, if I need to leave my drink for going to the toilet or going out for a cigarette, I'll just leave it and I'll come back and I'll buy a new one, I won't go back to the one that I've left – 'cause you never know who's put anything in it. All my friends are the same.

It is interesting to note that virtually all of the young women in the study said that they watched their drink despite only just over half (18) of them explicitly stating that they were concerned about drink spiking. It is possible that young women did not consider drink spiking to be a concern since they took precautions to prevent it anyway. Alternatively, watching drinks may also be perceived as a natural or taken for granted behaviour. Women's descriptions of watching drinks as common sense behaviour, or a 'natural' thing that friends do for one another, suggests that the later may be the case.

Although young women in this study were generally in agreement that you shouldn't leave your drink unattended, some women did acknowledge that this could become more difficult to do in practice:

Ruth (FG03):   You go out with the intention of right, keep a hold of my drink and I won't put it down and all this stuff, but then once you're out and you've had a few more drinks it tends to go a little bit by the wayside. It's all good in theory, but in practice it doesn't really work out.

Watching drinks as an evening progressed was something which young women conceded became more difficult, particularly as the amount of alcohol that they had consumed increased. Safety advice intended to help women avoid their drinks being spiked recommends that they avoid leaving drinks unattended and don't accept drinks which they have not seen being poured. However, young women highlighted scenarios in which it would be impractical to follow this advice:

> *Judith (INT):*   I think that even if I was with a guy going out for a drink that I'd just met, like a month ago or whatever, and that's someone you've gone for a drink with, it's not like a stranger, but you still don't know them that well, but I would never have any second thoughts about going away to the toilet and leaving my drink or whatever. 'Cause I mean what do you do? You're not gonna say, like, you know, "I'm taking my drink with me to the toilet", you know, you just…you would just leave it there.

> *Lorna (INT):*   "Never accept a drink you've not seen being poured" – I mean that's… like if you're at a bar and then the barmaid goes to do it and then someone shouts at you so you just look over your shoulder, then you just take your drink, I mean you've not seen them being poured, but you wouldn't really…I wouldn't really question it because I…well you trust the people that are pouring the drinks, you've got to.

The scenarios described here by Judith and Lorna, illustrate the reality of being in a social environment where young women would expect to have a level of trust in those around them, including bar staff. This would suggest that some of the advice issued to women goes beyond what may be reasonably expected of an individual. Ironically, women's concerns not to leave their drinks unattended also meant that they may consume their drinks more quickly, which would result in them being more likely to be drunk:

> *Melissa (INT):*   You either down it or you trust your friends. And sometimes you don't have that opportunity to trust your friends because your friends might be out with people that you don't know and you don't really feel comfortable leaving your drink with, especially if it's guys I don't know… usually, 9 times out of 10, I would leave it, but now I'd probably end up still drinking it because of the money and wasting your money. If you've spent £5 on a cocktail and your favourite song's just come on, all your friends are grabbing you up to dance and you're like do I down it, do I not?

> *Marion (INT):*   I find that maybe like we drink our drinks faster because if you want to go dance you don't want to be having a drink with you, so it tends to…you don't tend to put it down or anything.

Another common recommendation made by safety advice in relation to the prevention of drink spiking, is the nomination of a 'drinks watcher' within a social group. However, none of the women said that they ever formally nominated someone in their social group to watch their drinks:

> *Louisa (INT):*   I just think its kind of like one of those American teen movies where you've got like a sober sister for the night and it's just like no, if you go out you all want to have fun, and someone doesn't want to be. . say if you did have a drinks watcher and they missed someone spiking a drink imagine how guilty you would feel, and I just think as well it sort of shifts responsibility.

Alison (INT): …it's not something that, you know, one person watches the drinks all night, it's just…it's a natural thing we all do for each other.

It would appear that appointing a 'drinks watcher' was rejected by participants' on the basis that it formalises responsibility for something which seems like 'natural' behaviour. Only four out of the 35 women who participated in this study said that they personally didn't watch their own drinks. For Judith, doing so was considered to be unrealistic:

Judith (INT): Yeah, I think that's really unrealistic, especially saying that, you know, somebody's gonna like watch all the drinks all night… obviously it just takes a second for something to end up in your drink, so it's not… even if you were paid to do that I think it would be pretty hard to do that, you know?

Gillian and Suzanne also tended not to watch their drinks, although they questioned whether this was sensible behaviour:

Gillian (INT): I leave my drinks with guys and that, that's a daft thing. When I've had a bit o' drink I'll just leave my drink on the table with guys.

Suzanne (INT): I think just 'cause my friends are around me I expect that they'll watch out, but I think I am a bit kind of complacent with my drink though, I will leave it sometimes and come back to it… I think I should probably think a bit more about that.

Meanwhile, the fourth woman who stated that she doesn't watch her drinks, Debbie, was clear that she wouldn't accept a drink from a stranger. Overall, watching drinks in order to prevent them from being spiked was something which the majority of young women said that they at least tried to do. However, although almost all of the young women in this study watched their drinks, none of them used specific devices to prevent their drink from being spiked, or to detect whether their drink had been spiked[68]. A small number of women had used such devices during a specific campaign period or fresher's week when they had been given out free of charge. Only one woman said that her friend had actually gone out and purchased such a device:

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68 These devices include 'spikeys' and 'drinks detectives'. A 'spikey' is a product which is designed to prevent a substance being administered into a drinks bottle by sealing the bottle neck, allowing space for only a straw to be inserted. A 'drinks detective' is a device which is designed to be inserted into a drink in order to detect the presence of 'date rape drugs'. The reliability of these devices, however, is questionable.

Jessica (INT): On one night out, my friend brought these lids for bottles, but they're so expensive to buy. You can put them on top of your bottles and some of the one's you can put in and use a straw; you can only use them once. So we did that one night when it was the girls' night out once, but we've never done it since.

On the whole, young women were critical of devices such as bottle stoppers and 'drinks detectives' for a range of reasons:

Louisa (INT): I don't see how it's plausible to test if you're drink's been spiked in a way because you wouldn't be drinking it if you think it's been spiked, and you don't think basically that you're going to get spiked... and if you do think your drinks been spiked you would just get rid of it, you wouldn't go test it.

Karen (INT): And a lot of the time you feel like they're trying to flog you stuff because like it costs money to buy these stoppers, you know, to stop your drink getting spiked and it's… it's just a gimmick, isn't it, you know. 'Cause if somebody takes the stopper out the top and puts something in your drink it doesn't really make a difference.

Eilidh (INT): On the one hand I can understand like yeah, that's, you know, a good way of safeguarding, but then it's like, you're gonna have to take like a big black bag of those out with you every time you go, the amount of drinks you and your friends are gonna be having… Some of it is still a little bit kind of unreasonable to ask of people… it's like it takes kind of the enjoyment bit out of it really.

As the excerpts above illustrate, the main reasons that drinks devices were not thought to be useful were that they were potentially costly, impractical and could impact on women's enjoyment of their evening. However, some young women thought that devices designed to prevent your drink from being spiked would be a good idea:

Tessa (INT): They are a good idea, to be honest… I mean if it's the bar that's providing them I suppose it's an extra expense for them, so I can understand why maybe they wouldn't be as popular… I suppose I would even go as far as to say that if…if a bar was doing things like that on a regular basis I would actually think quite well of that establishment for going a little bit further, you know, and sorta trying to take care of people

Suzanne (INT): I don't drink bottles, but if I did I think they'd be a good idea… If this is a real, serious problem then they should be giving them away or at least make them a bit more accessible.

Cara (INT): Myself, personally, I probably wouldn't use the big stopper because I don't like attention being brought to myself, so it's drawing too much attention to me, this big thing in my bottle… but if they gave you drinks and they had them in them already or something, you wouldn't feel so stupid and you'd be safe.

The endorsements that women gave to devices such as drinks stoppers were conditional upon the devices being provided by bars, pubs and clubs or already installed within bottle necks, free of charge. Young women who said that they would consider using devices such as bottle stoppers identified cost and not wanting to draw attention to themselves as barriers to using these devices. In this regard, participants resisted commercial products marketed to them by the 'crime prevention industry'.

Looking out for friends and staying together

Advising women to go out in groups, look out for their friends and avoid leaving with a stranger is an integral part of safety advice directed towards young women socialising in bars, pubs and clubs. Going out in groups, or at least not alone, is something which participants described doing as a matter of course. This is perhaps unsurprising given the safety concerns and stigma attached to drinking in bars as a lone female, as discussed in Chapter Five. Looking out for friends and staying with friends is something which women commonly described doing. This often involved an unspoken understanding amongst friends about safety behaviours such as not leaving a bar, pub or club without each other, or agreeing to meet in a particular area of a club if they became separated:

> *Jessica (INT):* I think it's just like an unwritten rule with some of my friends like we won't do that, and we won't do that, but we don't really talk about it.

In the following focus group exchange, the young women go as far as to describe the way that they look out for one another in their friendship group as 'a system':

> *Yvonne (FG04):* 'Cause generally I think people…well certainly when we were going out when we're like what, 16, yeah, and we sort of almost have like well it wasn't like a rota, but everyone was always looking out for each other kind of thing, it was a system almost, if you look back, like it was really…

> *Lisa (FG04):* Yeah, it totally was…

> *I:* And was that something that you ever spoke about, or was it just something that you just seemed to do?

> *Yvonne (FG04):* It just happened.…you just look out for one another.

Although it was unusual for young women to explicitly discuss safety strategies with their friends, Fiona describes how the behaviour of her group of friends evolved as a result of their shared experiences:

Fiona (INT): …it's more when people have bad incidents or if someone's had to walk home… we'll talk about it as a group and it's kind of discussed that that'll…won't happen again and, I think as bad as it sounds it's always bad incidences that make us kind of think, "Right, this…like, we'll be safe this time" sort of thing, which is…I don't know if that's a good thing or not, but… yeah, it's basically just kind of years of practise [laughs].

Implicit within Fiona's description of the way that she and her friends "will be safe this time", is a belief that they are capable, as a group, of ensuring their safety, so long as they behave in a particular way. While this belief may understandably offer assurances to woman through a sense of control over their safety, it does not take account of the actions or behaviour of potential perpetrators. Further, relying on friends is a safety strategy which is not without difficulties, particularly if they are also intoxicated:

Judith (INT): … you always think, "Oh…oh they would look after me", but then in the end they've not remembered going home either, so were they even in a position to look after me if something was to happen, or if some guy was trying to like…drag me somewhere, would they even be in a position to do anything about it, you know? You sorta think, oh, you know, your friends look out for you, but…and it's not that your friends…would intentionally not look out for you, but it's that maybe…they've lost control as well.

Limiting alcohol consumption

As discussed in previous chapters alcohol consumption was considered to be a pleasurable and normal aspect of socialising in bars, pubs and clubs, although it could also be equated with vulnerability and loss of control. Some women did seek to limit their alcohol consumption, and information about the alcoholic content of different drinks contained with alcohol advice leaflets was welcomed by some young women:

Ruth (FG03): I got a leaflet similar to that in Fresher's' Week I think when I was in first year and I didn't have a clue what units were, how many units were in something so I found it quite helpful… It was quite interesting to read actually to realise how many units were in just even 1 glass of wine or something. Reading an article about how many calories are in a glass of wine that scared me more! [laughter].

Fiona (FG03): It is definitely good. I think it makes you feel a lot better when you know a wee bit more about what you're drinking, and even what's in it and just facts about it I think does make you a lot more aware and it makes me feel a lot safer too.

However, information and advice about sensible drinking was seen to contradict the current drinking culture, which is characterised by incentives to drink more alcohol:

Lisa (INT): … see I think that's really silly because it's…it's a bit for students and then it says "Avoid cheap drinks promotions or competitions to get you to drink more" [laughs] … That's all about Fresher's' Week. I mean they can't…you can't give out a leaflet like this in sort of a Fresher's' Week pack, and then going in and then you're gonna open it and then behind it you're gonna have "oh, what is there, 12-hour Tuesdays, drinks are all 99 pence" – it just totally contradicts each other.

Sophie (INT): … there's like this conflict between, you know, there's a lot of information saying "look after yourself", but what is actually…what's actually going on behind the scenes – it's just…I don't see any progress at all because it's all drink promos.

The contradiction highlighted here by Lisa and Sophie is perhaps unsurprising given that young women have become a key audience for both safe drinking advice and the marketing of the alcohol industry. It was also acknowledged that information alone is not enough to reduce levels of alcohol consumption in a drinking culture in which high levels of alcohol consumption are the norm:

Rachel (INT): But the thing is, I think women know that they have to be careful and I…I don't really think that campaigns do…a huge amount of good because women know that, you know, if they get incredibly drunk they're putting themselves at risk from attack or whatever and that they should watch their drinks, that they shouldn't drink too much, you know, but everyone still does, kind of thing.

Rachel suggests here that women are aware of the risks associated with high levels of alcohol consumption, but resist safety messages and continue to do so anyway. In this regard, some of the advice was viewed as unrealistic:

Fiona (FG03): … they need to realise that women do go out, they do drink, they, you know, probably drink too much. That's not really the, you have to think about other things, you know, you can't just have posters saying don't drink, because that's not going to happen.

One of the reasons why young women may resist advice about 'sensible drinking' would appear to be related to the way that some of this advice is presented. Information about 'binge drinking' was disregarded by young women, since they rejected the validity and relevance of this term:

Katy (FG02): Is that a glass of wine every night constitutes you as a binge drinker?

I: Mm. I think it's supposed to be six units in one sitting for women and eight units for men.

Katy (FG02): That's half a bottle of wine. If you sit and drink a bottle of wine with a mate [laughs] you're then classified as a binge drinker!

Eilidh (FG02): That's a bit of a harsh label to be put on you, isn't it?

For these participants, the amount of alcohol associated with official definitions of 'binge drinking' seemed to be relatively low, and therefore disproportionate to the negative connotations of the 'binge drinking' label. Within the media, the term 'binge drinking' has been associated with behaviour which is irresponsible, unattractive, out of control and potentially violent. This image is very much at odds with that of normative femininity. Participants also rejected messages which linked drinking to the possibility of rape or sexual assault on the grounds that women were being blamed. The following focus group exchange relates to young women's discussion of a Home Office poster with the message "1 in 3 rapes happened when a woman has been drinking":

Fiona (FG03): I don't know if I like that, it's almost offensive to say well you shouldn't drink 'cause this'll happen. I don't know if that's…I don't like the message that's sort of giving me…

Ruth (FG03): I don't know if it's sort of putting some sort of blame onto the woman as well for drinking, like…if you drink this is that's gonna happen, you should know that, or something.

Lorna (FG03): It feels like they should have another poster that says one in three…out of how many rapes has the male been drinking when he carries out rapes? To kind of even up the score a bit 'cause it does like…it is reading as oh the female is being blamed for having a few drinks.

Sophie (FG03): Yeah, it's sort of like rape…the acceptance, you know, kind of playing on it like well you were drunk so therefore you deserve it… or, you know, it was silly to put yourself in that position, but you shouldn't, you should be able to drink and expect it…you know, everything to be okay.

Seeking assistance from bouncers or bar staff

In the event that women have safety concerns in a bar, pub or club, some safety literature advises informing a bouncer or a member of the bar staff. Some young women had a mainly positive experience of doing so:

Jessica (INT): Some guys, when they come up to you and they're giving it all this and okay, you have a laugh, and then they just won't leave you alone and now and again you have to get the bouncers to tell them look, "leave them alone". But I've always felt the bouncers do their job, and the guys just leave us alone and don't realise what they're doing…But I think it depends on the bouncers as well and how understanding they are as to actually what these guys can be like… but most of them are really responsive and there's just like no messing about.

However, mistrust of bouncers and barmen emerged as a strong theme in young women's accounts. For some young women this mistrust stemmed from their perceptions of the reasons that someone would be attracted to this type of work:

Judith (INT): …there's quite a lot of doormen who themselves are maybe like…involved in some kinda violence themselves… I think maybe they're the kind of guy that's…I don't know if I would…totally trust them to like look out for my safety.

Alison (INT): I know like quite a few bouncers, and especially in the clubs and pubs I mentioned earlier, have actually been the ones spiking drinks, and you know, they…they're not interested in what other people are doing, they're just rather stand there and, you know, look out for fights and half the time join in fights themselves.

Participants expressed their concern that some bouncers are attracted to the work they are doing due to the potential it offers for exerting control and violence, rather than due to a concern about ensuring safety within the bar, pub and club environment. Lack of trust in bouncers essentially related to young women's identification of bouncers as male, over and above identifying them as a member of security staff:

Sophie (INT): I heard a story of a bouncer, spiking a girl's drink and taking her out of the bar and then the next day she woke up and she was in the middle of a like a sex movie basically and she didn't know what she was doing and that's really scary in that you can't…trust the people who are supposed to put on like a security front, but then again that might be a sexist comment to make, but all bouncers or most bouncers are men.

While it is not possible to verify 'stories' which young women have heard about bouncers spiking drinks, this was clearly a matter of concern for participants. Further, Lily recalls a situation where she was pursued by a bouncer she had turned to for assistance earlier in the evening:

Lily (INT): … I went to that bouncer and I was like, "Look, can you get rid of this guy 'cause he's basically just driving me up the wall?" and he was like, "Yeah, sure thing"… he got rid of him, and at the end of the night when I was leaving, the bouncer asked me for my number [laughs]. So I was just like, "That's not why I asked you to do it as if I was gonna give you this reward", you know, so I was like, "No, no, sorry" and basically I wanted to leave, but my friend didn't want to leave… so I left by myself and I was walking up the hill, the bouncer started running after me, like he left work to run after me. So, yeah, I was a little bit surprised 'cause I was like, "How can you do that when you're supposed to be working… never mind ensuring people's safety?"

The lack of trust which young women voiced about male bouncers also extended to male bar staff:

Shirley (INT): And then, at the end of the day, who really trusts a barman, do you know what I mean?

Lisa (INT): And then you get…you hear the things on the news how, like the…quite a lot of spiking drinks is done by barmen because they've got easy access to it… I mean, when you hear things like that you're not gonna really be expecting to sort of trust them, are you? Especially if they're…I mean young men and stuff, barmen, who are just gonna try and sleep with you and stuff and you wouldn't really…not that trustworthy, I don't think.

With the exception of one participant from a focus group who thought that female bouncers could be 'scary', young women expressed a strong preference for having female bouncers available:

Jessica (INT): There's a couple of female ones [bouncers], but most of them, a high percentage are male. But there's a couple of ones in some of the clubs which I think is a bit more reassuring really.

Debbie (INT): I think the male bouncers are really scary. They seem really scary… I was in a place where there was a woman bouncer, and there was something happening, and I did speak to her and I found that really easy.

Cara (INT): Yeah. I think men don't quite understand how vulnerable women feel sometimes. Like male bouncers most of the bouncers are males. You get a few women bouncers, but most of them are men and they can't always sympathise with women.

The main reason that young women expressed a preference for having at least some female bouncers in bars, pubs and clubs, was that they were considered to be more approachable, or more understanding in the event that young women experienced any difficulties.

Resisting safety advice: 'No, why should I?'

Having a good time

It is apparent that participants received a range of safety advice from family, friends and safety campaigns and engaged in numerous safety behaviours, ranging from watching drinks to seeking assistance from bouncers. While much of the safety advice directed towards young women socialising in bars, pubs and clubs was considered to be common sense, taken for granted behaviour, some women resented the imposition of having to think about their safety when they were socialising. The tension between the benefits of being aware of your safety and having the freedom to socialise and enjoy life without being fearful is highlighted by Louisa and Sophie:

> *Louisa (INT):* Yeah, also I hate the idea of the media saying, putting all these sort of massive deals out of date rape and stuff, but at the same time you're thinking well at least it's opening people's eyes to the fact that it is happening, but then at the same time, I don't like it because then I feel like the media are trying to make me scared of my life when I don't want to be scared of my life.

> *Sophie (INT):* I think that there is a lot of information out there, but it's not …it's only accessible if you want it to be accessible and by that I mean that there is plenty of information, but I think a lot of females don't choose to…em…acknowledge it, especially maybe in my age group, sort of young 20s, late teens, because there is a drinking culture like in Scotland so I think that in order to conform to that culture you have to almost just not be too aware and not, you know, be too cautious about a safety of it because it is about going out and having a good time.

Given that young women seek to 'have a good time' when they are in bars, pubs and clubs, it is perhaps unsurprising that some young women said that they did not consciously think about their safety while they were socialising in this way. In response to being asked why they don't think about their safety when they are out, Shona and Lynn gave the following response:

> *Shona (FG01):* You can't really do anything else. You'd always be thinking, "Oh I can't do that just in case something happens."

> *Lynn (FG01):* A lot o' people just try and put that out their mind so it doesn't ruin their night.

Backlash

Some young women also went beyond resenting the conflict that addressing safety issues may have on their enjoyment of their leisure time, by questioning the intentions of campaigns and media attention on the issue of women's safety:

> *Rachel (INT):* I don't know, this might be just me kind of ranting, but it always seems like you get all this advertising saying. "watch out for yourself, blah, blah, blah", you know, "don't drink too much", and it's like, well, men don't get this…this, so why should I listen to it? It just seems really, really unfair that, you know, kind of once again women are being targeted to kind of, you know, have to…have to stop what they're doing or modify what they're doing because of someone else's behaviour. It just kind of irritates. I think probably sometimes it irritates me to the point of just doing exactly the opposite of what it tells me to do just to kind of like, "No. Why should I?" It just seems very unfair.

Rachel goes on to locate the advice targeted towards women within the context of gender equality more generally:

> *Rachel (INT):* It's just so irritating. It's like, once we do kind of start getting a bit of…equality and do start acting more like men they're just like, "Oh no, no, you can't. No, it's just dangerous, you're just going to get yourself…" It's just like, oh God, seriously! We can't do anything without being…you know, oh… Yeah, sorry, I get quite irritated by that kind of…

It is interesting to note that when Rachel questions the gendered disparity in expectations about male and female behaviour, she suggests that she might just be "ranting" and goes on to apologies for being irritated by this perceived inequality between men and women. However, Eilidh and Louisa also identified this as a concern, locating the current approach to women's safety, as conveyed in the media and safety campaigns as a form of backlash to women's emancipation:

> *Eilidh (INT):* It's like women are let off the leash in some ways. It's like those training leads you get for puppies, you're let off for so long and then they kind of like yank you back again. It's like oh you're allowed to vote and do all this, but now you're not allowed to drink or smoke "Come back! Come back! Get back in the kitchen!" I honestly feel like it's like it can be so difficult to be a woman 'cause you keep getting told what's appropriate and what's not appropriate and…you know, back in the thirties it was a bit more acceptable, but apparently not any more… We've come a long way… but now it seems like they're trying to kind of revert again back to what women are supposed to be like.

Louisa (INT): … the media should be splashing around cases where the men have been locked up for years and years for doing this to a woman and instead its like 'women, make sure you buy those stupid little things for the top of your drink' and I think definitely it's more like a rehash or a backlash to women wanting to enjoy themselves and be more liberal and as its gone all the way through, like when we started wearing short skirts and no tights.

Refocusing safety campaigns?

Related to the concern articulated by participants that there were negative implications of safety campaigns focusing entirely on women's behaviour, a preference was articulated for campaigns which focused on men's behaviour:

Louisa (INT): I think that's a good campaign [Home Office consent campaign], because I think it might make men question like their attitude and themselves rather than women being told to like question themselves and like stop drinking because you're going to end up getting taken advantage of. It's more like, guys, like stop doing it!

Lisa (INT): I mean they all say the same thing, don't they? And the more you hear something the more you're just gonna be like, "Yeah, yeah, I know, whatever"… because it's all aimed at girls and I think that…yeah, after you hear it too many times you just switch off, whereas guys don't hear it enough, which maybe is why these like…they spike people's drink, these things are still happening 'cause they just don't…and they think they can get away with it too, and they can, well they do.

Participants also expressed a particular preference for campaigns with a practical focus, particularly those which included information about where women could go for support in the event that something happened to them or their friends:

Belinda (INT): People probably wouldn't know where to go if, for example, they were like a victim, or if they needed like sexual health clinic or family planning. They probably wouldn't know where to go for that. So I think that's probably what needs to be pushed more. Like because when people are out drinking, I mean they're not gonna think "How can I prevent such and such happening?", but I think it's more a case of people don't know where to go if something does happen, like I think that's probably what needs to be…there needs to be more information on that and how people can get help, and less of a sort of…like sort of stigma about going to get the help.

Marion (INT): …when we first started at [University] they gave out loads of flyers which you wouldn't really look through, but there's one and there's one we've still got it, you get it out every year, and it's got…I think it's got help lines and stuff on it… I think there's something women can call at night time… I did actually feel when that was given out that that was quite a good thing because like is something did happen you wouldn't know who to contact, so it's quite good that even if it wasn't necessarily connected to your problem, there was something there that you could phone or you could email or something just whatever.

Summary

For many of the young women in this study there was a sense that they should be responsible for their own safety in bars, pubs and clubs, reflecting the individualised discourse found within contemporary safety campaigns and crime prevention literature. Some participants, however, believed that bars, pubs and clubs, and to a lesser extent, the government, should play a greater role in young women's safety through increased information and awareness about the issue and improved security measures in bars, pubs and clubs. Bouncers and bar staff were reassuring and useful for some women in light of any difficulties. However, there was a significant lack of trust, particularly in male bouncers. A preference was expressed for the having at least some female bouncers on the basis that they would be more approachable in the event of any difficulties. It was also acknowledged that there was a limit to what the government could do, while safety initiatives could present a conflict of interest with the commercial interests of bars, pubs and clubs.

Women's safety behaviours were influenced by a range of factors including safety campaigns, messages from family and media, and personal experience. Women had relatively low recall of specific safety campaigns, and much of the advice was considered to be common sense behaviour that women already know, as a result of messages received from family and the media from an early age. The key safety behaviours advocated within contemporary safety campaigns directed at women socialising in bars, pubs and clubs relate to the prevention of drink spiking, looking out for or staying with friends, and limiting alcohol consumption.

Most of the young women said that they do at least attempt to watch their drinks. However, no women adopted more formal measures of doing so (i.e. nominating a 'drinks watcher' or using safety devices such as bottle stoppers). These measures are generally thought to be impractical, and prohibitively costly. Going out in groups and

looking out for friends is something which young women tend to do as a matter of course. However, issues remained about how far trust in friends and acquaintances could be extended. Some young women did attempt to limit their alcohol consumption as part of their safety strategy, since alcohol is equated with risk and vulnerability. However, this was sometimes difficult to do in light of the current drinking culture. Safety advice on this issue was contradicted by other incentives to consume more alcohol (e.g. drinks promotions), and discredited due to the association with the stigma of 'binge drinking' and the scope for women to be blamed of they were raped or sexually assaulted following alcohol consumption.

Some women resisted messages within safety advice due to resenting the impact it had on their capacity for fun and enjoyment. Some women also saw campaigns which focus on women's behaviour as a backlash against women's freedom and equality, citing a preference for campaigns which focus on men's behaviour and provide practical information about sources of support in the event of difficulties. Participants' safety strategies incorporated some of the behaviours advocated within the safety advice directed towards them, while rejecting other aspects of this advice. In many respects, the safety strategies adopted by young women in bars, pubs and clubs transgress the behaviours promoted within safety advice. On one hand, this demonstrates creativity and resilience on the part of the young women in this study. On the other hand, it also demonstrates the extent to which women's behaviour in bars, pubs and clubs is moderated by safety concerns.

Chapter Eight
Negotiating Unwanted Sexual Attention from Men

Introduction

Studies which have focused on the way in which women occupy bars, pubs and clubs indicate that this is an area where women are subject to particular risks, due to being subjected to heightened unwanted sexual attention (Snow et al., 1991), and an expectation that they are sexually available (Green et al., 1987). However, more recently debate has developed about women's empowerment, and in particular their apparent sexual empowerment (Levy, 2005). This debate can be located within the broader context of claims that we are now witnessing a 'postfeminist' era, whereby it is claimed that women and girls are on an equal footing with their male counterparts (Griffin, 2004), free to embrace their sexuality and be sexually assertive.

The majority of safety advice directed towards young women socialising in bars, pubs and clubs is essentially advice about how they can prevent themselves from being sexually assaulted by men. However, with the exception of the Home Office 'Consent' campaign which focuses on male behaviour, the issue of men who perpetrate violence against women is entirely absent from safety literature (Brooks, 2005). From a feminist perspective, such advice has been critiqued on the basis that it positions women as individually responsible for stopping sexual violence (Neame, 2003), limits women's freedom and autonomy in public space, and invokes a victim blaming discourse should a woman fail to adhere to particular standards of conduct (Campbell, 2005).

Given that two thirds of participants in the current study reported experiencing sexual harassment from men in bars, pubs and clubs as discussed in Chapter Six, the lack of consideration given to the behaviour of abusive men would appear to be a significant omission. Responding to unwanted sexual attention from men emerged as a key concern for young women in this study. This chapter explores how young women accommodate, resist and challenge unwanted sexual attention from men in bars, pubs and clubs, including the tensions involved in doing so.

Assessing risk: 'reading the scene'

It is apparent from young women's accounts that they are engaged in an ongoing process of assessing risk when they socialise in bars, pubs and clubs. In addition to the assessments participants made about the risks associated with different types of establishments, within bars, pubs and clubs, young women in the current study were engaged in an ongoing process of assessing the behaviour and intentions of men around them. This process was described as happening as soon as you meet an unknown male:

> *Belinda (INT):* …you kinda get the guys who you sort of think… you just get a sense about them as soon as you meet them, like …you can tell they've had a lot to drink, and you're kind of like could you be, especially if it's someone you don't know, could you be capable of forcing yourself on someone or doing something like that? So I think it's sort of just sort of a sense you get about someone when you first meet them… but then again for all I know that person that I perceive as being nice could actually have an ulterior motive, so…it's kinda like you go on instinct.

The assessments being made by young women are in relation to whether particular men have the potential to violate them sexually. For these young women a significant part of being able to protect themselves depended on their own ability or 'instinct' to assess situations. However, as Belinda indicates, this is by no means a fool-proof technique. If young women judged an encounter with a man to be uncomfortable or unsafe, they then had the predicament of how to respond in a given situation. It was particularly important, therefore, that they were able to assess the situation with some degree of certainty:

> *Lorna (FG03):* I think if you're like able to kind of read the scene well then you'll know whether to like actually just say something or just to walk away. I think you're gonna need to like read the scene really well before you make up your mind.

Participants frequently cited examples of situations where they described men harassing them, or 'not leaving them alone' in bars, pubs and clubs. This was a source of fear, frustration and annoyance for young women who were attempting to enjoy an evening out with friends:

> *Yvonne (FG04):* You can't do anything right by them either. If you don't react…

> *Various (FG04):* Yeah

> *Lisa (FG04):* 'Cause they'll say sexual stuff and it's like you really want to go and hit them, but I mean what can you do? It's just so annoying.

The sense of frustration voiced by young women related to their perceived powerlessness in these situations, and the associated difficulty in deciding how to respond to men in such situations. These issues are explored in more detail below.

Challenging men's behaviour: 'you don't want to be really rude to them'

At an individual level, participants described three different types of response available to them when receiving unwanted sexual attention from men in bars, pubs and clubs: challenging men's behaviour; removing themselves from the situation; or placating men's behaviour. Deciding what to do in such situations was informed by a fear of how men might react:

> *Lynn (FG01):* … like walking through a club and somebody grabs your bum… that really irritates me 'cause it's like, "Why should you have the right to do that?" That really gets on my nerves. But then I'd maybe usually be too scared to turn round and say anything just like 'cause I don't know who done it or… scared in case what happened if I kicked up a fuss.

> *Ruth (FG03):* Most…some of them can be quite all right, some of them just chat to you and stuff and, "Oh, do you want a drink?", or then other ones are just…they're just obviously out for as much as they can get and if you say no then they take that very personally. Even though like you're both probably extremely drunk, if you tell them no then they'll take it personally and they might get a bit like physical with you, like touching you or pulling you or whatever.

> *Sophie (INT):* If you say something, like "don't do that" or "what do you think you're doing?", or if you say something back you don't know if they're gonna, you know, maybe hit you or they'll back down or they'll…they'll apologise. My way of dealing with it was to walk away from the situation, … I didn't want to deal with it any more, I just walked away… So I can see why they do get away with it because it's…you're putting yourself at risk, maybe yeah, so there's a risk, definitely a risk factor there.

In the extracts above, Lynn, Ruth and Sophie clearly articulate their concern about the risks involved in challenging male behaviour. The fact that these young women are referring to the behaviour of men, however, is implicit within their descriptions of these scenarios. Gender neutral terms such as 'them' or 'they' are used to denote men. Even in the comparatively rare accounts where young women suggested that they would resist and challenge unwanted male attention, their language remained gender neutral:

> *Eve (INT):* Like we've never really been pestered, like and even if someone does come up and like they are annoying us, we'll just be like, "Listen, fuck off!"… it doesn't take them long to take the hint. But if there was someone that was really annoying us I would just go up to a bouncer and say to the bouncer.

Tessa (INT): I'm not shy to tell somebody where to go if they're annoying me and I think because I come across as confident, I don't really get that much hassle, you know? But I suppose it…I suppose it all depends. I mean, everybody can be vulnerable sometimes, especially if you've had too much to drink.

Eve and Tessa's assertions that they've 'never really been pestered' or 'don't really get that much hassle', and that they would be comfortable with challenging such behaviour were not typical of the accounts given by most participants. A number of participants did express a desire to challenge and resist men's behaviour, although this was mediated by concern about the consequences of doing so. Young women's fear of how men might react to being challenged was not necessarily an unfounded fear since they also described scenarios where men had become more aggressive *after* their behaviour had been challenged. The following excerpt from a focus group discussion about walking home from a bar illustrates how such a situation unfolded in practice:

Sophie (FG03): It's like they [men] expect you just to shut up, keep your head down and just deal with it, but we tried to say, "look don't, you know, just leave us alone". It's like oh…he just start…I don't even know what he was saying. He just…I don't know if he was drunk or not, he just followed us all the way back, so…if you can't like challenge them, what are you supposed to do? Are you supposed to just take it, the abuse? It's not fair.

Lorna (FG03): Again, do you think that… if you did like what you were expected to do, just kind of like keep your head down and be quiet… keeping quiet, do you reckon he would like still kind of follow you?

Sophie (FG03): No… he was going the opposite direction. As soon as we said something he just started coming after us.

In this light, it is perhaps unsurprising that women refrain from challenging men's behaviour for fear of the response this may provoke. Further, a number of young women stated that they would not wish to be rude or impolite to a man who had made an approach to them:

Evelyn (INT): I'm not one of those people who are nasty, I'm really quite…I just smile polite and try and get away. And then they come and start touching you and its like that, did I give you permission to touch me? That makes me mad or they grab your bum when you walk past and its like wait a minute, I never said you could do that.

Katy (INT): …so you give them the kind of chat that would imply it's not going to happen, but not to be rude because I don't know how I would take it if you were rude, they would become rude back and that it turns into… it blows up into this massive situation, so if you're just polite about it

Suzanne (INT): … but sometimes they [boys] don't listen though and that's quite, it's quite scary really, you know, when they're quite like…once somebody's got you like that it's hard to kind of get off and say "No, leave me alone" without being really rude 'cause you don't wanna be really rude to them and I think… that's really difficult…you know 'cause if they grab hold of you, how…you don't wanna push them away 'cause that's just taking it too far then, isn't it?

Despite these descriptions of men's behaviour towards them making them mad or being scary, it was conceded that at times it is easier just to smile and be polite about the situation. These passive responses are indicative of young women enacting behaviours associated with normative femininity. In the extract above, Suzanne highlights that even if "boys" were to "grab hold of you", you wouldn't want to push them away since that would be taking it "too far". This would imply that it is, at some level, acceptable for young women to be grabbed by men, or that physically pushing men away would somehow be a disproportionate response. However, Suzanne goes on to reflect upon the more serious consequences of her friend's reluctance to upset boys by saying 'no' to them:

Suzanne (INT): I mean, it would never get to a silly stage, I don't think, but then I think some of my friends have done that because they just generally didn't wanna say no. I mean, I think there's quite a fear of boys like that… I think that they don't want to upset people. I mean, I know friends that have been with my other friends just because they didn't wanna hurt their feelings by saying they weren't interested, so they just got it over and done with and said "Oh, it was a drunken mistake" like the next day, but I don't think I'd let it get to that stage, but … yeah, maybe I would just pull someone just because it was easier than to push them away.

Similarly, Lorna describes how it can be easier to adopt a passive response to verbal harassment:

Lorna (INT): I'd like to think I'd got enough courage to say to them like please don't address me like that, but when peoples' got quite a lot of drink in them then they're not gonna take no for an answer and they're probably just gonna make it worse, so…in the long run it's easier just to be silent.

The extent to which women are expected to endure harassment and sexual coercion is a striking feature of these accounts. Embedded within the belief that it is easier to be polite or remain silent in such situations, is the assumption that women do not have the right to challenge this behaviour; it is an expected part of a night out. Participants even discussed situations where they have left a bar to escape unwanted male attention (although they voice their irritation about this at the same time):

Lisa (FG04): Yeah, I think you feel less safe when you into a bar with lots of drunk men. I'd leave…we have left…we left last week. Went into [bar] in [Street], actually, of all places, and it was the football was on . . . everyone was drunk and it was horrible, and I would leave purely because you'd be scared that someone would say something to you.

Yvonne (FG04): And also when you sit down and guys always feel the need to just…I mean if you sit anywhere near them then they think that's their cue to chat you up.

Lisa (FG04): And especially when they're drunk and it's horrible and you don't feel safe at all.

Yvonne (FG04): No, I never really… I just feel more inconvenienced than anything. It's just like you know women don't do that to guys, that's what really annoys me, and it's like get over yourselves…

Lisa (FG04): I know. What gives you the right?

Yvonne (FG04): What makes you think that you can just sit there and your chat's crap.

Lisa (FG04): I know, it really annoys me and I lost it with one guy and walked away.

Lisa (FG04): But then if you…yeah… ..if you say something they could get aggressive, so you don't…

Yvonne (FG04): It depends where you are.

Lisa (FG04): and so you have to put up with all that stuff when really you're just there for a quiet drink.

Lisa and Yvonne clearly articulate their frustration about the unwanted attention they receive from men in bars, pubs and clubs and questioned men's right to behave in this way. Again, it would appear that this frustration is to some extent borne out of a perceived lack of control over the situation, due to the difficulties associated with challenging this behaviour, and having to 'put up' with this during their leisure time. However, the way in which women responded to situations where they were experiencing harassment from men was also mediated by concern about how they would be perceived:

Louisa (INT): … when you think about sexual harassment on a night out, women are definitely more prone than men to being sexually harassed than men I believe, and it's to the level of what you think what you will allow because if you don't allow it you're like, not a party pooper, but uptight and moody, and then if you do allow it you've got to think, "how long am I going to allow you to harass me?"

Rachel (INT):   I think it's really, really hard for women to ever, you know say to like a member of staff or a steward or anything, "Em, this guy's hassling me," because guys are very quick to go, "Oh it's just banter," you know, "It's just…" I think when we're always seen as really like having no sense of humour or just not being kind of up for banter or anything if they go that "you…you're, you know, annoying me or intimidating me or I'm just not comfortable with it".

Ironically, it would seem that if women challenge the behaviour of men who harass them, it is their own behaviour rather than that of men's which may be subject to judgement. By suggesting that women are taking sexual harassment too seriously or that they fail to find it humorous effectively trivialises their concerns and objections. A further repercussion of challenging men's behaviour is that a woman's sexual reputation could be questioned:

Suzanne (INT):   But I suppose it's just not nice to confront people, it's not really… I think it's just 'cause you don't know them, but I think they maybe would lose their temper and be a bit like "Uh" and then also, em, it sounds a bit silly, but I think I'd be worried if I saw them in Uni again and they'd be like, "Oh there's that…that girl" and, you know, it'd be a bit like being back in secondary school again, you get called frigid or something.

In addition to encountering an aggressive response, Suzanne expresses concern about being called 'frigid'. Alison also suspects that this is a concern for some of her female friends:

Alison (INT):   Probably because they [female friends] don't want to be too…be seen as being too frigid or anything like that… and they're just not comfortable enough around guys to say, "Look, I'm not interested, move on."

In this excerpt, Alison suggests that some of her friends are "not comfortable enough around guys" to ask them to leave them alone. Rachel also suggests that, for some women, their lack of confidence in these situations could be problematic:

Rachel (INT):   So I think a lot of women just tend to try and deal with on their own and…I think a lot of them just aren't kind of confident enough to say, "Just leave me alone," they kind of just go, "Uh-huh, yeah," and, you know, try and walk away, but, yeah, I think a lot of them just don't bother saying anything when, you know, they really should, or they can. I don't think they know that they…they can.

By suggesting that the issue lies with the confidence levels of individual women the need to question men's behaviour is evaded. As discussed earlier, however, staying silent in such situations may be a rational and measured choice for women when

confronted with a situation which they fear, rather than a statement about their personal confidence.

Accommodating men's behaviour: 'perhaps it's just the way it is'

A further reason that some participants didn't question men's behaviour, and instead highlighted the need for women to take individual responsibility for situations where they received unwanted sexual attention from men, appeared to stem from an understanding of men's behaviour, or at least the behaviour of some men, as inevitable:

> *Susan (INT):* I don't think it's men's responsibility generally there 'cause, you know, there's men that are perfectly well-behaved… the only men that have anything to do with it is the men that attack women and, um, well, yeah, I guess you could call them being responsible, but, you know, that's not really gonna help because they want to attack women and, yeah, I would always say that it…it's you to have to look after your safety.

> *Rachel (INT):* …women kind of have to be aware of the fact that… I don't know… it should be that the men know that there are lines and you shouldn't cross them, and if a woman says 'no' she means no… that should be…how it is, but I just don't think it ever is going to be. I think it kind of does fall with women that they have to know that, you know, drunk men are bastards, basically. You have to… look out for yourselves and other women.

> *Annabelle (INT):* Like women should be more aware and men should be aware of their friend and think about if it was their friend and how would they feel if they were being like that and that was their little sister that some guys were doing that to, the way they are with us. I think that would be better. But perhaps it's just the way it is [laughs].

> *Debbie (INT):* I think men are always going to behave the way they are and that's just men [laughs]. I think it is mainly the women themselves [who should take responsibility for safety] because, obviously, they have control over what exactly they're drinking and what exactly they're doing.

These assertions draw upon essentialist discourses of male sexuality being characterised by aggression and a high and uncontrollable sex-drive, which is predetermined and incapable of change. Both Annabelle and Debbie laugh after suggesting that men do not have the capacity to change their behaviour, since maybe that's "just the way it is". The laughter which accompanies these statements effectively minimises the gravity of the idea that men are incapable of changing their behaviour, even if women experience this behaviour as intimidating or abusive.

While none of the participants believed that men were mainly or solely responsible for women's safety, three participants articulated the view that men's behaviour towards women in bars, pubs and clubs was unacceptable and a further eight participants suggested that men should be more aware of their behaviour, or change their behaviour towards women. The following comment from Alison is typical of participants' responses in this regard:

> *Alison (INT):* I think most of it is down to the women themselves to, you know, be a wee bit more streetwise and just look what she's doing. But I think men sometimes need to look at the way they act as well and realise that if a woman tells you to back off, you back off.

While Alison highlights the need for men to question their own behaviour, she remains clear that staying safe is primarily women's responsibility. Annabelle, however, identifies the potential for this discourse of individualised responsibility to translate into blame:

> *Annabelle (INT):* I really don't like this attitude that if a woman gets drunk, she's at least partly responsible for what happens to her. That's probably like a really big problem. I really think it needs to be drummed into some of the male population that, you know, no touching, don't, you know. Just keep your distance. Sorry, that sounds really sort of rambling.

Annabelle also questions the attribution of blame to a woman who is drunk when something happens to her. In this instance, Annabelle was referring to a recent survey she had read about, which revealed that some people believe that if a woman had been raped while drinking, she is at least partly to blame[69]. It is interesting to note, however, that when Annabelle makes what seems like a clear point about responsibility for rape being attributed to the perpetrator, she apologies for "rambling". The potential for the notion of responsibility for safety to be translated into blame for women is also articulated by Eilidh:

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[69] This survey was commissioned by Amnesty International (2005) to explore public attitudes towards sexual assault..

> *Eilidh (INT):* I think that women do kind of beat themselves up more about it especially because there's so much more kind of media attention on women's safety, if you go out and you get so drunk you can't remember what happened you start thinking, "how could I be so irresponsible?", 'cause if something had happened to me, you know, I wouldn't know anything about it and that would be my own fault... you start to place responsibility and guilt on yourself, but then on the other hand it's like if something had happened to you it would've been somebody else that'd done that so why should you kind of feel like guilty for their actions? You know, it is difficult, but then obviously you don't want to be the one that gets yourself into such a situation that you don't know what's going on.

This dilemma, as outlined above by Eilidh encapsulates the complexity of the predicament which young women may face in navigating the fine line between individual responsibility for safety and self-blame. Should young women fail to prevent their safety being compromised in any way, it is likely that they will question their individual behaviour. Evelyn, for example, berates herself after she 'let' someone spike her drink:

> *Evelyn (INT):* ... it's not until afterwards you think it's more you feel stupid for letting somebody spike you, even though...
>
> *I:* Why would you feel stupid?
>
> *Evelyn (INT):* I don't know you just feel like, I should have watched my drink, I'm such an idiot, I should have just kept my drink with me, I shouldn't have left it with anybody, I should have kept it.

As discussed in Chapter Seven, participants also described some of the preventative measures which they are advised to adopt in order to prevent drink spiking as beyond what can reasonably be expected of an individual while socialising and drinking alcohol in bars, pubs and clubs (e.g. watching drinks at all times, watching drinks being poured). Nonetheless, self-blame persisted in young women's accounts, although some participants did rationalise that women should not be blamed following drink spiking or sexual assault. The individualised emphasis in safety campaigns about how women can avoid risk is likely to contribute to women questioning their own behaviour following an assault, rather than that of the perpetrator.

In stark contrast to women's increased responsibility for their safety after they have consumed alcohol, men were accorded *less* responsibility for their actions when they had consumed alcohol. This phenomenon was implicitly bound in judgements about the *intentions* rather than the *outcomes* of men's behaviour:

Suzanne (INT): I suppose there must be people in clubs – and I think that is bad – that there's really drunk girls and they, you know, they think "Oh, there's an opportunity", type thing. And I think that must happen quite often, and I would feel sorry for someone in that situation, but I don't think that then that guy should get arrested. Well, unless he's really, you know, unless it's really kind of pre-meditated and he's thought, "Right, I'm gonna go out and get somebody tonight that's really drunk", and he is, like, stone-cold sober, then I think that would be bad.

When asked whether men were aware of the impact that their behaviour may have on women in bars, pubs and clubs, participants seemed reluctant to attribute any responsibility to men for behaviour which women could feel intimidated by:

Debbie (INT): … they're too drunk to know what they're saying half the time. I think some of them might do it on purpose just to get attention. I think they might say something horrible or something that they shouldn't say just to get attention because that's what they want.

Heather (INT): So I don't think they're always aware that they're making you feel uncomfortable… I suppose if they've had a lot to drink as well they're unaware of how you're sort of… what signals you're giving off, maybe, they're kind of dulled down to that. But …I think they need to pay a bit more attention.

Tessa (INT): So sometimes I think it's maybe just like drunkenness and ignorance and…I don't know, sometimes it probably is something a little bit more sinister. I'm not saying like they actually want to do anything, but…maybe they think it's a bit funny or something, you know?

Male behaviour which may make women feel uncomfortable, or threaten their safety, was frequently attributed to men being unaware of what they were doing due to the effects of alcohol consumption. Within the confines of the current study, it is not possible to verify these perceptions of male behaviour with men themselves. However, the attribution of this type of male behaviour to the effects of alcohol consumption is concerning in light of high and increasing levels of alcohol consumption amongst young men. Perhaps more importantly, the notion that men are unaware of the implications of their behaviour essentially minimises the negative impact that this behaviour may have on women. Moreover, as discussed in Chapter Five, this lenient judgement of drunken behaviour is not extended to women who are drunk, particularly in public places.

Self-surveillance: 'but is he getting the wrong impression?'

In addition to assessing the behaviour of men around them, and making decisions about whether to challenge men's behaviour, participants in the current study described

engaging in self-surveillance of their own behaviour to ensure that they didn't give off the 'wrong signals' to men:

> *Rachel (INT):* … if you're just randomly chatting to a guy in a bar… it's that same kind of feeling, "Should I be talking to this guy because I'm actually just chatting to him, but is he getting the wrong impression?"… like I just want to kind of be doing what I want to do, but am I giving the wrong impression or am I… making a situation where there isn't one? … which is just horrible thinking about it. You just can't really do what you would want to do because of…yeah…thinking that something's going to happen, or you might contribute to something that's going to happen. Or even invite it.

This excerpt from Rachel highlights the tensions young women navigate between acting freely, and monitoring or regulating their own behaviour when socialising with men. Choice of clothing was the most prominent example participants described in their attempts to manage the impression they gave of themselves while socialising in bars, pubs and clubs, usually with the intention of avoiding giving the impression that they were sexually available. This was the one area in which women made explicit references to informal 'rules' during both interview and focus group discussions:

> *Belinda (INT):* I mean there's always the rule about you either show legs or top half, you don't show both.

> *Lynn (FG01):* Like all me and my friends usually always have the saying like you either have your legs out or your cleavage showing, never…I would never feel a wee bit too over…

> *Shona (FG01):* You'd feel exposed, I think. Guys would just think 'oh, she's up for it'

> *Jessica (INT):* I think some women, obviously, dress with nothing and I think that makes them more easier as a target, like maybe they're easy. I think that targets them. But I definitely wouldn't wear a short skirt and a low cut top; I'd wear one or the other. That's just the way I am. I just sort of cover up. Wear jeans and a low cut top; that's what you usually do.

This 'top half or bottom half' clothing rule described by young women is clearly linked to a concern about how they will be perceived by men. Participants were acutely aware of the implications that their clothing choices may have on how they will be perceived by others. In this regard, there was some suggestion that women were thought to posses a form of power and control as a result of the way that they choose to dress:

Sophie (INT): … in a way you could say that females are powerful in that sense, in that because you know that if you dress a particular way then you're going to get attention, so it's as easy as that. It's just down to what you wear at the end of the day. So if you don't wear something that, you know, like won't cause looks from men… you could say you have that choice because you know exactly what's gonna happen.

Katy (FG02): You wear the short skirt because you want the attention or else you wouldn't have worn the short skirt on top of it…of course, yeah, you want to look good as well, but you…you know, it's nice to have a bit of attention… part of the reason…my flatmate did that the other day, she had the shortest denim skirt I've ever seen in my life and the attention she got was unbelievable. Then she was like, "oh yeah, you know the short, the attention… the black skirt".

I: And was that a good thing to her, was she pleased to get that attention?

Katy (FG02): Oh no, yeah, she…she lives on…the attention.

Melissa (INT): … normally one of our mates will be like "oh, I'm out on the pull tonight" and she'll be wearing a suggestive top and she just wants a bit of attention really. And then you can go out some nights and you can just go okay, it'll be a girl's night so we'll just wear casual outfits.

It is suggested here by Sophie, Katy and Melissa that women who are seeking attention from men can choose to wear revealing clothing to secure this attention. In this regard, women are perceived to exercise power and choice. It could be argued, however, that this is very much power within the confines of heterosexual femininity, since women's power in this context is defined by what they can be in relation to men, and specifically how attractive they can be to men. Further exploration of participants' understanding of this issue revealed that this is an area which is infused with contradictions, risks and dilemmas for young women. For some participants, wearing revealing clothing was equated with risk:

Melissa (INT): I personally don't wear anything too revealing because I just don't feel that safe in it.

Alison (INT): There's one friend that does, but we just say she's, you know, asking for trouble half the time. She goes out dressed, you know, with very little on.

Annabelle (INT): … it sounds horrible, but you know even if you're a female and you wonder in and there's a girl going past and she's wearing, I don't know, like a boob tube and slapped on the makeup and a mini skirt and you can see her pants and really high heels, you think "ah, bit of a slapper". So I think by doing that she is making herself more of a target. I'm not saying…She's not to blame. She should be able to dress however she wants.

Lily (INT): … obviously some women will wear…will wear more exposing clothes to draw attention to themselves… I think yeah, it definitely is a factor of safetyness because it's almost like if you're wearing that kind of clothes you're asking maybe for the wrong attention and people are gonna act on that whether you like it or not, so something that's…it's almost out of your hands if you…if you're exposing yourself that…in that way.

Implicit in these statements is a connection to the possibility of sexual harassment or sexual assault. A sense of responsibility and blame is also conveyed in these statements through the use of terms such as "asking for trouble" and "making herself" a target. Lily's suggestion that the attention a women will receive will be "out of her hands", if she chooses to wear revealing clothing implies that women waive the right to object to unwanted sexual attention from men, should they choose to wear 'revealing' clothing. In addition to concern about how women will be perceived by men, participants expressed concern about judgement from other women. This is an area where other women were perceived to be particularly critical. Rachel highlights how this might operate in practice, while getting ready for a night out:

Rachel (INT):   I mean, getting…ready with quite a few girls, which is what usually happens if we're going on a night out, there will kind of be a lot of talk of, "Is this too short?", "Is this too slutty?"… a lot of girls when they kind of say, "Do I look slutty?", it's probably a lot for other girls as well because groups of drunk girls is just the most horrific thing ever. They're just so bitchy and so scary.

Given young women's concern's about judgement from both men and other women, it is perhaps unsurprising that participants in the current study expressed uncertainty about their clothing choices. The following comments from Debbie and Rachel highlight the dilemma about dressing attractively without giving the 'wrong impression':

Debbie (INT):   Sometimes you feel like you need to wear something like that if you want to get noticed, but then sometimes you think do I really want to look like that, do I really want to have all these guys making horrible comments? I'd rather not have it than have it because it's just not nice.

Rachel (INT):   I think there really is like a kind of… definite…not, "Should I cover up?", but trying to look…trying to look nice, but also not like you're, I don't know, kind of flaunting it.

Young women may seek, or feel pressured to conform to popular conceptions of what is deemed to be sexually attractive, and it is suggested that women may be able to attract sexual attention through their choice of clothing. However, in doing so, it seems they

are less able to control the type of attention that they may receive from men. Ironically, it would appear that dressing 'casually' does not provide a safeguard from this either:

Melissa (INT): … even with casual outfits sometimes we get unwanted attention and one of us will have to step up and be like okay, we're not interested kind of thing.

Annabelle (INT): But, yeah, I think there are a lot of instances where if you go out wearing like, even a V-neck, you're targeted with unwelcome attention.

Although young women may seek to manage the impressions they give of themselves, particularly in relation to their sexuality while socialising in bars, pubs and clubs, it would seem that the power and control they exercise in this process is compromised by uncertainty and fear of judgement about their sexual character.

Summary

Young women socialising in bars, pubs and clubs are involved in an ongoing process of negotiating unwanted attention from men. This included being vigilant, and often drawing upon passive behaviours associated with conventional femininity such as smiling and being polite, for fear of how men may react if their behaviour is challenged. Reflecting a discourse of individualised responsibility participants conveyed a need to take responsibility for their own safety. This stemmed, in part, from an understanding of men's behaviour as inevitable with the implication that it is down to women to 'manage' situations.

One implication of individualised responsibility for safety is the potential for self-blame, particularly if women have been drinking. Paradoxically, men are accorded less responsibility for their behaviour when they have been drinking due to a belief that they are unaware of what they are doing, or that their behaviour is intended to be humorous. Young women also engage in self-surveillance of their own behaviour to ensure that they are not giving off the 'wrong signals' to men e.g. by dressing 'provocatively'. In this regard, judgements made by other women were also deemed to be important. Ultimately, however, the safety strategies employed by women are implicitly and explicitly centred around negotiating unwanted male attention and the prevention of sexual violence.

Chapter Nine
Discussion and Conclusions

Introduction

The aim of this study was to understand how young women view, experience and negotiate their safety when they are socialising in bars, pubs and clubs using data from qualitative interviews and focus groups with women between the ages of 18-25 years. This chapter discusses the key findings from this data, as presented in Chapters Five to Eight of this thesis, and highlights the relevance of these findings to existing theoretical and empirical knowledge. The chapter is structured by the key themes which have emerged from the study findings, and situated in the context of the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter Three.

Feminist structural and poststructural theoretical perspectives are drawn upon to facilitate a nuanced and theoretical understanding of the study findings. These theoretical frameworks share a common concern with power, social control and resistance, although they offer contrasting possibilities for the application of these concepts to women's lives. By reflecting on the study findings in the context of the differing ideas found with feminist structural and poststructural theoretical frameworks, the validity of contrasting ideas found within these frameworks are evaluated as a means of understanding the experiences of contemporary young women in the social context of bars, pubs and clubs.

The central themes which have emerged from this study are grounded in the implications of young women's safety concerns and experiences for their freedom to socialise in bars, pubs and clubs, and whether their use of this social space can be theorised in terms of gendered resistance or repression. As such, this chapter begins by discussing primarily positive developments in respect of women's rights to socialise in bars, pubs and clubs, although it is argued that it is necessary to understand not just *whether* women access bars, pubs and clubs, but *how* they access them. The salience of gender in structuring women's experiences in bars, pubs and clubs is, therefore, highlighted. Secondly, participants' safety concerns and experiences, which are overwhelmingly related to sexual violence, are then discussed in the context of social

control theories. Finally, participants' adoption or rejection of safety advice and behaviours is discussed with a view to establishing whether they can be understood as resistance to conventional gendered norms and threats to their safety, or as a restriction upon their freedom. This chapter concludes by highlighting the theoretical and empirical contribution of this thesis, including the implications for future research, policy and practice.

Young women's right to socialise in bars, pubs and clubs: a step in the right direction?

For the young women in this study, socialising and consuming alcohol in bars, pubs and clubs was routine, and in many cases, a central leisure activity. Reiterating the findings of Parks et al. (1998: 707), that although drinking in bars has traditionally been a male pastime, women have adopted this as a leisure activity of their own. Bars, pubs and clubs constituted an important social space for young women to socialise with their close friends and acquaintances and to meet new people. Socialising in bars, pubs and clubs was described as fun, and contrasted with the constraints of the working week similar to the way in which the pub has conventionally been constructed as a sanctuary for the 'working man' to escape the stresses and strains of daily life (Harrison, 1971: 171). To a certain extent, findings from this study challenge the construction of socialising and consuming alcohol in bars, pubs and clubs as a conventionally masculine leisure pursuit (Hey, 1986; Woodward & Green, 1988; Plant, 1997), or "a man's privilege" (Whitehead, 1976: 175), by identifying it as a central feature of young women's leisure.

This finding is significant in light of the recognised benefits of leisure for women (Brown et al., 2001; Coble et al., 2003), and in particular, leisure contexts which offer women the opportunity to develop their friendships with other women, and review and assess their lives (Green, 1998: 171). Further, Watson (2000) contends that licensed premises are social spaces where young women can express themselves more fully than in the constrained settings of the school, work or family environment. From a primarily poststructural feminist perspective, it has been argued that leisure is an important site whereby women can develop their self-esteem, fashion their own identities and resist conventional gender norms (Kelly, 1983; Wearing, 1998; Aitchison, 2004; Seabrook & Green, 2004; Green & Singleton, 2006). Significantly, participants expressed a sense of entitlement to leisure time in a way that challenges the notion that women typically

facilitate the leisure time of others, rarely perceiving themselves to have the right to take up such opportunities (Glyptis & Chambers, 1982; Deem, 1986). It should be noted however, that participants in the current study were aged between 18-25 years and only one of the 35 participants had children. This finding, therefore, may not have been replicated across older age groups of women who are more likely to have caring responsibilities, which impact upon their uptake of leisure.

It would appear that the participants in this study were not subject to the constraints upon their actual take-up of leisure time in the ways identified by earlier studies of women's leisure, which emphasised the salience of structural constraints (Deem, 1986; Green et al., 1987; Wimbush & Talbot, 1988). Again, it should be noted that the majority of participants in the current study were college or university students; a population which is typically associated with a culture of socialising in bars, pubs and clubs (Gill, 2002; Piacentini & Banister, 2008). Nonetheless, what could be described as a liberal feminist goal of equality of opportunity to access to bars, pubs and clubs would appear to have been met with success for the young women in this study. Indeed, none of the participants questioned their right to socialise in bars, pubs and clubs or suggested that they refrain from participating in this leisure activity due to safety concerns or gendered expectations about their behaviour. However, simply looking at women's ability or sense of entitlement to access this leisure opportunity does not adequately take account of the complexities associated with *how* women access bars, pubs and clubs. Day et al (2004) also warn against the presumption that the mere presence of women within pubs constitutes social acceptance. It is argued here that young women's understanding, experience and behaviour in bars, pubs and clubs is significantly influenced by their safety concerns and experiences, which in turn, remain inextricably linked to gender relations, normative femininity and the fear of sexual violence. In this regard, it is proposed that socialising in bars, pubs and clubs remains a deeply gendered experience. This argument is discussed below in relation to how young women access bars, pubs and clubs, the gendered nature of their safety concerns and experiences, and their adoption of, or resistance to, safety behaviours.

Socialising in bars, pubs and clubs: the continuing salience of gender

Identifying safe spaces: the influence of gender and class

Participants' choices about which bars, pubs and clubs to socialise in were influenced by their safety concerns, and a desire to avoid establishments which were described as having a particularly drunken or sexualised environment. These undesirable venues were mainly characterised by the 'type' of person who went there, and venues which carried working class connotations (e.g. 'rough' places with 'tarty girls', 'sleazy guys', and 'seasoned hard drinkers'), were viewed as particularly unsafe by the young women in the current study. The risks associated with socialising in these undesirable venues related both to the possibility of experiencing violence or harassment and the risk of being deemed 'unrespectable' by association. This finding resonates with the work of Skeggs (2002), which highlights the construction of femininity through gender and class, whereby middle-class femininity has conventionally been regarded as the respectable ideal. Meanwhile, excessive drinking and overtly sexual or crude behaviours are associated with 'unrespectable' or problematic elements of working-class lifestyles (Jackson & Tinkler, 2007).

On the whole, bars and pubs were considered to be safer than nightclubs. This belief was grounded in concern about sexual violence and harassment. Paradoxically, participants' safety concerns in nightclubs related to both visibility and invisibility. Some participants, for example, described their discomfort at being subject to the sexual gaze of men in nightclubs, particularly in nightclub venues which were physically constructed as a space which is conducive to being watched. These expressions of discomfort concur with descriptions of anxiety and conspicuousness under a perceived male gaze in other leisure contexts (Wilson & Little, 2008: 179), which can lead to women engaging in self-surveillance and remaining vigilant to the behaviour of men around them (Wesely & Gaarder, 2004). Further, participants in the current study expressed concern that men are more likely to make physical approaches in nightclub environments with low lighting and loud music, and that such incidents are more likely to go unnoticed. Concern about incidents going unnoticed alludes to the idea that women require protection from others, invoking notions of dependence and passivity typically associated with normative femininity (Bosworth, 1996). However, bouncers were thought to be less effective in intervening in incidents where women were experiencing sexual harassment, compared to more visible intra-male violence.

The 'problem' with a girls night out

Participants' experiences in bars, pubs and clubs were significantly influenced by who they went to these venues with. Socialising in female only groups meant that young women felt that they were subject to heightened male attention based on the assumption that they were open to sexual advances rather then simply enjoying a 'girls night out', despite the value participants placed on bars, pubs and clubs as social space where they could socialise with their friends[70]. In other words, young women's rationale for socialising in bars, pubs and clubs is defined in relation to men.

Participants' reflections on women drinking in a bar on their own revealed further insights into the gendered nature of drinking and socialising in bars, pubs and clubs. On the whole participants were in agreement that this would be an uncomfortable or unexpected thing for a woman to do, although it is socially acceptable for a man to drink in a bar on his own. This point is encapsulated by the assertion from one participant that if you were in a bar on your own as a woman "it would always look like you were waiting for someone". Participants in the current study readily cited examples where they, or another woman known to them, had received unwanted sexual attention from men when they attempted to spend time in a bar on their own. Further, discussion about where to sit in a bar, if you are a lone woman, was always mediated by concern about evading unwanted sexual attention, feeling uncomfortable or on edge.

This dynamic implies that women are still not perceived to have a legitimate purpose in bars, pubs and clubs, beyond seeking a sexual encounter. There remains an expectation that women should be accompanied by a male, otherwise she is perceived to be intent on attracting a member of the opposite sex. This phenomenon, whereby women entering pubs on their own or with other women are stigmatised or subjected to sexual harassment, was documented by feminist writers in the 1980s (Stanley, 1980; Hey, 1986). Findings from the current study indicate that little has changed in this regard.

Paradoxically, despite participants' safety concerns in bars, pubs and clubs being overwhelmingly related to unwanted male attention and the fear of sexual violence, almost all participants agreed that they felt safest when they were accompanied by a

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[70] For a more detailed discussion of the value of female friendship, see Green (1998).

male. This apparent contradiction is not a new phenomenon; DeKeseredy et al. (1992) highlight the way in which women fear strangers and seek protection from men known to them, yet they are more likely to be assaulted by someone known to them. This points to the social construction of sexual violence and the continuing salience of rape mythology documented by radical feminists surrounding the notion of 'stranger rape' or, in other words, 'real rape' (Estrich, 1987). Although it could be argued that feeling safer when you are with someone who is known to you is not an obvious contradiction, for participants in the current study the nature of their relationship to this 'male protector' did not appear to be particularly significant (e.g. friend, acquaintance, boyfriend, brother); this was superseded by the fact that he was male. Further, being with male friends rather than female friends was considered to offer a greater level of security. Being accompanied by a male was deemed to offer a means of deterrence and defence against unwanted sexual attention from other males. Participants' beliefs in this regard drew upon essentialist discourses about gender whereby masculinity is characterised by strength and femininity is characterised by dependence (Bosworth, 1996).

From a radical feminist perspective, it has been agued that patriarchal ideology presents men as women's 'natural protectors' (Berrington and Jones, 2002: 309-10), and that the fear of rape is an effective mechanism of control over women, since women are manoeuvred into dependent relationships with men on the basis that those men will protect them from other men (Radford, 1987). However, as noted within feminist literature, some women are deemed more worthy of protection than others in accordance with whether they fulfil the (feminine) criteria of 'decent' women (Radford, 1987). This phenomenon is also documented within criminological literature which has explored 'chivalry theory' (Pollak, 1950), or in other words the idea that women are afforded preferential treatment within the criminal justice system simply because they are women (Nagel & Weitzman, 1971; Anderson, 1976). Critically reviewing the claims of chivalry theory, it has been acknowledged that any preferential treatment is only extended to women who embody respectable femininity (Visher, 1983). Indeed, findings from the current study suggest that women are subject to negative evaluation and alienation if they violate the boundaries of respectable femininity (e.g. by wearing clothing thought to be 'provocative', being drunk, or 'letting go' too much).

Reliance upon 'male protectors' contradicts the notion of liberated young women who are free to act beyond gendered constraint, and begs the question of why it is necessary to have a male protector to fend off unwelcome advances from other men. It would seem that certain taboos associated with making sexual advances towards a woman who 'belongs' to another man are still played out within bar, pubs and club environments. While some young women asserted that they were not afraid to tell men 'where to go', there was general agreement that some men just would not 'take the hint', and challenging such behaviour was recognised as risking the provocation of a more aggressive response.

By adhering to the notion of a 'male protector' it can be argued that women resist violence and harassment by drawing upon patriarchal notions of chivalry, masculine strength and feminine dependence. This is indicative of compliance with gender norms and non-coercive forms of social control, rather than resistance to gender norms. However, some participants did question and resist this dynamic and the associated role of 'male protector'. While the security offered by a 'male protector' was welcomed by some, others resented the need to rely on male acquaintances for safety and questioned the possessive nature of the protection offered by male acquaintances and boyfriends. This highlights the complex and contradictory nature of young women's relationships with men in this regard.

Alcohol consumption: a risky 'freedom'

Analysis of young women's talk in interviews and focus groups about their experiences of consuming alcohol in bars, pubs, and clubs offers an opportunity to evaluate the extent to which this 'new freedom' can be theorised as a poststructural signifier of women's liberation and freedom to participate in a conventionally masculine leisure pursuit. In keeping with poststructural discourses, it could be argued that the centrality of consuming alcohol and socialising in bars, pubs, and clubs within young women's lives is a prime example of the way in which young women are subverting conventional cultural discourses around appropriate feminine behaviour. However, this was a contentious issue for the young women in this study.

Participants in the current study were in agreement that it was now more socially acceptable for women to partake in the conventionally masculine pursuit of alcohol consumption in bars, pubs and clubs than it was in the past. These assertions are

consistent with recent research which reveals an increase in alcohol consumption by women (Richardson & Budd, 2003; Mathews & Richardson, 2005; McKenzie & Haw, 2006), and a growth in advertising directed at young women by the drinks industry (Day et al., 2004). Some participants also located women's increased opportunities to consume alcohol within the broader context of social changes, reflecting a growth in independence enjoyed by contemporary young women rather than simply an outcome of the targeted marketing strategies of the alcohol industry, spurred by recognition of women as a powerful consumer group (Jackson & Tinkler, 2007).

All of the participants in the current study had experience of drinking and socialising in bars, pubs and clubs. For some young women, consuming alcohol was experienced positively and equated with having fun. Others, however, expressed frustration and concern at what they described as the drink orientated culture that they live in and a sense of vulnerability was conveyed during discussions about alcohol consumption. Particular concern was articulated about the ability to remain 'in control' when consuming alcohol. These concerns related primarily to the deterioration in participants' ability to remain vigilant to potential threats to their safety, unwanted male attention, and drink spiking. These findings challenge the notion of 'ladette' culture characterised by young women who are reckless, out of control and embrace heavy alcohol consumption (Day et al., 2004; Jackson & Tinkler, 2007). On the contrary, findings from the current study suggest women's behaviour in this context is subject to powerful social surveillance and self surveillance. Participants also identified the contradictory nature of 'responsible drinking' initiatives and encouragement to consume alcohol via commercial marketing and drinks promotions as problematic.

Despite a discourse that women can now 'do anything really,' young women in this study were acutely aware of the gendered risks involved in consuming alcohol in this context. Young women's understanding of these risks relate, in the first instance, to negative perceptions attached to women who drink alcohol, particularly those who are seen to be 'drunk'. More specifically, and in keeping with earlier studies which have highlighted the connection between alcohol and a perceived lack of respectability (Green et al., 1987; Schwartz & DeKeseredy, 1997), it was understood that women who are drunk risk being viewed as unfeminine, unattractive, and of questionable sexual character. However, there would appear to be some movement in this regard since drinking in itself was not considered to be particularly problematic; negative

judgements tended to be reserved for women who were seen to be drunk. Being drunk was perceived to heighten women's risk of receiving unwanted sexual attention, or being targeted for sexual assault by men who may view them as less likely to resist their sexual advances.

Participants identified disbelief and blame for sexual assault as a secondary risk to women, following alcohol consumption. This is a perception which is corroborated by existing research evidence (Watson, 2000; Lovett et al., 2004; Amnesty International UK, 2005; Finch & Munro, 2005). In stark contrast to women's increased responsibility for their safety after they have consumed alcohol, men were accorded *less* responsibility for their actions when they had consumed alcohol (i.e. less responsibility is attributed to men for behaviour which may threaten women's safety, if it occurs when they have been drinking). This phenomenon was implicitly bound in judgements about the intentions rather than the outcomes of men's behaviour. Participants were reluctant to attribute responsibility to men for their behaviour; male behaviour which may make women feel uncomfortable, or threaten their safety, was frequently attributed to men being unaware of their actions due to the effects of alcohol consumption. However, participants tended to be critical of 'other' women who are drunk, echoing the finding of Parks et al (1998) that women are particularly critical of other women who become intoxicated in a bar setting. This finding has significant implications for the likelihood of women reporting incidents of sexual violence or drink spiking to staff within bars, pubs and clubs or to the police.

None of the rape, sexual assault or suspected drink spiking incidents disclosed by participants in the current study were reported to the police. The main reasons given by participants for not reporting these incidents centre around four key themes: fear of being blamed or disbelieved; concern that nothing would be done; uncertainty about what had happened; and minimising what had happened. These themes are not new; similar observations have been made by studies which have examined women's reluctance to report sexual offences to the police in more detail (Johnson & Sacco, 1995; HMCPSI, 2002; Walby & Allen, 2004). Although the sample of the current study is small, this challenges the claim that women make up false allegations in relation to drink spiking in order to cover up their own "abhorrent behaviour" (Kasteel, 2004: 22). On the contrary, this indicates that *lack* of reporting to the police is the problem. Indeed, although rapes reported to the police have risen over time (Temkin & Krahe, 2008), this

is a crime which remains subject to significant underreporting. More detailed research, specific to alcohol related sexual assault and police reporting, also indicates that the majority of victims do not report to the police (Bryant & Williams, 2000; Taylor et al., 2004).

The upward trend in women's levels of alcohol consumption is concerning in this light. Despite drinking and socialising in bars, pubs and clubs being viewed and experienced by young women in this study as a routine leisure activity, participants were very much aware of the negative judgements they may be subject to if they attempted to report a rape or sexual assault following alcohol consumption. Posters offering assurances to women that incidents of this nature will be taken seriously if they are reported to the police did little to reassure the participants in this study. This awareness articulated by participants is not misguided, indeed rape cases involving intoxicants are more likely to end in acquittal than those which do not (Lovett et al., 2004).

Clothing: what not to wear

Participants' descriptions of their own clothing choices, and those of 'other' women when socialising in bars, pubs and clubs provided one of the most striking illustrations of the way that women performed surveillance of their own behaviour. Young women in the current study explicitly referred to 'rules' (i.e. the 'top half/bottom half' rule), which applied to their clothing choices in order to avoid appearing too 'provocative'. There was some suggestion that women are powerful in this regard; they have the capacity to control the nature of men's responses to them and can vary their dress according to whether or not they want male attention. Similarly, underage female participants' in a study by Parks et al. (1998) agreed that 'provocative' clothing could be used as a strategy for gaining admission to bars. However, the power women can exercise in this regard remains within the confines of heterosexual femininity whereby women's status is defined in accordance with what they are in relation to men, and in particular, how attractive they are to men.

Moreover, women's clothing choices were explicitly linked to judgements of sexual respectability on one hand or sexual promiscuity on the other. Women (usually 'other' women) who chose to wear 'revealing' clothes forfeited their right to object to sexual attention which they received from men, particularly if they were also seen to be drunk. This was due to the perceived association with sexual promiscuity, reflecting

conventional and entrenched views of female sexuality. Results of recent surveys about social attitudes toward rape also evidence the existence of these views: 26% of people surveyed believe that women contribute to rape if they are drunk while 20% of people believe that they contribute to rape if they wear 'revealing' clothing (Rape Crisis Scotland, 2007).

It is possible that in the context of women's increased alcohol consumption and use of bars, pubs and clubs over time, clothing choices offer women a means to exercise normative femininity, and therefore their 'respectability'. Following a study with working class women, Skeggs (2002) concludes that their forays into femininity were immensely contradictory; while their conduct was definitely not feminine (e.g. drinking), they had the physical appearance of femininity. The current study included the accounts of primarily middle class women, which suggests that 'respectability' is strived for across different social classes. Clothing choices may be an accessible means of achieving this 'respectability', which is understood to offer protection from unwanted sexual attention and the risk of being blamed for rape or sexual assault.

Reviewing findings from the current study in relation to the way that women socialise in bars, pubs and clubs, it is apparent that these venues are social spaces infused with gendered expectations and risks for women. These gendered concerns impact upon which venues women feel safest in, who they feel safe with, and how they behave or present themselves within these venues. This finding concurs with Campbell's (2005: 50) assertion that women engage in numerous behaviours in order to ensure their safety in public places, which are "a performative condition of normative femininity". Moreover, participants in the current study understood that women who do not adhere to normative femininity risk alienation from other women, are viewed as legitimate targets for sexual attention from men, and are more likely to be disbelieved if they are raped or sexually assaulted. In other words, despite increased social acceptance of women in bars, pubs and clubs, their experiences in these venues remain significantly structured by gender and the participants in the current study were acutely aware of this dynamic.

The fear and reality of sexual violence and harassment as a source of constraint

The construction of bars, pubs and clubs as 'risky' spaces for young women

None of the participants in the current study were able to describe bars, pubs and clubs as a safe space for women without some form of caveat. Reflecting the dominant discourse of individualised responsibility within prevention literature (Neame, 2003; Lawson & Olle, 2005; Campbell, 2005), bars, pubs and clubs were only considered to be safe spaces for women as long as they were vigilant to potential risks, engaged in safety behaviours, and ensured that they were protected by other people. Further, the risks encountered by women in bars, pubs and clubs were perceived to have increased rather than decreased over time, and participants recounted experiencing sexual violence, harassment and drink spiking as a prevalent feature of their experiences of socialising in bars, pubs and clubs. Although it is difficult to draw comparisons over time, this finding contradicts the idea that contemporary women are now substantially more liberated than those of previous generations in this regard. Participants' understanding that women now face increased risks in bars, pubs and clubs was attributed to three perceived social and cultural changes: an increase in drink spiking; an increase in women's alcohol consumption; and a shift in social relations between men and women. These three changes were interrelated and were understood to contribute to women's vulnerability to sexual violence and harassment.

These findings, alongside the individualised rhetoric of prevention campaigns, beg the question of whether young women's behaviour is in fact subject to greater surveillance and regulation now than it was in the past. The identification of drink spiking as a 'new' risk to women in the late 1990s, for example, would appear to have emerged at a time when there appeared to be signs of 'moral panic' (Cohen, 1972) about 'ladette' culture and troublesome young femininities. In a similar vein, Jackson (2006) argues that media driven concern about 'ladettes' is leading to greater surveillance and regulation of the behaviour of girls and young women at a time when girls are starting to gain increased freedoms and opportunities. Further, some participants in the current study questioned whether the contemporary concern with young women's safety in bars, pubs and clubs was in fact a 'backlash' (Faludi, 1992) to the apparent freedoms enjoyed by their generation.

Safety concerns and experiences: the centrality of sexual violence

Almost all of the participants in the current study noted at least one safety concern which they personally had in relation to socialising in bars, pubs and clubs. Participants' safety concerns were overwhelmingly related to the fear of sexual violence. This finding resonates with earlier studies which locate the fear of sexual violence as women's primary safety concern (Stanko, 1990; Myhill & Allen, 2002; Tulloch, 2004). In keeping with research which has highlighted gendered disparities in the nature and extent of safety concerns (Stanko, 1990; Tulloch, 2004; Walklate, 2007), participants in the current study also believed that women were significantly more likely to be concerned about their safety than men when socialising in bars, pubs and clubs.

It does not follow, however, that the concerns of participants in the current study were irrational as espoused by certain aspects of criminological debate (Pain, 1997a; Tulloch, 2004), since participants also reported significant levels of sexual violence and harassment which they had experienced in bars, pubs and clubs. Indeed 80% of participants described at least one incident in a bar, pub or club where their personal safety had been compromised, with a total 40 incidents of rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment or drink spiking being disclosed across the sample of 35 young women. More specifically, one young woman disclosed a suspected personal experience of rape, eight reported a sexual assault, and nine reported a suspected incident of drink spiking. Meanwhile, almost two thirds of participants reported experiencing sexual harassment (e.g. being subjected to unwanted sexual comments, being followed, pulled, grabbed or flashed at). Participants also reported numerous incidents where the safety of friends and relatives had been compromised in a bar, pub or club. Overall, 34 out of the 35 participants in the current study reported an incident where their own safety, or the safety of a female friend or relative had been compromised through rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment or drink spiking. The findings of the current study indicate that the extent of sexual violence endured by women socialising in bars, pubs and clubs is extremely high, lending credence to the earlier observation by Stanko (1987: 130) that women's apparently subjective estimates of risk may not simply be a misguided perception of risk, rather they may be an objective evaluation of risk.

There is a contemporary concern within the media about a perceived rise in violent and aggressive behaviour by young women (Batchelor, 2001; Tisdall, 2003), particularly

when they are drunk. However, this was not identified as a significant concern by the participants in the current study. A small number of participants referred to the perception that girls were now more violent than they were in the past, although this was not substantiated by participants' experiences in bars, pubs and clubs. These perceptions may be more adequately explained as a reflection of the growth in press reporting of women fighting with one another as part of the so-called 'ladette culture' (Jackson & Tinkler, 2007: 260).

Due to a relative lack of research evidence around the nature and extent of women's experiences of violence in bars, pubs and clubs, it is difficult to draw any direct comparisons with other studies, although research studies which have focused specifically on women's experiences in bars, pubs and clubs indicate that women are subject to high levels of sexual violence and harassment (Parks et al., 1998; Watson, 2000). Existing research suggests that bars, pubs and clubs are characterised by a heightened sexualised environment (Cavan, 1966; Snow et al., 1991), and findings from the current study substantiate these observations; it would seem that young women are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence and harassment in this context. The nature and extent of the safety concerns and experiences detailed by the young women in the current study lend credence to theories of social control of women via the fear and reality of sexual violence developed by feminists, and in particular radical feminists, in the 1980s. In recent years, fear of drink spiking has emerged as a 'new' and additional concern for women socialising in bars, pubs and clubs and participants in the current study believed that risks for women in bars, pubs and clubs had increased over time. It would, therefore, appear that the requisite mechanisms of actual violence and harassment coupled with fear of being the target of these behaviours are in place. These mechanisms combine to underpin a 'continuum of social control' which operates through coercive and non-coercive control (Green et al., 1987), or symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1979).

This finding poses significant difficulties for poststructural theorising of leisure entirely as a site of liberation for young women. That said, however, young women do continue to regularly socialise in bars, pubs clubs as a central aspect of their leisure. This would suggest that power and control is not exerted over these young women in a unilateral and all encompassing way; there must be other processes at work. In other words, there must be scope for resistance and negotiation on behalf of women in the contested social

space of bars, pubs and clubs. The way in which the young women who participated in this study negotiate socialising in bars, pubs and clubs, within the context of the fear and reality of sexual violence, is discussed below.

Adopting and resisting safety behaviours: complexities and contradictions

It has been argued that gendered norms are particularly evident within the bar, pub and club environment. Further, young women's safety concerns and experiences, which are overwhelmingly related to sexual violence, lend credence to theories of social control articulated by radical feminists. While this suggests that gender remains a significant contributor to women's experiences in bars, pubs and clubs, it would be overly simplistic to position women as helpless victims, since they can and do socialise in bars, pubs and clubs on a regular basis. This suggests that resistance is also at work. Foucault's conceptualisation of power as both productive and repressive, as embodied within 'technologies of power' and 'technologies of the self', has the potential to facilitate understanding of how women resist gendered norms and the threat of sexual violence and harassment in order to socialise in bars, pubs and clubs. Foucault conceptualises power within the context or potential for resistance and productivity as well as surveillance and control. These concepts have been discussed in relation to the safety behaviours young women adopt in order to facilitate their leisure in the specific context of bars, pubs and clubs, and are explored further here.

Findings from the current study demonstrate that participants adopted a wide range of safety behaviours with the intention of avoiding or preventing drink spiking, sexual violence and harassment from men. Reflecting the individualised discourse found within the prevention literature, the majority of participants believed that women were mainly or solely responsible for their own safety, although some participants thought that the government and bars, pubs and clubs could do more to promote and protect women's safety while they are socialising in these venues.

Although participants' recall of specific safety campaigns was relatively low, there was a high level of awareness of the key messages within these campaigns (i.e. how to prevent drink spiking, look out for female friends, and limit alcohol consumption), and evidence to suggest that women did adopt behaviours advocated within the prevention literature. For example, 31 out of the 35 participants in the current study said that they watched their drinks to guard against drink spiking. However, adoption of such safety

behaviours was not necessarily attributed to safety campaigns; it was not uncommon, for example, for participants to describe these behaviours as 'common sense' due to receiving similar messages at an early age from their family and the media. This finding concurs with earlier research which demonstrated that women employ a range of 'safekeeping' strategies in response to their fear of assault and harassment, suggesting that women are acutely aware of their vulnerability in public places (Stanko, 1990: 53).

However, the young women in this study did not uniformly adopt all of the behaviours recommended within the prevention literature. Indeed, the majority of women resisted the suggestion that they should nominate a 'drinks watcher' within their friendship group or purchase 'drinks stoppers' to prevent their drinks from being spiked. For some participants, these devices were considered to be impractical while others objected to the idea that they should have to pay for them. On the other hand, some of the safety behaviours described by participants transgressed those recommended in the prevention literature (e.g. pretending to be engaged to be married, avoiding particular types of bar, wearing shoes that they can run in, moderating their choice of clothing). This raises interesting questions about whether these behaviours demonstrate creativity and resilience on behalf of young women or the entrenched nature of social control, which manifests itself in self-surveillance.

It would appear that young women's safety behaviours are infused with contradictions. Drawing upon the theoretical concepts of power, control and resistance can facilitate understanding of these apparent contradictions. Examining women's rationale for adopting or resisting these behaviours is of central importance to understanding whether young women's safety behaviours can be positioned as resistance to gender norms and male violence or a reflection of social control and self-surveillance. Findings from the current study indicate that there are three key themes in relation to participants' rationale for adopting safety behaviours. These themes, which are discussed below, relate to the normalisation of sexual violence, the need for young women to exert control over their lives, and the fear of repercussions associated with not adopting safety behaviours.

The rationale for adopting safety behaviours

Normalisation of sexual violence and preventative measures

For most of the young women in the current study, utilising safety strategies was 'just what you do' while drinking in bars, pubs, and clubs and, as such, they were described as 'common sense' precautions. Arguably, however, adopting safety strategies such as having shoes that you can run in and taking your drink to the toilet with you are only 'common sense' measures for women, not men. Some women resented and resisted this imposition on their own freedoms, although for most women taking responsibility for their own behaviour, and that of men around them, was normal and inevitable. A small number of participants did articulate the view that men's behaviour towards women in bars, pubs and clubs was unacceptable and suggest that men should be more aware of their behaviour. However, safety remained primarily women's responsibility. This was partly a result of male behaviour being viewed as inevitable. In this regard, it is argued here that women internalise the message within the prevention literature which unwittingly presents rape as a 'fixed reality', reinforcing essentialist notions of the 'vulnerable/indefensible feminine' and the 'potent/unstoppable masculine' (Campbell, 2005: 119). Drawing upon essentialist discourses of male sexuality characterised by a high and uncontrollable sex drive, this echoes earlier feminist work which highlights the way that cultural norms position intimate sexual violence as a 'natural' or 'exaggerated' expression of innate male sexuality (Neame, 2003), which upholds the myth that men are physically unable to control themselves sexually (Lawson & Olle, 2005). Women, therefore, must engage in safekeeping behaviours if they are to socialise in bars, pubs and clubs.

The normalisation of safekeeping behaviours rests upon the normalisation of sexual violence itself. In the current study, for example, participants frequently described sexual harassment as a routine feature of their time socialising in bars, pubs and clubs, yet only two participants stated that they were specifically concerned about sexual harassment. Examination of participants' accounts suggests that particular concern was not expressed about sexual harassment since it is normalised by young women in the bar, pub and club environment, and therefore deemed unworthy of specific recognition. This concurs with the empirical findings of Watson (2000) and Parks et al. (1998), which highlight the extent to which young women come to expect male violence and

aggression in licensed premises. One implication of anticipating or normalising sexual harassment, or other forms of sexual violence, is that it effectively minimises both the extent and the impact of these acts on women's lives (Kelly & Radford, 1990) and in particular, their capacity to enjoy the freedoms and benefits typically associated with leisure.

It would appear that despite increased awareness about the nature and extent of sexual violence, largely as a result of feminist campaigning around this issue, difficulties identified decades ago persist in contemporary young women's discourse about these issues. The concept of minimisation, identified by Kelly and Radford (1990) almost twenty years ago is evidenced in the current study in relation to the relatively new concept of drink spiking. In the same way that Kelly and Radford (1990) describe women stating that "nothing really happened" when they describe incidents where, as a result of men's behaviour towards them, they have experienced intimidation, felt sick and angry, been in tears and been unable to safely inhabit public space, women in the current study typically stated that "nothing happened" when they suspected that their drink had been spiked. Yet participants described being 'blacked out', sick, unaware of their surroundings, and clearly connected drink spiking to the possibility that they could be raped or sexually assaulted. Arguably, what participants in the current study mean when they say that 'nothing happened' is that they were not raped or sexually assaulted, reflecting their awareness of the "everpresent sexual danger" which they experience in their daily lives (Stanko, 1990: 86).

Power and control in a 'just world'

Participants who viewed themselves as safer than other women in bars, pubs and clubs attributed this to personal qualities and strengths, and in particular, having a greater awareness of potential risks. These personal attributes, and a heightened personal awareness of risks, meant that these participants perceived themselves as more able than other women to perform safety behaviours, which in turn gave them a greater level of protection and safety while they socialised in bars, pubs and clubs. Given women's heightened level of fear in public space (Stanko, 1990; Tulloch, 2004), behaviours which give women the sense that they are in control of their environment and their own bodies have an understandable appeal. This reflects the inherent tensions in debates between so-called 'victim feminism' and 'power feminism'. In other words, women can

be individually empowered to reject 'victim mentality' by taking control of their own lives although this may inadvertently dismiss the lived reality of women's experiences.

Parallels can be drawn between the belief that women can be individually empowered to resist violence, and 'just world' theory, which has been most closely scrutinised within the field of psychology. Just world theory operates on the premise that, as individuals, we have a need to believe in a just, stable and predictable world (Brogdon, 2003). Within psychological discourses, just world theory has been used to suggest that female jurors may blame rape victims due to a need to maintain their own sense of control and distance themselves from the rape victim (Krulewitz & Nash, 1979; Kanekar & Vaz, 1983). Thus, women who believe the world is just and that people generally deserve what happens to them, must judge rape victims harshly to avoid facing their own vulnerability in a society that may not always be just (Lerner & Miller, 1978). In other words, young women may have an investment in believing that they can protect themselves from harm within the context of bars, pubs and clubs. This resonates with the findings of Parks (1998: 713), who notes that women's belief that they can control or minimise the aggression directed towards them may account for the paradox whereby women expect and experience high levels of aggression in bars, yet continue to socialise in these venues on a regular basis.

In this regard, it could be argued that participants in the current study maintained a sense of control over their lives and resisted adopting a 'victim mentality', by engaging in safety behaviours which they believed would offer them protection in a just world. However, there is some evidence to suggest that this belief system may be problematic. Firstly, some participants acknowledged that engaging in safety behaviours does not always guarantee protection (e.g. despite dressing conservatively, participants were still subject to sexual harassment). Moreover, research has demonstrated higher levels of distress in rape victims who were assaulted when following their own personal rules of safety (Scheple & Bart, 1983). Belief in a 'just world' may also contribute to women being alienated if they are not seen to engage in appropriate safety behaviours. Lawson & Olle (2005: 50), for example, contend that the belief of individuals that they have not been assaulted because of their use of safety behaviours sets up an unjust "us-and-them dichotomy".

Play the game or face the consequences

Women may be blamed by others, or indeed blame themselves, if they do experience violence, harassment or drink spiking when they have 'failed' to adopt they full range of safety behaviours recommended within the prevention literature. Watson (2000) observes that within the setting of licensed premises, women can be particularly critical of one another if they are seen to fail to look after themselves and take responsibility for their own safety. This highlights one of the negative implications of the individualised discourse inherent within much of the contemporary prevention literature targeted towards young women. In essence, it can be argued that women who fail to 'self regulate', fail to do their gender properly (Campbell, 2005: 132).

In addition to the risk of blame and judgement that young women may experience if they are not seen to engage in 'safe' or feminine behaviour, they may well also risk actual violence and harassment from men. Indeed, findings from the current study indicate that this is a prevalent feature of young women's experiences of socialising in bars, pubs and clubs. The way in which young women attempted to negotiate unwanted attention from men in bars, pubs and clubs highlights the difficulties inherent in utilising resistance at an individual level due to fear of the consequences. Participants engaged in an ongoing process of risk assessment, namely in relation to the intentions of men in bars, pubs and clubs. Where they were subject to sexual harassment, the young women in this study frequently expressed a desire to challenge this behaviour, although they often refrained from doing so due to a fear of 'provoking' a more aggressive response. In these situations, it was at times 'easier' to draw upon passive behaviours typically associated with conventional femininity (e.g. smiling, being polite or remaining silent). Doing so had the intended effect of pacifying men and avoiding the risk of personal judgement and denigration (e.g. being viewed as frigid or lacking in a sense of humour). This finding concurs with the experiences reported by young women in Watson's (2000: 31) study of licensed premises whereby attempts to be assertive or claim ownership over space were met by accusations from men that they were "uptight, a bitch, a lesbian, or have PMT". Although some participants in the current study indicated that they would strongly resist male harassment and have little hesitation in doing so, this was generally recognised as a risky strategy. Participants, therefore, also attempted to pre-empt unwanted attention from men by engaging in 'self-surveillance'

of their own behaviour (e.g. avoiding being 'too drunk' and moderating their clothing choices), or ensuring that they were accompanied by a 'male protector'.

Theorising young women's safety behaviours: repression or resistance?

Understanding young women's rationale for adopting or rejecting safety behaviours is an essential precursor to theorising whether these behaviours can be positioned as acts of resistance to power and control, or the consequences of repressive power and control. It could be argued that the participants' adoption of safety strategies exemplifies the scope that women as individuals have for enacting 'technologies of the self', resisting repressive regimes of power which restrict their participation in public life. Indeed, women in the current study did creatively resist (sometimes successfully, sometimes unsuccessfully) threats to their safety and at times doing so was described with a sense of pride in their own strength and knowledge. Previous studies have described safety behaviours employed by women in the realm of leisure, such as only going out at particular times, as 'resistant practices' (Jordan & Aitchison, 2008: 343), arguing that this illustrates how women address their fears in order to participate in leisure activities (Bialeschki & Hicks, 1998; Mehta & Bondi, 1999).

However, findings from the current study indicate that women's safekeeping behaviours emanate from a sense of individualised responsibility, which manifests itself in self-surveillance. When safety behaviours are synonymous with self-surveillance and self-governance, it is difficult to position these acts uncritically as resistance. Young women's sense that they should remain 'vigilant' and 'in control' resonates with the Foucauldian concepts of 'self-surveillance' and 'self-policing', which have been used to describe the ways that women regulate their behaviour in public (Mitchell et al., 2001; Wesely & Gaarder, 2004). The restrictions of occupying a state of 'hypervigilance' (Wesely & Gaarder, 2004), have been acknowledged within existing work in this area in terms of the limitations on women's opportunities and the mitigation of their use of leisure space for pleasure, enjoyment, and relaxation (Gardner, 1990; Snow et al., 1991; Seabrook & Green, 2004; Wesely & Gaarder, 2004).

Reflecting on the findings of the current study, it is also difficult to describe safety behaviours which young women engage in as 'resistances' in the empowering sense of this term when failure to comply with these behaviours may result in sexual assault, judgement, alienation and even blame following an assault. This argument echoes the

assertion of McNay (1992), that with regard to gender norms and sexuality, Foucauldian perspectives do not discriminate sufficiently between practices which are suggested and those which are imposed; taboos which operate around masculinity and femininity make certain practices more imperative. This critique is particularly pertinent to the current study in light of the gendered bar, pub and club environment. Thus, participants' adoption of safety behaviours may be more appropriately defined as 'accommodating techniques', a term used by Wilson & Little (2008: 181) to describe the safe keeping practices of solo women travellers, such as modifying their clothing choices, adapting to local variations in normative femininity, avoiding places where they felt unsafe and remaining vigilant.

Moreover, focusing on micro-analysis of individual action ignores the question of why women need to resist threats to their safety in the first instance. Safety advice which is directed at women tends to exacerbate this problem, and has been critiqued by Stanko (1996:17), objecting to the message that 'prudent' women can avoid men's violence since it individualises responsibility and avoids any "collective comment on *the problem of men"*. It can be argued that over reliance on micro-analysis, theoretically or in prevention initiatives, is like looking at the pattern of individual snow flakes without noticing that there is a blizzard going on outside.

While Foucault may have been insufficiently attentive to the specific power of gendered norms, drawing upon Foucauldian ideas about the embodied nature of power is of some assistance in understanding the *process* of how safety concerns operate to regulate women's behaviour and why they 'choose' to engage in safekeeping acts. Utilising such an analysis, Campbell (2005: 123) contends that bodily practices become a 'technology of the self' through a process of normalization. Applying this logic to safekeeping strategies employed by women to prevent rape, it is argued that these strategies become 'embodied acts' rather than a coercive form of regulation. Campbell (2005) argues that engaging in safekeeping strategies confirms a specific form of femininity, which is rooted in vulnerability; safekeeping techniques operate as a form of 'self-governance' as women internalise the belief that they are inherently vulnerable due to a discourse emanating from prevention literature which naturalises and normalises rape as a 'fixed reality'. In this regard, Campbell (2005) positions these safekeeping strategies as constitutive of feminine vulnerability rather than an expression of feminine vulnerability. Drawing upon Butler's notion of 'performativity', safekeeping acts are "a

(performative) condition of a normative femininity" (Campbell, 2005: 130). Thus, safekeeping acts reinforce and perpetuate feminine vulnerability.

Conceptualising safekeeping behaviours in this way resonates with theories of social control through the fear and reality of sexual violence articulated primarily by radical feminists. Locating safekeeping behaviours in the context of women's lives and the 'continuum of sexual violence' (Kelly, 1988) is crucial in this regard. While it could be argued that safety behaviours become 'technologies of the self', these technologies are ultimately informed by essentialist assumptions about gender and entrenched views of women's sexuality, which keep women passive for fear that they be thought provocative (Griffin, 1971).

This is not to suggest, however, that participants in the current study were merely the 'passive dupes' of repressive patriarchal power and control. Indeed, participants were 'gender aware' (McRobbie, 2004) and some participants expressed forms of resistance, which reached beyond the level of employing safety strategies as individual resistance. Some participants, for example, questioned the double standards which persist in relation to the expected behaviour of men and women in the environment of bars, pubs and clubs. Certain aspects of preventive advice were also rejected by participants in the current study and resisting sexual violence and harassment was at times described as scary, annoying, unfair and frustrating. This alludes to a form of resistance which differs from the notion of individual resistance enacted through specific safekeeping behaviours. Some participants resented the imposition of having to think about their safety while they were trying to socialise and have fun. Meanwhile others took issue with the emphasis and constraint placed upon women's behaviour, describing this as a 'backlash' to women's emancipation and citing a preference for safety campaigns which focused on challenging the behaviour and attitudes of abusive men. This challenges the notion that safekeeping strategies used by women are entirely normalised or fully 'embodied acts' (Campbell, 2005: 123); although the participants in the current study described their safety behaviours as 'common sense' or 'just what you do', at times they also challenged, questioned and resented the need to engage in these behaviours. Although the young women in this study tended to apologise for voicing their frustrations about these issues, it could be argued that they engaged in an important aspect of resistance to gender norms in challenging and questioning those which they experience as contradictory and unfair.

Conclusion

Concerns about women's increased levels of alcohol consumption and the associated problem of drug and alcohol assisted sexual assault have prompted a renewed interest in the development and dissemination of safety advice to women, particularly young women, who are simultaneously positioned as 'a risk' and 'at risk' when they socialise in bars, pubs and clubs. The implications of this advice for young women has received little consideration, yet it seems that contemporary young women are expected to negotiate a myriad of tensions and expectations, which include enjoying an independent social life while remaining vigilant to the possibility of attack, following 'sensible' drinking advice while being a consumer group specifically targeted by marketing strategies of the alcohol industry, and being sexually assertive and empowered whilst remaining appropriately feminine. This study sought to explore these tensions from the perspective of young women themselves. The theoretical arguments found within feminist structural and poststructural debates in relation to power, control and resistance have been used to develop a nuanced understanding of young women's views, experiences and behaviours in this regard.

Socialising and consuming alcohol in bars, pubs and clubs is a leisure activity which remains significantly structured by gender, although as within other areas of social life, it is apparent that there has been some movement in the gender norms which govern this activity. Expressing their entitlement to socialise in bars, pubs and clubs, young women described this as a central leisure activity, and an area where there is now more social acceptance of women. However, none of the participants in the current study described bars, pubs and clubs as a safe space for women without some form of caveat. Consequently, gendered norms and safety concerns continue to influence their behaviour in these venues, including where they went, who went with, what they drank and how they presented themselves. While there appears to be greater social acceptance of women consuming alcohol, this does not extend to women who are seen to be drunk, especially if this is coupled with wearing 'revealing' clothing. In this regard, clothing choices are particularly significant for young women consuming alcohol in bars, pubs and clubs in a bid to retain some elements of 'respectable' femininity, and differentiate themselves from 'other' less respectable women.

Socialising in bars, pubs and clubs remains a deeply gendered experience and young women understand this to be the case. This raises significant questions about whether

there really has been meaningful change in gender relations or whether women are simply accommodated in bars, pubs and clubs as a result of commercial imperatives, which recognise the economic power of young women as a consumer group. Further, despite increased social acceptance of women in bars, pubs and clubs, young women have significant concerns about their safety in these venues and perceive risks to have increased over time. Risks were also perceived to have *extended*; although contemporary young women share the concerns of women from the previous generation about 'getting home', their concerns appear to have extended *within* bars, pubs and clubs due to the identification of drink spiking as a 'new' risk. The safety concerns articulated by the young women in the current study were overwhelmingly related to sexual violence, and were by no means irrational; indeed women reported experiencing significant levels of sexual violence and harassment although these experiences were frequently minimised and normalised. Safety concerns and experiences operate as a source of constraint on women's freedom to enjoy the benefits of socialising in bars, pubs and clubs. This is not a picture of emancipated young women who are free to embrace poststructural notions of leisure as liberation. It would appear that contemporary young women navigate a contradictory discourse of rights; amidst post-feminist claims of female liberation and young women's own sense that they should be able to 'do anything really', they face a reality which is grounded in gendered restrictions upon their behaviour. In some respects, despite the apparent freedoms afforded to contemporary young women, they are in fact subject to increased surveillance and control. In this regard, drinking and socialising in bars, pubs, and clubs remains a 'relative freedom' (Wimbush & Talbot, 1988).

To a large extent, sexual violence and harassment were normalised by participants in this study as 'part and parcel' of a night out. This in turn meant that safekeeping acts were also normalised as 'commonsense' behaviours due to the perceived inevitability of male behaviour. Young women largely, although not exclusively, internalised the discourse of individualised responsibility found with in contemporary prevention initiatives and engaged in an extensive range of safekeeping behaviours as a result. These behaviours were complex and contradictory in that they simultaneously resisted, adopted and transgressed those advocated within contemporary safety advice. This raises interesting questions about whether these safety behaviours demonstrate creativity and resilience on the part of young women or the entrenched nature of social control which manifests itself in self-surveillance. Although these behaviours could be

described as 'resistant practices' since they assist in facilitating women's access to bars, pubs and clubs, these behaviours also constrain women's freedom by reinforcing their feminine vulnerability, endorsing self-surveillance and facilitating the attribution of blame to women who 'fail' to successfully perform these behaviours. In this regard, resisting these gender norms is a risky pursuit for individual women. Moreover, this discourse of individualised responsibility evades the need to question the behaviour of abusive men and curtails the possibility of collective resistance by normalising the threat of sexual violence and the necessity of associated safekeeping acts.

From a theoretical perspective, understanding the perspectives of young women in bars, pubs and clubs is best served by an appreciation of structural feminist perspectives which highlight the salience of gender, and in particular the power of gendered norms and taboos which continue to operate with regard to women's sexuality. Poststructural perspectives which draw upon Foucauldian ideas about the embodied nature of power are of some assistance in understanding the *process* of how safety concerns operate to regulate women's behaviour, alongside the possibility of resistance. However, this perspective is insufficiently attentive to the power of gendered norms to facilitate a satisfactory understanding of the way that gender structures women's experiences and their capacity for resistance in bars, pubs and clubs. Context is crucial in this regard. Firstly, bars pubs and clubs are typically sexualized environments and this has particular implications for women's safety and their conduct within these venues. Echoing the findings of earlier feminist studies in this area, women's behaviour in these venues is ultimately constrained by their continual negotiation of risk, including the risk of moral judgement in addition to the risk of encountering sexual violence and harassment. Secondly, the context of women's lived experiences must be taken into account. This means understanding different forms of sexual violence as a continuum, which remain connected in sharing a common basis of gendered power relations, and impact cumulatively on young women's understandings of their safety.

Implications for policy and practice

A range of safety advice has been issued to young women in recent years with the intention of reducing the level of sexual violence experienced by women when they socialise in bars, pubs and clubs. This advice has typically individualised responsibility for personal safety, relied upon notions of feminine vulnerability, and obscured the role

of men who choose to perpetrate sexual violence. Echoing the assertions of Neame (2003) and Campbell (2005), this thesis challenges prevention campaigns which compound the normalisation of male violence and harassment experienced by women by presenting it as an innate aspect of male behaviour alongside the presentation of safekeeping strategies for women as 'common sense'. Although participants in the current study were largely in agreement that safety was primarily the responsibility of individual women, they also expressed a preference for campaigns which challenged the behaviour of abusive men.

Participants in the current study differentiated between types of bars, pubs and clubs on account of how safe they felt in these venues, with venues which were characterised by having a particularly drunken or sexualised environment being considered the least safe. This lends some credence to the argument that violence prevention efforts should focus on aggravating features of licensed premises themselves (Parks et al., 1998; Graham & Homel, 2008). However, focusing on particular features of bars, pubs and clubs alone obscures the necessary focus on the behaviour of those who perpetrate violence within these venues.

Participants also held the view that both the government and licensed premises could do more, particularly in relation to 'irresponsible' drinks promotions which were seen to contradict safety advice. Alcohol consumption was a particular concern for participants in this study due to the implications that this had for women's capacity to remain vigilant and implement safety behaviours, and the belief that men are more likely to target women who are drunk due to the perception that they are less likely to resist sexual advances. Participants in the current study also expressed a preference for safety initiatives which were based on factual information (e.g. about the strength of alcoholic drinks and the effects of 'date-rape' drugs), and included details of relevant support organisations, which could be contacted for assistance if needed.

A number of participants had reservations about seeking help from male bouncers and bar staff due concerns about the motives and understanding of these members of staff. There was broad agreement that bars, pubs and clubs should have more female bouncers on the basis that they would be more approachable in the event of any difficulties experienced by women in these venues. Participants' preference for female bouncers is consistent with findings from other studies which highlight the importance of access to female staff members, particularly where sexual assault is being reported to the police

or agencies (HMCPSI, 2002). Reluctance to report incidents of drink spiking or sexual assault to the police following alcohol consumption emerged as a particular concern. Although low levels of reporting in relation to sexual assault is by no means a new phenomenon it would appear that this problem may be compounded by the stigma associated with alcohol consumption for women.

The findings of this thesis highlight the need for gendered stereotypes in relation to women, alcohol and sexuality to be challenged. Reiterating the assertions of Campbell (2005), essentialist notions of masculine sexuality which present the male body as "unstoppable and beyond social regulation" also need to be challenged. This would represent a departure from current prevention campaigns which, with the exception of the 'consent' campaign developed by the Home Office, have focused on women's individual responsibility to resist the violence and harassment they are subjected to at the hands of abusive men.

Contribution of thesis and ideas for future research

Within leisure studies, a significant body of work exists in relation to women's safety as women take up an ever increasing range of leisure activities. However, at times, this work is insufficiently attentive to the fear and reality of sexual violence experienced by women, and there is a lack of research which has specifically focused on the social space provided by bars, pubs and clubs. Meanwhile, research which has adopted the site of bars, pubs and clubs as a central focus has tended to neglect the nuances of gendered safety concerns. Bars, pubs and clubs provide a particularly interesting site for the examination of contemporary gender relations since they have traditionally been defined as masculine social spaces, although they have become increasingly feminised over time as women are recognised as a powerful economic group. This thesis highlights socialising in bars, pubs and clubs as an important and accepted part of young women's social lives, thus demonstrating the scope for resistance and change to gendered norms over time.

However, the findings of this thesis suggest that bars pubs and clubs are social spaces which ultimately remain infused with gendered risks and expectations. Although the current study did not include male participants, and therefore cannot provide a direct comparison with the concerns of men, female participants understood their safety concerns, experiences and behaviours to be qualitatively different to those of their male

counterparts. This finding is significant given the existing preoccupation with intra-male violence and disorder in the night-time economy; adopting a masculinist stance is insufficiently attentive to the specific safety concerns of women, many of which are not directly observable in the way that intra-male violence is.

This thesis highlights the specific safety concerns and experiences of contemporary young women in bars, pubs and clubs, arguing that gender significantly structures women's experiences in this context. Future research in this area would benefit from taking account of the continuing salience of gender in structuring the experiences of women. That is not to say, however, that gender alone structures the experiences and concerns of women in bars, pubs and clubs. Greater exploration of the impact of sexuality, age, race and class would be valuable since the sample for the current study was comprised primarily, although not exclusively, of young, educated, heterosexual white women.

Nonetheless, sexual violence emerged as a key safety concern for participants in the current study through their descriptions of the subtle (and at times unsubtle) forms of intimidation they experienced at the hands of men in bars, pubs and clubs. Understanding the impact of these 'subtle' forms of intimidation is facilitated by an appreciation of the 'continuum of sexual violence' (Kelly, 1988), and sensitivity to the cumulative impact of acts within this continuum. In order to understand and theorise women's experiences and behaviours it is crucial to locate women's experiences as part of a continuum, particularly in the sexualised environment of bars, pubs and clubs. Elements of this continuum, such as sexual harassment, are typically minimised and normalised as an expected aspect of male and female sexuality within bar, pub and club culture.

Assessing women's scope for resisting power and control must also be viewed in this context; although resistance to repressive gendered norms which sanction male violence is possible, at an individual level doing so is infused with risk. This problematises post-feminist and post-structural notions of freedom and liberation for women within the realm of leisure and lends credence to radical feminist theorising of the interplay between sexual violence and social control. It is through these particular findings about the continuing significance of radical feminist theorising that this thesis makes an important contribution to feminist theorising and debates within sociology and leisure studies about the social position of contemporary young women. Considerable public

and private scrutiny exists in relation to young women's behaviour, yet it is an area where their voices are frequently overlooked. This thesis addresses this gap by foregrounding the perspectives of young women themselves. The thesis also contributes to criminological debates about crime prevention literature by highlighting both the theoretical underpinnings and the practical implications of safety advice directed towards women. By highlighting young women's specific perspectives on this issue, the thesis contributes to understanding the complex and diverse responses young women make when faced with the contradictory and gendered discourses around safety when socialising in bars, pubs and clubs and, in particular, the reasons why women may adopt, resist or transgress safety advice.

Finally, by drawing upon empirical evidence and theoretical concepts across the disciplines of sociology, criminology and leisure studies, this thesis has demonstrated the value of working across disciplinary 'boundaries' in pursuit of a nuanced understanding of social problems. This is an approach which characterises and strengthens feminist social research.

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APPENDIX 1

Safety campaign materials

who's keeping an eye on your drink?

Protect yourself from drug assisted sexual assault. A spiked drink can look, taste and smell normal.

- Watch when your drinks are being poured.
- Don't leave your drink unattended.
- Stay aware of who and what is going on around you. If your drink looks or tastes different, don't take a chance, leave it.
- Think before you leave a bar or club with someone you've just met.
- Some incidents have involved people the victims knew, so be aware.
- If you feel unusually drunk after only a drink or two, seek help from a trusted friend or the pub or club management.

Protect yourself and your friends.
Make sure you're in control of what you drink.

For information or advice call
0800 587 587 9
www.knowthescore.info

KNOW THE SCORE

ACPOS

SYMPTOM SPOTTING

health + housing
priority campaign 2003/4
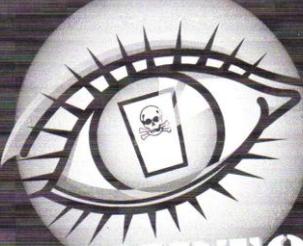
You can keep you and your friends safe by spotting the symptoms of drink spiking:

- Your drink tastes unusually salty or bitter
- There are odd colours or textures
- You feel as if you are losing control
- You experience hallucinations
- Your friend acts with less inhibition than usual
- They may display amnesia, aggression, incoherence or drowsiness

Remember not all symptoms need to be present

for more information visit www.nusonline.co.uk/drugrape

for support if you think you have been attacked call the Roofie Foundation helpline on

n u s **0800 783 2980**

WAYS TO BE SAFE

health + housing
priority campaign 2003/4
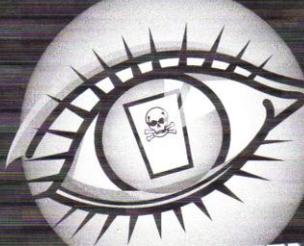
There are ways you can keep you and your friends safe:

- Go out in a group, and have a 'sober' person
- Keep your drinks with you at all times
- Don't drink anything that has been left unattended
- Look out for unusual behaviour in your friends
- Stay away from high-risk areas
- Don't accept drinks from strangers

for more information visit www.nusonline.co.uk/drugrape

for support if you think you have been attacked call the Roofie Foundation helpline on

n u s **0800 783 2980**
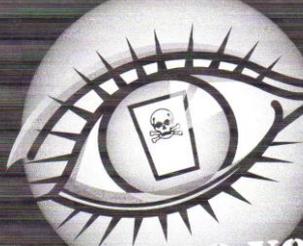
WHAT DO YOU DO IF YOUR DRINK HAS BEEN SPIKED?

health + housing
priority campaign 2003/4

if you think your drink has been spiked:

- Find someone you trust
- Show them you feel ill
- If you can't find a friend, find a member of staff
- Don't leave on your own
- Never **ever** leave with a stranger

for more information visit www.nusonline.co.uk/drugrape

for support if you think you have been attacked call the Roofie Foundation helpline on

n u s **0800 783 2980**

stay in control

how much is too much?

A useful way of keeping track of how much you're drinking is to look at the unit content of drinks. 1 unit is approximately half a pint of normal strength beer or a pub measure of spirits or a small glass of wine. Although by law the alcohol strength (%ABV) of bottles and canned drinks must be shown on the label, unfortunately not all drinks manufacturers print the unit content on their packaging. If they don't, here's how you can work it out:

MULTIPLY THE VOLUME OF THE DRINK BY THE %ABV THEN DIVIDE BY 1000

for example, a bottle of wine at 12%ABV would be:
750ml x 12%ABV = 9000
9000 - 1000 = 9 units

male and female daily guidelines

2-3 units per day for females and 3-4 units per day for males, but not every day. These are not hard and fast as everyone handles alcohol differently but they do offer useful guidelines so you can keep track of how much you are drinking and you are more likely to know when you've had too much.

how do i know if i've got a problem?

Many people have an image of what they think someone with a drink problem looks like, but: it doesn't matter what age of sex you are, or your occupation or lifestyle. You don't need to have a dependence or 'need' of alcohol to have a problem. People who drink regularly and heavily or aim to get drunk may also have a problem through accidents, violence, workplace problems, relationship problems, contact with the law, and poor health. The following is not a complete list but may indicate a problem:

Are you aware that you're drinking more? If so, think about why this is.

Do you regularly have a hangover, or need to take time off work or studies due to a hangover?

Are you using alcohol to block out feelings or thoughts?

Do you find yourself having arguments with friends or family about your drinking?

Are you drinking to 'cure' a hangover?

If you're concerned about your own or someone else's drinking, or if you would like to know more about alcohol contact :

Alcohol Focus Scotland
2nd Floor, 166 Buchanan Street, Glasgow G1 2LW
tel: 0141 572 6700
email: enquiries@alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk

Useful Numbers

Drinkline : 0800 917 8282

Sexual Health Line : 0800 567 123

You can also get advice from your Students' Association Welfare Service or the National Union of Students website www.nusonline.co.uk/advice

This leaflet was produced in consultation with the National Union of Students Scotland.

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Scottish Charity Reg No. SCO 09538

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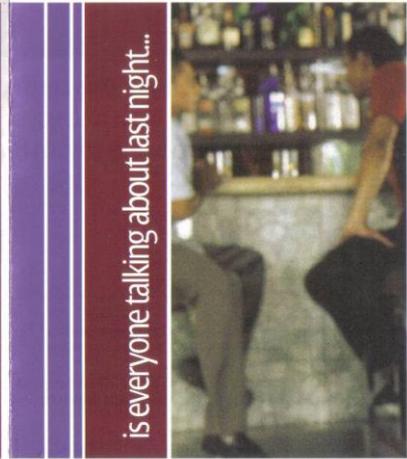
is everyone talking about last night...

...or about you?

students & booze.. all you need to know

www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk

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is your hair all you let down last night?

"Figures show that 16-24 year olds are the group most likely to binge drink and alcohol is often seen as being a big part of the student lifestyle. Alcohol can be enjoyed in moderation at the right time and place, but problems do arise from its misuse. Some people decide to totally abstain from alcohol. That's their choice and it should always be respected."

alcohol facts...

- Alcohol is a depressant drug, even though it may feel stimulating when drunk at first.

- Within minutes of drinking, some alcohol will be absorbed into the bloodstream. The rate of absorption can be affected by certain things e.g. eating slows this down.

- Alcohol slows down a person's reactions. This means that driving, using machinery or doing certain sports e.g. swimming, after even small amounts of alcohol is dangerous. Don't risk it!

- Females have less water in their bodies than males, so they have less to dilute the alcohol. This is one of the reasons why females get drunk quicker than males.

- It takes the body (mainly the liver) at least one hour to break down one unit of alcohol.

- Alcohol does not warm you up, despite what many people think. There is a real risk of hypothermia if you fall asleep outside in cold weather after drinking too much.

- Mixing alcohol with drugs, whether illicit, prescribed or over the counter can be dangerous and the results unpredictable. Ask you pharmacist or doctor for advice.

drinking too much...

When drunk, people behave in ways they wouldn't normally and this can lead to all sorts of risky situations like not being able to get home safely, getting into an argument, having unsafe sex and being a victim of an accident or crime. Think about how you appear to your friends when you've drunk too much - do you really think they want to spend their night looking after you while you're being sick or get knocked back from a club just because you can't control yourself?

A recent study of 16-24 year olds showed that after drinking:

| 1 IN 7 HAD UNSAFE SEX |
| 1 IN 5 HAD SEX THEY LATER REGRETTED |
| 1 IN 10 WERE UNABLE TO REMEMBER WHETHER THEY HAD SEX THE NIGHT BEFORE |
| 40% THOUGHT THEY WERE MORE LIKELY TO HAVE CASUAL SEX |

essential safety info...

Never leave someone unattended who is drunk, especially if they're starting to fall asleep. If you're unable to rouse the person, you should turn them onto their side (recovery position) so that if they vomit they won't choke. It is essential to summon medical assistance for someone who is comatose - they can die if not properly treated.

some tips before & during drinking...

- Eat something before you start drinking.

- Avoid drinking to get drunk - the reality is not sexy,glamourous or a 'badge of honour'. Stay in control.

- Watch out for larger measures at home or at a party compared with pub measures

- Don't accept drinks from strangers or leave your drink unattended in case your drink gets spiked.

- Slow down and try soft drinks or water in between alcoholic drinks.

- Avoid cheap drinks promotions or competitions to get you to drink more - it's not a bargain if you end up ill.

- Be careful about drinking in rounds - you tend to end up drinking at the speed of the fastest drinker.

- Avoid using alcohol to help you cope with situations like shyness or insomnia. Drinking won't solve your problems, it will only blot them out.

X

Blackout

Can YOU remember what happened last night?

Socialising

- **Before you go out make sure you have got what you need**
  e.g. phone charged and in credit, cash and keys

- **Let someone know where you're going**
  and tell them if your plans change

- **Think about how you're going to get home**
  Try not to leave it to the last minute

- **Look out for each other, stay with your mates**
  Don't let anyone wander off

- **Keep an eye on your drink**
  Be aware! Even soft drinks can be spiked

- **Before getting a lift text the car reg. home**
  So someone knows how you are getting back

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AIR PRODUCTS

SURREY POLICE

Artwork designed by: Hazel Kidd

APPENDIX 2

Participant profile and monitoring form

Participant Profile

Age	No. Participants (n=35)
18 years	1
19 years	5
20 years	8
21 years	9
22 years	2
23 years	4
24 years	2
25 years	2
Unknown	2
Occupation	
College student	8
University student	23
Employed	1
Unemployed	1
Unknown	2
Ethnic origin	
White British	13
White Irish	1
White Scottish	16
Irish Traveller	0
Other White background	2
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0
Black or Black British – African	0
Other Black background	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
Other Asian background	0
Mixed – White and Caribbean	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0
Other ethnic background	1
Unknown	2
Sexuality	
Heterosexual	32
Lesbian	0
Bi-sexual	1
Unknown	2

Relationship Status	
Single	19
In a relationship	14
Married	0
Divorced	0
Separated	0
Unknown	2
Disability	
Yes	0
No	33
Unknown	2

PhD Research Study
Young women's safety in bars, pubs and clubs

Participant monitoring form

To assist the development of a profile of research participants taking part in this study, please complete this form. The information given will be confidential.

Age_____ years

What is your main occupation?

[   ] College student
      Course name:_____

[   ] University student
      Course name:_____

[   ] Employed
      Occupation _____

[   ] Unemployed

Ethnic origin:

[   ] White British
[   ] White Irish
[   ] White Scottish
[   ] Irish Traveller
[   ] Other white b/ground
[   ] Black or Black British - Caribbean
[   ] Black or Black British - African

[   ] Other Black Background
[   ] Asian or Asian British - Indian
[   ] Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
[   ] Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi
[   ] Chinese
[   ] Other Asian Background

[   ] Mixed - White and Black Caribbean
[   ] Mixed - White and Black African
[   ] Mixed - White and Asian
[   ]*Other Ethnic Background
[   ] Not Known
*Please Specify
…………………………………

Relationship status:

[   ] single   [   ] in a relationship   [   ] married   [   ] divorced   [   ] separated

Sexuality:

[   ] heterosexual   [   ] lesbian   [   ] bi-sexual

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?   [   ] yes   [   ] no

Please return this form to Oona Brooks at the end of your interview/focus group, or by using the SAE provided. Thank you.

APPENDIX 3

Focus group and interview topic guides

Focus group guide

Thank participants for attending and introduce facilitators. Introduce purpose and format of focus group (reiterate key points from info sheet).

- Purpose of group is to gather information about young women's views on their safety in bars, pubs and clubs. The issue of women's safety in these venues is something which has attracted a significant amount of media attention in recent years, and a body of safety advice has been directed towards young women. However, there is very little research which takes women's views on this matter into account. This is something I want to know more about.
- Focus group: has anyone taken part in one before? FG can differ, but generally, in research context, FG used to discuss a particular issue and gather participant's views in a way which is more interactive than an individual interview.
- Overview of topics covered: views about women's safety in BPC, safety concerns you might have when you go out, and views about safety advice directed towards women
- Taking part: participation voluntary and no-one is expected to answer anything that they do not want to. However, I would ask that only one person speak at a time – allows everyone to have their say and easier to record! There are no 'right or wrong' answers. Also, respect the fact that others may have views which are different to your own.
- Confidentiality: all information will be kept confidentially and any extracts from the discussion will be anonymised. Only exception to this would be if you were to tell me about a child who is at risk of significant harm or that you or another adult is in immediate or imminent danger. In these circumstances I would need to contact the relevant authorities. Also anything discussed here should not be discussed with other people out with the group. Okay to mention taking part in the group to other people, but not to mention anything that was discussed in a way which could identify someone.
- Are there any other 'ground rules' that participants would like to add?
- Is it okay to record the discussion?
- Time: 1 ½ - 2 hours with break
- Any questions?
- If participants happy to proceed, gather signed consent forms.
- Ask participants to introduce themselves (just first name, or say a bit more if they wish to do so?).

Introduction
Start discussion by asking where women would usually go out, who they would go with etc. Any there any particular places that they would avoid, and why?

Section 1: General views on women's safety
1. Generally speaking, do you think that bars, pubs and clubs are safe places for women?
2. Do you think that women are more/less likely to be concerned about their safety in bars, pubs and clubs than men?
3. What do you think are the main risks that young women face when they go to bars, pubs and clubs?
4. Are these risks different/ increased from what they were in the past?
5. What do you think influences how safe women are when they go to BPC?
   Prompts: clothing, alcohol consumption, behaviour of men? Is this the same for men?
6. Are bars, pubs and clubs/staff concerned about women's safety? Why/why not?
7. Who should be responsible for women's safety in BPC? (e.g. bars and clubs, the government, men or women).

Section 2: Safety concerns & behaviours
1. Do you think about your own personal safety when you go out to bars, pubs and clubs? What safety concerns do you have when you go out?
2. When you go to BPC, is drink spiking something which you are concerned about? Do you think that drink spiking is a common occurrence? Urban myth? What has influenced your views on this issue? Impact of smoking ban?
3. When you go to BPC, is DASA something which you are concerned about? Do you think that this is a common occurrence? How would you define this (e.g. voluntary/involuntary intoxication – are they the same due to incapacity to consent to sexual activity? View that involuntary intoxication (spiking) is worse?)
4. How does concern about safety/ safety behaviours influence your night out?
5. Can you tell me about anything you do to 'stay safe' on a night out?

Section 3: Views on safety advice (examples of safety advice to aid discussion)
1. Are you aware of safety advice in relation to socialising in bars, pubs and clubs? Which advice are you of? (what, where etc.)
2. What do you perceive to be the main messages within this advice?
3. Has any of this advice influenced what you do on a night out?
4. Are there any difficulties associated with adopting this advice?
5. Advice suggests that friends 'look out' for each other/nominate a drinks watcher etc. Is this something that you do?

Circulate posters and other materials
Have you seen materials before?
What do you think of the materials? (e.g. in terms of images used, slogans, advice, format – i.e. leaflet, poster, bookmark).

Circulate safety devices (bottle stoppers, drinks detectives and related advertising)
Are you aware of safety devices (e.g. bottle stoppers, drinks detectives etc.)? What are your views on safety devices? Do you/would you use these devices?

At the end of the group:
- Thank participants for their contributions and for taking the time to participate.
- Acknowledge that some of the topics discussed may raise difficult issues for individuals. Distribute 'Source of Information and Support' sheet, and let participants know that they can get in touch if they need any further information.
- Handout participant feedback and participant monitoring form. These forms can be completed and returned now, or using the SAE provided.
- Distribute flyer/information sheet for participants to pass on to their friends if they wish.
- Circulate interview sign-up sheet.

Extended focus group guide

Thank participants for attending and introduce facilitators.

Introduce purpose and format of focus group (reiterate key points from info sheet)
- Purpose of group is to gather information about young women's views on their safety in bars, pubs and clubs. The issue of women's safety in these venues is something which has attracted a significant amount of media attention in recent years, and a body of safety advice has been directed towards young women. However, there is very little research which takes women's views on this matter into account. This is something I want to know more about.
- Focus group: has anyone taken part in one before? FG can differ, but generally, in research context, FG used to discuss a particular issue and gather participant's views in a way which is more interactive than an individual interview.
- Overview of topics covered: views about women's safety in BPC, safety concerns you might have when you go out, and views about safety advice directed towards women
- Taking part: participation voluntary and no-one is expected to answer anything that they do not want to. However, I would ask that only one person speak at a time – allows everyone to have their say and easier to record! Also, respect the fact that others may have views which are different to your own.
- Confidentiality: all information will be kept confidentially and any extracts from the discussion will be anonymised. Only exception to this would be if you were to tell me about a child who is at risk of significant harm or that you or another adult is in immediate or imminent danger. In these circumstances I would need to contact the relevant authorities. Also anything discussed here should not be discussed with other people out with the group. Okay to mention taking part in the group to other people, but not to mention anything that was discussed in a way which could identify someone.
- Are there any other 'ground rules' that participants would like to add?
- Is it okay to record the discussion?
- Time: 1 – 1 ½ hours.
- Any questions?
- If participants happy to proceed, gather signed consent forms.
- Ask participants to introduce themselves (just first name, or say a bit more if they wish to do so?).

Section 1: Socialising in BPC and views on women's safety

8. Can you tell me what a typical night in a BPC would involve for you (e.g. where, with who, what you might drink?)
9. Are there any particular BPC you go to/avoid? Why is this?
10. Do you think that women are more/less likely to be concerned about their safety in bars, pubs and clubs than men?
11. What do you think are the main risks that young women face when they go to bars, pubs and clubs? Are these risks different/ increased from what they were in the past?
12. What do you think influences how safe women are when they go to BPC (e.g. clothing, alcohol consumption, behaviour of men)? Is this the same for men?
13. Who should be responsible for women's safety in BPC? (e.g. bars and clubs, the government, men or women).

Section 2: Safety Concerns

1. Do you think about your own personal safety when you go out to bars, pubs and clubs? What safety concerns do you have when you go out?
2. Can you describe how it feels to be safe/ unsafe?
3. How important would you say it is to feel safe in BPC?
4. Can you recall any specific occasions where you have felt unsafe in a bar, pub or club? Why did you feel unsafe?
5. How did you respond in this situation? Who, or what, was safety threatened by – e.g. male stranger, group, known person, other women, bouncer, bar staff?
6. Did you seek any assistance or report this incident to anyone?
7. Are you aware of any incidents where you, or someone you know, have had their drink spiked?
8. When you go to BPC, is drink spiking something which you are concerned about? Do you think that drink spiking is a common occurrence? What has influenced your views on this issue?
9. When you go to BPC, is DASA something which you are concerned about? Do you think that this is a common occurrence? How would you define this (e.g. voluntary/involuntary intoxication, include alcohol as drug?)

Section 3: Views on safety advice (examples of safety advice to aid discussion)

6. Are you aware of safety advice in relation to socialising in bars, pubs and clubs? Which advice are you of? (what, where etc.)
7. What do you perceive to be the main messages within this advice?
8. Is this advice to be relevant to you/ do you follow this advice?
9. Are there any difficulties associated with adopting this advice?
10. Advice suggests that friends 'look out' for each other/nominate a drinks watcher etc. Is this something that you do?
11. Are you aware of safety devices (e.g. bottle stoppers, drinks detectives etc.)? What are your views on safety devices? Do you use these devices?
12. Are there any other safety strategies which you use when you to BPC?
13. How does concern about safety/ safety behaviours influence your night out?
14. Can you think of anything which would make you feel safer on a night out?
15. Is there anything else you would like to add to what you've already said?

At the end of the group:
- Thank participants for their contributions and for taking the time to participate.
- Acknowledge that some of the topics discussed may raise difficult issues for individuals. Distribute 'Source of Information and Support' sheet, and let participants know that they can get in touch if they need any further information.
- Handout participant feedback and participant monitoring form. These forms can be completed and returned now, or using the SAE provided.
- Distribute flyer/information sheet for participants to pass on to their friends if they wish.

Extended interview guide

Introduce purpose and format of interview (reiterate key points from info sheet)

- Thank participant for attending interview.
- Purpose of study is to gather information about young women's views on their safety in bars, pubs and clubs. The issue of women's safety in these venues is something which has attracted a significant amount of media attention in recent years, and a body of safety advice has been directed towards young women. However, there is very little research which takes women's views on this matter into account. This is something that I want to know more about.
- Purpose of interview is to find out about participants personal experiences and safety concerns relating to socialising in BPC.
- Overview of topics covered, 4 main areas: socialising in BPC generally; your views on women's safety in BPC and the safety advice offered to women; as well as your thoughts about your own personal safety.
- Do not have to answer anything that you do not want to and you are free to stop the interview at any time.
- Confidentiality: all information will be kept confidentially and any extracts from the discussion will be anonymised. Only exception to this would be if you were to tell me about a child who is at risk of significant harm or that you or another adult is in immediate or imminent danger. In these circumstances I would need to contact the relevant authorities.
- Time: 1 hour at most.
- Any questions?
- Confirm permission to record the interview.
- If happy to proceed, sign consent form.

Section 1: Socialising in BPC & general views on women's safety
1. Can you tell me what a typical night in a BPC would involve for you (e.g. where, with who, what you might drink?)
2. Are there any particular BPC you go to/avoid? Why is this?
3. How important is going to BPC in your social life?
4. Generally speaking, do you think that BPC are safe places for women?
5. Do you think women are more or less likely to be concerned about their safety when they go to BPC than men?
6. What do you think are the main risks that young women might face when they go to BPC?
7. Are these risks different to what they were in the past? Why?
8. What do you think influences how safe women are when they go to BPC? (e.g. clothing, alcohol consumption, behaviour of men). Is this the same for men?

Section 2: Experiences and perceptions of personal safety in BPC
1. How important would you say it is to feel safe when you go top a BPC?
2. Do you feel more/less safe in bars, pubs and clubs compared to other places that you go to? Why is this?
3. Are there particular features of a bar, pub or club which may contribute to your sense of safety/lack of safety?
4. Do you think that you are more/less likely than other women to be safe when you are in bars, pubs and clubs?
5. Is there anything in particular that you do to 'stay safe' in BPC?
6. What do you fear most if you are going out to a BPC?
7. Can you tell me about any specific occasions where you have felt unsafe in a bar, pub or club? Why did you feel unsafe?
8. How did you respond in this situation? Who, or what, was safety threatened by – e.g. male stranger, group, known person, other women, bouncer, bar staff? Did you report this situation to anyone? If no, did you think about doing so?
9. Have any of your friends experienced a situation where their safety was compromised? Did they seek any assistance or report this incident to anyone?
10. Have you or any of your friends experience any sexual harassment while in BPC?
11. Are you aware of any incidents where you, or someone you know has had their drink spiked? Did they seek any assistance or report this incident to anyone?
12. When you go to BPC is drink spiking something which you are concerned about? Do you think that drink spiking is a common occurrence? What has influenced your views on this issue?
13. When you go to BPC, is drug or alcohol assisted sexual assault something which you are concerned about? Do you think that this is a common occurrence?

Section 3: Safety advice and strategies
16. Are you aware of any safety advice in relation to socialising in bars, pubs and clubs? (particularly advice targeted towards women).
17. Which advice are you of? (what, where etc.)
18. What do you think were the main messages within this advice?
19. Are you aware of safety devices (drinks detectives/spikeys)? Do you/would you use them?

20. Has this advice influenced your behaviour on a night out in any way?
21. Is this advice relevant to you?
22. Are there any difficulties associated with adopting this advice?
23. Have other people (e.g. family or friends) given you advice about safety in BPC?
24. Do you ever discuss this with your (male/female) friends? Do your friends 'look out' for each other when they are out/ nominate drinks watcher?
25. How does concern about safety/safety behaviours influence your night out?
26. Can you think of anything which would make you feel safer on a night out?
27. Are you aware of anything which BPC have done to improve women's safety? What are your views on these measures?
28. Are BPC concerned about women's safety?
29. Overall, who should be responsible for women's safety in BPC? (e.g. bars and clubs, the government, men or women).
30. Is there anything else that you would like to add to what you've already said?

At the end of the interview:
- Thank participant for their contributions and for taking the time to participate.
- Acknowledge that some of the topics discussed may raise difficult issues for individuals. Handout 'Source of Information and Support' sheet, and let participant know that they can get in touch if they need any further information.
- Handout participant feedback and participant monitoring form. These forms can be completed and returned now, or using the SAE provided.
- Handout flyer/information sheet for participants to pass on to their friends if they wish.

Follow-Up Interview guide

Introduce purpose and format of interview (reiterate key points from info sheet)
- Thank participant for attending focus group and interview.
- Purpose of interview is to follow-up some of the FG discussion and to look at participants personal experiences and safety concerns relating to socialising in BPC rather than just general views about the issue. Also, sometimes it's difficult to get the views of all individuals during a group discussion.
- As with FG, you do not have to answer anything that you do not want to and you are free to stop the interview at any time.
- Confidentiality: all information will be kept confidentially and any extracts from the discussion will be anonymised. Only exception to this would be if you were to tell me about a child who is at risk of significant harm or that you or another adult is in immediate or imminent danger. In these circumstances I would need to contact the relevant authorities.
- Time: ½ hour - 1 hour at most.
- Any questions?
- Confirm permission to record the interview.
- If happy to proceed, sign consent form.

FG – Anything to add to what you said? Did you agree with the discussions or was there anything that you were less sure about? Did it prompt you to think about any new issues? Was there anything that you looked at differently or changed your mind about as a result of the discussion?

Section 1: Socialising in BPC & perceptions of personal safety
9. Can you tell me what a typical night in a BPC would involve for you (e.g. where, with who, what you might drink?)
10. How important is going to BPC in your social life?
11. How important would you say it is to feel safe when you go top a BPC?
12. Are there any particular BPC you go to/avoid? Why is this?
13. Do you feel more/less safe in bars, pubs and clubs compared to other places that you go to? Why is this?
14. Are there particular features of a bar, pub or club which may contribute to your sense of safety/lack of safety?
15. Do you think that you are more/less likely than other women to be safe when you are in bars, pubs and clubs?
16. Is there anything in particular that you do to 'stay safe' in BPC?
17. What do you fear most if you are going out to a BPC?
18. When you go to BPC is drink spiking/DASA something which you are concerned about?

Section 2: Experiences where safety has been compromised
1. Can you tell me about any specific occasions where you have felt unsafe in a bar, pub or club? Why did you feel unsafe?
2. How did you respond in this situation? Who, or what, was safety threatened by – e.g. male stranger, group, known person, other women, bouncer, bar staff? Did you report this situation to anyone? If no, did you think about doing so?
3. Have any of your friends experienced a situation where their safety was compromised? Did they seek any assistance or report this incident to anyone?
4. Have you or any of your friends experience any sexual harassment while in BPC?
5. Are you aware of any incidents where you, or someone you know has had their drink spiked? Did they seek any assistance or report this incident to anyone?

Section 4: Safety advice and strategies
31. Are you aware of any safety advice in relation to socialising in bars, pubs and clubs? (particularly advice targeted towards women).
32. Which advice are you of? (what, where etc.). What were the main messages within this advice?
33. Do you follow this advice? Any difficulties associated with adopting this advice?
34. Has this advice influenced your behaviour on a night out in any way?
35. Have other people (e.g. family or friends) given you advice about safety in BPC?
36. Do you ever discuss this with your (male/female) friends? Do your friends 'look out' for each other when they are out/ nominate drinks watcher?
37. Are you aware of safety devices (drinks detectives/spikeys)? Do you/would you use them?

38. How does concern about safety/safety behaviours influence your night out?
39. Can you think of anything which would make you feel safer on a night out?
40. Is there anything else that you would like to add to what you've already said?

At the end of the interview:
- Thank participant for their contributions and for taking the time to participate.
- Handout participant feedback and participant monitoring form – acknowledge that they will have completed forms at focus group already. These forms can be completed and returned now, or using the SAE provided.
- Handout flyer/information sheet for participants to pass on to their friends if they wish.

APPENDIX 4

Information sheet for participants

PhD Research Study
Young women's safety in bars, pubs and clubs

Information sheet for participants

- **What is this about?**

My name is Oona Brooks, and I am a postgraduate researcher at the University of Stirling. I am conducting a research study on young women's (18-25 yrs) safety in bars, pubs and clubs.

The main aim of this study is to understand how young women view, and negotiate, their safety in bars, pubs and clubs. With your permission, I would like to talk to you about your experience of socialising in bars, pubs and clubs, and the factors which influence your safety in and around these venues. I would also like to ask you about any safety advice which you are aware of, and what your views on this advice are.

This information sheet tells you more about what participating in this research study will involve.

- **Why are your views important?**

Often young women's voices are not heard or taken into account in matters which affect them. You can provide valuable information about your experiences of socialising in bars, pubs and clubs as a young woman. You will also contribute to a study which will inform understanding of young women's concerns about their safety, and future work in this area.

- **What do you have to do?**

Take part in a focus group discussion, followed by an individual interview. The focus groups and interviews will each last for approximately one hour. However, if you prefer, you can choose whether you would like to take part in an interview *or* a focus group, rather than participate in both.

Focus groups will take place at a venue which is convenient for you and the others in the group – for example, it could be at your University or College, or within the premises of an organisation which you are familiar with. Ideally, there will be 4 – 6 people in each group. During focus groups, I will mainly ask you about your views on safety advice directed towards young women who socialise in bars, pubs and clubs. Your contributions to the discussion will be entirely voluntary, and you will not be expected to answer anything that you do not wish to.

The interview will also take place at a time and a location which is convenient for you. During the interview I would like to ask you about your own experiences of

socialising in bars, pubs and clubs, and your safety in these venues. If there are any questions which you do not wish to answer, you can let me know this.

All interviews and focus groups will be conducted by me. During focus groups, one other female researcher will be present to offer assistance. If you agree, I would like to audio-record the interviews and focus groups to ensure that I have an accurate account of what you say.

- **What will the information be used for?**

The information collected will be the basis of a PhD thesis at the University of Stirling. The findings may also be published in academic journals or inform research reports, which influence policy and practice in relation to young women's safety in bars, pubs and clubs. Your name or any other identifying details will not be used in any of these reports.

- **Will the information provided be kept confidential?**

Yes, all information will be confidential. Short quotes of what you say may be used in the PhD thesis or in articles in research journals, but your name or any other identifying details will not be used so that you remain anonymous. All research documents will be kept secure in a locked file at the University, and all electronic information will be kept on a computer which is password protected.

- **What if I change my mind?**

You can change your mind about taking part at any time, and you do not have to tell me your reasons for doing so. Your participation is entirely voluntary.

What should you do if you wish to take part or want more information?

If you wish to take part, then please contact me by telephone or by e-mail.

If you have any further questions about the study, then please do contact me.

Thank You

Oona Brooks
Rm. 3s37
Colin Bell Building
Department of Applied Social Science
University of Stirling
Stirling
FK9 4LA

Telephone: (01786) 466 312   Email: oona.brooks@stir.ac.uk

APPENDIX 5

Consent form for participants

PhD Research Study
Young Women's Safety in Bars, Pubs and Clubs

Consent Form for Participants

It is important that people take part in this study only if they wish to do so, and when they are satisfied that they understand what taking part will involve. I would like to make sure of this by asking you to sign this form to confirm that you have freely agreed to take part in this research by participating in a focus group and/or being interviewed. This form should only be signed once you have had the opportunity to read the information sheet provided, and have asked any questions that you may have. You will still be free to withdraw from the research at any point if you wish to do so.

With your permission, I would like to tape record the interview and the focus group. Your name or any other details, which would allow someone else to identify you, will not be used in any research reports based on this study.

I agree to take part in a focus group. ☐Yes ☐No

I agree to take part in an interview. ☐Yes ☐No

I agree to the focus group/interview being audio recorded. ☐Yes ☐No

I confirm that anonymised extracts from the focus group/interview
may be used in a research report. ☐Yes ☐No

If you would like to choose the pseudonym (fictitious name) used to represent you in research reports, please give the name here. Choosing a name is optional and only a first name is required.

………………………………………………………………………………………………

If you would like to receive a summary of the completed research report (due in 18 months) please give your e-mail or postal address below.

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

Signed: …………………………………………………………………………

Print name: …………………………………………………Date:……………………..

APPENDIX 6

Sources of information and support

Sources of Information and Support

This information sheet gives details of organisations which can offer support, information and advice about a range of issues. If you would like information or advice about an issue which is not covered by these organisations, please contact me and will try to direct you to a relevant source of support. I can be contacted by telephone (01786 466 312) or e-mail (oona.brooks@stir.ac.uk)

Sexual Health

Healthy Respect
Website: www.healthy-respect.com

A useful resource for advice and information on relationships and sexual health.

Drugs and Alcohol

Drinkline Scotland
Tel: 0800 731 4314 (freephone).

Free and confidential national helpline.

Know the Score
Tel: 0800 587 5879 (freephone)
Website: www.knowthescore.info

Free and confidential drugs information and advice.

Crew 2000
Tel: 0131 220 3404
Website: www.crew2000.co.uk

Information, support and advice for young people who are using or thinking about using drugs.

Rape and Sexual Assault

Rape Crisis Scotland
Tel: 0141 248 8848
E-mail: info@rapecrisisscotland.org.uk
Website: www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk

Rape Crisis Scotland can provide you with details of support services in your local area.

Domestic Abuse

Scottish Domestic Abuse Helpline
Tel: 0800 027 1234 (freephone)
Textphone: 0800 027 1234
Website: www.domesticabuse.co.uk

24 hour free telephone service providing information regarding domestic abuse.

Women's Safety

Wise Women
Tel (Support): 0141 550 7557
Textphone: 0141 550 7558

Aims to proactively address women's experiences and fears of violence by providing accessible information, advice, workshops and courses on personal safety and confidence building in Glasgow.

Mental Health

Scottish Association for Mental Health
Tel: 0141 568 7000
Website: www.samh.org.uk

SAMH, Scotland's leading mental health charity, works to support people who experience mental health problems, homelessness, addictions and other forms of social exclusion. We provide direct services, including accommodation, support, employment and rehabilitation, and actively campaign to influence policy and improve care services in Scotland.

APPENDIX 7

Participant feedback form

PhD Research Study
Young women's safety in bars, pubs and clubs

Feedback form for participants

Thank you for taking part in this study. If you would like to provide some anonymous feedback about your experience of participating in this study, please complete this form. Your feedback is important, and it will be used to inform best practice for this study and future research studies.

1. I participated in an interview/ focus group/ both *(delete as appropriate)*

2. If you participated in an interview and a focus group, please say which (if any) you preferred, and why.

_____

_____

3. Were you provided with enough information before you took part in this

    study?

    ☐Yes   ☐No (If no, what would have liked more information about?)

_____

_____

4. Was there anything which you particularly liked about participating in this research?

_____

_____

5. Was there anything which you particularly disliked about participating in this research?

_____

_____

6. Any other comments?

_____

_____

Please return this form to Oona Brooks at the end of your interview/focus group, or by using the SAE provided. Thank you.

Feedback from Interview and Focus Group Participants

33 out of 35 participants completed an anonymous feedback form. The responses to each question on this form are detailed below.

Were you provided with enough information before taking part in the study?

Yes   33
No   0

If you participated in a focus group and an interview, please say which you preferred and why?

- *Interview – topic has always been something I have been interested in and I felt I could give my opinion.*
- *I preferred the interview because I was able to voice my own opinion rather than agreeing with the other girls and I could speak more freely.*
- *I preferred the interview because it didn't go off into areas I didn't feel important. In an interview I could control what was discussed more.*
- *Focus group – more interactive, use of materials – posters – produced more conversation topics.*
- *I preferred the interview as lots more detailed info could be discussed/more personal experiences.*
- *Both were enjoyable. In the interview, I was able to convey my own views more though.*
- *Although the focus group was a good way of hearing other peoples opinions and responding to that, there is more space in an interview for your own input and you didn't feel like you were taking over the discussion.*
- *I preferred the workshop. It was a good chance to sit and talk about a subject with strangers that you might only talk to your friends about.*
- *Focus group – because it was good to give my opinion (to agree or disagree) on other peoples' views.*

Was there anything which you particularly liked about participating in this research?

- *Yes – understanding my own views and questioning what I know.*
- *Interesting subject and valuable*
- *It really made me think about the issues in a way I never had before, especially the gender divide in attitudes towards safety.*
- *I liked the topic because it's something you can express your own opinion on. Partly also based on your culture, parents and experience.*
- *Questions asked were quite relevant to my experiences of being in bars, clubs and pubs.*
- *I like talking!*
- *Important area to research and relevant to all women who go out to bars etc.*

- *More awareness of how to stop drinks being spiked.*
- *I found the topic a very interesting and relevant topic to discuss, considering I am a young female who goes to bars/clubs.*
- *I liked the topic as it required me to challenge accepted social behaviours that may otherwise be dangerous to young people.*
- *The fact that it got me thinking about the issue, something I maybe not do enough! And the opportunity to ask some questions about the issue.*
- *It was reassuring to dear that other women have the same lack of knowledge about women's safety as I do.*
- *The questions made me think of the way I am in pubs and clubs.*
- *It highlighted the importance of my safety when out at night and I am more aware of people around me as a result.*
- *The relevance to my own recent experiences.*
- *The materials which were provided (posters etc.) gave a good variety of things to discuss. The group seemed to flow quite well, it didn't feel awkward.*
- *Finding out other peoples attitudes to feeling sage and drinking in pubs and clubs.*
- *Hearing other people's opinions, looking at the different campaigns, discussing my views on something which affects me a lot.*
- *It was useful to hear the views of friends on drink related issues and to hear of the campaigns that are targeted at young people.*
- *Sharing views with others, finding out more about safety programmes directed at women.*
- *Interesting to hear other peoples point of view on topics which affect us all each week on a night out and be part of research which asks women their views on safety as opposed to telling them what they should/shouldn't do!*
- *The relaxed atmosphere. It just feels like you are having a girly chat.*
- *I found the topic very interesting.*
- *Oona was very approachable and I appreciated the one-on-one interview technique and the way she appeared to take my opinions seriously.*
- *I enjoyed hearing the views of other women. Also discussing the different campaigns put in place to ensure women's safety in bars/clubs etc.*
- *It was all enjoyable. It also made me think of several factors which I had never considered before (e.g. drink spiking).*
- *I thought the provision of various promotional posters was a good way to encourage discussion and in the case of the interview, get an individual account.*
- *It was a good way to sit down and chat about a subject that we all deal with but which is very much a taboo and not spoken about.*
- *It was interesting to hear other peoples views and learn about alcohol and drug awareness schemes.*
- *It gave me a chance to really think about how safe me and my friends are when we go out.*
- *Good way to get me thinking about how safe I am when I go out.*
- *Hearing about views other people had.*
- *Very comfortable and informal. Everyone seemed quite at ease once the conversation started.*
- *It is a very interesting topic. Advertisement and Home Office initiatives and their effectiveness should be evaluated*.

- *I liked talking about things that happen every weekend to myself or my friends and expressing my views on it.*
- *Being able to talk about experiences kind of made me realise some things.*

Was there anything which you particularly disliked about participating in this study?

- *No, I thought it was very well done.*
- *Nothing really, it was quite a positive experience.*
- *I felt really that I didn't really see how I was helping.*

Any other comments?

- *I thought it was a really interesting subject and one that definitely needs more work done on it – look forward to seeing the findings!*
- *Interview was quite interesting to participate in.*
- *Liked how it was in a group and could speak freely and openly about anything.*
- *I learnt some things as well as giving my opinions.*
- *It was good to hear other opinions.*
- *It was interesting hearing other people's views.*
- *Good luck with your assignment!*
- *I think this topic is extremely important and I strongly support the research.*
- *Enjoyed the chat and found it useful to remember events when I wasn't safe so I can prevent these happening again.*
- *Very interesting topic.*
- *Really enjoyed the session!*
- *Enjoyed very much and I would gladly take part in other similar research. Particularly enjoyed that fact that it was focused on the safety of women.*
- *Thanks for the cookies!*
- *I enjoyed the interview with Oona – it was very relaxed.*
- *I hadn't really thought about this topic in any great detail before and was glad of the opportunity to do so.*
- *I would definitely participate in another focus group. Oona was v. professional and I learned a lot.*
- *Juice was great. Thanks.*
- *Think more schools should talk about alcohol safety.*
- *It was a great chance to talk about a serious topic and have my comments valued.*

APPENDIX 8

Recruitment flyer