"An Amplified Space": A feminist poststructuralist analysis of sexual violence at university

Kym Atkinson

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Liverpool John Moores University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

September 2020

Declaration

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

'She imagined herself taking a walk at night under the stars. She imagined ambling down a country road and feeling only mild curiosity when she saw three men coming toward her. She imagined hitching a ride with anyone willing to give her a ride. She imagined answering the door without fear, to see if anyone needed help.'

Marge Piercy, (1979: 208)

Abstract

The research took place at one university in the North West of England with the purpose of exploring women students' experiences of sexual violence whilst at university, the impact of these experiences and the role of the institution in responding to this violence. In order to address the aims of the thesis, a feminist poststructuralist approach was taken which highlights the social construction of historically and contextually contingent gendered subjectivities through dominant discourses on gender and (hetero)sex. This approach allowed for an exploration of the dominant discourses on sexual violence and the subsequent 'truth' that was constructed within the university about the nature and extent of sexual violence in the institution.

To achieve the aims of the thesis, a mixed methods approach was undertaken. Firstly, an online survey was disseminated to women students at the institution, resulting in 144 responses. Secondly, interviews with five students who had experienced sexual violence whilst at the university were undertaken. Finally, interviews with five stakeholders who were responsible, in various ways, for preventing and responding to sexual violence in the university were conducted.

The thesis found that the harms and effects of sexual violence were multiple, layered and extended beyond the dominant, yet limited discourse surrounding this violence. It is argued that violence experienced by the students transformed their subjectivities, a process which was further impacted by the institutional response. Whilst discourses of gender and (hetero)sex shaped the context, experience and (non)response to sexual violence, the institutional deployment of gendered and neoliberal discourses, alongside dominant discourses of 'fun' university life, amplify these experiences and their harmful effects.

Overall, the findings suggest there is a need to radically rethink the policies which have so far dominated institutional responses and, therefore, several suggestions are developed. These suggestions address and outline the role and responsibility of institutions to transform their limited approach to the issue and radically transform the current situation.

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Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank all of the women who participated in this research. To those who offered their time, shared their stories and their insights, this research truly would not have been possible without you. Your input, passion and commitment to change was inspirational.

To my Director of Studies, Dr Helen Monk, a very special thanks for everything you have offered during the process of this research. Your knowledge, passion, humour and honesty are hugely appreciated. You always knew the right thing to say to make me feel like I could do this and, despite having a workload which nobody would envy, you always found time to offer support, guidance and kindness.

To Professor Joe Sim, to say that this thesis would not have happened without you, whilst true, does not do justice to your role. As an undergraduate student, you ignited my passion for critical criminology and you continue to do so to this day, every day. You have been a constant source of intelligence, guidance, support, wisdom, friendship, humour and Malbec. You are the antithesis to everything that is problematic in academia and have set a standard which is impossible to replicate but I will do my best.

To Dr Sarah Greenhow, thank you for joining the supervisory team and always offering friendly, helpful guidance. You helped me through one of the most difficult parts of this process and I am eternally grateful for your quantitative knowledge.

I would like to the criminology team at LJMU. Special thanks to Dr Giles Barrett for the generous statistical support and to Dr Lindsey Metcalf for organising writing sessions. I would also like to thank the IT staff in the John Foster Building as well as everyone who works in the school office, particularly Joan and Jacinta. To my fellow PhD students who I shared office space with as well as stress, complaints, and laughter, thank you and I am so happy to see you all doing so well. A special mention to Katie Tucker, we shared a lot of this process together and you have been a great source of friendship and PhD distraction. Thank you also to Jan Ludvigsen for your friendship, technical support and for setting a standard for all of us PhD students to follow.

I would like to thank all of the people that I have met at conferences who have engaged with my work and allowed me to engage with theirs, particularly those at the European Group.

Thank you to my family for your support throughout the years. To all of my friends, I am exceptionally lucky to have you all and I appreciate your kindness and understanding whilst I have been distracted and not able to see you as much as I would have liked. You have never complained, and always showed interest, even when I know I talked too much about this PhD. To adequately articulate my appreciation of all of you would take up another 90,000 word document so, as briefly as possible, to the girls in Liverpool, Erin, Emma, Lizzie and Hannah thank you for

being the sweetest. To The Paddingtons, you are the most fun and the best distraction anyone could wish for. A special mention goes to Neil and Nadia who I have come to rely on so much during the last six months and who always give me the ultimate confidence boost. Thank you to Benny, you have been an incredibly supportive and motivational friend from afar.

To Dr Jodie Hodgson, thank you for keeping me on track, for virtual shut up and write sessions, for margherita nights and for always making me laugh, even whilst working. Your support has been incredible, and you have set a brilliant example which I hope to follow.

Thank you to my oldest and dearest friends living in Australia and Newcastle, Katy, Katy, Emma and Jemma. A special thank you to Caitlin, who without, I am not sure where I would be, but I definitely would not be submitting a PhD.

This thesis is dedicated to Stevie Eleanor and to my grandma, Anne, who would have been the proudest.

Introduction

Violence against women is one of the central, urgent issues of the twenty first century. Reported and recorded levels of femicide, sexual violence, domestic violence and sexual harassment are at record levels (Femicide Census, 2020; Office for National Statistics, 2018; 2019). This thesis is concerned with one other, urgent area of violence against women, namely sexual violence towards women university students, and the nature of the institutional responses to this violence. This chapter has four aims.

First, the nature and extent of sexual violence in universities is considered within the broader, neoliberal context in which the institutions are currently operating. Second, it sets out the theoretical perspective underpinning the thesis. Third, it provides an overview of the research questions, methods and contribution of the thesis. Finally, the chapter provides an overview of the structure of the thesis.

Sexual Violence in Universities: The context

In 2010, the National Union of Students (NUS) conducted a survey across higher and further education institutions in the UK (NUS, 2010). The nationwide study, *Hidden Marks,* found that one in seven women students had experienced a serious or physical sexual assault and 68% had experienced some form of verbal or non-verbal harassment, in or around their institution. The study highlighted the problem of sexual violence experienced by women university students and, in addition, a lack of student awareness as to whether institutions provided support. This has led to low levels of reporting and accessing support services. Although research and activism around the issue predates the release of *Hidden Marks,* the publication can be seen as a turning point and a catalyst for the range of media, political, institutional, academic and activist responses which have followed.

Despite this, much has remained the same. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2017) found that students (6.4%) were more likely to have been a victim of sexual assault in the previous year than adults in other occupations. Felts et al (2012) also found that 18-24 year olds were particularly at risk of experiencing sexual violence. Testimonies online (Strategic Misogyny, 2017), and social media accounts such as *Do Better Academia,* have confirmed the nature and extent of sexual violence on campus as well as the problematic nature of institutional responses.

Moreover**,** media reports have highlighted a range of issues including prevalence (Batty, 2019; Batty, Weale and Bannock, 2017; Reynolds, 2018), the failure of universities to respond adequately to incidents, victims and survivors (Jokic, 2020; Lawthom, 2020; Page, Fenton and Keliher, 2020; Pittam, 2020) and staff sexual misconduct against students (Batty, 2018). Universities were also found to be using non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) in cases of sexual violence (Weale and Batty, 2016) while *The Guardian* found that £90 million was spent over two years on upholding NDAs some of which related to allegations of bullying, discrimination and sexual misconduct (Murphy, 2019).

These issues have emerged in a context where, as Field (2018: 1) has argued, 'higher education has been hijacked by an increasingly aggressive neo-liberal ideology'. The marketisation of higher education, via the removal of the majority of public funding, and the increase in student fees, has resulted in competition between universities, a business model approach in which success depends on how well universities market themselves, an increase in student numbers, and ultimately, what Collini (2018: 1) argues is 'a change in the character and above all the ethos of universities'. Within this neoliberal, marketised context where profit maximisation is the priority, evidence that universities are not providing adequate levels of health, wellbeing and support services

has been documented (Shackle, 2019). This is important in the context of this thesis as neoliberal rationalities are shaping not only university practices, but also student behaviour and the performances of masculinities (Phipps, 2017). This issue is explored further in Chapters One and Seven.

The Theoretical Context

One objective of the thesis was to consider the issue, theoretically, from a feminist poststructuralist perspective. This perspective draws significantly from the work of Michel Foucault. Specifically, the concepts of discourse, truth, subjectivity and resistance are outlined and developed in relation to sexual violence. The relevance of Foucault's work, and the contribution of feminist poststructuralism, are discussed in Chapter Two.

Discourse is a central concept used in the thesis in terms of analysing how power is exercised and how 'truth' is defined and constructed (Foucault, 1980a: 93). Of relevance is the discursive construction of sexuality, built around dominant, but socially, historically and contextually contingent, discourses of male and female sexuality. The thesis draws from Gavey's (2005: 2) conceptualisation of 'the cultural scaffolding of rape' to place 'everyday, taken for granted, normative forms of heterosexuality' in the context of the university.

The feminist poststructuralist perspective challenges stable notions of the categories of 'man' and 'woman', as well as the implicit dualisms within these categories (Bailey (1993). The thesis, moreover, addresses the construction of gendered subjectivities and understands these to be historically and contextually contingent and not viewed as stable or pre-discursive. Nor, following Weedon (1987), are they understood as essential, natural or universal, but as constituted in power relations and in discourses.

The thesis focusses on the construction of gendered, sexual subjectivities and draws on the work of Alcoff and Cahill in order to broaden the analysis of the harms generated by sexual violence as a violation of, or an attempt to violate, a person's sexual subjectivity.

Whilst the exercise of power operates on the body and constitutes gendered subjectivities, this exercise in power is also contested and resisted (McLaren, 2002; Sawicki, 1990). This resistance can be seen through challenging dominant discourses, resisting an imposed docile subjectivity and, particularly, speaking out about sexual violence (Alcoff and Gray; 1993 Serisier, 2018).

Taken together, as Chapter Two illustrates, these are key concepts for theorising sexual violence from a feminist, poststructuralist, theoretical perspective. Utilising this perspective and applying it to critically analysing sexual violence in the university under study, represents an original contribution to knowledge in this field. While there has been a significant range of research and surveys conducted around sexual violence against women university students, and while there has been research and theorising around 'lad culture' in particular, the area remains undertheorized, particularly from a feminist poststructuralist perspective. This, in combination with analysing the role of the university in compounding the intersubjective harms experienced by women university students, is where the original contribution of the thesis lies.

Research Questions and Methods

As noted above, the research aimed to explore women students' experiences of sexual violence whilst at university and to consider the context and role of the

institution alongside this experience within a feminist poststructuralist framework. In order to do this, the following research questions were investigated:

1. How do women students perceive the problem of sexual harassment and violence at university?

2. What is the extent of women students' experiences of sexual harassment and violence at university?

3. What is the nature of women students' experiences of sexual harassment and violence at university?

4. How do women students experience reporting and disclosure at university?

5. How does the university respond to women students' experiences of sexual harassment and violence at university?

The research took place at one post-1992, city campus university in the North West of England and utilised a mixed methods approach in order to address the research questions. Utilising a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods follows Oakley's (1998: 707) argument for a move beyond the paradigmatic division between these distinct traditions and the integration of 'a range of methods in the task of creating an emancipatory social science'. Therefore, the survey was utilised in order to explore 144 students' experiences of sexual violence at the university. Five in-depth, semi-structured interviews were undertaken with students who had experienced sexual violence. These interviews offered a rich and detailed insight into the often complex and extensive experiences of students. Finally, five in-depth, semi-structured interviews were undertaken with stakeholders who were responsible for preventing, responding and/or managing sexual violence at university. These interviews allowed for a further exploration of the context in which students' experiences occurred.

The mixing of these methods resulted in a comprehensive exploration of the issue of sexual violence at the university in question, which has implications for the university as well as the sector more broadly. The thesis, therefore, makes an original contribution to a burgeoning knowledge base on the issue of sexual violence against women university students in the UK. Moreover, key to the thesis and its contribution, is the application of a feminist poststructuralist lens which centralises the role of power and its exercise through the institution of the university.

The Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is structured as follows.

Chapter One considers the relevant literature relating to the nature and extent of sexual violence in universities and the policy and institutional responses to this violence.

Chapter Two outlines the theoretical framework which underpins the thesis. The chapter provides an overview of the relevance of the work of Michel Foucault and the key concepts derived from this work. The centrality of a feminist poststructuralist framing in the analysis of sexual violence is explored via the concepts of gendered disciplinary power, discourse, truth, subjectivity, the body and resistance. The aim is to critically examine the experience of sexual violence and the politics of speaking out about it, within the broader context of unequal, gendered power relationships.

Chapter Three begins with an overview of feminist methodologies and the challenges posed to the politics and production of knowledge in the social sciences. In terms of feminist epistemology and feminist praxis, the opportunity for the creation of an alternative truth about sexual violence in universities, as a result of these challenges, is outlined. The chapter then considers the critical issue of the epistemic status of

women's accounts of sexual violence and places these accounts within the context of the university under study, highlighting the importance of the critical criminological underpinning of the research as well as a consideration of key feminist concerns in sexual violence research: reflexivity, power, ethics and wellbeing. Chapter Three also discusses the methods utilised focusing on the design, collection, and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data.

Chapter Four presents the quantitative findings derived from an online survey with women students attending the university in which the research took place. The analysis is presented in relation to three key areas: experiences of sexual harassment, experiences of sexual violence and the impact and reporting levels following experiences of sexual violence.

Chapter Five presents the qualitative findings from in-depth interviews with five students who had experienced sexual violence whilst studying at the university. The analysis is built around three themes: the impact of sexual violence, reporting and disclosure and the context of men's violence at university. Drawing upon the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter Two, the chapter critically explores their experiences of sexual violence, their decision-making processes in relation to reporting and disclosure and the ways in which the participants understood their experiences in relation to their gendered positions as university students.

Chapter Six presents the qualitative findings from in-depth interviews with five stakeholders who were responsible for preventing and responding to sexual violence at the university. A number of key themes identified in the data are outlined in three sections: the experience of sexual violence, the university's response and ongoing issues around this violence. This chapter offers an insight into the role of those working

in the institution to effect change on campus and also raises questions about the relationship between the policies pursued, and the obstacles to, creating radical change as perceived by the stakeholders.

Chapter Seven draws together the empirical findings from the quantitative and qualitative data and considers these findings in relation to the available evidence on sexual violence in universities. The chapter provides a critical exploration of several key themes in order to develop a number of arguments that challenge the current approach to the issue. It explores the nature, harm and effects of sexual violence experienced by university students and suggests that, by focusing on the distinct harm to subjectivity, understanding the nature, extent and impact of sexual violence can be broadened and, therefore, more appropriate responses can be developed. It also considers feminist poststructuralist accounts of sexual violence, drawing upon the importance of the discursive construction of (hetero)sex and the deployment of sexuality. The students' accounts are placed in the context of the university, whereby gendered and heterosexed discourses on masculinity and femininity are amplified due to the discursive construction of 'normal', 'fun' university life. The chapter, throughout, notes various ways in which students resisted these dominant discourses.

Chapter Eight concludes the thesis and draws together the key themes that were identified. It also points to the lessons that can be learned from the thesis in terms of future policy responses to sexual violence in universities in the context of the need for broader, structural change if the future victimisation of women students is to be reduced and eliminated.

Chapter 1: Sexual Violence in Universities: A literature review

Introduction

This chapter has three aims. First, it will provide an overview of the developments in UK national policy in the area of campus sexual violence, with a focus on the *Changing the Culture* report (Universities UK, 2016a) and developments in legal guidance. Next, key research and responses from academics, institutions and the National Union of Students (NUS) are considered. Finally, the findings from UK and internationally focused research into campus sexual violence will be outlined.

The Policy Context in UK Universities

Prior to October 2016, if sexual violence was alleged by a student, universities often followed guidelines set out in The Zellick Report (1994). The report was produced following a legal challenge by a student who was suspended from a university following an accusation of rape but was then found not guilty at a trial (NUS, 2015a). The overall aim of the report was to advise universities on handling circumstances where a student's alleged misconduct might also constitute a criminal offence. The guidelines advised against universities investigating cases of manifestly serious violence, described as, 'incidents where conviction is likely to lead to a custodial sentence or are triable only on indictment' (Swanton, 2015: 1). This included various forms of sexual violence. The Zellick report provided advice to higher education institutions 'in order to protect them from legal challenges and loss of reputation' (NUS, 2015a: 1). As there was no national policy on how and when universities should respond to allegations of sexual violence, the report also provided institutions with the capacity to take no action in response to allegations. However, according to End Violence Against Women (EVAW), universities had various legal obligations with

respect to dealing with such matters. EVAW (2015) pointed out that, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), the governing bodies of higher education institutions must have due regard for the need to eliminate the discrimination and harassment of women. Furthermore, they must also have due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity for people with particular characteristics, which included gender, and for the need to foster good relations between different groups, in this case men and women (EVAW, 2015). The Zellick guidelines similarly were incompatible with the Human Rights Act (1998). Under the Act, it is unlawful for a public authority to act in a way which is incompatible with a right included in the European Convention on Human rights. EVAW (2015) also addressed this and stated, if the Zellick guidelines were followed, and institutional policies and practices did not provide adequate protection, universities might be in breach of Articles 2 and 3, the right to life and the right to freedom from inhuman and degrading treatment. These Articles are positive obligations, which means that state bodies have to take steps to protect people from having these rights breached, which includes the requirement of the education sector to consider these duties when developing policy and practice (EVAW, 2015).

The problematic nature of the Zellick guidelines meant they were incompatible with current law and policy and were a key part of the campaign by the National Union of Students (NUS) to improve institutional responses to sexual violence (NUS, 2016). Following NUS campaigning, and alongside the academic, activist and media responses in the area, a taskforce to address the issue was created by Universities UK (UUK). The UUK taskforce had representation from NUS officers, University Vice-Chancellors, members of Universities UK and a member of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. Taskforce members were responsible for developing and co-ordinating guidance in relation to the prevention, support and response needs

of students and staff and for developing the responsibilities of institutions to consider these needs. The aim was to provide a national template which universities could use 'to support the development of an institution-wide response' (UUK, 2016a: 1). This resulted in the *Changing the Culture* report published in October 2016 by UUK.

Changing the Culture (UUK, 2016a) covered broader issues of violence against women including harassment and hate crime which affected university students. The report gathered evidence from 60 member universities as well as from published research, stakeholders and official statistics on policies which were currently in place; what initiatives were taking place and how they were communicated; how incidents were recorded and the effectiveness of these initiatives. Institutions also shared information on the challenges they faced in responding to, and preventing, incidents. The report highlighted a number of themes and identified key components relating to the response to, and prevention of, harassment and hate crime. It looked at various forms of harassment and hate crimes with a separate focus on sexual violence, noting that 'such cases are particularly complex and sensitive' (UUK, 2016a: 45).

A key point made in the report was the necessity to achieve a 'university-wide' response to incidents which begins with the understanding that regardless of the ethos, structure and approach of the university, institutions had 'a clear responsibility to respond appropriately to any student or staff member who experiences sexual violence' (UUK, 2016a: 49). This was a clear shift away from previous approaches, such as the guidance offered by Zellick, and a move towards understanding the impact incidents of sexual violence may have had on student and staff wellbeing, academic attainment and student retention, issues which were clearly highlighted within the NUS's *Hidden Marks* study (NUS, 2010), discussed in more detail below. The taskforce recommended that individual institutions develop their own explicit

framework for dealing with sexual violence, which should be tested and regularly reviewed (UUK, 2016a).

A key theme was the importance of the commitment of senior management in universities. This commitment was said to begin with, firstly, recognising that harassment, hate crime and violence against women were serious problems affecting university students. Following this, senior leadership should ensure appropriate recording and data collection mechanisms were in place for students, as well as ensuring effective training and the availability of appropriate resources (UUK, 2016a). However, whilst 'a commitment from senior leadership was deemed essential' (ibid), questions remained as to what would be the response by UUK if its senior management did not commit to affording this priority status as recommended.

A further key component was the focus on the need for an agreed strategic response. In order to respond effectively, the report stated that clear lines of accountability, risk management and joined-up support were necessary. It suggested one individual, who occupied a senior position, should have the responsibility to oversee the development and implementation of an agreed response and that all staff, regardless of position, should be made aware of the 'go to' people in order to refer others to the appropriate support (ibid: 49-50). Clearly, with the knowledge that this was a widespread problem across universities, the delegation of one person to coordinate new policy and practice, specific to the context of that institution would be, in theory, a step forward. Within this role however, the responsibilities of a 'senior person' would be varied which the report acknowledged. There was no recommendation, however, that a new position should be created, rather, this was presented as additional work on top of existing responsibilities.

In terms of prevention, the key recommendation made by UUK was that all universities adopt an evidence-based, bystander intervention programme with *The Intervention Initiative,* developed at the University of West England and commissioned by Public Health England, being highly recommended (UUK, 2016a). *The Intervention Initiative* was designed as a preventative mechanism, which aimed to empower students to act as pro-social citizens. With the aim of changing behaviours, beliefs and peer group relationships, bystander intervention involved facilitated learning by trained facilitators on the subject of violence against women (Fenton et al, 2015). According to Fenton et al. (2015: 1), bystander intervention empowers 'both men and women to intervene proactively to stop violence and abuse'. Bystander intervention was seen as effective as it placed responsibility for changing the environment on the whole community and 'importantly [gave] men a positive and active role in the prevention of violence against women' (Berkowitz, cited in Fenton et al., 2015: 1). A further recommendation was the need to embed a zero-tolerance approach towards sexual violence on campus which outlined expected behaviours, and which would 'facilitate meaningful cultural change' (UUK, 2016a: 34).

In 2017, following the *Changing the Culture Report,* the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) made money available to universities to address the issue of sexual violence on campus and implement measures in relation to student safeguarding (Office for Students (OfS), 2018a). This work, now taken over by the OfS, awarded £4.7million to 119 projects across the higher education sector (OfS, 2020a). Moreover, one year after the production of the *Changing the Culture* report, UUK (2018) assessed the progress that had been made, as well as barriers to progress in implementing the recommendations made by the UUK Taskforce (2016a). This qualitative research found that there had been 'significant but highly variable

progress' (UUK, 2018: 6). In 2019, UUK quantitatively assessed the progress that had been made (UUK, 2019), stating that there were improvements in a range of areas, but that progress was still variable and specific challenges remained in terms of resources and funding.

In the context of the UK, Chantler et al. (2019) carried out research which aimed to establish what had been achieved since the UUK (2016a) *Changing the Culture* report, to identify the barriers faced when implementing the UUK recommendations, to identify examples of good practice and, finally, to highlight ways in which the agenda could be moved forward. They carried out a survey and interviews with staff at 54 universities in England, Wales and Scotland. The research found that institutions were at very different stages of developing an institutional agenda in terms of creating working groups, producing plans and reviewing policies. They found that, at times, it was key individuals who were pushing the agenda forward, rather than institutions being committed to change. Participants stressed the need for an approach which encompassed the whole institution, Students' Unions and external services such as Rape Crisis services and victim support agencies. Participants were also asked about barriers that they faced when trying to address the issues, and out of 68 survey respondents, 17 indicated that they had not met any challenges. Of those who had faced barriers, two key challenges were identified. Firstly, 37 respondents noted a disparity between the verbal support of the institution and the level of commitment and support in the form of resources, money, and dedicated staff time. Secondly, institutional resistance was cited by survey respondents. Resistance took the form of institutional concern for reputational risk, the denial of, or minimising of the issue, difficulties in achieving senior level buy-in and barriers from research ethics committees.

In terms of legal developments, following evidence from various institutions, the NUS and other organisations, the UUK taskforce commissioned Pinsent Masons LLP to produce guidance for the sector on how to handle student disciplinary issues where alleged misconduct may have constituted a criminal offence (Pinsent Masons, 2016). These guidelines broadly related to all such incidents but, as with *Changing the Culture*, the guidelines provided specific guidance in relation to sexual misconduct. Pinsent Masons argued that, when handling incidents of student misconduct, 'the imposition of disciplinary sanctions must be seen in the context of the contractual relationship between the university and the student' (Pinsent Masons, 2016: 2). In order to ensure disciplinary actions taken by a university were in line with this contractual relationship, Pinsent Masons recommended producing a code of conduct, which provided possible sanctions that might be imposed on students, as well as the publication of a disciplinary framework. The guidance provided an example of a code of conduct, which covered various behaviours and possible sanctions separated into more and less serious behaviours. The general approach of these guidelines, that universities must handle the issue internally if a report was made, represented a move away from the Zellick guidelines.

Pinsent Masons (2016) addressed the differences between an internal, civil process, proving the incident on the balance of probabilities, and the external, criminal process, proving beyond reasonable doubt with possible criminal sanctions. In instances where the allegation might constitute a criminal offence, the report recommended firstly that the criminal process should take priority. If a criminal process did take place, the internal disciplinary process should be suspended until the end of the criminal process. If the alleged incident was not being dealt with through a criminal process, universities

should consider whether to investigate the matter under internal disciplinary regulations (Pinsent Masons, 2016).

In January 2020, the OfS, the independent regulator for higher education in England, began an open consultation process on harassment and sexual misconduct in higher education (OfS, 2020b). The consultation included proposed expectations for universities and colleges to follow as well as a proposed outline of how the OfS would regulate harassment and sexual misconduct affecting students. The expectations related to processes, policies and systems, which all higher education providers were expected to have in place and drew heavily from the UUK *Changing the Culture* report discussed above. The OfS also proposed that, in cases where there was evidence of failure in the complaints process to respond to reports of harassment and misconduct at an institution, the broader regulatory framework (OfS, 2018b) allowed for intervention and regulation. The regulatory framework (OfS, 2018b) outlined the options for intervention, not specifically related to harassment and misconduct. These interventions are enhanced monitoring, the imposition of specific ongoing conditions of registration, the imposition of formal sanctions such as monetary penalties and the suspension of some or all elements of registration or deregistration[1].

Research and Institutional Responses in the UK

Sexual violence, experienced specifically by women university students in the UK, has gained media and political interest since 2010. Although students, academics and activists have been campaigning and researching in the area prior to 2010, the report by the National Union of Students (NUS) (NUS, 2010), referred to earlier, provided the

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[1] At the time of writing, the consultation is paused, with no new deadline. The role of the OfS in the monitoring and regulation of institutional management of harassment and sexual misconduct is, therefore, undetermined.

catalyst for developing responses and shedding a light on the issue. The NUS published *Hidden Marks* in 2010, which was the first, nationwide study exploring women students' experiences of stalking, violence and sexual assault. The report found that one in seven women students had experienced a serious or physical sexual assault and 68% had experienced some form of verbal or non-verbal harassment, in and around their institution (NUS, 2010). The study highlighted the problem of campus sexual violence, a lack of student awareness of whether institutions provided support to women, and low levels of reporting incidents to the institution. Phipps and Smith (2012), in a discussion of the findings from the survey, also highlighted that a student's year of study was relevant in that victimisation was significantly more likely to take place in the first or second year of university. The research also found fear of victimisation to be a key issue and that, when visiting university or college buildings in the evening, more than one third of students felt unsafe, reporting that often this was due to their concern that they would be intimidated or harassed (NUS, 2010). Stenning et al's (2013: 106) research into sexual violence against female students at one English institution found lower levels of sexual violence compared to the NUS report. Of the 580 female students surveyed, 44% had experienced some form of sexual harassment, 8% had experienced some form of sexual assault or coercive sexual act and 3.7% had experienced rape (Stenning et al., 2013).

In 2012, the NUS released *That's What She Said,* qualitative research into women's experiences of 'lad culture' in universities. Participants in the research cited experiences of misogynistic jokes and pressure to engage in a high frequency of sexual activity. They also heard stories about sexual harassment and molestation which altered and placed limits on their activities (NUS, 2012). The NUS (2014) later released the *Lad Culture and Sexism Survey* report. Following an online survey of

2156 university students, the research found that a quarter of students reported experiencing unwelcome sexual advances and that women were more likely to report experiencing this than men. In 2014, moreover, the University and College Union (UCU) surveyed 1953 of its members about their experiences of sexual harassment in the workplace. 54% of respondents reported that they had experienced sexual harassment, 66% had been sexually harassed by a colleague and 27% by a student. Of those respondents who had experienced sexual harassment, half reported that it was a one-off incident and half reported that it was a series of incidents (UCU, 2016).

This increased attention towards the issue led to media investigations and coverage of high rates of sexual assault on campus. *The Guardian* carried out several investigations, with one investigation finding that fewer than half of the Russell Group[2] universities investigated were logging allegations of rape, sexual assault and sexual harassment (McVeigh, 2015). The newspaper also explored the perspective of victims/survivors of rape and sexual assault and found they were not being taken seriously and 'universities were failing in terms of advice and support, let alone action to deter sex attackers' (Mcveigh and Cresci, 2015: 1). It also published an anonymous article from an academic which discussed the prevalence of sexual harassment at universities and highlighted the difficulties in reporting incidents, particularly for Early Career Researchers and PhD students, for whom speaking out was often viewed as a possible risk to their careers (Anonymous, 2016).

A further significant development was the recognition of the issue of staff to student sexual misconduct. *The Guardian* uncovered the use of non-disclosure agreements by UK universities in staff sexual harassment cases whereby confidentiality clauses

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[2] The Russell Group represents 24 universities in the UK

prevented those involved, student or staff member, from discussing the case (Weale and Batty, 2016). The use of non-disclosure agreements effectively silenced students and the problem by allowing alleged perpetrators to move to another institution without a record of the allegation. Freedom of Information requests sent to 120 universities uncovered three universities using non-disclosure agreements in staff sexual harassment cases; Goldsmiths, Liverpool John Moores University and The University of Plymouth (Batty, Weale and Bannock, 2017).

Following the uncovering of several incidents of staff-to-student sexual misconduct (Strategic Misogyny, 2017), the use of non-disclosure agreements (Weale and Batty, 2016) and the inadequate response to the issue by universities (Batty, Weale and Bannock, 2017), the 1752 Group undertook research in the area in partnership with the NUS Women's Campaign. The 1752 Group is a lobby and consultancy group which was created to work towards ending staff-to-student sexual misconduct in higher education, a problem which, prior to the establishment of the group, had not garnered the same level of attention. The Group, with the NUS, surveyed 1839 current and former students and four focus groups with 15 students (NUS, 2018). They found that 41% of the survey respondents had experienced at least one incident of sexualised behaviour from staff. A further 5% of respondents stated that they were aware of someone they knew experiencing sexualised behaviour from staff including being touched in ways that made them uncomfortable, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual assault and rape. Women, students who were gay, queer and bisexual, and postgraduate students were all more likely to report these experiences (NUS, 2018).

Following the range of developments outlined above, a number of universities implemented new policies and strategies in order to tackle the issue. Whilst there have been a range of initiatives across institutions, Durham University was at the forefront

in publicly addressing and acknowledging the issue. Prior to recommendations from the national universities taskforce, Durham University had established the Durham University Sexual Violence Taskforce (DUSVTF). The taskforce was established in 2015 and was built on the recognition that 'as a community we have a civic responsibility to address sexual violence in terms of prevention work and improved responses to reported cases of sexual violence' (Durham University, 2016: 1). The recommendations of the taskforce focused on the production of specialist policy, encouraging greater reporting, introducing bystander intervention and consent workshops, and staff and student leadership training for individuals working with those who had disclosed sexual violence (ibid, 2016). Towl (2016) published a case study of Durham University in relation to the work carried out by their Sexual Violence Taskforce. Importantly, he contested the idea that high levels of sexual violence reporting would necessarily result in reputational damage. Rather, the work of the taskforce began with the premise that sexual violence was a social problem; which did not only occur in universities, but universities had an important role to play in addressing it. For Towl (2016: 433), both the 'civic and educational responsibilities of universities are such that it is essential that such matters are addressed'.

Another institution which identified issues and developed policy ahead of national recommendations was the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). In advance of updated legal guidelines from Pinsent Masons, discussed above, the university developed an approach to responding to incidents of sexual violence and gender-based violence more broadly. Alongside facilitating consent workshops, additional staff training and monitoring levels of gender-based violence on campus, in 2015 SOAS produced guidance for students and staff stating that if an allegation was made, SOAS would internally investigate the complaint in relation to student disciplinary

procedures (SOAS, 2015). Prior to the production of new legal guidelines (Pinsent Masons, 2016), few institutions had a formal policy which dealt with such matters with respect to internal investigations.

The NUS, and individual Students' Unions, have also played a role in the development of campaigns and strategies particularly relating to the engagement of students. The University of Manchester, in partnership with the Students' Union, created the *We Get It* campaign which supported a zero-tolerance approach to any form of bullying, harassment or discrimination. The campaign was supported by an online reporting mechanism which provided the option of an anonymous report, or follow-up support from a trained advisor (The University of Manchester, 2017). The University of Oxford similarly utilised technology to improve knowledge of what support was available following an incident of sexual violence. Subsequent to the *It Happens Here* campaign, which aimed to raise awareness of sexual violence at the university through education, advocacy and outreach (It Happens Here, 2017), the First Response application was created. This application provided victims/survivors with different options as well as information about support, contact details and answers to frequently asked questions (First Response Oxford, 2017). The University of Cambridge also created an online reporting tool which allowed students to report incidents of harassment and violence anonymously (University of Cambridge, 2017). Following this, and their awareness campaign, *Breaking the Silence*, Virgo (2017), the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education at the university, claimed 173 reports were received through their reporting tool in a nine month period.

Key Findings from the UK and International Research

Research in the UK and internationally has highlighted a number of key issues concerning sexual violence against women university students. This following section presents some of these findings, with a focus on the UK and the USA. The international discussion focuses significantly on the United States as, for a range of reasons outlined by Phipps and Smith (2012), the issue of sexual violence has long been on the research, activist, legislative and policy agenda. This section presents key findings in relation to the prevalence and characteristics of victims and perpetrators, the barriers faced when reporting an incident of sexual violence and research and activist interventions.

Prevalence and characteristics

There have been a number of individual and national level studies which have investigated the prevalence of sexual violence on campus in the USA and subsequently explored demographic differences across student populations. There is little consistency, however, with definitions of sexual victimisation in prevalence surveys (Gross et al., 2006), and differences exist relating to which demographic characteristics are highlighted as relevant to experiencing sexual violence victimisation. In Gross et al's (2006) US study, 27.2% of women reported unwanted sexual experiences. In Krebs et al.'s (2007) research, 19% reported having experienced an attempted or completed sexual assault since entering college. In a campus telephone survey conducted by *The Washington Post* and the *Kaiser Family Foundation*, 20% of women reported sexual assault either by physical force or whilst incapacitated (Anderson and Clement, 2015).

In the UK, the NUS (2010) found that one in seven women students had experienced a serious or physical sexual assault and 68% had experienced some form of verbal or non-verbal harassment, in and around their institution. The research also found that 2% of participants experienced attempted rape and 5% experienced rape. Later, national research also found that 8% of respondents reported experiencing rape (Revolt Sexual Assault, 2018). There are methodological differences in the language and definitions of sexual victimisation in these surveys, however, this generally shows a lower rate in the UK than that which has been found in the literature in the United States.

Some research in the US has explored the impact of different demographic characteristics on sexual assault victimisation. The Association of American Universities (AAU) Campus Climate Survey (Cantor et al., 2020) found that 13% of students experienced at least one incident of non-consensual sexual contact due to physical force or their inability to consent. The survey further measured undergraduate students' experiences of non-consensual sexual contact due to coercion which accounted for less than 1% of experiences. The research also considered non-consensual sexual contact which occurred due to a lack of ongoing, voluntary consent and found that transgender, queer and non-binary students were most likely to report this (15.9%), followed by women (10.6%) and men (2.5%). When the data was broken down by level of study, undergraduate students were more likely to report experiencing this (12.9%) compared with postgraduate students (5.9%) (Cantor et al., 2020).

DeKeseredy et al. (2017) carried out research specifically exploring LGBTQ students' experiences of sexual violence and stalking. Their research found that LGBTQ students reported higher rates of sexual assault and stalking than heterosexual students; 40 per cent compared with 24 per cent of the heterosexual participants

(DeKeseredy et al., 2017: 170). Ford and Soto-Marquez (2016) explored the prevalence of sexual assault among straight, bisexual and gay men and women and the factors associated with sexual assault. Bisexual women were found to have experienced a higher rate of sexual assault than the other population groups researched with a prevalence at 27.8%. In comparison, 24.7% of heterosexual women reported experiencing sexual assault. Among gay men and bisexual men, 24.3% and 17.7% experienced sexual assault respectively with lesbian women showing the lowest level of victimisation at 11.4%.

Consistent with sexual violence research in the wider population, US research has also shown that when incidents of sexual violence occurred, women were most often likely to know the perpetrator. Fisher et al (2000) found that as many as 9 in 10 college women who were sexually assaulted knew their attacker and Gross et al. (2006) highlighted that boyfriends (41.1%, n=101), friends (29.7%, n=3) and male acquaintances (21.1%, n=52) posed the most salient risk to female students while only 2% (*n=5)* of the incidents were committed by strangers. These findings are supported by Stenning et al's (2013) research in the UK which found that, in relation to sexual harassment, the overwhelming majority identified the perpetrator as someone they knew; namely a partner, ex-partner, fellow student, friend or someone with whom they had a date. The significance of the victim-perpetrator relationship was also highlighted in cases of sexual assault with 29% identifying the perpetrator as a fellow student, 42% a partner or ex-partner or someone they had a date with and 13% identifying the perpetrator as someone from within their friendship group (Stenning et al., 2013). The *Hidden Marks* (NUS, 2010) report in the UK also highlighted friends, partners and ex-partners as the most common perpetrator.

Another significant element in the victim-perpetrator relationship is that when the perpetrator is known to the person experiencing assault or harassment, they are less likely to name the violence in legal terminology or to report it to official bodies such as the police or the university. The NUS (2010) research found that students often did not think the incident was serious enough to report it. Further reasons highlighted for not reporting were that they did not believe what had happened was a crime or that they feared they would not be believed. Eight per cent of the participants in the NUS research also stated they did not report their experience because they did not want their relationship with the perpetrator to end. Bondurant (2001), in exploring university women's acknowledgement of rape in the US, found certain individual and situational factors increased the likelihood of acknowledging what had happened, including experiencing higher levels of violence and when they blamed their own behaviour for the rape. Fisher et al. (2003) further explored these instances and uncovered several factors which were more likely to lead to acknowledging that rape had occurred. Some of these included when the incident involved a stranger, when their acceptance of rape myths was high, if they had previously been sexually victimised, if they had friends who had been raped by an acquaintance, when the incident resulted in physical injury and when the victim did not know the perpetrator well. The belief in, and existence of rape myths, defined by Burt (1980: 217) as 'prejudicial, stereotyped or false beliefs about rape, rape victims, and rapists', have been shown to be widely accepted in the existing research on campus sexual violence (Gross et al., 2006). In the UK, Fenton and Jones (2017) explored beliefs about gender-based violence held by undergraduates in England and found a number of key issues to focus prevention work on in the future. In measuring rape and domestic violence and abuse (DVA) myth acceptance, they found that men endorse rape and DVA myths more than women.

Denial of the problem of sexual violence was also found to be related to rape and DVA myths, and these were also significant predictors of denial.

Barriers to reporting

Research in universities and the wider population beyond universities has highlighted significant barriers to women reporting sexual violence to the police and other formal agencies (AAU, 2020; Fisher et al., 2003; Kelly, 1988; NUS, 2010; Smith et al, 2011; Stenning et al., 2012). There are also specific barriers for university and college women and Sinozich and Langton (2014) found that students were less likely to report than non-students. Valls et al. (2016) conducted the first national research into sexual violence on university campuses in Spain and found that 91% of victims did not report the incident. One reason for this, was that 64% did not regard themselves as victims. Furthermore, 92% of respondents did not know whether services existed for victims at their university. In the UK, Stenning et al's (2013) research highlighted similar issues. Thirteen per cent of respondents reported to a person in authority in the university and 22% reported to the police. They also found that, of those that did not report the incident, 17% stated that they did not know who they should talk to about it. However, they found other issues were more often cited as the reason why participants did not report:

> 44% indicated that they wanted to be left alone and forget about the incident, 39% blamed themselves for having misjudged the situation and felt that they contributed to the incident and 30% indicated that they had felt ashamed and couldn't find the words to describe what had happened (Stenning et al., 2013: 112).

Sable et al. (2006) explored the perspectives of college students in the US in relation to barriers to reporting. The authors found that barriers prevalent in the 1980s, prior to efforts by the rape reform movement in the USA, still existed. The most significant

barriers highlighted were shame, guilt and embarrassment, concerns about confidentiality and fear of not being believed. Fisher et al. (2003) also explored women college students' reporting of sexual victimisation to the police, campus authorities and others in the USA. They found that few incidents were reported to the police (2.1% *n*=27) and campus authorities (4.0% *n*=37) but a high proportion disclosed to friends (87.9% *n*=808). For incidents reported to the police, the circumstances and characteristics of the assault which were more likely to be "believable" included if the perpetrator was a stranger, or a weapon was used. In incidents where alcohol or drugs had been used by offenders and/or victims, this resulted in students being less likely to disclose to campus authorities and more likely to disclose to friends.

As university students are not regularly reporting incidents to formal agencies, research has explored who students do disclose to. Ahrens et al. (2007) studied the outcomes of first, post-assault disclosures among rape and sexual assault survivors in the United States and found that the majority (75%) of first disclosures were to informal support providers, for example friends. The authors also found that survivors who sought help from informal support providers were more likely to receive positive reactions (for example, being supportive, listening, providing reassurance, empathetic) whereas, those who disclosed to formal support providers were more likely to receive negative reactions (for example, blame, lack of sympathy, disbelief, no reaction). Most research shows that survivors of rape and sexual assault most often turn to informal support providers like family and friends (Ahrens et al., 2007; Fisher et al., 2003; Orchowski and Gidycz, 2012; Paul et al., 2013; Ullman and Fillipas, 2001). Other research, from the perspective of professors and lecturers, suggests that they commonly receive disclosures from students regarding sexual assault in the United States (Hayes-Smith et al., 2010; Richards et al., 2013).

As discussed previously, the perpetrators of sexual violence are most often known to the victims as friends, partners and ex-partners. Several studies have, however, highlighted that university staff are commonly identified as the perpetrators of violence against students. The majority of this research is from the United States with Cantor et al. (2020) conducting a large-scale study. Their data indicated that when identifying their harasser, 4.8% of undergraduate students stated that this was a teacher and 16.5% of postgraduate students identified their teacher as the harasser. The 1752 group and NUS Women's Campaign, as discussed above, have explored the specific issue of staff misconduct (1752 Group, 2018a) and accounts of such experiences have been collected on the blog *Strategic Misogyny* (2017)*.

The wide acceptance of rape myths, and barriers to reporting led to prevention work on campuses, in the US in particular, directing interventions at this specific problem. Fraternities and sports teams in the United States, and sports teams in the UK, are two groups which have been targeted for prevention work around rape myths and bystander approaches to prevention based upon the idea that the performance of masculinity plays out differently within these contexts. It is to a consideration of this issue to which this thesis now turns.

Interventions

Nationally, the NUS has been at the forefront of research and campaigns around 'lad culture' and women students' experiences of it in the UK. 'Lad culture' was defined by the NUS as 'a group or "pack" mentality residing in activities such as sport or heavy alcohol consumption, and "banter" which was often sexist, misogynistic and homophobic' (NUS, 2012: 28). 'Lad culture', however, is a contested term, and Phipps (2017: 7) argued that, within the debates, it has been positioned as universal,

'obscuring specific behaviours and practices with vague notions of hegemony'. She reframed this debate and, focusing on the university context in the UK, argued for the need to develop gendered analyses to also include class. She explored the conditions which shape performances of 'laddism' and argued that consumerist, neoliberal rationalities, austerity, the backlash against feminism and postfeminist narratives are relevant in this shaping of 'laddism'. Within this context, 'there is evidence that working class articulations of laddism proceed from *being dominated* within alienating education systems' (Phipps, 2017: 11, emphasis in the original). Therefore, white, working class 'laddism' in universities can be understood as resistance to being positioned as a failure within higher education. However, 'laddism', as practiced by white, middle class and elite men, is argued to be 'a reaction to *feeling dominated* due to a loss of gender, class and race privilege' (Phipps, 2016: 1, emphasis in the original). This can be understood as 'a reassertion of superiority in reaction to perceived or real lost privilege' (Phipps 2016: 11). For Phipps (2017: 11) it is this second form which is more likely 'to spill over into sexual harassment and scaffold more extreme forms of sexual violence'. Jackson and Sundaram's (2015) research indicated that institutional interventions undertaken to tackle 'lad culture', sexual violence and harassment were underdeveloped and were often punitive and reactive. Phipps (2018) therefore argued for the need to engage with and frame these issues at both the institutional and structural levels. This framing would allow for interventions beyond reactive, punitive and individualistic interventions.

Different researchers have reported how members of fraternities and sports teams, in American colleges and universities, hold attitudes and beliefs which contributed to sexual violence. Bleeker and Murnen (2005: 487) found that fraternity men, in one college, were 'significantly more likely to score higher than non-fraternity men on a

rape supportive attitude scale'. Forbes et al (2006) similarly found, in their study of 147 college men, that those who had participated in aggressive high school sports, compared with men who did not, engaged in more sexual coercion with their dating partners, had more sexist attitudes and hostility towards women and were more accepting of rape myths. In an earlier study however, Schwartz and Nogrady (1996) argued that, whilst belief in rape myths existed, there was no difference in the prevalence of their beliefs between fraternity and non-fraternity men.

Along with the critical, feminist research and activism around campus sexual violence in the USA, there have been a number of intervention initiatives, which aimed to reduce rape myth acceptance, educate students about sexual assault and implement strategies such as bystander intervention. As historically, education and initiatives have often focused attention upon the individual, and often the potential victim, several programmes aimed to address the culture which allowed violence to take place. With the widespread existence of rape myths, in fraternities, sports teams and the wider university population, prevention programmes have been created in order to address the issue. Schwartz et al. (2006) developed a student-led, peer initiative in order to raise the issue of social responsibility surrounding dating violence broadly, and to increase awareness of the ways in which gender role stereotypes contributed to dating violence. The authors found that stereotypical and misogynistic attitudes about dating violence decreased after the training period (Schwartz et al., 2006). The *First Year Campus Acquaintance Rape Education* (FYCARE) programme was also developed at the University of Illinois. FYCARE was a mandatory programme which focused on the ways in which students could be bystanders and supporters within their community in order to reduce sexual violence. A review of FYCARE found that participants revealed greater sexual assault knowledge, less support for rape myths and less rape-

supportive attitudes compared to those who had not yet undertaken the programme as well as an increase in the number of reported assaults (Lonsway and Kothari, 2000). *The Green Dot Programme* was another prevention programme utilised at several colleges and universities, as well as in schools, communities and the Air Force. The programme was tailored to the experience of college students and relied on the college and community working together to end violence, similar to other bystander intervention methods. The programme was evaluated, and it was found that trained students had significantly lower rape myths acceptance scores and engaged in significantly more bystander behaviours compared with non-trained students (Coker et al., 2011).

Following the developments of various intervention initiatives in the United States, several meta-analyses and subsequent reviews were undertaken (Anderson and Whiston, 2005; DeGue et al., 2014; Flores, 1998; Katz and Moore, 2013). In a meta-analysis of rape myth acceptance intervention initiatives, Flores (1998) found that such interventions appeared to be successful in reducing acceptance. However, the benefits appeared to be short-term. Anderson and Whiston's (2005) meta-analysis of the effectiveness of broader sexual assault education programmes also found positive results in relation to attitudes, knowledge and behavioural intent. Longer interventions were, however, found to be more effective than brief interventions in altering rape, and rape-related attitudes, a similar finding to Vladutiu et al's. (2010) study. Similarly, a systematic review carried out by DeGue et al. (2014) argued that due to the nature of many prevention strategies (brief, psycho-educational and focused on increasing knowledge), the effectiveness on sexually violent behaviour was not significant. Katz and Moore (2013) later carried out a meta-analysis of bystander intervention initiatives at 12 colleges and universities in the USA. They found that those who participated in

bystander education programmes reported more bystander efficacy, more bystander behaviours, and less rape myth acceptance. The students who were trained, compared to the control group, however, were no less likely to report perpetration behaviours (Katz and Moore, 2013).

In the UK, 'Good Lad' Workshops were created at Oxford University in order to tackle 'lad culture' and violence against women on campus. The initiative involved workshops for men within university groups such as sports teams and clubs. The workshops promoted the idea of 'positive masculinity' to 'enable men to become agents of positive change within their social circles and broader communities' (Good Lad Workshop, 2015: 1). The National Union of Students UK, in conjunction with Sexpression: UK, also created an educational consent programme titled *I heart Consent* in which workshops were carried out across 20 universities in the UK as part of a wider campaign to prevent sexual harassment (NUS, 2015b). A further preventative measure which was employed was the use of night-time economy venues to promote sexual violence prevention messages (Gunby et al., 2017). Gunby et al., (2017) carried out research into the usefulness of licensed venues in promoting rape prevention discourses amongst male students. The researchers analysed male students awareness and interpretation of a campaign which ran in Liverpool bars and clubs to raise awareness around the myths concerning sexual violence and alcohol. The authors, however, found that due to the nature of the licensed venues; 'environments which incite narratives of loss and control and hypersexuality' (Gunby et al., 2017: 1), the ability of the programme to promote positive messages which countered sexual offending was compromised. They argued that the presence of sexually violent advertising within night-time economy venues, for example to promote club nights and drinks, produced conflicting narratives which undermined sexual

violence prevention aims (Gunby et al., 2017). The Intervention Initiative, discussed above, was also a key primary prevention initiative being used across various universities in the UK (Fenton et al., 2015) following the recommendation of Universities UK.

While there is a range of research in the United states into the prevalence, nature, effects and interventions into sexual violence experienced by women university students, this research is not directly comparable owing to the different social and cultural contexts in which students live. Whilst university sports teams have been identified in the UK as a specific group to target for sexual violence prevention initiatives (Denholm, 2013; Jackson and Sundaram, 2015; Phipps and Young, 2013), the cultural impact of sports in the United States has a different status. Moreover, fraternities play a significant role in university life in the United States and prevention initiatives have often been targeted at this group (Choate, 2003; Foubert, 2000; Foubert and Newberry, 2006). Universities and colleges in the United States, furthermore, are more often campus-based, with accommodation, learning spaces and social spaces being confined to one, often geographically secluded area in comparison with many citywide campuses in the UK. Further research in the UK is therefore needed in order to explore the specific nature, and social and cultural contexts of the universities and spaces in which violence against women students takes place.

Conclusion

The literature on sexual violence against university students in the UK and USA demonstrates some key issues. Firstly, while estimates of prevalence differ across studies, the research demonstrates that sexual violence against students is prevalent,

as in the wider population. Women students are consistently found to experience sexual violence more frequently than men, and US research highlights that LGBTQ students often report experiencing sexual violence at higher rates than heterosexual and cisgender students. Furthermore, research has identified that there are a range of barriers to reporting an incident to formal agencies such as the police or institutional reporting mechanisms, which has resulted in very low levels of reporting. Finally, there have been a range of interventions, in the UK and the USA from the NUS, individual institutions and individual Students' Unions and activists. The interventions have aimed to prevent and respond to the issue of sexual violence on campus and have focused on the issue of 'lad culture', bystander intervention and the night-time economy.

Overall, the literature indicates that much work is being undertaken by higher education institutions in the UK to address the issue, but this is not consistent in the sector with different universities at very different stages of developing prevention, reporting and support mechanisms.

Having considered the literature in this area, Chapter Two outlines the theoretical framework underpinning the thesis.

Chapter 2: Theorising Sexual Violence in Universities

Introduction

This chapter is concerned with outlining the theoretical perspective which underpins this thesis. It is based on the utilisation of a poststructuralist feminist theoretical perspective. According to Rhode (1990), feminist theories, although diverse, share three central commitments: political, substantive and methodological. Politically, the aim is to achieve gender equality and substantively, gender becomes the focus of the analysis. Methodological commitments are addressed in the following chapter. Politically and substantively, this chapter, and the thesis overall, foregrounds gender, as a fundamental category of analysis, alongside a number of other intersecting social divisions, in understanding women students' experiences of sexual violence. This chapter aims to address these central commitments and to develop a theoretical framework for exploring the experiences of sexual violence at university. Specifically, the chapter will discuss, theoretically, how sexual violence can be understood through dominant discourses on gender and (hetero)sexuality, and the effects of these on the reinforcement of gender relations of power, regulation, subjectivity and spaces for resistance.

The chapter covers four substantive areas. Firstly, the relevance of the work and concepts of Michel Foucault are outlined. Second, the chapter provides a critical overview of the feminist poststructuralist framing utilised in the thesis, the links to Foucault's work which underpins feminist poststructuralism and the centrality of feminist poststructuralism for theorising sexual violence. Next, the chapter considers discourse and the constitution of subjectivity in the context of criminal justice. Finally,

the chapter outlines the importance and role of resistance, based on feminist poststructuralism, to the dominant discourses around sexual violence.

The Relevance of Michel Foucault

This thesis is situated within a feminist poststructuralist framework which draws significantly from the work of Michel Foucault. Poststructuralist, particularly Foucauldian, and feminist theories have been criticised as being in opposition or, at least, not working together (Barrett, 1991). Critiques of Foucault are for, Hekman (1996), concerned with three key issues: his position as an androcentric, European, male philosopher, his lack of attention to women and the construction of gender, and finally, what is deemed as a challenge to feminist politics through the deconstruction of the subject to the point where the category 'woman' disappears. However, both feminist and Foucauldian work have posed a challenge to Western philosophy and Foucault's work has had a substantial impact on some areas of feminist thought. Hekman (1996: 1) identified Foucault's challenge to Western philosophy's 'definitions of truth, knowledge, power and the subject' as key concepts for feminist interest in his work. It is to a consideration of the relevance of these concepts that this chapter now turns.

The exercise of power and its effects

Foucault's work on power does not provide us with a theory of power, rather, 'his work helps us examine power relations' (Grosz, 1990: 86). Following an outline of the juridical conception of power, whereby power is solely repressive, and always negative, he argues that, if this were the case, power would be 'fragile', and the only effect would be obedience. Instead, he asserts power is productive (Foucault, 1978). The outline of power, in *The History of Sexuality Vol.1,* asserts that power is

everywhere and comes from everywhere (Foucault, 1978). Power is not solely located in one institution, nor held by one person or group, instead, 'individuals are the vehicles of power, not its point of application' (Foucault, 1980a: 98). The circulation of power, within a net-like chain of relations, means that individuals are 'simultaneously undergoing and exercising its power' (Foucault, 1980a: 98). Contrasting this understanding with the juridical conception of power, resistance too, is not viewed as abstracted from power, working against it, rather, there are 'a multiplicity of points of resistance' (Foucault, 1978: 95-6).

Discussing the analytics of the juridical model of power, in relation to sex, Foucault (1978: 83) states, 'all sex is placed by power in a binary system', that which is either permitted or forbidden, with it being understood in relation to its legality. However, in *Discipline and Punish* (1995), he outlined the operation of newer methods of power from the eighteenth century that shifted away from the sovereign exercise of power towards discipline and surveillance. Using Bentham's panopticon, he illustrates how the architectural structure, which allows one person in a central tower to see into prison wings and then prison cells, without being visible induces in the person who is imprisoned, a state of 'conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power' (Foucault, 1995: 201). When the possibility of surveillance is constant, actual surveillance is not necessary. Those imprisoned, themselves, undertake the act of surveillance, they become a self-disciplining subject. Panpoticism, and the resulting self-discipline, may be applied to any building which requires the inspection of those inside, as well as, more broadly, a technique of regulation and social control.

Furthermore, the operation of new technologies in the exercise of power are ensured 'not by right but by technique, not by law but by normalization, not by punishment but

by control' (Foucault, 1978: 89). With this, power is employed, not solely by the state and its institutions, but at all levels of society. Again, contrasting this analytic of power, with the juridical model, power is not employed through force and punishment, but through norms through, and against which, individuals are judged and controlled (ibid). In *Discipline and Punish,* he also outlined the role of 'judges of normality' - teachers, doctors, educators and social workers - in the operation of this normalising power: 'it is on them that the universal reign of the normative is based' (Foucault, 1995: 304).

Foucault urges us to work towards an understanding of the 'analytics of power' (Foucault, 1978: 82). This means, rather than asking what power is and where it comes from, we should question how power is exercised, through which means and the effects of this exercise of power (Smart, 1985). Foucault states:

> [R]ather than ask ourselves how the sovereign appears to us in his lofty isolation, we should try to discover how it is that subjects are gradually, progressively, really and materially constituted through a multiplicity of organisms, forces, energies, materials, desires, thoughts etc. We should try to grasp subjection in its material instance as a constitution of subjects (Foucault, 1980a: 98).

For him, subjectivity is constituted through power relations which comprise 'the intention to teach, to mold conduct, to instill forms of self-awareness and identities' (Gordon 1994: xix). Subjectivity is, therefore, a result of the operation of power and is related to 'the formation and development of the "experience of sexuality"', that is, the ways people have come to think of themselves as sexual subjects (Smart, 1985: 94). This point is discussed further below.

Power, knowledge, discourse and truth

The approach to analysing the exercise of power necessitates a critical interrogation of the relationship between power and knowledge. In *Discipline and Punish,* Foucault (1995: 27) noted:

> [T]here is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations.

The exercise of power creates knowledge and 'knowledge constantly induces effects of power' (Foucault, 1975 cited in Gordon, 1994: xvi). Gordon (1994: xviii) noted that, a focus on the relationship between power and knowledge is not in order to identify false knowledge, but to highlight the role of particular knowledges, 'that are valued and effective because of their reliable instrumental efficacy'. Analysing the exercise of power, therefore, should focus on 'who knows, the objects to be known and the modalities of knowledge' (Foucault, 1995: 27-28).

Foucault's argument that 'the exercise of power creates and causes to emerge new objects of knowledge and accumulates new bodies of information' leads to the significance of discourses in analysing the mechanisms of power (Foucault, 1975, cited in Gordon, 1994: xv-xvi). Discourses are the 'juncture where power and knowledge meet' (Lemert and Gilligan, 1982: 62). They are ways of constituting knowledge and, for Smart (1985), they refer to groups of statements which belong to a single discursive formulation. They 'constitute the "nature" of the body, unconscious and conscious mind and emotional life of the subjects which they seek to govern…..[they are] always part of a wider network of power relations, often with institutional bases' (Weedon, 1987: 108).

In different institutions, or arenas of social life, particular discourses are dominant whilst others are suppressed, for example in relation to medical discourse (Foucault,

1973), discourses on prisoners (Foucault, 1995) and sexuality (Foucault, 1978). The domination and suppression of various discourses, with regard to a particular object of knowledge, results in a hierarchy of knowledge, with particular forms of knowledge deemed to be 'hierarchically inferior' (Foucault, 2003: 7). Dominant discourses 'appear "natural", denying their own partiality and gaining their authority by appealing to common sense' (Gavey, 1989: 464). Therefore, discourses are not just about what can be said, but also, importantly, about who can speak, when, and with what authority (Foucault, 1972).

As Bell (1991: 63) notes, it is not that Foucault argues discourse is everything or that there are no other relations which shape society. Instead:

> His point was to move away from the general division between discourse and the nondiscursive world and to focus instead on a specific discourse - such as that on sexuality - in order to question the power relations within and outside this discourse, the knowledges it uses and instigates and its effects, including its effects on other discourses.

This focus can be useful in exploring the control and regulation of language and subjectivity (Lees, 1986) and to uncover 'patterns of meaning, contradictions and inconsistencies' (Gavey, 1989: 467) within discourses. A Foucauldian conceptualisation of power, which asserts that it does not just operate in terms of that which is allowed and that which is prohibited, means sexuality is a useful site for analysing power and discourses, 'not because it is a special target of repression but because it is densely overlaid with power relations which cannot be encapsulated in the category of repression' (Cousins and Hussain, 1984: 202). In *The History of Sexuality,* Foucault (1978) outlined his argument that the way that sex has been understood and spoken about, generally in the West, has changed. Sexuality is socially constructed, and the production of norms, discourses and the effects of this, has varied throughout history. In the nineteenth century, it is not that sexuality was

repressed in terms of that which was licit and illicit, rather, there was a 'discursive explosion' (Foucault, 1978: 38) regarding sex. So while there may have been rules and restrictions about what could be said about sex, and where and between whom it could be spoken about, there was also:

> A multiplication of discourses concerning sex in the field of exercise of power itself: an institutional incitement to speak about it, and to do so more and more; a determination on the part of the agencies of power to hear it spoken about, and to cause it to speak through explicit articulation and endlessly accumulated detail (Foucault, 1978: 18).

This 'discursive explosion' refers to the proliferation of discourses on sex, induced by 'the need to scrutinise sexuality' (Cousins and Hussain, 1984: 205) through domains such as the Catholic Church and psycho-medical analyses. Whilst is accepted that it might be the case the individuals were deprived of speaking about sex in a certain way, this was, as Cousins and Hussain (1984: 206) note, not a silencing of all discourses, but the creation of a space for 'the proliferation and circulation of such discourses by men of authority and knowledge'. The limitations on who was authorised to talk about sex, and in which way it could be talked about, allowed for the production of particular discourses and for the construction of particular truths.

For Foucault (1994), there was no universal truth, instead, truth should be understood as 'a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation, and operation of statements' (Foucault, 1994: 132). Societies have 'regimes of truth' (Smart, 1985: 61). This is a 'general politics of truth' (Foucault, 1994: 131), relating to the distinction between statements designated as true or false and the discourses which are accepted and function as truth. Different arenas, institutions and regimes have their own claim to truth (Smart, 1989). There is, therefore, not 'a battle "on behalf" of the truth but…a battle about the status of truth and the economic and political role it plays' (Foucault, 1994: 132).

There is a relationship between discourses and hierarchies of power and, therefore, there are 'techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true' (Foucault, 1994: 151). With these propositions, Foucault asserts that the goal is, therefore, to ascertain the possibility of 'constituting a new politics of truth' (Foucault, 1994: 133). Rather than criticising particular ideologies or ensuring the choice of the 'correct' ideology, the goal should be to change 'the political, economic, institutional regime of the production of truth' (Foucault, 1994: 133).

Foucault's (2003) conceptualisation of subjugated knowledge allows us to unearth points in history in which specific knowledge has been blocked as well as points where particular discourses flourish. Discourse, as a form of power, 'can attach to strategies of domination as well as those of resistance' (Sawicki, 1988: 185). They are a site of struggle, a place where resistance takes place and, ultimately, 'discourse is the power to be seized' (Foucault, 1981: 52). There is a need, therefore, for the 'insurrection of subjugated knowledges' that have been 'masked' and then 'reveale[d]…by using…the tools of scholarship' (Foucault, 2003: 7). As truth is not outside of power, it cannot be emancipated from power and, therefore, the task is to detach 'the power of truth from the forms of hegemony, social, economic, and cultural within which it operates at the present time' (Foucault, 1994: 133).

The discussion above has particular relevance for the ways in which feminists have utilised Foucault's analyses of discourse, truth and power in relation to the discourses on sex, sexuality and gendered violence. It is to this issue that the chapter now turns.

Feminist Poststructuralism: Theorising gender and sexual violence

Introducing Gender

Since the 1970s, feminist academics and activists have critiqued previously held assumptions about the biological, innate and 'natural' differences between men and women. Instead, gender has come to be understood in cultural terms in relation to the social construction of masculinity and femininity and the expectations and norms associated with this social construction (Renzetti, 2013). These expectations and norms are 'reproduced and transmitted through socialisation' (ibid: 7) and are deeply embedded in social institutions and social practices (Jackson and Scott, 2002). Gender, therefore, is recognised as 'an organising principle of social life […] governing female and male behaviour and attitudes' (Renzetti, 2018: 74)

At the interpersonal level, masculinity is positioned as more valued than femininity (ibid) resulting in increased levels of patriarchal, social control, sexism and violence towards women (Manne, 2017; Hanmer and Maynard, 1987). At the structural level, gender is again stratified, and as Connell (1994) argued, the state has a specific location within gender relations and its history is shaped by a gender dynamic which, 'is a central and irreducible aspect of the state' (ibid: 148). She further argued that gender relations are manifested within structures and institutions and conceptualised these manifestations as 'gender regimes'. Gender regimes of the state, wider structures of power, and gender inequality at the interpersonal level are inseparable, and all form part of 'a wider structure of gender relationships that embody violence or other means of control' (Connell, 2009: 148).

For Connell (2009), a definition of gender which is based on the masculine/feminine dichotomy is problematic in that it excludes differences within, and across, gender categories and excludes analyses of the social processes, beyond the individual, which are relevant to gender relations. There is, therefore, a need to analyse how gender intersects with other social divisions, including but not limited to, 'race', class,

sexuality, age, and ability/disability, in order to highlight the heterogeneity of gender. Without an understanding, theoretically, methodologically, or in practice, of the operation of power across intersecting forms of oppression, feminist theory risks essentialising women and, as Crenshaw (1991) asserts, privileging the perspective of the most privileged member of the group. Acknowledgement that gender is heterogeneous and fragmented, furthermore, means recognising that the social construction of gender transcends the binary categories of man and woman, as well as varying presentations of masculinity and femininity. This perspective also allows for an exploration of the intersections among systems of oppression at the interpersonal and structural level. Hill-Collins's (2000: 18) use of the matrix of domination is useful in exploring 'how these intersecting oppressions are actually organised' in specific historical contexts and varying institutions such as education, housing and employment (ibid).

Yuval Davis (2006: 198), moreover, argues that social divisions operate at different levels, they 'have organisational, intersubjective, experiential and representational forms', that is, they operate at the structural, micro, and discursive levels. Structurally, social divisions are expressed through institutions and organisations. Intersubjectively, social divisions 'involve specific power and affective relationships' (Yuval Davis, 2006: 198), expressed either through people, generally, or as agents of structural institutions. Experientially, subjective experiences of, for example, exclusion or, holding prejudices towards others, are further examples of the operation of social divisions. Finally, in terms of representation, social divisions exist and operate at the discursive level, through texts, images, symbols, legislation (Yuval Davis, 2006) and policy. Taken together, analyses at these various levels allows for an understanding of the operation of power at the macro level, which acknowledges the role of individuals in also

exercising this power. The feminist poststructuralist discussion hereafter addresses each of these levels in order to outline the framework for understanding sexual violence experienced in the context of institutions.

The gendered operation of disciplinary power

The relevance of the body, for feminist developments of Foucault's work, is that 'it is the place where power relations are manifest in their most concrete form' (McNay, 1992:16). Foucault (1980a: 57-58) argued that 'nothing is more material, physical, corporeal than the exercise of power'. In response to this, Cahill (2000: 47) stated, 'far from being in any sense natural or primary then, the body is the location of inscription'. The body, and its functions, is the site of the inscription of power dynamics (Diamond and Quinby, 1988; Sawicki, 1990) and the body is produced through the exercise of power (McNay, 1992). In contrast to feminist perspectives which consider the body as the site of women's essential difference to men, Weedon (1999) asserts that a feminist poststructuralist perspective emphasises the importance of discourses and their shifting meaning over time. Modern power, therefore, has a hold upon the body, a hold which is culturally and historically contingent. Whilst Foucault's focus was upon the economic use of the body, his point that 'the body becomes a useful force only if it is both a productive body and a subjected body' (Foucault, 1995: 25) is relevant to complex reciprocal relations beyond those relating to its economic utility. Feminist poststructuralists have developed Foucault's conception of power and argued that 'the fact that power is not held by *anyone* does not entail that it is equally held by *all*' (Bordo, 1993: 191, emphasis in the original). Although no one holds power, individuals and groups are positioned differently within the network of power relations (Bordo, 1993).

Bartky (1990: 65) criticised Foucault for failing to acknowledge that disciplinary practices are gendered: 'Foucault treats the body throughout as if it were one, as if the bodily experiences of men and women did not differ and as if men and women bore the same relationship to the characteristic institutions of modern life'. Bartky's incorporation of gendered disciplinary practices, which ensure women's compliance with socially constructed norms of femininity, such as bodily comportment and appropriate ornamentation of the body, highlighted the manufacture of the gendered, self-disciplining subject. Moreover, Cooper (1994: 437), in an attempt to explore a gendered analysis of the disciplinary power of the panopticon states that, 'it is a metaphor for women's internalisation of the view of the "other" to produce self-monitoring subjects'. The operation of disciplinary power is to manage individuals through adherence to, and internalisation of, culturally and historically specific norms (Foucault, 1995), and the effects of this 'fragments and partitions the body's time, space, and its movements' (Bartky, 1988: 62). The body is, therefore, a target of social control (Bordo, 1993). The self-disciplining subject, who alters her physical appearance in terms of ornamentation, also, alters her physical movements, in relation to how much or how little space she takes up, as well as geographically, in the spaces she goes to or avoids. For Cahill (2000: 54), 'women's limitation of the space within which her body can move seems to gesture not towards self-inflicted harm, but rather toward harm inflicted by other bodies […] to go beyond that space is to enter an arena where her body is in danger of being violated'.

The limitation of women's spatial movements is an effect of disciplinary practices and discourses around women's safety and imposes responsibility on them for avoiding sexual violence. Implicit within such discourses is that danger is located within the feminine body. As Heidensohn (1996: 183) noted, women's activities in public are

controlled by a double fear, 'of actual unprovoked assault and of unknowingly provoking such an attack by her dress, demeanour or "contributory negligence"'. Highlighting the embodied nature of violence, Vera-Gray (2018: 11) explored the habitual 'safety work' women undertake in order to avoid men's violence. These norms, of appropriate feminine bodies, behaviours and movements, ensure that spatial and geographic limitations are placed on women, based on the need to avoid sexual violence. Discourses on women's safety, therefore, place the responsibility to avoid assault on women, encouraging this bodily self-discipline, and expressing the 'power dynamic which blames women for sexual assault' (Cahill, 2000: 56).

For Ballinger (1997: 123) when sexual violence is experienced, the consequences of these discourses mean that there are:

> attacks for which the woman concerned may be held partly or wholly responsible, depending on a number of factors such as where and what time it took place, how she was dressed, how she behaved, what she did or did not say. In short, a woman's conduct plays an important role in determining the extent of her culpability in the crime committed against her.

The result of these discourses and disciplinary practices, therefore, is that a woman's movements, behaviours and freedom are limited, whilst at the same time ensuring that, should she experience sexual violence, responsibility lies with her own failure to self-discipline and self-regulate.

Discourses, sexuality and the 'cultural scaffolding'[3] of sexual violence

In terms of the development of particular discourses on sexuality, feminist poststructuralists have argued that 'sex is *produced* through the deployment of sexuality' (Gavey, 2005: 80, emphasis in the original). Sex is not understood as natural or fixed, rather, it is tied to relations of power and deployed as a means of social

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[3] Gavey (2005: 2)

control. This control can be seen, throughout history, as promoting normative models of sexuality (Foucault, 1978).

McLaren (2002: 33) argues that Foucault's work raises questions on taken for granted assumptions, such as that 'sex is a natural biological category, that particular behaviours are unnatural, and that one's sex prescribes what an individual can do'. As previously noted, shifting norms around masculinity and femininity prescribe that which is deemed acceptable and unacceptable in particular periods and in different places. Naffine (1987: 43), has argued that 'our culture expects women to be passive, not aggressive, dependent, not audacious'. More broadly, Carlen and Worrall (1987) point to three central discourses around which women's experiences are structured, namely domesticity, sexuality and pathology. Women's delinquent femininity most often, for Naffine (1987: 13), takes the form of sex delinquency and, as Ballinger (1997: 123) noted, 'young girls and older women alike have to tread the thin line between being sexually desirable without appearing provocative or too sexually experienced'. In relation to the shifting nature of such constructions, Bacchi (1988) outlined the dominant, yet changing discourses of 'appropriate' female sexuality throughout several points in history from the eighteenth century. It is these dominant discourses which are the mechanisms through which behaviours are judged 'according to their nearness to or distance from that which is defined as the norm' (Smart, 1995: 49).

Women's sexuality and desire have been conceptualised in contradictory ways, described both as dangerous and therefore requiring control while women who were deemed respectable have been portrayed as lacking desire (Lees, 1997). The 'respectability' of the woman in question is key to her construction as either insatiable or lacking desire. Bacchi (1988), moreover, uncovered models of sexuality, such as the promotion of active female sexuality, which relied on reproducing middle-class,

heterosexual images. Through the analysis of the work of two 'sex reforming feminists', Bacchi (1988: 44) showed how the attitudes they shared, as a result of their membership 'within the Anglo-Saxon middle class, set the parameters within which they examined female sexuality'. Additionally, Hill-Collins (1990) outlined the racialised discourses of Black women's sexuality in relation to sexual aggression and deviant, uncontrollable sexuality. For Hill-Collins (1990), the regulation of Black women's sexuality, through categorising the asexual 'moral' woman in opposition to those who are not, is also critical to the constitution of gender oppression.

As with femininity, there are normative expectations around masculinity. Collier (1998: 174) argues that men are expected to be 'tough, aggressive, in control, that they are not to express any feelings except anger, not to cry and never to ask for help'. These are also norms through which populations are regulated. For Connell (1995), certain forms of masculinity are culturally exalted. The concept of hegemonic masculinity, in its cultural acceptance and expectations of 'real manhood' and 'acceptable' masculinity, is important in relation to the norms and limitations on expressions of masculinity, as well as its role in the reproduction of unequal gendered power relations. In the current Western gender order, normative standards of masculinity most importantly relate to heterosexuality and 'gayness is easily assimilated into femininity' (Connell, 1995: 78). Furthermore, central to the construction of 'acceptable' sexualities is the concept of compulsory heterosexuality (Rich, 1980) and, for Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) the policing of heterosexuality and the exclusion and subordination of homosexual men is a key concern.

Poststructuralist feminists have developed the arguments on language, discourse and the construction of sexuality in relation to the social construction of truth around sexual

violence. Alcoff (2018: 3) argues that rape cultures produce a discursive formation in which:

> the intelligibility of claims is not by logical argument or evidence, but by frames that set out who can be victimised , who can be accused, which are plausible narratives, and in what contexts rape may be spoken about, even in private spaces.

Discourses, therefore, determine the criteria by which the statement of experiences of sexual violence are interpreted. A further way in which dominant discourses are implicated in violence is through what Smart (1999: 404) named the 'discursive trick'. Through an exploration of the social and cultural history of the contested discursive field of child sexual abuse, she discussed the difficulties in naming child sexual abuse and highlighted the 'discursive trick' whereby victims of abuse were named as liars or hysterics. This trick, historically used by perpetrators to shift blame for child sexual abuse, may be viewed as similar to the discursive production of rape myths which may be articulated by a perpetrator of sexual violence to avoid responsibility. Ussher (1997) stated that women are accused of lying and making false claims based on a number of dominant discourses and 'truths' namely that they are malevolent and make false accusations in order to absolve them from the responsibility of having loose morals. Furthermore, a woman may be viewed as lying because she does not know her own mind and that 'she has a deep pathology which motivates [her] to fabricate a rape charge' (Ussher, 1997: 388). Discourses around rape, specifically rape myths, have entered into language as common-sense knowledge and may also be used by those other than the perpetrator, to excuse them of responsibility and again, shift blame to the victim. Gavey (1999) also highlights how some women who have had experiences which are consistent with legal definitions will not always interpret what happened as rape. Again, dominant discourses of sexuality construct 'truths' about the experience

of rape, who can rape and who can be raped, which extends to the meanings and interpretations of those who experience sexual violence. Discursive manoeuvres (Howe, 2008) such as misdirecting blame, relying upon gendered stereotypes such as pathologising women as liars and hysterical, further construct a truth about sexual violence which conceals the agency and behaviour of the perpetrators.

Hollway (1984: 228) outlined 'coexisting and potentially contradictory' discourses concerning sexuality which are relevant to explanations, understandings, and constructions of sexual violence. Firstly, she outlines the discourse around the male sexual drive, the belief that men's sexuality is produced by a biological drive which is understandably difficult to control. Women within this discourse, are positioned as objects, 'that precipitate men's natural sexual urges' (Hollway, 1984: 228). Secondly, the 'have/hold' discourse, with its roots in Christian ideals of the family and monogamy, where women's sexuality is viewed in relation to men's. An insistence of women's asexuality, within this discourse, is underlined by the belief that women's sexuality is dangerous and in need of control. Finally, the permissive discourse, which challenges the principle of monogamy, assumes sexuality as natural and applies these assumptions to men and women. For Campbell (1980: 1-2 cited in Hollway, 1984: 233), however, the permissive discourse was contradictory for women and, whilst it permitted sex for women, it did not:

> defend women against the differential effects of permissiveness on men and women…It was about the affirmation of young men's sexuality and promiscuity […] the very affirmation of sexuality was an affirmation of male sexuality.

Gavey (2005) explored these discourses and outlined their role in relation to sexual violence. Dominant discourses of heterosexuality 'operate to reinforce gender relations of power through which women's choices and control in heterosex are

potentially compromised' (Gavey, 2005: 98). As such, discourses on heterosexuality position women as passive subjects who are expected to comply with men's sexual desires over their own (Gavey, 1993). The conceptualisation, of sexuality, as discursively produced, highlights what Gavey (2005: 2) termed 'the cultural scaffolding of rape', that is, the everyday, taken for granted, normative forms of heterosexuality. These discourses on sex and gender are argued to produce 'forms of heterosex that set up the preconditions of rape – women's passive acquiescing (a)sexuality and men's forthright, urgent pursuit of sexual "release"' (Gavey, 2005: 3). For Gavey (2005), there are normalising dimensions of contemporary heterosex which might not be thought of as coercive or victimising, but are social scripts, codes and norms which legitimate particular forms of sex as normal and delegitimise others as deviant and dysfunctional. A central argument is that these discursive constructions script a relational dynamic 'that arguably authorise sexual encounters that are not always clearly distinguishable from rape' (Gavey, 2005: 3). The binary dynamic of heterosexual sex, 'masculine-feminine, active-passive, dominant-submissive, desiring-desired', provides the discursive scaffolding that enables rape (Gavey, 2005: 231-232). This discursive scaffolding blurs the lines between that which is 'normal' heterosex and that which is rape, 'providing the perfect alibi for many rapes – it was just sex' (Gavey, 2005: 232).

"It is always the body that is at issue[4]": Sexual subjectivity and sexual violence

As noted above, feminist poststructuralists contest the stability, naturalness and universalism of categories such as 'man' and 'woman', as well as the dualism implicit within these categories (Bailey, 1993). Moreover, power is understood as producing

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[4] Foucault (1995: 25)

different subjectivities and the body 'is the site of the production of new modes of subjectivity' (Zerilli, 1991:2-3 cited in Bordo, 1993: 182). Following this, the stable concept of women's subjectivity has been questioned, in that it assumes a prediscursive subjectivity (Weedon, 1987) and lacks an analysis of the power of some women relative to others (Bailey, 1993). Moreover, the concept of a pre-discursive body, with a 'pre-social or extra-cultural status' (Bailey, 1993: 101) has been criticised in that, if the body is understood as naturally existing prior to, and external to, social categorisation, biological differences are reified and sexed and gendered systems of division will remain (Bailey, 1993). Feminist poststructuralists have problematised the body 'as the foundation and guarantee of difference' and considered 'the implications of this for feminism' (Weedon, 1999: 100). The body is, instead, discursively constituted, a constitution which has real effects. It is conceived as 'a concrete phenomenon, without eliding its materiality with a fixed biological or prediscursive essence' (McNay, 1992: 17).

Whilst subjectivity is constituted in the body, experience shapes subjectivity, and experience is not homogenous. As Weedon (1987: 79) notes, 'what an event means to an individual depends on her ways of interpreting the world, on the discourses available to her at any particular moment'. In relation to sexual violence for example, the experience, interpretation, and response to this will depend upon one's beliefs in relation to masculinity and femininity as well as available language and discourses. Subjectivity, and the interpretations of experiences are, therefore, temporary and shifting as available discourses are open to challenge, changing and developing. However, whilst discourses are socially, culturally and historically contingent, with the effect that meaning, experience and subjectivity are also provisional, Weedon (1987) notes that this does not mean that there are not real effects. In its concern with the

exercise of power, feminist poststructuralism has focussed on excavating the 'specific discursive production of conflicting and competing meanings… [which] are only fixed temporarily, but this temporary fixing has important social implications' (Weedon, 1987: 86). The discursive construction of bodies is inseparable from sexual identities. Bodies, and discourses on the body, 'have been permanently altered by the power-knowledge machinery erected on, around and through human sexuality and sex' (Bailey, 1993: 108). Bodies are understood through the knowledge and truths produced about them. The result of the development of this field of knowledge is, 'the conjunction, the joining of bodies and sexuality/sex' (Bailey 1993: 112).

Experiences of sexual violence, and awareness of the potential to experience sexual violence, can impact upon sexual subjectivity (Alcoff, 2018). Plante (2007: 32 cited in Alcoff, 2018: 111) outlines sexual subjectivity as 'a person's sense of herself as a sexual being'. She goes on to note that this sense of self relates to:

> [M]ore than our arousal patterns and our conduct or sexual choices. It also includes a complex constellation of beliefs, perceptions, and emotions that inform our intrapsychic sexual scripts and affect our very capacity for sexual agency. Because our sexual subjectivity is interactive with others and our social environments, it is always in process, changing in relation to our experiences. For this reason, our sexual subjectivities are constitutively or intrinsically vulnerable (ibid).

Sexual subjectivities are unstable, and constituted by changing and conflicting experiences, interactions, knowledge and discourses. The body and embodiment are 'central to the development and construction of the self' (Cahill, 1998: 198). Therefore, whilst bodies present the opportunity for physical harm, 'they necessitate that the implications of that abuse extend well beyond the purely physical' (Cahill, 1998: 198). Moreover, sexual subjectivities are interactive in nature and are tied to our relationships with others as well as existing within social and political contexts (Cahill,

2014a). This 'intersubjectivity of embodiment' (Cahill, 2001: 9) means the embodied self is affected and constructed by these wider relations beyond the self. Stauffer (2018) also argues that selves are built by human interaction and that 'autonomy and liberty mean something only in spaces where they are respected' (Stauffer, 2018: 4).

In relation to sexual violence, some incidents of rape can be understood as an attempt to temporarily eclipse a victim's subjectivity through denying her ability to affect the interaction (Cahill, 2014b). This ability is, for Cahill (2014b: 315), 'central to her dignity as a person of moral worth'. Moreover, in terms of the implications for subjectivities, the potential consequences of sexual violence, for those who have experienced it, affect their ability to move about freely and autonomously in the world, their capacity for pleasure, to trust others, to trust their judgment and responses, and to trust their relationship to themselves (Alcoff, 2018). Whilst a victim or survivor of sexual violence might not always be altered by the experience, violence does have effects on sexual subjectivity (Alcoff, 2018). The consequences of sexual violation, therefore, constitute subjectivities, in that they 'inhabit our bodies, our neighbourhoods, our families, our social networks and our lives' (Alcoff, 2018: 110).

Alcoff (2018) also noted that sexual violence, which she termed 'sexual violation', is a normative concept which involves judging sexual acts and desires. She argued for the use of the term 'sexual violation', rather than sexual violence, to 'complexify' our understandings of what counts as sexual violence. This moves the focus away from binary conceptions of rape as relating to power not sex, while maintaining that rape is not always 'about violence in the usual sense' (ibid: 12). Therefore, 'to violate' is to 'infringe upon someone, to transgress, and it can also mean to rupture or break' (ibid: 12). Violation serves as a more useful term in that violence is not always determinative of rape, but violation of sexual agency, subjectivity and free will are. These arguments

are discussed further in Chapter Seven. There is, however, 'no easy way to establish the dividing line between harmful and harmless sex' (ibid: 77). The ways in which experiences come to be named and interpreted, within these unequal social structures, are more complex than right or wrong, harmful or harmless. For example, normative concepts of consent are inadequate in that they are embedded within unequal social structures and are a poor indicator of desire or will. Drawing the boundaries around that which is sexual violence and that which is not, for Alcoff (2018), requires a focus on sexual subjectivity. This is discussed in more depth below.

A consideration of the harms generated by sexual violence is therefore required, beyond harms as defined in the law. The harm of sexual violence is the violation of sexual subjectivity, 'meaning our capacity for having sexual agency in our lives' (ibid: 111). Moreover, when the body is located as central to identity, with the awareness that it is not unified or determined, sexual violence can be understood as not just a violation upon sexuality and the body, but on a woman's self-hood and subjectivity (Cahill, 1998). Sexual violence is, therefore, an embodied experience, a violence against the very self. Positing the harm of sexual violence as a harm against the self and subjectivity, allows for the understanding that the most harmful incident does not always relate to what happens to the body, but to 'long-term or permanent damage to the victim's subjective functioning' (MacCannell and MacCannell, 1993: 205).

Discourse, Bodies, Subjectivity and the Law

The power of the law

Ballinger (2009: 21) stated that we cannot understand the contradictions between:

> on the one hand formal, (supposedly) legal equality in the public sphere, and, on the other hand, informal equality through (supposedly) illegal violence within

the private sphere, without placing the state's role in maintaining the dominant heteropatriarchal social order at the forefront of analysis.

As both she and Connell (1994) note, the state's role as 'a vehicle of sexual and gender oppression' (Connell, 1994: 147) is embedded in its procedures and in the very ways it functions. The discursive construction of sexual violence and violence against women explored above, can also be seen at the level of legislation, policy and practice. There is, therefore, a need to examine the relationship between these representations of women and the regulation of bodies. Foucault's (1994) conceptualisation of 'truth', discussed above, in which particular discourses are accepted and function as truth, is relevant in that different arenas have their own claims to truth and the law is one arena in which these claims are most evident. Smart (1989: 162) outlined the power of the law, specifically, the law as discourse, which can 'refute and disregard alternative discourses and claim a special place in the definition of events'. She argued that the law has a claim to truth in that it sets itself outside of the social order, 'as if through the application of legal method and rigour, it becomes a thing apart which in turn can reflect on the work from which it is divorced' (Smart, 1989: 11). In this process of claiming truth, the law subordinates other knowledges.

Feminist theorisation of the law has taken several forms and Smart (1989) outlines three key parameters; the law is sexist, the law is male, and the law is gendered. Moving beyond arguments that focus solely on binary constructions of differences between men and women, and the limitations within this approach in terms of intersecting identities, Smart (1989) argues that the law is a gendering strategy. Law can be understood as a process whereby it is not necessarily applied differently to men and women, but that 'the same practices signify differently for men and women because they are read through different discourses' (Hollway 1984: 237 cited in Smart 1989: 33). Moreover, an understanding of the law as gendered, allows for analyses

which do not rely on a pre cultural woman upon which the law is applied. In that sense, whilst the law might 'insist on a specific version of gender differentiation' (Smart, 1989: 191), analyses of the law do not have to do this. When the law is understood as a technology of gender, that its power is not purely negative, the productivity of law is uncovered in its (re)production of 'truth'. The law has historically established the 'truth' about rape, and feminists have contested these 'truths', instead exposing them as stereotypes and myths which both deny women's experiences and 'refuse women the status as truth-tellers' (Serisier, 2018: 71). Smart (1989: 192) argued the law produces and reproduces gendered subject positions, binary gender identities and 'subjectivities or identities to which the individual becomes tied or associated'.

Duncan (1995: 334) also argued that the law disciplines bodies differentially, those which are 'distinguished by gender, sexualisation and sexual orientation'. Constructions of 'woman' and 'the conflation of women with "sex" directly influence many areas of material practice, in which the physical body of a woman is regulated and controlled' (Ussher, 1997: 256). As Foucault (1978: 104) argued, women's bodies have been analysed and 'thoroughly saturated with sexuality'. This saturation can be seen in the way that sexual ideology is embedded in laws, institutions and social policy regarding sex work, with the changing reconstruction of sex work and sex workers as immoral, a sexual health problem, and a threat to public decency (Walkowitz, 1980).

Legal, philosophical, psychological and medical discourses

As a gendering strategy, the law, in relation to sexual violence, 'reflects myths rooted in medical, religious and philosophical discourses about the nature of women's bodies and of female sexuality' (Lees, 1997: 71). These discourses construct women's bodies in rape trials in ways which cast doubts on her credibility as a victim. The

power/knowledge nexus of medicine and psychiatry operate throughout the trial process to discredit complainants and maintain gendered divisions (Lees, 1997). Medical discourses are used to distort a complainant's testimony and doctors, as 'judges of normality' (Foucault, 1995: 304), play a 'crucial "expert" role', often giving conflicting and distorted accounts of what is deemed 'typical' bodily signs of rape (Lees, 1997: 84). As Ussher (1997) argued, the standard of how the 'reasonable woman' would respond to someone if she did not consent to sex ensures a court assesses rape based not on what the perpetrator did, but on what the victim did not do. Without a 'sufficient' level of resistance, understood through medical discourse as physical resistance, an incident might not be deemed 'real rape'. Therefore, if *excess* force is not used the man can be positioned merely as a seducer, not a rapist' (Ussher, 1997: 373, emphasis in the original).

The process of cross examination is a key example of how power and discipline produce docile bodies. In line with Foucault, Lees (1997) explored the power of punishment through cross examination, and how it is 'embodied in local, regional, material institutions' (Lees, 1997: 87). The trial focuses upon the body of the woman complainant and she is the subject of examination, a focus which functions to further control women's sexuality. The focus on the body of the woman, rather than her testimony, relates back to the mind/body dualism in which women are viewed as ruled by their bodies. The constant association of women complainants with their bodies throughout this process, results in their dissociation from reason. Therefore, 'her "consent" or "rationality", the core issue of dispute in rape trials, is implicitly questioned' (Lees: 1997: 74). Men's rationality is, however, taken for granted (Lees, 1997). In addition to a perceived lack of rationality, women are positioned as liars, particularly in relation to sexual violence (Ussher, 1997). For Ussher (1997: 389), the law accepts

these misrepresentations of 'woman' with the result that the discourse that women change their minds is often utilised: 'they seek revenge on a man, or simply they want sympathy and attention'.

The 'truth' of sexual violence

For Smart (1989), rape trials are a process in which women's bodies become sexualised:

> Her body becomes literally saturated with sex. She is required to speak sex, and figuratively to re-enact sex; her body and its responses become the stuff of evidence. As she occupies the metaphorical sexual space which is allocated to her during the trial, she simultaneously invokes women as sex; the biological woman. The natural/sexed woman is always already known to be more emotional, less rational, more subjective, more mendacious, and less reliable than man (Smart, 1995b: 84).

Smart (1989) argued that women's sexual subjectivities are framed through the legal language of rape. Moreover, the discourses, outlined above on women's safety and responsibility to avoid sexual violence, or men's innate sexual aggression, construct the sexual subjectivity of the woman in the rape trial. The law's deployment of power is extended by 'silencing all but one account of rape, an account which in turn produces the rapable (biological, sexed) women of legal discourse' (Smart, 1989: 84). As noted above, Alcoff (2018) and Cahill (2014b) posit the harm of sexual violence to be a violation against a person's sexual subjectivity, agency and will. The narrow construction of sexual violence within the law, which relies upon legal, philosophical, psychological, and medical discourses to determine harm and appropriate or believable responses from victims, does not allow for the expression of harm to sexual subjectivity. The construction of 'truth' in the trial, therefore, is a result and reflection of the exercise of power, whereby women's experiences are heard and reconstructed through the dominant discourses of what sexual violence means.

Accounts of rape which do not meet the standards of those who are deemed innocent, or which are not discursively framed around common sense understandings of rape and victimisation, are not deemed worthy of legal justice. Jeffreys and Radford (1984) also argued that, in the case of rape, the closeness or deviation between that which appears to be 'normal' heterosexual sex affects the difficulty or ease with which that case travels through the criminal justice system. Hollway's (1984) outline of discourses concerning sexuality, as discussed above, operate through the criminal justice process, to delineate behaviours, acts and responses which are acceptable or unacceptable. There is, therefore, for Jeffreys and Radford (1984), a need to acknowledge parallels between 'normal' sexual intercourse and rape as, without this, stereotypes of who can rape and who can be raped persist.

Of further importance, is the law's discursive framing of 'real' rapists, as monsters or predators, and as individuals who would be clearly distinguishable from non-rapists (Manne, 2017). This discursive framing has effects, particularly in relation to reporting and speaking out about incidents. As Brison (2014) discussed, the myth that only those who are inhuman rape, reinforces the general belief that those who experience sexual violence experience it at the hands of people known to the victim. The persistence, and reproduction of these discourses, have effects on the numbers and types of cases which are deemed to be 'true'. Succinctly, 'by scapegoating "the few" as rapists, the law legitimates "the many" as normal' (Jeffreys and Radford, 1984: 160). Through claims to 'truth', the law has the power to disqualify women's experiences of sexual violence (Howe, 2008).

Taken together, these critiques of the law, highlight the need for it to be understood as a site of struggle, due to its participation in constructing meaning and subjectivities (Smart, 1989). Through the exercise and operation of dominant discourses on

women's bodies and sexuality, and the depiction of women's bodies at trial, a complainant's credibility is affected and reflects the operation of power through legal and medical discourses (Lees, 1997). As well as disqualifying experiences, rape trials, function 'as a warning to all women about speaking out about male violence' (Lees, 1997:71). In terms of the operation of power, the law operates through norms (Foucault, 1978), and for Lees (1997), in relation to women, regulation through norms focuses on sexuality. Whilst Foucault's (1995) argument that punishment has shifted from punishing the body through the public spectacle of sovereign power, to punishing the mind is clearly relevant, Lees (1997: 73) argued that elements of the 'spectacle of degradation' are still relevant in rape trials. This, however, is degradation focussed on, and exercised over, the victim rather than the offender. In that sense, the rape trial functions as 'the public mechanism for the control of female sexuality' (Lees, 1997: 88).

Overall, following the work of feminist poststructuralists, it is theoretically important in recognising that gendered subjectivities are constituted in a range of conflicting and changing ways, in relation to behaviour, beliefs, experiences, meanings, perceptions and relations. Moreover, this exercise of power is evident in various arenas. As well as the body being the place where subjectivity is constituted, it is also the site of power, the place of domination and the place of discipline (Diamond and Quinby, 1988). At the same time, this subjection is never complete. It is contested and resisted. It is to a consideration of the importance of resistance as a theoretical concept that the chapter now turns.

'The Subjection of Bodies is Never Complete[5]': Theorising feminist poststructuralist resistance

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[5] Bailey, M.E. (1993: 108)

Foucault's conceptualisation of power, and its effects on the body, has been critiqued by McNay (1992: 12) in that the body 'is conceived essentially as a passive entity, upon which power stamps its own images'. This is, for McNay (1992), problematic in that it leaves no space for the ways in which individuals might act autonomously and resist these power relations. Similarly, accounts by feminist poststructuralism on the gendered effects of disciplinary power have been critiqued for not taking into account women's agency. Devaux (1994: 227), critiquing Bartky's use of the docile bodies thesis in relation to gendered disciplinary practices, states that this has the effect of:

> diminishing and delimiting women's subjectivity, at times treating women as robotic receptacles of culture rather than as active agents who are both constituted by, and reflective of, their social and cultural contexts.

However, if Foucault's conceptualisation of power as productive and relational is considered, operating as inequality between men and women for example, then Sawicki (1990) argues, the reverse relationship must be possible and that there is space for resistance.

For McLaren (2002), feminists need a conceptualisation of subjectivity which accounts for not only the operation of power through normalisation processes, but also resistance to these norms. Whilst disciplinary techniques operate on, inscribe and constitute gendered bodies and relations, it is this relational dynamic of power which holds the possibilities for resistance to its operation.

In relation to rape and resistance, Marcus (2002) and Henderson (2000: 229) argue that 'rape is an instance in which discourses of power produce the feminine body as violable and weak'. The productive, relational element of power means that resistance to this discourse, across the network of power, is also located within the body (Henderson, 2000). Resistance to a power which is not only negative or wholly

suppressive means a resistance to specific relations of power 'which must take myriad and partial forms' (Bailey, 1993: 107). Bailey (1993) identifies some of these struggles, such as feminist scholarship and grassroots political organising. In her work on rape prevention, Marcus (2002) explored the discursive construction of rape and contended that, rape is a question of language which is founded on neither real nor objective criteria but rather, on 'political decisions to exclude certain interpretations and perspectives and to privilege others' (Marcus, 2002: 168). When rape is understood as a scripted interaction, which takes place via language, as Marcus argues, then it can be analysed as a process and can, therefore, be challenged and undermined. The dominant discourse, or 'rape scripts' which 'describes women's bodies as vulnerable, violable, penetrable and wounded' (Marcus, 2002: 180) need to be revised to represent women in new ways. The image of the violable women which, for Marcus (2002) promotes male violence against women, must be displaced and women's will, and agency should be put in its place.

Resistance to an imposed, docile subjectivity, can also be understood through women not complying to discursively constructed norms of femininity. Gendered disciplinary practices, such as bodily comportment, ornamentation and geographical movements are resisted through not adhering to these expectations. Whilst it is evident that women do resist these norms, Henderson (2002) noted that, although locating resistance in the body can generate strategies for rape prevention, this also could place the burden on women as potential or actual victims of sexual violence to take responsibility for ensuring it does not take place. This shift in the burden could, therefore, reproduce historically dominant discourses of women's responsibility, and complicity, for the violence enacted against them (Henderson, 2002). These notions have historically been present in state, criminal justice, media, and public discourses and remain

contemporarily persistent. There is, therefore, a need for resistance strategies which do not responsibilise those who are most 'at risk' of sexual violence.

A further way in which resistance can be conceptualised is through speaking out and testifying to experiences. Historically, the use of speaking out as a political strategy has taken many forms and has been theorised in several ways. 'Breaking the silence' (Bass and Davis, 1988: 92) forms part of the history of the feminist movement and was actively encouraged for a range of personal reasons, as well as for collective, feminist organising around these narratives. According to Weedon (1987), some feminist positions have conceptualised speaking out as an expression of subjectivity based on experience as biological females. This position, however, considers the determining influence of women's language and subjectivity to be biology which erases differences between women (ibid). Moreover, speaking out and challenging rape myths about sexual violence, viewed solely through the prism of gender, leaves little, or no room for critiquing the myths and dominant discourses around 'race', class and criminality (Davis, 1983; Serisier, 2018). In an effort to mitigate this erasure, speaking out has been used in order to highlight connections between women's experiences with shared forms of oppression, particularly in relation to 'race', class and sexual orientation (hooks, 1989). This position, for Weedon (1987), allows for the expression of subjectivity, whilst acknowledging that a woman's experience is not innate but dependent upon myriad power relations.

A position which conceives of self-expression as a woman as being achieved in language, assumes that subjectivity is already existing, awaiting expression and that the language is simply a labelling system, divorced from power (Weedon, 1987). As discussed above, however, subjectivities shift and are socially, culturally and historically contingent, but with social implications. Subjectivity is an effect of

discourse, and if language is the place where subjectivity is constituted, 'then language also determines how we perceive possibilities for change' (ibid: 86). The use of speaking out as a political strategy of resistance potentially can uncover the discursive production of particular subjectivities, in different contexts, and the effects of this. Speaking out can take place in various arenas, such as the criminal justice system, the media, workplaces, educational institutions and within the family. Additionally, there has been an increase in the use of social media to share stories of sexual violence (Keller et al., 2016; Nuñez Puente, 2011). Serisier (2018) notes various benefits of women's experiential knowledge in relation to sexual violence, in its promise to enact cultural change through a shift in the popular and public understanding of sexual violence. Firstly, through speaking about the realities of this violence, such narratives have the potential to counter widely held rape myths. Furthermore, the development of these alternative knowledges and truths have the potential to bring into the public domain an understanding of the realities of sexual violence.

Speaking out can also assist in developing awareness of the prevalence of sexual violence, again, providing a counter narrative, specifically in relation to state-defined discourses and quantitative measures such as criminal justice statistics. The increase in the number of women speaking out, in part due to the accessibility of social media platforms, generates the ability to provide a more detailed and complex picture of the realities of sexual violence. Speaking out also means that the quantity and diversity of experiences of sexual violence is highlighted, contesting universal truths in relation to women's experiences. As Mohanty (1987: 123 cited in Fine and Macpherson, 1992) notes, it is not just the experience of being a woman, 'but the meanings attached to

gender, race, class and age at various historical moments […] that are of strategic significance'.

Speaking out, whilst 'fraught with risk and vulnerability' (Serisier, 2018: 17), can reduce the stigma and shame relating to sexual violence, can assist in the collective liberation of survivors as well as individual empowerment through the recognition of a survivor's experience and narrative. This point was developed by Alcoff and Gray (1993: 261-262) whereby survivor discourse was viewed as having the potential to be empowering, through victims acting 'constructively on their own behalf and thus making the transition from passive victim to active survivor'. Survivor discourse can reposition 'the problem from the individual psyche to the social sphere where it rightfully belongs' (ibid: 261). This repositioning, through breaking the silence and speaking out is, furthermore, part of a developing discursive struggle by feminism 'to move rape and sexual violence out of the orbit of the criminal justice system and into the domain of feminism and the politics of gender' (Serisier, 2018: 8). For Serisier (2018), the development of feminist narratives of sexual violence is important in providing a discursive framework for the articulation of experiences as well as making them politically meaningful. However, these narratives are not necessarily discursively positioned around feminism and gender politics, nor separated from the discursive framework of the criminal justice system (ibid). Further constraints upon the possibilities of speaking out relate to the boundaries around which narratives are tellable, primarily those which are in line with previously outlined, long held, rape myths.

For Foucault, speech is a site and object of conflict and to bring an issue into the realm of discourse 'is not always or even generally a progressive or liberatory strategy; indeed, it can contribute to our own subordination' (cited in Alcoff and Gray, 1993:

260). Publicly speaking out as a survivor comes with a set of risks including, but not limited to, relationship strain, social disapproval, and personal safety (Alcoff, 2018). Inherent within the process of speaking out, therefore, is the negotiation of deciding when to speak, where, how and to whom one should speak out (Alcoff, 2018). For Alcoff and Gray (1993) to bring stories of sexual violence into the realm of discourse, has the potential to inscribe these stories into hegemonic structures. They focus their critique upon discourses about sex, where, for example, when a speaker discloses experiences of sexual violence, this speaker and speech can be 'inscribed into dominant structures of subjectivity' (ibid: 260). This inscription relegates the speech into prevailing beliefs about sexual violence, subsumes subjectivities under hegemonic discourse, diminishes possibilities for transgression and enhances the power of 'experts' (ibid: 261). This means that if a survivor has the choice to speak out, and does decide to, what happens to the speech, and how it is used, is often not controlled by her. In the context of universities, students have spoken about their experiences of sexual violence, therefore, analysis of how these narratives have been brought into and inscribed within discourses is necessary. This is discussed in Chapters Five and Seven.

There are, therefore, a range of intended and unintended consequences of speaking out. As Serisier (2018) argues, whilst, consciousness raising groups beginning in the 1970s provided the space for women to speak about their experiences of sexual violence, it was the collective listening and witnessing inherent within these groups which made that speech meaningful and transformational. Therefore, while it may have the potential to be an empowering and liberatory expression of subjectivity and a form of resistance, the context in which experiences are expressed, and what is done to that speech is vital.

Conclusion

Feminist poststructuralists have shown that dominant discourses on sexuality and the body shape the way we talk about sexual violence. These discourses have real effects in that they regulate sexuality and relationships to ensure conformity to prescribed norms. Of particular importance in theorising sexual violence, is the role of language and the productivity of power. As Foucault (1978) demonstrated, these norms, as effects of discourses, can be oppressive and, therefore, one site in where they can be resisted is in language, as a struggle against the discursive constructions which reproduce the effects of gendered inequality. The work of poststructuralists is not to uncover the 'facts', but instead to 'disrupt and displace dominant and oppressive knowledges' (Gavey, 1989: 463). Moreover, as Cahill (1998: 250) notes, the feminine body is where 'the tenets of a sexually hierarchical culture are written, [it is therefore,] also the site where they may be fought'. As both power and resistance are everywhere, feminist theorising and activism has focussed on the possibilities of resistance. The reverse relationship of resistance and power, as discussed by Sawicki (1990), ensures that, in local struggles, acts of resistance can take place.

The development of discourses around sexuality are an exercise of power, with multiple effects in terms of regulation and social control. For McLaren (2002), this has led some to conclude that these normalising effects are inescapable. Yet, Foucault argues that, due to the historical contingency of such discourses, they are not fixed, and social change is possible (McLaren, 2002). We should therefore, Foucault (cited in McLaren, 2002: 33) argued, 'consider the possibility that one day, perhaps in a

different economy of bodies and pleasures', society might be organised differently. This point is considered in Chapter Eight.

Having outlined the theoretical perspective which underpins the thesis, Chapter Three now considers the research methodology underpinning the thesis and the methods through which the data was collected.

Chapter 3: 'Redressing the Balance'[6]: Researching sexual violence

> Good social science is that which 'seeks to give voice to and to improve the life conditions of the marginalized, and it transforms social scientific inquiry from an academic exercise into an instrument of meaningful social change (Renzetti, 1997: 143).

Introduction

The decision to undertake research with women students who were victims and/or survivors of sexual violence, as well as women students more broadly, is premised on the concern that their voice and experiences are central to understanding the issue. This thesis, therefore, aims to address this through the inclusion of these perspectives. This chapter is divided into five parts. First, it provides an overview of feminist methodologies, feminist praxis and the challenge this posed to the politics, and production of, traditional social science knowledge. Second, the feminist epistemological framework utilised in this research is outlined drawing upon the work of Miranda Fricker, Maria do Mar Pereira and Michel Foucault. Third, the chapter considers feminist knowledge in the local context of the university. Fourth, it considers issues of reflexivity, power, ethics and wellbeing in the research process. Finally, the chapter outlines the research methods utilised in the collection of data.

Feminist Epistemology and Feminist Praxis: Producing an alternative truth about sexual violence in universities

Despite the diversity of feminist methodologies (Harding, 1986), feminist methodological approaches tend to have some similarities. Skinner et al. (2005: 10) outline some 'commonly held characteristics'. Feminist methodologies are concerned with gender and gender inequality, a rejection of the researcher/researched distinction

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[6] This is taken from Smart (1977) Women, Crime and Criminology, which addresses the role of criminological research in reproducing social inequality and its failure to take adequately address gender in analyses of crime and victimisation.

and enabling the voices of women and other marginalised groups to be heard (Skinner, et al., 2005: 10-14). These methodologies, moreover, are broadly committed to politically active and emancipatory research, reflexivity, consideration of the wellbeing of the researcher and participants and, finally, they utilise methods that are most likely to reflect the experiences of women and children (Skinner et al., 2005: 14-18). These commonalities are discussed throughout this chapter.

Feminist epistemologies developed through a critique of the 'androcentrism of mainstream epistemologies' (Comack, 1999: 287). They aimed to create feminist knowledge, 'on' and 'for' women (Comack, 1999), questioned the social production of dominant 'truths' and posed a challenge to dominant discourses. Harding (1986: 15) argued that when feminist scholars have studied gender and social relations, they showed that what had been claimed to be 'humanly inclusive problematics, concepts, theories, objective methodologies, and transcendental truths are in fact far less than that'. They are instead products of the people who created them. Daly and Chesney-Lind (1988: 504) argue this and suggest knowledge production is gendered in that 'systems of knowledge reflect men's views of the natural and social world'. For example, Carlen and Worrall, (1987), Heidensohn (1985) and Smart (1977) all noted the androcentrism of criminology, with its use of biological explanations for criminality and the merging of female criminality with sexual deviance. Feminists have, therefore, addressed issues of epistemology and raised 'significant questions about the status and power of knowledge' (Smart, 1995: 34).

Cain (1993: 88) discussed the relationship between the production of feminist knowledge and subject positions, she stated:

> Anyone producing knowledge occupies a relational and historical site in the social world which is likely to shape and set limits to the knowledge formulations produced.

Some feminist critiques have centred around the desire for objectivity, the masculine trait of reason and the social production of knowledge which, in traditional social science terms, means the production of knowledge from the perspective of men's experiences (Harding, 1987). Stanley and Wise (1983: 49) assert that the desire for objectivity in research should be questioned, that it is a sexist notion and that 'it is the term that men have given to their own subjectivity'. As discussed in the previous chapter, the absence of the trait of reason is central to the perceived credibility of women. In terms of knowledge production, the masculine trait of reason, in addition to objectivity, ensures the credibility of the knowledge producer. As Jagger (1989: 151) argued, 'reason rather than emotion has been regarded as the indispensable faculty for acquiring knowledge'. Of further importance within these debates on the production of knowledge, are the issues of what is researched, what questions are asked, and, as Harding (1987: 7) asserts, 'even more significantly, those that are not asked'. What has historically been demarcated as in need of explanation, has often been from the limited perspective of men.

Cain (1990 cited in Ballinger, 1997: 17) outlined the characteristics of the traditional male researcher, who 'is concerned with establishing absolute truth claims, […] he is unemotional and detached, which leaves him in full control of those investigated'. The values of the traditional researcher, therefore, involve being dispassionate and politically neutral which is 'justified on the grounds that research must be separated and protected from political interest, of society at large and the social values of the researchers' (Ballinger, 1997: 17). As Ballinger (1997) notes, however, these values and goals stand in opposition to the goals and values of feminist researchers.

Furthermore, Skinner et al. (2005) stated that a key characteristic of feminist research is a rejection of the researcher/researched dichotomy alongside an acknowledgement of the potential power imbalance in the research relationship. Notwithstanding a history and philosophical tradition of 'proper' research being premised on objectivity, value-neutrality and scientific experts, feminist epistemologies posed a challenge to such traditions (Ballinger, 2016). Smith (1988), in critiquing traditional methodologies, argued that a feminist methodology requires the standpoint and presence of the subject as knowers, rather than 'transforming subjects into objects of study' (Smith, 1988: 105). This is particularly pertinent in this research as it necessitates the accounts of the women who participated and consideration of how their social position was connected to their experiences of victimisation (Gray, 2018). Code et al. (1988: 7) highlighted dichotomies which are entrenched in philosophical tradition. Such dichotomies, reason/emotion, subjective/objective, knowledge/experience, theory/practice and mind/body are shown to be 'products of ways of thinking that could well have been different'. These dichotomies have, however, persisted and position researchers as 'masters of mind' (Ramazanoglu with Holland, 2002: 29). Lloyd (1979 cited in Ramazanoglu with Holland, 2002: 29), however, contends that the 'master of reason' in this way of thinking, is in fact 'the man of reason', in that 'male' has historically been positioned as 'rational' in opposition to the 'non-rational' female. The researcher/researched dichotomy is a point of departure for feminist epistemologists who have contested the exclusionary limits of reason, by showing it to be socially constituted (Ramazanoglu with Holland, 2002: 29). Feminist epistemologies contend, therefore, that the man of reason; the objective, value-free, neutral researcher, able to separate himself from the effects of the world around him, is not achievable, nor is it desirable (Stanley and Wise, 1983).

While feminist researchers have rejected the androcentrism of 'traditional' research, though the epistemological positions taken in this rejection has differed. Harding (1986) outlined three stances, feminist empiricism, feminist standpoint and feminist postmodernism. Feminist empiricism argues that sexism and androcentrism, are biases which effect scientific inquiry and that 'stricter adherence to existing methodological norms of scientific inquiry' (Harding, 1986: 24) can correct this. Within this framework, science is not the issue, but bad science, therefore leaving the existing norms of scientific inquiry unchallenged (Harding, 1986). Feminist standpoint suggests that, due to women's subjugated position, they have the potential for a more complete understanding of the social world than men (Harding, 1986). Feminist standpoint, therefore, is concerned with women's universal experience (Harding, 1986).

Feminist postmodernism differs from empiricism and standpoint in its rejection of universal claims of existence (Harding, 1986). Flax (1987: 624) states postmodern perspectives are deconstructive, that they 'seek to distance us from and make us sceptical about beliefs concerning truth, knowledge, power, the self, and language'. Specifically, postmodern philosophy has questioned beliefs drawn from the enlightenment, which suggested 'the existence of a stable, coherent self' and that through reason, a person can achieve 'privileged insight' into the world' (Flax, 1987: 624). The independent character of reason is challenged by postmodernism in that it is understood as connected to the body, history and social experiences (Flax, 1987). Moreover, the asserted transparency of language is challenged, language is not viewed as simply a medium through which an object or experience is represented, but rather objects and experiences are linguistically and socially constructed (Flax, 1987).

Postmodernists avoid the search for grand narratives and a universal truth. As Smart (1995: 45) states, in postmodernism, 'the aim of feminism ceases to be the

establishment of the feminist truth and becomes the aim of deconstructing truth and analysing the power effects that claims to truth entail'. Knowledge is therefore not objective and is inherently linked to power and truth and is understood as a social construction, one which develops from a person's position and experience in the social world. Therefore, in order to understand women's experiences of sexual violence at university, the dominant discourses – the 'truth' – about these experiences needs to be deconstructed, from a range of sources, and to analyse the effects of these truths upon the women who have experienced sexual violence.

Ramazanoglu (with Holland, 2002) argue that subjective accounts of experiences are required in order to develop knowledge of gendered lives and power relations. They do point out, however, that there are different approaches to interpreting 'experience' and recognise the problematic status of such accounts. They suggest that, although it is necessary that knowledge is grounded in experience, experiential knowledge should not be simply taken as 'true' and, feminist knowledge, should 'go beyond competing stories of experience if they are to produce valid knowledge' (Ramazanoglu with Holland, 2002: 129). In relation to rape, for example, there are competing experiences, languages and meanings, suggesting that such variations 'cannot directly connect a personal experience with a general power relation' (Ramazanonglu with Holland, 2002: 129). Researching women's experiences of sexual violence, therefore, requires an exploration of subjective accounts and the differences for, and between women.

Oakley (2019: 25), in outlining sexism within the social sciences, argued that the 'ideology of gender roles' underpinned the structure of sociology itself so that attention is paid to some areas of social reality, and not others. For her, 'a way of seeing is a way of not seeing' and whilst she argues this in terms of the social sciences being concerned with the social reality of men, at the expense of women, a range of feminist

research has moved forward in understanding the subjective accounts between different categories of women. Whilst gender is a justified category of analysis, it is not a homogenous category, nor is it the only subject position to be explored. These are intersectional concerns, in that gender, and other inequalities, intersect with each other, and with experiences of victimisation and treatment by the criminal justice system (Cooper, 2015). For Smart (1990) the search for a meta-narrative to explain oppression, and the idea of a universal truth should therefore be challenged in order to uncover multiple realities. Whilst one form of social identity should not be privileged at the expense of others (Crenshaw, 1991), gender is more salient here in terms of knowledge production and so is foregrounded as a heterogeneous category. The point that women experience violence differently is evident (ibid), therefore, as proposed by Carastathis (2013), gender is foregrounded as a coalition, or potential coalition, rather than simply an identity category of 'separatism based on sameness' (ibid, 2016: 163). Conceptualising gender as a coalition enables a simultaneous focus on 'intragroup and intergroup differences' (ibid, 2013: 945) and allows for 'alliances built across differences' (ibid, 2016: 163). Approaching gender as a coalition also avoids the further reproduction of essentialist categories which assume the stability of these categories and fixed notions of difference (Ludvig, 2006). Therefore, subjective accounts, in this thesis, were explored through acknowledging the historically and socially contingent multiplicity of subject positions participants identified with.

A further characteristic of feminist research, according to Skinner et al. (2005: 12), is 'enabling the voices of women and other marginalised groups to be heard and their experience valued'. This involves, providing spaces for these voices to be articulated, and in turn listened to, encouraging participation from marginalised groups and, finally, considering the role that experience should play in the research (Skinner et al., 2005).

Providing a space in the research for women with intersecting experiences of marginalisation was therefore deemed necessary, but there were further considerations. Alcoff (1991) outlined the problem of speaking for others in that, the position which someone speaks from, and their social location, cannot be transcended. Speaking on behalf of those in less privileged locations can result in reinforcing the oppression of the group spoken for. Alcoff's (1991) outline of how to address these issues was considered throughout the research process: namely the impetus to speak must be fought against and the researcher's social location as a speaker must be interrogated in terms of its impact on what we are saying. Moreover, researchers must always be accountable and responsible for what we say, and subsequently open to criticism. Finally, we 'need to analyse the probable or actual effects of the words on the discursive and material context' (Alcoff, 1991: 26). The research, therefore, aimed to provide a space for women and other marginalised groups to speak and be heard and this was a key consideration in the research design and recruitment process. This was considered alongside an interrogation of my role and social location as a researcher, in terms of the impact and effects of my position on the research and the findings. This is discussed further below.

Skinner et al. (2005) next identify that a key element of feminist research is the importance of politically active and emancipatory research. This can be addressed through, as discussed above, enabling the voices of marginalised groups to be heard, but also through producing research which is accessible to audiences outside of academia (Skinner et al., 2005), in effect, producing knowledge which can be used by women themselves (Acker et al., 1983). The interviews were approached, as outlined by Lees (2002: 208), on the understanding that 'the results would be used to bring about improvements in the present situation'. This reflects Stanley's (1990) arguments

on feminist praxis, which ensures questioning not only the knowledge that is produced, but also the value of the knowledge in terms of who it is produced for. She stated that 'the point is to change the world, not only to study it' (Stanley, 1990: 15). The issues of policy change and how the knowledge produced from this research was used is discussed more fully in Chapter Seven.

'Knowledge is in the End Based on Acknowledgement'[7] : The epistemic status of women's experiences of sexual violence at university

As explored above, critiques of 'traditional' methodologies and developments in feminist methodologies centre around epistemology and which knowledge is deemed reliable, valid and valorised. Key to this thesis is the 'insurrection of subjugated knowledges' (Foucault, 2003: 7), as highlighted in Chapter Two. The subjugation of women's testimonies of sexual violence not only disqualifies these testimonies but, also, supports the further subjugation and disqualification of future testimonies. The subjugation of this knowledge restricts the theoretical and conceptual frameworks available for women to name, define and testify to their experiences. This section, therefore, explores the role of power in delineating that which is, and is not, deemed valid knowledge and how claims to science are 'constituted by, and constitutive of, relations of power' (Pereira, 2017: 2). This research uses Foucault's concept of epistemes, in a similar manner to Pereira (2017), with the aim of conceptualising a feminist theory of epistemic status and injustice.

For Foucault (1980c: 197) epistemes are:

> The strategic apparatus which permits of separating out from among all statements which are possible, those that will be acceptable within, I won't say

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[7] This is a quote from Wittgenstein, cited in Code (1991: 215) which she cites to argue that, in order to seek acknowledgement, a woman has to free herself from 'her "underclass" epistemic status, her cognitive incapacity, and her ever-threatening irrationality'.

a scientific theory, but a field of scientificity, and which it is possible to say are true or false. The episteme is the 'apparatus' which makes possible the separation, not of the true from the false, but of what may from what may not be characterised as scientific.

Epistemes therefore allow for the identification, and exploration, not of which knowledge is true or false, but which knowledge is demarcated as scientific and valid, within a given context, due to the 'effects of truth' (Foucault, 1980c: 118). For Pereira (2017), the study of scientificity as the study of epistemes recentres the analysis from discerning that which is true from that which is false, to political acts of categorisation and separation. These acts of categorisation and separation are political because 'they perform a double move of excluding a range of claims from the realm of the acceptable and constituting a domain of authorised discourses' (Pereira, 2017: 49). As Pereira (2017) points out, epistemologies from a broadly critical stance have highlighted the narrow and shifting political character of demarcation.

Foucault's conceptualisation of epistemes allows us to critically explore which statements are deemed acceptable within particular contexts, but, for a feminist theory of epistemic status, a consideration of whose statements are accepted is also required. What can be said, and what is demarcated as valid knowledge, is mediated by power relations and, for Alcoff (2000), by social identity. Gendered relations of power, therefore, affect demarcation. Pereira (2017) draws on the work of Code (1995) in order to address this, an approach that is useful also in the context of this research. She (1995: ix) outlines the enabling and constraining effects of knowledge and subjectivity in rhetorical spaces 'where hierarchies of power and privilege always contribute to shaping these processes'. Rhetorical spaces are locations where 'territorial imperatives structure and limit the kinds of utterances that can be voiced within them with a reasonable expectation of uptake' (Code, 1995: ix). What is limited

within rhetorical spaces is, therefore, the expectation of being heard, understood and taken seriously (Code, 1995). Code's analysis is focused on gendered locations and it is argued that women occupy positions of 'minimal epistemic authority' (Code, 1995: xiii). Who the person is, therefore, affects their credibility as a knowledge producer.

Pereira (2017) considers epistemic authority in relation to those making knowledge claims in the rhetorical space of the performative university from the perspective of the fields of women's, gender and feminist studies. This research is also concerned with epistemic authority in the rhetorical space of the university, but specifically, epistemic injustice in this space in relation to women's testimonies of experiences of sexual violence. The university is perceived as a rhetorical space whereby 'knowledge and subjectivity are reciprocally constitutive, yet where cognitive resources and expertise are unevenly distributed' (Code, 1995: ix). In order to uncover this uneven distribution, in relation to women's testimonies and experience of sexual violence, Fricker's (2007) outline of testimonial injustice is outlined.

In order to achieve, or at least work towards, epistemic justice, it is important to consider epistemic injustice. Epistemic injustice relates to when a wrong is done to 'someone specifically in their capacity as a knower' (ibid: 1). Fricker's (2007) analysis focusses on systematic, identity-prejudiced, epistemic injustice. This is because, prejudice is viewed as the 'ethical poison' (ibid: 22) which turns an ethically non-culpable mistake into an ethically culpable epistemic judgement. This is also the focus in this thesis and its impact is discussed in Chapter Seven.

Testimonial injustice is broadly defined as when 'someone is wronged in their capacity as a giver of knowledge' (ibid: 7). In cases of systematic, identity-prejudiced, testimonial injustice, the speaker will receive a diminished level of credibility from a

hearer. This 'credibility deficit' results in an attack on a speaker's epistemic authority and may deflate credibility enough to cause the hearer to miss out on particular knowledge (ibid). Credibility deficits represent an obstacle to truth either by directly causing 'the hearer to miss out on a particular truth, or indirectly by creating blockages in the circulation of critical ideas' (ibid: 43). The mechanism through which prejudice most often corrupts a hearer's judgement of a speaker's credibility is via stereotypes, made use of as heuristics in their credibility judgements (ibid). Systematic testimonial injustices, moreover, are 'connected, via a common prejudice, with other types of injustice' (ibid: 27). For example, economic, educational, sexual or legal prejudices, which Fricker (2007) argues are identity prejudices which track people through different dimensions of social activity, are present in wider social relations, and are connected to, and produce, testimonial injustices.

This research was concerned with women's experiences of sexual violence including the experience of testifying (or choosing not to testify) to those incidents to different audiences and in different contexts. One objective of the research then, was to uncover and highlight the testimonies of women who had experienced this violence through semi-structured, one to one interviews, discussed further below. Interviews were utilised in order to challenge to the credibility deficit that women who testify to experiences of sexual violence are often subjected to. A space of epistemic trust was created within the interviews, in opposition to the 'rhetorical space' previously outlined, where credibility is affected by gendered relations of power and social identity.

Researching Up: Critical criminology, feminist knowledge and the local state

The research of this thesis was developed in the context of the state's reproduction of dominant discourses and the key questions of power, order, authority, legitimacy and

truth that arise from this reproduction. Dafnos (2011) argues that, in order to challenge ruling institutions and their policies and practices, critiques of the dominant discourses that they produce are vital. Beyond just critique, an understanding of how these discourses are produced is essential if we are to dismantle structures of inclusion and exclusion (Dafnos, 2011). Despite significant critical interventions, criminology, still, has a 'cosy and intertwined relationship' (Coleman et al., 2009: 2) with structures of state power and domination. Walters (2009) outlined the mechanisms through which radical critique is diluted and incorporated by the state and its organisations and how dominant discourses on 'crime' are also adopted by criminologists. The role of the state in the (re)production of social inequality is therefore a necessary site of analysis for critical criminological research. The role of criminology, in (re)producing social inequality, particularly in relation to gender, also warrants critical attention.

Smart (1977) highlighted the role of the criminology in (re)producing inequality, through its reliance on deterministic models of female behaviour or giving women only indirect or implicit, token recognition. She also, noted that women constitute an absence as victims in the criminological literature, as victims of individuals, organisations, institutions and the law. This led her (1977: 180) to question whether 'the victims of these offences being women has influenced the criminologist's or sociologist's interests'. Revisiting criminology's failure to redress this balance, Smart (1995) later pointed to the need, as well as some success, of feminist scholarship in challenging criminology through engagement with theoretical and political questions drawn from outside of the discipline. However, despite four decades of critical and feminist criminology since the publication of *Women, Crime and Criminology*, Monk and Sim (2017) note that the central arguments of Smart's work bear repeating, particularly in relation to the victimisation of women. This 'silence of criminologists'

(Smart, 1977: 180) therefore still needs to be redressed, with studies on women's criminality and victimisation which work towards radical and transformative social change. This is addressed further in Chapter Eight.

In order to contest the state and criminology's institutional and discursive power to define and regulate, Walters (2009) argues for the expansion of a critical knowledges of resistance. This is concerned with an increase in 'deviant knowledge' (ibid: 207) which challenges contemporary forms of governance and the existing social order. This is particularly pertinent in relation to women's experiences of sexual violence, as Ballinger (2016: 9) notes, through embracing 'the politics of naming', new knowledges from below, on women's lived experiences, have been excavated. Through an exploration of women students' experiences of sexual violence, the research aimed to uncover 'deviant knowledge', and knowledge from below, built around, as noted in Chapter Two, an 'insurrection of subjugated knowledges' (Foucault, 2003: 7). The 'insurrection' of these knowledges is vital in order to uncover alternative narratives which, as Foucault (2003: 7) notes, already exist, but which have been suppressed as 'hierarchically inferior'.

Developing this 'knowledge from below' is achieved alongside a commitment to studying the 'locally powerful' (Smart, 1984: 149). Studying the 'locally powerful' is useful, for Smart (1984: 150), when the aim is to 'examine structures and practices which sustain or reproduce material conditions'. The aims of this research, therefore, necessitated an 'upwards', as well as 'downwards' gaze in order to identify the exercise of institutional power. In Smart's (1984: 151) research, although institutions are central to the analysis, 'the practices of actors within the profession […] were also a vital ingredient'. Researching the locally powerful, in the context of this research, involved focusing attention on the practices of the university and to contribute to the

insurrection of, specifically, 'disqualified knowledges' (Foucault, 1980a: 82). Undertaking critical criminological research on state practices involves, as Tombs and Whyte (2002) indicate, conducting research which challenges the neoliberal view of the world, bringing the state back in as a site of scrutiny and moving beyond the notion of impartiality in academic research. At the same time, the role of institutions such as universities, as state institutions, in what Ballinger (2009: 33) refers to as the 'preservation of the heteropatriarchal social order' needs to be considered, a point discussed further in Chapter Eight.

How Can You Think Straight in all of that Pain?[8] Reflexivity, power, ethics and wellbeing

Sexual violence is a highly sensitive topic and the choice of methods discussed below reflected this. Feminist research has identified the power imbalance between 'researcher' and 'researched' and aimed to correct this in various ways through the active involvement of participants and the concern with the accurate representation of their views (Letherby, 2003; Skinner et al., 2005). This was particularly pertinent in the process of survey design. Inherent in the process of survey design is the ability of the researcher to construct the categories which are deemed relevant, simply by asking those questions. Subsequently, by not asking certain questions, consciously or not, the researcher is, as a result, excluding a range of knowledge which may be valuable or important to the participants and to the research. The implications of this, and the endeavour to mitigate these issues, are discussed below, when survey design is discussed in detail.

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[8] This was a question that a research participant asked Campbell (2002), in relation to her work researching rape. Campbell uses this discussion with the participant to highlight the importance of emotion work when researching rape and the need to explore such questions further.

Letherby (2003: 100) claims that, particularly in feminist research, 'issues of power, empowerment, emotion, ethics and responsibility' should be considered in each part of the research process. Furthermore, feminist research should be a mutually beneficial experience for the researcher and participants (Lees, 2002; Oakley, 1981). The research was conducted in accordance with Liverpool John Moores University's (LJMU) ethical Code of Practice for Research (LJMU, 2020), the British Society of Criminology's (BSC) Statement of Ethics (BSC, 2020) and the World Health Organisation's (WHO) Ethical and Safety Recommendations for Research on Domestic Violence Against Women (WHO, 2001).

A commitment to reflexivity is a further core element of feminist methodology (Ackerley and True, 2010; Skinner et al., 2005; Stanley and Wise, 1983). There are varying definitions of reflexivity but, as Ramazanoglu (with Holland, 2002: 118) states, it 'generally means attempting to make explicit the power relations and the exercise of power in the research process'. The first way in which to address power relations is to account for our own role, as researchers, in the research process and to account for differences in behaviours, status and positionality (Leavy and Harris, 2018). Reflexivity can be viewed as:

> A self-critical action whereby the researcher finds that the world is mediated by the self – what can be known can only be known through oneself, one's lived experiences and one's biography (Hesse-Bibber and Piatelli, 2014: 6).

Consideration must be given then, to how a researcher's positionality shapes the research question, design and process. Reflexivity is argued to be one of the ways in which less hierarchical relationships can be developed (Hesse-Bibber and Piatelli, 2014) but, as Ramazanoglu (with Holland, 2002: 156) notes, when researchers enter into social relationships with participants, 'a reflexive approach demands awareness of, and appropriate responses to, relationships between researcher and researched'.

Although feminist researchers should be working towards minimising these power relations, they can never be fully neutralised, but will exist, at times, to a greater or lesser extent. For Stanley and Wise (1983), because the results of research are developed from the perspective of the researcher, power relations will be present. The existence of power relations in the research process, particularly in the interview process, related to my position as an insider and/or outsider (Hesse-Bibber and Piatelli, 2014). The research participants and I shared some similar characteristics and experiences and therefore I occupied a role as an insider. However, due to my position as a researcher, with a research agenda, I simultaneously occupied the role of an outsider. My position as a postgraduate student, a researcher and, at the time of data collection, sessional lecturer, as well as interviewees who were both students and staff members at the site of research, highlights the complex nature of the research relationship. Whilst there were clear power imbalances between myself and the student interviewees, which may have been somewhat mediated by my dual position as a student, interviews with stakeholders put me in an arguably less powerful position than those being researched. However, as a researcher, the ability to interpret and draw conclusions from the research counteracts this position.

A further important consideration in the researcher/researched relationship is attention to how much of ourselves, and our experience, we invest in the research. Discussing her experience of conducting feminist research, Letherby (2003) noted that every respondent asked why she was interested in doing the research and that each interview should contain as much of her experience as her respondent wished. This was the approach taken in the interviews for this research and one which followed a similar path to Letherby's (2003: 115) whereby 'my own experience was referred to by me and the other person/people variably'. Some student participants asked why I was

interested in carrying out this research, with one being particularly interested and pressing for more information. This was something I tried to address and answer openly, with the intention of developing a reciprocal, less hierarchical relationship, but was something I struggled to answer as eloquently as that participant did.

Skinner et al. (2005) state that concern with participants' and researchers' emotional and physical wellbeing is a key component of feminist research, particularly in relation to researching gender violence. As participants may have already suffered emotional and/or physical harm, limiting the harmful impacts of research is pertinent. In order to minimise this, researchers should clearly discuss the objectives, aims and topics explored in the research. The potential implications should also be discussed with participants (Kelly, 1988) and, ethically, the benefits of taking part in the research should outweigh any potential harms and avoid revictimisation.

Bryman (2008a) highlights the key ethical issues to be considered in all research with human participants. These relate to informed consent, confidentiality and the avoidance of harm to participants. In relation to the survey, a participant information was available on the first page, participants were asked to give their consent and they could not access the survey without this. The participant information sheet can be found in Appendix A. Potential participants were informed that they could withdraw their consent at any stage without giving a reason and their data would not be saved unless the survey was completed. After submitting the responses, each participant received a completion receipt, they were informed that if they would like to withdraw their data, they could quote the receipt and their data would be removed, again without providing a reason. In relation to the interviews, potential participants were again sent a detailed participant information sheet (see Appendix B and Appendix C) and were

advised that it was their decision to take part, and if they did choose to take part, they were still able to withdraw their consent at any stage.

In terms of anonymity and confidentiality, participants were made aware that the university at which the research took place would remain confidential and so would their identities. The survey did not ask for participants' names and pseudonyms were used for the interview transcripts and in the final thesis. Any personal identifiable information, such as consent forms, were kept in a locked filing cabinet which only the researcher had access to. Participants were made aware, prior to the interviews, that criminal disclosures would not be acted upon. However, if I felt that they, or someone else was at risk of immediate harm, confidentiality would be broken.

According to Denscombe (2007), researchers must ensure participants do not come to any physical harm, care must be taken to avoid psychological harm, participants must not suffer any personal harm and they should stand to benefit from the outcomes of the research. As he notes in relation to the potential for harm, 'researchers have a duty to consider in advance the likely consequences of participation and to take measures that safeguard the interests of those who help with the investigation' (ibid, 2010: 310). These issues are intensified when researching violence against women as, due to the nature of the research, the participants could be deemed as vulnerable due to their experiences of victimisation (Aronson Fontes, 2004; Downes et al., 2014). The priority, and key ethical consideration throughout the entire research process was, therefore, the physical and psychological safety of the women taking part. This was considered carefully in relation to the survey as mitigating factors needed to be built into the survey design. On every page of the survey, there was a link to the local Rape Crisis service. Upon completion of the survey, the contact details for Rape Crisis were repeated, as well as information on student support services internal to the university.

As discussed below, the survey and interview schedules were also sent to a contact at Rape Crisis to ensure it was ethically sound and to limit any potential for harm. The nature of this type of research raises 'ethical and methodological challenges with respect to the need for greater interviewer skill and training than in other areas of research' (World Health Organisation, 2001: 1). Prior to commencing any interviews, I undertook training with Rape Crisis on sexual violence and safeguarding to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the participants and myself. Signposting materials for support services, internal and external to the university, were also taken to every interview and given to all participants.

As Aronson Fontes (2004) notes, research on violence against women is a sensitive topic which traditional disciplinary guidelines do not always adequately address. The sensitive nature of the research, and the potential for harm to participants required careful consideration. A consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of taking part in research, which focuses on enabling women's voices to be heard, has been developed by Alcoff and Gray (1993). The authors explore the experiences of those who have survived rape, incest and sexual assault and, with reference to the survivors' movement, they explore the possible benefits of "breaking the silence" such as educating the wider society and 'repositioning the problem from the individual psyche to the social sphere' (ibid: 262). Furthermore, Downes et al (2014) discuss the benefits of taking part in well designed, safety conscious, violence research. They highlight the role of 'bearing witness', being living proof that violence and abuse exists, as well as participation being 'an act of resistance and/or an opportunity to use one's own experience in order to help others' (ibid: 1).

A further ethical consideration related to leaving the field of research (Reeves, 2010). At the end of the interviews, participants were thanked for their participation, debriefed

and were able to ask any questions. They were reassured of their confidentiality and I also gave them my contact details and, as noted above, signposted materials for support services. In order that the interviews did not end on a more sensitive discussion, I asked participants about their day and their studies. Finally, I offered all interviewees the opportunity to receive the research findings when the research was completed. None of the student participants requested this, however, it was agreed that the findings would be shared with the university support services.

Concern with participants' emotional wellbeing is key, but there are also implications for the researcher. Skinner et al. (2005: 16) state that, whilst researching gender violence, 'there is a very strong potential of the researcher suffering emotional pain, fear, anger… and feeling powerless'. As well as undertaking training with Rape Crisis, I was aware of the range of support services available in the university, and externally, in case they were needed.

Campbell (2002) describes researching rape as emotional work in her exploration of the process and impacts of researching rape. She distinguished between 'thinking rape' and 'feeling rape' throughout the research process. 'Thinking rape' related to rape being 'a concept to be operationally defined and debated' (Campbell, 2002: 9). Throughout her research, however, when the concept was explored alongside the reality of the women's narratives, the researchers moved towards 'feeling rape', that is, 'an understanding based upon shared emotions – shock, betrayal, guilt, anger, and hope – with the rape victim' (Campbell, 2002: 10). Moreover, Kelly (1988) stated that, in carrying out her work on women's experiences of sexual violence, there were clear effects on her life outside of the research. Some of the impacts related to feeling vulnerable and concern for her own safety and her daughter's and women's safety more generally. A further impact related to the process of uncovering buried memories

of assault or harassment. The potentially positive effects of a researcher's subjective, political and ethical standpoint on research have been clearly stated but the 'affective influences' (Campbell, 2002: 10, emphasis in the original) and the role that emotions could have on the research process have been explored less. For Campbell (2002: 10) the affective influence of the researcher can 'provide intellectual, substantive insight and therefore can be a valuable tool for research'. This is seen clearly through Kelly's (1988) discussion of 'remembering' in the research process, which led her to connect her own experiences with those of the participants and resulted in a deeper exploration of the process of naming and defining sexual violence than originally intended.

A further commonality across feminist methodologies is the utilisation of methods which are most likely to reflect the experiences of women and children (Skinner et al., 2005). An overview of the methods utilised in the thesis is presented below.

Research Design

As noted in the Introduction, the research was undertaken at one, post-1992 university in the North West of England. The university is a city campus, with just over 24,000 students enrolled on a course at the institution at the time of the research, approximately 13,000 of whom were female. The primary data was collected between February 2017 and December 2017. These methods were an online survey with women students who attended the university and interviews with two categories of participants, students who had experienced sexual violence and stakeholders who were responsible in some way for managing and/or responding to sexual violence at the university.

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used in order to add 'completeness' to the research (Bryman, 2008a: 633). Quantitative research was undertaken in the form of an online survey in which any student who identified as a woman was able to complete, it was not necessary that the student had experienced sexual violence. Qualitative interviews were subsequently undertaken with students who had experienced sexual violence and stakeholders who were responsible for managing and responding to sexual violence as well as developing prevention initiatives.

Mixed methods: An overview

Whilst qualitative research, particularly interviews, have a long history in feminist research (Roberts, 1981) there are longstanding debates concerning the use of quantitative and qualitative research (Epstein et al., 1991). For feminists, these debates have centred around research design, the illusion of objectivity, interpretation and the overgeneralisation of findings, the selection of research subjects and the exploitative relationship between the researcher and participants (Epstein et al, 1991).

Oakley (1998), however, asserted that the paradigm argument, whereby qualitative and quantitative research methods are viewed as opposed to each other, is itself an historical and social construction with its own gendered history. She argues that this is a false polarisation which, in line with other dichotomies outlined above, 'repeats the patriarchal character of many dichotomies' (Oakley, 1998: 724). Overall, she (1988: 707) argues that the problem is not a problem of gender and methodology 'but the gendering of methodology as itself a social construction'. That is, the construction of quantitative research as masculine and qualitative as feminine, with no middle ground, is in line with the patriarchal assumption about the opposition between men and women (ibid). Feminist research, therefore, risks participating in 'the construction of

an unequally dichotomised social world' (ibid) if it continues to use the language of paradigms. Moving beyond the division between qualitative and quantitative research can be useful in working towards 'an emancipatory social science' (ibid: 707).

Reinharz (1992) noted the value of survey research and offered various successful examples of feminist research using quantitative methods in developing knowledge for women. Oakley (1998: 723), moreover, argued that the underlying gendering of structural inequalities that occurs in most societies could not be discerned using qualitative methods on their own. A range of mixed methods, feminist research has now been undertaken which highlights the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative research and can potentially contribute to the dialogue between macro and micro level structures of social life (Hesse-Biber, 2015). Gelsthorpe (1990: 91) argued that the problem is not quantitative research itself, but 'insensitive quantification'. In order to avoid insensitive quantification, this survey was designed with feminist methodology and ethics in mind. For example, providing the opportunity to not answer most questions, to provide further details and to discuss issues which participants thought was relevant outside the confines of closed questions. This is discussed in more detail below. Whilst Bryman (2008b) notes that paradigm wars have not come to an end, there is an acknowledgment of the advantages of mixing or blending data, in order to 'provide a stronger understanding of the problem or question than either by itself' (Creswell, 2013: 215).

Notwithstanding the potential advantages, Bryman (2006) states that researchers should be explicit about the grounds on which mixed method research is conducted. For Greene (2007), the first consideration in the appropriateness of mixed methods is the purpose and rationale of the study, rather than the method or design. The identification of appropriate methods should therefore follow the purpose of the study

and what it is aiming to achieve. The research questions below framed the choice of methods which were utilised. The method utilised to address each question is also outlined below:

> 1. How do women students perceive the problem of sexual harassment and violence at university? (Survey and student interviews);
> 2. What is the extent of women students' experiences of sexual harassment and violence at university? (Survey);
> 3. What is the nature of women students' experiences of sexual harassment and violence at university? (Survey and student interviews);
> 4. How do women students experience reporting and disclosure at university? (Survey and student interviews);
> 5. How does the university respond to women students' experiences of sexual harassment and violence at university? (Survey, student and stakeholder interviews).

Addressing the research questions fully, most often required the use of multiple methods. Greene et al. (1989) outlined five reasons for combining quantitative and qualitative research methods, namely, triangulation, complementarity, development, initiation and expansion. The use of mixed methods in this research was for the purpose of complementarity. The rationale behind complementarity is:

> to increase the interpretability, meaningfulness, and validity of constructs and inquiry results by both capitalizing on inherent methods' strengths and counteracting inherent biases in methods and other sources (Greene et al, 1989: 259).

Mixed methods yield 'an enriched and elaborated understanding of a phenomenon' (ibid: 258). The mixed methods used in this thesis measured both similar and different aspects of the participants' experiences of sexual violence, in line with Greene et al's (1989) framework, in order for the qualitative data to enhance the quantitative.

Ontologically, the research adopted a constructivist approach, in that it was concerned with the subjective meanings and interpretations of participants' experiences of sexual violence, built on the understanding that reality is socially constructed, 'selected, built,

and embellished by social actors, from among the situations, stimuli and events of their experience' (Lincoln and Guba, 1989: 230). Understanding and interpreting the meanings behind students' experiences of sexual violence, therefore, related to understanding and interpreting the meanings participants attached to events, people and interactions., thereby giving them a voice. These social constructions are therefore, clearly, personal, diverse, multiple and temporal. The research did not begin with an hypothesis, instead it was explorative (Smith and Osborn, 2015). The goal of this approach was to construct theory and meaning inductively (Creswell, 2013), to develop understanding, rather than produce 'facts' about these experiences.

The Quantitative Approach

Survey design and development

The design of the survey began with reviewing the research questions which the survey was designed to address. The literature on sexual violence, and sexual violence at university specifically, was next explored in order to identify issues which had already been highlighted in the literature. Based on the literature review, several themes emerged as relevant to the research questions, specifically, students' perceptions and knowledge of sexual violence at university, the extent and range of experiences of harassment and assault which were often multiple and the experiences of reporting to institutions, agencies and individuals. Large scale surveys which had already been conducted on the issue were also consulted to again identify themes to be explored in the thesis, but also to identify issues which had not been addressed.

This survey was developed and modelled closely following the AAU Campus Climate Survey (Cantor et al., 2015). The survey was adapted to focus on the themes identified

in the literature review, as well as to ensure the language and context was relevant to the university at which the research took place.

It was separated into four main sections:

- Perceptions and knowledge of sexual harassment and violence at university;
- Experiences of sexual harassment;
- Experiences of sexual violence;
- Sexual violence incident reports.

In addition to the four main sections, the survey included four screening questions to ensure that those who took part matched the inclusion criteria. All participants therefore identified as women, were over the age of 18, studied at the university in question and lived in the city in which they studied during term time.

The full survey can be found in Appendix D. It began with a total of 12 screening and demographic questions. Other than the four screening questions, all responses were optional to reflect the sensitive nature of the content. The limitations inherent in asking participants to select demographic categories pertaining to different dimensions of their identity were acknowledged. Whilst an effort was made to provide a thorough list of options, questions relating to accommodation type, gender, sexual orientation and ethnicity included the option of 'other'.

Following the demographic questions, participants were asked about their perceptions of sexual violence, their perceived likelihood of experiencing sexual violence and their knowledge of reporting and support mechanisms as well as their knowledge of what happened after a report was made. Participants were asked to answer these questions on a nominal Likert scale in order to explore attitudes and perceptions as a quantifiable measure (Lavrakas, 2008).

The questions relating to experiences of sexual harassment and sexual violence were designed carefully and were informed by feminist survey methods. This meant that, firstly, that sexual victimisation was conceptualised as multi-dimensional in order to measure its multiple forms. This conceptualisation meant that various forms of victimisation were captured which might not otherwise be reported (Fisher et al., 2000: 17). Moreover, behaviourally specific questions were developed. Whilst these behaviours related to legal categories of sexual violence, legal language was not used. Kelly et al. (1992) state that, if women were asked 'have you ever been raped?' they might say no as they do not label all forced sex as rape. Therefore, asking 'have you ever been forced to have sex?' might produce a different response as women might be more likely to state they have experienced an illegal behaviour, when not described in legal language. Therefore, following Fisher et al. (2000), incidents were described in graphic language which covered the elements of a criminal offence but related to behaviours, rather than the law.

The term sexual violence is used throughout the thesis to denote the range of experiences of which can be understood as reflecting Kelly's insight regarding 'sexual violence as a continuum' (1988: 75-76). Whilst experiences of sexual harassment are understood to be part of this continuum, the survey addresses experiences of sexual harassment separately. This is not to separate the issues in terms of seriousness, rather it is a way of separating the issues for the purpose of data collection and analysis.

The questions on sexual harassment were modelled on those in the AAU Climate Survey (Cantor et al., 2015) but were adapted to meet the UK definition of sexual harassment outlined by Rape Crisis (2016) and in The Equality Act (2010), which was developed to protect people from discrimination in the workplace and wider society. At

the beginning of the survey, participants were also provided with a definition of sexual harassment, as outlined by Rape Crisis (2016). Rather than repeat the full definition with each new question, participants were provided with a brief reminder that the questions related to situations in which:

- Someone said or did something that made you feel distressed, intimidated or offended, or,
- Created an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment, and
- The behaviour was of a sexual nature.

Although the optional behaviours were not an exhaustive list, they covered a broad range of behaviours across four questions. In order to account for multiple experiences, participants were able to address different behaviours within and across each year of study. They were also able to note the frequency of each behaviour and the year in which it occurred. If a participant stated that they had experienced one of the behaviours listed, they were then asked about their relationship to the person who had engaged in it.

The next questions related to attempted and completed incidents of non-consensual sexual contact. These questions, as with the sexual harassment section, used behaviourally specific language to cover the four behaviours outlined in the Sexual Offences Act (2003): namely rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault and causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent. Participants were first asked about attempted incidents and then completed incidents. They were provided with a definition of consent, in line with the Sexual Offences Act (2003) and reminded that the person with whom they experienced the incident could be someone they knew. If participants stated that they had experienced one of the behaviours, they again were able to note the frequency of each of the incidents and the years in which they occurred in order to capture repeated incidents of the same behaviour and multiple behaviours.

The next section was only completed by those participants who stated that they had experienced one of the eight attempted or completed behaviours in the previous section. Participants were asked to select the one incident which they either thought was the most serious, or the one which they would like to discuss in further detail. The incident report asked a range of follow up questions whereby themes and issues were developed from the literature. The questions related to the means of coercion, the number, gender and relationship to the person who engaged in the behaviour and the location of the incident. Feelings and emotions following the incidents were next explored, as well as the reasons for reporting and/or disclosing. Finally, their satisfaction with the responses they received was explored.

The final question was an open-text box for participants to provide qualitative comments. They were told that they could provide additional details or concerns, comment on the survey, provide further detail on their responses, or use the space to express something they felt they were unable to in the survey. This was to mitigate against the concerns raised above around quantitative research in relation to the researcher imposing categories and limitations upon what participants were allowed to discuss (Fielding, 2001; Seale, 2004).

The survey was sent to a contact who was employed at a Rape Crisis service who did not note any issues. It was next piloted with two students at the university. One of the students who piloted the study noted an issue with the clarity of one of the questions on perceptions and knowledge which was resolved prior to recruiting participants.

Data collection and analysis

Bristol Online Surveys was used to collect data which is an online survey instrument. In terms of recruitment, a link to the survey was sent to faculty administrators and they

were asked to feed this down through the different departments in the university. The survey recruitment email can be found in Appendix E. It is unclear which administrators did this and, therefore, it is possible that the survey did not capture responses from all departments. The survey was also advertised via the student support service's social media accounts as well as my personal social media accounts. Furthermore, I accessed the contacts for the president of each Student Union society and sent an email to each asking them to disseminate the link to their society. This email can be found in Appendix F. Finally, I used a personal Facebook account to advertise the survey to some of the Students' Union groups with permission from each president or secretary. The survey elicited 145 responses. One response was eliminated from the analysis as, after examination, they had not answered one of the screening questions about the city in which they lived during term time.

The data collected from the survey was exported into SPSS for statistical analyses. Primarily, tests were used to determine whether there were significant correlations between coded variables, for example demographics and reported experiences of sexual violence. Cross-tabulations, chi-squared tests, descriptive statistics and frequency tables were used to identify any trends in the raw data. Whilst undertaking the analysis, it became clear that some responses were missing which has been acknowledged in Chapter Four. The open-text box for qualitative comments elicited 25 responses which were reviewed for themes and data from this is presented in the following chapter.

The Qualitative Approach

Alongside the quantitative data, participants' responses to, and experiences of sexual violence, and the meanings attached to these, were explored through in-depth semi-

structured interviews. The goal of the semi-structured interview, according to Flick et al (2004: 205), is 'to maximise the scope of the topics to give interviewees an opportunity to invoke points of view that had not been anticipated'. The use of semi-structured interviews allowed for a reflexive approach to understanding the issue and were therefore utilised as there was a need for a structure that permitted interviewee input, allowing for a greater depth of understanding of the issue to be explored.

It was deemed necessary that the research was qualitatively driven (Mason, 2006). Whilst recognising the value of the quantitative element, qualitative interviewing allows for the nuances and complexities of subjects' views of an issue to be captured so that the researcher comes to see and understand the respondents' complex social world (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). As discussed above, providing a space for this knowledge and experience to be articulated is key, as well as the need for research to 'connect with the lives of people who contribute to research processes while finding ways of presenting complex layers of social and cultural life in sentient ways' (Smart, 2009: 297). Undertaking the research within a feminist methodological framework meant that, in practice, the respondents' subjective experiences were valued and validated (Oakley, 1981). The qualitative approach, therefore, meant that key theoretical concepts could be explored at an experiential level while, importantly, giving a voice to those participants who had experienced sexual violence and creating the space for stakeholders' perspectives on the issues.

Design and development

Several interview schedules were developed to account for the range of participants. One schedule was developed for all student interviewees and, whilst following the same format with key themes, schedules for the stakeholders were altered in line with

each stakeholder's specific role. All interview schedules can be found in Appendix G. The schedules were designed with a focus on the research questions but were semi-structured in order to allow for flexibility and for the participant to direct the course of the interview (King et al., 2019). The student interviews focused on participants' experiences of sexual violence, the nature of those experiences and the ways in which the experience impacted on them in the short and long term. The interviews also explored participants' experiences of reporting and disclosing incidents to a range of organisations, institutions and people. Finally, space was provided for their perceptions and potential suggestions for changing policy in this area with respect to how the university and other organisations responded to what they identified as issues.

The first group of interviews were held with five students, two were postgraduates and three were undergraduates. The two postgraduate students however, mostly discussed experiences relating to the time that they were undergraduate students at the same university. The demographics of the student participants highlight some limitations of the research. All five interviewees were white, British, cisgender women. Four interviewees were studying within the broad area of the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences and one studied in Law and Business. They all also were from the UK. Three of the interviewees were, at some stage, involved in the university feminist society and had a good level of awareness about the nature and extent of sexual violence beyond their individual experiences. As well as similarities in relation to individual characteristics, the fact that these five women felt comfortable volunteering to take part in an interview, and many others did not, is relevant. The interview participants described a range of barriers to disclosure and reporting, but still were able to disclose to the researcher and discuss their experiences in detail. The

experiences of those who did not volunteer to take part are clearly not presented and there might be key reasons as to why they did not feel comfortable doing this.

Across the range of experiences identified by the student participants, there were some commonalities. All of the incidents they highlighted were carried out by men and whilst not all of these men were students at the university, the majority were. All of the incidents occurred whilst the interviewees were students at the same university. Furthermore, when the participants discussed verbal harassment, this most often took place in the buildings of the university in which teaching and learning took place. The incidents of rape and sexual assault all occurred off the official campus of the university, but all occurred as part of their lives as students. For example, one incident took place in off-campus, student housing and two incidents took place in "fresher's fortnight" where the interviewee was either in, or had been in, an advertised student night in a local nightclub. Finally, all incidents, except one, took place in the city in which the participants studied. In relation to the incident that took place in a nearby city, a student in the same university perpetrated this.

In relation to participant recruitment, it was originally intended that students would be recruited via the survey. The final page of the survey included information on the interview stage of the research and participants were asked if they would be willing to take part. It was hoped that approximately 10 participants would be recruited for interviews via this method. However, just one survey participant responded to this request. Therefore, as with the survey, the interviews were advertised to various Students' Union groups, which resulted in two further interviewees. One further interviewee was recruited, via snowball sampling (Given, 2008) under the recommendation of a previous participant. The final student interviewee contacted me after her academic tutor passed on information about the research.

The stakeholder interviews focused on participants' perceptions of the issue and their role in managing, reporting, responding to and preventing incidents of sexual violence. As well as discussing the support available to students, space was provided in the stakeholder interviews to discuss how work in the area was developing, plans for future developments and how they would like to see the university deal with the issues in future. The questions in each interview schedule included a range of prompts but were deliberately broad in order to allow for flexibility, to change the order of questions and to ensure participant input. As noted above, the interview schedules were sent to a contact at Rape Crisis to review and ensure they were appropriate and would not cause any undue distress.

Recruitment of stakeholders took a more direct approach with strategic sampling in order to ensure a meaningful range of participants (Mason, 2002). These interviews were intended to place the data gathered from the survey and student interviews in the context of current policies and practices in the university. A list of potential participants was therefore contacted who worked in some capacity in student support services, the Students' Union, external support services and in student policy development. A recruitment email for potential stakeholders can be found in Appendix H. The first Students' Union representative did not respond to several emails and, therefore, I contacted another representative who declined to take part. I took the decision at this stage to contact someone in a leadership role in the Feminist Society about taking part in the research as it was hoped they would also have insight on the Students' Union's role. This participant agreed to take part. The participant who worked in student policy development also did not respond to several requests to take part in the research. I therefore approached someone who worked in the same position, but in relation to the development of staff policy. She also agreed to take part.

The person who was originally contacted in relation to policy who did not respond, later contacted me indicating that she would be willing to participate. Although this person's insight would have been valuable, at this stage, I had already conducted five stakeholder interviews and took the decision that it would not be appropriate to have more stakeholder interviews than student interviews. All of the participants from external support services and student support agreed to take part, taking the number up to five.

All potential participants were provided with an information sheet in advance and were able to ask questions and seek further information prior to taking part. The researcher reinforced the fact that participants were able to withdraw their consent at any stage of the research after which, times and venues were agreed between the parties. Participants were again offered space to ask questions and signed a consent form. Nine of the ten interviews took place on the university premises at which the research took place and one took place in the external support services for convenience for the participant. Interviews lasted between 45 minutes and 90 minutes and were audio recorded with the consent of participants which allowed me to focus on the responses. Interviewee consent forms can be found in Appendix I. Profiles of all the interviewees are provided in Chapters Five and Six. A summary of the two groups of participants is provided below:

> • Student interviewees: Five students who had experienced sexual violence and/or harassment whilst studying at the institution which the research took place. All of the students referred to experiences during their time as an undergraduate student, although at the time of the research, two had progressed to postgraduate study. Four of the interviewees studied in the broad area of Arts, Humanities and Social Science and one interviewee was undertaking a course on the area of Law and Business.

> • Stakeholder interviewees: Five interviewees who were responsible, in various capacities, for preventing, managing and/or responding to incidents of sexual

violence at the university. Four of the stakeholders worked internally within the university. One participant was external to the university and worked for the local Rape Crisis service but had been involved in working with the institution in the development of policy and practice in the area. One of the stakeholders was also a student and played a leadership role in the university's feminist society. One respondent worked in the department responsible for developing staff policies in relation to sexual misconduct. Two participants worked in student support services, one being in a leadership role and one worked as a counsellor.

Data collection and analysis

The first stage of analysis was to transcribe the interviews which was important in becoming familiar with key themes in the data. Data management and analysis was undertaken using NVivo in order to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of coding as well as ensuring rigour in the process (Jackson and Bazeley, 2019). Two NVivo projects were created, one for the student interviews and one for the stakeholder interviews. The interview data were analysed using an inductive approach whereby, directed by the research questions, findings emerged from the themes within the data (Wincup, 2017).

Thematic analysis was undertaken in line with Braun and Clarke's six phases (Braun and Clarke, 2006). They note that the first stage is for the researcher to familiarise themselves with the data, as an active process. This was done whilst collecting the data, transcribing the interviews and through repeated reading of the transcripts. Notes were made during this phase to assist with thoughts on initial codes. The second stage generated the initial codes from the interview transcripts. Coding was undertaken in order to identify extracts which would potentially be helpful in addressing the research questions (King et al., 2019). The focus at this stage was on identifying data in relation to the research questions, rather than interpretation (ibid). Participants' responses were categorised and stored as a node in NVivo (Jackson and Bazeley, 2019). Some

data were coded more than once and, in order to ensure the context of the responses was not lost (Bryman, 2008a), relevant surrounding data was also coded.

The third stage involved organising the codes into potential themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Themes capture something important within data, which are deemed significant in relation to research questions (ibid). Consideration was given to the ways in which several codes might be organised and categorised into potential themes and subthemes. The formation of themes was data-driven, in that they developed from participants' responses to the interview questions, rather than being theory-driven. The data were not approached with specific questions to code around, but the themes were developed from the data (ibid). It was, therefore, appropriate to code the entire data sets.

The fourth stage involved reviewing the themes to assess whether there was enough data to validate each theme or whether the themes needed to be refined due to the data being too diverse (ibid). Themes were also reviewed to ascertain whether they formed a coherent pattern with the result being that some codes were discarded. Once the themes, and the codes within them, formed a coherent pattern, the entire data set was reviewed again to ensure all data were coded appropriately and that there were no missing data which could be appropriately coded into one of the overarching themes.

Following Braun and Clarke's (2006) fifth phase, themes were next defined and named. The data within each theme were analysed, the essence of each theme was defined, and the data were organised into a 'coherent and internally consistent account' (ibid: 22). A narrative of each theme was produced in relation to the research

questions. The final stage involved writing up the findings with extracts from the original transcripts.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the methodology, methods, data analysis and ethical considerations utilised in the thesis. A feminist methodological framework underpinned the methods used to excavate and explore the subjugated knowledge of women students' experiences of sexual violence whilst at university. Further to this, the methodology was utilised to explore the context in which policies and responses to the issue operated, again, as part of an overall challenge to the production of dominant discourses. A critical, reflective account of the methods utilised, and the techniques of data analysis were also outlined, as well as a consideration of the ethic underpinning the research process.

The following chapter is the first of three findings chapters. This chapter presents the findings from the student survey regarding their experiences of sexual violence.

Chapter 4: Perceiving and Experiencing Sexual Violence: Findings from a student survey

Introduction

Chapter Three discussed the quantitative and qualitative methods used to collect the data for this thesis. This chapter draws on the data from the online survey which was developed in order to explore women students' experiences of sexual harassment and sexual violence from the university under study. As highlighted in the previous chapter, the survey was utilised in order to address the following research questions:

1. How do women students perceive the problem of sexual harassment and violence at university? (Survey and Student interviews);
2. What is the extent of women students' experiences of sexual harassment and violence at university? (Survey);
3. What is the nature of women students' experiences of sexual harassment and violence at university? (Survey and student interviews);
4. How do women students experience reporting and disclosure at university? (Survey and student interview);
5. How does the university respond to women students' experiences of harassment and violence at university? (Survey, student and stakeholder interviews).

Contemporary UK-based survey research has mostly focused on the issues of sexual violence at university on a national scale and developed various responses in relation to this. This survey, instead, focused in-depth on the experiences of women students at one university in England, the nature of these incidents, their personal responses, the systems for reporting and the support mechanisms they utilised. Experiences of sexual violence are therefore placed within the context of that particular institution. This chapter explores the demographic characteristics of respondents in relation to their experiences of sexual harassment and violence. This chapter provides a snapshot of the respondents' experiences which, as discussed in Chapter Three, frames and feeds into the findings outlined in the following qualitative chapters.

The findings follow the layout of the survey, as outlined in the previous, methods chapter. However, only pertinent data, which relates to key themes identified, is explored in the thesis. Quotes, taken from an optional open text box at the end of the survey, are also presented throughout this chapter to contextualise the quantitative data further. The chapter explores three issues. First, it provides an overview of the demographic characteristics of the participants. Second, the chapter moves on to explore participants' multiple and repeated experiences of sexual harassment and the attempted and actual incidents of sexual violence. Finally, the chapter explores the nature of participants' experiences of sexual violence and their experiences of reporting and accessing support in relation to one incident of their choosing.

The Backgrounds of the Participants

The survey elicited 144 valid responses which represents 1.2% of the female student population at the university at the time of the survey. The survey asked a series of optional demographic questions relating to participants' age, programme of study, living arrangements, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and ability/disability. Where these data are available, the demographic makeup of the participants has been compared to those in the university. The majority of the respondents (n=94/ 65%) were in the 18-23 age category with 35% (n=50) in the 24+ category. 100% of participants stated their gender identity to be 'woman'.

The largest number of respondents were home students (n=127/ 88%) and 17 (12%) were either European Union (EU) or international students. 139 respondents (97%) were full time students and 5 (3%) were part time students. Moreover, 95 respondents were undergraduate students (66%) and 48 respondents (34%) were postgraduate students. The survey gathered responses from a larger percentage of postgraduate

students than was reflective of the general split in the university as there was a higher percentage of undergraduate students (82%) than postgraduate students (18%) in the general student population.

In relation to the participants' living situation during term time, the majority of respondents (n=77/ 54%) lived in a shared student flat, house or halls of residence. Thirty eight respondents (26%) lived with their family and/or a partner, 24 (17%) lived alone in their own or rented accommodation and 5 respondents (3%) selected 'other'.

The majority of respondents described their ethnicity as white British (n=112/ 78%), 18 (12.5%) described their ethnicity as any other white background and 5 (3.5%) described their ethnicity as white Irish. The survey further included 1 (0.7%) white Scottish respondent, 1 Black British-Black African respondent, 1 Asian British-Pakistani respondent, 1 respondent who selected other Asian background, 1 mixed – white and Black African respondent, 1 mixed – white and Black Caribbean respondent, 1 Chinese respondent and 2 respondents (1.4%) selected any other mixed background.

In relation to sexual orientation, 123 respondents (85%) were heterosexual, 3 respondents (2%) were gay/lesbian, 16 respondents (16%) were bisexual and 2 respondents (1.4%) stated that their sexual orientation was not listed as an option.

Finally, in relation to disability, the majority of respondents (92%/n=132) stated that they did not consider themselves to have a disability, 8 respondents (6%) stated that they did consider themselves to have a disability and 4 respondents (3%) stated that they would prefer not to say. This generally reflects the available statistics on the student population at the institution at the time, where 8% of students were known to

have a disability and 92% were not known to have a disability (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2017).

Overall, the largest proportion of respondents were 18-23 years old, home students, studying full time, undergraduate courses. Most of the respondents lived in a shared student flat or house, were white British, heterosexual and did not consider themselves to have a disability.

Experiences of Sexual Harassment: Prevalence, demographics and perpetrators

The next section explores participants' responses to four main questions about experiences of sexual harassment in or around the university. Four behavioural questions were posed in which respondents could answer 'yes' or 'no' as to whether they had experienced the behaviour. If respondents selected 'yes', they were then asked to state how many times they had experienced the behaviour (never, once, twice, three or more times, regularly) and in which year of study these experiences occurred (1st year, 2nd year, 3rd year, 4+ years). A multiple response follow-up question, if they had answered 'yes' to experiencing harassment, asked about the participants' relationship to the perpetrator(s).

 The four sexual harassment questions related to:

- Q20: Sexual comments or jokes that were insulting or offensive;
- Q23: Inappropriate or offensive comments about your, or someone else's, body, appearance or sexual activities;
- Q26: Texts, tweets, phone calls, instant messages or displays, in any way, of offensive sexual remarks, jokes, stories, pictures, or videos to you that were unwanted;
- Q29: Continually asked out, to get dinner, have drinks or have sex even though you said "no".

Prevalence

The survey results show that participants reported experiencing, at least once, Q20 at 41% (n=59), Q23 at 51% (n=73), Q26 at 16% (n=23) and Q29 at 22% (n=32). Therefore, in total there were at least 187 incidents of sexual harassment reported in the survey. The same respondents could have experienced all four behaviours. Figure 1 displays these data.

Figure 1: Participants reporting experiencing questions 20, 23, 26 and/or 29 at least once
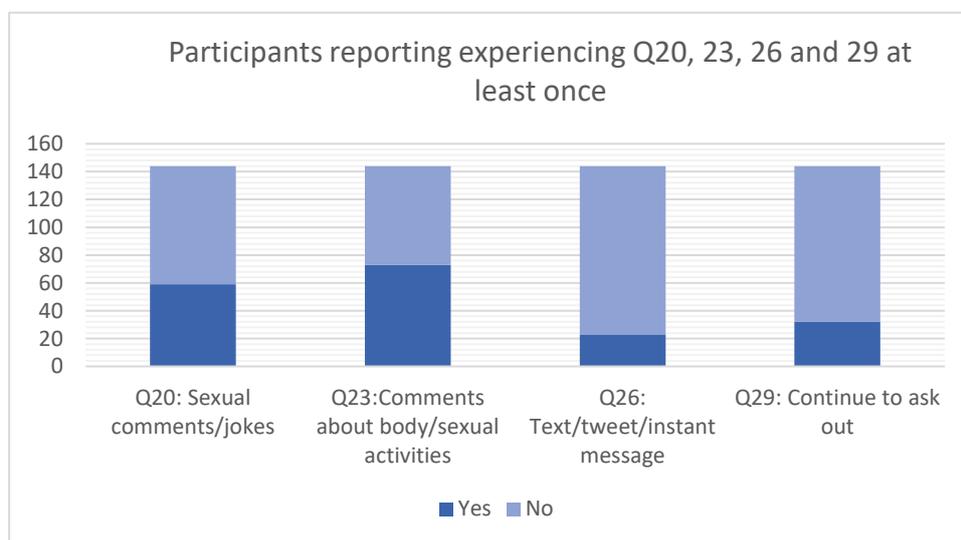
Demographics

Experiences of sexual harassment were cross-tabulated with the demographic questions in order to explore patterns within the data. Cross-tabulation and chi squared tests show that age was significantly related to participants' likelihood of experiencing the sexual harassment behaviours explored in question 20 (χ= 9.123, <0.003) and question 23 (χ= 6.617, <0.010). As Tables 1 and 2 below illustrate, participants in the youngest age category were more likely to state that they had experienced unwanted sexual comments/jokes and comments about their body or

sexual activities than those in the older age category. It was not possible to explore the significance of age in relation to questions 26 and 29 due to there being a count of less than 5 in several cells.

Table 1: Cross-tabulation of respondents' age and reported experience of question 20

| Age | Q20: Sexual comments/jokes | | | | Total |
| | Yes | | No | | |
	N	%	N	%	
18-23	47	50	47	50	94
24+	12	24	38	76	50
Total	59	41	85	59	144

Table 2: Cross-tabulation of respondents' age and reported experience of question 23

| Age | Q23: Comments about body/ sexual activities | | | | Total |
| | Yes | | No | | |
	N	%	N	%	
18-23	55	59	39	41	94
24+	18	36	32	64	50
Total	73	51	71	49	144

A mature student also noted the relevance of age in their qualitative comments within the survey:

> 'I feel that as a mature student with a partner this is not something that would really happen to me, as I do not socialise with people from university or go to "student nights". I'm sure if I had come to university at 18 then my answers would be very different, as I remember being constantly pressured by boys that age, although I was not afraid to say no, which I know some people are.'
>
> Respondent 143

Cross-tabulation and chi squared tests also indicated that respondents' home or EU/international status was significantly related to the likelihood that they would report experiencing Q20 (χ=9.814, <0.002) and Q23 (χ=5.691, <0.017). As Tables 3 and 4

illustrate, Home students were more likely to report experiencing unwanted sexual comments/jokes and comments about their body or sexual activities than EU and international students. Again, it has not been possible to explore the significance of this demographic in relation to questions 26 and 29 due to there being a count of less than 5 in several cells.

Table 3: Cross-tabulation of respondents' Home or EU/International status and reported experience of question 20

| Home or EU/ International Student | Q20: Sexual comments/jokes | | | | Total |
| | Yes | | No | | |
	N	%	N	%	
Home	58	46	69	54	127
EU/International	1	6	16	94	17
Total	59	41	85	59	144

Table 4: Cross-tabulation of respondents' Home or EU/International status and reported experience of question 23

| Home or EU/ International Student | Q23: Comments about body/ sexual activities | | | | Total |
| | Yes | | No | | |
	N	%	N	%	
Home	69	54	58	46	127
EU/International	4	24	13	76	17
Total	73	51	71	49	144

Undergraduate and postgraduate student status was furthermore significantly related to participants' likelihood to report experiencing the behaviours in Q20 (χ=7.881, <0.005), Q23 (χ=3.801, < 0.051). As detailed in Tables 5 and 6, undergraduate students were more likely to report experiencing the behaviours in Q20 and Q23 than postgraduate students. Again, it has not been possible to explore the significance of

this demographic in relation to questions 26 and 29 due to there being a count of less than 5 in several cells.

Table 5: Cross-tabulation of respondents' undergraduate or postgraduate status and reported experience of question 20

Undergraduate/ Postgraduate	Q20: Sexual comments/jokes				Total
	Yes		No		
	N	%	N	%	
Undergraduate	47	49	48	51	95
Postgraduate	12	25	36	75	48
Total	59	41	84	59	143

Table 6: Cross-tabulation of respondents' undergraduate or postgraduate status and reported experience of question 23[9]

Undergraduate/ Postgraduate	Q23: Comments about body/ sexual activities				Total
	Yes		No		
	N	%	N	%	
Undergraduate	54	57	41	43	95
Postgraduate	19	40	29	60	48
Total	73	51	70	49	143

Multiple experiences

The survey also explored participants' multiple experiences of sexual harassment behaviours. For those participants who responded 'yes' to one of the four behaviours, the next question involved reporting the number of incidents across each year of study and the regularity of these incidents. These data are displayed in Table 7.

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[9] One response missing

Table 7: Multiple experiences of sexual harassment by year

							Frequency (N)								
Year of study		1st year				2nd year				3rd year				4+ years	
Question number	20	23	26	29	20	23	26	29	20	23	26	29	20	23	26	29
Once	13	15	5	6	7	10	4	3	9	5	1	1	1	2	0	1
Twice	12	9	3	4	7	9	3	3	1	6	1	2	1	1	0	0
Three+ times	20	26	8	9	13	19	4	6	3	8	2	1	0	1	1	1
Regularly	12	14	2	4	5	5	2	3	5	4	1	4	0	0	0	0
Total	57	64	18	23	32	43	13	15	18	23	5	8	2	4	1	2
Total by year		141				103				54				9	

Although Table 7 shows that the total number of reported incidents was higher in first year, which then decreased across second, third and 4+ years, the survey did not gather data on participants' level of study at the time of completion. Therefore, it was not possible to explore whether this reflected more incidents occurring in first year, or that more respondents were in their first year at the time of completing the survey.

An analysis of these data was carried out, discretely by year, in order to explore the likelihood of particular experiences being more or less likely to occur once, twice, three or more times or regularly. A chi squared test found no significant relationship between these variables. Analysis of the data, moreover, aimed to explore the relationship between the frequency of a behaviour and the type of behaviour. Again, no significant relationship was found between these variables.

Table 7 does, however, highlight that the respondents had experienced a range of behaviours, often multiple times within one year of study. If, as a minimum, 'three+' is counted as 3 and 'regularly' is counted as 4, Table 7 shows that there were at least 268 incidents of Q20 (sexual comments/jokes) when participants' multiple experiences are considered, across all four yearly categories. Table 7, therefore, also shows that there were at least 336 incidents of Q23 (comments about body/sexual activities), 89

incidents of Q26 (text, tweet instant message) and 124 incidents of Q29 (continue to ask out). Therefore, when multiple and repeated experiences are considered, across all levels of study, the table indicates that there were at least 817 incidents of sexual harassment reported.

The regular occurrence of sexual harassment was also reflected in the optional open text box where several participants provided qualitative comments:

'I feel that sexual harassment is very common for women at uni, especially on nights out when alcohol is involved. Men don't seem to think that touching you on the bum or saying sexual remarks is wrong. There does seem to be a type of acceptance in our culture but it still makes you feel violated and uncomfortable when they do.'

Respondent 9

'Sexual harassment is often expressed in jokes and comments that people find not to be offensive or abusive. And I feel that has often got a lot to do with 'lad' culture, or 'banter' culture that is linked with teenagers and students at university. Often people making the comments do not see anything wrong with what they are saying.'

Respondent 72

One participant also used the qualitative comments to describe behaviours which were not available as options in the survey, but were considered as intimidating:

'Most of my experiences have been through leering and someone coming uncomfortably close to me - enough to make me feel intimidated and making it clear to me that they were displaying their sexual interest. So no explicit evidence but you know when someone is doing that. It has been males that have done this.'

Respondent 123

A further issue highlighted in the qualitative comments is the impact of experiences of sexual harassment, as well as broader sexually violent behaviours. One respondent who noted experiencing sexual harassment stated that a general lack of education on issues of rape and sexual assault resulted in her changing her own behaviours:

'The lack of knowledge university students have on such subjects is frightening. This is one of the reasons I rarely go on nights out.'

Respondent 59

Perpetrators

Of the respondents who had experienced sexual harassment, Table 8 highlights the students' relationship to the person who carried out this behaviour. Participants were able to select multiple options that applied to describe this relationship.

Table 8: Respondents' relationship to the people who carried out incidents of sexual harassment

	Fellow student	Stranger	Friend	Ex-partner	**Frequency (N)** Teaching staff	Don't know	Partner	Other university staff	Other
Q20	29	40	16	5	5	4	3	1	1
Q23	45	40	22	3	6	4	1	2	0
Q26	15	8	9	4	0	0	1	0	0
Q29	12	13	15	3	0	3	1	2	0
Total	101	101	62	15	11	11	6	5	1

Considering all of the data in Table 8 together, fellow students (n=101) and strangers (n=101) were the categories most often highlighted as the individuals who carried out the incidents. Other, non-teaching staff at the university (n=5) and partners (n=6) were least often reported as the individuals who engaged in this behaviour.

University staff, both teaching and non-teaching, were identified as the people who carried out these behaviours (n=16), a point which was reflected in the qualitative comments:

There are men in positions within the university who have acted inappropriately e.g. invited me to a bar and offered me drugs, then attempted to kiss me.

Respondent 77

To summarise this section:

- Participants reported experiencing a range of sexual harassment behaviours at least once;
- 51% of participants reported experiencing Q23 (someone made inappropriate or offensive comments about your, or someone else's body, appearance or sexual activities) at least once which was the highest reported behaviour;
- 16% of participants reported experiencing Q26 (someone texted, tweeted, phoned, instant messaged or displayed, in any way, offensive sexual remarks, jokes, stories, pictures, or videos to you that you did not want) at least once which was the lowest reported behaviour;
- Participants who were 18-23 years old (the youngest age category), undergraduate students and home students were significantly more likely to report experiencing one of the sexual harassment behaviours described in questions 20 and 23;
- Some participants highlighted the frequency of sexual harassment in the qualitative comments and noted that there was a level of acceptance of these behaviours in relation to what was identified as 'lad' culture;
- Qualitative comments highlighted that some participants experienced behaviours which could be considered sexual harassment, and were intimidating, but were not available as options in the survey;
- When multiple and repeated incidents are considered, Table 7 indicates that there were at least 817 reported incidents of sexual harassment;
- Fellow students and strangers were most often highlighted as the people who carried out the sexual harassment behaviours.

Attempted Experiences of Rape, Assault by Penetration, Sexual Assault and Causing Sexual Activity Without Consent: Prevalence, demographics and multiple experiences

The following section deals with attempted incidents of rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault and causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent. Eight behavioural questions were posed in which respondents could answer 'yes' or 'no' as to whether they had experienced the behaviour. Question numbers in relation to each behaviour are presented below:

- Q33: Attempted rape;
- Q35: Attempted assault by penetration;

- Q37: Attempted sexual assault;
- Q39: Attempting to cause someone to engage in sexual activity without consent.

If respondents selected 'yes' they were then asked to state how many times they had experienced the behaviour (never, once, twice, three or more times, regularly) and in which year of study these experiences occurred (1st year, 2nd year, 3rd year, 4+ years).

Prevalence

In relation to attempted incidents, the survey results show that participants reported experiencing, at least once, Q33 at 8% (n=11), Q35 at 6% (n=9), Q37 at 43% (n=62) and Q39 at 0.7% (n=1). Figure 2 shows the number of participants who reported experiencing these behaviours at least once.

Figure 2: Participants reporting experiencing questions 33, 35, 37 and/or 39 at least once

Participants reporting experiencing Q33, 35, 37 and 39 at least once
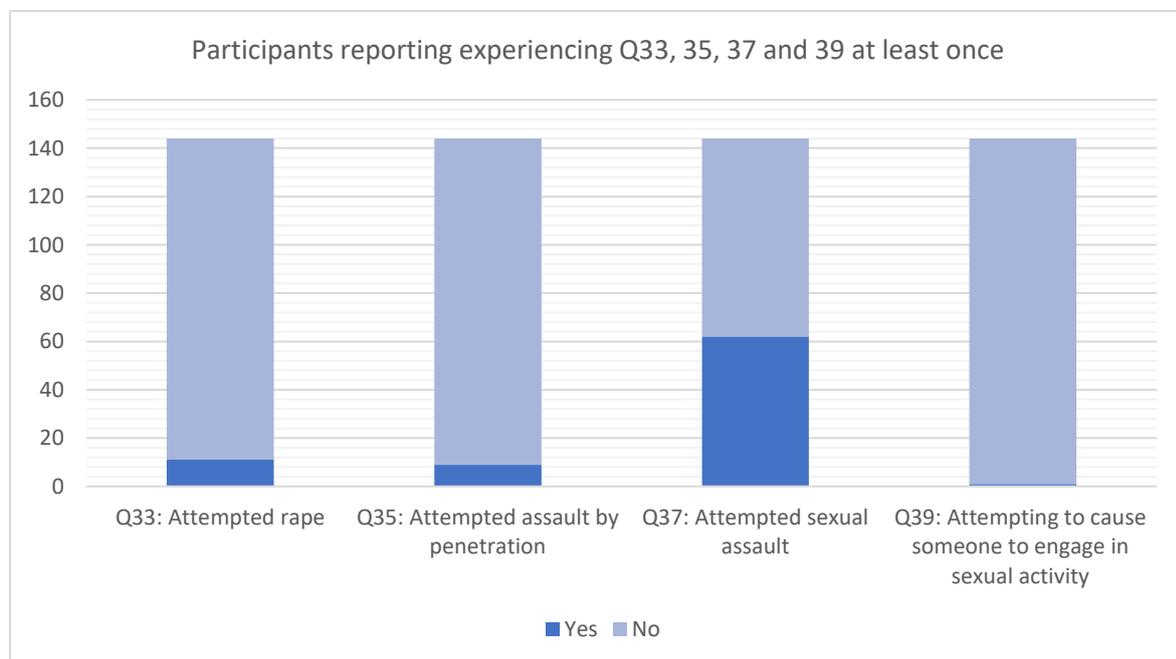
Demographics

As a minimum of 5 cases within each cell is required for chi squared analysis, it was not possible to explore the significance of the demographic questions in relation to questions 33, 35 and 39. Due to the larger number of participants who reported experiencing question 37 (attempted sexual assault), chi squared analysis was undertaken. Cross-tabulation and chi squared tests show that age is significantly related to a participant's likelihood of experiencing attempted sexual assault (χ=11.344, <0.001). As Table 9 shows, participants in the youngest age category were more likely to report experiencing attempted sexual assault than those in the older age category.

Table 9: Cross-tabulation of respondents' age and reported experience of question 37

| Age | Attempted sexual assault | | | | Total |
| | **Yes** | | **No** | | |
	N	%	N	%	
18-23	50	53	44	47	94
24+	12	24	38	76	50
Total	62	43	82	57	144

Respondents' status as home or EU/international students was also found to be significant (χ= 7.698, <0.006). As Table 10 shows, home students were more likely to report experiencing attempted sexual assault than those who were EU or international students.

Table 10: Cross-tabulation of respondents' Home or EU/International status and reported experience of question 37

| Home or EU/ International Student | Attempted sexual assault | | | | Total |
| | Yes | | No | | |
	N	%	N	%	
Home	60	47	67	53	127
EU/International	2	12	15	88	17
Total	62	43	82	57	144

Finally, a respondent's status as an undergraduate or postgraduate student was also found to be significant (χ= 9.914, < 0.002). As Table 11 shows, undergraduate students were more likely to report experiencing attempted sexual assault.

Table 11: Cross-tabulation of respondents' undergraduate or postgraduate status and reported experience of question 37[10]

| Undergraduate/ Postgraduate | Attempted sexual assault | | | | Total |
| | Yes | | No | | |
	N	%	N	%	
Undergraduate	50	53	45	47	95
Postgraduate	12	25	36	75	48
Total	62	43	81	57	143

Multiple experiences

For those participants who reported at least one of these behaviours, the next question involved reporting the number of incidents across each year of study and the regularity at which these incidents occurred. Table 12 displays these data.

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[10] One response missing

Table 12: Attempted incidents of rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault and causing sexual activity without consent

	Frequency (N)															
Year of study	**1st year**				**2nd year**				**3rd year**				**4+ years**			
Question number	33	35	37	39	33	35	37	39	33	35	37	39	33	35	37	39
Once	4	3	12	1	2	1	7	0	3	2	4	0	0	0	0	0
Twice	2	1	11	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Three+ times	1	2	20	0	0	0	9	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Regularly	0	0	12	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0
Total	7	6	55	1	2	1	29	0	3	2	12	0	0	0	1	0
Total by year	69				32				17				1			

As with multiple experiences of sexual harassment, it was not possible to explore whether participants were more or less likely to experience particular behaviours across different years due to the survey not collecting data on participants' level of study. Analysis was again carried out discretely by year in relation to the frequency of incidents and the types of behaviour experienced but, due to the limited number of cases, either no significant relationship was found or, significance tests could not be carried out.

Table 12 does, however, highlight that the respondents had experienced a range of behaviours, often multiple times within one year of study. As with the sexual harassment data, when, as a minimum, three+ times is counted as three and regularly is counted as four, the table shows that there were at least 16 incidents of attempted rape and at least 14 incidents of attempted assault by penetration when participants' multiple experiences are considered. Table 12 also, therefore, shows that there were at least 252 incidents of attempted sexual assault and one incident of attempting to cause someone to engage in sexual activity without consent. Overall, when multiple

and repeated experiences are considered, Table 12, therefore, indicates that there were at least 283 attempted sexual violence incidents.

It is important to note, also, that participants used the qualitative comments section in order to describe behaviours which were not options in the survey but were deemed relevant:

> 'The incident did not involve any threats of violence. Only attempt to touch me was to put arm around me and give me a cigarette. Man started talking to me walking back to my halls with me and on the dark part of the street started pulling his pants down and playing with himself indirectly talking about sexual activity which I think he presumed would happen with me. When I got to halls I told him that he should leave there is lots of CCTV and he ran away quickly. It was scary to think what could have happened.'
>
> Respondent 38

To summarise this section:

- Participants reported experiencing a range of attempted behaviours across all levels of study;
- Attempted rape was experienced by 11 respondents, 8% of the sample;
- Attempted assault by penetration was experienced by 9 respondents, 6% of the sample;
- Attempted sexual assault was experienced by 62 respondents, 43% of the sample;
- When multiple and repeated experiences are considered, Table 12 indicates that there were at least 283 reported attempted incidents of sexual violence;
- When multiple experiences are considered, there were at least 16 incidents of attempted rape and at least 14 incidents of attempted assault by penetration;
- Qualitative comments highlighted that some participants experienced behaviours which were not available as options in the survey but were deemed relevant in relation to questions of harassment and assault;
- Participants who were 18-23 years old (the youngest age category), undergraduate students and home students were significantly more likely to report experiencing attempted sexual assault.

Completed Experiences of Rape, Assault by Penetration, Sexual Assault and Causing Sexual Activity Without Consent: Prevalence, demographics and multiple experiences

Incidents of rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault and causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent are next considered. Question numbers in relation to each behaviour are presented below:

- Q41: Rape;
- Q43: Assault by penetration;
- Q45: Sexual assault;
- Q47: Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent.

If respondents selected 'yes' they were then asked to state how many times they had experienced the behaviour (never, once, twice, three or more times, regularly) and in which year of study these experiences occurred (1st year, 2nd year, 3rd year, 4+ years).

Prevalence

In relation to completed incidents, the survey results show that participants reported experiencing these behaviours at least once, Q41 at 6% (n=9), Q43 at 4% (n=5), Q45 at 41% (n=59) and Q4 at 0.7% (n=1). Figure 3 shows the number of participants in this category who reported experiencing these behaviours.

Figure 3: Participants reporting experiencing questions 41, 43, 45 and/or 47 at least once
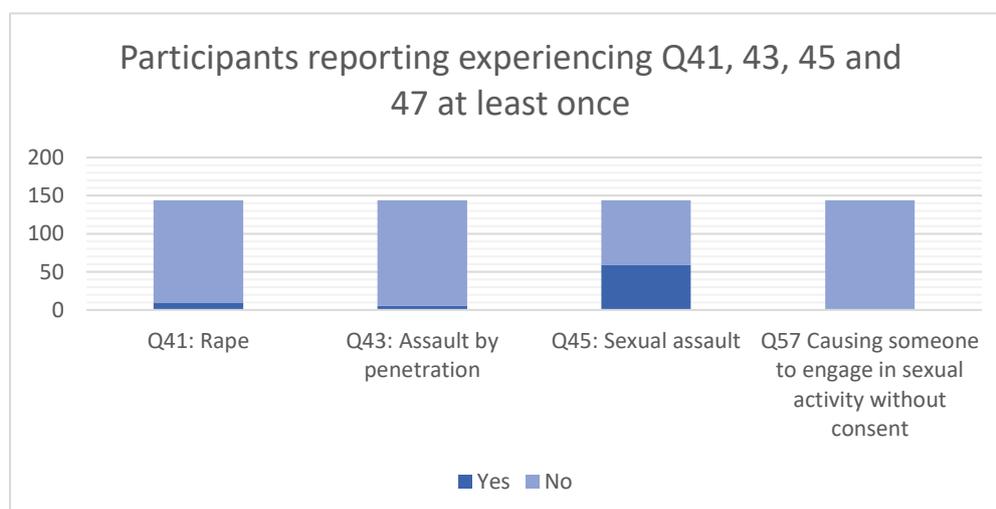
Demographics

Reported experiences of all four completed behaviours were next cross-tabulated with the demographic data in order to explore patterns. As with attempted incidents, due to the limited number of cases in cells, chi squared analysis was not possible for questions 41, 43 and 47. Chi squared analysis was undertaken in relation to question 45 (sexual assault). Cross-tabulation and chi squared tests show that age was significantly related to participants' likelihood of reporting experiencing sexual assault (χ= 13.930, <0.000). As Table 13 shows, participants in the younger age categories were more likely to report experiencing sexual assault than those in the older age categories.

Table 13: Cross-tabulation of respondents' age and reported experience of question 45

Age	Sexual assault				Total
	Yes		No		
	N	%	N	%	
18-23	49	52	45	48	94
24+	10	20	40	50	50
Total	59	41	85	59	144

Respondents' status as home or EU/international students was also found to be significant (χ= 4.336, <0.037). As Table 14 shows, home students were more likely to report experiencing sexual assault than those who were EU or international students.

Table 14: Cross-tabulation of respondents' Home or EU/International status and reported experience of question 45

Home or EU/ International Student	Sexual assault				Total
	Yes		No		
	N	%	N	%	
Home	56	44	71	56	127
EU/International	3	18	14	82	17
Total	59	41	85	59	144

The respondent's status as an undergraduate or postgraduate student was also found to be significant (χ= 12.438, <0.000). As Table 15 shows, undergraduate students were more likely to report experiencing sexual assault than postgraduate students.

Table 15: Cross-tabulation of respondents' undergraduate or postgraduate status and reported experience of question 45[11]

Undergraduate/ Postgraduate	Sexual assault				Total
	Yes		No		
	N	%	N	%	
Undergraduate	49	52	46	48	95
Postgraduate	10	21	38	79	48
Total	59	41	84	59	143

Multiple experiences

For those participants who reported at least one of these behaviours, the next question involved reporting the number of incidents across each year of study and the regularity at which these incidents occurred. Table 16 displays these data.

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[11] One response missing

Table 16: Completed incidents of rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault and causing sexual activity without consent

Frequency (N)																
Year of study	1st year				2nd year				3rd year				4+ years			
Question number	41	43	45	47	41	43	45	47	41	43	45	47	41	43	45	47
Once	3	2	13	1	3	1	5	1	2	2	3	0	0	0	0	0
Twice	2	0	11	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0
Three+ times	0	0	18	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Regularly	0	0	12	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	1	0
Total	5	0	54	1	3	1	27	1	2	2	13	0	0	0	2	0
Total by year	62				32				17				2			

As with the data presented above, it is difficult to distinguish patterns due to the limited number of cases. Table 16 does however highlight that respondents experienced a range of behaviours across each year and, in some cases, multiple times within one year. Table 16 shows that, when multiple experiences are considered, counting three+ times as three and regularly as four, as a minimum, there were at least 12 incidents of rape, 5 incidents of assault by penetration, 253 incidents of sexual assault and 2 incidents of causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent. Overall, when multiple and repeated experiences are considered, Table 16 indicates that there were at least 272 incidents of sexual violence.

Respondents also noted that multiple experiences of sexual assault were common in the qualitative comments:

> 'I don't feel at risk on the actual campus but on nights out in the city centre you can guarantee you will get groped at least once.'

> Respondent 32

> 'The sexual contact that I referred to was mostly people touching areas of my body like my breasts or bum without consent on a night out. I feel as though this happens all the time as it's happened to me and my friends quite a few times in the one and a half years we've been studying here.'

> Respondent 44

'Being groped or grabbed or having someone try to take advantage at an event or on a night out is just something that everyone accepts as being part of a night out. [It] makes all my female friends and myself uncomfortable but there's no way to stop it. If all clubs and bars were as intolerant to unwanted touching and attention by men they would lose too much business.'

Respondent 73

'I have experienced being touched up in nightclubs, as have many other females my age.'

Respondent 99

To summarise this section:

- Participants reported experiencing a range of the behaviours;
- Rape was experienced by 9 respondents, 6% of the sample;
- Assault by penetration was experienced by 5 respondents, 4% of the sample;
- Sexual assault was experienced by 59 respondents, 41% of the sample;
- When multiple and repeated experiences of all behaviours are considered, Table 16 indicates that there were at least 272 incidents of sexual violence;
- Participants who were 18-23 years old (the youngest age category), undergraduate students and home students were significantly more likely to report experiencing sexual assault.

The Nature of Reported Incidents of Sexual Violence

Following the exploration of multiple experiences, participants were asked to select the one attempted or completed incident which they considered to be the most serious and then answer follow up questions relating to this. These follow up questions were only asked to those participants who stated that they had experienced attempted or completed rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault or being caused to engage in sexual activity without consent. Fifty-eight respondents completed the follow up questions. Of these 58, 11 respondents discussed rape, 2 discussed attempted rape, 28 discussed experiences of sexual assault and 17 discussed attempted sexual assault. This section aimed to explore the nature of these experiences in more depth, relating to two broad themes, the nature of the incident and experiences of reporting

and disclosure. Responses by participants who experienced rape and attempted rape are presented first, followed by responses by participants who experienced sexual assault and attempted sexual assault. Due to the small number of cases, statistical significance tests were not possible as there were less than 5 cases in each cell. The following sections are, therefore, entirely descriptive.

Rape and attempted rape: The nature of reported incidents

Respondents who chose to discuss their experience of rape (n=11) and attempted rape (n=2) were asked the following questions in order to ascertain, in more detail, the nature of their experience:

- Q50: Non-consensual sexual contact may occur because of different types of pressure. Please select all that apply to the one incident;
- Q51: During this incident, how many people did this to you?
- Q52: What was the gender of the person who did this?
- Q52.a: What was your relationship to the person who did this?
- Q54: Where did the incident take place?
- Q55: What feelings did you experience as a result of the incident?

Table 17 combines 13 follow up responses for those participants who experienced rape or attempted rape. The table highlights that, across all incidents, the incident occurred, in part, because either there was a lack of ongoing consent, or, they were unable to consent because they had either passed out or were incapacitated due to drugs or alcohol. Use of physical force was also present in 8 of the 13 incidents.

Table 17: The nature of rape and attempted rape

Behaviour (participant number)	Type of pressure	Number of people who did this?	Gender	Relationship	Location	Feelings after
Attempted rape (62)	Use of physical force Unable to consent Lack of ongoing consent	One	Man	Friend	Own rented accommodation	Increased drug or alcohol use
Attempted rape (107)	Use of physical force Threats of physical force Use of non-physical harm Unable to consent	One	Man	Fellow student	Own halls of residence	Difficulty concentrating on studies Loss of interest in daily activities Nightmares / trouble sleeping Feeling numb / detached Eating problems / disorders Increased drug or alcohol use Attendance at university suffered
Rape (22)	Unable to consent Lack of ongoing consent	One	Man	Fellow student	Someone else's halls of residence	Fearfulness or being concerned for safety
Rape (25)	Use of physical force Unable to consent Lack of ongoing consent	One	Man	Friend Fellow student	Own shared student flat/house	Difficulty concentrating on studies Feeling numb / detached Increased drug or alcohol use
Rape (41)	Use of physical force Unable to consent Lack of ongoing consent	One	Man	Stranger	Other: In a club	None of the options
Rape (48)	Unable to consent Lack of ongoing consent	One	Man	Stranger	Other: nightclub in the city centre	Difficulty concentrating on studies Fearfulness or being concerned for safety
Rape (63)	Lack of ongoing consent	One	Man	Other: just started seeing one another	Own shared student flat/house	Difficulty concentrating on studies Fearfulness or being concerned about safety Loss of interest in daily activities

						Nightmares / trouble sleeping Feeling numb / detached Eating problems / disorders Increased drug or alcohol use Attendance at university suffered
Rape (76)	Unable to consent Lack of ongoing consent	One	Man	Friend	Own shared student flat/house	None of the options
Rape (105)	Unable to consent	One	Man	Stranger	Own shared student flat/house	Fearfulness or being concerned about safety Feeling numb / detached
Rape (108)	Use of physical force Unable to consent Lack of ongoing consent	One	Man	Friend Fellow student	Someone else's halls of residence	Nightmares / trouble sleeping Increased drug or alcohol use Other: anxiety
Rape (111)	Use of physical force Unable to consent	One	Man	Fellow student	Other: University research trip	Difficulty concentrating on studies Fearfulness or being concerned about safety Feeling numb / detached Increased drug or alcohol use
Rape (132)	Use of physical force Unable to consent	One	Man	Stranger	Social event in a local venue	Difficulty concentrating on studies Fearfulness or being concerned about safety Nightmares / trouble sleeping Feeling numb / detached Increased drug or alcohol use Attendance at university suffered
Rape (141)	Promising rewards so that you felt you must comply	One	Man	Stranger	Other: In a taxi	Feeling numb / detached

In all of the cases, incidents of rape and attempted rape were carried out by one person and these individuals were all identified as men. When asked about their relationship

to the perpetrator, participants were able to select more than one category to describe this relationship. Respondents stated that 5 incidents were perpetrated by a fellow student, 5 by a stranger and 4 by a friend. One participant selected 'other', stating that they had 'just started seeing one another'. Six out of 13 incidents took place in the respondent's own halls of residence or rented accommodation. Two incidents took place in someone else's halls of residence. Three incidents took place in public, in a club, one in a taxi and one incident occurred during a university field trip.

In relation to feelings and how the participant responded to the incident, participants highlighted a range of behaviours which followed. Seven out of thirteen respondents reported feeling numb or detached, five respondents reported feeling fearful or concerned for their safety, and six stated that they found it difficult to concentrate on their studies or assessments. In the qualitative comments, one respondent who had experienced rape in a nightclub stated that, as a result of the incident:

> 'For the few weeks after the attack, I did not really go outside and after I managed to start going to my lectures again, I was to[o] scared to tell anyone.'
> Respondent 48

Reporting and disclosure of rape and attempted rape

None of the respondents who experienced rape or attempted rape reported the incident to the police. When asked why they chose not to report to the police, five participants stated that they felt embarrassed, ashamed or that it would be too emotionally difficult while four stated that they did not think the incident was serious enough to report. Moreover, two participants did not report because they did not think that they would be believed and two stated that they did not think anything would be done.

Participants were next asked whether they made an official report to someone who deals with these cases in the university. Again, no respondents who experienced rape or attempted rape reported the incident to the university. When asked why they chose not to report the incident to the university, four participants did not think the incident was serious enough to report, three stated that they did not know where to go or who to tell, two felt embarrassed, ashamed or that it would be too emotionally difficult. One participant did not think that they would be believed, and one did not think anything would be done.

Participants were next asked whether they disclosed the incident to a friend or family member. Four out of thirteen did not disclose the incident. Of these four, three did not think the incident was serious enough to talk about and one felt embarrassed, ashamed or that it would be too emotionally difficult. For those respondents who did disclose the incident to a friend or family member, they were asked to state how satisfied they were with the response they received. One participant was 'not at all' satisfied, one was 'a little' satisfied, two were 'somewhat' satisfied, three were 'very' satisfied and two were 'extremely' satisfied.

Following this, the participants were asked whether they felt their friend or family member responded in particular ways with particular behaviours and they were able to select all options that applied. The two participants who felt 'extremely' satisfied with the response stated that this was because they felt respected, believed, supported and that someone put pressure on them to make an official report. The three participants who were 'very' satisfied, also felt respected, believed and supported. For the two participants who were 'somewhat' satisfied', they felt believed and supported but felt that there was some pressure to make an official report. They did not state that they felt respected, which is also the case for those who were 'a little' satisfied or 'not

at all'. The one respondent who felt 'a little' satisfied, only stated that they felt pressure to make an official report and the respondent who felt 'not at all' satisfied did not offer any reasons, out of the available options, as to why this was the case.

In the qualitative comments, one respondent detailed their experience of disclosure to friends and family and the impact this had on their decision not to make an official report.

> 'I didn't report this or tell anyone because he denies it and made everyone else believe I was lying because he's not the type of guy you expect this from, so why would anyone else believe me? I also already lost my friends from it so why would I want to [lose] even more… And if anything was done to him what would they do? I have no proof and no witness, only my statement.'
> Respondent 25

Further avenues for disclosures were also considered in terms of disclosing the assault to internal student counselling services or to a member of the academic staff. Of the 13 respondents who had experienced rape or attempted rape, most (n=10) did not disclose to university staff. Six of those who did not disclose to university staff stated that this was because they did not think the incident was serious enough to talk about, two did not think they would be believed, one did not know where to go or who to tell and one felt embarrassed, ashamed or that it would be too emotionally difficult. Of the three participants that did disclose the incident to a staff member, two felt 'a little' satisfied with the staff member's response noting that they felt respected (n=1) or believed (n=2), but that one staff member put pressure on the respondent not to make an official report. The other participant was 'somewhat' satisfied and stated that they felt believed and supported.

The final avenue for reporting and disclosure explored was external support services. Of the 13 respondents who experienced rape or attempted rape, most (n=11) did not

utilise external support services. Of these 11 who did not disclose to external services, six stated that they did not think the incident was serious enough to talk about, three did not know where to go or who to talk to, one felt embarrassed, ashamed or that it would be too emotionally difficult and one did not think they would be believed. Two participants did disclose the incident to external services and felt either 'somewhat' or 'very' satisfied with the response. The participant who felt 'somewhat' satisfied stated that they felt believed, supported and that they were helped to understand their options going forward. The participant who was 'very' satisfied, stated that they felt believed.

To summarise this section:

- All participants who had experienced rape or attempted rape noted that there was either a lack of ongoing consent or they were unable to consent;
- All reported incidents were carried out by one man;
- Most incidents (n=8) occurred in halls of residence or student housing;
- Participants reported a range of feelings following the incident, including feeling numb, detached, concerned for their own safety and difficulty concentrating on their studies and assessments;
- No participants chose to make a formal report to the police or the university citing emotional difficulty, that they did not think the incident was serious enough and/or that they did not think they would be believed or that anything would be done;
- In relation to reporting to the university, 3 out of 13 respondents stated that they did not know where to go or who to tell;
- Of those respondents who disclosed to friends, satisfaction ranged from 'not at all' to 'extremely' with various reasons offered as to why this was the case;
- Of those respondents who disclosed to a university staff member, they felt 'a little' or 'somewhat' satisfied citing that they felt believed and supported but one respondent also felt pressured not to make an official report;
- Most participants also did not disclose the incident to external support services.

Sexual assault and attempted sexual assault: The nature of reported incidents

Respondents who reported experiencing sexual assault or attempted sexual assault were asked the following questions in order to obtain more detail about the nature of their experience:

- Q50: Non-consensual sexual contact may occur because of different types of pressure. Please select all that apply to the one incident;
- Q51: During this incident, how many people did this to you?
- Q52: What was the gender of the person who did this?
    - Q52.a: What was your relationship to the person who did this?
- Q53: What were the genders of the people who did this?
    - Q53.a: What was your relationship to the people who did this?
- Q54: Where did the incident take place?
- Q55: What feelings did you experience as a result of the incident?

Forty-five respondents discussed their experiences of attempted sexual assault or sexual assault. These participants were first asked about how the incident occurred. These are detailed in Table 18.

Table 18: Type of pressure experienced during the reported incident

Type of pressure	Number of respondents experiencing this type of pressure
Use of physical force	10
Unable to consent due to being passed out, asleep or incapacitated due to drugs or alcohol	13
Lack of ongoing consent	16
Promised rewards so that you felt you must comply	1
Threats of non-physical harm	2

Respondents were able to select several options for this question and twelve respondents chose not to select the type of pressure which was present during the incident. As with the questions relating to rape, being unable to consent, or lack of

ongoing consent, was cited as occurring for a number of participants who experienced sexual assault and attempted sexual assault.

Participants were next asked about the number of people who carried out the one incident and the gender of that person or people involved. Table 19 below details this data.

Table 19: Number of people who carried out the incident by gender

	Man	**Woman**	**Men and women**	**Do not know**
1 person	36	0	0	2
2 people	2	0	3	0
3 or more people	2	0	1	0

In most incidents, participants identified one person who carried out the incident and they were overwhelmingly identified as men. In relation to the respondents' relationship to the person who carried out the sexual assaults, strangers were most often identified as that person (n=34), followed by fellow students (n=8), don't know (n=3), friends (n=3) and one ex-partner.

Regarding location, participants most often stated that sexual assault or attempted sexual assault took place in a social event at a local venue (n=26) or at an advertised student night at a local venue (n=13).

How the participants felt following the assault were next considered. Participants again highlighted a range of feelings which are detailed in Table 20.

Table 20: Feelings following assault

Feelings following incident	Count (n)
None of the options	29
Fearfulness or being concerned about safety	11
Feeling numb or detached	5
Difficulty concentrating on studies	3
Nightmares or trouble sleeping	3
Increased drug or alcohol use	3
Loss of interest in daily activities	2
Eating problems or disorders	1
Attendance at university suffered	1
Missing responses	2
Other	Anxiety (n=1)
	Embarrassment (n=1)

Whilst many participants (n=29) reported that they did not experience any of the options, Table 20 highlights that several participants reported experiencing a range of negative feelings and consequences following the assault or attempted sexual assault.

Reporting and disclosure of sexual assault and attempted sexual assault

Of the sample who had experienced sexual assault or attempted sexual assault (n=45), one participant reported this experience to the police. This participant stated that they were 'not at all' satisfied with the police response to the report and stated that the reason was that they 'put pressure on you not to proceed with further action'. Forty-four respondents chose not to make a report to the police. Of those 44, 38 did not think the incident was serious enough to report, 5 did not think anything would be done and one felt embarrassed, ashamed or that it would be too emotionally difficult.

In relation to making an official report at the university, again, none of the participants utilised this method of reporting. When asked why, the majority of respondents (n=34) did not think the incident was serious enough to report. Furthermore, five participants did not think anything would be done and five did not know where to go or who to tell.

Certain incidents of sexual assault were also viewed as not being serious enough to report as discussed in the qualitative comments:

> 'The sexual harassment in terms of bum grabbing, kissing, etc when unwanted mainly happens on nights out… and isn't really serious enough to report but I think people need to realise it's not okay to just grab girls (or boys) and presume they want that! Or presume someone wants to kiss you, under the influence of alcohol it's hard but it shouldn't be considered an okay thing. And girls shouldn't think that it is okay/normal to experience behaviours like this every night out.'
> Respondent 126

Participants were next asked whether they disclosed the incident to a friend or family member of which 27 did and 18 did not. For those who did not disclose the incident, 15 did not think the incident was serious enough to talk about, and three felt embarrassed, ashamed or that it would be too emotionally difficult. Following this, the participants were asked whether they felt their friend or family member responded in particular ways with particular behaviours and they were able to select all options that applied. The respondents who felt 'somewhat', 'very' and 'extremely' satisfied with the response from their friend or family member stated that this was because they felt respected, believed and supported. The two participants who felt 'a little' satisfied felt believed and supported but did not state that they felt respected. One participant felt 'not at all' satisfied with the response from their friend or family member but did not select any of the options as to why this was the case. In relation to attempted and completed sexual assault, none of the participants who disclosed to a friend or family member felt that there was any pressure to make an official report, or not to make an official report.

Informal disclosures were also considered in relation to student support services and individual staff members. None of the respondents disclosed the incident to a staff member or to internal university support services. The majority of respondents in the

sample (n=42) did not think the incident was serious enough to talk about, however, one respondent stated that they did not know where to go or who to tell and one respondent felt embarrassed, ashamed or that it would be too emotionally difficult.

Finally, no participants disclosed the incident to external services, with the majority (n=43) stating that they did not think the incident was serious enough to talk about. One participant also felt embarrassed, ashamed or that it would be too emotionally difficult, and one did not access external services because they did not want to get the perpetrator in trouble.

To summarise this section:

- The majority of participants either cited being unable to consent or a lack of ongoing consent as relevant to their experience of sexual assault or attempted sexual assault;
- The majority of incidents were carried out by one person and were identified as men;
- The person who carried out the behaviour was most often identified as a stranger;
- In contrast to experiences of rape, incidents of sexual assault most often occurred at a social event in a local venue or at an advertised student night;
- The majority of respondents (n=29) did not report the negative feelings following the incident, again in contrast to reported experiences of rape and attempted rape. Several participants did, however, state that they felt fearful or concerned for their safety;
- One participant reported the incident to the police. She was 'not at all' satisfied and felt the police put pressure on her not to proceed with further action;
- Most respondents did not report to the police and no respondents reported to the university, to external services, or disclosed to individual staff members stating that, for the majority, they did not think the incident was serious enough;
- Again, some participants (n=5) stated that the reason they did not report to the university was that they did not know where to go or who to tell.

Discussion: Themes and issues emerging from the data

The survey elicited 144 responses which provide a snapshot of a relatively small number of students' experiences at the university. This chapter presented descriptive statistics to explore patterns within survey responses and where possible inferential statistics have been produced to test the significance of relationships between variables. However, overall, the 'power' of the data is not at an acceptable level in order to produce statistically significant results in relation to the sample size (Cohen, 1992) across the whole dataset.

The aim of this chapter has been to explore women students' experiences of sexual harassment and sexual violence at one university in England. In doing this, several themes have emerged from the data that suggest, although many students reported experiencing sexual harassment and violence, these experiences, and the way students responded to them, differed. The following discussion explores the survey data in relation to five themes: frequency, age and 'risk', a continuum of sexual violence and acceptability, the impact of the experiences and underreporting and disclosure. The chapter has identified themes and patterns in the data which will be explored in more detail through an analysis of the qualitative interview data in Chapter Five.

The frequency of sexual harassment and violence

The chapter presented data around the frequency of individual experiences of sexual harassment and violence, including data on multiple experiences of the same behaviours. Data in tables 7, 12 and 16 highlight that there were at least 817 incidents of sexual harassment, 283 incidents of attempted sexual violence and 272 completed incidents of sexual violence. Therefore, when multiple experiences of all behaviours,

across all years of study are considered, the survey data show that there were at least 1372 incidents of sexual harassment and attempted and completed incidents of rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault and being caused to engage in sexual activity without consent reported by the 144 participants. Sexual harassment accounted for the majority of these incidents (n=817). Attempted and completed rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault and being caused to engage in sexual activity without consent accounted for 555 incidents. Of these 555 incidents, attempted and completed sexual assault accounted for the vast majority of these incidents (n=505) with attempted and completed rape (n=28), assault by penetration (n=19) and being caused to engage in sexual activity without consent (n=3) accounting for 50 incidents overall.

In relation to the different sexual harassment behaviours, participants reported experiences between 16% and 51%, there were, however, noteworthy differences between the behaviours. The lowest percentage of respondents (16%) experienced unwanted texts, tweets, messages or images which is perhaps surprising considering the growth in international research, legislation and media attention given to such issues in recent years (Henry and Powell, 2014). It is unclear why this is the case in this research.

In relation to sexual violence, comparing this survey to other similar research which has been carried out in the UK, there are some notable differences in the rates at which respondents experienced some of the behaviours. National research undertaken by the National Union of Students (NUS) (2010) reported that 2% of participants experienced attempted rape and 5% experienced rape. The results of this survey, however, show a higher rate of incidents as 8% of respondents reported attempted rape and 6% reported experiencing rape. Later research (Revolt Sexual

Assault, 2018) also found that 8% of respondents reported rape. Moreover, although the NUS survey does not report the rate at which respondents had experienced attempted assault by penetration, perhaps because no respondents reported that they had experienced this violence, completed assault by penetration was reported by 0.4% of respondents in the NUS research. Again, the results from this survey show a higher rate with 6% experiencing attempted assault by penetration and 4% assault by penetration. Moreover, the NUS report indicated that 16% of respondents experienced sexual assault and, again, the report did not state the number of students who reported attempted sexual assault. This compares with the 43% of respondents in this survey who had experienced attempted sexual assault and 41% who had experienced sexual assault. The results of this research, therefore, indicate a much higher prevalence than that in the national research.

There were significant methodological differences between this survey and the one carried out by the NUS. The response rate to the national NUS survey was low. As Stenning et al. (2013) note, there were 2058 respondents to the NUS survey out of a possible population of all students in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland at 115 higher and further education institutions. This could, potentially, explain the higher number of incidents reported in this survey. Moreover, the NUS survey was less restrictive in its limitations as to where incidents could have taken place. For example, the NUS survey could have collected data on incidents which did not occur in the city where the respondents studied as the question stated, 'whilst you have been a student at your current institution'. This survey, however, states that incidents must have occurred on or around respondents' university campus and in specific locations as part of their life as a student. Therefore, as it is more restrictive, it would be expected that this survey would record a lower number of incidents. Despite this, it is not

possible to draw conclusions as to how much the low response rate, and the less restrictive wording, affected the findings of the NUS research.

Age and 'risk'

Statistical analyses highlighted that age, level of study (undergraduate or postgraduate) and citizenship status (home or EU/international students) were significant indicators of participants' likelihood of reporting an incident of sexual harassment or sexual violence in the survey. Students who were undergraduates, and were 18-23 years old, were significantly more likely to report experiencing attempted sexual assault and sexual assault than those in the postgraduate and 24+ categories. It is, however, likely that most of the students in the undergraduate category were in the 18-23 year old category and those in the postgraduate category were in the 24+ year old category. The AAU Campus Climate Survey (Cantor et al., 2020) also found a similar pattern, but in relation to a broader range of behaviours defined as non-consensual sexual contact. The AAU research found that prevalence for women undergraduate students was nearly three times higher than the rate for postgraduate students. Age is considered further in Chapter Five in relation to participants experiences and perceptions of sexual violence.

The survey research for this thesis also highlights the fact that home students were significantly more likely to have reported experiencing sexual harassment and violence. More research is needed in order to ascertain why this is the case as, a point acknowledged by Bonistall Postell (2017), there is a significant lack of information on international students' experiences of sexual violence, particularly in relation to postgraduate international students.

A continuum of sexual violence and acceptability

Kelly's (1988) concept of sexual violence as a continuum was relevant to the experiences of many participants. Kelly (1988) outlines two definitions of a continuum. First, 'a basic common character that underlies many different events' (Kelly, 1988: 76). Second, 'a continuous series of elements or events that pass into one another and which cannot be readily distinguished' (Kelly, 1998: 76). This conceptualisation has several uses in relation to sexual violence. It highlights the range of experiences of sexual violence, the daily experience of forms of violence which are deemed 'typical' and makes the connections between these experiences and those which are more easily condemnable within dominant discourses.

The survey data show high rates of sexual harassment and violence. As well as this, individual incidents were, at times, experienced several times in one year, or individual participants reported a range of experiences within and across years. The survey data, therefore, support the wider research conducted on sexual violence, including Kelly's (1988) notion of a continuum, which highlights that sexual violence is a regular feature of life for many women. In relation to the student respondents in this survey, discussing the 'normalness' of sexual harassment, one participant in the qualitative comments, pointed to, what she described as 'lad' culture or 'banter' culture which she thought was linked to university students and was expressed through jokes and comments. Behaviours carried out under the banner of 'lad culture', as discussed in Chapter One, Phipps (2018) argues, often constitute sexual harassment.

As well as arguing that most women had experienced sexual violence in their lives, Kelly (1988) also stated that behaviours defined as abusive, by those women who experienced them, were not necessarily reflected in the legal codes or in analytical

categories used in research. Whilst survey research lends itself to the researcher's pre-determining optional categories, thus minimising opportunities to discuss the full range of sexual violence behaviours, respondents in this research were encouraged to utilise the qualitative comments to provide wider examples and the interviews later focused on developing this understanding. The qualitative comments highlighted experiences which were not directly in line with the options available in the survey but were deemed as intimidating or as intrusions. Respondents described incidents such as being followed home by a person touching themselves sexually. Furthermore, behaviours such as leering and someone coming uncomfortably close were described as intimidating and experienced as intrusions by the participants. The use of the term 'continuum' therefore, in this research, as in Kelly's, reflects the range, as well as the extent of sexual violence. This is discussed further in Chapter Five.

Kelly and Radford (1996: 19) argued that women are 'systematically encouraged to minimise the violence that [they] experience from men' and the qualitative comments section in this research pointed to a level of acceptance, for some, of sexual harassment and sexual assault, particularly unwanted sexual touching. Participants described some behaviours as regular occurrences and, whilst contesting the acceptability of these behaviours generally, they also stated that this is something that was often accepted as part of a night out. This was also noted by Gunby et al. (2020: 31) who found that, for students in the night-time economy, there was a 'reluctant acceptance' of certain behaviours which were 'brushed off' in order to not allow unwanted attention to define a night out. These arguments around acceptability are developed in the following chapters in relation to normalising discourses within the university.

Further to minimising violence through 'reluctant acceptance', Sundaram (2018) builds on Kelly's continuum and argues that, young people's views on gender-based violence exist on a continuum of acceptability. Rather than conceptualising gender-based violence in binary terms as acceptable or unacceptable, young people 'sometimes label violence as "wrong" and other times construct narratives to excuse or justify violence' (Sundaram, 2018: 31). For Sundaram, the construction of a narrative of acceptability, or not, relates to gendered norms and expectations of behaviour. Narratives which justify behaviours are sometimes constructed if, for example, someone transgresses 'appropriate' gendered behaviours. Violence, therefore, can be viewed as wrong or unacceptable by an individual, but 'its use in a particular situation is still accepted' by that same person (Sundaram, 2018: 31). In relation to respondents' decisions not to report incidents, whilst the quantitative nature of the survey did not allow for the expression of narratives of acceptability, or unacceptability, the majority of respondents did not report incidents and many stated that the reason for this was because they did not think the incidents were serious enough. This point is, therefore, explored further in the following chapter through interviews with students who had experienced sexual violence and had made decisions to report, or not.

Overall, the frequency of incidents highlighted in the survey, alongside a level of acceptance of certain behaviours as part of university life, highlight the relevance of the continuum of sexual violence, as well as a continuum of acceptability within the student population explored in the research. This point is explored further in the following chapter.

The impact of experiences

When asked about their feelings following incidents of various forms of sexual assault, participants highlighted a range of consequences. There was a difference between those who had experienced attempted or completed rape and those who had experienced attempted or completed sexual assault. The majority who experienced sexual assault reported not experiencing any of the negative consequences that were listed as options and did not use the 'other' option to detail other consequences. Some participants who experienced sexual assault, however, did point to some consequences, with several stating that as a result they were fearful or concerned for their own safety, felt numb or detached, anxiety or embarrassment. So, although many participants did not report negative consequences, for some, sexual assault had a profound impact on different aspects of their lives particularly in affecting their feelings, emotions and mental health. Similar impacts were also found in national UK based research (NUS; 2010; Revolt Sexual Assault, 2018).

For those who experienced rape, two participants stated that they did not experience any of the negative consequences that were options in this survey. However, generally for those who reported such experiences, there were a range of consequences which impacted on daily life such as fear, a concern for safety, anxiety, feeling numb or detached, loss of interest in daily activities, eating problems or disorders, nightmares and having trouble sleeping and having difficulty concentrating in general. Such consequences were also found by Kelly (1988) in her exploration of the experiences of women who had experienced sexual violence. Several respondents in this research also identified specific negative consequences in relation to university such as difficulty concentrating on their studies or assessments or that their attendance suffered as a result of the sexual violence. Research conducted by the NUS (2010) found that one

in four victims of serious sexual assault, in the sample population, had noted the impact on their education and for one in seven, their attendance had suffered. Therefore, the findings of this survey reinforce previous research findings that highlighted the negative impact on students' education and the need for understanding and support within Higher Education

Participants expressed the changes in their behaviours following being assaulted in the qualitative comments. As one respondent in this survey noted, immediately following people touching her inappropriately, she would change her body language in response and if necessary, verbalise how this behaviour made her feel. She stated that people would usually then leave her alone. Another participant pointed out that she was 'not afraid to say no, which I know some people are'. Whilst there are clearly issues with accepting sexual violence as normal, Gunby et al (2020: 41) also point out that, there are also problems with 'instructing young people to not tolerate unwanted attention [as it…] problematically responsibilises individual victims', a point which is explored further in Chapter Six.

As a result of their experience of both sexual assault and rape, many participants were fearful or concerned for their safety. For one respondent who had experienced rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault, this manifested in her not going outside for weeks after one of her experiences. One participant, who had experienced sexual harassment stated that she rarely went on nights out due to comments she had previously heard on nights out which minimised or misunderstood sexual assault and rape. This respondent was concerned by university students' lack of knowledge about what constituted sexual violence. The responses of some respondents can be understood as 'safety work' (Kelly cited in Vera-Gray, 2018). Safety work is described, by Vera-Gray (2018: 14) as the 'range of modifications, adaptations, decisions that

women take, often habitually, in order to maintain a sense of safety in public spaces', often developed in response to previous experiences. The concept of 'safety work' is explored in more detail in the following chapter whereby participants discuss a range of modifications to their own behaviours as a result of their experiences.

The findings in this research, moreover, reflect MacCannell and MacCannell's (1993) argument, discussed in Chapter Two, that the impact of sexual violence extends beyond harm done to the body, to the harm done to a person's subjective functioning. This point is developed further in Chapters Five and Seven.

Underreporting and disclosure

The most commonly used form of reporting or disclosure by participants was to friends and family, which, resulted in mixed responses and levels of satisfaction. Overwhelmingly, participants selected not to utilise official reporting mechanisms such as the police or university systems. Just one participant (0.7%) reported to the police and no participants reported to the university. This is reflective of the general population in which underreporting is prevalent. According to the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) (2018) approximately 18-19% of victims reported a sexual offence to the police. Research involving students, by Revolt Sexual Assault (2018), noted that just 6% of respondents who had experienced sexual harassment or violence reported the incident to the police suggesting that, along with the much lower number in this survey, students are less likely to report an incident to the police. Participants highlighted various reasons as to why they did not report incidents to the police from not thinking the incident was serious enough to feeling embarrassed, ashamed, that it would be too emotionally difficult, fear that they would not be believed and that they did not think anything would be done. In the qualitative comments, one

participant also stated that they were too frightened to tell the police as they feared they would then have to tell their parents.

When asked why they chose not to report incidents, participants stated that they did not think the incident was serious enough but also, three stated that they did not know where to go or who to tell. It is important to note that, at the time the survey was live, there was no student-facing information, for example a website, which identified a specific place for students to report sexual harassment or assault. In addition, there was no information on the university, or Students' Union website about support services, or any specific information about sexual violence.

Participants also highlighted negative experiences of reporting and disclosure, and their impact. The negative experience often related to pressure in terms of options for moving forward. The one survey respondent who reported to the police felt that they were pressured not to proceed with further action and, also, for one respondent who disclosed the incident to a staff member, they felt pressured not to make an official report. One participant, in the qualitative comments, also stated that she did not report the incident because her friends did not believe her, so she did not have faith that other people would believe her, particularly due to the lack of evidence and witnesses. Finally, in the qualitative comments, one participant noted that, the reason they did not report their experience to the university, was that they did not think the university would believe it was the institution's problem or responsibility. Lack of reporting, and the reasons for these decisions, is discussed further in Chapter Five.

Conclusion

As well as extremely high rates of sexual violence, this chapter has identified a range of issues in terms of experiences of sexual violence and the response to it. The

frequency of experiences, which are often multiple, is considered in the following chapter, alongside further exploration of the issue of age as a relevant factor in relation to experiencing sexual violence. Moreover, in terms of the impacts of experiencing sexual violence, the findings suggest that the impact extends beyond the incident itself, into broader areas of the respondents' life and affects her movements and choices. Finally, the process of deciding whether to report or not, is also further explored in Chapter Five in order to understand this decision making process further.

Chapter 5: 'So I Just Had a Shower and Got on With It': Findings from interviews with students

Introduction

The previous chapter explored responses from women students to an online survey. This chapter explores the themes identified in the survey in more depth and also builds upon these through the nuances of participant accounts. This chapter discusses findings from qualitative interviews, conducted with five students, who had experienced various forms of sexual violence whilst studying at one university. The chapter will outline and critically analyse a number of key themes identified in relation to three areas: the impacts of experiences, reporting and disclosure and the context of men's violence at university.

The chapter begins with an overview of each participant which details their experiences. Following this, the chapter outlines the key themes identified in the interview data.

Participants

Sara

Sara is a white, British, heterosexual woman. At the time of the interview, she was in her third year of university as an undergraduate student in Arts, Humanities and Social Science.

Sara focused on one incident throughout our discussion, which she defined as abuse. The incident occurred in her house, a house she shared with the person who sexually assaulted her. The person who did this to her was a friend, for whom she had strong romantic feelings, but who also had a girlfriend. Sara was at home one evening and, after a night out in the city, he returned home. Not long after he said goodnight, Sara

also went to her room intending to go to sleep. He later came into her room to see her. He stated that nothing was going to happen and that he just wanted to be near her. Sara then consented to kissing him, but said it had to end there and that he had to leave. She felt verbally pressured into removing some of her clothes, he continually repeated that nothing was going to happen, that she could just fall asleep, and then he kissed her again. She again told him to leave but he did not. Sara next conceded to his request to give him oral sex as she thought, if she did, he would be satisfied and leave her alone. He then fell asleep and she tried leave but, as she did, he woke up. He pulled her pyjamas down despite her trying to stop him. She described feeling like she had no other option but to lie there and be quiet because she thought her other housemates might hear something and she thought she was doing something wrong. It took Sara several days to realise that what had happened was not right and that she did not consent to what had occurred. When asked, she defined this situation as abuse and was clear that it was not consensual. Although what happened to her during the incident would fit within the legal definition of rape, throughout the conversation, she also often referred to the incident as 'cheating'. Defining the incident, for Sara, was complicated by the fact that she believed she was in love with him at the time, and had, prior to this incident, wanted to have consensual sex with him. She, however, did not want to be in a situation where he was cheating on his girlfriend, and in this situation, was physically and verbally saying no.

Other than this occasion, Sara highlighted that there were several times during her time at university where she had had one night stands and she had said she did not want to have sex with someone, but it happened anyway. She did not consider these incidents to be serious. Sara did not make a formal report to the university or the police

about any of her experiences although did disclose what had happened to friends, family and a lecturer at the university.

Heidi

Heidi is a white, British, gay woman. At the time of the interview, she was studying for a Masters degree at the same institution where she gained her undergraduate degree. She was in a relationship and studied in Arts, Humanities and Social Science.

Heidi discussed in detail two incidents of rape, which she experienced in 'freshers' fortnight', in her first year of university. The first incident occurred in a student nightclub, in the centre of the city, in the toilets. She believed her drink might have been spiked. She went to the toilets in the nightclub where a man forced her into a toilet cubicle. She said that he physically forced her to give him oral sex as he tried to record the incident.

The second incident occurred when she was outside a club waiting for a taxi. She got into a taxi, unsure if it was the one she ordered, and the taxi driver drove her to his house, forced her to give him oral sex and then forced her out of the house. Heidi did not formally report any of her experiences to the university or the police but did disclose these incidents to her friends. Heidi discussed in depth her personal and familial difficulties prior to attending university and the impact these life experiences had on the way she dealt with the incidents of sexual violence. She also centred the role that her discovery of feminism played in understanding and articulating her experiences. Her experiences, and discovery of feminism, were linked to subsequent choices in university where she became heavily involved in activism and groups involved in campaigning against sexual violence and sexism more broadly.

Meredith

Meredith is a white, British, heterosexual woman. She was in her third year of an undergraduate degree in the area of Arts, Humanities and social science at the time of the interview.

Meredith discussed a range of experiences from being deceived into going back to a fellow student's house, being locked in the room and verbally abused, to persistent verbal, sexual harassment in university spaces and unwanted touching in bars and nightclubs. Later in the interview, she disclosed that on one occasion she had gone to a hotel with a small group of people who had offered her a place to stay as her friend, whose house she was supposed to stay at, had left her in a bar in a city that she did not live in. This was in a city approximately one hour away from the city in which she attended university. She fell asleep in the hotel room and woke up to find one person touching her, as she described, 'seedily'. The following week she saw this person in her university library and realised that he attended the same university as she did. He was also studying in the same department. Therefore, she saw him regularly around campus. Before her interview, Meredith had only told one person about the incident. She did not formally report any of her experiences to the university or the police but did discuss them with friends. Meredith stated that she did not think that these experiences had any huge impact upon her life. She said that she understood that these experiences were bad, that they could have affected somebody else much worse, but that she did not spend too much time thinking about them.

Audrey

Audrey is a white, Welsh, heterosexual woman. At the time of the interview, she was in her fourth year of undergraduate study. She was in a relationship at the time and studied in the area of Law and Business.

Audrey discussed one incident that occurred at the end of her first year at university, in the summer, not long before beginning her second year of study. She was out in the evening with friends and she thought her friends had left the club, so she decided to leave and get a taxi home. Whilst waiting at the taxi rank, a man began talking to her about potentially sharing a taxi. Whilst still at the taxi rank, he raped her. A passer-by ran to a nearby police car and the police found this person twenty minutes later. Audrey decided to bring charges and went through the entire criminal justice process. Two years later, the man was sent to prison. Audrey discussed on the one hand, the extremely positive experience she had with a specialist sexual violence police officer who she worked with throughout the process, but also, the overwhelmingly negative experience of the criminal justice process. Audrey also experienced various mental health issues and educational difficulties after being assaulted and had to take time off from university and repeat one year due to the demands of going through the criminal justice process. At the time of the interview, she was finishing her third year. She also accessed internal and external support services and disclosed the incident to friends and family.

Nicola

Nicola is a white, British, gay woman. She had very recently begun postgraduate study at a different university to the one she studied at as an undergraduate. She discussed her experiences in relation to her previous institution. She was in a relationship at the

time of the interview and was studying in the area of Arts, Humanities and Social Science.

Nicola focussed on her experiences of harassment throughout university and how this related to her sexuality. She discussed experiences of unwanted touching, persistent, verbal sexual harassment, harassment in public for being what she described as 'visibly lesbian' and, much later in the interview, disclosed that she had experienced rape, by an ex-boyfriend. She did not formally report any of her experiences to the university or the police but did discuss these with friends. Nicola also discussed her experiences of coming to feminism, the importance of friendships made through feminist groups and often highlighted situations in which she challenged the harassment she and others were experiencing. Nicola had extensive knowledge about sexism, sexual violence and harassment, talked often in academic terms, and highlighted the social and cultural environment of the university, and society more broadly, as the problem and reason for the persistence of sexual violence.

The remainder of this chapter presents a number of key themes that arose from the interviews.

The Impact of Sexual Violence

During the interviews, participants were asked to discuss how their experiences impacted upon their lives: physically, emotionally, mentally, educationally, upon their relationships or any other impacts. Several participants discussed the impact on their mental health, their relationships, changes to their previous behaviours through developing protective, safety strategies and, the ways in which their experience(s) impacted upon their university education and finances.

The impact on mental health

Audrey, who was raped by a stranger in the street, discussed the range of mental and emotional health issues which she experienced as a direct result of her assault:

> *I was diagnosed with PTSD, depression and anxiety after and I wouldn't go out unless I was holding my phone in my hand. Like if my phone was in my pocket or my bag, I wouldn't go out the house. I used to always have to have it in my hand. Erm, that's something that everyone notices about me, that I've always got my phone like really close. That's probably, after that happened like I've always got it on hand to phone 999 straight away if anything was to kind of happen and things like that. That's something that has massively changed. Like I don't, I've got like a lot of issues with like losing people in public kind of thing. So the other day, me and my partner were in Sports Direct and he went to a different aisle and I almost had a panic attack because I'd lost him and I didn't know where he was and I was by myself.*

At the time the interview with Audrey took place, it had been three years since she had been raped. She was still dealing with anxiety, depression and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and continued to keep her mobile phone in her hand. She highlighted the various ways in which, since the incident, she had altered her behaviour and movements in order to feel safer, and to avoid any further incidents. For a long time after the assault, Audrey experienced nightmares where she was being chased by her attacker, these had now passed, and despite the issues she discussed above, in her own words, she 'was in a much better place'.

Heidi, who was raped twice during 'freshers' fortnight', also discussed a range of emotional and mental health impacts as a result of her experiences. She had depression prior to attending university and, therefore, prior to being assaulted. Discussing the impact of the experiences of rape, she stated:

So this was first year of uni, so at that point then when I went into my second year, I went to go live on my own in a flat by myself and then I bought a car so I didn't have to get a taxi again because it just put me off public transport. I spent the whole year just being like a full-on recluse, like not talking to anyone for a whole year and I changed my course and everything and like, it was basically like starting uni again.

The impact of this led to further issues for Heidi. In order to get to university, and to travel around the city and beyond, she bought a car. She got into debt because of the car, which she could not afford, but needed the car as she did not want to use taxis or public transport due to her experiences of sexual violence. Heidi also described obsessively reading and learning about sexual violence, gender-based violence and sexism. She became involved with the feminist society and became a campaigner and activist on campus around sexual violence. It was approximately two years, after being raped that Heidi questioned these choices:

But I don't know if that's healthy. I mean I say that it's beneficial, but being obsessed with anything is unhealthy but people don't recognise it as unhealthy behaviour because it's something they approve of… Like I became so obsessed with it, and it wasn't healthy because I also had like three jobs. I volunteered for like six different things, I went abroad for a month, I did all of these things all at once to try and distract myself which looked great and it looks like I'm super motivated and doing all of this stuff but actually it was really unhealthy because it just like wore me down.

Heidi described her obsession with education, university and all of the extra-curricular activities, retrospectively, as 'a cry for help'. Although externally these behaviours may be perceived as positive, Heidi believed that they were a result, not just of being raped, but were a demonstration of the deterioration in her mental health.

The spatial impact of sexual violence

In terms of spatial impacts, several of the interviewees reported moving out of their then current accommodation. Sara, who lived with the person who abused her in a shared student house, had told her mother what had happened. Following this:

> *[Her mother] was like 'OK, we are getting you out of the house asap' and we literally went the next day and moved all of my stuff and I moved home.*

Sara lived at home for the summer and during her final academic year. Heidi, also, moved into a studio flat soon after her experience which, as noted above, caused her to become reclusive. Audrey, who was also living in a shared student house with friends at the time she was raped, moved into her cousin's house for the rest of the summer as the person who raped her was on bail and lived in the same part of the city where she also lived. After the summer, she moved back into the shared house but her relationships with her friends who she lived with became strained. She said:

> *So that's why I moved into a studio in my last year because I just couldn't deal with stuff like that.*

Audrey discussed the fact that she very rarely went out in the evenings to bars or clubs since she was assaulted. In her first year of university, she would go out twice a week. Since her experience, that changed dramatically. She had been on one night out in the previous twelve months with her partner, as he knew not to leave her alone at any point, but she had never been out in the city in which she studied, as this was where she was raped. Audrey also pointed out that the person who assaulted her was on bail for over a year in the area where she lived which meant she sometimes would not go into university unless her housemates were also going in at the same time.

Interviewees were asked whether they felt safe around the campus. Meredith said she felt safe, although this was because she knew she could get a taxi from outside of the university buildings and usually there were staff around the buildings. Nicola, however,

discussed her feelings of safety and linked this to the self-protection strategies which she employed to avoid harassment:

> *When I'm walking on the university campus there's always young men, there's always groups of men and I don't feel comfortable or safe around them ever. Like, to be honest no, it doesn't feel safe and then I alter my behaviour… I just like walk faster or I'll be like hyper aware. Like if I hear a noise, I'll be like uhh, or if I see someone behind me, I'm like, why are they behind me? It's weird like I read years ago that if like you jingle your keys around you are less likely to get attacked.*

Some of the interviewees, therefore, highlighted strategies which they undertook in order to feel safe and to try to avoid sexual harassment and violence. This, at times, meant avoiding certain locations and at times adopting particular behaviours, such as Nicola jingling her keys. These strategies were noted by Stanko (1995) and have been conceptualised by Kelly (2013) as 'safety work', that is, the planning that women and girls undertake in order to avoid men's violence. Vera-Gray (2018: 11) also notes this habitual 'safety work', when considered alongside responsibilising safety advice for women, is 'not so much a choice, [its] just "what you do"'.

The educational impact

Participants' experiences also impacted directly upon their education. For Sara, the person who abused her was not only someone she lived with, but he was also on the same course as her. As the incident took place towards the end of her second year of university, and before the summer break, Sara felt that she had *'had enough time to digest it'*, which reduced, to some extent, the impact upon her studies. However, she was regularly in the same room as her abuser in the course of her studies:

> *Today was the first time I spoke to him which is weird because like I've seen him before obviously around uni and every time I've seen him my heart just*

goes like du du du du du. I just don't know, I'm like oh my god kind of thing or I'll just like lose my breath when I see him.

Heidi changed her course as a result of her experiences. The friends she had made at the beginning of university were from her course, and these were the people who were with her when she was raped. She had fallen out with these friends since, as a result of them leaving her at the bar that she was in when she was raped. This is discussed in more detail below. She also, at that time, was studying a subject which meant she would regularly encounter discussions and work on sexual violence and, for these reasons, she changed her course. Moreover, she noted that her attendance significantly decreased, as she had become reclusive. However, her grades increased as she threw herself into work as a distraction and as a way of coping with what had happened:

> *[T]he effect it had on me that I was becoming obsessed, no one would notice at all that anything had happened because actually my grades were going up. So they wouldn't have noticed any difference because, I mean my attendance went down but my grades went up.*

Audrey also discussed the difficulties of studying modules which covered issues around sexual violence:

> *There were times where I'd walk out of class crying and stuff like that and just break down in tears and stuff in these lectures and things like that. So there was a lot of time where I couldn't actually attend the lectures if I knew they were about that kind of thing…. I purposely avoided the essay questions that were about that subject as well.*

The anxiety and depression that Audrey experienced meant that she repeated her final year of university. She lacked motivation to get up, go to university and do her work and was dealing with PTSD. It was during her third year that the person who

raped her was sent to prison. The culmination of these issues, alongside her feelings of guilt for sending someone who was a father to prison, resulted in her repeating her final year:

> [I]t was in my third year that he actually got sent to prison so it was dealing with the guilt of sending somebody to prison […], I was kind of dealing with that and then dealing with obviously PTSD and stuff like that, it really kicked in in my third year.

The impact on relationships

Sara and Meredith both discussed the way in which their experiences had affected subsequent personal relationships. For Sara, the person who abused her was the issue as he was someone she was close to and someone she had feelings for:

> I think it's hard as well because he was such a good friend. Like when I said about that guy [someone she had previously been dating], like it never became anything. It was supposed to become something but because like I have the same kind of trust with him that I had with [the person who abused her], I couldn't go near him.

Meredith's subsequent relationships were also affected following her experiences:

> [I]t probably has had an effect on like new relationships and that because I like, I've never just jumped into bed with someone, but I probably take so much longer now to have like a physical relationship with someone than I probably would have beforehand.

Sara, Heidi and Audrey all discussed the impact of their experiences upon their friendships. Sara lost her friendships with most of the people she was living with, excluding one, as they believed her abuser, rather than her. This is explored in more detail later in the chapter in relation to reporting and disclosing. Moreover, she lost

friends on her course, which he was also on, as they shared friends and she did not want to spend time with him. Heidi also lost the friends she had made on her course as they had left the bar that she was in on the night she was raped, and she did not want to remain friends with them. Audrey was no longer friends with the people she previously lived with for a range of reasons:

> [W]e really drifted apart because obviously I wasn't going on nights out with them anymore. I was staying in my room kind of thing. We didn't actually have that kind of bond anymore and I always blamed them for what happened because obviously they weren't looking out for everyone and they didn't know where I was, they had gone off without me realising where they were and stuff like that.

The environment in the house which they shared became increasingly hostile as her housemates would not clean up their mess and then go out in the evening and leave her at home alone in the messy house. She felt that they did not understand the position she was in and she did not know how to talk to them which culminated in her moving into a studio flat. Furthermore, she stated that she did not have many friends during her second year of university, increasing her social isolation further.

The differential impact of sexual violence

It was clear that the impact of sexual violence was different for each interviewee. Audrey also stated that the impact of the violence had changed over time. At first, she was in denial and would not talk to anyone about her experiences, and felt ashamed, but, despite some lasting physical, mental and emotional impacts, she was open about her experiences and now, '*if anyone wants to ask me about anything, then I'm the first person to sort of give that advice and help and stuff to people'.*

Meredith discussed the ways in which, despite the fact that she had experienced several unwanted sexual behaviours, it did not have an impact on her everyday life:

> *Obviously my experiences, I would say, aren't that bad probably in comparison to other people's, but that's just because that is how I feel about it. Someone else might have the same experience and think it's the worst thing that's ever happened.*

Meredith generally viewed her experiences as negative, but not serious. Kelly (1998) argues that minimising incidents of sexual violence can be considered a coping strategy in that it alleviates pressure to respond to an incident in a certain way which may be more difficult. In line with this, Meredith pointed out that her experiences probably impacted on her in ways which she did not know or realise, but because she had so much to concentrate on, with university and work and other aspects of her life, she did not have time to think about how it had really impacted on her.

Taken together, the harms of participants experiences of sexual violence are multiple and extend beyond the incident itself, in some cases for years after. There were some direct effects of experiences, for example, PTSD. Moreover, the fear and concern for safety that participants experienced as a result of sexual violence, had a further impact, through affecting their choices of places they chose to avoid, the times in which they would leave their home and, generally, their development of safety strategies. These findings, therefore, relate to Cahill's (2000) point, as discussed in Chapter Two, that the disciplinary strategies women undertake reflect the potential for harm to be inflicted by others and that, in certain spaces, women's bodies are perceived as being in danger of being violated. The incidents, and the effects which followed, ultimately had the impact of altering participants' behaviours, movements, choices, and relations with others. They, moreover, reflect the 'ripples' (Buffachi and Gilson, 2016: 27) of

harm which stem from experiences of sexual violence, as discussed further in Chapter Seven.

Reporting and disclosure

The interviewees provided a range of reasons as to why they did or did not report or disclose their experience(s). Whilst the majority of incidents were disclosed to friends or family members, only one incident was reported, through the formal (police or university) routes. This section will firstly explore the reasons for reporting/disclosure, or non-reporting/disclosure, in relation to various potential routes, and will then discuss, for those who did utilise these routes, their experiences of reporting and/or disclosure.

Reasons for/ for not reporting/disclosing

Audrey was the only participant who reported her experience to the police. She did not give a reason as to why she did report the incident, but the police were involved very quickly after she was raped as a passer-by ran to a nearby police car. Audrey's experience was the one that aligned most closely with the stereotype of 'real rape' as highlighted by Estrich (1987), in that the attacker was a stranger, he was not white and Audrey was, it took place outside and down a dark lane. This potentially explains the reason this report was taken forward as Du Mont et al. (2003) found that those incidents which conformed more to the 'real rape' myth, were more likely to be reported to the police resulting in action being taken by the state.

No other participants reported their experiences to the police. Discussing why she chose not to, Sara stated:

> *It's not like I've been tied up and like I've had bruises, or I've had marks*

Sara's reasoning reflects the medical discourse outlined in Chapter Two whereby dominant discourses construct the 'typical' bodily signs of rape (Lees, 1997:84). Therefore, whilst as Audrey's case which reflected dominant discourses of real rape was reported, Sara's case, which did not conform to these discourses was outlined as the reason why she chose not to report. Experiences of sexual violence, therefore, when understood through these dominant discourses, can affect the levels of reporting.

Heidi also stated that she did not report the incident because she thought the police would not believe her, particularly as she was drunk at the time. She questioned what could be gained from '*the gruelling process of the criminal justice system*' when there was no forensic or CCTV evidence and she did not remember what he looked like as she was in and out of consciousness at the time. For these reasons, once she had left hospital following her assault, rather than reporting or disclosing the incident to anyone, she said:

> *So I just had a shower and got on with it.*

As also found in the survey, none of the participants reported their incident to the university. Heidi stated that one of the reasons that she did not choose this route was because:

> *[A]t the time I didn't think it was their responsibility, so I didn't report to the university. Because who would I report it to anyway?*

Heidi chose not to report her abuse to the university because, in part, she did not know how to go about this process but also, because she did not think at the time that it was their responsibility. Sara also chose not to report her experiences to the university.

Although she did not have knowledge about how, or if she could start this process, she thought that, regardless of whether it was available or not, this was still not a route that she would have taken:

> *It's just a waste of time, a complete waste of money and a waste of time, waste of everything. But if I did go, and something did happen, then I'd probably not want to go [in] to uni anyway because I feel that if [it was then blamed on me], which I think it probably would because there's more of him, like in his group than there is me [...] It wouldn't be a comfortable situation for me to be in uni.*

She, therefore, did not want to report anything to the university in case her friendship group found out that she was the one making the report. She was worried she would lose friends and she thought that she would be blamed which, as discussed below, when her friends found out, she was blamed and criticised.

In relation to university student support available, a variety of reasons were given as to why the participants chose not to access these services. Sara did not access the university counselling service following the incident because she had previously accessed these services for mental health support and had not found them helpful:

> *I went to the wellbeing services to see if I can have counselling and there was a wait, but then I got counselling and then I forgot to go to the session. Because I had that one first session, well I'd booked it when I was down here and I was on the verge of starting like, like I was thinking about self-harm and like really negative thoughts. So I booked it and then when it actually came to my first session, it wasn't that bad like at all.*

She was also not sure about the level of confidentiality offered and did not want the person who abused her to get into trouble, or for other people on her course to find out what had happened. Furthermore, the layout of the support services proved to be a barrier to her accessing the service. As the financial support, and various other

services, were all situated in the same area, with the same waiting room, she did not feel comfortable accessing the support service:

> *So if I was to go, then someone was to accidentally walk in or could hear from the outside or something like that, like I don't want… It's just not something that I would trust as much as something else I think.*

In relation to external specialist services, Sara stated that the reasons she did not access these services was that she did not think it was serious enough to report and that it took her some time to realise that what had occurred was not consensual:

> *I didn't know anything and I didn't want to look for anything because in my mind it's not something that serious enough to go like […] at the beginning I didn't know that I wanted to go and speak about it. And I think like my Mum made me realise like, ok it wasn't consensual or what have you, it was kind of like, in my mind, it was too late then anyway because it had passed.*

Most of the incidents were disclosed to at least one friend or family member. In relation to one incident, Meredith had only ever told one person prior to her interview. She had lost her friend on an evening out, in another city, and went back to a hotel with people who had offered her somewhere to sleep as she had been left alone. She woke up to find someone touching her, as she described, *'seedily'.* She did not tell her mother, someone who she said she told everything to, because this was not something she felt comfortable talking to her about. Furthermore:

> *I didn't really speak to anyone because like, I had a boyfriend at the time so it was like, I didn't speak to him about it because it was like I didn't really want to be, he would have been like why have you gone back to a hotel with all the lads?*

Meredith's discussion highlights some of the barriers to informal disclosure to friends and family such as feeling embarrassed, being unable to talk about the particular issues and nature of sexual violence, and potentially feeling guilty, or in part being responsible for what occurred.

The experience of reporting/disclosing

Audrey was the only participant who reported what had happened to the police and, at the time of the interview, the perpetrator was in prison. Following the initial report, Audrey persisted with a long, difficult police, Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and court process. Firstly, it should be noted that she spoke very positively about the specialist police officer, from the sex crimes unit, that was assigned to her case. She felt this woman believed her, supported her, knew how to deal with the situation and overall*, 'did an amazing job[…] and was faultless'*. Beyond this, however, the criminal justice process more broadly was difficult, long and in the end, it was the negative impact of this process which meant she repeated her final year at university. Audrey's frustrations with the process were that, despite the case being '*clear cut',* it took almost two years for her attacker to be prosecuted:

> *[The attacker was found by the police] 20 minutes after the assault and taking that long [between 18 and 24 months] to actually getting put into prison, there was no closure for me. He was out on bail for well over a year while the police tried to sort this investigation out which [both Audrey and her specialist police officer thought] was clear cut.*

The police had her attacker's DNA evidence taken from Audrey and Audrey's DNA taken from him, despite his denial that he was in the area at the time. Audrey was shown images of eight or nine different men and identified him within seconds. The police also had eyewitnesses who were in the area when she was assaulted. She was

given several reasons for the delays. At first, it took three months for photo identification as the police needed to find, and include in the identification, men of the same ethnicity as the person who assaulted her. The process was further delayed at the original trial as an interpreter had not been hired and her attacker said that he did not speak English, despite speaking English to her on the night. The trial was again postponed when he pleaded not guilty and then failed to attend the next court date, postponing it further. He then pleaded guilty two days before the next court date, but sentencing did not occur until three months after this plea. Audrey, therefore, was back and forwards to court for over a year. She discussed this experience, and how it impacted on her:

> *I was like really kind of set up for the trial and stuff like that and I'd got myself into a position where I felt strong enough to give evidence and stuff like that in court. Then two days before the court date he pleaded guilty and that was like a massive blow to me because I was ready… well I had as good as given evidence at that point because I'd already been through like… been to court and stuff like that and had a look around. I knew what I was going to say, I knew the kind of questions they were going to ask me and stuff like that, so I had built myself up to do it. But then to be told 'no, you're not going to do it now' and then he actually got a percentage of his erm sentence knocked off for an early guilty plea and I was just like, well it was two days before the trial was supposed to take place, why are you knocking his sentence down?*

Audrey was not only unhappy with the criminal justice process, but she also struggled with the eventual result when he was sent to prison. She felt guilty sending him to prison as she had found out that he was a father of young children. This was a large part of the reason she repeated her final year at university:

> *[I]t was kind of in my third year that he actually got like sent to prison so it was dealing with the guilt of sending somebody to prison who I found out actually*

> *was a dad, I saw on Facebook. Like his kids are like missing out on [their] dad kind of like growing up, well them growing up kind of thing for a couple of years.*

Audrey was also the only participant who accessed internal support services at the university in relation to sexual violence. She had a few counselling sessions, with two different counsellors, but did not think that they were specialised enough to help her deal with her experiences. The first counsellor listened, but she wanted advice and coping mechanisms to help her move forward. She then spoke to a contact at the university support services and was given another counsellor but felt that they '*did not click'* so she stopped using these services:

> *I do think that they really did need a little bit more kind of training, like specifically in sexual assault and rape and things like that because obviously it's a big issue among students and I don't know how many other students have come to them with these kinds of issues and they have been dealt with, but it just didn't really work with me.*

As noted above, none of the other participants chose to access the internal student support services. Both Sara and Audrey, however, spoke to academic staff, such as personal tutors, with very different experiences. Sara was studying the same subject as the person who abused her and shared lectures, seminars and workshops with him. Whilst she felt able to continue her studies with him on the same course, in the final year, students were put into groups for an assessment based on the topic they chose. She disclosed her experience to her lecturer as she wanted to ensure she would not be in the same group as her attacker. This tutor was somebody who Sara had previously spoken to about her depression and was somebody that she felt that she could speak to about this incident. When she spoke to her tutor:

She was like well you shouldn't have told his girlfriend[…] and she didn't say it in as many words but she kind of was like brushing off the fact that I was saying that it wasn't consensual and using the kind of, well you were drunk so that kind of thing, like excusing it.

This experience led to her blaming herself further for what had occurred. As the person who abused her had a girlfriend, and someone she had feelings for, she regularly described what happened as 'cheating'. Because she consented to a kiss and felt she was verbally pressured into oral sex, and because she felt like she could have done more to resist the physical force he later used, she went through a period of blaming herself for what had happened. Although, after she was abused, she had time over the summer period to process what had happened, this experience with her personal tutor meant the feelings of guilt and shame resurfaced:

She was like you're the one whose done something wrong at the end of the day and I was like, I know I have because I've slept with someone who I know was full well in a relationship but she kind of just like excused it all and then I went out feeling a lot worse than… speaking to someone made me actually feel a lot worse for it.

Audrey, however, had a very different experience and was grateful for the support offered to her by her personal tutor. She spoke to him about what had happened and had worked closely with him over the previous three years. He had given her help and time when she needed it and liaised with other tutors to negotiate extensions in her work:

He's been amazing as well through it […] [W]henever I needed any help like he would always see me as soon as he could and like have meetings with me and like work with me to do… well to give me the best chance that I could at university kind of thing.

In relation to external specialist services, Audrey was the only person who utilised these. Audrey accessed the local Rape Crisis Service but had issues with the fact that she was seen by a trainee counsellor:

> *So I felt like I was almost a guinea pig for them rather than actually wanting to help with like…It's hard to explain, it's like, when you're in that position, you need proper help. You don't want to be teaching somebody like how to do their job and things like that. So that was it from Rape Crisis, it put me off from using them.*

Audrey was hoping for help with coping mechanisms and actionable advice from the various services she accessed in order to help her move forward. She had contacted Victim Support and was told that this was something that they would be able to help her with. However:

> *[I]t was in [place outside of city] … but I didn't have a car and it was in [place outside of the city] which was like a massive hassle for me to like come down from [where she lived] and get the train to [place where victim support was].*

All of the participants discussed their experiences of disclosing incidents to friends and family members, again, with varied responses and levels of satisfaction with these responses. Meredith spoke of the time she was deceived into going back to someone's house, was locked in the room and the person then attempted to pressure her into sexual activity before she was verbally abused for not doing so. She then discussed the different reactions from friends:

> *[H]alf me mates would be like oh that's so funny and err whereas half me mates would be like no that's wrong.*

Meredith's course was in the social sciences, which covered various issues relating to gender-based violence and feminism, which many of her friends also studied. Heidi

and Nicola also disclosed their experiences to friends who were on their courses, within the social sciences, and the positive experiences they drew from these disclosures. They were also both members of the feminist society and were active in the area of contesting sexual violence on campus and more broadly. For Heidi:

> *All of my friends are feminists and actually and […] I wouldn't have told people if I didn't think they would believe me.*

For Nicola:

> *Oh yeah [my friends are] completely supportive but… I wouldn't have told anyone when I was younger. But now I've got like good friends who are like feminists.*

Nicola indicated that this supportive response from friends was in contrast to the experiences she had with other friends, when she was younger, who would question why she complained about unwanted sexual behaviours and comments.

In contrast to Heidi and Nicola's experiences of disclosing to friends, the person who abused Sara denied the incident which resulted in all of her housemates, apart from one, no longer talking to her as they did not believe her. Sara did have one friend within the group who believed her. This friend also no longer spoke to the group and had been supportive of Sara since the incident.

Audrey came from a care background. Her mother had passed away before she came to university and her father had been ill for some time. In terms of family, Audrey told her brother about the incident. He did not believe what she had told him and, at the time of the interview, three years after this, they still did not speak as he thought she was lying. Other than family, as discussed earlier, Audrey struggled with the friends

that she lived with, and who she was out with on the night that she was raped, as she believed they did not know how to help her or support her with what she was dealing with. However, at the time of the interview, she did have a supportive partner, who was aware of what had occurred, and tried to help her with her PTSD and anxiety stemming from the incident.

All of the interviewees provided a number of reasons as to why they chose to, or chose not to, report or disclose their experiences. In some cases, this was related to previous negative disclosure experiences, sometimes it was due to preconceived ideas as to credibility and whether they would be believed or not. Some participants chose not to report because they did not think that what they had experienced was serious enough to warrant a report, or potentially that it would not be perceived as serious enough. Across all avenues for reporting and disclosure explored in the interviews, the interviewees experienced a range of positive and negative responses. Ultimately, the participants' experiences demonstrate that, the response which is received following a report or disclosure is key and has the potential to further negatively impact upon participants.

The context in which the interviewees experienced these incidents and impacts, and in which they made decisions to report, or not, is considered in the next section.

The Context of Men's Violence at University

This section explores the context, highlighted and described by participants, in which the violence they experienced occurred. This context is, at times, specific to the university, or universities, but also, at times, discussed or alluded to in relation to the broader environment outside of the university.

Some participants either directly named or alluded to the concept of 'lad culture', a concept which was noted in Chapter One, and has become a central issue in debates in this area (Jackson and Sundaram, 2015; NUS, 2012; Phipps and Young, 2015a; Phipps and Young, 2015b; Phipps et al., 2018). Some participants either problematised heteronormative constructions of masculinity and femininity, and the sexual expectations inherent within these constructions, or, used this language indirectly when discussing and making sense of their own, as well as their friends', experiences. These participants, therefore, discussed their involvement in the feminist society, and for some, their education in the social sciences as having a positive impact and created a space for them to resist the context they outlined. Interviewees also described their multiple experiences of harassment and violence within this context. This section also explores participants' identities in relation to their experiences, and how they identified their gender and sexual orientation as key factors in their experiences.

Biology, masculinity, femininity and sexual expectations

Sara regularly drew upon stereotypical constructions of masculinity and femininity to make sense of the various experiences she, and her friends, had as students.

> *So it's like, there's all these things now, there is these 'fuckboy' things to do. So emotionally for girls it's a lot because* we're different breeds almost, *like boys are completely detached, it's very rare you'll find an attached boy. (emphasis added)*

Following this discussion, in which she drew a potentially biological and innate distinction between men and women, and their approach to sex and relationships, she talked about a number of occasions where she was pressured into sexual activity. On one occasion, where she had had consensual sex the previous evening, she was

pressured into sexual activity the next morning and described this experience in relation to what she perceived as a broader issue with men's understanding of consent:

> *[T]hey do it without realising because of sex cultures, I think. They think it's cool to just like shag birds and then send them off on their way and it's not. It's really taking apart from like love making and having sex and boys don't realise that having sex is both parts consenting to it, rather than I've got you in my room and I'm going to fuck you kind of thing.*

Sara therefore drew upon gendered stereotypes, as well as highlighting the importance of the social context. Biological discourses were also drawn upon by Sara's friend. When Sara disclosed to her that she was abused by their mutual friend, an experience which they both described as him cheating on his girlfriend:

> *She was like, well he's not the kind of person you'd expect to cheat on a girlfriend, but I can understand him doing that because he's got a very high sex drive and he's very flirtatious so… without meaning to be.*

Chapter Two highlighted dominant discourses on sexuality and, in line with Hollway's 1984) outline of the male sexual drive discourse, Sara and her friend framed this person's sex drive as the reason for, or at least contributing to, the incident. This was linked to broader, heteronormative constructions of masculinity and an innate biological need for sex. In relation to this, research by End Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAW, 2019a) found that 32% of those surveyed believed men need sex more than women, compared to 1% believing the opposite. Furthermore, EVAW (2019a) found that, among 18-24 year olds, 25% believed having sex was a mutual decision, with 50% believing it is up to the man to decide. The language used by Sara, moreover, highlighted men as active, and women as sexual gatekeepers. For

example, Sara discussed her friend who had been abused as a child, and the effects this had on her current relationship:

> *She's obviously not ok, it's obviously a long-term thing that she can't let someone that she loves have sex with her.*

Through her choice of language, Sara framed her friend as a sexual gatekeeper, as allowing or not allowing her partner to have sex with her. In relation to heterosexual sex, the Director of EVAW stated, the results of the previously mentioned survey conducted by EVAW (2019a) matter, because 'putting all the responsibility on women for preventing and 'gatekeeping' sex – rather than on the man for seeking consent and also working towards enjoyable experiences for both – then at best our aspirations are poor, and at worst we create a set of readymade excuses for sexual assault' (EVAW, 2019b).

Sara, and other participants, described various incidents in which they persistently had to say no to sex to someone which sometimes resulted in the other person desisting and other times not. Meredith and Nicola, furthermore, discussed the perceived expectations upon them from men who would expect to have sex if they were in that person's bed, or bedroom, or if they had previously seemed interested in that person. Meredith discussed the time that she was deceived into going back to a fellow student's house, then his bedroom:

> *It was just like surreal, like a surreal experience and I was like no, not really, I'd just like to go home. He was like 'why, why, you knew you were coming back to mine, you wanted to come back to mine' and I was like 'no, like I thought I was getting a taxi home'.*

Moreover, Nicola stated that she would no longer feel comfortable living in student halls with men that she did not know. This was due to what she perceived as expectations on women:

> I think it's also like an expectation when you're in halls, when you're like on campus or not on campus that like a lot of sexual activity is going to go on and that like… so like if you were to invite someone home with you after a party at your house, that you, like it's an instant kind of idea that you're going to sleep with them, so then the man expects that… and then like pushes for it… and I think that… well that is sexual harassment.

Again, therefore, discourses around sex and expectations placed upon women proved relevant to the participants experiences. Not only were such discourses, as outlined in Chapter Two, reflected in the participants experiences but they affected the choices participants made in order to avoid these behaviours, such as Nicola choosing not to live in student halls.

Minimising and contesting 'normal' violence at university

Although the participants contested the idea that sexual violence was acceptable behaviour, they noted that it was often normalised in its nature, frequency and the response to it. This was particularly pointed out by Meredith who described multiple incidents of verbal harassment and unwanted touching:

> But there's loads of occasions like, there's been loads of occasions where I've been in town with like my lad mates and they've touched me up in town and like, that was normal for my mates to do that.

Furthermore:

> I've been in town and I've had like a dress on and a lad has just put his hand up my dress, like that is just the standard.

Sara spoke to the person who abused her and told him that what had occurred was not consensual and he responded with his interpretation that it was drunken sex:

> *Before he denied the whole situation, he was like oh, it was just sex though. Like but it wasn't because I was saying no, I didn't want that to occur but that's not wrong or as wrong in his eyes because boys don't have that understanding.*

The person who abused Sara, therefore, recast her experience of the incident, constructing her as having not understood the situation and that what had occurred was consensual, despite Sara's contestation of this.

As discussed above, one of the incidents which Meredith recalled was waking up to someone she had met that evening touching her 'seedily'. This was in another city to the one in which she lived. However, she later found out that he attended the same university when she saw him in the library. Meredith described her frustration with the fact that, when she saw him on her campus for the first time, he acted like nothing bad or negative had happened:

> *But then, the thing of the story was, that was the horrible experience but then, I was in the library and he was from (another city), the lad, and I had met him in (a different city), and I seen him in the library didn't I? I was just like are you actually messing? Then he walked over and he was like are you alright? I was just like are you really like having a conversation with me? Like this is not… so I just got up and left.*

The range of sexual violence which participants had experienced was often perceived as normal by the men who carried out those behaviours. At times, participants were surprised or frustrated by this. At other times, despite contesting the idea, they described these behaviours as 'normal'.

Participants, at times, contextualised their experiences, and these behaviours, as part of the culture of university and the freedom that comes with starting university, as well as drawing upon the concept of 'lad culture' and banter. Some interviewees presented this as particularly problematic within 'freshers' week' and 'freshers' fortnight' activities. Meredith discussed freshers' week as she believed, as well as Heidi, that a range of non-consensual behaviours occur during this time:

> *It happens; I think it happens quite a lot in freshers' though. I'd say more so because everyone is trying to get to know one another and no one wants to seem like antisocial. No one wants to seem boring, so everyone is like having drinks and drinking lots and like wanting to like go out with new people.*

Heidi, as noted above, was raped twice during 'freshers' fortnight' in her first year of study discussed the impact of this time of year, and her status as a new student. She described how after these incidents occurred, she did not disclose or report them to anyone at first because:

> *You'll do anything to fit in somewhere you've never been before. So you brush aside things that happened that you wouldn't usually, because you think you don't really want to draw attention to yourself.*

Freshers' week also led to discussions about the perceived culture at university in which violence takes place, alongside the broader sociocultural context outside of the university. Meredith highlighted the problems with 'banter' and how it is often sexist. Discussing fellow students' use of the word 'slag', she said:

> *It's just sort of normalised through using words like that. Like if the lad calls you it, it's meant to be like a bit of a joke, do you know what I mean?... I think it's also like joining in on the joke […] The one I hate is like banter.*

Meredith highlighted 'banter' as a way in which the negative impacts of sexist language and behaviours minimised their seriousness, a connection which, as noted in Chapter One, is also made in discussions of 'lad culture' at university. The sexist joke, within this context, is not the problem, but instead, signals the lack of 'banter' on the women's part, a point also noted by Phipps and Young (2015b). Meredith went on to recall a time when she went to a university job fair where a representative for a recruitment firm approached her to discuss her future employment prospects. During the discussion, Meredith recalled this interaction:

> *He was like, 'do you fancy a job in recruitment?' And I was like 'oh I'm not really sure', and he was like 'well the money is good' blah blah, 'but you've got to be able to handle like office banter'. I was like, 'what's office banter?' He was like, 'oh it's a bit sexist and it's a bit playful' and things like that and I was just like, 'why is it like that?' But I don't think he expected me to be like, 'oh why is it like that'… and he was like, 'it just sort of is, do you think you can handle it?' And I was like 'well there's laws in place so that I don't have to'. He was just like 'haha, you definitely can't handle it then'.*

Meredith thought that the word 'banter' was used to hide the sexism of the behaviour. Moreover, Nicola stated that she often heard from her friends about sexual harassment taking place in student halls of residence. Nicola and Heidi linked incidents of harassment and sexual violence to the culture at university, but then situated this within the broader culture in society. For Heidi:

> *It doesn't happen as an isolated incident inside the university institution. It happens because rape exists in the university, and the university exists within the greater culture.*

Nicola also linked the university and broader culture. However she thought that there were particular issues with the university:

> *I think that [the university] is an amplified kind of space of sexual violence because of the kind of culture that exists in universities. So obviously we live in a culture where rape and sexual violence is already prevalent. But within the university setting erm, it's more amplified too. Things like lad culture and erm binge drinking and obviously the culture around alcohol consumption, things like that.*

Importantly, some participants noted the way in which they resisted these issues. Nicola, Meredith and Heidi were involved at some point in a form of research or activism which challenged the culture in which the sexual violence occurred and were also involved at some point with their university feminist society. All three spoke about the positive impact of this involvement, as well as their education in the social sciences. These participants experiences echoed a point made by hooks (1991: 2), that 'when lived experience of theorizing is fundamentally linked to processes of self-recovery, of collective liberation, no gap exists between theory and practice'. Heidi felt that it was being part of a feminist community which meant she was able to tell these friends about her experiences and, as they were feminists, their response and reaction was positive. Nicola drew upon the course she studied, and her integration into the feminist community at university to highlight the fact that she no longer accepted certain behaviours as 'normal':

> *So at this point in my life, because of my like feminist consciousness, I know that I'm not an object for consumption by men. So that makes me then say, 'why does he feel that I'm available to touch when I'm just in the same space as him?' Erm but when I was younger, I would have been like, 'oh well that's just what happens' but now, but now I see this as a problem.*

Overall, all of the participants contested the normalisation and acceptance of sexual violence in a range of ways. Resistance, for some, was related to their feminism, their developing education, language and articulation around the issues and their university

education. Through taking part in an interview, taking their case through the criminal justice process, supporting friends, joining or creating campaigns through the feminist society and being vocal about their experiences or the nature of sexual violence, participants resisted what some described as the normalisation of these behaviours in the context of the university.

When making sense of their various experiences, participants often drew upon a broad range of attitudes, beliefs and behaviours, not just those they classified, legally, as the most 'serious'. They spoke about experiences of harassment, intimidation, verbal abuse and harassment in relation to their sexuality, sexist comments made by university staff members and male students lying to pressure participants into sexual activity. These behaviours were often experienced by more than one participant, and multiple times by some participants.

A continuum of sexual violence

Interviewees described a range of verbally, emotionally, sexually and physically abusive behaviours both directed at themselves and incidents that they either witnessed, or were told about by friends. Meredith, Heidi and Nicola, in particular, drew upon wider experiences of several forms of violence, rather than focusing upon one incident. Meredith discussed a range of incidents:

> *Like I've been in the library and lads have gone like you fucking slag and I don't even know them, and I think that they don't know me. They don't know me at all and things like, like one… I think I was in like first year and I was with me mate and this lad was sat behind us with like a few of his mates and he was going like, anyone of you basically give me a blow job and all things like that.*

As highlighted in Meredith's profile above, she was deceived into going back to a fellow student's house, and he persistently tried to pressure her into sexual activity. When she continued to say no, he said, *'I thought you would like the attention because you're a fat bitch'*. Despite continuing to say no:

> *He kept like touching me and like trying to kiss me and that and in the end I, because I was having literally none of it, he was like 'you fucking'… he like threw money at me and was like 'fuck off home'.*

She perceived situations like this as normalised and she thought they happened to many women. She also described a situation with a male friend where he told her about verbally, sexually harassing a student on his course, and she was surprised with the ease with which he told her this:

> *[H]e was saying to me like 'oh I said to this girl, do you want to come to ours later' like blah blah and like, oh I don't even know if I can say this, its too horrible. I don't even know if I can actually get the words to come out, he basically said 'I'm going to do anal sex', but he didn't put it in that way. I was just looking at him like, 'like are you seeing her? Are you dating her?' 'No no I just think she's fit' and I was like, I said, 'When did you ask her?' and he was like, 'just in class'. I was like, 'with other people there?' and he was like 'yeah, yeah'. Like that was like normal, like that was something that just happens every day.*

Heidi had experienced two incidents of rape and noted, '*I have six close female friends, and out of six, five of them have been sexually assaulted or raped whilst at university*'. Audrey also stated: '*I know personally like three or four other people who I'm good friends with that it happened with, probably even more than that actually*'. Heidi saw this violence as linked to sexism more broadly, particularly within the university. She pointed out that the behaviour of staff within the university contributed to this sexism:

> *In one of the lectures we were doing about rape and the criminal law and they were talking about like drunken consent and erm, the lecturer said […] he turned around and he said 'well you can't criminalise regret'.*

Not only did Heidi disagree with her lecturer speaking in this manner but, after he said this, she described how she then went through a self-blame process in response to her own experiences:

> *So then in my head I went through this kind of self-blame process of thinking oh am I just saying that this is what happened to me because I regret it or I wish I hadn't done it because I have just come to uni.*

Nicola discussed the fact that she did not always feel safe on the university campus and beyond this, in the wider city. This was related to the intimidating behaviours she saw and experienced on various occasions:

> *So I've watched a man literally like stare at a woman the whole way that she has walked past him and then made a comment to his friends on the university campus and that's intimidating.*

In the library:

> *There was a video going around and it was like […] something like punch her in the pussy or something. […] and this lad next to me shouted about punching someone in the vagina and I'm in the library as we are studying and he's talking about it over and over and over again and I had to say to him, 'can you stop'.*

The experiences Nicola outlined highlight the ways in which sexual violence does not need to be directed at someone for them to feel the effects of that behaviour. Nicola also described that, in a previous relationship, her ex-partner tried *'to get me drunk and then he like forced me to have sex with him'*. Drawing on her own experiences, she thought that men tried to *'emotionally coerce you into letting them stay [in your*

house], so that they can then like push the boundary further…oh let me just get in the bed with you, oh let me just cuddle you until like they try to have sex with you'.

Nicola experienced a broad range of behaviours which she identified as sexual violence and/or harassment and moreover, her personal experiences also often related to her sexuality. During one incident, she went outside of a bar and asked someone for a lighter. He then tried to put his arm around her, she pushed him away and then he said to her, *'you don't like boys, do you?'* After this:

> *His friend said he just got out of court today and I said 'oh, what have you done?' Expecting it to be like 'oh I didn't pay my council tax' whatever and he turned around and went, 'I raped a lesbian' […] I was so shocked and he kept saying it over and over again and I was like 'why are you saying this?' I tried to walk away from him, and he kept following me.*

Nicola described how her sexuality had changed over the previous few years and how this impacted upon the harassment she experienced. The harassment which related to her sexuality was based upon the assumption by others that she was a lesbian, drawn from stereotypes. In discussing this, she stated that she '*present[s] as a lesbian'.* She said, '*I present in a way that I look like I'm making an effort to be less physically attractive to men, which I am in a way because I don't care'.* This 'presentation', however, was not always the case, and Nicola described the way that harassment based on her appearance changed:

> *I would get harassed, previously, for being feminine. They would see that and they would [think] 'oh she's sexually available' and then they would harass me then, but now, I get more harassed for not being available to them. So men will make sexual comments towards us [Nicola and her girlfriend], about how we are women together.*

Participants identified a range of behaviours as violent or harmful. Such incidents did not necessarily fit into legal definitions of the 'most serious' or the 'most harmful' but were identified as such by these participants.

Whilst participants contextualised their experiences in line with the culture at university, the connections were also made to society more generally. Nicola, discussing these connections stated:

> *I think it's an amplified space of sexual violence because of the kind of culture that exists in universities. So obviously we live in a culture where rape and sexual violence is already prevalent but within the university setting, its more amplified with things like lad culture and binge drinking and the culture around alcohol consumption.*

Overall, participants' experiences have demonstrated the relevance of the context of sexual violence at university and the need for further exploration into this context, as well as the need to make connections between the issues inside and outside of the university. Dominant discourses around male and female sexuality, 'normal' university life in relation to sex and alcohol, and 'banter', whilst at times contested, contribute to the multiple and everyday incidents of sexual violence experienced by the participants.

Conclusion

This chapter has described and explored a range of behaviours relating to sexual violence, harassment, misconduct and sexism experienced by the five participants. The broad range of effects that these experiences had on participants were considered and explored alongside participants' experiences and decision making processes in relation to reporting and disclosing. Constructed from the perspective of the participants, the social and cultural context of the university in which these experiences occurred, as well as the broader societal context, was critically analysed.

The next chapter presents findings from interviews with five stakeholders who were responsible, in various ways, for preventing and responding to sexual violence on campus.

Chapter 6: 'If You Want to Think of the University as a Business, the Very Least You Could Do is Provide the Services for your Students': Findings from interviews with stakeholders

Introduction

The previous chapter explored the findings from interviews with students who had experienced sexual violence whilst studying at university. This chapter explores the role of stakeholders who were responsible for responding to incidents of sexual violence, supporting students, developing policies and/or working broadly in the area of prevention and campaigning. The chapter begins with an overview of the participants and moves on to discuss a number of themes identified in the data in three key areas; the experience of sexual violence, the university's response, and ongoing issues.

Overview of Stakeholder Participants

Name of Participant	Overview of role
Joanna	Joanna was an undergraduate student at the university at the time of the interview. She played a leadership role in the Feminist Society and, therefore, took part in, and organised, a range of campaigns in relation to the issue of sexual violence affecting university students.
Elizabeth	Elizabeth played a leadership role in student support services at the university. She coordinated and managed a range of work which involved responding to incidents of sexual violence. Her role involved working with the counselling and mental wellbeing team, the disability team, accommodation team, as well as many others. She also worked in the area of student safety in the university and wider city.
Kristin	Kristin was a counsellor in the university counselling team and had been in that position for 6 years. She previously worked for a Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC).

Angela	Angela worked in policy development in the university. The focus of her role was to ensure staff policies and procedures met legal requirements. In her previous role at the same university, she was involved in managing staff situations such as mediations, disciplinary hearings and grievances.
Caitlin	Caitlin had been working at the local Rape Crisis Service for 10 years in a range of roles. She had been a volunteer, Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA), ISVA service manager. She was the clinical lead for the Rape Crisis Centre and was a teacher in the counsellor training school. As part of her role, she had been involved in steering groups and meetings with representatives of the university and relevant organisation in the city, on issues relating to sexual violence.

The Experience of Sexual Violence

Prevalence, nature and naming sexual violence

Joanna discussed the prevalence and persistence of sexual violence she was aware of due to her role in the Feminist Society:

> *I wish when I was talking about this you could say oh I know one person, it was this one incident that happened you know and we'll get it sorted then you know it's fantastic. But it's not, it's every single person, every single woman I know has had some form of inappropriate touching […] especially, it's definitely on nights out.*

Joanna's role meant that she regularly encountered women students who often, anecdotally, disclosed a range of incidents of sexual violence. As in the student interviews and survey, the night-time economy was highlighted as the place in which these behaviours often occur. The number of incidents Joanna was aware of was perhaps more than other students and staff due to her role in the feminist society, and therefore, she regularly participated in conversations around gender-based violence and what should be done about it. Joanna clearly acknowledged rape, assault by

penetration and sexual assault as significant issues for university students, and women more broadly. However, she most often focused her discussion on the prevalence of inappropriate touching and sexist behaviour such as 'catcalling'. When discussing sexual violence, interviewees sometimes separated these into two categories; 'low level' and 'serious', in contrast to Kelly's (1988) continuum of violence in which there are connections between all behaviours, including those perceived as every day, typical behaviours.

Caitlin, who worked for the local Rape Crisis Service, and had participated in working groups involving the university in order to address a range of issues broadly related to student safety stated:

> *I think, some of the safety groups that I sit on, there's a perception that the sexual assaults are quite low level because a lot of students are reporting low level sexual assaults i.e. groping in the library or gropes on campus. And I think they are reported more than some serious sexual offences. So I think it's [important] to be mindful that they are more... it's easier for somebody to report that I think.*

However, Elizabeth, who worked within the university stated:

> *We certainly don't hear a lot of the low-level prevalence of inappropriate touching and that type [of…] sexual assault that you might see in the night time economy.*

There was, therefore, a disparity between how the prevalence and reporting of different incidents was understood, which was dependent upon the role of the interviewee, and the type of work they undertook. All interviewees did acknowledge the existence of both 'more' and 'less' serious incidents, but they were more likely to hear about one category than the other. This is an issue in terms of the need to have data which accurately represents the issue locally, in order to develop appropriate

responses. The classification of incidents as less serious also has implications for levels of acceptance of such behaviours. As discussed in Chapter Four, the survey findings indicated that whilst underreporting of all incidents was high, often the 'low level' sexual assaults such as unwanted touching was often not reported because the student who experienced it did not think it was serious enough to report.

Of further importance, was the difficulty in naming particular incidents. Joanna thought that sexual violence was prevalent among students. However, she also thought that the sexual violence did not necessarily fit within narrow definitions:

> *[…] when most people, if you said to them, well you know have you been raped? They would probably say no. If you say to them, has someone coerced you into you know something that you didn't want to do, did you feel pressured, or they couldn't say no, then loads of people will be like 'oh yeah that happened last week with my boyfriend, that happened with this guy I was seeing'.*

As discussed in Chapter Three, Kelly et al. (1992) highlighted this issue and the different responses when someone is asked whether they have been raped, compared to whether they have been forced to have sex. The discursive construction of 'real rape' (Lees, 1997; Ussher, 1997), discussed in Chapter Two, therefore, has implications on the naming of incidents, dependent upon whether force was used or who the perpetrator was.

Caitlin provided an overview of the students who most often used the Rape Crisis Service and detailed some similarities in how these incidents occurred. She pointed out that there were a few male students who used the service in relation to male on male sexual violence and that more often these incidents occurred off campus. However, the cases Caitlin and Rape Crisis dealt with mainly involved women and in terms of similarities:

It's happening at house parties, in toilets, erm taxi cabs, meeting associates online, maybe online dating and then meeting up with them. […] So sometimes when they separate from friends or they don't know somebody very well from another house maybe and they meet up. Erm then the offence occurs then or at a party and sometimes they get in taxis with people that they don't know particularly well, and they go to a house that they are not familiar with and offences occur there.

This overview does not apply to all incidents that students reported to Rape Crisis, but instead highlights connections made by Caitlin across some of the student cases that had been reported. Elizabeth moreover noted that, in her role in student services, when she took over responsibility for student accommodation:

I started to see a little bit more about what was happening within the halls. So that has added to my concern that there is an issue out there.

As highlighted in the survey and student interviews, whilst what is identified as 'lower level' sexual assaults occur most often in night-time economy venues, as both Caitlin and Elizabeth note, there is an issue with student housing as a place in which sexual assaults are occurring.

Kristin also highlighted that in terms of location, there were some similarities:

From working in [local SARC], we used to keep a log of any students and you know from which university. And there was a period of time where it would be the same clubs kept coming up all the time.

Following this, certain points of the year were highlighted as issues, as in the student interviews, whereby freshers' week was a concern. Kristin pointed to times in the year when the SARC would receive more reports:

So I think just in you know the kind of freshers' week and all that time sort of period. Another period, for some strange reason, probably because it's a big night out, is Halloween.

As time and place were identified as issues by participants in terms of when and where reports increased, there are, therefore, implications for the direction of prevention initiatives. Freshers' week, also noted in the student interviews, as time in which students are deemed to be at increased risk, is discussed in more detail below.

The construction of the problem

Beyond describing when and where the incidents occurred, participants drew upon a range of concepts in constructing the problem and explained some of the issues in different ways.

Elizabeth drew upon notions of safety when she conceptualised the issue. For Elizabeth, her role in student support services meant that her understanding of, and response to, sexual violence on campus was linked to wider issues for students. She drew together that wider range of work under the umbrella of work that she termed 'safer campuses' and 'safer communities', therefore addressing issues for students beyond sexual violence, such as hate crime.

Kristin focused on vulnerability and pointed to a range of factors relating to students which she thought could make them more vulnerable to sexual violence:

> *I think from my experience you have vulnerable groups. I think first years are particularly vulnerable when they, when they come to a new city, they want to make friends, so they go out, get drunk, don't know their surroundings.*

Kristin and Caitlin pointed to alcohol as a further issue which increases the vulnerability of students. However, both participants were keen to make a distinction between alcohol being a vulnerability factor and from blaming the victim for drinking. For example, Caitlin said:

> *Alcohol is a big issue in the sense that it can leave people vulnerable, but it also stops people reporting and also kind of conjures up judgements as well.*

Caitlin, therefore, thought alcohol played a role in making students vulnerable to victimisation, but that alcohol also increases the blame placed upon those who experience sexual violence. Through judgement of a victim's alcohol consumption, the construction of ideal or 'real' victims is deemed relevant, a point well documented in the literature (Bieneck and Krahé, 2011 Romero-Sánchez et al., 2018; Schuller and Wall, 2006; Ullman and Filipas, 2001).

In discussing alcohol as a factor which might increase a student's vulnerability to sexual violence, Kristin pointed to this as leaving students vulnerable to 'sexual predators':

> *I know this might sound a bit extreme, but it's actually not… You get predators who will actually go out looking for people who appear to be vulnerable. […] Halloween, because you know everyone is out and partying, and that is when you will get people who like say, 'well we'll target anyone who looks vulnerable' unfortunately.*

Elizabeth also used this language when discussing vulnerability and describing the perpetrators of sexual violence but did also note there might be problems with using such language. She highlighted prevention work that the university was carrying out through providing information on safety:

> *We create all sorts of information for students […] you know all those sorts of things about personal safety. But what we don't say is… we don't give them tips on how to stay safe from a sexual predator of some variety here. If I can use that… that might be quite a strong term to use in that sense.*

Kristin and Elizabeth both, therefore, referred to safety in terms of sexual predators and narratives of 'stranger danger', however, whilst Elizabeth did question this, as discussed below, responses were still, at times, implicitly built on such discourses.

Beyond alcohol and vulnerability, Caitlin highlighted some other factors, related to student life, which potentially made them more vulnerable:

> *I guess students have a vulnerability of wanting to fit in as well you know. And sex is one of those things really that can enable that, or they might struggle with. So I think that makes students vulnerable as well.*

This point was also made by students in the previous chapter, whereby they felt pressured to fit in, not only in relation to sex, but also in terms of alcohol consumption. This pressure also led one student to 'brush aside' experiences of sexual violence in order to fit in. Stakeholder and student interviewees have identified freshers' week or freshers' fortnight as key points in which students are either deemed to be more vulnerable, or have experienced sexual violence.

Some interviewees highlighted the culture at university, which was seen as being closely linked to use of the night-time economy, as being part of the wider problem. This was mostly discussed by Joanna, a student herself, who thought that the night-time economy was where many of the 'low level' incidents of sexual assault took place:

> *We live in a culture where people think it's just normal for someone to grab you or to touch you… especially on nights out.*

She then provided examples of some of these incidents of which she was aware:

> *You know I had women say to me like they've been in the clubs and they've gone to the cloak room to get their things back and you know the people, the staff there saying I'm not giving it back unless you give me a kiss.*

She, therefore, echoed comments made by participants in the survey and student interviews, discussed in the two previous chapters, in which students regularly face a range of unwanted sexual behaviours in the night-time economy. Again, similar to participants in the survey and student interviews, whilst these behaviours were not necessarily accepted, Joanna noted a level of normalisation of this behaviour. The culture at university, she thought, meant that incidents and experiences such as this were minimised due to the idea that, at university, '*things are a bit of a laugh, a bit of banter'.* Incidents of harassment and violence were sometimes constructed as a joke and therefore minimised, due to the context Joanna described. 'Banter' as part of university life, and more specifically 'lad culture' was identified as an issue by the NUS (2012) as playing a key role in minimising sexual harassment. Joanna also described an incident where a different university to the one she attended, but in the same city, undertook a consent campaign:

> [*T]he response on social media was stuff like, especially anonymous things would be like… making light of sexual assault… saying you know, 'nobody would want to, you know' […] 'Oh thank you for teaching me how not to rape' and things like this. And so I think it is a real attitude problem and that it's either not taken seriously or it's not seen as anything that's out of the ordinary.*

Attitudes and behaviours which minimise sexual violence, such as those described by Joanna, are connected to broader issues where victims are not believed or are blamed for incidents which can, in turn, impact upon their willingness to challenge or report an incident (NUS, 2012). Caitlin described situations where she had been in meetings with university staff, not necessarily at the university in which this research took place where these attitudes were displayed:

I've been to many meetings where there is that kind of victim blame we need to change, the student needs to do this, the student needs to do that. And they need to get in the right taxi and you know… that just still goes on now really.

Prevention campaigns which utilise such language were ultimately an issue for Caitlin because:

What's the message that is giving them? […] one of the first impacts of sexual violence on anybody is a sense of guilt or shame and it's a really natural feeling. So I think to make sense of that then, they're just going to see those myths, it is just going to reinforce it, it's just going to collude with it. And by the time they get to us [Rape Crisis] you know it is, they've already made up their mind that it's their fault.

In the survey, and in wider research, guilt and shame has been identified as leading to underreporting (NUS, 2010; Sable et al., 2006; Zinzow and Thompson, 2010)**.** Moreover, such beliefs draw upon myths and stereotypes to construct a narrative whereby students are responsibilised to avoid sexual violence The effect, as discussed in Chapter Two, is that women are held culpable for the sexual violence they experience (Ballinger, 1997).

Barriers to reporting and disclosing

Victim blaming, as well as responses which focus on the actions of the victim, as noted above, have an impact on how victims of sexual violence understand their experience. Such attitudes also impact upon levels of reporting in the general population (Weiss, 2009) and with students (NUS, 2012). These arguments were echoed by some interviewees who discussed the range of barriers students might have encountered which prevented them from, not just officially reporting an incident, but also disclosing the incident more informally. Caitlin discussed the similarities and differences in the

barriers which students faced when reporting or accessing support compared with the those in the general population:

> *I think there is probably, kind of being around peers of a similar age, I think there is probably a level of normalising sexual violence on campus. So again, I think it might make them less likely to report and there is often alcohol involved. I think that some students can feel particularly isolated sometimes, they feel different maybe because they've been going through those developmental stages maybe as well. So those kind of things can impact, being away from home maybe can impact on students more maybe than somebody else.*

The way in which some participants constructed the problem above, around 'lad culture' or the 'culture at university', which it is argued minimises sexual violence and harassment (NUS, 2012), therefore, could have the effect of normalising certain behaviours. This normalisation has effects in that they become barriers which students face when considering reporting an incident. Caitlin also thought alcohol played a role in students choosing not to report an incident which, as noted above, has been shown to have an effect on whether a complainant is believed or not (Schuller and Wall, 2006). Caitlin also mentioned feeling isolated as a potential barrier. Students' experiences of isolation have been explored in relation to age, ethnicity and class (Read et al., 2003: 261) and feeling excluded from the academic conventions of the university. However, as some students discussed in the previous chapter, they also felt a pressure to fit in and to partake in the social conventions of university life, for fear of isolation. This is discussed further in the Chapter Seven.

Kristin also discussed the point of being away from home, noted above by Caitlin, and the impact that had specifically in relation to Irish students:

> *I know that one of the groups of students we used to see in [local SARC], who find it really difficult were Irish students. Because we would get quite a few Irish*

students come through who didn't want to report it, didn't want anybody to know because they didn't want their parents to take them back again. So there is that kind of fear, is that you know, 'they were worried about me in the first place and they didn't want me to come here and now they find out this has happened then make me go back again'.

Kristin also highlighted further dynamics within the student population that she felt hindered students willingness to report:

[I]f it is a friend of a friend, or if it's another student, or something like that they're then scared of what their university life is going to be like. If they go and report, you know someone who's really popular in a group or are they going to be ostracized because no one will believe them?

This is particularly an issue when the survey results showed that many of the alleged perpetrators of various incidents were friends and fellow students.

Further to this, when asked about the barriers students might face in reporting, Kristin discussed the point that certain students might be more or less likely to report incidents:

I think culturally there are some cultures where you don't talk about you know personal stuff, you don't talk about what's going on in the family.

She noted that there were likely particular barriers for male, LGBT and/or BAME students that experience sexual violence and it was important to be aware of those barriers. Again, this raises the issue, and importance, of consistency, not just in terms of the process that follows when a report is made, but that all students feel able to report and access the available services. Whilst research has been undertaken in the United States which highlights experiences of reporting and navigating institutional mechanisms across different demographic groups (Brubaker and Mancini, 2017), as noted in Chapter One, the literature in the UK is lacking. This is particularly an issue

when research in the United States also shows that LGBT students report experiencing higher rates of sexual violence (DeKeseredy et al., 2017; Ford and Soto-Marquez, 2016).

A further barrier highlighted by the interviewees related to the police. Joanna noted that she, and some of the women students she had spoken to, would either not want to go to the police immediately, or potentially not at all. She said she had seen that her local police force had made a joke on social media about rape in relation to a game of football:

> *I can't even begin to like, how they thought that was OK and they thought that was appropriate.*

The attitudes of the police were highlighted by Joanna and Caitlin as barriers to reporting. Police attitudes (Temkin and Krahé, 2008) and lack of trust in the police (Hohl and Stanko, 2015) have previously been highlighted in research with the general population as being barriers to reporting incidents of sexual violence.

Caitlin provided an overview of one client's experience who had accessed Rape Crisis services, which highlighted several stages at which the student encountered a range of barriers:

> *[O]ne had reported that they'd gone to a house party, got in a taxi with someone they knew from another house and then at this house party erm, him and another male sexually assaulted her. So her journey really was erm, she was quite intoxicated, she had taken some drugs that night. So the first barrier was not wanting her parents to know she'd taken drugs which delayed her reporting. She then told the police, the police asked why did it take so long to report which immediately made her feel quite ashamed so she decided not to report it any further. She then went to her lecturer and said, 'this has happened to me, I don't know what to do'. It appeared that the lecturer didn't know what to do erm and then kind of proceeded where there was… I challenged this, but there was a*

process which occurred where the university got involved in questioning around what happened and also created almost a mini statement of what happened. Erm, which caused the student a bit more trauma and the student that was on campus [who was alleged to be the perpetrator] wasn't moved, because it wasn't reported.

The statement from Caitlin about the student's experiences highlighted the range of barriers students faced when making a report or seeking support, which were sometimes institutional and sometimes due to the nature of sexual violence and wider beliefs around it. The issues which the general population face in reporting an incident to the police (Temkin and Krahé, 2008) were an issue for the student Caitlin describes above, however, the role of the university in producing a statement extended and replicated this experience in a different context. The role of lecturers in being able to respond appropriately to disclosures is again highlighted, as in the previous chapter, as a key point following an incident, discussed further below.

As explored in chapter Two, the effects of sexual violence stretch beyond the act itself. The interviews with students, discussed in the previous chapter also highlighted this, through negative effects on physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. Elizabeth acknowledged that, for students, there were particular impacts upon education:

I think we, as an institution, see students withdrawing from programmes and often not telling us all the detail[s] behind why they are leaving and I think that's really important to get behind. I think some of that number will be represented by individuals who've been victims of sexual violence who haven't spoken to somebody and have then found the situation exacerbates itself and becomes worse for them.

Therefore, should the barriers that students face when reporting or disclosing result in the student not being able to access support, the impacts stretch even further through excluding them from education.

This section has outlined the issue of sexual violence on campus, and the nature of the problem as understood by the stakeholders. It outlines a range of ways in which the issues of sexual violence on campus has been constructed, built on conflicting discourses of safety, vulnerability, 'stranger danger', 'lad culture' and responsibility. The next section will consider the range of ways the institution responded to the issues outlined so far.

The university's response

The stakeholders interviewed were all responsible, formally and informally through their employment or chosen roles, for instituting change on campus, for responding to and preventing incidents of sexual violence. This section explores some of the changes these individuals, and their departments, had introduced in order to address some of the issues outlined above. The interviews took place at a time when specific departments within the university structure had acknowledged that changes needed to be made, in line with wider sector acknowledgement of the issues involved (UUK, 2016a).

Prevention and response initiatives

Elizabeth, as head of student health and wellbeing, considered her role and the role of the large teams she managed to mostly be about responding to incidents. She did however highlight work where they undertook prevention initiatives:

> *We put a lot of information out about students staying safe and looking out for each other on a lot of different themes.*

As discussed above, the work undertaken around 'safety' did not include staying safe from 'sexual predators'. Elizabeth noted the difficulties, not only with that term, but with

the approach that prevention work would take. When considering how to approach safety in relation to sexual violence, she said:

Maybe we need to review that. Maybe that needs to be where we start with safety. You know 'if you're going out, if something happens, this is what you need to do'. I think it's about educating the potential perpetrators rather than potential victims. I don't like using those words either but… they're very emotive aren't they? […] I think it is very difficult to give prevention tips to students. How do you do that? Because it is dependent on somebody else's behaviour.

Because of some of these difficulties, her team was working with the police in the city and city council organisations to ensure that:

[T]he message is about 'don't do this. This is wrong. Not, if this happens to you, do X, Y and Z'.

The prevention work Elizabeth discussed therefore, related to the discursive construction of sexual violence and the concept of safety. Educational messages were to be directed at naming the sexual violence and constructing the issue as a problem on the part of potential perpetrators, rather than potential victims. Kristin, however, also noted work that she had undertaken in her role as a counsellor, again, developed around the idea of student safety. This, however, was specifically in relation to students protecting themselves from being victims of sexual violence. The counselling team provided a variety of workshops throughout the academic year, she noted:

I've added a new group […] the group is called 'it won't happen to me'. And I am doing it with one of the Student Engagement Officers and that is around safety, being aware of your surroundings, what you can do to, you know, take care of yourself… We will have a group as well about how to keep yourself safe as best you can.

The construction of safety in the programme developed by the counselling team, therefore, stands in contrast to that described by Elizabeth, through its messaging on individual responsibility for safety.

Initiatives around prevention came in the form of safety groups undertaken by the counselling services and, potentially in the future, safety tips which would be provided in the Student Handbook. Examples of prevention campaigns undertaken at other universities, particularly by Student Unions, have been documented and have focused on the issue of 'lad culture' (UUK, 2016b). 'Lad culture' was noted as an issue by student participants, as discussed in the previous chapter and, in terms of stakeholders, Elizabeth stated that this was being addressed by the Student Union. The stakeholder interviews did not include any participants from the Student Union, as discussed in Chapter Three, therefore, interviewees' awareness of prevention campaigns carried out by the Student Union was anecdotal and potentially, incomplete. Elizabeth did, however, note:

> *I certainly think the Student Union here at the university have done quite a lot of work with their teams over the last few years since [the NUS, 2010 report] came out to try and address that that whole lad culture issue.*

Elizabeth described a campaign which was undertaken:

> *They've done training with all of their clubs and societies presidents or leads […] around the issues surrounding sexual violence and harassment and hoping that they will be that sort of catalyst, that cascade, that if the lead of each club behaves in a certain way, that seeps through the culture of that individual club and society.*

Joanna also noted that the Student Union had developed one of the policies around zero tolerance to specifically include sexual harassment. However, she stated that the

Student Union broadly, and some societies, were 'not very political' and prioritised 'fun' and socials. In relation to the Feminist Society, she said:

> *[With] our previous president, we've had chats with the LGBT Society and they said 'oh we're not a political society'. Yeah they just get together and you know going for socials*

Dominant discourses on student social life and what constitutes fun was, therefore, again identified as relevant. As Student Unions nationwide have taken on the role of campaigning around the prevention of sexual violence and education on 'lad culture', what Joanna perceived as the relatively apolitical nature of some societies and the Student Union was particularly problematic.

Most of the interviewees' roles were related to responding to sexual violence, rather than preventing it, although the two are clearly related. Interviewees came from different sections and departments in the university and, therefore, they were responsible for different responses. Joanna noted:

> *If you try to search [name of university], report, things like that, there is no way to like report it easily.*

As discussed in the previous section, knowledge on the prevalence of sexual violence was limited. However, at the time the interviews took place, the student health and wellbeing services were in the process of developing an online reporting tool. Elizabeth's team were the lead on this.

This tool, Elizabeth explained, would have a range of benefits:

> *So that we actually know that the cases are coming into staff who are senior enough to be able to deal with it and escalate it and actually know how to deal with the situation. We will also get them some additional training. At the moment it could come into anybody which obviously, ultimately, that would be the*

preferred model that everybody was equipped to deal with it appropriately. But that's a lot of training, a lot of expertise.

Elizabeth noted the difficulties of implementing such mechanisms in a large university and highlighted the importance of the role of all university staff. She acknowledged that students might still report to other staff members, but the introduction of the mechanism, for her, meant that those staff members would know they could escalate it to the relevant people. The reporting mechanism was subsequently introduced and is accessible through the university's web pages.

Elizabeth was also involved in a project, which fed into the work around reporting and responding to incidents, which focused on what students wanted from student support services. The involvement of students in the process and development of mechanisms was seen as necessary to Elizabeth, in order to ensure that the results are useful for students:

> *[C]urrently as an individual… I don't have an understanding of what students would want from us an institution […] I think it's really important, what we don't want to do is put services in place that aren't based on what students actually want, or what they would have wanted at the time.*

Kristin discussed her role as a counsellor and the process which followed when a student disclosed an incident and sought counselling. She acknowledged that there was a long waiting list for students, but that overall, the counsellors used their initiative in order to respond effectively:

> *If I was doing an initial interview with someone who came in and said I was raped yesterday, I would use my own initiative then and would think 'well actually you know it's now that it's happening'. […] [Y]ou can say to someone, 'look I've got an appointment in two weeks so shall we book you in for that'. And then just knowing that they've got an appointment will keep them going more than thinking I'm just going to be on a waiting list for two months.*

There was, therefore, an acknowledgement that there were significant waiting lists for students who wished to access counselling, as noted in Chapter Five, however, under the circumstances, the counsellors were working to ensure that students could access a level of support, even if they were not able to begin counselling immediately.

Legal and Policy Responses

As discussed in Chapter Three, the interviews did not include a participant who was responsible for the development of student policies in the area. Instead, Angela, who worked in Human Resources and was responsible for the development of a range of staff polices, including those related to sexual violence, was interviewed. Angela stated that, staff policies and the student policies often mirrored each other, with staff policies often developing from student policies and the two teams worked together. The next section therefore focuses on the perspective of Angela, whose role was to ensure that staff policies and procedures at the university met legal requirements.

Angela had recently rewritten the policy which related to harassment and bullying. The overall change was:

> *We've changed it to be just respectful and so that it's be respectful at work and you treat others equally.*

Rather than a focus on bullying and harassment, the policy was broadened to ensure dignity and respect at work, across a range of behaviours. This approach, which focuses on 'respect', has also been introduced in the institution in relation to students, with campaigns focused on respectful behaviour in the university community as a whole.

A further key policy issue discussed was the development of a personal relationships policy. This was the type of policy which would normally be written by Angela. However:

> *It's the legal team doing that because it's quite erm… contentious. […] It was something that was brought up at quite a senior level. The concern is because there is a lack of understanding of interrelationships across the university.*

Therefore, the intention was that the issues around personal relationships between staff were to be addressed within the personal relationships policy. Angela also stated that personal relationships between staff and students was going to be addressed.

Angela was, moreover, the Chair of a regional policy forum. Within that forum, Angela stated that the university was developing a personal relationships policy and the reaction by the other members highlighted that this was not something they had looked at or, had intentions of developing:

> *I said we were looking at it and they were all really shocked. They were like, 'we would not touch that with a barge pole'. […] So that is something they were like 'whoa… why on earth would you even be looking at that?' I was like 'well you know the context of everything that's happened' and they were like 'no'. […] It's not all universities [in the region] that [are] in that group or anything, but that was very much, 'what on earth are you doing that for?'*

The contentious nature of a personal relationships policy, as described by Angela, was, therefore. further highlighted by the response of the regional policy managers. Seemingly, there was a concern that the issue, for some institutions, was *too* contentious and, therefore, the result was that they were choosing not to take any action. Angela did, however, think that this highlighted a positive aspect of this particular university in that they were pre-empting potential issues that might arise. The policy, Angela thought, was due for final ratification during the couple of weeks

following the interview, which took place in November 2017. The policy was introduced two years later.

In a discussion of the process which occurs when someone brings a grievance case, Angela noted that, when an issue was reported, depending on the seriousness of the accusation, a decision was made as to whether the accused person should be suspended and made to work from home or not. She said that the opportunity to do this was useful because:

> *That can actually protect the [accused] member of staff as well… because, the other thing we need to balance it out is, sometimes we do have quite malicious complaints that are unfounded unfortunately so it's that balance as well. So it can protect the member of staff if potentially an outcome is malicious.*

In a discussion of the difference between a malicious complaint, and one that was not proven because, for example, there was not enough evidence, Angela noted that it was difficult to make that decision:

> *It's really hard to prove that someone has been blatantly malicious unless there has been previous examples of it.*

Therefore, whilst the perceived difficulty between proving the difference between a malicious complaint and one which was not proven was acknowledged, malicious complaints were still constructed as a key issue, in the interview and in the policy. Research in the context of the criminal justice system has, however, shown that often, cases which are designated as false are not done so on the basis of either an admission or strong evidence (Kelly et al., 2005). Instead, as explored by Kelly et al. (2005), the designation of an allegation as false, is often a result of police assumptions about the credibility of a complainant, based on the complainants characteristics, and inconsistencies in a victim's story, which, as Jordan (2001) argued, was at times a

result of fearing disbelief. Therefore, the distinction, in the criminal justice and institutional context, between malicious complaints and those which are not proven is an important one in that, without this distinction, a truth is constructed whereby more complaints are presented as malicious than is actually the case.

Elizabeth discussed other policies, specific to students, which were already in place, or were in the process of being developed. She stated that policies on their own were not enough. However, they did provide certain advantages:

> *I certainly don't want to see things created just for the sake of it because as I said it's a tick box exercise. But it needs to support the work and actually, by having that as a policy of the institution, that gives increased buy in and persuasion so I can go out to people and I can say, and I love taking the moral high ground, I can say 'we have a policy about this, you must comply with this'. It gives greater weight to our argument.*

Policies were therefore deemed useful in terms of constructing and naming a problem to be addressed, in order to later be used as a tool to create change.

This section has provided an overview of the university's developing responses to the issues of sexual violence. It has demonstrated that, in a range of ways, the stakeholders are working to effect change on campus and to ensure that students are supported. It also, however, highlights some constraints to creating this change, for example, the long waiting list for counselling services which means it is more difficult for counsellors to provide support. Moreover, the section outlines the strengths and weaknesses of policies, as understood by the participants. Despite the various developments outlined above, there were a range of issues, highlighted by the interviewees which persisted beyond these changes. These will be considered in the next section. It will also explore the recommendations and arguments made by the

interviewees regarding what changes could be made in order to improve the current situation.

Ongoing issues

Resources, commitment and communication

When considering the issues the university still faced when trying to address sexual violence on campus, several of the interviewees pointed to the need for more resources and a commitment to continue providing these. Elizabeth said:

> *I'd like to see some resources identified to be able to support this work because I'm currently doing this with existing resources.*

Joanna noted the need for funding and resources in relation to the student support services, counselling and as a particular priority, the mental health services. Elizabeth was also in the process of trying to put in place a new role for an Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) to work within the institution. Again, she thought, the need for resources such as this were vital in working to create real changes:

> *[W]e moved a few years ago to having a mental wellbeing adviser because of the demand. I think this is a similar scenario that actually in a few years time, even if it's just one post that is dedicated to this work that can make sure that the changes that we've made are embedded aren't just tick box exercises, paying lip service, whatever you want to call it. I really want this work to enhance the experience for students and that will only come from having dedicated resources because you can't continue... You can't spread the existing resources too thinly because otherwise it falls apart.*

At the time of writing, this position had been planned for some time, but it had not yet been put in place. Elizabeth pointed out that the large range of work which her team was undertaking across student support was being done with already existing resources. She argued for the creation of the ISVA role in order to ensure the required

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specialist skill was involved in the work but also, this signalled a commitment to the issues. This commitment, and allocation of resources, Elizabeth argued, needed to be embedded in the institution and reflect the need for long term support for students as well as, as Caitlin stated, the need to prioritise this work.

At the time of the interview, Elizabeth's team were developing an online reporting mechanism for students, which was in place at the time of writing. The online reporting mechanism does not however have the option of making an anonymous report. Joanna thought the option of making an anonymous report was important so that students could log an incident and have the time to make the decision as to whether to take further action, or not, later. Although anonymous reporting mechanisms exist at other institutions (University of Stirling, 2019; University of Cambridge, 2019; University of Birmingham year, 2019; University Of Bristol, 2019), Elizabeth, who would be responsible for developing this mechanism, thought there were difficulties with instituting it:

> *I have wrangled with anonymous reporting because anonymous reporting means that we can't necessarily do anything. And then having that information from a source that we can't actively do anything for… bothers me. […] I know we probably need to move to that position. […]. I would like to have some mechanism for third party or anonymous reporting, but I really need to have some greater depth of work done around the implications… from our duty of care to those individuals. So I'm a little bit cautious but that will be our next step.*

Research shows that, often, individuals who experience sexual violence will not choose to go to the police or use institutional mechanisms immediately after experiencing sexual violence (Temkin and Krahé, 2008). The assumption that someone will report an incident of sexual violence immediately not only feeds into the discursive construction of 'real rape' and 'appropriate victims' but can also have an

effect on the legal process, should that decision be made. For example, Jordan (2004) analysed police files in New Zealand and found that those cases which were deemed 'possible true/false' or 'false', rather than 'true', were more likely to have involved a delayed report. Anonymous reporting mechanisms, therefore, provide a potentially useful tool for individuals to log an incident, with the opportunity for that log to be used at a later date should the person reporting wish to take further formal action. At the time of writing, a mechanism for anonymous reporting was not available.

Joanna also discussed the need for resources, more specifically in relation to the work of the Student Union but also, the university more broadly. She discussed work carried out by the Student Union around mental health awareness in the student population:

> *[T]he SU, they do stuff for mental health week and, or or you know they do like the fair trade fair. I think but […] its all very good having like Mental Health Week to raise awareness and then if the funding is not there then well what difference is it really going to make? Like maybe some attitudes might change but then if you are suffering, its not any good just the awareness, you need the resources.*

The need for more resources and a commitment to address sexual violence was seen as a key issue for the interviewees. However, some also argued it was not just about the need for more resources, but there was a need to develop ways of communicating the availability of these resources. The structure of the university, in its size, student population and geography were cited as a barrier to this, as well as the level of student engagement with the university and its services. Interviewees asserted that many students were unaware of the services that were available to them. Joanna, as a student herself, pointed out that, during enrolment and induction, the university provided a lot of information, but there was perhaps important information missing:

You know they bombard you with stuff like, you know, come to this event, come to that event, buy these wristbands, tickets and stuff like this and like that might have been really useful to someone if they'd known about it or if I'd known about it.

Caitlin, moreover, pointed out that not all students knew the policies and procedures in place which could be used to support them, for example the potential to change accommodation following an incident:

[T]he student survivor, they don't know their rights either do they really? So it'd be good to be transparent where all staff and students can see what that process is.

Joanna cited the structure of the university, such as separate buildings for different subjects, and the fact that student accommodation was privately owned, were issues. She noted that the dispersal of university services could be difficult for students in knowing where to report an incident:

Because it's a city campus and like, because it's private landlords, does that count as like not on campus? If you know, if you want to report something, would you report it to your halls rather than your uni?

Despite a range of work being undertaken, communication to staff and students remained a key issue for some of the interviewees who argued that having the resources was not enough and students and staff needed to be more aware of what was available.

Some interviewees also highlighted concerns and inconsistencies in the way that the university was responding to incidents. It is to this issue that the thesis now turns.

The consistency of processes

As discussed above and in Chapters Four and Five, there were a range of barriers to reporting sexual violence for students. In a discussion about the campus police officer, Elizabeth noted, sometimes students might feel it was easier to talk to him, rather than a more general police officer. However, she said, '[h]*e's still in full uniform. That's still off-putting to many people'.* As noted in previous research, there are a range of reasons why individuals might not want to report an incident to the police (Hohl and Stanko, 2015) and victims/survivors of sexual violence should have the right to make a decision whether to report, or not. This, however, can be a complex situation for the university to manage if a student does not want to report an incident to the police, but does want to access services or utilise internal disciplinary mechanisms. Caitlin pointed out that there was a difficulty when navigating the options of the criminal justice process, the civil disciplinary process and accessing a range of support mechanisms. She also pointed to the experience of a student, detailed above, who encountered a range of barriers first with the police and then with her lecturer. Due to the barriers encountered, the student did not want to formally report the incident to the university, and chose not to continue with the criminal justice process, which meant that the accused student was not moved because the incident was not reported:

> *So there's a big conflict around if it's reported or if it's not reported and where does the other person stand if we can't criminalise them? Do they still remain on campus? Do they still remain in close contact with the student? And I generally think that universities and colleges are confused about what to do, as are we then in that respect.*

Importantly, the issue Caitlin highlighted did not just relate to the university that this research is concerned with, but was a sector wide problem (NUS, 2015c; EVAW, 2015) and has resulted in legal guidelines being developed (Pinsent Masons, 2016).

Universities can use these guidelines to navigate this conflict between criminal and civil processes, although they are not a requirement.

Whilst there are difficulties for the university should a student not report an incident to the police, there are also a range of limitations with the criminal justice system in relation to sexual violence. Such limitations include underreporting and attrition (Daly and Bouhours, 2010), rape myths (Smith and Skinner, 2017) and the limitations of legal reforms in their failure to address the root causes of sexual violence (Ballinger, 2009; Bumiller, 2008; Miller and Meloy, 2006; Regan and Kelly, 2003). Moreover, the construction and politicisation of ideal victims (Phipps, 2009) leaves many women unprotected through legal procedures such as sex workers (Levy and Jakkobson, 2014), women of colour (Richie, 1996) and trans women (Phipps, 2016). Moreover, as explored in Chapter Two, the discourse and power of the law reproduces dominant notions of gender and (hetero)sexuality (Smart, 1989), further reproducing notions of deserving and undeserving victims, in turn, furthering the harm and victimisation of those who experience sexual violence. Therefore, reliance upon the criminal justice system, or focusing solely on increasing the numbers of students who will report to the police, is unlikely to improve the situation overall, for all students, a point which is developed in the following chapter.

While Caitlin acknowledged the difficulties of appropriately managing a situation whereby official reports, to the police or the university might not have been made, she wanted:

> [T]o see a consistent procedure and the victim, the survivor, being at the heart of it. Because I still think that there is a way of doing that, erm, prioritising them to be moved somewhere else or… so something around a list of options for that person and then making sure that they're at the heart of it…Have they got some

support is the first thing to consider. Rather than looking at the active self and who externally has responded, so just the uni taking responsibility for that person's care first of all.

Elizabeth stated that, if a student approached the health and wellbeing services, there was a range of options for student support and they could choose what they preferred:

Every situation has to be assessed on its own individual characteristics. I could sit here and give you a whole range of options but a student will sit in an interview situation and go 'I don't want to do that, I don't want to do that, I'm happy to do that'. So we would go through, we would provide the advice and guidance that they need in order to make informed choices and empowered choices for themselves as people who have experienced sexual violence and make sure that they know we're there to support them in the longer term as well.

The type of support that Caitlin argued for was, therefore, in part, already in place. However, her point was about the consistency of this process. She stated that the university could use a similar system that was used in Rape Crisis Centres whereby:

If we have somebody that comes to us that has experienced high risk domestic violence, so we then do a risk assessment with them and if they come out quite high there's a list of options. If they come out low-medium, each one has a list […] So it kind of has a flow chart of what you do really with that person to support them.

This approach was designed to ensure consistency across each case that came to the support services. The student would also be able to retain control over any action that was taken. Caitlin also stated that there needed to be consistency in terms of how disclosures were dealt with, for example, in terms of confidentiality and communication:

I've brought the issue that there seems to be some serious inconsistencies and it is impacting on the students that we were aware of and how things have been dealt with, because it's so different. […] [W]e've heard instances where quite a

lot of information is shared which is already an anxiety for the victim or survivor anyway. So it's like how that disclosure, responding to that disclosure, was dealt with seems to vary.

Clear approaches to responding to the issue were, therefore, also required to ensure the student was able to access all available support and that confidentiality was ensured for the student. Caitlin did point out that there had been situations where the university and external services had worked together well to ensure this, but that this was not always the case.

Responsibility for change

A key, overarching point made by Caitlin was that everyone was responsible for prevention and safeguarding:

[I]t can't work with just one body, one area, one strand of people. This has to be everybody.

Universities UK (UUK) have recommended that universities need to work closely with local specialist services in order to develop their responses to sexual violence (UUK, 2016a). The university at which this research took place did work with some external specialist services in the city in different contexts. Caitlin stated that there were times when the university and Rape Crisis Services worked well together:

[W]e've had really good practice. […] But only with an external service, the wellbeing team and the course head as well being aware of those circumstances and understanding.

Some interviewees, however, pointed out the difficulties they experienced when trying to institute change on campus around the prevention of, and response to, incidents of sexual violence. Ahmed (2017: 139) outlines the process of coming up against 'brick

walls' when trying to institute change at universities around sexual harassment. Joanna also described her experiences of institutional resistance in this way:

[I]t feels like you have these interviews, you feel like you've got on really well and then again brick wall, like nothing's happening. And like how many times I have to have a meeting with someone, go to someone and say not enough has been done, not enough is being changed, there's not enough services, you need to do this, this needs to be done before something actually gets changed?

Similarly, Caitlin also described a situation where she worked with the university in order to develop advocate positions for students to represent Rape Crisis on campus. These roles were intended to ensure that students could access signposting for available services should they or a friend experience sexual violence but did not know what was available. In this situation, Caitlin had done the preparatory work in order to create the role, and was ready to go ahead, but two years had passed since the initial discussion at the time of the interview and the position was not in place. At the time of writing, a similar position had been introduced, although this was different to the specific role outlined by Caitlin.

Further to improving links with external services, Joanna argued for the Student Union to take greater responsibility for the issue of sexual violence affecting students. Whilst Elizabeth noted that the Student Union had undertaken some training with the presidents of various societies, Joanna, as a student herself noted:

I would like the SU to be more than just a nice thing, that puts on nice events for students. Like I want them to actually be active in doing something and know that they are campaigning for the students' rights without us [the Feminist Society] having to go to them and say, 'we want you to do this'. […] They could do so much more I think, and like if you think, obviously it's not the same, but what other unions achieve and it's just a bit, not good enough really in my opinion.

For Joanna, the politicisation of the Student Union and the need for the officers to be outspoken about the issues affecting students and fighting for their needs was a necessary step to addressing the problem on campus.

Joanna also noted that, in part, due to these difficulties and 'brick walls', the burden for creating changes on campus fell on the shoulders of those who had an interest in the area, or felt that it was in important issue, but for whom it was not necessarily within their remit. Joanna described this process, whereby she, and the Feminist Society, undertook the work themselves:

> *[E]very time it feels like I try to have the conversation, go on to say 'yes I think this is important, this needs to be done', and then just nothing happens from it unless either you know, we as a [feminist society] at like the freshers' fair hand out stuff for [local Rape Crisis]. Or like you know, put the stickers up around uni you know about like charities or leaflets. But then again, that's not being handled internally, that's again being pushed off to charities and other institutions rather than having a proper mechanism to deal with it in the uni.*

She went on to say that she, and the Feminist Society, often took the approach that, if they felt like something needed to be done, they just did it themselves. Again, this highlights the importance of the consistency of processes, outlined above as a necessary step in ensuring the university takes responsibility for the issue.

She acknowledged that this burden was not just in relation to the students in the Feminist Society, but academic staff who appeared to be interested or supportive in the area. She described how, in situations where she personally needed support, she most often spoke to the disability co-coordinator for her school:

> *It feels like it falls a lot on you know the people who are already interested. Like the disability coordinator for our [school]. Personally, I've been to her a lot,*

rather than… I know her, I know I can get in you know [and have] a chat with her, as opposed to trying to get the mental health team.

This is a point discussed by Page et al. (2019) whereby the responsibility for work which should be undertaken by the institution and its various services is often taken up by women and academics with a clear interest in the area. Quinlan and Lusiak (2017) and Page et al. (2019) also point out that the responsibility for prevention and campaigning often falls on the shoulders of those who have experienced such incidents themselves.

Joanna, the only stakeholder interviewee who was a student, discussed the management of the university, and their responsibility from a business and consumer perspective, to provide adequate support for their students:

I am getting myself into 30 grands worth of debt. Like I have signed what is basically a consumer contract with the university.

She pointed out that in this context, for her tuition fees, she expected the student support services to have the resources to be able to carry out their work:

[W]hy would I not expect the people who run this organisation, who are in charge, to provide adequate services? […] [I]f you want to think of the university as a business, rather than an academic institution, then the very least you could do is provide the services for your students.

Prevention and education

A broad recommendation from several interviewees related to prevention and education. Joanna, Elizabeth, Kristin and Caitlin all pointed to the importance of education around consent. Joanna said that at other universities, students who enrolled had to take part in a consent quiz. She did, however, note that it was not necessary to achieve a certain score in order to continue with their enrolment but,

regardless, it raised awareness. Kristin also discussed the need to educate students about consent. As part of the steering group to tackle sexual violence, she said that education around consent for potential perpetrators and what can happen if consent was not given, was a priority for her, however, the initial focus was on making sure students felt they could report incidents and access support. Whilst Caitlin also noted the importance of consent education, she thought that education should go beyond just consent. In order to help tackle the issues, there should be:

> *Compulsory education as to the prevalence of sexual violence, how it occurs, how we would respond to it and what to do if we think it's happening.*

She also thought that people should be educated about bystander intervention (The Intervention Initiative, 2019) and what they should be looking for:

> *[T]here are just instances where you can see some stories that students say and you think oh if only we could get to those people who saw that. There feels like there's two or three other people that saw something there and didn't do anything you know [...] Like one student was raped in a toilet in a club and erm you know she was in there for over an hour. I just think you know if somebody just checked the toilets on a regular basis.*

This section has outlined that, despite commitment to the issue from participants and the range of work which has developed from this, there were some persisting issues. Participants outlined the need for commitment, resources, funding, education and a prioritisation of student support from the institution and the Student Union. However, the institution itself can be understood as constraining these developments.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the range of issues relating to sexual violence experienced by university students from the perspective of stakeholders responsible for preventing and responding to incidents. The interviewees' discussions highlighted the need for a

range of initiatives introduced to tackle the issue of sexual violence. Despite the development of some initiatives, and commitment from the interviewees to address the issues, the construction of the problem and recommendations outlined highlight the need for developments across prevention, responses, reporting and disclosure, training and education and broader cultural change. This is particularly relevant at the time when the university, and the sector more broadly, are in the process of developing responses. It is also especially pertinent when considered alongside the survey results and interviews with student survivors' experiences of sexual violence. The next chapter will discuss the findings from the survey and the interviews with both students and stakeholders.

Chapter 7: Discussing Sexual Violence at University: Reproducing dominant discourses, compounding harms and women's resistance

Following feminist poststructuralist analysis, the findings arising from this research have uncovered a number of significant themes concerning women students' experiences of sexual violence whilst at university. This chapter will address five of these themes. Firstly, it will critically consider the nature of sexual violence at university, drawn from the findings of the survey and the student and stakeholder interviews. Second, the harmful effects and impact of sexual violence are considered, addressing the limitations of discourses of trauma and consent and, therefore, suggests that the conceptualisation of the harm of sexual violence as a violation of subjectivity is useful in broadening our understanding of its effects. Third, following feminist poststructuralist arguments about the discursive constructions of gender and (hetero)sex, as outlined in Chapter Two, this chapter considers this in relation to discourses on 'fun' and university life and the reproduction of norms of masculinity, femininity and their particular amplification in the context of universities. Fourth, women students' experiences of testifying to incidents of sexual violation are considered in relation to Fricker's (2007) framework of epistemic injustice which, in this chapter, is discussed in relation to dominant discourses and the subsequent 'truth' that is constructed about sexual violence, victims and perpetrators. Finally, these themes are analysed in the context of the institutional operation of power in the neoliberal university and its connections to the criminal justice system.

The Nature of Sexual Violence at University

One of the most significant themes which emerged through the research process was the extent of sexual violence in its various forms, broadly, as well as a seemingly increased 'risk' for younger, undergraduate students. Moreover, beyond the extent of those incidents which are more easily definable, was the acknowledgement of behaviours which might not be so easily categorised, or less willingly categorised within current legal frameworks.

The differing methodologies which have been used to gain empirical data have allowed for a detailed understanding of the extent of sexual violence. Whilst this is not a prevalence study, and both the quantitative and qualitative data is not intended to generate claims about the extent of sexual violence on university campuses at a general level, the findings *do* show that, during the time that the research was conducted, sexual violence was experienced by a large number of students who responded to the research. As discussed in Chapter Four, there are issues with comparing the reported rates in this research with wider data due to the difference in methodologies, question types and the definitions of behaviours. The survey data captured the patterns of respondents' experiences, with sexual harassment accounting for the majority of reported incidents, experienced by between 16% and 51% of respondents, depending on the particular behaviour. This was followed by sexual assault which, as noted in the introduction, in contrast to other studies, has not been separated out into 'more' and 'less' serious incidents in recognition of Kelly's (1988) argument that the continuum of violence is not a scale, that one incident is not necessarily more or less harmful or more serious than the other. Rather, these experiences are interconnected and exist and occur within the broader structural context of gender inequality. Out of 144 respondents, 43% had experienced attempted

sexual assault and 41% experienced sexual assault. Moreover, 8% had experienced attempted rape, 6% had experienced rape, 6% attempted assault by penetration and 4% assault by penetration. When multiple experiences, across all years of study, of harassment, rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault and being caused to engage in sexual activity without consent are considered, the survey data showed that there were at least 1373 incidents reported by the 144 respondents. The data, therefore, indicate that sexual harassment and violence was a reality experienced by a range of respondents, and that often this involved multiple and repeated negative and harrowing experiences.

The qualitative data, in the survey and interviews, also indicated that participants experienced a range of sexual, physical, verbal and emotional abuse, some of which was not easily definable within pre-existing categories, within this research and more broadly in the criminal justice system. As discussed in Chapter Five, Meredith's experience of being deceived into going to someone's halls of residence, being locked in the individual's room and being verbally harassed for not sexually complying with the perpetrator's assumptions, is an example of this. Whilst the verbal harassment Meredith experienced was clearly identified as a problem, being locked in the bedroom was the key moment that evening which incited her fear. Similarly, Nicola described her experiences in the university library where she overheard male students' sexually aggressive speech. Whilst this speech was not directed at her, or anyone in the library, this was still a moment in which she felt uncomfortable. Several survey respondents also utilised the optional qualitative comments box to highlight experiences, such as being followed home, or being offered drugs, followed by an attempted kiss by men in positions of power at the university, which were not captured within the pre-defined survey questions.

These experiences can be understood as part of what Kelly (1988) conceptualised as a continuum of sexual violence, which ranges from verbal harassment, to rape and murder. Importantly, as seen through Nicola's experience above, the violence and harassment does not need to be directly experienced in order to feel its negative and harmful repercussions. For Kelly (1988: 76), these incidents are connected, as there is a common character which underlies the various forms of sexual violence experienced which is the 'abuse, intimidation, coercion, intrusion, threat and force men use to control women'. Moreover, conceptualising the range of behaviours as part of a continuum allows for the documentation and naming of experiences of which 'there are no clearly defined and discrete analytic categories into which men's behaviour can be placed' (Kelly, 1998: 76), such as those described by Meredith and Nicola. Moreover, the complexity of women's responses to sexual violence, as discussed further below, demonstrates that incidents cannot be simplistically categorised as more or less serious in terms of their physical, emotional and psychological impact.

Whilst sexual violence was experienced by all demographic groups, the survey identified that age was an indicator of whether students had experienced several of the behaviours, with 18-23 year olds significantly more likely to report incidents compared with the 24+ category. Similarly, undergraduate students were more likely to report experiencing several behaviours compared with postgraduate students. Respondents age and undergraduate/postgraduate status are likely related in that the undergraduate students were also likely to be in the youngest, 18-23 category.

The qualitative data also highlighted that interviewees, both students and stakeholders referred to age, as well as level of study, as relevant to the prevalence of incidents. Some student interviewees referred to their first year of university as key. When moving to a new city and making friends, participants identified a pressure to fit in and

there was a broad understanding that 'fitting in' involved alcohol consumption and the night-time economy, a point which is discussed further below in terms of the discursive construction of the 'fun' university. The age of participants was also identified as a reason why behaviours might be minimised or as a barrier to reporting an incident. As Nicola noted, what she would have minimised as 'normal' when she was younger, would now be something which she questioned. Age, therefore, can be understood as contributing to the 'continuum of acceptability' (Sundaram, 2018: 31), as discussed in Chapter Four, whereby narratives of acceptability are constructed in relation to gendered norms and expectations of behaviour.

The student interviews also highlighted that a participant's sexuality was relevant to their experiences. Nicola felt that her experiences of sexual harassment were in part framed by her appearance and others' perception of her as gay. At the time of the interviews, she described her appearance as 'visibly lesbian' and discussed experiences where she was harassed on this assumption, which she thought reflected men's perceptions of her not being sexually available to them. This was particularly evident as she discussed a time before she 'presented as a lesbian', where she was harassed, she thought, on the basis that she was 'sexually available'. Mason (2001: 29) explored the ways in which 'homophobia-related violence functions through the relation between homosexuality and visibility'. She argued, in line with Kelly's (1998) continuum, that awareness of one's vulnerability, in this case as a lesbian, and the risk that homosexuality poses to personal safety, shapes practices of safety. Such practices include minimising and monitoring 'visible manifestations of sexuality' in public, through appearance, avoiding intimate expressions and avoiding certain areas (Mason, 2001: 32). Following the feminist poststructuralist observations in Chapter Two, whereby the body is understood as the location of inscription of power relations

(Cahill, 2000; Diamond and Quinby, 1988; Sawicki, 1990), the shaping of these practices of safety can be understood as bodily self-surveillance, the adaptation and alteration of behaviours, movements and appearance in order to avoid violence. Whilst at the time of the interview Nicola noted that she did not alter what she described as her 'visibly lesbian' appearance, her experiences of harassment were shaped by this appearance. However, as she noted, if she were to alter her appearance to conform to expected norms of femininity, she would experience harassment based on her gender, which is something she had experience of.

Therefore, Nicola's experiences highlight the array of behaviours which work to induce conformity to dominant gendered discourses, but that also, as a lesbian, alterations in visibility simply result in another form of harassment. Separating out and identifying harassment and violence on the basis of gender or sexuality is, however, not a straightforward task. As Duggan (2015) notes, because women, generally, are more likely to experience harassment, abuse and victimisation on the basis of their gender, it may be that lesbian and bisexual women who experience homophobic harassment, abuse and victimisation, view this 'as an extension of the gendered sexism or misogyny they experience as a *woman'* (Duggan, 2015: 1, emphasis in the original). Concerns for safety, therefore, are 'grounded in both a sense of vulnerability based on sexual preference and an awareness of a continuum of violence against women' (Mason, 1997:63).

In terms of the nature of the incidents, as uncovered through the survey, the findings are generally consistent with the wider literature in the general population (Myhill and Allen, 2004; Walby and Allen, 2004), as well as the student population (NUS, 2010), in that all experiences of rape and attempted rape, were perpetrated by men, and often by men known to the victim, although five incidents were perpetrated by strangers.

Three incidents took place in a more public setting, in a club, a taxi and on a university field trip, it is unclear exactly where the incident on the field trip took place. However, again consistent with the wider literature, the majority of incidents of rape and attempted rape took place in the participants' accommodation or someone else's accommodation (Myhill and Allen, 2002; NUS, 2010).

The Harm and Effects of Sexual Violence

The findings from this research demonstrate that there are a broad range of effects and harms which stem from experiences of sexual violence against women. In the survey, participants expressed a range of negative effects which resulted from their experiences. Participants noted the detrimental impacts on their education, such as difficulty concentrating on university and assessments and reduced attendance. There were participants who reported feeling numb and detached, had lost interest in daily activities, and felt embarrassed. In terms of health, participants reported that they had trouble sleeping, developed eating problems or disorders and/or increased their drug or alcohol use. Moreover, the effects of their experiences led some participants to be fearful and concerned about their safety and led some to feel anxious. The wide-ranging effects noted by the survey participants were supported by the student interviewees who expressed similar issues. Additionally, interviewees noted that, as a result of their fear and concern for safety, they developed strategies which resulted in self-discipline, specifically in terms of restrictions on their behaviour, the places they would go to as well as negative financial effects. Interview participants also noted a range of negative impacts on their mental health, including anxiety and PTSD. Finally, a point which was noted in the interviews, was the effects of the participants' experiences on their wider relationships, including with family, friends and partners. The findings, therefore, indicate that sexual violence impacts upon women students in

a range of ways and the effects of an incident extends beyond the incident itself. Understanding the effects of sexual violence, however, is not simple, in that they depend on the incident, the individuals involved, social and cultural norms and social and institutional responses. There are three dimensions to this process which emerged following feminist poststructuralist analysis: the dominance of trauma, sexual subjectivity and consent and violating and disciplining the sexual subject.

The dominance of trauma

Herman (1992: 33) outlined the experience of trauma, particularly as a response to sexual violence. She asserts:

> Psychological trauma is an affliction of the powerless. At the moment of trauma, the victim is rendered helpless by overwhelming force […] Traumatic events overwhelm the ordinary systems of care that give people a sense of control, connection and meaning.

Powerlessness and fear are understood as key dimensions in psychological trauma. Whilst, as Herman (1992) notes, traumatic events were previously understood to be uncommon, the rise in awareness of sexual and domestic violence, due to feminist research, has demonstrated that this is not the case and that it is in fact a common part of many women's lives. Therefore, what makes trauma extraordinary is not that traumatic events are rare, but because 'they overwhelm the ordinary human adaptations to life' (Herman, 1992: 33).

Burgess and Holmstrom (1979, cited in Briere and Jordan, 2004: 1259) outlined Rape Trauma Syndrome which, following an experience of rape, was experienced by the women participants in their study as a life threatening event, there were two phases, the acute phase which occurs immediately after being raped, and a reorganisational phase which occurs in the time that follows rape. Rape Trauma Syndrome involves

'anxiety and phobias, depression, anger, emotional and social withdrawal, sleep and eating disturbance, various signs of posttraumatic stress, self-blame, shame and guilt, somatization, and sexual dysfunction' (Burgess & Holmstrom, 1979 cited in Briere and Jordan, 2004: 1259).

The findings from this research have demonstrated that many of the participants experienced some, or several, of the effects described by both Herman (1992) and Burgess and Holmstrom (1979 cited in Briere and Jordan, 2004), although these effects were not necessarily connected to trauma by the participants. Audrey, who discussed in depth her experience of PTSD certainly experienced many of these symptoms and discussed the stages through which she had been recovering from PTSD.

Few participants, however, named trauma, specifically, as an effect of their experiences of sexual violence. Two survey participants did not note any negative feelings or consequences following an incident of rape, however, the majority did. Briere and Jordan (2004) state that treatment approaches to violence primarily focus on PTSD. However, they argue that there is a need for approaches which acknowledge the complexity of experiences of sexual violence. Gavey and Schmidt (2011: 433) note the dominance of the 'trauma of rape' discourse which centres on 'the contention that rape *is* traumatic, and depicts this trauma as unique, severe, long lasting, and in need of healing'. Whilst they acknowledge that this has developed positively as a 'more enlightened and sensitive framework' (Gavey and Schmidt, 2011: 433) than previous understandings, this still has potentially othering and stigmatising effects which also, importantly, can become another barrier for accessing support.

In this research, Audrey was the only participant who noted experiencing PTSD as a result of rape. Her experience aligned with discursively constructed norms of sexual violence in terms of the trauma of rape. Audrey was, also, the only participant who reported to the police and accessed the most support services. All other participants, who did not note trauma as an impact of their experience, but did experience a range of negative effects, did not as often utilise such mechanisms. The point that those who did not describe the effects of their experiences through the lens of trauma did not report the incident, or access as much of the available support, could potentially stem from their experience not conforming to the dominant discourses and understanding of what the impact of rape *should* be. Examining the issue through a feminist poststructuralist framework, therefore, highlights the ways in which personal experiences of sexual violation are modulated through this dominant framework for understanding rape, with the effect that there is a presumed impact of sexual violence and the furnishing 'of a set of idea or assumptions about what should happen afterwards' (Gavey and Schmidt, 2011: 445). This construction also relates to how the victim/survivor should feel and behave and, has the potential to effect whether victims/survivors access reporting and support mechanisms should they want to.

Vera-Gray (2019), moreover, argued that the dominance of the trauma discourse, as an effect of rape, might hide the broader effects and true extent of its harmful impact. The dominance of trauma, in discussions of and response to rape, she argues, 'can function to silence other forms of harm' (Vera-Gray, 2019: 1) due to rendering the problem and solution in the individual, rather than in cultural, social and structural dimensions. The result of this, is that less, or minimal, priority is granted to the need for social change. Essentially, looking at the issues through a trauma lens means that 'harm done *to* an individual becomes an illness *of* the individual' (Vera-Gray and

Fileborn, 2018: 81, emphasis in the original). However, the language of trauma is deemed necessary in order render intelligible, legitimate and, therefore, speakable, experiences of sexual violence (Vera-Gray and Fileborn, 2018). Moreover, as discussed above, the participants' range of experiences can be understood through Kelly's (1988) concept of a continuum, and a key element of this is the limitations of a delineative and hierarchical approach to understanding incidents. A singular focus on trauma means that, those incidents which are not as clearly aligned with trauma, that is those which are rape but do not involve physical violence and injury, reinforce the hierarchical approach, whereby everyday experiences of harassment may be minimised and disconnected from the more clearly criminal and condemnable behaviours.

Sexual subjectivity and the limitations of consent

As discussed in Chapter Five, participants experiences varied, and whilst all incidents discussed were viewed negatively as intrusions, violations, or something which the participants felt uncomfortable with, they did not always align these experiences with legal discourse, as a violation of consent.

In Sara's case, she expressed her decision to 'give in' to oral sex in the hope that she would then be left alone. This, however, was not the case and she went on to experience what she described as abuse, but what could also, legally, be termed rape. This was something which she did resist verbally while also trying to stop her clothes being removed. Firstly, therefore, she expressed consent to oral sex, but this was consent under 'not-so-subtle pressures and constraints' (Gavey, 2005: 146) in that it was done in order to be left alone in the hope that she would not be pressured into any further sexual activity. Consent, therefore, 'provides a low bar for sexual agency'

(Alcoff, 2018: 128). This is because, as Cahill (2001: 174) notes, the concept of consent 'rests in its simultaneous assumption of gender neutrality and its distinctly gendered application'.

Discourses of consent as ungendered fail to recognise structural inequalities and, therefore, the structures and situations in which an individual consents, or not (Cahill, 2001). As noted in Chapter Five, feminist poststructuralist insights have highlighted how heterosexed discourses which construct men as active and women as passive, put the onus on women to say yes to sex. However, as Gavey (2005: 138) argues, 'sexual imperatives are woven into [our] cultural knowledge about what having a boyfriend or being a girlfriend mean[s]' and, as discussed below, are also woven into our understandings of what 'normal' student behaviour is. Therefore, consent can just be a reflection of wanting to be viewed as 'normal'. However, whilst the constrained context, in Sara's situation discussed above, in which the decision to 'give in' and consent is important, the point that Sara also did not describe her subsequent experience as rape, but abuse, is important in terms of her agency. For Gavey (2005: 181), it is necessary to resist representing such accounts as the result of false consciousness and, instead, to theorise the potentially more nuanced accounts in order to 'illuminate the complex relationship between heterosexuality and rape'. Alcoff (2018) argues, therefore, that we should move away from a singular focus on the concept of consent as a valid way to indicate whether sexual violation has, or has not, occurred.

Given the wide-ranging effects outlined by participants in this research, whilst trauma and violations of consent were certainly relevant for some, it is important to also have a broader understanding which recognises the negative effects on the individuals sense of self, and subjective functioning, such as the impact on physical and emotional

health, their social, financial, educational lives. This research has shown that the sexual subjectivities of the participants were clearly affected by experiences and awareness of sexual violence. As Alcoff (2018: 111) states, sexual subjectivity is relational and interactive, it changes alongside experiences, is always in process and, therefore, is 'constitutively or intrinsically vulnerable'. Conceptualising the harm of sexual violation as negatively impacting on a subject's capacity for agency is also key to understanding experiences which do not as clearly violate consent (Alcoff, 2018).

Violating and disciplining the sexual subject

Sexual subjectivity, as highlighted in Chapter Two, is understood as involving 'a complex constellation of beliefs, perceptions, and emotions that inform our intrapsychic sexual scripts and affect our very capacity for sexual agency' (Alcoff, 2018: 111). Following feminist poststructuralist observations, sexual subjectivity does not relate to an innate sexual self, but an ongoing, historically and politically contingent process, interactive with others and environments. Sexual subjectivities also develop in the context of discourses produced about sexuality and should, therefore, be understood in relation to what is deemed 'normal' within particular historical, social and cultural contexts. Therefore, sexual subjectivity is produced by, 'immersed and shaped by systems of power and knowledge' (Cahill, 2020: 294).

As noted in Chapter Two, Alcoff (2018) argued that the term sexual violation is more appropriate than sexual violence. Sexual violation more adequately expresses the harms and consequences of violation on victims/survivors, particularly in terms of its impact on sexual subjectivity. Concern with sexual violations should consider consent, desire, will and agency but, most importantly, their 'inhibiting and transformative effects on sexual subjectivity or our self-making capacities' (Alcoff, 2018: 111). This

self-making relates to the ways in which sexual violations 'prohibit the active involvement of the subject in the development of their sexual subjectivity' (Cahill, 2020: 289). Therefore, when a violation to sexual subjectivity is posited as the harm of sexual violation, there is the opportunity to move beyond limited legalistic conceptualisations of the harms of sexual violence. Moreover, the term sexual violation, as a broader, less precise term, allows the flexibility for victims/survivors to name their own experiences in their own way.

Sexual violation also encompasses a wider range of experiences which, through dominant discourses, might not be understood by some to be violence, but which are felt as violations against sexual agency, subjectivity and will. This signals a move away from binary arguments surrounding whether violations are about power or sex, and includes experiences which do not involve physical force, but which do result in harm. Alcoff (2018: 12) states that:

> to violate is to infringe upon someone to transgress, and it can also mean to rupture or break. Violations can happen with stealth, with manipulation, with soft words and a gentle touch to a child, or an employee.

Alcoff's arguments are persuasive in the context of this research in which physical violence was not always present, but violations were common. As one survey participant noted:

> Men don't seem to think that touching you on the bum or saying sexual remarks is wrong. There does seem to be a type of acceptance in our culture but it still makes you feel violated and uncomfortable when they do.

The findings from this research align with Alcoff's conceptualisation and demonstrate that the term sexual violation can be used to develop the discussion on sexual violence and to broaden our understanding of its full impact and effects. For the remainder of this thesis, the terms sexual violation and sexual violence are both used, to

encompass the range of violations which were experienced by participants and to provide a broader framework for understanding the effects of the participants' experiences, as discussed below.

Bufacchi and Gilson (2016) argue for a shift from thinking about violence as an *act,* to violence as an *experience* in order to uncover and prioritise the effects on the victim and to acknowledge the temporally indeterminate nature of violence. They argue that focusing only on the violent act is perpetrator-centred, as it is considered only in the restricted parameters of when the perpetrator chose to commit an act of violence and what the intentions of that act were. However, violence can be better understood as something that 'starts as an act of violence, with a precise starting point and an end point, [but] evolves into an experience, with much broader and unclear boundaries'. For the victim or survivor, the violation 'lives on after the act has ceased' (Bufacchi and Gilson, 2016: 32). It also impacts on unintended victims of violence such as friends and family members for whom the violence also has negative harmful effects. Such consequences can be seen through the experiences of the students in this research, who detailed a range of effects, which developed and changed over time and, in the case of Sara, had an impact on her friends, particularly her friend who subsequently lost a friendship group as she supported Sara whilst the others in the group failed to do so.

The consequences, beyond the act or the victim, are a result of what Bufacchi and Gilson (2016: 34) term the 'ripples of the same act of violence'. Tombs (2019), moreover, addresses the ripples of social harm which follow specific events. He notes the importance of capturing:

> 'the various *dimensions* of social harms; to explore how these *unfold;* to note that these unfold in *ripples;* initially and perhaps most intensely within a specific

time and place […] but then disperse geographically and longitudinally' (Tombs, 2019: 1, emphasis in the original).

The effects of the women's experiences in this research can be understood as rippling. Participants most clearly noted physical, emotional and psychological harms due to their experiences. What followed from these psychological harms, particularly in Audrey's case, was a form of self-surveillance by which participants undertook 'safety work' (Vera-Gray, 2018: 11) such as always ensuring they were with someone they knew when in public, always keeping their phone in their hand or jingling their keys.

Cultural harms, meaning harms which are produced 'by having the ways of living to which they are accustomed or acculturated either disturbed or, literally, removed' (Tombs, 2019: 12), can also be seen through participants self-surveillance via changes to their behaviours, movements and education. For example, participants noted either actively choosing not to attend lectures in which sexual violence might be discussed or missing out on lectures because they no longer felt motivated to attend. Moreover, several participants chose not to attend night-time economy venues as a result of their experiences.

Relational harms (Pemberton, 2015) were clearly evidenced by participants being excluded from social relationships in cases where the perpetrator was a friend and, in Sara and Meredith's case, their experiences had the effect that they were reluctant to start new relationships. Moreover, clear harms of (mis)recognition (Pemberton, 2015) were evidenced through participants not being believed, this is discussed in further detail below in relation to testimonial injustice. Financial and economic harms were evidenced by Heidi who bought a car to avoid public places and particularly transport. There are also likely financial costs to the university, through students leaving and the need for increased funding for student support services.

As Tombs (2019) noted, these harms 'do not exist or unfold in a discrete sense – they are *layered,* they interact – often complexly – thus producing new or heightened levels of harm through their synergistic effects' (Tombs, 2019: 1-2, emphasis in the original). Psychological or emotional harms can interact with relational harms, for example, in cases where participants were not believed, as discussed below. This combines and compounds the harms experienced which reinforces Bufacchi and Gilson's (2016) conceptualisation of violence as an experience, rather than a singular act.

Buffachi and Gilson's (2016) analysis, of the temporally indeterminate nature of violation, and their, as well as Tombs' (2019) conceptualisation of the ripples of violence, are important in highlighting the multiple effects on victims and survivors which follow an incident. However, in the context of this research, feminist theorisations of sexual violation have addressed the important point that, it is not just the experience of sexual violation which has effects, but the awareness of the potential to experience violation, whether that has been experienced before or not (Vera-Gray, 2018). As noted in Chapter Four, some student respondents to the survey, who noted that they had not experienced sexual harassment or violence whilst at university, stated that they avoided certain places, spaces and particularly night-time economy venues, due to what they perceived as a lack of education and awareness of what constitutes sexual assault and due to conversations they had heard regarding consent.

Taking these multiple and synergistic layers and ripples into consideration, alongside feminist poststructuralist insights, the participants accounts demonstrated the operation of gendered disciplinary power. Not only did their experiences have clear psychological, emotional and physical effects, but the ripples which followed induced various gendered forms of self-surveillance. As noted in Chapter Two and demonstrated above, self-surveillance relates to bodies, movements, appearance and

the space which bodies take up (McLaren, 2002). The varied impacts of sexual violation were, therefore, connected to various modes of self-discipline and acted upon subjectivities through changing the way participants inhabited 'their bodies, neighbourhoods, families, social networks and lives' (Alcoff, 2018: 110). Feminist poststructuralism locates these subjectivities within 'the broader field of patriarchal power relations' (Weedon, 1987:75). Moreover, following Alcoff's (2018) argument for the broader term sexual violation, the varied modes of self-surveillance which are induced following experiences of sexual violence, can be understood as a further violation upon a person's subjectivity and agency, exemplified through the limitation on their self-making capacities.

The Discursive Construction of (Hetero)sex, 'Fun' and University Life

Within an feminist poststructuralist framework, as outlined in Chapter Two, the exercise of power, through discourses, produces different subjectivities which 'appear "natural" […] and gain their authority by appealing to common sense or dominant cultural values like reason or science' (Gavey, 2005: 85). This section considers the dominant discourses which operate within the university in relation to gender, (hetero)sexuality, and the 'fun' university experience.

Reproducing discourses of masculinity, femininity and (hetero)sex in the student population

Chapter Two discussed the development of discourses on sexuality, and the deployment of these discourses as a means of social control through promoting normative modes of sexuality (Foucault, 1978). Despite this, the student participants in this research at times problematised heteronormative constructions of masculinity and femininity, as discussed in Chapter Five. However, at times they also used this language when referring to their, and others', experiences of sexual violence. Firstly,

discursive constructions of men's sexuality, and a supposedly innate biological need for sex, were drawn upon to explain, and excuse, men's behaviour. Sara, and her friend, suggested that her abuser's 'high sex drive' provided and explanation as to why he abused her. Therefore, they utilised the dominant male sexual drive discourse, outlined and critiqued by Hollway (1984), to make sense of the experience, through portraying his behaviour as, at least in part, understandable within heteronormative constructions of masculinity.

Moreover, participants, particularly Sara, indicated that, whilst she thought men had a limited understanding of consent, this could be explained through a different approach to sex. She thought that men did not necessarily realise the lack of consent in certain situations and that *'they do it without realising'*. Moreover, in the qualitative space available in the survey, comments included: 'men don't seem to think it is wrong' and 'often people making comments do not see anything wrong with what they are saying'. Therefore, participants' depiction of the issues at times deflected responsibility away from individual perpetrators due to broader cultural issues with gendered understandings of consent. As discussed in Chapter Two, these dominant discourses reinforce relations of power in which 'women's choice and control in heterosex are potentially compromised' (Gavey, 2005: 98). The effect of these discourses is that women are positioned as passive subjects, expected to comply with men's sexual desires, which ultimately provides the 'cultural scaffolding' (Gavey 2005: 3) in which sexual violence occurs.

Participants also noted the expectations they felt due to being women, in terms of being pressured into sex, but also in being a sexual gatekeeper. Meredith and Nicola, in the student interviews, both described experiences where they felt pressured into sex due to situations that they were in, such as being in the same bedroom or bed.

Meredith was called a 'fat bitch', told to 'fuck off' and had money 'thrown at her' simply because she did not comply with this person's expectations that she would have sex with him. His expectation was based on the fact that she was in his bedroom. Burgin and Flynn (2019: 5) highlight the issue of implied consent, in which 'women's ordinary behaviour is systematically (re)constructed as implying consent to sex'. They discuss these narratives in the context of the rape trial, whereby the implication is that, had the victim/survivor behaved differently, the perpetrator would not have misread the situation and assumed consent. This is also relevant in the broader context, outside of the trial, as demonstrated through Meredith's experience. As Burgin and Flynn (2019: 3) note, the notion of implied consent, 'absolves the perpetrator from culpability'. This, therefore, reinforces dominant discourses of who can and cannot be a victim or perpetrator and further reproduces victim blaming narratives.

Following feminist poststructuralist arguments, the subject positions available for women within these dominant discourses of heterosexuality are limited and, as Gavey (2005) notes, provide the context in which women make decisions about sex. The following section considers the discursive construction of 'fun' university life and its effects on these already limited subject positions.

The 'fun' university experience

As outlined in Chapter Two and above, discourses of (hetero)sex operate to establish and reproduce power relations which limit the subject positions available to all, set up the conditions which Gavey (2005: 2) terms the 'cultural scaffolding of rape', and reinforce dominant understandings of sexual violence which are, or are not, rendered intelligible. Discourses operate, and are reproduced, through social institutions (Gavey, 2005) and the particular context of the university is key to understanding how

these discourses operate. Dominant discourses of (hetero)sex, which operate in wider society, also operate, and are reproduced, in the university. The findings in this research have, however, also demonstrated that dominant discourses on university life, 'fun' and 'normal' student behaviours further limit the available subject positions for students as to whether they conform to these behaviours, and, also, can be understood as part of Gavey's (2005) cultural scaffolding. As noted above, Gavey (2005: 138) argued that dominant discourses frame our understanding of what having a boyfriend or girlfriend means, and, as discussed below, these sexual imperatives are also woven into our understandings of what 'normal' student behaviour is.

Grant (1997) argued, in Foucauldian terms, that the university is saturated with relations of power, in which the 'good', docile and useful student subject is produced. She pointed out that students are disciplined 'both by the institution and by themselves to become more like the norm of the "good" student' (Grant, 1997: 101). Whilst she argued this in terms of the 'good' student, academically, in which the normalised student is the competitive student within 'a culture of autonomy and individualism' (Grant, 1997: 110), her analysis has relevance to this poststructuralist feminist research in terms of the discourses and production of the 'good' social student. Dominant discourses about university life, and its social aspects, produce a range of subject positions, constituting students as within or outside of these discourses. Such discourses operate within and outside of the institution, during and prior to student enrolment.

As Joanna discussed in Chapter Six, during student induction, she received a lot of information about events, how to buy wristbands and tickets for student nights, but little about the support services available in the institution. Moreover, representations in the media often portray the social aspect of student life solely as 'wild parties and

sex' (Griffiths, 2020: 1) with organisations such as Student Beans undertaking a national Student Sex Survey (Student Beans, 2020). The NUS (2012) also found that participants expressed a pressure to engage in a high frequency of sexual activity and to consume alcohol.

Moreover, advertising for student nights reproduces the discourse that normal student life is about heavy alcohol consumption and sex. However, often, this advertising includes evidently sexist language used to describe such events, as documented by Phipps (2015). In addition to discourses which present university social life as purely built around alcohol and sex, there are the various examples of advertising which directly refers to sexual assault such as Cardiff Metropolitan University's Student Union advertising a student night with an image of a T-shirt which read, 'I was raping a woman last night and she cried' (Williams, 2013). Moreover, the events company Tequila UK organised a night called 'Freshers' Violation' in which the promotional video questioned a girl: 'How are you going to survive violation tonight?' and, in the same video, a male student stated that he was going to rape someone, whilst another thought that violate was too a strong word, but that he was 'going to take advantage of someone' (Sherriff, 2013: 1). It has been argued that night-time economy venues are using 'lad culture' as a business model (Sherriff, 2014). As Phipps and Whittington (2015, cited in Stenson, 2020: 99) note:

> 'behaviours attributed to "lad culture" can often constitute sexual harassment. Although this does not necessarily cause more extreme forms of sexual violence, student communities where sexual boundaries are routinely crossed may be conducive to sexual assault and rape'.

Gunby et al. (2017) explored the role and value of sexual violence prevention campaigns, directed at men, within licensed, night-time economy venues. They concluded that, whilst bars and clubs are important venues for the promotion of rape

prevention discourses, the nature of these venues, with sexualised drinks advertising as well as explicitly violent advertising, which they argue 'links alcohol and intoxication with sexual offending' (Gunby et al., 2017: 329), undermines the message of prevention campaigns which challenge sexual offending. Moreover, sexualised and sexually violent advertising 'feeds into a climate that constrains nights out and helps to normalise unwanted sexual touching within licensed spaces' (Gunby et al., 2017: 329).

There are, therefore, competing discourses which operate around student life, with a clear emphasis on the good social student taking part in alcohol consumption, sex and the night-time economy. Whilst this is certainly a part of student life for some, and is not problematic for many, there are, however issues with the dominance of these discourses. Firstly, as noted above, Gunby et al (2017) argue that advertising around alcohol and the night-time economy, for students, often links alcohol with sexual offending. Secondly, the dominance of the discourse that 'normal', social student life involves intoxication, which often, or at least should, result in sex with multiple people, severely limits the acceptable subject positions for students to take up. The students who took part in this research, in the context of their experiences of sexual violence, felt the need to 'fit in' with other students, to display the same behaviours, and to demonstrate that they were the same as their peers. For the most part, this meant a social life built around the night-time economy, alcohol consumption, accepting 'lad culture' as a normal part of university life and avoiding being viewed as antisocial by other students. As noted above, taking part in these 'normal' student behaviours, had the effect that participants felt pressured into having sex with someone, because someone was in her flat, bed or because she had previously seemed interested in that person.

Several interviewees mentioned that these issues were amplified during freshers' week and freshers' fortnight. The stakeholder interviewees also referred to some of these issues, particularly wanting to fit in and issues with freshers' week, noting that there was an increase in reported incidents of sexual violence during this time. The findings here demonstrate that, due to the limitations on subject positions, there was a fear of being ostracised for not taking part. Those who felt pressured to present themselves as the 'good' social student put themselves in positions in which they did not always feel comfortable. The pressure to fit in also has an effect after an initial incident of sexual violence has taken place, as Heidi noted, the pressure to fit in meant that she 'brushed aside' her rape because she did not want to 'draw attention to herself'.

In Grant's (1997) analysis of the discursive production of the 'good' academic student, discussed above, she draws upon Foucault's analysis of the exercise of power to demonstrate the ways in which students resist the dominant discourses of the competitive student. Foucault (1986 cited in Grant, 1997: 111) states 'it would not be possible for power relations to exist without points of insubordination which, by definition, are means of escape'. Several of the participants in this research resisted these dominant discourses of 'fun' student life and did not conform to the limitations placed upon them. For those who did address the issue of resisting these norms, this came after at least one experience of sexual violence and after some time had passed. Participants, as noted in Chapter Five, reflected on the fact that age and education had an impact on this.

Lewis and Marine (2018a: 129) explored the role of university feminist communities in helping students involved to 'find a voice'. Three of the participants in the student interviews explicitly mentioned their involvement in the Feminist Society as developing

their understanding and awareness of sexual violence. They felt that being involved helped them to find likeminded people and also helped them work through their own experiences. Again, in relation to feminist poststructuralism, the temporary, and shifting nature of subjectivity is highlighted in that, it is dependent upon available discourses which are open to challenge. The Feminist Society, therefore, created a space in which participants were able to take up a subject position, which was subversive and countered the dominant discourses on what a good social student should be like, but, which was acceptable within that particular space.

Overall, when the institutional context and discursive constructions of the 'fun' university are considered, gendered, heterosexed discourses of men as sexually aggressive and women as passive are amplified in order to promote and sustain dominant notions of 'fun', a process which limits further the subject positions available to women students. Moreover, discourses on 'normal' masculinity, femininity and (hetero)sex are amplified in the environment where 'fun' is viewed within the limited parameters of alcohol, sex and the night-time economy. Therefore, whilst following the feminist poststructuralist argument outlined in Chapter Two, that dominant discourses of (hetero)sexuality reinforce gender relations of power, so too do dominant discourses of 'normal', 'fun' university life.

This chapter so far has addressed the exercise of power and the gendered disciplinary practices which constitute sexed and gendered bodies and subjectivities within the context of the university. Foucault's (1978) conceptualisation of the relational dynamic of power and resistance, however, accounts for the possibilities for resistance and, as outlined in Chapter Two, speaking out about sexual violence is one way in which this can be achieved. It is to a consideration of the context in which participants spoke out, and their testimonies were heard, which this chapter now turns.

'Truth' and Testimonial Injustice

The self, subjectivity and autonomy are, as Cahill (2001), Alcoff (2018) and Brison (2002) argue, fundamentally relational. Whilst, as Brison (2002: xi) notes, the self is 'capable of being undone by violence, [it is also capable] of being remade in connection with others'. Alcoff (2018) discusses the way in which subjectivity is affected and constituted through relations with others, but also, importantly, through relations with social institutions. The feeling that institutions will not intervene to provide protection or justice, for Alcoff (2018: 120) means that sexual violation, not only 'changes [our] relation to [ourselves], but the social context that protects rapists'. The context in which students speak out about sexual violence, and the effects of this, is considered below.

The research participants outlined a range of issues when they were either making the decision to tell someone about their experience, or, after they told someone about their experience. Stakeholder interviewees noted that a priority for the institution should be that students felt supported and believed. Despite this, the students surveyed and interviewed noted that concern that they would not be believed was a factor in not reporting or disclosing an incident and several participants noted that they were not believed when they did make a report or a disclosure.

As discussed in Chapter Two, speaking out about experiences of sexual violence generates a range of possibilities in terms of resistance, such as 'breaking the silence' (Bass and Davis, 1988: 92), uncovering the discursive production of particular subjectivities, insurrecting subjugated knowledge and challenging dominant conceptions of the 'truth' about sexual violence. Speaking out, however, also inscribes that speech, and the speaker, into hegemonic structures and prevailing beliefs about sexual violence and dominant structures of subjectivity (Alcoff and Gray, 1993).

Feminist poststructuralist contributions to issues of language, discourse and the construction of sexuality have demonstrated that, when speaking out about sexual violence, the ways in which claims are rendered intelligible, or not, relates to the discursive formation resulting from rape cultures (Alcoff, 2018). That is, dominant discourses set out who can be a victim, a perpetrator and, how, when and where sexual violence can be spoken about and considered plausible (Alcoff, 2018).

Chapter Two also outlined that an issue which women faced when attempting to speak out about sexual violation was their perceived lack of credibility. Philosophical, legal and psychological and medical discourses operate to discredit women who speak out about sexual violation and, as discussed below, can be understood through the feminist poststructuralist concept of discursive tricks (Smart, 1999). The findings, moreover, show that in addition to these issues, dominant discourses on neoliberalism and 'normal' university life, also discredit women in what can be understood as a further violation of their subjectivity and their position as a knower.

If 'discourse is the power to be seized' (Foucault, 1981: 52), and if speaking out can be understood as a form of resistance, the experience of testifying to sexual violence in different contexts needs to be understood. Through the production of sexed bodies, and the operation of discourses which frame sexual subjectivities, testimonies of sexual violation are discredited in a range of contexts resulting in epistemic injustices (Fricker, 2007). Testimonial injustice, as outlined in Chapter Three, is discussed below in relation to its various forms and the experiences of the research participants.

Testimonial injustice

The ways in which some of the women's accounts of sexual violation, in this research, were responded to can be understood as testimonial injustices. Specifically, credibility

deficits follow testimonies of sexual violence due to the constitution of the sexed body around the mind/body dualism. The woman who testifies to sexual violence receives a diminished level of credibility through the construction of her as ruled by her body, rather than the masculine trait of reason, with the result that women are disbelieved. In the case of Sara, after confronting her friend who abused her, he constructed a story where what had occurred was consensual, that they had both wanted to have sex with the implication that she was not thinking rationally about what had occurred. He stated that it is not something that he would do, a statement that was more believable to their friends than Sara's account. Therefore, Sara was positioned as less credible. Fricker's (2007) argument that negative credibility judgements are more likely to occur when an individual is deemed less competent in 'knowing' is clearly relevant in terms of accounts of sexual violation. The hysterical woman who is not in control of reason, due to being ruled by her body, is not someone who can understand and testify to her own experiences 'clearly' or 'honestly'.

Credibility judgements are, moreover, filtered through medical and psychological discourses. As discussed in Chapter Two, these discourses are inherent within the criminal justice process and further discredit victims, through denying the possibility of an incident actually taking place and through portraying those testifying as liars or hysterical. In this research, medical discourses were evident. In the case of Sara, when explaining why she chose not to report the incident to the police, the discursive construction of 'real rape', based on medical discourses and the 'typical' bodily signs of rape (Lees, 1997: 84), affected her decision which resulted in her not reporting the incident due to it not conforming to these dominant discourses.

Furthermore, credibility judgements can be made based on a testimony's closeness to, or deviation from, discursively constructed norms of sexual violence and beliefs

about how a 'real' victim would respond. Only one participant of the 144 survey respondents, and one interviewee out of five, reported an incident to the police and no respondents used the university reporting mechanisms. When incidents are not reported immediately, this is used as justification to cast doubt on the person reporting (Smith and Skinner, 2017). For many participants in this research, however, the reality was that they did not think that anything would be done or that they would not be believed. Due to the 'real rape' stereotypes, as discussed in Chapter Two, and participants' awareness of the limitations and credibility judgements which follow engagement with the criminal justice system, they often chose not to report their experiences. This was also cited as a reason, by some participants, as why they chose not to report an incident to their university. This shows that, not only can credibility judgements have a negative impact following a testimony of sexual violation, but awareness of these can impact on the levels of reporting.

In terms of the discursive construction of 'real rape', testimonies of sexual violation which are not too distant from Gavey's (2005: 3) conceptualisation of 'just sex' (Gavey, 2005: 3), which fit within common sense discourses on masculine and feminine (hetero)sexuality, are drawn upon to judge the honesty of the testimony and the credibility of the testifier. For example, an argument often put forward to justify low conviction rates for sexual violence, particularly those incidents which do not conform to 'real rape' stereotypes, is that such cases often lack evidence, witnesses, corroboration and are judged most often on two testimonies (Lees, 1997). The credibility of these testimonies, of the woman complainant, and the man who is accused are, however, held to a different standard when discourses on sexuality, and dominant discourses of femininity which depict women as liars and hysterical, are considered.

As noted in Chapter Six, one of the stakeholders involved in the creation of policy at the university, was concerned with the level of 'vexatious complaints' which, again, reproduced dominant discourses of women as liars, particularly in relation to claims of sexual violation, despite evidence to the contrary (Kelly et al., 2005). Tuerkheimer (2017) outlines recurring presumptions in the legal process when a woman makes an accusation of rape, that she is malicious and vindictive, that she is lying due to a feeling of regret following sexual activity, or that she is incapable of assessing whether she consented due to intoxication. Each of these presumptions result in a credibility deficit. Therefore, whilst the mind/body dualism functions to discredit a woman as being without reason, as not in control or competent, discourses of women as liars, work to further compound negative credibility judgements.

In relation to epistemic judgements, Medina (2011) outlined the importance of the contextual role of hierarchy. Whilst Fricker's (2007) analysis focuses on exchanges where a speaker undeservedly receives a diminished level of credibility, Medina (2011) outlines the importance of undeserved epistemic privileges, rooted in patterns of social relations (Medina, 2011: 15). Therefore, he focuses attention on excess credibility, its effect on testimonial injustice and argues that there are hierarchies of credibility in varying contexts. The excess credibility afforded to dominant group members, within a particular context, results in testimonial injustice for those considered subordinate group members within that same context. Credibility can therefore be viewed as relational and temporal. Importantly, such credibility judgements of a speaker do not happen in a vacuum and 'credibility is not undermined independently of the credibility of those around' the speaker (Medina, 2011: 23-24). As discussed above, Sara, who was abused by her friend, was not believed by her friendship group. The relational element is of importance in that, it is not just the fact

that she was disbelieved, but also that her male friend who abused her, was believed. Disbelieving Sara was directly related to her male friend being believed. He was believed because 'he is such a nice guy, you don't expect it from him' and Sara even partly excused his behaviour because 'he has a very high sex drive and is very flirtatious'. As Connell (1995) pointed out, femininity is always constructed against masculinity and, therefore, dominant discourses around masculinity, in terms of men's reason and rationality, and in Sara's case, men having an uncontrollable sexuality, also operate to not only to give surplus credibility to the man who is accused, but to discredit the woman.

Manne (2017) argued that hierarchy and ideology are crucial in understanding the political basis of credibility assessments. She stated that credibility deficits, and surplus credibility, serve to strengthen a dominant group's social position and, therefore, testimonial injustice can be understood as the preservation of social hierarchy. The findings in this research suggest that, in relation to sexual violence, this preservation is an effect of normalising discourses. Testimonial injustices occurred as a result of dominant discourses on gender, sexuality and 'normal' university life as outlined above. The power of, for example, legal, medical, psychological and philosophical discourses, stereotypes of 'real rape' and expectations of 'normal' behaviour following sexual violence, as outlined in Chapter Two and demonstrated in the research findings, serve to strengthen particular discursive frameworks and regimes. The deployment of these varied but dominant discourses can be understood as what Smart (1999: 404) terms, the 'discursive trick', as discussed in Chapter Two. Dominant discourses which shift the blame from perpetrators and deny the credibility of victims, determine the criteria through which naming and testifying to sexual violence is interpreted.

Within the university, therefore, a 'truth' about sexual violence is constructed in which individuals and their testimonies can be designated and considered as less credible. The construction of this 'general politics of truth' (Foucault, 1994: 131), as discussed in Chapter Two, serves to distinguish between statements designated as true or false and, therefore, those which function as true or false. In relation to sexual violence, this 'truth' constructs, constitutes and limits what can be said, who can articulate and what is accepted, and not accepted, about victims, perpetrators and experiences in different contexts.

Testimonial Injustice and Institutions

Testimonial injustices exist and operate within the university. As demonstrated above, and in Chapter Five, participants noted that they were not believed in various situations, for example when speaking to a lecturer about their experience. Survey and interview respondents often stated that they did not report because they thought they would not be believed, an assumption based on their awareness of rape myths and the lack of credibility afforded to women who speak out about sexual violence.

Institutionally, the opportunity for epistemic injustice is built into university policies on the issue of sexual violence. Through the inclusion of the issue of 'vexatious complaints' within the policy, vexatious complaints are constructed as a common and prevalent issue, despite evidence to the contrary (Kelly et al., 2005). It has been argued that, when analysing policy, there is a need for a shift in 'focus from "problem" *solving,* to "problem" *questioning'* (Bacchi, 2014: vii). Essentially this shift means interrogating the ways in which policies, and the proposals for change inherent within them, represent the problem (Bacchi, 2014). The creation of the policy on sexual violence within the university can be viewed as a positive step, through

acknowledgement of the issue and responding to what is defined as a problem. However, viewing the policy through Bacchi's (2014) lens, reveals that the inclusion of a section on 'vexatious complaints' further reproduces the discourse of women as liars and that vexatious complaints are common, despite evidence to the contrary (Kelly et al., 2005).

In terms of the criminal justice system, as noted in the previous chapter, underreporting, attrition, the prevalence of rape myths and the limitations of legal reforms have led to some concluding that the criminal justice system is not adequate to provide justice. The findings in the research demonstrate that very few students reported their experiences to the university, to the police and many did not disclose to student support services or services which were available external to the university. Whilst the findings show that several participants in the survey did not report an incident to these services because they did not think the incident was serious enough to report, many participants also did not report for reasons which locate the problem within these services themselves. For example, across the survey and interviews, some students stated that they did not report to the university or the police because they felt they would not be believed, that they did not know where to go or who to tell, that they did not think anything would be done, that they did not think it was the university's responsibility. The lack of trust in the university, and the criminal justice system, is perhaps understandable considering media attention on the failure of universities and the police, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and the courts to adequately respond to reports of sexual violence, as outlined in Chapter One.

Whilst Fricker's (2007) outline of epistemic injustice acknowledges injustice at the individual and structural levels, Anderson (2012) argues that her suggestions for tackling such injustice rely on individual virtue. Anderson (2012), therefore, argues for

epistemic justice as a virtue of social institutions, rather than simply individual hearers. For her, 'testimonial exclusion becomes structural when institutions are set up to exclude people without anyone having to decide to do so' (Anderson, 2012: 166). An understanding of the structural level of epistemic injustice is required, for Anderson (2012), because firstly, individual epistemic virtues might not be effective in tackling individual epistemic injustices because people might not be aware how much their prejudice is affecting their credibility judgements. Secondly, structural epistemic injustices are more pervasive than acknowledged in Fricker's work and require structural responses. For example, in terms of poverty, individual epistemic virtue 'plays a comparable role to the practice of individual charity in the context of massive structural poverty' (Anderson, 2012: 171). She argues, therefore, that a reconfiguring of epistemic institutions should be a priority, in order to prevent the injustice in the first place.

Discussions of the functions of epistemic justice, and the systematic or structural nature of credibility judgements and identity prejudices, have focused on its ideological functions (Manne, 2017). This research identifies the issues of sexual violation and epistemic injustice at the discursive level. Addressing epistemic injustice, at the structural level, therefore, requires critique and action at the level of discourse. As this research has demonstrated, discursive constructions of gender, masculinity, femininity and (hetero)sex are amplified in the context of the university where norms of student behaviour operate to limit the available subject positions for women students, discipline those who step outside the dominant discourses and construct and minimise their experiences of sexual violation. When testifying to their experiences, their stories are filtered through hegemonic discourses of sexual violence which, at best render these experiences unintelligible, at worst, construct those students as liars. This is one

further stage in the violation of the subjective functioning of students who have experienced sexual violence. The following section considers the ways in which power is exercised through universities, and how this can be, and has been, resisted.

The Institutional Operation of Power

So far, this chapter has indicated that, in terms of experiencing and testifying to sexual violation, it is not just what is said that is of importance, but also the discourses and frameworks through which experiences and testimonies are interpreted. These discourses and frameworks differ across institutions, although with some persistent, common themes, resulting in different, social constructions of sexual violence, victims and perpetrators and different responses to what might or might not be perceived as an issue that needs to be institutionally addressed. There are two dimensions to this; the role, place and ideological construction of the neoliberal university and connecting criminal justice and institutional justice.

The Role, Place and Ideological Construction of the Neoliberal University

Universities, as institutions, are instruments of discourses and power relations. For Foucault, institutions are 'instruments for the finer, more elemental workings of power' (Caputo and Yount, 1993: 4). Foucault (1986) also argued that institutions should be analysed from the standpoint of power relations, rather than power relations being analysed from the standpoint of institutions. Overall, 'the fundamental point of anchorage [of power relations], even if they are embodied and crystallized in an institution, is to be found outside the institution' (Foucault, 1986: 222).

In relation to universities, they operate in a neoliberal, marketised and corporatised societal context (Brady, 2012; Brooks et al., 2016; Ozga, 2008). Brady (2012: 344) states that power has been relocated away from the academy to the marketplace,

which has resulted in 'a utilitarian preoccupation with extrinsic outcomes'. In relation to sexual violation, for Phipps and Young (2015b: 2), these neoliberal values are 'reshaping the retro-sexist behaviours which have been identified in student social and sexual life', and that the noeliberalisation of higher education is connected to student 'lad cultures'. The connection between neoliberalism and 'lad culture' is exemplified through neoliberal systems of monitoring such as grading women on their attractiveness and sexual scoring matrices (Phipps and Young, 2015b). This connection, therefore, produces further subjectivities, which reflect not only certain forms of masculinity, but also the culture of neoliberalism itself. Several of such forms of behaviour were identified by the participants in this research, particularly framed around 'lad culture' and the 'culture at university'. The findings, however, also demonstrated that neoliberal, marketised and corporatised discourses affected the way in which universities were responding to sexual violation and how prevention initiatives were framed and developed. In Chapter Six, Joanna in particular highlighted this as an issue, arguing that the university prioritised profit and a marketised approach to education resulting in the university operated as a business first. However, she also noted that, in this context, the university was not providing an adequate level of support services for students.

Neoliberal governmentality operates via discourses of responsibility and risk management. In relation to sexual violation, gendered discourses of responsibility and risk management, were evident in university prevention initiatives. It is important to note that, as highlighted in Chapter Six, several stakeholders acknowledged issues with framing the question of sexual violation around discourses of safety and the need for students to protect themselves. There were, however, interviewees who, in Chapter Six, noted prevention initiatives which were centred on the perceived risk of sexual

violence for women students and were based on safety tips, advising students on how to stay safe. Therefore, despite explicit contestation of such discourses, they were still evident. Such prevention initiatives constructed the issue as being in the body of women students, and the 'risk' as a result of their existence in public spaces, particularly in the night-time economy. Stringer (2014: 2) suggested that 'the ideal neoliberal citizen' is someone who takes responsibility for protecting themselves against the risk of victimisation and, therefore, the effect of such discourses is the responsibilisation of women students. As discussed in Chapter Two, and evidenced above, feminist poststructuralist insights have shown how gendered discourses on women's bodies as dangerous and violable induce individual discipline and self-surveillance. In line with this, students discussed the multiple forms of 'safety work' (Kelly, 2013; Vera-Gray, 2018), which they undertook to try to avoid sexual violation, such as always keeping their phone in their hand, always being with someone that they knew when in public spaces, not going to certain places which were perceived as risky, buying a car to avoid public transport and jingling their keys. The effects of these gendered discourses are compounded when, as Stringer (2014) argues, neoliberalism replaces the concept of structural oppression with personal responsibility. Rather than sexual violation being understood as a result of the operation of power and gender inequality, it is explained through a lack of personal responsibility. Overall, neoliberal definitions of victimisation and sexual violations are 'profoundly depoliticizing' (Stringer, 2004: 3).

Gendered discourses on risk, therefore, ensure women students are responsibilised to take care of themselves, watch their drinks and to be alert to danger. Not only does this place limitations upon their bodies, movements and choices but, as noted in Chapter Two, failure to adequately self-discipline and take responsibility for their own

safety, plays a role in determining the extent of the woman's perceived 'culpability' in the violation she experiences (Ballinger, 1997: 123). These discourses of responsibility and risk are, however, in tension with the dominant discourses on university life. As noted above, 'normal' student life is constructed as involving alcohol, wild parties and sex, all of which are deemed 'risky' behaviours under gendered discourses of women's responsibility for their own safety. The norms of 'normal' student life are, therefore, for women, in direct conflict with the norms of 'good' feminine behaviour. Feminist poststructuralist analysis highlights that these competing discourses produce constrained subject positions and choices available to women, again, constituting them as within or outside of accepted norms, however, this conflict also means that there is no clear, acceptable, subject position for women students.

Further to the effect that neoliberal discourses responsibilise women students and construct them as within or outside of acceptable norms, these discourses operate to shift the focus, and therefore the responsibility, away from the institution. The responsibilisation of women students to 'protect' themselves from the risk of victimisation deflects attention away from the role of the institution in supporting the discourses which provide the cultural scaffolding of sexual violation. Moreover, in responding to the issues of sexual violation on campus, universities have focused on the creation of policies, legalistic responses and reporting mechanisms which, for Lewis and Marine (2019: 1284) 'appear to have fallen victim to neoliberal commodification'.

The stakeholders in this research were involved in a range of work, but there was a clear focus for some on the importance of policy development and mechanisms for reporting. Ahmed (2012) explored the role and effects of the language of equality and diversity and the experiences of those doing diversity work in universities. She argued

that equality often becomes a performance indicator, and that institutional commitment to equality becomes a 'paper trail' and 'tick box exercises' which 'do nothing to bring about the effect they name' (Ahmed, 2012: 17). Such approaches, such as writing policies, allow institutions 'to "show" that they are following procedures but are not really "behind" them'. She argues that by showing or stating that they are committed to diversity, institutions are then able to not commit to diversity. What are presented as commitments to diversity, can be understood as 'non performatives' (Ahmed, 2012: 116), that is, actions or performances which do not bring about what they name. Therefore, in the context of this research, through producing a policy on sexual harassment and violence outlining the university's position and process of responding to the issues, the existence of this policy creates the opportunity for the institution to demonstrate that they are committed to change. However, the ability to demonstrate this commitment through the existence of the policy can have paradoxical effects, as the policy can then be used to deny that there is a problem.

The stakeholders in this research seemed genuinely committed to addressing the issue of sexual violation on campus, more than performatively. They acknowledged a problem and were working to create change. However, it is the broader institutional, neoliberal context which impeded some of this work. As Ahmed (2012) notes, a document and statement of commitment needs to be supplemented with other and further work to address the issues, and develop other forms of institutional pressure such as reminders from committed staff, resources and funding, all of which were limited. Elizabeth, who played a leadership role in student services, thought that the creation of policies was important. Whilst she agreed with the point that policies, on their own, would not create transformational change, she felt she was able to use a policy to then lobby for the further work and action that needed to be taken in order to

create real change. Whilst this demonstrates a commitment on her part, it also highlights the limited institutional commitment as there was still a requirement from committed individuals to take the work further beyond policy creation. The neoliberal agenda, overall, runs counter to a transformative, feminist agenda due to individualising discourses being incompatible with collective feminist struggles for social justice (Weber, 2010).

Connecting criminal justice and institutional justice

The failures of the criminal justice system in responding to women's reports of sexual violence have been well documented (Centre for Women's Justice, 2019; Madigan and Gamble, 1989; Meloy and Miller, 2010; Temkin and Krahé, 2008; Walby et al, 2015). Given the operation of power through criminal justice and state institutions more generally, some feminists have engaged with the state, its institutions, and practices, to different extents, in order to challenge the operation and exercise of patriarchal power. Despite the contradictions with this engagement, discussed below in relation to institutionalisation and co-optation, feminists have been able to achieve reforms to policy and legislation in relation to sexual violence and violence against women. Notwithstanding this range of reforms, as Ballinger (2009) asserted, such changes have done little, if anything, to reduce the extent of sexual violence. She argues that when the failures of the state to respond to sexual violence are conceptualised as a '"legitimacy deficit"… that the law is faulty and in need of reform', they are removed from 'the structural context of the heteropatriarchal social order which feminists have identified as being responsible for gendered violence in the first place' (Ballinger, 2009: 4). The social context and the power of the law, which make sexual violence routine, Ballinger (2009) argues, therefore remains effectively unchanged. This can also be said for university policies, when neoliberal solutions solely come in the form of

monitoring mechanisms, statements of commitment and legalistic responses, the root cause of the problem, that is the context of gendered and structural inequality, and the student 'lad culture' of masculinity, remains veiled and effectively unchallenged.

Lees (1997: 175) noted the 'profound scepticism' around researching state institutions and particularly, the legal system. She argued that, through engaging with the law, feminists 'invariably concede too much' (Lees, 1989: 175). Smart (1989: 138), as discussed in Chapter Two, also argued that feminists should resist being 'too easily "seduced" by the law' as, through resorting to the law for empowerment, liberation or justice, 'women risk invoking a power that will work against them rather than for them' (ibid). Therefore, resisting the law is necessary in order to avoid being drawn onto the terrain of its masculine and positivistic requirements and traditions. Through engaging with the law, feminists are 'tacitly accepting the significance of law in regulating the social order' (Smart, 1989: 161) and therefore, further empowering the legal response to sexual violence and the dominant discourses surrounding this response.

Smart (1989: 161) moreover argues for resistance to law due to its 'juridogenic nature'; the potential to produce more harms through the exercise of law, thereby ostensibly creating the need for more law. Given the operation of legal discourses which limit the ability for women to testify to the harms of sexual violence, which, as noted in Chapter Two, discredit those testifying and limit opportunities to achieve criminal 'justice', the law creates its own and further harms. Smart (1989) was also concerned with the extension of the power of law and the system of knowledge which is enhanced by its extension into new modes of regulation and disciplinary mechanisms. Finally, she argues for the decentring of law, to resist ad hoc strategies which empower legal responses to sexual violence and maintain the status quo. Her suggestion is not that the law should not be engaged with, it should, because sexual violence is already in

the legal domain, therefore 'it must be addressed on that terrain' (Smart, 1989: 49). Instead, rather than focusing on reform, the law should be challenged on the grounds that it has the 'power to define and disqualify' (Smart, 1989: 164). Feminism's focus on the power of the law should, therefore, be to redefine law's 'truth', through the development and articulation of feminist knowledge.

Smart's arguments can be applied to the context of the university and the power of the discourses which are (re)produced through the institution. For example, as discussed above, the inclusion of 'vexatious complaints' within the university's student conduct policy, positions this as a significant issue, brings into effect a 'truth' about sexual violence, therefore, the context and discursive production of gendered inequality is reproduced. The challenge to universities, therefore, should also concentrate on the ways it constructs a 'truth' about sexual violence and the ways in which the institution responds, or not, as the case may be.

Bumiller (2008: 36), in analysing institutional, governmental and state level responses to sexual violence, outlined the operation of what she termed 'expressive justice'. Due to cultural anxieties raised by sexual violence, the state is required to respond to demands for justice and to create order. Following Garland (2001, cited in Bumiller, 2008), the sovereign response is produced, whereby 'the state reassures an anxious public by demonstrating its ability to protect citizens with immediate and authoritative police power' (Bumiller, 2008: 36). For Bumiller (2008), politicians act in 'expressive mode', concerned more with the outrage that crimes of sexual violence provoke, rather than with actually controlling crime. Bumiller (2008) uses the example of the gang rape trial as this political response relates only to the cases which conform to stereotypical accounts of sexual violence, victims and perpetrators. Such cases are renarrated, threats are located and the state's response generates opportunities for publicising

'symbolic messages about the risk of victimisation' (Bumiller, 2008: 37), ultimately justifying a punitive response. Bumiller's (2008) argument is that the employment of expressive justice in relation to sexual violence increases the power and legitimacy of the police and the state to control sex crimes without affecting the capacity to effectively 'respond to the prevalent and ordinary conditions of sexual violence' (Bumiller, 2008: 37).

This analysis is applicable to the university and was exemplified through a statement from Sajid Javid, the former Secretary for Business, Innovation and Skills and Chancellor of the Exchequer, during an interview, undertaken at the time when the issue of sexual violence on campus was beginning to gain media attention, as noted in Chapter One. He stated, 'I will end this evil of campus harassment' (cited in Lanigan, 2015: 1). After expressing his outrage at the 'evil' of campus harassment, Javid proposed a taskforce to help reduce violence against women and girls on university campuses. He subsequently stated that he believed, 'police should be involved in cases such as alleged rape at university, even if students have gone to staff about the issues in confidence' (Lanigan, 2015), further reinforcing the legitimacy of the criminal justice system. As Bumiller (2008: 37) states, 'by declaring war against sexual terrorism, police power is legitimated and the state maintains its monopolistic power to control sex crimes'. It is therefore important, in considering state responses to violence against women, that 'the questions are always what forms of involvement, to what ends, and who makes these decisions' (Rhode, 1994: 1188). The more routine and everyday experiences of sexual violation are not responded to with such expressive outrage, as they do not fit within dominant discourses of 'real rape', 'real victims' and 'real perpetrators'. This further contributes to the construction of a 'truth'

about sexual violence in universities whereby notions of behaviour which is condemnable are reinforced and the normality of sexual violence is mystified.

It could be argued that, through legal and policy reforms, campaigns against violence against women have achieved 'sufficient social validation…[and] won mainstream legitimization' (Richie, 2012: 65). For Richie (2012), however, this validation has been achieved through a softening of the radical politics of anti-violence, grassroots movements: that is a move from identifying sexual violence as a result of gender inequality in both public and private spheres, 'rooted in the politics of patriarchy' (Richie, 2012: 68), to a movement which has been institutionalised and co-opted. Reforms which result from such softened anti-violence politics, moreover, do little for the most marginalised women, particularly Black women, who often bear the brunt of hostile social policies which stigmatise and compound the impacts of men's violence (Richie, 2012).

The criminal justice response is predicated on the notion that carceral responses are common sense and that laws can potentially eradicate, or at least reduce the frequency of sexual violation (Olufemi, 2020). As noted above, however, the social context in which sexual violence occurs has been distorted through successive reforms (Ballinger, 2009). Olufemi (2020: 114) too argues this, and states that criminalisation does not transform society, it just 'pushes out the undesirables, filters them from society'. In part this is due to the individualisation of the problem which 'locates the problem in the body of the "bad" person rather than connecting patterns of harm to the conditions in which we live'. As Tarana Burke, founder of #MeToo, noted, 'no matter how much I keep talking about power and privilege, they keep bringing it back to individuals' (Adetiba and Burke, 2018 cited in Phipps, 2019a: 3). Therefore, removing 'bad apples' becomes the response, built on, as noted above and

in Chapter Two, dominant discourses centred around abnormal men and uncontrollable sexual drives. However, as Phipps (2019b: 5) argues, this serves the purpose of strengthening punitive responses, 'positioning the state and institutions as protective rather than oppressive'. Removing individual, 'bad apples' and naming and shaming, are all central to mainstream feminist politics and are also all 'precursors to demanding criminal justice remedies or institutional discipline' (Phipps, 2019b: 5). She argues that, when such tactics are used, the person who will be believed is the person with the most 'compelling and commodifiable story'. In the specific context of universities, naming and shaming strengthens 'institutional airbrushing' (Phipps, 2019b: 5). This means that universities, and management, more concerned with their image and reputation, as a result of the marketised, corporatised and neoliberal agenda, 'merely remove the individual "blemish", while the systemic malaise remains' (Phipps, 2019b: 5). As a result, this airbrushing, passes the problem onto other institutions.

A feminist conceptualisation of justice is therefore required, which not only highlights the organisation of the social world as one in which women experience disproportionate levels of violence, but that also recognises deferring to traditional institutional responses, 'places women on the margins (poor, black, trans, disabled) in danger' (Olufemi, 2020: 111-112). Solutions such as naming and shaming and removing individual 'bad apples' might be understood as the only option in particular circumstances, but as Phipps (2019b: 6) notes, 'it is not always conducive to collective or systemic solutions'. In the context of universities, the individualisation of prevention strategies, and dominance of discourses of risk and responsibility, as discussed above, are unable to transform the conditions in which sexual violation persists.

Conclusion

The institutional deployment of discourses of women as liars, hysterics, dissociated from reason, and discourses which define 'normal' heterosexual sex, all operate to produce particular legal, medical, philosophical and popular 'truths' and dominant discourses about gender, sex and sexual violence. The effect of these dominant discourses is the social construction, constitution and limitation of how incidents are understood, the discrediting of those testifying to the majority of experiences, and specific limited responses as to how these testimonies are dealt with. The less that a testimony conforms to the 'truth' deployed at the local level by particular institutions, the less likely that the testimony will be listened to and rendered intelligible.

The operation of neoliberal, institutional and criminal justice discourses within universities results in the construction of a 'truth' about sexual violation, as outlined throughout this chapter. This 'truth' limits the parameters in which the broad and varied range of experiences of sexual violation, across the student population, can be rendered intelligible. Therefore, this not only results in a small proportion of incidents being responded to, but also deflects the responsibility of the institution, through limiting the intelligible instances which they are required to respond to. This research suggests that the harm and effects of experiences of sexual violation at university, are much broader than the construction permitted within the current, dominant discourses. Through the (re)production, and as this chapter has shown, amplification, of dominant discourses on gender, sexuality and sexual violence, within the university context, a range of experiences are not acknowledged, effects are underestimated, and testimonies are disavowed or denied. Not only are women students experiencing sexual violation at an alarming level, although this is also the case outside of the

university, their experiences are often not validated when they report or disclose an incident, further compounding the harms they experience.

Lacey (1994: 28), discussing criminal justice, suggests a shift in our understanding, from the practice of identifying and responding to breaches of the criminal law, to 'a related but not entirely coordinated set of practices geared to the construction and maintenance of social order'. She refers to criminal justice as 'a social ordering practice' (Lacey, 1994: 28). She suggests that social ordering as a concept is preferable to social control or regulation, due to the implications within the latter two concepts of 'narrow instrumentalism' and almost total repression (Lacey, 1994: 29). In line with Lacey's analysis, this research suggests that the institutional exercise of power, in the context of universities, is a gendered ordering practice. The concept of ordering practices makes visible the continuities between institutions (Lacey, 1994), in this case universities, criminal justice and the broader neoliberal and patriarchal regime. Moreover, a focus on the gendered ordering practices of the institutions, ensures that the focus becomes orientated towards its social functions. This means shifting the spotlight 'from specific offences, offenders and penalties, to the broader question of how societies generate the conditions for their own continued existence' (Lacey, 1994: 30). This research has shown that these conditions are generated at the level of discourse and, in conjunction with the institutional exercise of power, reproduce a gender regime in which sexual violation persists, access to justice is restricted and simply being believed is limited.

Given the findings of this research, addressing the issue of sexual violation at university necessitates an approach which acknowledges the need to resist the individual, structural and institutional exercise of power. The conclusion which follows

in the final chapter sets out a framework for addressing the issues and working towards

a feminist conceptualisation of justice for student victim/survivors of sexual violation.

Chapter 8: Conclusion: Facing a Feminist Future

Introduction

The multiple and interconnected experiences of sexual violence against women university students, and the range of negative effects of these experiences, have been explored throughout this thesis. Whilst, as outlined in Chapter One, there have been a range of institutional responses to the issue, this thesis has illustrated the need to radically rethink the strategies that have so far dominated institutional responses, based on the lived experiences of those students who have experienced the harms of sexual violence. The women's experiences which have been central to this research have produced an alternative narrative by which the harms and effects of sexual violence extend beyond their current, narrow conceptualisations within traditional legal discourse. In light of this, this concluding chapter has three main aims. First, it will provide a summary of the main themes identified in the thesis. Second, it will move beyond the policies which have developed from conventional legal discourse and outline a range of policies which are informed by the participants' experiences. Third, it will consider a number of structural issues which should be recognised, and acted upon, if these policies are to impact on sexual violence in universities.

The Main Themes in the Thesis

Whilst the intention of this thesis was not to produce a generalisable, quantitative claim as to the extent of sexual violence, the findings do show that sexual violence is prevalent at the university at which the research took place. Wider research and media reporting of the issue, as outlined in the Introduction and Chapter One, demonstrates that this is, however, a sector-wide issue, and not a problem which lies only with this individual institution. The prevalence of the issue is connected to repeated and multiple

experiences on the continuum of sexual violence (Kelly, 1988), whereby these experiences are interconnected, not always easily defined within the available legal categories, and are better understood within the broader, structural context of gender inequality. Participants' sexuality, moreover, shaped their experiences, particularly of harassment, and, in line with wider research, perpetrators were most often identified as men, were often known to the victim and rape most often took place in student accommodation.

The research has also explored the broad and varied range of effects following experiences of sexual violence. Through this, the limitations of focussing on discourses of consent and trauma were highlighted. The term sexual violation, can, as Alcoff (2018) argues, be useful in developing an understanding of the harm of sexual violence as a violation of subjectivity. Within this framing, as discussed in Chapter Seven, the impact of sexual violation is understood as transforming subjectivities and constraining victims' and survivors' self-making capacities as sexual subjects. It also uncovers the ripples of experiences of violation, and the ways in which a victim or survivor's behaviour may change, through self-surveillance, while redefining the ways that she moves about in, and experiences, the world.

As Chapter Two indicated, feminist poststructuralist work has identified discourses as key to understanding sexual violence through the promotion of normative modes of sexuality which has been described as the 'cultural scaffolding of rape' (Gavey, 2005: 2). The effects of these discourses absolve blame and deflect responsibility away from perpetrators and limit the normatively accepted subject positions available. As Chapters Five and Seven noted, the findings from this research support this work and extend it further through placing these normative discourses in the context of the university. Not only do dominant discourses of (hetero)sex operate in the university

context, but dominant discourses on 'normal', 'fun' university life for students, depicted as relating to heavy alcohol consumption, wild parties and sex, further limit the available subject positions and construct students as within or outside these norms.

This research was also concerned with students' experiences of reporting, disclosing and testifying to their experiences. Participants were, at times, not believed and, most often, chose not to report or disclose due to the concern that they would not be believed. This concern often stemmed from their awareness of the lack of credibility afforded to women who do speak out about sexual violence and the thought that nothing would be done should they disclose. The participants' accounts were considered in relation to Fricker's (2007) outline of epistemic injustice, through a feminist poststructuralist lens, whereby dominant discourses on gender, (hetero)sex and sexual violence operate to frame how testimonies are heard and responded to. The findings also highlighted the need to consider epistemic justice at the institutional level, particularly in relation to policy development.

The final theme which was addressed was the institutional operation of power, particularly in relation to the role of the university as a neoliberal institution which promotes discourses of individualism, responsibility and risk management. Neoliberal discourses were found to shape the university's responses to sexual violence and framed some prevention initiatives, which meant that responsibility was deflected away from structural issues and the role of the institution, to the individual. This institutional operation of power was also considered in relation to criminal justice and the power of the law, as outlined by Smart (1989). The individualisation of prevention and protection, the 'truth' that is constructed about sexual violence through discourses of responsibility and risk and the deflection away from structural problems within the

university are incompatible with, and unable to transform, the social conditions in which sexual violence against women students occurs.

Overall, the findings from this original and in-depth research indicate the need for radical transformation in the way that universities are responding to the issue of sexual violence. The next section outlines a number of policy alternatives, some of which could be implemented immediately while highlighting other, more long-term goals, which address the need for structural change.

Universities, Sexual Violence and Feminist Praxis

Four policy areas are outlined below which are designed to contribute to a radical transformation in the current situation. They are intended create positive change through feminist praxis (Stanley, 1990), and address a range of issues**.**

As Hyde (2009) states, feminist approaches to social policy necessarily correct gender blind and androcentric discourses and address the 'structural apparatuses and collective processes that either empower or subordinate women' (Hyde, 2009: 247). Feminist approaches to social policy, overall, offer a critique and remedy to these discursive limitations. These policies follow that feminist position.

Theoretically informed, victim and survivor led responses

The findings demonstrate the need for more theoretically informed responses which are drawn from the lived experiences of victims and survivors. Those who have experienced sexual violence at university, and who have tried to navigate various reporting or disclosure mechanisms, should have the opportunity to be involved in university responses to the issue, should they wish. Increased involvement would help to ensure that responses, policy and practice are informed by the experiences of those for whom these decisions would impact the most. Further to this, there is now a

developing body of research, outlined in Chapter One, through which students' experiences and perspectives on the issues are highlighted, as well as the broader literature on sexual violence. Therefore, whilst institution-specific recommendations are needed, there is also wider research in the UK which can be used to inform responses (Lewis and Marine, 2018b; Lewis and Marine, 2019; Marine and Lewis, 2020; NUS, 2010, 2012; Phipps, 2015, 2017, 2018; Phipps and Smith, 2012; Stenson, 2020; Sundaram, 2018; Towl, 2016).

Taking into account the wider harms of sexual violence, and the rippled, temporally indeterminate effects upon subjectivity, as outlined in this thesis, it is necessary that universities develop responses in line with this. This means that universities need to be able to respond and support students in different and changing ways. It is likely that as more students access support via the institutions, the more the university will need to change the ways in which it responds. A recognition that the negative effects of sexual violence are likely to extend beyond those effects which are most obvious means that universities need to be in a position where they can continue changing and developing the support available on the basis of the experiences of survivors and their definitions of the reality of that violence.

Commitment, resources and funding

Whilst the recommendation that senior leadership in universities should be committed to the issue was made by Universities UK (2016a), the findings here suggest that this recommendation needs to be repeated. Moreover, commitment needs to go beyond a statement. Commitment in relation to senior leadership should include resources and funding. In terms of resources, adding to the workload of those who are already stretched will not address the issue. Instead, there is a need for specific staff who will

undertake this work and there are examples of universities who have done this, such as Durham University's Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Manager (Durham University, 2020). A key requirement, therefore, is the need for *at least* one person whose only role is to undertake the management and coordination of prevention and response initiatives in universities, and that they are also, importantly, allocated the funding and support to carry out that work on a long term basis. As Carline and Gunby (2020) outline, funding is vital for policies around sexual violence as underinvestment and the depletion of resources raises questions about delivering justice and putting the victim's needs first.

Prevention initiatives

The findings demonstrate that there needs to be education around sexual violence, 'lad culture', who can be victims and who can be perpetrators. Whilst this research is concerned with university students, Sundaram (2018) suggests that education initiatives should focus on students in schools in order to address the issues prior to entering university. This is a convincing argument, but it does not mean that the university does not have a responsibility to continue that education.

'Lad culture', 'the culture at university' and 'normal men's behaviour' were referred to by student participants in the survey and interviews, an issue which has been highlighted in the academic literature (Jackson and Sundaram, 2015; Phipps, 2017, 2018; Phipps and Young, 2013, 2015a, 2015b; Phipps et al., 2018; Stenson, 2020). Participants pointed to discursively constructed norms of masculinity as providing the context for sexual violence in the university. Education, therefore, should also be focused on masculinities as a structural issue. The prevention of sexual violence necessitates a radical shift in the way that masculinity, and femininity, are discursively

constructed in order to challenge the operation and reproduction of unequal gendered power relations. By developing education on masculinities, thereby expanding available discourses on culturally accepted forms of masculinity, and femininity, the, at times, cultural acceptance of particular forms of sexual violence can be challenged.

As noted in Chapter Six, whilst the issue of safety and foregrounding of 'stranger danger' and 'sexual predators' was contested by participants, some prevention initiatives were still implicitly built on these discourses. Whilst it is acknowledged that, in some cases, strangers are perpetrators of sexual violence, prevention initiatives which singularly focus on the 'stranger danger' narrative obscure the reality for many victims of sexual violence and compound the harms experienced as a result. Moreover, the point that most incidents of rape and attempted rape in this research were perpetrated by someone who was not a stranger and was often a friend and/or fellow student, suggests that education around who is a potential perpetrator of sexual violence will be an important step forward. Given that the reporting of incidents is lower when the victim has a relationship with the perpetrator (Kelly, Lovett and Regan, 2005), a point reflected in this research, this is a key policy area for future development.

There are, moreover, implications for the direction of prevention initiatives in relation to where incidents take place. In this research, the majority of incidents of rape took place in the participants' or someone else's student accommodation and, therefore, this is a place where prevention and response initiatives should be focused. For example, information on the university and local external support services could be made available within the students' halls of residence. Detailed information on these services should also be available on the university website and should not only list the

services available, but also discuss the issues cited above in terms of who can be a perpetrator.

This research also suggests that, at times, prevention initiatives were developed in line with neoliberal, gendered discourses of individual responsibility and risk management, although this was again contested by some stakeholders. Therefore, it is suggested that prevention initiatives, such as education and campaigns, should move beyond these individualising discourses which place responsibility on women students to avoid sexual violence. When the risk of sexual violence is constructed as arising from women's behaviour, bodies and existence in public spaces, this has the effect of limiting and regulating their behaviour, rather than the behaviour of those who are potential perpetrators.

Institutional responses

There is, moreover, a need for all universities to have an anonymous reporting mechanism. The mechanism which has been developed at The University of Cambridge is a useful tool which includes a range of questions and information and, importantly, publishes the anonymous data. It should be made clear that no action can, or will be taken, following an anonymous report. An anonymous reporting tool has a range of benefits. Firstly, students are able to make a report without immediately needing to start a formal criminal justice or civil process. This challenges the discourse that the criminal justice system is the only acceptable route following sexual violence. Secondly, the data collected can help universities to monitor the prevalence of incidents. Thirdly, the data can be used by universities in the development of prevention campaigns and to advertise services to students. Finally, it can be used to

measure the impact of university sexual violence campaigns, in terms of prevalence but also, whether students accessed support.

Generally, universities should be collecting data on the nature and extent of sexual violence. The data captured from an anonymous reporting tool and evidence from internal and external support services, can be useful in framing future responses. Universities could collect data on the prevalence, nature and reporting of sexual violence annually and use this to review prevention and response initiatives and shape the university's future response.

Furthermore, there is a need for the formalisation of the university's links with external, specialist services. It was evident that the university often worked with the local SARC and Rape Crisis and, when this was done, there was evidence of good practice and a high level of support for the students. However, it was noted by one of the stakeholders in Chapter Six, that these links were not formalised, that there was inconsistency in this approach and, therefore, not all students were receiving the same level of support.

As evidence from this, and wider research shows (Day and Gill, 2020; DeKeseredy et al., 2017; Ford and Soto-Marquez, 2016), different demographic groups experience sexual violence and the process of accessing support differently. Closer working with wider services which are, for example, LGBTQ+ or BAME specific services, would be another step towards all students being able to access the same level of support.

The benefits and limits of current policies were highlighted in Chapters Six and Seven. While policies are deemed necessary to respond to sexual violence in universities, these are only starting points and require careful and critical construction. The creation of policy can construct a particular 'truth' about the issue it discusses and, therefore, establishes the parameters in which the institution does or does not need to respond.

For example, in terms of the content of the policy documents relating to student discipline, which includes sexual violence, the inclusion of a section on vexatious complaints is problematic because it constructs this as a common and prevalent issue. As discussed in Chapter Seven, this is contrary to the available evidence from wider research which points out that vexatious complaints about sexual violence are similar to vexatious complaints in other crimes (Kelly, Lovett and Regan, 2005).

Structural Considerations

As noted above, there are a number of immediate issues that the university could and should address. However, these issues should not be considered outside of a number of structural issues which provide the context for policy and practices. Three of these issues are discussed below.

Policy and Punishment

As Lewis and Marine (2019) suggest, university policy and responses to sexual violence have often been developed around neoliberal, commodified values. The creation of policies, and the response to sexual violence more broadly, requires that universities move beyond the 'tick box' approach (Ahmed, 2012: 113) which allows them 'to "show" that they are following procedures but are not really "behind" them'. Whilst it is evident that there are some committed individuals within the institution, which was the focus for this research, it is important that the creation of policy moves beyond a statement of commitment and, instead, the resources and funding discussed above should follow.

In relation to state policies, Duggan (2018) has discussed the development of victim-focused policies. She argues that increasing victims' role, input and visibility in policy development, whilst positive steps, are limited as they 'stop short of providing

necessary rights or true empowerment' (Duggan, 2018: 214). She also argues that, in relation to criminal justice, victim-focused policies have been used to justify and enhance punitive approaches (Duggan, 2012). As discussed in Chapter Seven, there has been much critique of the limitations of the legal system in protecting victims and survivors of sexual violence through punitive approaches (Bumiller, 2008; Olufemi, 2020), a point which is also relevant to institutions such as universities. Therefore, following Duggan's (2012; 2018) critique, in the context of universities, whilst victims' and survivors' experiences are crucial and central to policy development, institutions should not use this to enhance a singularly punitive agenda. Responses such as naming and shaming, or relying on the criminal justice system, as argued by Phipps (2019b), are effective for institutions in maintaining their image and reputation, but do not support victims and survivors. In line with Duggan's (2012) argument that a populist politics approach, through the creation of tougher laws, will not prevent violence against women, a tougher, increasingly punitive approach to the issue in universities will not protect or support the majority of victims and survivors. There is, overall, a need to consider issues of justice outside of the limited sphere of the criminal justice system and punitive, carceral approaches within institutions, if the issue of sexual violence in universities is to be adequately addressed and prevented.

Reconceptualising justice

Universities are in a position to forge and develop new ways of addressing sexual violence because, as institutions, they are not expected to undertake criminal justice procedures, but are expected to address the issue. There is, therefore, the opportunity for a more radical, victim and survivor centred approach, which, firstly, does not mimic the criminal justice system's singularly punitive focus and, also, does not simply pass the responsibility to the criminal justice system and deflect responsibility away from

the institution itself. What this would look like would depend on the individual university, and institutions should tailor their approaches based on the evidence base in that institution. There are, however, some approaches which are applicable to all institutions.

As discussed above, institutions should resist reactive and punitive responses and consider approaches which foreground prevention and education. In terms of responding to incidents, it is necessary that institutions recognise that there is a need for a diversity of options for the victim or survivor to choose from. The ability to take control of the process which follows an incident is imperative for someone who has had their decision-making and self-making capacities violated.

One way of conceptualising this is through expanding the discourse of justice, to reflect the broader range of harms to subjectivity which results from incidents of violence and the interactions which follow, when seeking support or reporting. This could be done through what McGlynn and Westmarland (2019: 179) term 'kaleidoscopic justice'. Kaleidoscopic justice reflects the fact that justice is 'a constantly shifting pattern […], is constantly refracted through new experiences or understandings, […] and is an ever-evolving, nuanced lived experience' (McGlynn and Westmarland, 2019: 179). Moreover, justice is understood not solely through the 'linear, dichotomous and incident-based' (McGlynn and Westmarland, 2019: 181) criminal justice conceptualisation, whereby justice is achieved, or not, and where justice relates only to a singular incident. Instead, it is understood as relating to 'consequences, recognition, dignity, voice, prevention and connectedness' (McGlynn and Westmarland, 2019: 179). Within this framework, consequences can be punishment through the criminal justice system or financial compensation. However, there can be consequences outside of these systems through an admission of guilt, that people

become aware of what happened, that victims and survivors are able to speak to the perpetrator and the more general acknowledgement of victims and survivors. Connectedness is viewed as essential. It is understood as being valued as a person, belonging to society and being supported. It is also about 'redressing a victim-survivor's shattered sense of belonging' (McGlynn and Westmarland, 2019: 194). For the participants in McGlynn and Westmarland's (2019) research, justice fundamentally relies on the prevention of further incidents and in educating the wider society about the reality of sexual violence.

Furthermore, recognition by the perpetrator of the harms that they have caused, and the severity of the experience was viewed by their participants as key, as well as victims having their feelings validated by the perpetrator and wider society. This is particularly important in the context of this research whereby validation from the university is essential. Moreover, ensuring that victims and survivors are given the dignity and the space to give voice to their experiences, be heard and actively participate in the decisions and direction of justice is necessary. Following the discussion above concerning the role of epistemic injustice in limiting women's options for speaking out about their experiences and being heard, it is necessary that the university works towards developing the principles of epistemic justice which would involve embedding concepts such as recognition and dignity as well as giving voice to victims and survivors within university processes. However, as discussed below, in recognition of a broader, transformative agenda, this will also require the production of new discourses, challenging personal and institutionalised power structures and constructing a different 'truth' about sexual violence.

Kaleidoscopic justice provides a useful framework and starting point for considering how universities can begin to respond to incidents of sexual violence in a way which

reflects the experiences of victims and survivors. It reflects the point that justice is a collective pursuit (McGlynn and Westmarland, 2019), one for which the university also must take responsibility. Following this, it is important that staff and students are also aware of this work. Kaleidoscopic justice also recognises that justice is different for everyone and, as discussed in Chapter Seven, just as sexual violence can be understood as an experience, with no beginning and end point, which changes over time, so too is justice. Universities, therefore, in supporting victims and survivors who report or disclose incidents, should be able to support students in their pursuit of justice, and have a range of options to offer which do not simply rely on passing the issue to the criminal justice system, or the perpetrator moving to another university. As the majority of victims and survivors do not report incidents to the police, and do not want to, developing responses which do not utilise the criminal justice system in order for a sense of justice to be felt is required. Whilst it is not suggested that universities, for example, undertake internal restorative justice processes, it is possible for the concepts outlined as part of kaleidoscopic justice to be used to inform and develop more victim and survivor-centred approaches to policies and processes.

Whilst McGlynn and Westmarland's (2019) outline of kaleidoscopic justice is a useful starting point, building upon research and evidence of the harms of the criminal justice system, for victims, survivors, perpetrators, and society more broadly, as discussed in Chapters Two and Seven, it is also important to actively work against carceral approaches to punishment. McGlynn and Westmarland (2019) highlight the harms of the criminal justice system for victims and survivors and recognise that this is not a suitable option for all. However, in terms of radical transformation, it does not adequately challenge the operation of power in the criminal justice system and institutions more generally. Beyond pragmatic steps which can reform and improve

the current situation, it is key that these are undertaken alongside a broader commitment to radical, transformative change within universities and in the wider society.

Envisioning a Feminist Utopia: A question of women's safety in the twenty first century

Russell Jacoby has made the point that:

> The choice we have is not between reasonable proposals and an unreasonable utopianism. Utopian thinking does not undermine or discount real reforms. Indeed, it is almost the opposite; *practical reforms depend on utopian dreaming – or at least utopian thinking drives incremental improvements* (Jacoby, 2005 cited in Sim, 2009: 162, emphasis in original).

Therefore, following Jacoby, in order to envision a feminist utopia, it is important to move beyond 'incremental improvements' and address the roots of sexual violence. Whilst discourses of safety and protection are necessary in moving forward and imagining a world free from sexual violence, the co-optation of victims into law and order rhetoric serves to enhance punitive, individualised responses to crime (Bumiller, 2008; Duggan, 2018) and results in the dichotomising of 'good' and 'bad' victims (Duggan, 2018).

There is, therefore, a need for clarity concerning what safety means for women. Brown (2020: 78) argues for 'reconceptualis[ing] safety in ways that address harm while resisting the vigilantism of "call out culture" and permanent exile as solutions'. This means addressing the issue of harm, rather than just criminality. It also means recognising that the safety of all women is key. Whilst there is a need for institutional accountability, there is also a need recognise the limitations of punitive, retributive responses whereby, at times, the perpetrator is removed from one institution to another (The 1752 Group, 2018b). As a long term solution, moving the individual

perpetrator to another institution, where perhaps, women do not have the same access to this limited notion of safety and protection, does nothing for the safety of all women.

Brown and Schept (2016) have also argued for a reconsideration of safety and call for an 'insurrectionary safety' whereby:

> Safety…is not simply about those who have harmed or been harmed, but a movement beyond disciplinary neoliberal frames of responsibilisation and internalisation to community and state accountability (Brown and Schept, 2016 cited in Sim, forthcoming: 16).

Therefore, the questions we should ask are:

> How can we organise our communities to be safe? What should we do when various kinds of harm, with different kinds of needs, occur? What are the collective ways and forums in which we can pursue this work? (Brown and Schept, 2016 cited in Sim, forthcoming: 16).

In doing this, they suggest that dominant discourses of harms as private and individualised, are particularly relevant in the case of sexual violence, and should be rendered visible as structural violence. Neoliberal, individualising discourses which rely on criminalisation, do 'not reduce harm or future harm and is at cross-purposes with stopping abuse and violence' (Brown and Schept, 2016: 449). Therefore, it is this visibility, they argue, which can lead to community accountability. Moreover, their point that institutions should consider how safety can be organised collectively, within and across communities, is reinforced by Phipps (2019b) who argues that safety should not 'reinforce the stigmatisation and alienation of marginalised people'. The safety of women in any institution or community can thereby be connected to the safety of women more generally.

Moreover, challenging dominant discourses of safety and protection, Sim (forthcoming) argues, requires connecting the lack of safety and deaths experienced by a range of marginalised groups. Building on this argument, without denying the

specificity of violence experienced by particular groups, sexual violence against women university students, and their lack of safety inside and outside of the institution, could be connected to the lack of safety generated by gender-based violence more generally, racist and homophobic violence, homelessness, poverty, austerity and state confinement. By connecting issues of safety between different groups, violence, harms and deaths are not individualised but 'represent a *normal* outcome of the state's failure to offer even a modicum of protection to those at the bottom of the ladder of inequality' (Sim, forthcoming: 18, emphasis in the original).

Conclusion

By undertaking research with women students, victims and survivors of sexual violence and stakeholders, this thesis has critically analysed how the institution in which the research took place was responding to sexual violence. The findings are intended to contribute to the development of practice at the particular institution, but also to the broader literature and debate on sexual violence in UK universities.

The theoretical underpinning of this research considered these arguments in a context whereby already limiting gendered and (hetero)sexed discourses operate alongside dominant discourses of 'fun' university life. The combined effects of these was that participants' subjectivities were further constrained and all students were disciplined into conforming to dominant, discursively constructed norms. Individualising, neoliberal discourses were also found to shape the university's response to the issue which impacted on victims' and survivors' experiences and understanding of sexual violence and constructed a 'truth' about sexual violence which deflected responsibility away from the institution. Moreover, psychological, biological and philosophical discourses, which have long been found to operate within the criminal justice system

were evident in the context of the university and affected the credibility of the women who reported and disclosed their experiences. Critically analysed in line with feminist poststructuralism, this lack of credibility has been understood as a further violation of victims' and survivors' subjectivity.

Overall, the thesis has revealed the failure of policy and practices to adequately respond to students in a way which reflects the realities of sexual violence and has outlined a number of immediate, policy suggestions, built on feminist praxis, to respond to this failure. For fundamental change to be enacted, however, there needs to be a radical transformation in how universities conceptualise the issue of sexual violence against women students including 'the production of new discourses and so new forms of power and new forms of the self' (Ramazanoglu, 1993: 24). In practice, this means contesting and resisting dominant discourses which construct a 'truth' about sexual violence and the broader reality of victims' and survivors' experiences. Alongside wider policy and structural changes, this reality can be fundamentally changed thereby ensuring the physical and psychological safety of women students.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Participant Information Sheet – Online Survey

LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY

Title of Project The prevalence, nature and reporting of sexual violence against women university students in the UK

Kym Atkinson

PhD Researcher, Liverpool John Moores University,

Faculty of Arts, Professional and Social Studies, School of Humanities and Social Science

k.atkinson@2015.ljmu.ac.uk

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it involves. Please take time to read the following information. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide if you want to take part or not.

What is the purpose of the study?

This survey is part of a wider research project which aims to explore the nature and extent of some forms of sexual violence against women students in the UK. At a later stage, interviews will also take place to further understand the experiences of students at university as well as to explore institutional practice in relation to student support. The project further seeks to understand the perceived adequacy of responses to reporting of incidents of sexual violence within a university setting. The overarching goal is to give a voice to survivors of sexual violence and involve them in discussion on prevention and support.

Who can take part?

The survey seeks to explore the experiences of self-defining women students within the participating institutions.
In order to take part, participants must:

- identify as a woman
- be 18 years old or over,
- live in the UK, in the city in which they study, during term time, and
- be enrolled at participating institutions

Do I have to take part?

No. Participation is voluntary and it is up to you to decide whether you would like to take part. If you meet the criteria above and wish to take part, you will be able to withdraw your consent at any stage of the research and your data will not be stored or used. Your consent will be automatically withdrawn if you exit the page. Excluding some eligibility questions, you will be able to skip questions you are not comfortable answering. There will be no consequences if you choose not to complete the survey.

At the end of the survey you will be asked if you are certain you would like to submit your responses. If you choose to submit your responses here, you will be shown a completion receipt. The 'receipt number' on this does not contain any identifiable information but, if you would like to withdraw your data after completion you can quote this 'receipt number' in an email to k.atkinson@2015.ljmu.ac.uk and your responses can be identified and removed.

What will happen to me if I take part?

If you choose to take part you will be asked to answer questions about your university, student status and background information. The survey further asks questions about your personal experiences with sexual violence such as harassment and sexual assault. Some of the language used in the survey is explicit and some people may find it uncomfortable but it is important that the questions are asked in this way so that you understand what it means. Information about how to get help and access to support services will be available throughout the survey.

Confidentiality and anonymity is assured and the survey will not ask for any information that will enable someone to identify you. Electronic data will be encrypted and stored on my personal LJMU IT account. Data which is not electronic will be stored in my personal, locked filing cabinet at LJMU. Data will be stored for up to 5 years after completion of the PhD viva which is in accordance with LJMU ethics guidelines. The data collected will be used for the PhD and will therefore likely be used for academic publications and at conferences. Again, no names or identifiable information will be collected.

Are there any risks/benefits involved?

It is possible that discussing sensitive information may lead to emotional distress. If at any point you become distressed, you can leave the survey immediately and not return to it or you may choose the 'finish later' option. If you choose to finish the survey later, you do not have to return to it and your data will not be used. Data is only used once you click on the 'submit' button. You will be able to access information about local and national support services throughout the survey.

Regarding benefits, the research aims to give a voice to those people who have experienced sexual violence and understand the prevalence of sexual violence against women university students. You will also be contributing to an under-researched topic with the aim of bringing about change in the present situation. Specifically, the aim is to improve prevention and support services for university students particularly at the participating institutions.

Contact details of researcher:

Kym Atkinson

k.atkinson@2015.ljmu.ac.uk

Contact details of Academic supervisor:

Dr Helen Monk

H.L.Monk@ljmu.ac.uk

If you have any questions about this survey, please contact the researcher in the first instance.

If you any concerns regarding your involvement in this research, please discuss these with the researcher in the first instance. If you wish to make a complaint, please contact researchethics@ljmu.ac.uk and your communication will be re-directed to an independent person as appropriate.

Thank you for your time in reading the participant information sheet. If you would like to confirm your participation in the research, please complete the informed consent form. Please note, you are still able to withdraw your consent, at any stage, without giving a reason.

Please see below for details of local and national support services available.

Rape Crisis England and Wales:

Rape Crisis is a national charity and umbrella body for a network of independent member Rape Crisis Organisations. On the website information is available on: how to get help if you have experienced any kind of sexual violence; details of your nearest Rape Crisis Services, information for friends, partners, family, and other people supporting a sexual violence survivor and information about sexual violence for survivors.

Contact Information:

Website: http://rapecrisis.org.uk/

National helpline: 0808 802 9999
(weekdays, 12 -2.30pm; 3-5.30pm; 7-9.30pm and weekends, 12-2.30pm and 7-9.30pm)

RASA Merseyside

Rasa Merseyside is a support service for anyone, regardless of gender, who has been sexually abused, raped, or who has been affected by sexual violence at any time in their lives. All staff and volunteers are women and women-only spaces are maintained.

RASA Merseyside also provide an Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVA) service. The ISVA service is there to support you if you choose to report to the police.

Contact Information:

Website: http://www.rasamerseyside.org/

General enquiries: 0151 558 1801

Helpline (To talk in confidence): 0151 666 1392
(Tuesday, 6-8pm; Thursday 6-8pm; Sunday 1-3pm)

Email: helpline@rasamerseyside.org

[Information on internal support services has been omitted to ensure anonymity].

Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet – Student Interviews

LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY

Title of Project The prevalence, nature and reporting of sexual violence against women university students in the UK

Kym Atkinson

PhD Researcher, Liverpool John Moores University,

Faculty of Arts, Professional and Social Studies, School of Humanities and Social Science

k.atkinson@2015.ljmu.ac.uk

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it involves. Please take time to read the following information. Ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide if you want to take part or not.

1. What is the purpose of the study?

The aim of the research is to critically explore the nature and extent of some forms of sexual violence against women students, as well as the perceived adequacy of responses to violence, across UK universities. This will be achieved firstly, through an online survey of women students, followed by interviews with women who have experienced sexual violence whilst at university and interviews with key stakeholders.

2. Who can take part?

The interviews seek to explore the experiences of self-defining women students within participating institutions.

In order to take part, participants must:

- Identify as a woman
- be 18 years old or over,
- live in the UK in the city in which they study, during term time, and
- have experienced some form of sexual violence whilst studying at their current institution.

3. Do I have to take part?

No. It is up to you to decide if you would like to take part. You have been selected as a prospective participant, but participation is voluntary. If you decide to take part now, your information will be kept confidential and you will remain anonymous throughout. Furthermore, you are able to withdraw your consent at any time, without giving a reason, and your data will be removed from the research.

4. What will happen to me if I take part?

If you choose to take part, you will be asked to participate in an interview, lasting approximately one hour, with myself. The date, time and place of the interview will be arranged for the most suitable time for you. During the interview, I will ask you about your experience of sexual violence, the effects of this, the adequacy of any responses and how you would like the situation to improve in the future.

The anonymised findings will be made available to all interview participants, presented at conferences and published in criminology and sociology journals. The findings will also be available to higher education institutions in the UK, policy makers, the National Union of Students, the Department for Education, and other relevant bodies.

5. Are there any risks / benefits involved?

It is possible, that discussing sensitive information may lead to emotional distress. If at any point you become distressed, I will cease the interview immediately. It can then be decided, at a later point, if you wish to continue participating in the research. You will also be offered information about local and national support services which you can find detailed at the end of this participant information sheet.

Regarding benefits, the research aims to give a voice to those who have experienced sexual violence. Interview questions will be set in advance however, there will be space for you to discuss what you believe are important issues in the area. You will also be contributing to an under-researched topic with the aim of bringing about change in the present situation.

6. Will my taking part in the study be anonymous and my information kept confidential?

Yes. Your participation will be kept confidential and you will remain anonymous in the research. Pseudonyms will be used in all documentation, such as interview transcripts, and in the final research. Electronic data will be encrypted and stored on my personal LJMU IT

account. Data which isn't electronic will be stored in my personal, locked filing cabinet at LJMU. Electronic and non-electronic data will only be accessible to myself but may be shared with my supervisors, personal and identifiable data however will not be shared with anyone. Data will be stored for up to 5 years after the PhD viva which is in accordance with LJMU REC guidelines. However, anonymised interview transcripts will be saved and may be used in future research in the area. Confidentiality will be upheld throughout the research. Any criminal disclosures will not be acted upon however, if I believe that somebody is at serious risk of harm it is my position that I will break this confidentiality.

This study has received ethical approval from LJMU's Research Ethics Committee Ref: 16/HSS/005

Contact Details of Researcher

Kym Atkinson

k.atkinson@2015.ljmu.ac.uk

Contact Details of Academic Supervisor

Professor Joe Sim

J.Sim@ljmu.ac.uk

If you any concerns regarding your involvement in this research, please discuss these with the researcher in the first instance. If you wish to make a complaint, please contact researchethics@ljmu.ac.uk and your communication will be re-directed to an independent person as appropriate.

Thank you for your time in reading the participant information sheet. If you would like to confirm your participation in the research, please complete the informed consent form. Please note, you are still able to withdraw your consent, at any stage, without giving a reason.

Note: A copy of the participant information sheet should be retained by the participant with a copy of the signed consent form.

Please see below for details of local and national support services available.

Rape Crisis England and Wales:

Rape Crisis is a national charity and umbrella body for a network of independent member Rape Crisis Organisations. On the website information is available on: how to get help if you have experienced any kind of sexual violence; details of your nearest Rape Crisis Services, information for friends, partners, family, and other people supporting a sexual violence survivor and information about sexual violence for survivors.

Contact Information:

Website: http://rapecrisis.org.uk/

National helpline: 0808 802 9999
(weekdays, 12 -2.30pm; 3-5.30pm; 7-9.30pm and weekends, 12-2.30pm and 7-9.30pm)

RASA Merseyside

Rasa Merseyside is a support service for anyone, regardless of gender, who has been sexually abused, raped, or who has been affected by sexual violence at any time in their lives. All staff and volunteers are women and women-only spaces are maintained.

RASA Merseyside also provide an Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVA) service. The ISVA service is there to support you if you choose to report to the police.

Contact Information:

Website: http://www.rasamerseyside.org/

General enquiries: 0151 558 1801

Helpline (To talk in confidence): 0151 666 1392
(Tuesday, 6-8pm; Thursday 6-8pm; Sunday 1-3pm)

Email: helpline@rasamerseyside.org

[Internal support service information has been removed to ensure anonymity].

Appendix C: Participant Information Sheet – Stakeholder Interviews

 LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY

Title of Project The prevalence, nature and reporting of sexual violence against women university students in the UK

Kym Atkinson

PhD Researcher, Liverpool John Moores University,

Faculty of Arts, Professional and Social Studies, School of Humanities and Social Science

k.atkinson@2015.ljmu.ac.uk

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it involves. Please take time to read the following information. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide if you want to take part or not.

2. What is the purpose of the study?

The aim of the research is to critically explore the nature and extent of some forms of sexual violence against women students, as well as the perceived adequacy of responses to violence, across UK universities. This will be achieved firstly, through an online survey of women students across three universities, interviews with women who have experienced sexual violence whilst at university and interviews with key stakeholders.

2. Who can take part?

The interviews seek to explore the experience of professionals who may be involved in dealing with cases of sexual violence internal, or external to the university.

Interviewees could be directly responsible for handling cases of sexual violence at university. This may be in a prevention role, or response, such as dealing with reported cases internally, support services or criminal justice agencies. Interviewees may also be working as representatives of students such as Students' Union Officers or working within a general health and wellbeing role in university.

Furthermore, interviewees could be anyone who has been involved in handling cases of sexual violence at university even if this is not their official role.

3. Do I have to take part?

No. It is up to you to decide if you would like to take part. You have been selected as a prospective participant, but participation is voluntary. If you decide to take part now, your information will be kept confidential and you will remain anonymous throughout. Furthermore, you are able to withdraw your consent at any time, without giving a reason, and your data will be removed from the research.

4. What will happen to me if I take part?

If you choose to take part, you will be asked to participate in an interview, lasting approximately one hour, with myself. The date, time and place of the interview will be arranged for the most suitable time for you. During the interview, I will ask you about your role, your experience, if any, of dealing with cases of sexual violence or your perceptions of procedures that are currently in place.

The anonymised findings will be made available to all interview participants, presented at conferences and published in criminology and sociology journals. The findings will also be available to higher education institutions in the UK, policy makers, the National Union of Students, the Department for Education, and other relevant bodies.

5. Are there any risks / benefits involved?

It is possible, that discussing sensitive information may lead to emotional distress. If at any point you become distressed, I will cease the interview immediately. It can then be decided, at a later point, if you wish to continue participating in the research. You will also be offered information about local and national support services which you can find detailed at the end of this participant information sheet.

Regarding benefits, the research aims to give a voice to those who have experienced sexual violence. Interview questions will be set in advance however, there will be space for you to discuss what you believe are important issues in the area. You will also be contributing to an under-researched topic with the aim of bringing about change in the present situation.

6. Will my taking part in the study be anonymous and my information kept confidential?

Yes. Your participation will be kept confidential and you will remain anonymous in the research. Pseudonyms will be used in all documentation, such as interview transcripts, and in the final research. Electronic data will be encrypted and stored on my personal LJMU IT account. Data which isn't electronic will be stored in my personal, locked filing cabinet at LJMU. Electronic and non-electronic data will only be accessible to myself but may be shared with my supervisors, personal and identifiable data however will not be shared with anyone. Data will be stored for up to 5 years after the PhD viva which is in accordance with LJMU REC guidelines. However, anonymised interview transcripts will be saved and may be used in future research in the area. Confidentiality will be upheld throughout the research. Any criminal disclosures will not be acted upon however, if I believe that somebody is at serious risk of harm it is my position that I will break this confidentiality.

This study has received ethical approval from LJMU's Research Ethics Committee

Contact Details of Researcher

Kym Atkinson

k.atkinson@2015.ljmu.ac.uk

Contact Details of Academic Supervisor

Helen Monk

H.L.Monk@ljmu.ac.uk

If you any concerns regarding your involvement in this research, please discuss these with the researcher in the first instance. If you wish to make a complaint, please contact researchethics@ljmu.ac.uk and your communication will be re-directed to an independent person as appropriate.

Thank you for your time in reading the participant information sheet. If you would like to confirm your participation in the research, please complete the informed consent form. Please note, you are still able to withdraw your consent, at any stage, without giving a reason.

Note: A copy of the participant information sheet should be retained by the participant with a copy of the signed consent form.

Please see below for details of local and national support services available.

Rape Crisis England and Wales:

Rape Crisis is a national charity and umbrella body for a network of independent member Rape Crisis Organisations. On the website information is available on: how to get help if you have experienced any kind of sexual violence; details of your nearest Rape Crisis Services, information for friends, partners, family, and other people supporting a sexual violence survivor and information about sexual violence for survivors.

Contact Information:

Website: http://rapecrisis.org.uk/

National helpline: 0808 802 9999
(weekdays, 12 -2.30pm; 3-5.30pm; 7-9.30pm and weekends, 12-2.30pm and 7-9.30pm)

RASA Merseyside

Rasa Merseyside is a support service for anyone, regardless of gender, who has been sexually abused, raped, or who has been affected by sexual violence at any time in their lives. All staff and volunteers are women and women-only spaces are maintained.

RASA Merseyside also provide an Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVA) service. The ISVA service is there to support you if you choose to report to the police.

Contact Information:

Website: http://www.rasamerseyside.org/

General enquiries: 0151 558 1801

Helpline (To talk in confidence): 0151 666 1392
(Tuesday, 6-8pm; Thursday 6-8pm; Sunday 1-3pm)

Email: helpline@rasamerseyside.org

[Internal support service information has been removed to ensure anonymity].

Appendix D: Survey

I have read and understood the informed consent form above and understand that by completing the survey I am consenting to be part of the research. Select yes if you wish to continue to the survey.

☐ *Required*

○ Yes

Do you identify as a woman? *Required*

○ Yes

○ No

How old are you? *Required*

○ 17 and

○ 18 20

○ 21-23

○ 24-26

○ 27+

Which university are you currently studying at? *Required*

[   ]

Do you live in the city in which you study during term time?

Required

○ Yes

○ No

Are you a home, EU or international student?

○ Home

○ EU

○ International

Do you study full time or part time?

○ Full

○ Part time

Are you an undergraduate or postgraduate student?

○ Undergraduate

○ Postgraduate

Which of the following best describes your living situation during term time?

○ At home with parents

○ Halls of residence

○ Shared student flat/house

○ Shared flat/house with partner

○ Alone in rented accommodation

○ Alone in your own accommodation

○ Other

How would you describe your ethnicity? Please select one box that you feel most closely represents your ethnicity

Which best describes your gender identity?

- ○ Woman
- ○ Man
- ○ Transgender
- ○ Transgender
- ○ Genderqueer or gender non-conforming
- ○ Questioning
- ○ Not listed
- ○ Prefer not to

How would you describe your sexual orientation?

- ○ Heterosexual
- ○ Gay/lesbian
- ○ Bisexual
- ○ Prefer not to say

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Prefer not to say

The survey will now move on to address your perceptions of experiencing sexual violence on or around your university.

For the purposes of this survey please limit your answers to experiences which occur on or around your university campus and places which are connected to your life as a university student within the city you study in since you first enrolled. This may be university buildings where you attend lectures or seminars, university libraries, student common areas, or student union bars or restaurants. This may also include student housing either on campus, or in a shared student flat or house (not necessarily owned by the university), at an advertised student night in a bar or club or student social event.

This may also include a place which is connected to your life as a student for example, a bar which is not specifically advertised as a student night, but which you are attending, as part of your life as a student, in the city you study in.

Please select 'Yes' if you are happy to continue with the survey

○ Yes

Sexual harassment:
Sexual harassment is any unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature that you find offensive or which makes you feel distressed, intimidated or humiliated. You don't have to have objected to a certain kind of behaviour in the past for it to be unwanted and constitute harassment.

Sexual harassment can include:

- someone making sexually degrading comments or gestures
- your body being stared or leered at
- being subjected to sexual jokes or propositions
- e-mails or text messages with sexual content
- physical behaviour, including unwelcome sexual advances and touching
- someone displaying sexually explicit pictures in your space or a shared space, such as at work
(Rape Crisis, 2016).

Click here for a link to support services

Do you think that sexual assault and sexual harassment are a problem on or around your university?

- ○ Not at all
- ○ A little
- ○ Somewhat
- ○ Very
- ○ Extremely

Click here for a link to support services

Sexual Violence:
'Sexual violence is any unwanted sexual act or activity. There are many kinds of sexual violence, including but not restricted to: rape, sexual assault, child sexual abuse, sexual harassment, rape within marriage/relationships, forced marriage, so-called honour-based violence, female genital mutilation, sexual exploitation, and ritual abuse' (Rape Crisis, 2016).
The next questions ask about your perceptions of experiencing sexual violence as defined above.

How likely do you think it is that you will experience sexual violence on or around your university campus?

- ○ Not at all
- ○ A little
- ○ Somewhat
- ○ Very
- ○ Extremely

Click here for a link to support services

How knowledgeable are you about where to get help at your university if you or a friend experience sexual violence?

○ Not at all

○ A little

○ Somewhat

○ Very

○ Extremely

Click here for a link to support services

How knowledgeable are you about where to make a report of sexual violence at your university?

○ Not at all

○ A little

○ Somewhat

○ Very

○ Extremely

Click here for a link to support services

How knowledgeable are you about what happens when a student reports an incident of sexual violence?

○ Not at all

○ A little

○ Somewhat

○ Very

○ Extremely

Click here for a link to support services

The next questions ask about situations in which someone said or did something that:

- Made you feel distressed, intimidated or offended or,

- Created an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment and

- The behaviour was of a sexual nature

Please remember to limit your answers to experiences on or around the university campus and places which are connected to your life as a student.

Since you enrolled at this university, has anyone made sexual comments or told jokes that were insulting or offensive to you?

○ Yes

○ No

Please select the year in which you were studying at this university when the incident(s) occurred (left column) and how many times this/these incident(s) occurred (top row) in that year. (please select all that apply)

	never	once	twice	three or more times	regularly
1st year	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2nd year	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3rd year	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4+ years	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

What is your relationship to the person/people who did this? (mark all that apply - If your relationship to one person could be described in two options, select both. Also, if this occurred with more than one person, select more than one option for each person).

- ☐ A partner
- ☐ An ex-partner
- ☐ A friend
- ☐ A fellow
- ☐ University teaching staff
- ☐ Other university staff
- ☐ A stranger
- ☐ Do not know
- ☐ Other

If you selected other, please specify

[_____]

<u>Click here for a link to support services</u>

The next questions ask about situations in which someone said or did something that:

- Made you feel distressed, intimidated or offended or,

- Created an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment and

- The behaviour was of a sexual nature

Please remember to limit your answers to experiences on or around the university campus and places which are connected to your life as a student.

Since you enrolled at this university, has anyone made inappropriate or offensive comments about your, or someone else's body, appearance or sexual activities?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

<u>Click here for a link to support services</u>

Please select the year in which you were studying at this university when the incident(s) occurred (left column) and how many times this/these incident(s) occurred (top row) in that year. (please select all that apply)

	never	once	twice	three or more times	regularly
1st year	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2nd year	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3rd year	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4+ years	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

What is your relationship to the person/people who did this? (mark all that apply - If your relationship to one person could be described in two options, select both. Also, if this occurred with more than one person, select more than one option for each person).

☐ A partner
☐ An ex-partner
☐ A friend
☐ A fellow
☐ University teaching staff
☐ Other university staff
☐ A stranger
☐ Do not know
☐ Other

If you selected other, please specify

Click here for a link to support services

The next questions ask about situations in which someone said or did something that:

- Made you feel distressed, intimidated or offended or,

- Created an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment and

- The behaviour was of a sexual nature

Please remember to limit your answers to experiences on or around the university campus and places which are connected to your life as a student.

Since you enrolled at this university, has anyone texted, tweeted, phoned, instant messaged or displayed in any way, offensive sexual remarks, jokes, stories, pictures, or videos to you that you didn't want?

○ Yes

○ No

Click here for a link to support services

Please select the year in which you were studying at this university when the incident(s) occurred (left column) and how many times this/these incident(s) occurred (top row) in that year. (please select all that apply)

	never	once	twice	three or more times	regularly
1st year	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2nd year	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3rd year	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4+ years	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

What is your relationship to the person/people who did this? (mark all that apply - If your relationship to one person could be described in two options, select both. Also, if this occurred with more than one person, select more than one option for each person).

- ☐ A partner
- ☐ An ex-partner
- ☐ A friend
- ☐ A fellow
- ☐ University teaching staff
- ☐ Other university staff
- ☐ A stranger
- ☐ Do not know
- ☐ Other

If you selected other, please specify

[ ]

The next questions ask about situations in which someone said or did something that:

- Made you feel distressed, intimidated or offended or,

- Created an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment and

- The behaviour was of a sexual nature

Please remember to limit your answers to experiences on or around the university campus and places which are connected to your life as a student.

Since you enrolled at this university, has anyone continued to ask you to go out, get dinner, have drinks or have sex even though you said "no"?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Click here for a link to support services

Please select the year in which you were studying at this university when the incident(s) occurred (left column) and how many times this/these incident(s) occurred (top row) in that year. (please select all that apply)

	never	once	twice	three or more times	regularly
1st year	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2nd year	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3rd year	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4+ years	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

What is your relationship to the person/people who did this? (mark all that apply - If your relationship to one person could be described in two options, select both. Also, if this occurred with more than one person, select more than one option for each person).

☐ A partner
☐ An ex-partner
☐ A friend
☐ A fellow
☐ University teaching staff
☐ Other university staff
☐ A stranger
☐ Do not know
☐ Other

If you selected other, please specify

<u>Click here for a link to support services</u>

The next section firstly asks about whether you have experienced **attempted** non-consensual sexual contact. You will later be asked about **completed** non-consensual sexual contact i.e. the contact took place.
The person with whom you experienced the non-consensual sexual contact with could have been someone you know, such as someone you are currently with, or were in a relationship with, a friend, a colleague, a lecturer, or a family member. Or it could be someone you do not know.

Consent is defined as:

agreeing by choice and having the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

Non-consensual sexual contact may occur because of different types of pressure, for example:

- Use of, or threats of, physical force

- Use of, or threats of, non-physical harm

- Promising rewards so that you felt you must comply

- Being unable to consent because you were passed out, asleep or incapacitated due to drugs or alcohol

- Ignoring cues to stop or slow down or, you agreed to one type of sexual contact, but not another, and this further contact occurred despite your refusal

Some of the language used in the survey is explicit and some people may find it uncomfortable, but it is important that the questions are asked in this way so that everyone understands what it means.

Please remember to limit your answers to experiences which occurred on or around your university campus and places which are connected to your life as a university student within the city you study in.

Select 'Yes' if you are happy to continue with the survey

○ Yes

Since you enrolled at this university has someone made an unsuccessful attempt to penetrate your vagina, anus or mouth with their penis without your consent?

○ Yes

○ No

Click here for a link to support services

Please select the year in which you were studying at this university when the incident(s) occurred (left column) and how many times this/these incident(s) occurred (top row) in that year. (please select all that apply)

	never	once	twice	three or more times	regularly
1st year	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2nd year	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3rd year	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4+ years	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Since you enrolled at this university has someone made an unsuccessful attempt to penetrate your vagina or anus with a part of their body, or something else for example an object, without your consent?

○ Yes

○ No

Click here for a link to support services

Please select the year in which you were studying at this university when the incident(s) occurred (left column) and how many times this/these incident(s) occurred (top row) in that year. (please select all that apply)

	never	once	twice	three or more times	regularly

	never	once	twice	three or more times	regularly
1st year	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2nd year	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3rd year	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4+ years	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Since you enrolled at this university, has someone attempted to intentionally touch you in a sexual way (even if the touching is over clothes) without your consent, for example: kissing, touching your breast, crotch, groin or buttocks, grabbing, groping or rubbing against you in a sexual way

○ Yes
○ No

Click here for a link to support services

Please select the year in which you were studying at this university when the incident(s) occurred (left column) and how many times this/these incident(s) occurred (top row) in that year. (please select all that apply)

	never	once	twice	three or more times	regularly
1st year	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2nd year	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3rd year	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4+ years	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Since you enrolled at this university, has someone attempted to make you touch yourself sexually or carry out sexual activity on yourself without consent?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Click here for a link to support services

Please select the year in which you were studying at this university when the incident(s) occurred (left column) and how many times this/these incident(s) occurred (top row) in that year. (please select all that apply)

	never	once	twice	three or more times	regularly
1st year	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2nd year	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3rd year	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4+ years	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

This next section asks about **completed** non-consensual contact you have experienced i.e. the contact took place.

Please remember to limit your answers to experiences which occurred on or around your university campus and places which are connected to your life as a university student within the city you study in.

Since you enrolled at this university, has someone intentionally penetrated your vagina, anus or mouth with their penis without your consent?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Please select the year in which you were studying at this university when the incident(s) occurred (left column) and how many times this/these incident(s) occurred (top row) in that year. (please select all that apply)

	never	once	twice	three or more times	regularly
1st year	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2nd year	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3rd year	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4+ years	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Since you enrolled at this university has someone intentionally penetrated your vagina or anus with a part of their body or, something else, for example an object without your consent?

○ Yes
○ No

Please select the year in which you were studying at this university when the incident(s) occurred (left column) and how many times this/these incident(s) occurred (top row) in that year. (please select all that apply)

	never	once	twice	three or more times	regularly
1st year	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2nd year	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	never	once	twice	three or more times	regularly
3rd year	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4+ years	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Since you enrolled at this university, has someone intentionally touched you in a sexual way (even if the touching is over clothes) without your consent, for example: kissing, touching your breast, crotch, groin or buttocks, grabbing, groping or rubbing against you in a sexual way?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Click here for a link to support services

Please select the year in which you were studying at this university when the incident(s) occurred (left column) and how many times this/these incident(s) occurred (top row) in that year. (please select all that apply)

	never	once	twice	three or more times	regularly
1st year	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2nd year	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3rd year	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4+ years	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Since you enrolled at this university, has someone made you touch yourself sexually or carry out sexual activity on yourself without your consent?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Please select the year in which you were studying at this university when the incident(s) occurred (left column) and how many times this/these incident(s) occurred (top row) in that year. (please select all that apply)

	never	once	twice	three or more times	regularly
1st year	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2nd year	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3rd year	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4+ years	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please confirm whether you have experienced at least one of the following behaviours, on or around your university campus, whilst studying at your institution.

If yes, select the one incident you consider to be most serious (or the incident you would prefer to discuss further) and answer further questions about this one incident. You will have an opportunity later to comment on other incidents further if you choose.

○   someone attempted penetration of your vagina, anus or mouth with their penis

○   someone attempted penetration of your vagina or anus with another part of their body or an object

○   someone attempted to touch you in a sexual way way for example, kissing, touching or grabbing sexually

○   someone attempted to make you touch yourself sexually or carry out sexual activity on yourself

○   someone intentionally penetrated your vagina, anus or mouth with their penis

○   someone intentionally penetrated your vagina or anus with a part of their body or an object

○   someone intentionally touched you in a sexual way for example, kissing, touching or grabbing sexually

○ someone made you touch yourself sexually or carry out sexual activity on yourself

○ I have never experienced any of these behaviours

Click here for a link to support services

Non-consensual sexual contact may occur because of different types of pressure. Please select all that apply to the one incident.

☐ Use of physical force

☐ Threats of physical force

☐ Use of non-physical harm e.g. threatening to share damaging information about you, or pictures of you, or threatening to cause trouble for you

☐ Threats of non-physical harm e.g. threatening to share damaging information about you, or pictures of you, or threatening to cause trouble for you

☐ Promising rewards so that you felt you must comply

☐ Being unable to consent because you were passed out, asleep or incapacitated due to drugs or alcohol

☐ lack of ongoing consent e.g. ignoring cues to stop or slow down or, you agreed to one type of sexual contact, but not another, and this further contact occurred despite your saying no

Click here for a link to support services

During this one incident, how many people did this to you?

○ 1 person

○ 2 persons

○ 3 or more persons

Was the person who did this...

○ A man

○ A woman

○ Other gender identity

○ Do not know

At the time of the incident, was the person who did this... (mark all that apply)

☐ A partner

☐ An ex-partner

☐ A friend

☐ A fellow student

☐ University teaching staff

☐ Other university staff

☐ A stranger

☐ Do not know

☐ Other

Click here for a link to support services

Were any of the people who did this... (mark all that apply)

☐ Men

☐ Women

☐ Other gender identity

☐ Do not know

At the time of the incident, were any of the people who did this.... (mark all that apply)

☐ A partner

☐ An ex-partner

☐ A friend

☐ A fellow student

☐ University teaching staff

☐ Other university staff

☐ A stranger

☐ Do not know

☐ Other

Where did the incident take place?

○ Lecture hall/seminar room

○ Staff office

○ Student zone/common area

○ University library

○ Students' Union buildings

○ University outdoor/recreational space

○ Halls of residence (where you live)

○ Halls of residence (someone else's residence)

○ On campus accommodation (where you live)

○ On campus accommodation (someone else's residence)

○ Shared student flat/house (where you live)

○ Shared student flat/house (someone else's residence)

○ Your family home

○ Advertised student night at a local venue

○ Social event in local venue which you attend as part of your life as a student

○ Other

Did you experience any of the following as a result of the incident? (mark all that apply)

- ☐ Difficulty concentrating on your studies or assessments

- ☐ Attendance at university suffered

- ☐ Fearfulness or being concerned about safety

- ☐ Loss of interest in daily activities

- ☐ Nightmares or trouble sleeping

- ☐ Feeling numb or detached

- ☐ Eating problems or disorders

- ☐ Increased drug or alcohol use

- ☐ None of the above

- ☐ Other

Click here for a link to support services

The next set of questions asks about experiences of officially reporting incidents. This means, an incident which you told someone about, hoping to proceed with an official investigation for example a university, or criminal investigation.

You will have the opportunity later to discuss people and organisations you told about the incident but were not making an official report to.

Did you make an official report to the police?

- ○ Yes

- ○ No

Click here for a link to support services

Why did you choose not to report the incident to the police? (please select the one reason you feel affected your decision the most)

- ○ Did not know who to go to or who to tell

- ○ I did not think it was serious enough to report

- ○ Felt embarrassed, ashamed or that it would be too emotionally difficult

- ○ I did not think anyone would believe me

○ I did not want the perpetrator to get in trouble

○ I feared negative social consequences

○ I did not think anything would be done

○ I feared it would not be kept confidential

○ I didn't want to be interrogated or feel judged

Click here for a link to support services

Were you satisfied with the police response to your report?

○ Not at all

○ A little

○ Somewhat

○ Very

○ Extremely

Do you feel the police... (please select all that apply)

☐ Respected you

☐ Believed you

☐ Helped you understand your options going forward

☐ Put pressure on you to proceed with further action

☐ Put pressure on you not to proceed with further action

☐ Told you about support services available

☐ Supported you

☐ Knew how to deal with the situation

Click here for a link to support services

Did you make an official report to someone who deals with these cases in university?

○ Yes

○ No

Why did you choose not to report the incident to the university? (please select the one reason you feel affected your decision the most)

○ Did not know who to go to or who to tell

○ Felt embarrassed, ashamed or that it would be too emotionally difficult

○ I did not think anyone would believe me

○ I did not think it was serious enough to report

○ I did not want the perpetrator to get in trouble

○ I feared negative social consequences

○ I did not think anything would be done

○ I feared it would not be kept confidential

Were you satisfied with the university's response to your report?

○ Not at all

○ A little

○ Somewhat

○ Very

○ Extremely

Do you feel the university... (please select all that apply)

☐ Respected you

☐ Believed you

☐ Helped you understand your options going forward

☐ Put pressure on you to proceed with further action

☐ Put pressure on you not to proceed with further action

☐ Told you about support services available

☐ Supported you

☐ Knew how to deal with the situation

Click here for a link to support services

The next set of questions asks about experiences of telling other people about the incident. This is not about making an official report, rather when you wanted someone to talk to, and these questions ask about how this person responded.

Did you talk to a friend or family member about the incident?

○ Yes

○ No

Click here for a link to support services

Why did you choose not to tell a friend or family member about the incident? (please select the one reason you feel affected your decision the most)

○ Felt embarrassed, ashamed or that it would be too emotionally difficult

○ I did not think anyone would believe me

○ I did not think it was serious enough to talk about

○ I did not want the perpetrator to get in trouble

○ I feared negative social consequences

○ I feared it would not be kept confidential

Click here for a link to support services

Were you satisfied with your friend or family member's response to what you told them?

○ Not at all

- ○ A little
- ○ Somewhat
- ○ Very
- ○ Extremely

Do you feel your friend or family member... (please select all that apply)

- ☐ Respected you
- ☐ Believed you
- ☐ Put pressure on you to make an official report
- ☐ Put pressure on you not to make an official report
- ☐ Supported you

Click here for a link to support services

Did you talk to a member of staff from the university (e.g. personal tutor) or health and wellbeing services about the incident?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Click here for a link to support services

Why did you choose not to tell a member of staff from the university or health and wellbeing services? (please select the one reason you feel affected your decision the most)

- ○ Felt embarrassed, ashamed or that it would be too emotionally difficult
- ○ I did not think anyone would believe me
- ○ I did not think it was serious enough to talk about
- ○ I did not want the perpetrator to get in trouble
- ○ I feared negative social consequences
- ○ I feared it would not be kept confidential

○ I did not know where to go or who to tell

Click here for a link to support services

Were you satisfied with the response of the staff member?

○ Not at all

○ A little

○ Somewhat

○ Very

○ Extremely

Do you feel the staff member... (please select all that apply)

☐ Respected you

☐ Believed you

☐ Put pressure on you to make an official report

☐ Put pressure on you not to make an official report

☐ Supported you

☐ Knew how to deal with the situation

Click here for a link to support services

Did you talk to someone from support services, external to the university about the incident, for example, sexual violence support services, Samaritans or counsellors?

○ Yes

○ No

Click here for a link to support services

Why did you choose not to tell someone from support services about the incident?

○ Felt embarrassed, ashamed or that it would be too emotionally difficult

○ I did not think anyone would believe me

○ I did not think it was serious enough to talk about

○ I did not want the perpetrator to get in trouble

○ I feared negative social consequences

○ I feared it would not be kept confidential

○ I did not know where to go or who to talk to

[Click here for a link to support services](#)

Were you satisfied with the response of the support services?

○ Not at all

○ A little

○ Somewhat

○ Very

○ Extremely

Do you feel the support services... (please select all that apply)

☐ Respected you

☐ Believed you

☐ Helped you understand your options going forward

☐ Put pressure on you to make an official report

☐ Put pressure on you not to make an official report

☐ Supported you

☐ Knew how to deal with the situation

Please use the box below to provide any additional comments or concerns you would like. For example, may use this space to comment on the survey content, to

provide further detail on answers or if you felt you were unable to express something, you may do that here.
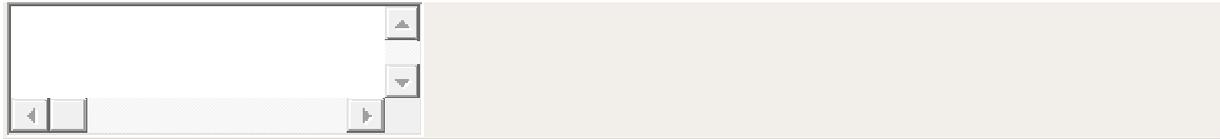
This survey is almost finished. Before you complete the survey please note there is a second stage to the research. Please read below and decide if you would like to take part and if you are eligible.

If you have experienced a form of sexual violence, abuse, assault or harassment whilst you were studying at the university you currently attend, and would be willing to take part in a one to one interview to discuss your experiences further, please contact k.atkinson@2015.ljmu.ac.uk **If you email, I will send you an information sheet with further details about the interview to help you make a decision on whether you would like to take part.**
If you have any questions about taking part in an interview please email k.atkinson@2015.ljmu.ac.uk

Appendix E: Participant Recruitment Email

Would you be willing to complete a short online survey?

I am a PhD researcher at Liverpool John Moores University researching the nature and extent of sexual violence against women university students in the UK.

You are eligible to take part in the survey if you,

- identify as a woman,
- are 18 years old or over,
- enrolled at participating institutions, and
- live in the city in which you study during term time.
- You **do not** need to have experienced any form of sexual violence in order to complete this survey

If you are interested in taking part, please follow this link to the participant information sheet https://ljmu.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/campussurvey If you would like to take part, you can access the survey by selecting yes after the participant information sheet.

If you have experienced sexual violence as a student, fit the eligibility criteria listed above, and would be willing to discuss your experiences in further detail with me in a one to one interview please email k.atkinson@2015.ljmu.ac.uk for the participant information sheet. Please also email if you have any questions.

If you have experienced sexual violence and would like information about local support services and a helpline, visit http://rapecrisis.org.uk/

This study has received ethical approval from LJMU's Research Ethics Committee Ref: 16/HSS/005

Appendix F: Participant Recruitment Email Directed to Student Society Presidents

Hello,

I am a Criminology PhD student at Liverpool John Moores University. I am carrying out research into women students' experiences of sexual violence and harassment at university and I am reaching out to all of the societies in order to spread the word about this research. I was hoping that you, as the head of a student group, would be willing to share the information about the survey and research and encourage the other members of your group to complete the online survey. The link to the survey is copied below and the participant information sheet is also attached to this email.

Thank you in advance for any help in disseminating the research and please feel free to email me with any question or queries.

Kind regards,

Kym

Appendix G: Outline of Interview Schedules

Interview schedule for student victim and survivors of sexual violence

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for this research project.

The interview will cover a range of topics. To begin with, I will ask some questions about your studies and some demographic questions. The interview will then move on to some questions about your experiences of sexual harassment and violence and some further questions relating to the nature of that experience and your feelings and responses to that. We will then move on to a broader discussion of the issue of sexual violence at university and discuss your perspective on the issue. For the purposes of the interview, please feel free to talk about one or all of your experiences during your time as a student at this university.

The questions here are a guide and you are able to direct the conversation as much or as little as you would like. If you do not wish to answer some questions that is fine, just let me know and we will move on to the next question. You can stop the interview at any time without giving a reason. If you wish to take a break at any point, again, that is fine, let me know and I will stop recording and you can decide how you would like to proceed.

- How old are you?
- Undergraduate or postgraduate?
- What do you study?
- Are you originally from [this city]?
- Where do you live during your studies? (At home/ student halls/private rented accommodation)

- Can you tell me about your experiences relating to sexual violence, assault, abuse or harassment whilst you were a student at this university?
    - When did this occur?
    - Where did this take place?
    - What was your relationship to the person?
- How do you define this experience? / These experiences?
- How do you think this experience affected you?
    - Physical health
    - Mental health
    - Emotionally
    - Educationally
    - General wellbeing
- Did you report or disclose any of these experiences?
    - Police
    - Health and wellbeing services
    - Counselling (internal/external)

- University staff (informally)
- Family
- Friends
- Can you tell me about your experiences with these different organisations/people?
  - Was it an overall positive experience?
  - Were you happy with the response?
  - Were there any outcomes of speaking to any of these people? E.g. access further support, changed the way you felt, criminal/disciplinary investigation.
- Why did you choose not to talk to certain, or all, people?
  - Were there any barriers/ reasons why?
  - What did you think would, or would not, happen?
- Could you tell me about the short and long-term impacts of the incidents and response (if discussed)?
  - How did you feel at the time?
  - How do you feel now?
- Do you generally feel safe on campus?
  - On university premises
  - In student halls
  - In private accommodation
  - Night-time economy
- Is there anything that could make you feel safer?
- Do you think sexual violence and harassment are a problem for students across the university? Is it something you think many students have to deal with?
- Is there anything that you would like to see in particular at this university or wider that may have helped you and improved your experience of reporting or disclosing?
  - In relation to support for students
  - In relation to prevention and education
- Is there anything you would like to add or anything you feel is important that we have not discussed?
- Do you have any questions for me?
- Finally, is there anything else you would like to add?

Thank you again for your participation.

Interview schedule for external support service participants

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for this research project.

The aim of this interview is to explore the role and experiences of those working at external support services to the university, who may be involved in various types of work relating to sexual violence against women university students. The interview will begin with a discussion of your role generally, the issue of sexual violence against women students and any of your work in the area. At the end of the interview you will have the opportunity to discuss anything you think is relevant or would like to discuss. As the interview is semi-structured, the discussion may take different directions. These questions are intended as a guide and, therefore, please feel welcome to discuss anything which you feel is relevant.

We can stop the interview at any time and your responses are confidential and anonymous.

Questions:

- What is your role?
- How long have you been in your post?
- What is your understanding of the issue of sexual violence on campus?

> - Is it a problem/prevalent? If so, why do you think it is a problem?
> - What are any of the issues that you know of?
> - How do you understand the culture and context at university in relation to sexual violence?

- Are you directly responsible for handling reporting/ disclosing/ supporting/ policy/ management/ campaigning?
- In your view, who has the responsibility for preventing sexual violence against women students?
  > [Prompts]
  > Academic staff
  > Students
  > Senior management
  > Governance
  > Police
- Do you have links with the university?
  - Do you offer your specialist knowledge to the university?
  - Have you worked together on policies or initiatives in this area, or more generally?
- In relation to prevention, what would you like to see universities doing to respond to the needs of students who have been sexually assaulted?

- What is it about these initiatives that you believe is useful in preventing sexual violence on campus?
- Do you know if the university undertakes any of these initiatives?
- Do you know of policies that have been developed elsewhere in relation to the prevention needs of students?
- Is there anything that can be learned from other institutions?

- In relation to responding to disclosures of sexual violence, what would you like to see universities doing to respond appropriately?
  - What exactly is needed when a disclosure occurs? In relation to supporting students
  - Who specifically do you think should be dealing with disclosures?
  - Do you think there are any issues regarding reporting in the area?
  - Is there anything that can be learned from other institutions?

- If a student is referred to you, is communication maintained with the university?

- What do you think of the university's response to students who have been accused of sexual violence or sexual harassment?

- What do you think of the university's response to staff who have been accused of sexual violence or sexual harassment?

- What are your views on having a centralised record and/or reporting system?
  - Statistics?
  - Help?

- Do you have any questions for me?
- Finally, is there anything else you would like to add?

Thank you again for your participation.

Interview schedule for internal support services participants

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for this research project.

The aim of this interview is to explore the role and experiences of those working in university student support services who may be involved in various types of work relating to sexual violence against women university students. The interview will begin with a discussion of your role generally, the issue of sexual violence against women students and any of your work in the area. At the end of the interview you will have the opportunity to discuss anything you think is relevant or would like to discuss. As the interview is semi-structured, the discussion may take different directions. These questions are intended as a guide and, therefore, please feel welcome to discuss anything which you feel is relevant.

We can stop the interview at any time and your responses are confidential and anonymous.

Questions:

- What is your role?
- How long have you been in your post?
- What is your understanding of the issue of sexual violence on campus?

> - Is it a problem/prevalent? If so, why do you think it is a problem?
> - What are any of the issues that you know of?
> - How do you understand the culture and context at university in relation to sexual violence?

- Are you directly responsible for handling reporting/ disclosing/ supporting/ policy/ management/ campaigning?
- In your view, who has the responsibility for preventing sexual violence against women students?
  > [Prompts]
  > Academic staff
  > Students
  > Senior management
  > Governance
  > Police
- How important is the role of student support services in relation to the issue?
- What is in place in terms of prevention of sexual violence at this university?

> - Does any of this directly come from the work of student support services?
> - Have you personally worked on any of these prevention initiatives?
> - Have you followed the work of other institutions or broader policies?
> - How do you see this approach to prevention? What, if any, are the benefits?
> What would you like to see in future in terms of developing these or undertaking new initiatives?
> - What, if anything, can be learned from other institutions?

- What is in place in terms of responses to disclosures of sexual violence on campus?
  - Does any of this come directly from the work of student support services?
  - Have you personally worked on the delivery of these responses?
  - What is useful about this approach to response? What, if any, are the benefits?
  - What would you like to see in future developments in the area of responses?

- Do you think there are any issues regarding reporting in the area?
- Have you followed the work of other institutions or broader policies?
- What do you think of this work?
- What can be learned from other institutions?

- Is there a reporting system available for students to report incidents?
    - Anonymous reporting?
    - Do student support services keep a centralised record of reported incidents of sexual violence?
- Which policies are in place at the university that relate to the management of these issues?
    - Is there a protocol to follow once an incident is reported?
    - Do you have policies on student misconduct in this area?
    - Do you have policies on staff misconduct in this area?
    - Can you tell me about the internal disciplinary process – what does it involve?
    - At what stage, after a report, would an internal disciplinary process begin (e.g. immediately after a report)?
    - What practices are put in place to ensure the fair treatment of all parties involved?
    - How effective, in your view, are the current policies?

- Can you talk about what happens if a student or staff member is accused of sexual violence and/or harassment?
    - Do you know of situations where a student or staff member was disciplined internally
    - Is knowledge of developments in a case shared with you, as a person who may have made a referral or been involved?
    - How is the continuation of support ensured?
- What do you think of the university's response to students who have been accused of sexual violence or sexual harassment?
- What do you think of the university's response to staff who have been accused of sexual violence or sexual harassment?
- What support is available in the university?
    - If someone reports an incident, is there specialised counselling available?
    - Waiting times?
    - Is there enough funding/staff
    - What would you like to see in future in relation to developing the support available?
    - Do you have links with external agencies? Which? What is the nature of this work?
    - How could student awareness of the availability of support services (internal or external) be raised?
- What is your understanding and perceptions of the UUK taskforce report?

- Has your work been changed at all due to these updates? If so, how?
- What changes, if any, have you seen in the university overall following the updates?
- What from the report will be, or is being implemented?
- Is there anything from the report and guidelines which will not be implemented?

- Do you have any questions for me?
- Finally, is there anything else you would like to add?

Thank you again for your participation.

Interview schedule for participants who work in policy, legal and governance roles

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for this research project.

The aim of this interview is to explore the role and experiences of those working in relation to policy and governance at the university, who may be involved in various types of work relating to sexual violence against women university students. The interview will begin with a discussion of your role generally, the issue of sexual violence against women students and any of your work in the area. At the end of the interview you will have the opportunity to discuss anything you think is relevant or would like to discuss. As the interview is semi-structured, the discussion may take different directions. These questions are intended as a guide and, therefore, please feel welcome to discuss anything which you feel is relevant.

We can stop the interview at any time and your responses are confidential and anonymous.

- What is your role?
- How long have you been in your post?
- What is your understanding of the issue of sexual violence on campus?

- Is it a problem/prevalent? If so, why do you think it is a problem?
- What are any of the issues that you know of?
- How do you understand the culture and context at university in relation to sexual violence?

- Are you directly responsible for handling reporting/ disclosing/ supporting/ policy/ management/ campaigning?
- In your view, who has the responsibility for preventing sexual violence against women students?
    [Prompts]

            Academic staff

            Students

            Senior management

            Governance

            Police

- What are the relevant policies, if any, in relation to the prevention of sexual violence at this university?

    - Does any of this directly come from the work of you and/or your department?

    - Have you followed the work of other institutions or broader policies?

    - How do you see the issue of prevention?

    - What would you like to see in future in terms of developing this or undertaking new initiatives?

- What is in place in terms of responses to disclosures of sexual violence on campus?

    - Does any of this come directly from the work of your department?

    - Have you followed the work of other institutions or broader policies?

    - What can be learned from other institutions?

    - Is there anything you would like to see with respect to future policy development regarding the responses to sexual violence against students?

- Which policies are in place at the university that relate to the management of these issues?

    - Is there a protocol to follow once an incident is reported?

    - Do you think there are any issues regarding reporting in the area?

    - Do you have policies on student misconduct in this area?

    - Do you have policies on staff misconduct in this area?

    - Can you tell me about the internal disciplinary process – what does it involve?

    - What practices are put in place to ensure the fair treatment of all parties involved?

    - How effective, in your view, are the current policies?

- Can you talk about what happens if a student or staff member is accused of sexual violence and/or harassment?

    - Do you know of situations where a student or staff member was disciplined internally

    - How is knowledge of developments in a case shared across departments?

    - How is the continuation of support ensured?

- What do you think of the university's response to students who have been accused of sexual violence or sexual harassment?

- What do you think of the university's response to staff who have been accused of sexual violence or sexual harassment?

- What is your understanding and perceptions of the UUK taskforce report?
  - Has your work been changed at all due to these updates? If so, how?
  - What changes, if any, have you seen in the university overall following the updates?
  - What from the report will be, or is being implemented?
  - Is there anything from the report and guidelines which will not be implemented?
- Do you have any questions for me?
- Finally, is there anything else you would like to add?

Thank you again for your participation.

Interview schedule for Students' Union participants

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for this research project.

The aim of this interview is to explore the role and experiences of those who are involved, formally or informally, in various types of work relating to sexual violence against women university students. The interview will begin with a discussion of your role generally, the issue of sexual violence against women students and any of your work in the area. At the end of the interview you will have the opportunity to discuss anything you think is relevant or would like to discuss. As the interview is semi-structured, the discussion may take different directions. These questions are intended as a guide and, therefore, please feel welcome to discuss anything which you feel is relevant.

We can stop the interview at any time and your responses are confidential and anonymous.

- What is your role?
- How long have you been in this position?
- What is your understanding of the issue of sexual violence on campus?

  - Is it a problem/prevalent? If so, why do you think it is a problem?
  - What are any of the issues that you know of?
  - How do you understand the culture and context at university in relation to sexual violence?

- Are you directly responsible for handling reporting/ disclosing/ supporting/ policy/ management/ campaigning?

- In your view, who has the responsibility for preventing sexual violence against women students?

  [Prompts]
  Academic staff
  Students
  Senior management
  Governance
  Police

- How do you see the role of the Students' Union and your society in relation to this issue?

  -What do you think of the work the union has done, and is doing, in this area?

- What is in place in terms of prevention of sexual violence at this university?
  - Does any of this directly come from the work of the students' union?
  - Have you personally worked on any of these prevention initiatives?
  - Are you planning any future initiatives?
  - How do you see this approach to prevention?
  - What would you like to see in future in terms of developing these or undertaking new initiatives?
  - Do you know of any other successful projects/campaigns external to the university?

- What is in place in terms of responses to disclosures of sexual violence on campus?
  - Does any of this come directly from the work of the students' union?
  - How do you see this approach to responding to sexual violence on campus?
  - What would you like to see in future developments in the area?

- What do you think of the university's response to students who have been accused of sexual violence or sexual harassment?
- What do you think of the university's response to staff who have been accused of sexual violence or sexual harassment?

- Do you know of other universities who have successful response procedures?
  - What can be learned from the work of other institutions in the area?
- What support, if any, does the students' union need to develop the work in this area?
- Do you have any questions for me?
- Finally, is there anything else you would like to add?

Thank you again for your participation.

Appendix H: Stakeholder Recruitment Email

I am a PhD researcher at Liverpool John Moores University researching the nature and extent of sexual violence against women university students. The final stage of the research involves one to one interviews with stakeholders who may be involved in work in the area. I am writing to ask you to take part in an interview with me. The interviews are concerned with exploring the experiences of those who may be working, formally or informally, in a role relating to the issue. The interviews are furthermore intended to explore the context in which policies, practice and campaigns are developing. I have attached a participant information sheet which details the process further.

Please read the participant information sheet and contact me if you have any questions. If you would like to take part, please contact me on this email address and we can arrange a time that is suitable for you.

Kind regards,

Kym Atkinson

Appendix I: Student and Stakeholder Interview Consent Forms

![Liverpool John Moores University logo] **LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY**

Title of Project The prevalence, nature and reporting of sexual violence against women university students in the UK

Kym Atkinson

Liverpool John Moores University, Faculty of Arts, professional and Social Studies,

School of Humanities and Social Science.

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information provided for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and that this will not affect my legal rights.

3. I understand that any personal information collected during the study will be anonymised and remain confidential

4. I agree to take part in the above study by attending an interview

5. I understand that the interview will be audio recorded and I am happy to proceed

6. I understand that parts of our conversation may be used verbatim in future publications or presentations but that such quotes will be anonymised.

Name of Participant   Date   Signature

Name of Researcher   Date   Signature

Note: When completed 1 copy for participant and 1 copy for researcher