**‘Everywhere’ or ‘over there’? Managing and spatialising the perceived risks of gender-based violence on a Girls’ Night Out**

Participating in the late-night leisure opportunities afforded by the Night Time Economy (NTE) is an important component of many women’s lives. However, in research contexts such as the UK, Australia, New Zealand and Singapore, drinking and clubbing can be understood as activities imbued with tensions for female revellers (Cullen, 2011; Fileborn, 2016; Lyons and Willot, 2008; Tan, 2013). On the one hand, these activities can be bound up with female friendship and femininity and be theorised as pleasurable and empowering for women (Hutton, 2006). On the other, the NTE can be understood as a site of risk-management and associated with the policing and control of women’s bodies (Buckley and Fawcett 2002; Tan 2013). Crucially, the particular, (hetero)sexualised patterns of engagement that are encouraged and even expected in mainstream nightlife venues may serve to normalise interactions that sit on a continuum of gender-based violence (GBV) for women (Kavanaugh, 2013). It is important to consider the ways in which the various pleasures and dangers of the NTE are experienced and negotiated and how this continues to be shaped by various facets of identity including – but not limited to – one’s gender and sexuality. In particular, the normalisation of (hetero)sexualised behaviours in mainstream bars, pubs and clubs - and the impact that this has on women’s understandings and negotiations of risk and safety – demands further attention.

For the purposes of this chapter, gender-based violence (GBV) will be defined as acts of violence, harassment or aggression perpetuated against individuals because of their gender and sexuality (presumed or otherwise) that take place against a wider backdrop of unequal power relations and social structures (Anitha et al, 2020). GBV exists on a spectrum and incorporates a range of practices not limited to; rape, sexual assault, unwanted sexual attention (including verbal comments and non-consensual touching), and homophobic or transphobic violence and abuse. GBV can include behaviours that may not be legally considered an ‘offence’ but are perceived as unwanted, threatening and non-consensual encounters by those who experience them (Gunby et al, 2020).

Drawing on primary research on the ‘girls’ night out’ in north-east England, this chapter will explore the ways in which a continuum of GBV in and around licensed venues is managed and understood by women through a lens that draws attention to the role of space and place. The chapter will consider the ways in which GBV was positioned by participants as a pervasive and unavoidable aspect of participation in the NTE. At the same time, GBV was also associated with venues or parts of the city centre labelled as problematic, dangerous or risky at night. In this sense, risk was simultaneously understood as embedded throughout *all* mainstream spaces of the NTE yet also regarded as concentrated within particular, ‘no-go’ areas.

*The development of the Night Time Economy*

Public drinking in the UK and other Western contexts has historically been a masculine pastime (Gofton, 1990), with the working man’s club or community pub in industrial villages, towns or cities representing a space where alcohol and masculinity symbolically intersected (Campbell, 2000). By the 1990s, the landscape of UK public drinking had shifted, and cities began to develop dedicated ‘Night Time Economies’ as an attempt to revive ailing urban areas and extend consumption opportunities in city centre spaces into the evening and late night. In this way, formerly industrial citites and towns became ‘remoulded as spheres of leisure and consumption’ (Smith, 2014: 24).

The term ‘Night Time Economy’ describes what Shaw terms ‘night-time economic activity, specifically, the entertainment and retail provisions of cities at night’ (2010: 893). Whilst early ambitions may have been to develop UK urban spaces into ’24-hour cities’ offering a continental-style and cosmopolitan late-night café culture with a range of different social, cultural and leisure opportunities, in reality, most city centres are characterised by clusters of licensed, mainstream bars, pubs and clubs targeted at cash-rich young consumers and encouraging heavy and rapid consumption. Any ambitions to create diverse, multi-purpose social and cultural late-night spaces have been further thwarted by liberalised planning laws that have given rise to a series of what Jayne et al (2011) wittily describe as UK ‘blandscapes’. Marketisation and de-regulation has facilitated the growth of large corporations and chain bars at the expense of local and independent venues (Shaw, 2010), to the point where many UK city centres now display what Smith calls ‘an unavoidable element of uniformity that transcends local specificity’ (2014: 11).

Alongside the development of the NTE and its associated drinking expectations, women have become more active participants in nightlife and drinking spaces (Atkinson and Sumnall, 2016), at least in urban environments[[1]](#footnote-1). The urban NTE has been theorised as an increasingly ‘feminised’ context where broader changes in women’s social positions have allowed them to enter this traditionally male space (Jackson and Tinkler, 2007), although a more cynical view might regard this ‘feminisation’ as a move by the alcohol and nightlife industries to target women as a new consumer market (Hollands and Chatterton, 2002). The 1980s and 1990s certainly saw an expansion of alcohol marketing to more explicitly target women (Chatterton and Hollands 2003), but of course this is not to say that clubbing and drinking are not important for women in the UK and beyond. Research suggests that the ‘night on the town’ offers important opportunities for young women to relax and escape from the often mundane realities of everyday life (Guise and Gill, 2007). In particular, the under-researched phenomenon of the ‘girls’ night out’ may offer unique opportunities to socialise with female friends and spend time away from work and domestic/caring responsibilities (Nicholls, 2019). The NTE has also been conceptualised as a space where women can experiment with different feminine identities (Hutton, 2006), re-write gendered and sexual scripts through shared embodied practices such as collective drinking (Waitt et al, 2011) and use alcohol consumption to excuse behaviour that transgresses boundaries of acceptable femininity and sexuality (Peralta, 2008). However, it is important to consider the ways in which this might be more difficult for women who are positioned further from ‘respectable femininity’ in the first place due to – for example - their sexuality, race or class. Furthermore, the ability of any woman to use the NTE as a space for escape, resistance or transgression is likely to be somewhat constrained by concerns about risk and safety, as this chapter will illustrate.

*Femininity, risk and gender-based violence in the NTE*

Temporal distinctions clearly impact upon urban spaces, and engaging with the NTE marks a distinct way of experiencing the city after dark. The NTE can be understood as a ‘liminal’ space of possibility and pleasure (Hayward and Hobbs 2007), where part of the attraction of the night may be navigating uncertainty, pleasure and risk. However, negotiating these tensions may be difficult for women, who have traditionally been denied access to late night leisure and are expected to engage in safekeeping practices as a ‘condition’ of their femininity. If we understand gender as performative - in that bodies only become gendered through the continued repetition of behaviours, traits and practices that are associated with masculinity and femininity (Butler, 1990) – then being risk-averse and adopting various ‘safekeeping’ practices is inextricably bound up with the performance of appropriate femininity (Campbell, 2005). In other words, women are charged with taking responsibility for their own safety and may be subjected to blame if they are seen to have made themselves ‘vulnerable’ to GBV or other seemingly risky encounters or situations through failing to adhere to standards of appropriate feminine behaviour (Brooks, 2008; Tinkler et al,2018). This may be even more significant for – for example - women of colour, disabled women, transwomen or women who identify as lesbian, bisexual, gay or queer, who may experience specific forms of GBV that are bound up with racist, ableist, transphobic or homophobic abuse.

The risks that women perceive and navigate are compounded in so-called ‘mainstream’ nightlife venues where (hetero)sexualised patterns of interaction are normalised and magnified. As Lindsay (2006) suggests, mainstream venues tend to play popular / chart music and target a specific, heterosexual consumer base. Indeed, an important feature of such spaces is their ‘heterosexualisation’; the mainstream NTE is a site where music and dancing, dress and bodily presentation, atmosphere and alcohol consumption work to create a sexualised and heteronormative environment where certain patterns of interaction are encouraged (Fileborn, 2016). There is a broad expectation that men should ‘pursue’ women in these spaces and act in sexually assertive ways whilst women remain passive (Kavanaugh, 2013). Whilst this may of course be a pleasurable part of the night for revellers who may seek out or desire sexual encounters, it can be argued that the line between expected (hetero)sexualised patterns of interaction and unwanted sexual attention or harassment is a thin one, and this may contribute to the normalisation of various forms of GBV in these spaces (Tinkler et al,2018).

Previous research highlights the wide range of ‘safekeeping’ strategies used by women to manage risk and safety in the spaces of the NTE globally (see Brooks, 2008; Fileborn, 2016; Nicholls, 2017; Sheard, 2011; Waitt et al, 2011), including seeking safety in numbers, moderating alcohol consumption and guarding drinks against ‘spiking’. However, research that considers the ‘girls’ night out’ as a specific form of engagement with the NTE remains limited. This is an important omission as these types of night out may come with specific opportunities (for example to spend time with female friends) yet also with specific challenges (such as attendance at mainstream venues in an all-female group, which may invite specific forms of harassment and unwanted attention). Gunby et al (2020) argue that research into the specificities of the ‘unwanted sexual attention’ aspect of GBV in the NTE - and its management - remains limited in a UK context (see also Anitha et al, 2020). This chapter will address some of these limitations, drawing on primary research in the UK to illustrate the ways in which the perception and management of GBV is a spatialised process in the context of a girls’ night out.

*The Girls’ Night Out Project*

Newcastle-upon-Tyne is the largest city in the north-east of England; formerly known for shipbuilding and heavy industry, but with a more recent reputation as a vibrant ‘party city’ (Buckley and Fawcett, 2002). The NTE is similar to that of a large number of UK city centres with mostly mainstream nightlife but with small alternative or ‘niche’ scenes. In 2012 and 2013, semi-structured and in-depth interviews were conducted with 26 young women aged 18-25 who went on ‘girls’ nights out’ in Newcastle as part of a PhD project. Whilst it is important to recognise that women engage with the NTE in Newcastle in an array of ways, the interviews sought specifically to explore the ways in which the boundaries of ‘appropriate’ femininity were defined and negotiated through embodied practices in the specific and under-researched context of the girls’ night out.

Participants were recruited through a range of methods including snowball sampling, social media posts and presentations at local college and university classes. There was some diversity in terms of sexuality (two-thirds identified as straight, 5 as bisexual, 4 as lesbian and 1 as queer) but less in terms of race (all participants identified as White British). Just under half self-identified as ‘working-class’, with the remainder saying they were ‘middle-class’ or ‘do not identify with a class’. Half of participants were not local to the city and were studying at one of the two Universities, 4 were local and had A-levels or were attending college and the remaining 9 were local and had attended / were attending University either in Newcastle or elsewhere. Some of the participants also self-identified as ‘Geordie’ (a term that can generally be argued to describe working-class people originally from the city).

Rich and in-depth data was collected, with the semi-structured approach providing scope to uncover the ‘perceptions, attitudes and experiences’ of participants (Sheard, 2011: 623). The young women were invited to talk through all aspects of a typical girls’ night out, positioning them as ‘authors of valid and reliable accounts of embodied experience’ (Howson, 2005: 39). There was widespread agreement amongst participants that this type of night is characterised by attendance at mainstream nightlife venues with a group of female friends following an extended session of drinking and getting ready at the home of one friend. Further discussion centred on themes such as dress and appearance, drinking practices and risk management. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, manually coded and subjected to thematic analysis. All participants were given pseudonyms to help preserve anonymity.

*‘Everywhere’: the pervasive threat of gender-based violence on a Girls’ Night Out*

Risk and safekeeping were seen as important considerations for almost all of the young women and many discussed the topic extensively. The ways in which assumptions about the NTE as a risky space came through in women’s discussions of drinking, dress and behaviour highlighted how considerations of risk and safety could be threaded throughout every aspect of the night out as young women continue to be expected to engage in active risk management in these contexts (Brooks, 2008). The possibility of rape or sexual assault heavily policed the behaviour of participants; whilst none talked about directly experiencing this in the NTE (although of course this does not mean none had), the mere threat of it shaped their experiences of a girls’ night out. As Campbell (2005) argues, the *fear* of rape and sexual assault produces particular types of vulnerable, feminine bodies, makes GBV seem inevitable and affects women’s behaviour and the ways in which they move through and use space.

Participants remarked that ‘unwanted attention’ from men was the most common form of GBV experienced when they were drinking and clubbing with female friends, suggesting a hesitance to overtly name sexual risks which is mirrored in other research with young women (Griffin et al, 2009). Their understandings of ‘unwanted attention’ included acts which might be recognised legally as sexual offences or crimes, but also other behaviours that were nonetheless experienced as non-consensual, threatening and uncomfortable. The ‘unwanted attention’ participants reported they had received from men on a night out included; feeling ‘watched’ or ‘stared at’; drink spiking; unsolicited conversations, catcalling, shouted comments or insults and unwanted touching and groping (see also Brooks, 2008; Fileborn, 2016; Sheard, 2011).

One significant finding across the data was the normalisation and – at times – the trivialisation of GBV in mainstream nightlife spaces. The participants associated *all* mainstream nightlife spaces with the risks of unwanted sexual attention and harassment and positioned this kind of interaction as inevitable and expected. For example, Nicole described being groped as ‘something which happens on a regular basis’, and went on to explain:

Things like that, you kind of let go. Are they acceptable? Probably not… But I think it would be *worse* in a supermarket because it’s not a social environment, really… You can kind of accept someone’s had a few drinks… bit cheeky… If they did it in a supermarket, I’d be like ‘what the hell are you doing?!’ I think that could be perceived as *worse*. I suppose it’s just the atmosphere you’re in more than anything else. From a serious atmosphere to one where it’s a little bit silly, and everyone’s a bit drunk (Nicole, 24)

Nicole’s comments echo findings reported elsewhere suggesting that sexual harassment and GBV are understood as ‘just what happens’ in the context of a night out (Anitha et al, 2020). Space and context are important, as Nicole suggests that within the specific spatial and temporal contexts of the NTE, the ‘rules’ about appropriate conduct may be different to the rules in spaces such as supermarkets, echoing findings in previous research about the specific ways in which the context of the NTE excuses or even *encourages* types of heterosexual interaction that would not be permitted elsewhere (Boyd, 2010). Some participants also reported that simply the layout of mainstream venues could make women feel more vulnerable (for example dancefloors in the centre of nightclubs with specific space around the edges for men to ‘watch’ women). Nicole also suggests that perpetrator drunkenness can, to an extent, excuse certain behaviours that would not be acceptable in other, more ‘serious’ spaces (although of course, this is not to say that GBV does not routinely occur in those spaces). In this sense, alcohol may function not just as an excuse for women to behave in transgressive ways but as an excuse for the ‘cheeky’ behaviour of others that is experienced nonetheless as uncomfortable or unpleasant. The belief that some degree of GBV is unavoidable and should be expected in these spaces was also reinforced through appeals to essentialist notions of male sexuality as somehow ‘naturally’ uncontrollable and uncontainable, as seen in Kate’s (20) comment that ‘men think with their penises’ and are likely to be incited or aroused by women in these particular contexts who might be dressed – in her words - ‘more provocatively’ than in other settings. This of course presents a source of tension for women who – as I have discussed elsewhere - are simultaneously expected to dress in particular ‘(hetero)sexy’ ways yet to avoid being seen to ‘lead guys on’ through their dress and appearance (Nicholls, 2017).

A degree of unwanted attention was further normalised through the expectation that women should respond by simply deciding to ‘let it go’, as Nicole suggests. Whilst actions like being groped or harassed might be actively and assertively called out in other spaces, the expected response in the NTE might be to downplay or ignore such behaviour, as noted by other participants who claimed that when they experience verbal or physical harassment their strategy is to ‘keep wur [our] heads down’ (Kirsty, 23), avoid a visible reaction or ‘just ignore it’ (Alex, 19). Where such encounters might be more difficult to ignore completely, it was still important to carefully diffuse an uncomfortable situation in a way that would not be confrontational:

You don’t know what to *say*! You know... you don’t wanna say ‘oh bugger off’, so you try and talk, but you try and turn away as well... so you’re tryin’ not to give them... I don’t know... without telling them to ‘eff off!’ [both laugh]... You have to keep jokin’, make it awkward! (Joanna, 24)

Referring here to situations where men persistently follow her, wolf-whistling and shouting to get her attention, Joanna describes the avoidance of strategies that might be seen as confrontational. The implication is that harassment from men should be managed it a way that doesn’t involve swearing or even risking making a situation feel ‘awkward’ in any way, perhaps through the use of humour or trying to turn away. Other participants, such as Donna (21), also talked about the difficulties her heterosexual friends might experience in extracting themselves from particular scenarios on a night out without seeming ‘rude’, for example walking away after a man has bought them a drink or started to dance with them. Tinkler et al (2018) report similar findings, suggesting that ‘appropriate’ reactions to GBV are often limited to responses that are indirect, passive or even polite. Of course, to react otherwise may risk escalating an uncomfortable or risky situation.

*‘Over there’: creating ‘risky spaces’ on a Girls’ Night Out*

There was agreement across the interviews that simply to enter the mainstream NTE is to enter a space where women may experience forms of GBV. However, whilst this was positioned as something pervasive, unavoidable, and perhaps expected on a night out, the participants simultaneously worked to ‘contain’ risk by associating it with particular venues or areas within Newcastle’s city centre. As Holt and Griffin (2005) also suggest, risk management in the NTE is likely to be spatialised, for example through the ways women move through public space after dark or make choices about venues to frequent or avoid.

All participants carved the city centre into particular zones or areas which at the time of the research could be broadly demarcated by pricing, branding and clientele. Generally, the so-called ‘Diamond Strip’ (a street of upmarket cocktail bars with associations of affluence and status) was the most popular part of the mainstream NTE and was frequented by most participants, regardless of class, sexuality, age or their status as students or locals. However, all participants were acutely aware of the Diamond Strip’s shared border with what was perceived to be a less desirable and more dangerous part of town, the Bigg Market. Historically, the Bigg Market has been understood as an infamous – perhaps notorious – site of ‘Geordie’ drinking culture, traditionally serving a local, working-class and male crowd (Hollands and Chatterton, 2002). The Bigg Market was often described by participants as a ‘no-go’ area, whilst the venues they preferred to frequent were depicted as familiar and comfortable. In this sense, the subjective and affective experience of *feeling* safer could be created through drawing spatialised distinctions between venues or areas that were felt to be safe and comfortable, and those that were unfamiliar, risky or dangerous.

A number of participants noted that the main advice they had received from others (usually from parents or family, even if they were not local), was to avoid the Bigg Market at all costs, as illustrated by Lydia here, describing advice given to her by her father before she came up to Newcastle to study:

Never, ever go down Bigg Market, ever... like, avoid it, take the other road. When you go down and left is the Bigg Market, and right is... go the other way (Lydia, 21)

As suggested here, often even passing through this problematic space was to be avoided, as the participants created mental maps that carved up city centre space and allowed them to chart ‘safe’ routes through it. Mason’s (2001) research with lesbian women indicates that women may draw on ‘knowledges’ of homophobic violence to construct ‘safety maps’ that help them to navigate public space. A similar practice is evident here; one where ‘knowledges’ may be collective ones that are passed on and shared by others. Several participants depicted the Bigg Market as a site of violent altercations (including glassings and stabbings) and also a space where women might be highly likely to experience forms of GBV, particularly in the form of sexually predatory behaviour from heterosexual men. Hollands and Chatterton describe the space as having a ‘boisterous and sexually charged atmosphere’ (2002: 308), and this certainly seemed to be reflected in the ways in which it was perceived by participants. Lydia goes on to describe the space as ‘dicey’, and to describe an occasion where she did actually walk through the Bigg Market, characterised at the time of the research by a combination of more traditional pubs serving an older, local clientele, ‘disco pubs’ and tightly-packed takeaway venues and taxi ranks. She felt nervous and intimidated as a result of some of the physical features of the space, particularly the crowded cobbled streets and busy takeaways, and the intoxicated people ‘pouring out’ of busy venues and occupying the street.

Whilst characteristics of the physical space and built environment may contribute to feelings of danger, as suggested above, concerns about risk, safety and crime often manifest as fears about certain *people*, and it is important to consider the ways in which the participants’ anxieties about the Bigg Market were entangled with the types of people they expected to find there. Perhaps unsurprisingly, notions of social class were important in shaping the ways in which participants spoke about the Bigg Market, with terms such as ‘rough’ and ‘cheap’ commonly used and with the area described more explicitly as ‘chavvy[[2]](#footnote-2)’ (Ruth, 21) or frequented by older, visibly intoxicated working-class revellers. Descriptions of the area as a ‘stereotypical Geordie type area’ (Zoe, 23) also functioned as veiled ways to talk about class and equate being local/Geordie with an undesirable working-class identity:

The local *men* especially.... [pause].... are more *chavvy...* and a bit more... like, *forward*.... in the way that they ask you stuff. It actually makes me feel uncomfortable (Lucy, 21)

Here, Lucy discursively links local men in the Bigg Market with being ‘chavvy’ (i.e. working-class) and argues that these men are more likely to engage in the types of behaviour that might be seen as ‘forward’ or make women feel harassed and uncomfortable in the NTE. This is also echoed in the work of Wattis et al (2011), who report that the students they spoke to in a similarly working-class, northern town viewed the area and the local residents as risky or dangerous in some way. As they argue, in de-industrialised urban settings, ‘local people become a distinct group from students, and are constructed as problematic amidst connections to crime and other social problems’ (Wattis et al,2011: 761). In this sense, participants’ associations of older, visibly intoxicated and ‘local’ men with an increased likelihood of GBV (and with aggression and violence more generally) firms up boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘them’, and between the type of people who are perceived to go out in the Bigg Market and the type likely to frequent similar venues to participants. Indeed, a sort of ‘territorial’ boundary-drawing between students and locals (with locals associated with all forms of violence) is echoed in previous research (see Holt and Griffin, 2005), although the accuracy of such assumptions can of course be challenged.

Interestingly, the participants who were local to Newcastle themselves often worked particularly hard to distance themselves from the Bigg Market and to make it very clear this was not a part of town they would frequent. Very early in the interview, Kirsty (23) made a point of bringing this up and saying ‘we’re not them kinda Bigg Market fans’. Similarly, her sister Nicole (24) who identified as proudly ‘Geordie’ and working-class, was careful to distinguish between hard-working locals such as herself and the perceived ‘underclass’ prone to excessive drinking, rowdy behaviour and violence that she associated with the Bigg Market. In this way, these participants could associate themselves with the ‘respectable’ rather than the ‘rough’ wedge of the working class (Nayak, 2003) and could also work, much like their student peers, to tie risk and violence (in all its forms) to a particular dangerous and undesirable space within the city centre and those who frequented it.

*Conclusion*

This chapter highlights some of the ways in which young women may talk about their experiences of GBV and risk on a girls’ night out, and the various ways in which they might seek to manage or to *accept* a degree of gendered and sexualised risk in the bars, pubs and clubs of the mainstream NTE. As this discussion has shown, there was some tension in the ways in which participants talked about GBV on night outs, through positioning risk as pervasive and omnipresent in the NTE *but* at the same time associating it with particular venues, settings and parts of town. Interestingly, risk could be simultaneously perceived to be largely confined to particular ‘rough’ areas in the city centre, yet at the same time, a degree of GBV (particularly in the form of being groped, stared at or verbally harassed) was regarded as an embedded and normalised part of the entire mainstream nightlife scene.

On the one hand, it is perhaps unsurprising that young women may work to ‘contain’ risk in particular geographical areas, a strategy noted in other research where regarding certain areas as risky or ‘off-limits’ is a common safekeeping strategy (Green and Singleton, 2006). Women may work to justify their continued presence in these spaces through positioning the venues they frequent as less risky or problematic than other parts of town. Crucially, the drawing of lines and boundaries around more or less ‘risky’ spaces is as much about risky *people* as it is about geography; social class (intersecting with age and student/local distinctions) was central to the ways in which the participants positioned the Bigg Market as a site of risk. Whilst the nature of the space itself *was* important - the tightly-packed venues, the activity spilling out onto the cobbled streets – anxiety was often centred around who was seen to occupy that space and frequent the venues there. In this way, the findings build upon earlier work suggesting class and student/local distinctions may be important for women in conceptualising risk (Holt and Griffin, 2005; Wattis et al, 2011).

On the other hand, women struggled to reconcile the notion that risk is confined to certain ‘no-go’ spaces, as forms of GBV quite obviously affected them in myriad ways, even in the spaces that they depicted as more comfortable, familiar and safe. It was clear from the data that any claims the NTE in the UK has been ‘feminised’ must be treated with caution, as mainstream nightlife venues ‘remain highly masculinised in terms of the male domination of space and the policing of compulsory heterosexuality’ (Chatterton and Hollands 2003: 148). In such spaces, particular patterns of (hetero)sexualised behaviour and interaction may be normalised to such an extent that we see ‘a blurring of definitional boundaries regarding what constitutes sexual victimisation versus normal heterosexual behaviour’ (Kavanaugh 2013: 29). The normalisation of harassment and other forms of GBV in such contexts is compounded by the expectation that women should try to downplay it, ignore it or meet it with strategies such as polite dismissal or humour.

It is important to consider the implications this has for women of a range of sexualities as they use, move through and occupy public spaces that are highly (hetero)sexualised and where a degree of unwanted attention or harassment is normalised and expected. Whilst the perceived confinement of risk to particular spaces or venues comes with its own consequences (for example in terms of limiting women’s ability to feel that they can move freely through public space), the normalisation of GBV across the NTE – and perhaps more widely – is an issue of even greater significance. The labelling of being stared at, groped or harassed as ‘everyday’ or expected may help to legitimise a broader spectrum of GBV and reinforce the idea that women should both expectand accept GBV in their daily lives.

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1. See, for example, Leyshon (2008) on women’s differing experiences in rural pubs in the UK [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. ‘Chavvy’ derives from the British term ‘chav’, a pejorative term used to describe or insult the (white) working-class (Tyler, 2008) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)