This is a repository copy of *A balancing act: agency and constraints in university students' understanding of and responses to sexual violence in the night-time economy*.

White Rose Research Online URL for this paper:
https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/208736/

Version: Published Version

# A Balancing Act: Agency and Constraints in University Students' Understanding of and Responses to Sexual Violence in the Night-Time Economy

Sundari Anitha[1] , Ana Jordan[1], Jill Jameson[1], and Zowie Davy[2]

## Abstract

This article extends our understanding of how university students make sense of, and respond to, sexual violence in the night-time economy (NTE). Based on semi-structured interviews with 26 students in a city in England, we examine students' constructions of their experiences of sexual violence within the NTE, exploring their negotiations with, and resistance to, this violence. Building upon theories of postfeminism, we interrogate the possibilities for resistance within the gendered spaces of the NTE and propose a disaggregated conceptualization of agency to understand responses to sexual violence, thereby offering useful insights for challenging sexual violence in the NTE and in universities.

## Keywords

sexual violence, gender-based violence, night-time economy, postfeminism, agency

There is a growing body of evidence documenting high prevalence levels of different forms of gender-based violence (GBV) among student communities (Anitha & Lewis, 2018). We understand GBV as behavior or attitudes underpinned by inequitable

[1]University of Lincoln, UK
[2]De Montfort University, Leicester, UK

**Corresponding Author:**
Sundari Anitha, Professor of Gender, Violence, and Work, School of Social and Political Sciences, University of Lincoln, Brayford Pool, Lincoln, LN6 7TS, UK.
Email: sanitha@lincoln.ac.uk

power relations that hurt, threaten, or undermine people because of their (perceived) gender or sexuality. GBV includes a continuum of behaviors and attitudes such as domestic violence, rape/sexual assault, unwanted sexual attention, and homo/transphobia. We recognize that women and girls constitute the vast majority of victims of GBV, and men the majority of perpetrators. Within the university context, research (NUS, 2010) suggests that one in seven women students have been victims of serious sexual assault or serious physical violence while at university or college in the United Kingdom. Based on women students' accounts of sexual violence in bars and nightclubs, Phipps and Young (2012) highlight how "lad culture" within these spaces limits women's freedom and safety. Everyday forms of sexual violence[1], such as "microaggressions" (Sue, 2010) entailing nonconsensual sexual attention and sexual harassment, are particularly common experiences for women and girls in various contexts (Girlguiding 2017; Vera-Gray, 2016), including the night-time economy (NTE; Graham et al., 2017; Kavanaugh, 2013; Ronen, 2010).

Although the gendered construction of women's intoxication as well as the prevalence and impact of sexual violence in student communities has been the focus of a growing body of scholarship, there is much less exploration in the U.K. context of young people's experiences of such violence within the NTE (for exceptions, see Gunby et al., 2020; Nicholls, 2018). This article seeks to add to this emerging debate by exploring the contours of sexual violence in the NTE to understand how students construct and respond to such violence through analysis that locates their experiences within broader sociocultural contexts and structural conditions that shape their agency. In doing so, this article offers insights about resistance to GBV.

## Intoxication and Gendered Risk in the NTE

Literature on the expansion of the NTE in the United Kingdom over the last two decades (Winlow & Hall, 2006) notes the increasing "feminization" of bars, nightclubs, and pubs (Chatterton & Hollands, 2003), which were traditionally the primary domain of male pursuits of leisure drinking, and positioned as a marker of male privilege (Hey, 1986). Changes in female drinking patterns are commonly interpreted as a "gender convergence" and as an indicator of increasing or achieved gender equality (Bogren, 2011; Jackson & Tinkler, 2007; Measham & Østergaard, 2009).

However, any "feminization" of the NTE has to be understood in the context of societal double standards on intoxication and gender (Holloway et al., 2009). Analysis of news media coverage indicates that heavy drinking among men is more often excused or neutralized, whereas similar behavior by women is viewed as deviant in the United Kingdom (Day, 2010; Jackson & Tinkler, 2007) and in other countries in Europe (Bogren, 2011). The masculinization of women's drinking in these media debates through terms such as "ladettes" (Day et al., 2004) is underpinned by discourses that draw on biological understandings of sex difference to claim that women and girls ought not to "drink like men" (Bogren, 2008). Research also indicates that gender stereotypes about drinking are reproduced

rather than challenged in user-generated content medium such as YouTube (Rolando & Törrönen, 2014). The stigmatization of female drinking is connected to its dominant interpretation as a sign of sexual willingness in a context where women are expected to be in control of their alcohol consumption and sexual behavior, but also that of men (Törrönen & Juslin, 2011).

These double standards are evident in discourses on alcohol and intoxication in relation to rape and sexual assault in the NTE whereby women are ascribed blame and are responsibilized for their sexual assault if they are drunk, while men are exonerated for perpetrating sexual violence if intoxicated. This sexual double standard is evidenced in media representations (Gunby et al., 2013; Meyer, 2010), public perceptions (Starfelt et al., 2015), in mock jury debates (Finch & Munro, 2005), and in public safety campaigns which oblige women to regulate themselves to stay safe from men, rather than focusing on men's aggressions (Brooks, 2011; Campbell, 2005). Indeed, there is a large body of scholarship in the United Kingdom and beyond on intoxication and women's safety in the NTE which documents the gendered risk of navigating the NTE (Brooks, 2011; Griffin et al., 2009, 2013; Tan, 2013).

One manifestation of risk in the NTE that has been explored in North American and Australian contexts is everyday forms of GBV (Fileborn, 2012; Graham et al., 2017; Kavanaugh, 2013), such as nonconsensual touching, verbal comments, and nonverbal acts (e.g., gestures) that are sexual in nature and intent. In contrast to the scholarship on women's safety in the NTE in the United Kingdom, which has centered on intoxication and risk such as fear of drink-spiking/rape (Brooks, 2011; Sheard, 2011), GBV in the form of unwanted sexual harassment remains "practically unexamined" in the NTE in the U.K. context (Gunby et al., 2020, pp. 1–2; also see Nicholls, 2018). This article aims to fill this gap by drawing upon interviews with 26 students in a small city in England to understand the scope and contours of GBV in NTE spaces and student responses to this problem.

## Agency and Postfeminism in the Sexualized Spaces of the NTE

NTE has also been conceptualized as "liminal spaces" of uncertainties and pleasure for young women (Hayward & Hobbs, 2007), which present opportunities for writing alternate sexual scripts that differ from the traditional emphasis on sexual restraint and passivity (Tan, 2013; Waitt et al., 2011). However, feminists have drawn attention to the contradictory expectations that require (young) women to challenge traditional norms of femininity associated with timidity and passivity in favor of a hypersexual feminine subjectivity which appears empowering, but is ultimately constructed for the male gaze. This marks a shift from sexual objectification to subjectification (Gill & Scharff, 2011), whereby women are expected to negotiate new feminine identities of sexual agency through bodily presentation and new alcohol consumption practices (Waitt et al., 2011). While acknowledging the agency taking place and the development of new modes of cultural representation that are being created in these spaces, sociologists have highlighted a convergence between traditional and new gender scripts (Gill &

Scharff, 2011; McRobbie, 2009). The hallmark of this contemporary culture is the "option" of "new" forms of transgression which appear to offer young women license to reject long-established codes of heterosexual patriarchal social relations, while those codes and the sexual double standards they engender remain in force.

Griffin et al. (2013, p. 184) argue that the juxtaposition of postfeminism and the culture of intoxication in the NTE produces a challenging set of dilemmas for young women, who are exhorted to be sassy and independent, but not feminist; to be "up for it" and to get drunk alongside young men, but not to "drink like men." Women are also expected to look sexy and act with (hetero)sexual agency within a pornified NTE, but to distance themselves from the troubling figure of the "drunken slut."

The contradictory gender expectations of the NTE can be understood as part of a broader trend toward "postfeminist" understandings of society. Postfeminism is a contested idea and there is a great deal of slippage and confusion over the term. For example, there are disputes over whether the prefix "post" should be read as *after feminism*, signaling its end, as *continuity with* feminism, or, finally, as simultaneously suggesting *both* rupture and continuity (Braithwaite, 2002; Dean, 2010; Gill, 2007). In addition (and relatedly), there have been a range of debates around postfeminism, including how far postfeminism is a reinvented feminism for a modern era. Angela McRobbie (2009), for example, has conceptualized postfeminism as a "new kind of anti-feminist sentiment" (p. 1). In contrast, scholars such as Stephanie Genz (2006) have argued that it is not necessarily antifeminist, emphasizing the "feminism" in postfeminism and highlighting its promise.

In this article, we understand postfeminism to be a deeply ambivalent perspective in which, as Rosalind Gill (2007) suggests, "feminist ideas have become a kind of common sense, yet feminism has never been more bitterly repudiated" (p. 1). The ambivalence arises because postfeminism takes aspects of feminism for granted, but simultaneously co-opts them into a "much more individualistic discourse," employing impoverished understandings of the feminist vocabulary of "choice" and "empowerment" (McRobbie, 2009, p. 1). Importantly, postfeminism also assumes that gender equality has already been (mostly) achieved and that feminism, understood as a revolutionary collective movement as opposed to an individual lifestyle choice, is therefore an anachronism (McRobbie, 2009). This reflects neoliberal discourses constructing the individual as genderless, raceless, classless, and so on, shifting the focus away from social structures of power and toward simplistic notions of individual choice and freedom (Connell, 2011; Gill & Scharff, 2011; McRobbie, 2009).

The individualization and depoliticization of gender in postfeminism positions young women as freely choosing subjects, as agents of their own destiny, rendering constraints/inequalities invisible. Gill (2008) expresses skepticism about the extent to which conformity to a narrow range of acceptable presentations of femininity which "coincidentally" match the desires of heterosexual men are the result of genuine empowerment, and raises questions about the internalization of conventional beauty norms. Without denying women's agency, it is important to challenge the logic of postfeminism which acts as a "thought-stopper," closing off questions and marginalizing issues of power before they can be asked (Jordan, 2016). This article explores how

these negotiations are reflected in young people's understandings of sexual violence in the NTE, and their responses to such violations.

A key theme in discussions of sexual violence in the NTE is the question of agency. Given both opportunities for pleasure and empowerment, and the limitations to these "freedoms," examining young people's accounts enables us to explore the complexities of agency in this context. We employ Katz's (2004) conceptually disaggregated notion of agency as acts of *resilience*, *reworking*, and *resistance*, which recognizes the constraints posed by oppressive contexts and ideologies in shaping both understandings of experiences and possible responses to these. Acts of *resilience* build on a limited consciousness of the relations of oppression, while acts of *reworking* and especially those of *resistance* draw on and (re)produce a much more critical and oppositional consciousness of the hegemonic powers at work (Katz 2004). Although the former may offer spaces of recuperation for the individual while leaving the oppressive structures untouched, reworking and resistance seek to recalibrate or challenge them with varying degrees of effectiveness.

## Research Methods

This article draws on 26 semi-structured interviews with university undergraduate students (seven men and 19 women) aged 18–25. None of the interviewees identified as neither male or female, or a gender identity different to that assigned at birth. All but two respondents identified as heterosexual, with one woman stating that she was "equally attracted to females and males" and the other was "mostly attracted to females." Eighteen participants identified as "White British," two as "Asian/Asian British," three as "Black/African/Caribbean/Black British," two as "Mixed/Multiple Ethnic groups," and one as "Other."

Both men and women were recruited as previous research in the U.K. context has often been based entirely on interviews with women (e.g., NUS, 2010). Although this is a valid approach as women are most likely to be victims of GBV, interviewing male students allowed us to gain insight into men's understandings of, and responses to, GBV, which is an important part of understanding the complexities of gendered identities and scripts which can either perpetuate or facilitate GBV-tolerant cultures. Although this article draws largely on women's experiences (because they were most likely to talk about their own encounters with sexual violence in the NTE), we analyze insights from two men who reflected on barriers to and possibilities of recognizing and challenging harm in the NTE. Other outputs from the research project will focus on the role of masculinity in lad culture, foregrounding men's perspectives.

Interviews were conducted by five members of the research team, lasted between 1 and 2 hr and were audio-recorded and transcribed. The university where the research was conducted is located in a small city in England, United Kingdom (university population: 10,000 undergraduates), and is not named to protect identities. Another relevant contextual factor is that the data were collected against the backdrop of an action research project in 2014–2015 which established one of the first "bystander intervention" (BI) programs to challenge GBV in a U.K. university.[2] The purpose of this article

(and of the interviews) is not to evaluate the BI program's impact as the program was too short-lived for firm conclusions to be drawn about its influence. We interviewed both participants and nonparticipants to gain a broader insight into students' perceptions of GBV (which might not have been gained from interviewing program participants alone). Given the lack of an overall pattern of difference between the two groups, we do not present the data analysis as a direct comparison between participants and nonparticipants. However, we note some insights from the research which are of value to those designing prevention education programs.

The research team constructed seven vignettes on various manifestations of GBV to gain insight into how students construct GBV and the possible responses to it through discussion of the hypothetical scenarios. When used in qualitative research, vignettes "enable participants to define the situation in their own terms" and "provide a less personal and therefore less threatening way of exploring sensitive topics" (Barter & Renold, 1999). The scenarios were based on a combination of insights taken from previous research findings and media reports about GBV in U.K. universities and piloted with students (who did not take part in the interviews) to ensure that the narratives were clear and "rang true" for them. In the interviews, students read each vignette, discussing each one in turn. Interviewees frequently and spontaneously raised their own experiences in the process of talking about the vignettes, suggesting that this approach was helpful in facilitating a space for such conversations. Analyzing interviewees' constructions of fictional scenarios is useful in its own right and a common feature of studies employing vignettes. However, here we focus on examining the interviewees' accounts of their own encounters in response to one particular vignette[3] to explore the complexities inherent in university students' perceptions about one manifestation of GBV—the continuum of sexual violence in the NTE—and of resistance to it.

Based on a constructivist theoretical framework, we used the qualitative data analysis software NVivo 10 to identify patterns and enable the organization and thematic analysis of the interview transcripts (Braun & Clarke, 2006). We identified significant concepts within each transcript through a process of continuous coding (e.g., accounts of sexual harassment), following which the concepts were compared across different transcripts to reveal emerging common and divergent themes (e.g., different constructions of sexual harassment experiences). At this stage, a process of constant comparative analysis between and within transcripts enabled the development and refinement of the themes. The aim was to go beyond the semantic content of the data and to examine the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualizations as well as the broader sociocultural contexts and structural conditions that we theorize as shaping the semantic content of the data (see Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Ethical approval was obtained from the University Research Ethics Committee. Participants were made aware of the potentially distressing nature of the interview themes, and information about appropriate services was provided. In recognition of hierarchies between academic staff and students, student participants were reassured that (non)participation would not affect any academic outcomes, and members of the

research team only interviewed students whom they were not currently teaching. Pseudonyms have been used to protect the anonymity of participants.

There are some limitations of the data and of the study. A convenience sample ($n = 26$) was recruited through advertisements on campus. The aim was not to be numerically representative, but to achieve sample adequacy through the inclusion of diverse participants who may experience GBV on campus in different ways as a result of their gender, sexuality, or ethnicity. To some extent, the final sample achieved reflects this diversity; for example, it is relatively varied in terms of ethnicity compared with the student intake at this university. As noted above, we also recruited male interviewees, who are less likely to be included in studies of GBV on campus. Most research participants, however, were women (19 out of 26). Although special efforts were made to recruit men (e.g., through signposting in the recruitment advertisement), there may have been perceptions of the topic as women-oriented. In addition, women are more likely to experience GBV and may have been more attracted to the study for this reason. Finally, while two (female) students who identified as nonheterosexual were interviewed, it would have been beneficial to recruit nonheterosexual men and transgender or nonbinary students, as both groups may experience particular manifestations of GBV in the form of homophobic/transphobic abuse.

As a nonprobability sample was employed and the study is based on students at one university, the generalizability of the interviews to the population is somewhat limited. However, generalization in *statistical* terms is usually not a central concern in qualitative research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 96) where the emphasis is on "information-rich" cases (Patton, 2015) and on gaining a comprehensive, "subjective understanding of *how* and *why* people perceive, reflect, role-take, interpret, and interact" (Adler & Adler, 2012, p. 8). The nuanced and in-depth analysis presented here offers this kind of valuable insight into students' perspectives in the under-researched U.K. context. Moreover, it has been argued that generalizability should not be understood as solely a property of quantitative research based on probabilistic sampling (Gobo, 2008). Further qualitative and quantitative studies are needed to fully establish whether these patterns are empirically present in other U.K. universities. However, this research expands knowledge of how students make sense of, and respond to, GBV in the NTE and in doing so contributes to broader conceptual understandings of agency and gendered structures in these contexts. Key findings about barriers to resistance and the importance of employing a nuanced, disaggregated understanding of agency to examining possibilities for resistance are applicable to other contexts.

The themes that emerged from the analysis of the data are presented alongside a discussion of students' experiences and perceptions. These themes include student accounts of how they experience the NTE as a gendered and heterosexist space, as well as their experiences of sexual harassment in these spaces and of the responses from staff in NTE venues. The final theme explores a range of student responses to sexual violence in the NTE and analyses the effectiveness of their actions in challenging the gendered norms and cultures that underpin such violence.

## The Gendered Spaces of the NTE: Constructing Women as Subjects of Consumption

Students' accounts indicated that the NTE is overwhelmingly constructed around the presumption of a heterosexual male consumer. As one interviewee noted,

> You know how they promote these club things . . . and it's like "oh, free drinks for you"— they target certain people. Like the women they put on leaflets most of the time—because I've walked past them; they've never offered [it to] me. The way they're dressed, kind of airbrushed celebrity, small figure and probably half-dressed or totally naked to be honest. (Letitia, Black British woman)[4]

Letitia was aware of how, under this heterosexual male gaze, she fell short of the standards of physical appearance deemed desirable in certain nightclubs, and outlined bouncers' roles in policing the bodies that belong within these spaces. She surmised that she did not belong because she was seen as a "geek" who "belongs in the library." The women depicted on the leaflets, at least in the context of nightclubs in this city, are also almost exclusively White, so racialized constructions of desirable femininity may also have played a role in her exclusion. These flyers were also the subject of criticism by another female interviewee, Eva, who identified as "equally attracted to both males and females." She reported working with the "LGBT" (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) society at her college to prevent nightclubs from circulating flyers using fetishized images of lesbian women.

Eva described her experiences at a singles theme night, the "kinky disco." The nightclub had two levels, with the upper balcony reserved for men and decorated with pictures of scantily dressed women in sexually suggestive poses. The space enabled men to look down at women positioned on the lower balcony:

> They have "kinky disco," which in itself says a lot . . . they had girls' [pictures] sort of up on the walls with like really, really like short and revealing clothing and stuff. It was just women, it was very straight. It sort of felt like you were being looked at more because people were sort of expecting everyone to dress in a certain way. . . . I think because people would, like, look up the sort of the pictures and the actual girls that are up there. So they'll look around and you're sort of there looking at yourself and your friends and then there's other people looking at you. (Eva, White British woman)

While Eva pointed out the heterosexist representations in the imagery on the walls ("it was very straight"), other respondents talked about their discomfort with representations of "girl-on-girl stuff" (Zoe, White woman) to promote events as sexy/glamorous. As representations of gender are intertwined with constructions of sexuality, nonheterosexual people may experience "lad culture" differently (Phipps & Young, 2012) given the pervasive heteronormativity within such spaces. The promotional literature and gatekeeping policies of these nightclubs construct women as objects to be consumed and rely on fantasies of lesbians as seen through a heterosexual male gaze (Gill, 2009). This heterosexist, classed and racialized construction of the ideal relationship/

body is not only problematic in contributing to the objectification/subjectification of all women, but particularly excludes those who are older, non-White, disabled, or not heterosexual (Gill, 2009; McRobbie, 2009).

Eva's quote above also illustrates how women are expected to act as sexual *subjects/ agents*, rather than being passively objectified: "you're sort of there looking at yourself." Letitia's account indicates how bodily presentation assumes primacy in these gendered spaces as women's inappropriate (not appropriately sexualized), or unfeminine, presentation limits their access to nightclubs (Chatterton & Hollands, 2003), whereas men's bodily presentation is differently policed, for example, to prevent men attired in ripped jeans or sportswear from entering. Eva and Letitia seem to suggest that they are not as free to choose their bodily presentation as postfeminist narratives imply. Gill (2008) argues that the increasingly frequent "erotic" presentation of girls' and women's bodies in public spaces means that women are no longer seen as traditional passive objects of the patriarchal gaze. Instead, they are presented as desiring sexual subjects who actively choose to undertake the requisite forms of beauty protocol, "freely" self-positioning their female body as sexually available to men at all times (Ticknell et al., 2003), and expect—indeed, welcome—the male gaze. In this notion of choice as productive of subjectivity, women's ongoing work to achieve these gendered standards are framed within a neoliberal "pleasing themselves" discourse (Gill 2008), whereby women are doing it for themselves.

But pleasing themselves in this manner also comes at a cost; our research participants were all too aware that these choices are fraught with contradictions and impossibilities:

> Because my friends they drink and they're like a bit wild. So they get a lot of attention when we go out. So they're used to people coming up to them . . . touching, and stuff like that, then they have to like turn around, like, don't do that. (Janice, Black British woman)

Janice seems to be reiterating the much-documented connection between intoxication and gendered risk (Brooks, 2011; Sheard, 2011). Victim blaming is inherent in Janice's suggestion of a causal connection between her friends' mode of bodily presentation/alcohol consumption and the unwanted sexual attention that they routinely experience ("*so* they get a lot of attention"), which they then have to find ways to deter. The omnipresent threat of sexual violence requires women to engage in multiple "safe-keeping" acts such as not dressing in certain ways, or avoiding certain public locales. Literature on risk and intoxication in the NTE indicates that women who do not conform to this "performative condition of normative femininity" (Campbell, 2005, p. 119) may be blamed if they are deemed to have made themselves "vulnerable" to sexual assault through failing to adhere to appropriate feminine behavior (Nicholls, 2018)—in this case, by being "a bit wild."

In a small city dominated by the presence of the university, many students also inhabit the NTE as workers and encounter similar imperatives. As one student recounted,

> I had a friend . . . that worked there and she had to go, like, dressed in like hot pants. I was like, but why? But the men that work there they were dressed in trousers. . . . Because of what she was wearing she was getting her arse pinched by a lot of the people that were there. (Molly, White British woman)

Molly's account notes that dress codes for male bar staff were not sexualized, which demonstrates how the sexualization of the NTE reflects the imagined desires of the heterosexual male customer. Such constructions of women's sexuality as part of the consumer's service experience require women workers to not only conform to sexualized dress and appearance codes but also to perform feminine receptivity toward male customers' sexual advances. Women service workers' exposure to customer sexual violence in bars/hotels is exacerbated by management techniques seeking to maximize profits, such as encouraging the sale of alcohol (Good & Cooper, 2016; Wolkowitz, 2006).

Further sections will explore students' accounts of and responses to sexual violence within the spaces of the NTE.

## Student Experiences of Sexual Harassment in the NTE: "This Is Just What Happens"

This section outlines students' experiences of sexual harassment and explores how students interpret and account for these experiences. Interviewees described how men would routinely run their hands over women's backs, grab their bottom, and persistently invade their private space. Sexual harassment in the NTE was constructed as part of the fabric of young women's everyday social lives: "it is something that a lot of women do put up with," "I expect it to happen," and "I'm not shocked" were some of the phrases participants used and suggest that such violations were the norm.

> I do know it happens a lot because when you're in a club and you're walking through the dance floor, guys will pat your bum on the way past. . . . It's kind of accepted. I think it's accepted in the sense [that] because if you said no and they carried on doing it, it becomes even worse because it's sort of like they've been told to back off. (Lucy, White British woman)

Lucy suggests drawing attention to harassment would only serve to highlight the lack of consent, which would make women's lack of power apparent. Best, then, to ignore it. The language Lucy uses to describe the nonconsensual touching also downplays the act; a "pat" can be affectionate, unlike other possible descriptions such as "grope" or "grab," which imply aggression. In their narratives, students accounted for this violence in various ways:

> A: Once you're in a club, I think people think rules are different, definitely.
> Q: Different, how?
> A: Men, they like to wander up and grab you on the backside. I've actually had been pinched at a bar and someone's put their hands around me and grabbed my

breasts from behind before, lots in my experience. It seems that people do think that if you're inside a club, the rules are different. Most of them wouldn't do that on the street. (Alice, White British woman)

Alice suggests that nightclubs are spaces where the rules are different from the outside world. Interviewees' construction of the NTE as emotionally charged spaces where sexual aggression is normalized or accepted reiterates observations in scholarship that part of the attraction of these spaces are the opportunities for transgression of social norms that are taken for granted during daytime (Hubbard, 2005; Williams, 2008). This language of exceptionalism ignores the many ways in which these so-called "transgressions" replicate the violence women encounter elsewhere, such as on public transport and the streets, during "normal" times (Girlguiding 2017; Vera-Gray, 2016). As a counterpoint to exceptionalism, the concept of the continuum of violence (Kelly, 1988) highlights the common character underlying sexual violence across different spaces, and between different forms of violence, such as rape to more commonplace forms of harassment. This enables us to recognize parallel behaviors within the NTE and other spaces, while paying attention to specific constructions of such behaviors in the NTE, which we argue serve to hinder efforts to challenge them.

Although interviewees tended to construct sexual harassment as something to be expected, they nevertheless articulated the impact it had on them. One common theme emerging from the interviews was a sense of violation:

J: It is accepted because nobody says anything about it, nobody really makes it a big-enough deal.

Q: What do you think would happen if they did make a big deal?

J: I don't know, but these kind of things, they seem harmless in a way. I don't agree with it. I think you should be able to say . . . people shouldn't have to have people slapping their bums and making them feel uncomfortable. But at the same time, it's like, "oh, he only touched a bum or he only put his arms around you, so what's the big deal?" . . . Because you just think, oh, well, did I really get harmed? (Janice, Black British woman)

Janice simultaneously normalizes and minimizes sexual harassment, using words like "only," not a "big deal," and "did I really get harmed," but also condemns it by signaling her disagreement with these very narratives.

Other interviewees were more unequivocal in their condemnation:

(I felt) disgusted, angry and awful. . . . It was horrible, I felt uncomfortable, I didn't want to be there anymore. . . . (Alice, White British woman)

Some interviewees interpreted sexual harassment through essentialist understandings of gender and sex which accounted for men's actions and framed women's responses:

It's not that I think that should be acceptable in society. It's basically lazy to say we don't want to deal with it, so you should just let it happen. But it shouldn't really be like that—I don't know, my flatmates think it's fine [for that to happen] when they go out. (Molly, White British woman)

Molly seems to be articulating the everyday-ness of this violence which renders resisting futile, as well as the need to take a stance and reject it. Scholarship on violence against women has questioned this paradox, asking why do "normal" behaviors of men and boys feel like harmful violations to many women and girls (Kelly, 1988)? This paradox also frames the issue of what the appropriate response to such violence may be, as Rebecca noted,

The boys have this thing that, oh you should be grateful for all the attention. But you see that often the girls don't want to be rude or whatever, but it's obvious that they don't want the attention. . . . I think a big group of boys, it's like this unspoken rule that we're going to be this big manly group of men and we're going to like go off and do what men do. We're going to pull lots of women, yeah. . . . I'd say it happens at least once every night, at least once. You just get fed up . . . I end up being rude because I just don't want that sort of attention. (Rebecca, White British woman)

Several participants invoked biologically determinist narratives about men's innate drive for sex, their need to "pull" as part of their "natural" impulse to initiate sexual contact, and women's corresponding role as sexual gatekeepers. Again, the discursive strategies deployed here simultaneously condemn and reinscribe gendered sexual scripts. These narratives suggest that simply appearing attractive—in a context where women's entry into nightclubs is premised upon a "freely" chosen hypersexual mode of bodily presentation—encourages male sexual aggression because men's sexual appetites cannot be controlled. At the same time, traditional, as well as postfeminist, constructions of femininity commonly require women to take responsibility for managing male desire. Women are blamed if they are seen to have made themselves "vulnerable" through ineffective gatekeeping of sexual advances (Nicholls, 2018) which "let it happen," or labeled as "rude" if their gatekeeping efforts are seen as too assertive.

Our respondents utilized culturally available discourses relating to heteronormative sexual scripts to make sense of everyday harassment, violence, coercion, and sexism in the context of the NTE. Their accounts highlight how dominant discourses of compulsory heterosexuality and gendered norms about sexual subjectivities shape young people's understandings of such violence as natural and inevitable. However, as documented in other research (Brooks, 2011; Graham et al., 2017; Tinkler et al., 2016), such violence is simultaneously condemned as an unacceptable violation.

## Invisible in Plain Sight: Gendered Discourses About Sexual Violence and the (In)credible Words of Women

While recognizing the harm caused by everyday forms of sexual violence, interviewees also reflected on the difficulties of challenging such behaviors:

The nightclub one, it is hard. There'll be fights, abuse hurled at you just because you're trying to challenge it. You wouldn't, because you want to avoid the trouble. It's horrible to think that because you can't like challenge it and change this social norm. And some [men] might be like [to other lads who subject a woman to unwanted attention], "Oh lad, at least you tried." You know what I mean? Or some might find it funny, it's a laugh, it's banter that he got rejected. (Ryan, White British man)

Despite widespread sexual harassment in the NTE, several interviewees reported that such invisibilization and minimization of sexual violence was enacted not just by perpetrators and bystanders—particularly men—but also by bar staff and bouncers.

> L: Things like that still happen in front of security's eyes, but they just stand there doing nothing. If I've seen it and if I say something to them, they just turn around and laugh in my face. So it's like you just end up just keeping quiet and not really saying much. . . . It's only when they [boys] maybe cause a fight . . . that's when they just come in, get you out, chuck them out. . . . I don't really know why they don't say anything. Maybe they think that their job is like, I'm only here to protect people from getting harmed and nothing else.
> Q: So you don't think they see that as harm?
> L: I think [when] it's more physical, that's when they act upon it. Well, he hasn't fought with nobody. He hasn't punched nobody. So oh well, nothing we can do about it, just let him in. (Letitia, Black British woman)

Letitia suggests bouncers routinely invalidate women's experiences of sexual violence. Letitia does not mention just one incident, but describes a pattern of aggressions and any help-seeking by women being ignored by bouncers who police physical conflicts between men (seen as harmful), while perceiving men's harassment of women as unproblematic (Tinkler et al., 2016). This invisibilization of men's sexual harassment of women as a private, trivial matter between two people has been documented in scholarship (Kelly & Radford, 1990), and was what motivated one student to volunteer for the BI program:

> They [bouncers] don't bother. They're not interested in that, not particularly, until . . . they're scrapping or whatever. . . . If there's trouble for the club, then they're interested. But if there is just trouble for one person that's moaning, that is whatever. We're not interested. That's what sparked me because I'm hearing from my friends who are girls like, god, there's so many annoying lads knocking about who won't leave you alone in clubs. And I'm like, why is that the case. So that's what really drew me to it [the Stand Together programme]. (Ryan, White British man)

In the face of disinterest from bar staff and bouncers who categorize women's complaints as an overreaction, one woman took matters into her own hands:

> I was once chucked off of a club because I basically stood up for something that I thought, no, I'm not going to take this. And then I was thrown out of it. I was told to go out. And

I tried to explain it to them. I'm like, you don't get it. It's this guy that came up to me and started saying all these things and I basically told him, no, stop it. And then they're like, well, you were kind of arguing too much. And I was like, no, I wasn't arguing. And they were like, just go away. . . . He was so close to me and I was like, please can you just leave. And he wouldn't leave. But they looked at it yeah, basically, like I was the one causing trouble. (Letitia, Black British woman)

Letitia's public challenge to sexual aggression was constructed as the problem, rather than the initial sexual violence, which was perceived as a private matter.

Some students felt that student union-run venues were more cognizant of potential sexual harassment and took measures to create safer drinking cultures, including having supportive bar staff. This highlights the importance of prevention education programs for engaging with nightclubs in local communities—an uphill task, where any such efforts may constitute a challenge to their business model.

## Diverse Student Responses to Sexual Violence: Building Resilience, Reworking and Resistance

The ephemeral nature of most microaggressions (a fleeting touch, an unseen hand grabbing a bottom) combined with the prevailing culture of NTEs make resistance difficult. In this cultural and institutional context, women were often forced to devise a range of strategies to inhabit these spaces of fun and pleasure while staying safe.

Katz's conceptually disaggregated notion of agency is useful to understand students' responses to sexual violence in the NTE in a way that avoids the binary characterization of people as *either* passive victims *or* successful agents. Katz seeks to break away from a tradition that reads resistance in every autonomous act by distinguishing between social practices "whose primary effect is autonomous initiative, recuperation, or *resilience*; those acts that attempt to *rework* oppressive and unequal circumstances and those that are intended to *resist*, subvert, or disrupt conditions of exploitation and oppression" (Katz, 2004, p. 242). This approach allows us to unpack the multiple forms, intentions, and effects of agency.

### Strategies of Resilience

Feeling unable to openly challenge persistent, unwelcome attention, some young women felt that avoidance—e.g., ignoring initial sexual advances and aggressions, moving out of reach, leaving the area, or avoiding the perpetrator by talking to others—was the safest, most effective response. Rebecca recounted one such avoidance refusal strategy:

Me and my friend, we had two boys talking to us, and we felt that we couldn't leave really. So I went to the toilet and then like waited until she joined me. You shouldn't have to do that. You should just be like . . . "It's just like girly night-out, can we leave you to it." You can't be yourself with your friends and stuff because they are hanging around. . . . So you

have to really change what you're doing to get yourself out of the situation, which shouldn't be the case. (Rebecca, White British woman).

Hlavka (2014) documents how women respond to aggressive sexual conduct while operating within a heteronormative discourse of gendered expectations of male sexual aggression. Women are required to self-protect, to avoid potentially dangerous situations by "ignoring" behavior or maneuvering to evade attention without provoking retaliation, as documented elsewhere in scholarship on intoxication and sexual violence in the NTE (Brooks, 2011; Graham et al., 2017; Ronen, 2010). In Katz's (2004) formulation of agency, such behavior would be characterized as creative strategies—or even merely ephemeral tactics (Certeau, 1984)—through which women can gain a sense of control over their personal space, though in ways that do little to challenge particular behavior as problematic or disrupt the gendered hierarchies and constructions of femininities/masculinities within these spaces.

## Strategies of Reworking

Several students crafted rehearsed strategies that helped them more directly deflect men's unwanted sexual attentions. A common practice relied on the presence of a male friend, or the invocation of an imaginary boyfriend:

> Most of my girlfriends, it happens to them. It happens an awful lot and obviously you have to be like, Oh, got a boyfriend, and until you say that, until there is another man involved essentially, that's when they are like, Okay, we'll back off. But if you're just saying, get lost, go away, they will continue with it. And I don't know why that boundary just doesn't seem to be there. (Elizabeth, White British woman)

Even more effective than women's assertion of their (pretend) relationship status, were pre-agreed strategies entailing intervention from male friends:

> Sometimes if this happens, I'd just peek from the queue. They [male friends] pick up on it. That you can kind of give them the eye. And like me and my friend have been in situations where . . . they'll like come over and like pretend, "Oh, I've been looking for you, where have you been?" And then the other lads will like back off because it's kind of like, Okay, so they've got, I don't know, like their own males. So it's kind of, like, they're not for us to play with anymore . . . they're not free girls anymore because they've got males looking after them. So they step back. (Lucy, White British woman)

Lucy utilized men's proprietary behavior toward "their" women to avoid harassment by pretending that she is "not free" for them "to play with anymore." Although some men participated in these efforts to keep their women friends safe, they also perceived limitations to this approach. One theater student recounted applying his BI training through this strategy. He was not the only one to recount his frustration at being called upon to be a "boyfriend" because men would only cede their entitlement to another man:

> I might pretend to be her boyfriend or have more stern words with the person. That shouldn't be a reason for them not to touch them just because they have boyfriends. They shouldn't do it anyway. But on a night out, with these idiots, that seems to be the only thing they understand. . . . Any means to stop it from happening you can take, but any means to stop it from turning into a fight . . . if you say that's my girlfriend, nine times out of ten they'll apologize and go away. (Ethan, White British man)

This strategy supports Stanko's (1985) observation on how women's fear of crime and violence leads them to seek protection from familiar men against assumed and real aggressions of other men. However, women's strategies may sometimes incur further risk of harassment from these familiar men as their strategic overtures can then become the pretext for unwanted sexual advances from their "protectors."

One woman recounted pretending that she was a lesbian to deflect persistent unwelcome attention:

> There was a guy that came to us and wouldn't leave us alone even after I'd said I was with someone, I wasn't interested. And he was also oh, well and then carried on. And then we went oh, we are lesbians he was like, Oh, right, okay. And then just wandered off. It seemed to be the easiest way. (Leila, White British woman)

This strategy, while effective in this instance, might again risk drawing sexual harassment from men who bring the hetero male gaze to lesbians, or, indeed, risk homophobic abuse. However, Nicholls (2018) argues that threats of sexual violence and harassment in these spaces are primarily associated with women's positioning as subordinated gendered subjects, rather than with the policing of "nonnormative" sexualities. She suggests that young women are more concerned with managing the risks associated with a heterosexualized male gaze than with a homophobic gaze, and adopting markers of normative, heterosexual femininity, while expected within the spaces of the NTE, was also felt to increase the risks of receiving this kind of "unwanted attention" and, hence, needed to be carefully managed (Nicholls, 2018).

Katz (2004) argues that such reworking strategies may be a product of a lack of consciousness of relations of oppression. However, almost all respondents who reported these tactics also noted their frustration at the limited efficacy of more direct efforts to challenge unwanted sexual attention/aggression and the risks associated with a direct refusal. It can be argued that rather than a lack of consciousness, their reworking strategies may be shaped as much by the cultural context of the NTE as they are by broader gendered sexual scripts within which women are forced to manage the risk of sexual aggression, while choosing the most effective and safe refusal strategy to avoid escalation. While men's persistent unwanted attention is naturalized as "what men do," women's negotiation of consent can prove to be a delicate balancing act: too forceful a rejection of men's sexual aggressions would risk positioning these women as not only unreasonable and a "bad sport" (Sue, 2010), but rude and thereby unfeminine, and may expose them to further risks. One interviewee recalled how a female friend who rejected a man's unwanted advances in a forthright manner was punched by him.

Reworking strategies may deter sexual violence in the immediate term. However, it can be argued that such refusal tactics serve to reinscribe the gendered norms that underpin the behaviors and attitudes that they seek to evade. These reworking strategies take the woman out of the ambit of risk by positioning her as "already taken," but in the process construct other, "free," women as legitimate objects of male sexual aggression/attention.

## Strategies of Resistance and Overt Challenges

Students described various practices entailing direct challenges in the face of sexual violence. A few women recounted attending nightclubs in groups to derive protection from each other's presence, as documented elsewhere (Graham et al., 2017; Griffin et al., 2009; Ronen, 2010). One program volunteer described initiatives that she took to "look out for" other female friends—particularly to prevent predatory men "taking advantage" of women who were too drunk to give consent—and how this had led to her being labeled a "cockblocker." This pejorative phrase positioned her as a "spoilsport" ("blocker") for preventing men ("cocks"), constructed as "natural" sexual aggressors, from achieving their goal. A few women reported calling out such behavior and challenging it directly where they encountered it:

> Especially the queues, the queues are like really annoying. . . . I've been in a situation where I was in a queue and these things happen almost all the time. You are in a queue, you have a male behind you and then you know, it's like a crampy queue so you can't really stand with enough space and then he tries to push himself on you . . . at first I kept quiet and then it comes, I was like, you have to stop it. I'm telling you now, you have to stop because if you do it again you won't like what will happen. . . . And then he left the line. (Grace, Black British woman)

However, overt challenges were seen as risky and as likely to be rebuffed by the assertion that men's "normal" behavior or "routine" sexual advances had been misinterpreted by the women.

> When you go to nightclubs and it's a crowded place and people are passing by, it's very common for guys who are passing by to—they just put their hands and feel the girls' backs. That happens a lot. Like it could be seen as innocent, but I kind of think it's probably not. I don't like it . . . he probably just wanted to get past, probably shouldn't have challenged him. But then again, you don't know if they are trying to—if they've bad intentions or whatever. I have shouted at a boy before because he like, he stood behind me and . . . I didn't like [the way] he was touching me. And he's like, "I am not doing anything," and he carried on doing it. And then I did shout at him. And he was like, "I didn't realize." And that sense of entitlement that they think you should be okay with that, if they do what they like. (Rebecca, White British woman)

Rebecca recognizes and condemns this man's sense of entitlement, which characterized her rejection as simultaneously a misunderstanding and an overreaction. Within a differentiated conception of agency, Katz (2004) characterizes such utterances and

actions that directly challenge oppressive social relations and contexts as resistance. Such a contextualized approach to agency seeks to move beyond the romantic assumptions that equate agency with autonomous action: a conceptualization that preempts empirical research that takes into account socioeconomic forces, racial and sexual subjectification, institutional hierarchies, or even just the contingencies of everyday life. Katz characterizes *resistance* as action or utterances that involve oppositional consciousness and seek to achieve emancipatory change. She contrasts resistance from forms of *reworking* that alter the organization, but not the polarization of power relations, and from *resilience*, practices that enable people to survive without really changing the circumstances that make such survival so hard.

## Conclusion

Our analysis suggests that the most significant barriers hindering resistance to sexual violence in the NTE include normalization of sexual assault/harassment, problematic responses from men and NTE staff (bouncers) to attempts at resistance, and postfeminist constructions of GBV as an individualized problem, rather than a product of gendered power structures. Taken together, these constraints mean that despite recognition of problematic aspects of the NTE, young people may normalize and individualize sexual violence in these spaces, leading them to perform acts of resilience and to individual navigation and reworking of the culture of the NTE to emerge (relatively) unscathed, rather than to outright resistance. This is perhaps unsurprising given the strength of postfeminist discourses, as neoliberal conceptions of gendered selves and of GBV militate against collective mobilization. On the contrary, there was some evidence of reworking and resistance among interviewees who connected their specific experiences of sexual violence to broader gendered power relations and therefore perceived the need for more conscious and potentially collective acts to challenge, rather than simply survive, the NTE. Attempts to shift the violence-tolerant culture of the NTE need to engage with all of these barriers and to highlight the importance of collective action to tackle the problem.

In the postfeminist neoliberal context which depoliticizes/degenders GBV, our findings reiterate criticisms of some U.S. BI initiatives which overemphasize individualized solutions to GBV and employ problematic, degendered concepts of "power-based violence" (Coker et al., 2011; Katz et al., 2004, p. 689). The findings in our study demonstrate the need to engage with and challenge postfeminist equalization discourses within which sexist and heteronormative attitudes and behaviors are repackaged as individual, freely chosen modes of acting and being. Within these discourses, GBV is characterized as a private matter for the victim, rather than an ongoing issue that reflects and reinforces existing gendered social relations. Prevention education can potentially raise awareness of these complexities, including shifting degendered conceptualizations of GBV.

GBV and the gender norms that underpin it may be experienced differentially based on one's location on the various matrices of privilege or disadvantage. There is a lack of research that deploys an intersectional lens to understand GBV and antiviolence

activism. Any attempt to challenge GBV through institutional responses needs to address the links between gender and other axes of inequality such as class, disability, and nonbinary gender presentations.

Our analysis of students' experiences of the NTE also offers valuable insights around defining intervention/resistance and on the kinds of agentic practices that are possible in oppressive contexts. What constitutes an intervention needs further inter-rogation, as does the possibility of defining and measuring "success." In spaces such as the NTE, acts of sexual violence are often ephemeral and embedded within domi-nant cultural norms, making collective resistance by students seeking to inhabit these spaces particularly challenging. Understanding strategies used to evade or challenge GBV is therefore instructive in analyzing the nature of resistance at this individual, micro-level, as well as in illuminating how available modes of resistance might serve to reinscribe prevailing gender norms. Finally, our analysis highlights both the con-straints on, and possibilities for, more collective and potentially transformative (stu-dent) resistance within the gendered spaces of the NTE.

## Acknowledgment

## Declaration of Conflicting Interests

## Funding

## ORCID iD

Sundari Anitha ⓘD https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6918-3680

## Notes

1. We define sexual violence as a continuum of behaviors and expressions from rape and sexual assault to more everyday violations such as street sexual harassment, name-calling, and technology-based nonconsensual circulation of sexual images.
2. Bystander intervention (BI) programs seek to foster community responses to gender-based violence (GBV) (Banyard et al., 2007) by training individuals to identify behaviors and expressions of GBV, and to intervene to challenge them. The BI program at this university was implemented by academics (supported by the students' union), in collaboration with three charities working to address violence against women, and involved social marketing through the dissemination of student-designed posters, peer education, and a theater project.
3. The vignette that generated the data is as follows: "You are standing in a queue waiting to go into a club in the High Street. A group of four male students that you recognise from

your course are laughing and making comments to two female students dressed in short skirts, who are standing in front of them. One of the men slaps the bum of the girl directly in front of him and his friend then tries to put his arms around both of the women. Both women try and shrug the man off and one tells him to 'get lost' and pushes him away. You then hear one of the men calling her a 'frigid bitch' and saying that she should be grateful for the attention. The men continue to try and pinch/tickle the women, who eventually leave the queue and walk away."

4. Pseudonyms have been assigned to all research participants.

## References

Adler, P. A., & Adler, P. (2012). Contribution. In S. E. Baker & R. Edwards (Eds.), *How many qualitative interviews is enough? Expert voices and early career reflections on sampling and cases in qualitative research* (pp. 8–11). National Centre for Research Methods Review Paper: Economic and Social Research Council, UK. http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/2273/4/how_many_interviews.pdf.

Anitha, S., & Lewis, R. (2018). Introduction. In S. Anitha & R. Lewis (Eds.), *Gender based violence in university communities: Policy, prevention and educational interventions* (pp. 1–20). Policy Press.

Banyard, V. L., Moynihan, M. M., & Plante, E. G. (2007). Sexual violence prevention through bystander education: An experimental evaluation. *Journal of Community Psychology*, *35*, 463–481.

Barter, C., & Renold, E. (1999). The use of vignettes in qualitative research. *Social Research Update*, Issue 25. http://sru.soc.surrey.ac.uk/SRU25.html

Bogren, A. (2011). Gender and alcohol: The Swedish press debate. *Journal of Gender Studies*, *20*(2), 155–169.

Bogren, A. (2008). Women's intoxication as "dual licentiousness": An exploration of gendered images of drinking and intoxication in Sweden. *Addiction Research & Theory*, *16*(1), 95–106.

Braithwaite, A. (2002). The personal, the political, third-wave and postfeminisms. *Feminist Theory*, *3*(3), 335–344.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77–101.

Brooks, O. (2011). "Guys! Stop doing it!" Young women's adoption and rejection of safety advice when socializing in bars, pubs and clubs. *British Journal of Criminology*, *51*, 635–651.

Campbell, A. (2005). Keeping the "lady" safe: The regulation of femininity through crime prevention literature. *Critical Criminology*, *13*(2), 119–140.

Certeau, M. D. (1984). *The practice of everyday life*. University of California Press.

Chatterton, P., & Hollands, R. (2003). *Urban nightscapes: Youth culture, pleasure spaces and corporate power*. Routledge.

Coker, A. L., Cook-Craig, P. G., Williams, C. M., Fisher, B. S., Clear, E. R., Garcia, L. S., & Hegge, L. M. (2011). Evaluation of Green Dot: An active bystander intervention to reduce sexual violence on college campuses. *Violence Against Women*, *17*(6), 777–796.

Connell, R. W. (2011). *Confronting equality: Gender, knowledge and global change*. Polity Press.

Day, K. (2010). Pro-anorexia and "Binge-drinking": Conformity to damaging ideals or "new," resistant femininities? *Feminism & Psychology*, *20*(2), 242–248.

Day, K., Gough, B., & McFadden, M. (2004). Warning! Alcohol can seriously damage your feminine health. *Feminist Media Studies*, *4*(2), 165–183.

Dean, J. (2010). *Rethinking contemporary feminist politics*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Fileborn, B. (2012). Sex and the city: Exploring young women's perceptions and experiences of unwanted sexual attention in licensed venues. *Current Issues in Criminal Justice*, *24*, 241–260.

Finch, E., & Munro, V. E. (2005). Juror stereotypes and blame attribution in rape cases involving intoxicants: The findings of a pilot Study. *British Journal of Criminology*, *45*(1), 25–38.

Genz, S. (2006). Third Way/ve: The politics of post-feminism. *Feminist Theory*, *7*(3), 333–353.

Gill, R. (2007). *Gender and the media*. Polity Press.

Gill, R. (2008). Empowerment/sexism: Figuring female sexual agency in contemporary advertising. *Feminism & Psychology*, *18*(1), 35–60.

Gill, R. (2009). Beyond the "sexualization of culture" thesis: An intersectional analysis of "six-packs," "midriffs" and "hot lesbians" in advertising. *Sexualities*, *12*(2), 137–160.

Gill, R., & Scharff, C. (2011). Introduction. In R. Gill & C. Scharff (Eds.), *New femininities: Postfeminism, neoliberalism and subjectivity*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Girlguiding. (2017). *Girls' attitude survey 2017*.

Gobo, G. (2008). Re-conceptualizing generalization: Old issues in a new frame. In P. Alasuutari, L. Bickman, & J. Brannen (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of social research methods* (pp. 193–213). Sage.

Good, L., & Cooper, R. (2016). "But it's your job to be friendly": Employees coping with and contesting sexual harassment from customers in the service sector. *Gender, Work & Organizations*, *23*(5), 447–469.

Graham, K., Bernards, S., Abbey, A., Dumas, T. A., & Wells, S. (2017). When women do not want it: Young female bargoers' experiences with and responses to sexual harassment in social drinking contexts. *Violence Against Women*, *23*, 1419–1441.

Griffin, C., Bengry-Howell, A., Hackley, C., Mistral, W., & Szmigin, I. (2009). The allure of belonging: Young people's drinking practices and collective identification. In M. Wetherell (Ed.), *Identity in the 21st century: New trends in new times* (pp. 213–230). Palgrave.

Griffin, C., Szmigin, I., Bengry-Howell, A., Hackley, C., & Mistral, W. (2013). Inhabiting the contradictions: Hypersexual femininity and the culture of intoxication among young women in the UK. *Feminism & Psychology*, *23*, 184–206.

Gunby, C., Carline, A., & Beynon, C. (2013). Regretting it after? Focus group perspectives on alcohol consumption, nonconsensual sex and false allegations of rape. *Social & Legal Studies*, *22*(1), 87–106.

Gunby, C., Carline, A., Taylor, S., & Gosling, H. (2020). Unwanted sexual attention in the night-time economy: Behaviors, safety strategies, and conceptualizing "feisty femininity." *Feminist Criminology*, *15*, 24–46.

Hayward, K., & Hobbs, D. (2007). Beyond the binge in "booze Britain": Market-led liminalization and the spectacle of binge drinking. *British Journal of Sociology*, *58*(3), 437–456.

Hey, V. (1986). *Patriarchy and pub culture*. Tavistock Publications.

Hlavka, H. R. (2014). Normalizing sexual violence: Young women account for harassment and abuse. *Gender & Society*, *28*(3), 337–358.

Holloway, S. L., Jayne, M., & Valentine, G. (2009). Masculinities, femininities and the geographies of public & private drinking landscapes. *Geoforum*, *40*, 821–831.

Hubbard, P. (2005). The geographies of "going out": Emotion and embodiment in the evening economy. In J. Davidson, M. Smith, & L. Bondi (Eds.), *Emotional geographies* (pp. 117–137). Ashgate.

Jackson, C., & Tinkler, P. (2007). "Ladettes" and "modern girls": "Troublesome" young femininities. *Sociological Review*, *55*(2), 242–248.

Jordan, A. (2016). Conceptualising backlash: (UK) men's rights groups, anti-feminism and postfeminism. *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law*, *28*(1), 18–44.

Katz, C. (2004). *Growing up global: Economic restructuring and children's everyday lives*. University of Minnesota Press.

Kavanaugh, P. R. (2013). The continuum of sexual violence: Women's accounts of victimization in urban nightlife. *Feminist Criminology*, *8*, 20–39.

Kelly, L. (1988). *Surviving sexual violence*. Polity Press.

Kelly, L., & Radford, J. (1990). "Nothing really happened": The invalidation of women's experiences of sexual violence. *Critical Social Policy*, *10*, 39–53.

McRobbie, A. (2009). *The aftermath of feminism: Gender, culture and social change*. Sage.

Measham, F., & Østergaard, J. (2009). The public face of binge drinking: British and Danish young women, recent trends in alcohol consumption and the European binge drinking debate. *Probation Journal*, *56*(4), 415–434.

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. Jossey-Bass.

Meyer, A. (2010). "Too drunk to say no": Binge drinking, rape and the Daily Mail. *Feminist Media Studies*, *10*(1), 19–34.

Nicholls, E. (2018). *Negotiating femininities in the neoliberal Night-Time Economy: Too much of a girl*. Palgrave.

National Union of Students (NUS). (2010). *Hidden marks: A study of women students' experiences of harassment, stalking, violence and sexual assault*. National Union of Students.

Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. Sage.

Phipps, A., & Young, I. (2012). *That's what she said': Women students' experience of "lad culture" in higher education*. National Union of Students.

Rolando, S., & Törrönen, J. (2014). Boundaries between adult and youth drinking as expressed by young people in Italy and Finland. *Young*, *22*, 227–252.

Ronen, S. (2010). Grinding on the dance floor: Gendered scripts and sexualized dancing at college parties. *Gender & Society*, *24*, 355–377.

Sheard, L. (2011). "Anything could have happened": Women, the Night-Time Economy, alcohol and drink spiking. *Sociology*, *45*, 619–633.

Stanko, E. A. (1985). *Intimate intrusions: Women's experiences of male violence*. Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Starfelt, L. C., Young, R. M., White, K. M., & Palk, G. R. M. (2015). Explicating the role of sexual coercion and vulnerability alcohol expectancies in rape attributions. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *30*(11), 1965–1981.

Sue, D. W. (2010). *Microaggressions in everyday life: Race, gender, and sexual orientation*. John Wiley.

Tan, Q. H. (2013). Flirtatious geographies: Clubs as spaces for the performance of affective heterosexualities. *Gender, Place & Culture*, *20*, 718–736.

Ticknell, E., Chambers, D., Loon, J. V., & Hudson, N. (2003). Begging for it: "New femininities," social agency, and moral discourse in contemporary teenage and men's magazines. *Feminist Media Studies*, *3*(1), 47–63.

Tinkler, J. E., Becker, S., & Clayton, K. A. (2016). "Kind of natural, kind of wrong": Young people's beliefs about the morality, legality, and normalcy of sexual aggression in public drinking settings. *Law & Social Inquiry*, *43*(1), 28–57.

Törrönen, J., & Juslin, I. (2011). From genius of the home to party princess. *Feminist Media Studies*, *13*, 463–489.

Vera-Gray, F. (2016). *Men's intrusion, women's embodiment: A critical analysis of street harassment*. Routledge.

Waitt, G. R., Jessop, L., & Gorman-Murray, A. W. (2011). "The guys in there just expect to be laid": Embodied and gendered socio-spatial practices of a "night out" in Wollongong, Australia. *Gender, Place & Culture*, *18*(2), 255–275.

Williams, R. (2008). Night spaces: Darkness, deterritorialization, and social control. *Space and Culture*, *11*(4), 514–532.

Winlow, S., & Hall, S. (2006). *Violent night: Urban leisure and contemporary culture*. Berg.

Wolkowitz, C. (2006). *Bodies at work*. Sage.

## Author Biographies

**Sundari Anitha**, PhD, is professor of gender, violence, and work at the School of Social and Political Sciences, University of Lincoln, UK. Her research interests lie in two areas: the problem of violence against women and girls in the United Kingdom and India, and in gender, race, and ethnicity in employment relations. She has published widely in both areas. She has been active in campaigns and policy-making to address violence against women and girls for over 20 years. She previously managed a Women's Aid shelter and is a trustee of organizations supporting survivors of domestic violence and labor exploitation/trafficking.

**Ana Jordan**, PhD, is a senior lecturer in the School of Social and Political Sciences at the University of Lincoln. She has researched and published on men's movements, including the construction of fatherhood(s) and masculinity/ies by fathers' rights movements; the gender politics of men's rights groups; the relationship between backlash, postfeminism, and men's movements; and gender-based violence in universities. Her 2019 monograph, *The New Politics of Fatherhood*, examines men's movements in the United Kingdom. Current research includes collaborative work on "crisis," masculinity, and suicide, and a Nuffield Foundation-funded project (*Caregiving Dads, Breadwinning Mums: Transforming Gender in Work and Childcare?*).

**Jill Jameson** is a senior lecturer in criminology at the University of Lincoln and has interests in both criminology and issues relating to the "student experience." She has undertaken research on student employability and engagement, teaching excellence, the "student as producer" (with Katie Strudwick and Sue Bond Taylor, University of Lincoln), bystander programs, and gender-based violence on the university campus (with Ana Jordan, Sundari Anitha, and Zowie Davy) and has published on these themes in journals such as *Enhancing Learning in the Social Sciences* (ELISS) and the *Student Engagement in Higher Education Journal*.

**Zowie Davy**, PhD, is a senior lecturer at the Centre for LGBTQ Research, De Montfort University. Her research and publications center on medicolegal constructions of gender and sexuality in health care. She is currently researching critical approaches to gender dysphoria, parents' experiences of school cultures while supporting their transgender children, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) sex work migration and health. Her book, *Recognizing Transsexuals*, won the Philip Abrams Memorial Prize in 2012. She is on the board of directors of the International Association for the Study of Sexuality, Culture, and Society, and a scientific advisor for the European Professional Association for Transgender Health.