

INTRODUCTION

Research has consistently shown that women and men experience spaces, particularly public spaces, differently (see Bows and Fileborn, 2020 for an overview) and that safety and crime are gendered. For example, in England and Wales, national data indicates that women and men over the age of 16 experience similar levels of personal crime (violence, robbery or theft) victimisation: 3.4% of women compared with 3.9% of men (ONS, 2020). However, women are significantly more at risk of domestic violence and sexual violence than men, which mostly occurs in the home by someone known to the victim or someone they are in a relationship with. For example, the data from 2018 indicates 3.1% of women experienced sexual assault in the previous year compared to 0.8% of men (ONS, 2018a). Furthermore, 7.9% of women experienced domestic violence compared with 4.2% of men (ONS, 2018b). Conversely, men are more likely to be victims of non-domestic physical violence/assaults: 2.1% of men compared with 1.3% of women and the majority occurred in public or workplaces. Research on victimisation and offender ratings show the areas in and around licensed leisure venues experience heightened rates of violence and crime, and men are overwhelmingly the victims and offenders (e.g. ONS, 2018c) except for sexual harassment and assault, where women make up the majority of victims. It should be noted, however, that other licensed leisure spaces such as gig venues and festivals are not included in these statistics, which are limited to pubs, bars and nightclubs.

Although the national statistics indicate that violence against women most often occurs in private spaces (e.g. the home), victimisation of women in public spaces is common. Internationally, research consistently reveals that women routinely experience sexual harassment and sexual assault in public spaces including public transport (London Assembly, 2016; SPA, 2014) and public streets. For example, a global study of street sexual harassment reports that 50% of women in 22 countries have been fondled or groped and more than 81.5% of European women have been harassed before the age of 17 (Hollaback, 2014). Moreover, leisure spaces are frequently associated with sexual harassment and violence against women, particularly those linked to nightlife situated within the 'sexualised city' (Hubbard and Colosi, 2012). In the UK, a Drinkaware study (2015) reported 54% of women and 15%

of men aged 18-24 experience sexual harassment on a night out. Thus, as Pain (1991) pointed out, whilst research may indicate the majority of violence against women takes place in the private sphere (usually the victim's home), while men are most often victimised in public spaces, this does not mean the public sphere is a safe place for women. In particular, sexual harassment (the most common form of sexual violence) overwhelmingly occurs in public places (Vera-Gray, 2016) including nightlife (Brooks, 2008) and live music venues (Hill, Hesmondhalgh and Megson, 2020). However, licensed spaces remain under-researched as a site for gender-based violence (Gunby et al., 2020), particularly sexual violence, with very limited attention afforded to festival spaces. This paper presents the findings from the first UK study to examine festival-goer experiences and perceptions of safety and crime, with a particular focus on sexual harassment and violence.

GENDER AND CRIME AT MUSIC FESTIVALS

There is a general consensus that there has been a global boom in festivals over the last three decades, although defining and counting them is not a straightforward task (Webster and McKay, 2016). There exists a vast range of festivals, with at least seventeen different 'types' of festivals that vary in size, style and patron demographics (Stone, 2009). Webster and McKay (2016), for example, suggest three overarching types of festivals: greenfield, open-air events which often include camping and programme music; venue-based festivals linked by theme or genre; and street-based urban carnivals. There is wide disparity in defining and counting festivals from UK Music's (2017) estimation of around 230 festivals in 2016 attended by more than 4 million people to CGA's (2019) estimation of 700 UK music festivals attended by 7.1 million in 2018. Clearly the festival industry is booming with Mintel (2018) estimating that there were 918 UK festivals in 2018, more than double that of a decade earlier.

Festivals, as with much of the music industry, are acknowledged as traditionally heavily gendered/male dominated businesses. However, a recent rapid upsurge in female UK festival attendance has resulted in more women than men now attending. In 2016, 60% of UK festival visitors were female, an increase from 37% in 2015 (Statista, 2016). Consequently, issues of gender inequality and broader gender relations have increasingly been recognised by the public, media and festival

organisers themselves. For example, after mounting media pressure, 45 festivals across the world pledged to achieve a 50:50 gender balance in musician line-up by 2022 in recognition of the gender gap (BBC, 2018) – a commitment few other industries have made.

Whilst festivals may share some characteristics with other licensed leisure space, there are also significant differences: as Dilkes-Frayne (2015, p.1) argues, ‘festivals are unique in their size, location and layout: are held at both day and night-time, are relatively infrequent, of long duration and large crowd size’. In terms of their policing and governance, they have been described as “temporary autonomous zones” that allow considerably more independence and flexibility to management, police, local authorities and support services in their approach than is the case in towns and cities (Bey, 1985). Moreover, the commodification of an ‘experiential opportunity to transcend normative constraints within a liminal setting is central to music festivals’ (Szmigin et al., 2017, p.1). Liminality refers to an ambiguous state, away from the norms of society and conventional rules. Edwards, Gilbert, and Skinner (2003, p.82) describe liminal spaces as between the fluid and solid social structure, shifting between safety and risk, of the social and the natural. Since music festivals first emerged in their current form in the 1960s, their core features – liminality, temporary freedom and escape from everyday life (Pielichaty, 2015) – have led festivals to be associated with crime, deviance and transgression ranging from drinking, drunkenness, drug use and nudity, through to anti-social behaviour and violence, sometimes reaching mythic status in festival folklore such as the events of Woodstock, USA, in 1969 or Castlemorton, UK, in 1992.

Multiple media reports and interviews have highlighted the issue of sexual harassment and assault of women at music festivals globally. For example, in 2016 and 2017 a spate of reported rapes and sexual assaults of women at Bravalla, a Swedish festival, led to the cancellation of the event in 2018 until men could ‘learn to behave themselves’ (Digital Music News, 2018). Statement Festival in Gothenberg, Sweden, has banned cisgender men from attending (NY Times, 2018). These reports are supported by the only UK empirical study currently published by YouGov (2018), which reported that sexual harassment is prevalent at UK music festivals, revealing 43% of female festival-goers and 22%

of male festival-goers under the age of 40 experienced unwanted sexual behaviour at a music festival but only 2% reported it to the police. These reported levels are significantly lower than those reported in a recent survey in the USA, which revealed over 90% of female respondents reported being sexually harassed at a music festival or music gig/venue (OMMB, 2017).

There has only been one academic study examining sexual violence at music festivals. Fileborn et al. (2019) surveyed 500 festival-goers attending a festival in Australia about their broader experiences of festival attendance, perceptions of safety and incidences of violence, harassment and assault. They found that most participants felt usually (61.5%) or always (29%) safe. Through interviews with individuals who had experienced or responded to sexual violence at any Australian music festival, they found that experiences ranged from harassment to assault, with groping and other forms of sexual touching in crowded stage and performance areas particularly common. Most perpetrators were men and few bystanders intervened in incidences of sexual violence.

Whilst the survey findings and media reports give some indication of the extent and nature of crime and sexual harassment at festivals, there are major gaps in knowledge about the perceptions of safety and experiences of crime among festival-goers, particularly in the UK. This article presents data from the first UK academic study to explore festival-goers' perceptions and experiences of safety and crime and incidence of different types of crime within UK festival spaces.

METHOD

Data was gathered using an online self-selected survey (n=400) during the 2018 UK summer festival season (June-September) promoted via social media (Twitter and Facebook) and online festival forums (e-festivals) and discussion websites (studentroom). We also asked industry contacts to retweet or share the link with their followers, networks and broader contacts. Additionally, 50 surveys were carried out on-site at two festivals during the summer of 2019. The study advert informed participants that the research was examining perceptions and experiences of crime and safety at festivals attended in the previous 12 months. The survey informed participants that all questions were optional and that some sections of the survey would ask about specific types of behaviours including

sexual harassment and assault. The following definitions of sexual harassment and assault were provided:

“Sexual harassment is any unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature that you find offensive or which makes you feel distressed, intimidated or humiliated. 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*
- *any other type of harassment of a sexual nature using forms of contact not described above*

Sexual assault is an act of physical, psychological and emotional violation, in the form of a sexual act, inflicted upon someone without their consent. It can involve forcing or manipulating someone to witness or participate in any sexual acts.”

The survey contained seventeen questions about perceptions and concerns around different types of crime at UK music festivals, and experiences of crime at festivals attended within the previous 12 months. Basic demographic data (e.g. gender, age group, level of education) were collected as well as introductory questions capturing the festivals attended by respondents within the previous 12 months. A combination of open and closed questions assessed perceptions of safety and experiences of crime. For example, participants were asked how safe they felt at the festivals they had attended in the previous 12 months using a Likert scale (from 1=very safe to 5=never safe). Participants were asked how concerned they had been at the festivals they attended in the previous twelve months in relation to three categories of crime (physical violence, sexual harassment and sexual abuse) on a Likert scale (from 1= very concerned to 5=not at all concerned). Furthermore, participants were asked to indicate the frequency of their experiences of each physical violence, sexual harassment and sexual abuse at festivals they attended in the previous 12 months (never, once, more than once). Follow-up

questions included closed questions asking participants whether they reported the incident (yes/no) and who they reported to (friends, festival staff, festival volunteers, welfare, police, security etc). A small number of open text questions were used to capture opinions and motivations for reporting (e.g. participants who indicated they had reported to one or more agencies/individuals were asked why they chose to report and how happy they felt about the response they received). Ethical approval for the study was obtained from (anonymised for review) University ethics committee.

The findings presented in this paper relate to respondents' experiences of safety and crime at UK music festivals. Data were inputted and coded in Excel before using SPSS v26 for analysis. Univariate and bivariate tests were run to produce descriptive statistics on the perceptions of risk and safety at festivals and the relationship between demographic variables, attendance at different categories of festivals and levels of concern and experiences of crime. Responses to the questions about feelings of safety, areas that feel safe/unsafe at festivals, features of festivals that affect feelings of safety, concerns about physical violence, sexual assault and sexual harassment and experiences of these harms were examined for gender differences. Chi Square tests were conducted for each question about safety, thereby reducing the chance of a Type 1 error. Responses were cross tabulated for women and men only, due to the very small number of differently gendered respondents. Free text answers were analysed qualitatively, identifying themes which were coded.

A total of 450 respondents completed the survey, of whom 285 (63.3%) identified as women, 158 (35.1%) identified as men and seven identified as a different gender. Respondents ranged from 16 to 69 years old. The biggest age group was 20-24 (18.2%) however there was a larger proportion of respondents aged 30 and over (56.2%) than under 30 (43.8%). The majority of respondents identified as heterosexual (80.2%), with 9.6% identifying as bisexual, 2.9% as pansexual, 2% as gay and 0.9% as lesbian. Over half of respondents (56.4%) had a university degree or equivalent, whilst a further third (34.2%) had completed a further education qualification. Over half (55.8%) were currently in full-time employment and another 12.4% were employed part-time. Just under one in five respondents was a student (17.6%). Given the challenges of undertaking research in the (festival) field,

the survey fields on demographics were kept to a minimum so we did not capture further data on ethnicity, religion or nationality. Table percentages are calculated from the whole sample where questions were applicable to the whole sample, not only from those who answered a particular question. Not all respondents answered all parts of all questions for example, if multiple choice, and therefore table totals do not always equal 100%.

FINDINGS

Most Respondents Feel Safe at UK Music Festivals

Overall, almost nine in ten respondents reported feeling usually or always safe at the UK music festivals they had attended in the previous year (see Figure 1). Female respondents were more likely to report feeling 'sometimes safe' or 'rarely safe' compared to male respondents .

Figure 1 about here

The Gendering of Safety in Festival Space

Although most respondents reported feeling generally safe at festivals, there were some spaces within the festival site that felt unsafe to some. Respondents were asked to indicate if any of a number of distinct named areas within a festival site led them to feel unsafe and were also given the option of selecting 'other' and providing a free text answer if none of the answers provided described the place/s they felt generally unsafe (Table 1). The five festival areas where respondents were most likely to say they felt unsafe were the camp sites, walkways, stage areas (in front of, to the side of or behind the stage), toilets and woodlands. Differently gendered respondents were the most likely to report feeling unsafe in camp sites, stage areas and toilets compared with women and men, while women were more likely than men to feel unsafe in all festival areas except the boneyard, a busy area of a festival site where heavy plant machinery, vehicles, and building materials are stored and utilised

throughout the event and where operations crew cabins are often located. These findings were statistically significant for camp sites, walkways, toilets and woodland areas (Table 1).

Table 1 about here

Features Affecting Feelings of Safety

Respondents were asked whether the presence or absence of a number of features affected feelings of safety (using a multiple response question). Respondents reported a number of features or contextual factors which increased (Table 2) or decreased (Table 3) feelings of safety falling into two categories: environmental and personal/social.

Environmental

A range of environmental features both enhanced and reduced feelings of safety. Respondents reported that the presence of welfare services, security services, festival staff/volunteers and medical services, as well as lighting, were most likely to increase feelings of safety (see Table 2). Women were more likely than men to report these environmental features enhanced safety, which was statistically significant for security and lighting.

Table 2 about here

Conversely, poor lighting and behaviour of security staff were the most common environmental features reducing feelings of safety (Table 3). Again, higher proportions of women compared with men reported that these affected feelings of safety, although this was only statistically significant for lighting. Police presence and police behaviour were two features that more men than women reported reducing their feelings of safety and this was statistically significant for police presence.

Personal/social

Respondents reported the presence of friends was the main social feature increasing feelings of safety, which did not differ significantly by respondent gender (Table 2).

A number of other social features reduced feelings of safety, primarily other people being intoxicated through alcohol or other drugs, and groups of men. Fewer respondents reported feeling less safe as a result of their own intoxication with alcohol or other drugs.

Table 3 about here

These findings were also gendered. Although there was little difference between women and men's feelings of increased safety in relation to the presence of friends, the majority of other environmental features reduced feelings of safety for a higher proportion of women than men. Women felt significantly less safe than men in relation to their own and others' alcohol intoxication, others' drug intoxication, and groups of men (Table 3).

Respondents were more likely to report increased safety due to the presence of security than police. However, this may reflect current models of security and policing in UK music festivals which are more likely to have private security companies responsible for safety and security within the site and policing concentrated at ingress and egress. Interestingly, the behaviour of security staff both increased and decreased feelings of safety, illustrating the complex and varying relationship between the general public and private security in licensed leisure venues (Livingston and Hart, 2003; van Steden and Nalla, 2010).

Concerns About Physical and Sexual Violence

Despite reporting feeling generally safe at festivals, respondents were concerned about physical violence, sexual harassment and sexual assault. Table 4 shows the level of concern for each of these, broken down by gender.

Table 4 about here

Women also reported higher rates of victimisation for sexual harassment and sexual assault, whilst more men had experienced physical violence.

Table 5 about here

Sources of Disclosure

For those respondents who said they had experienced one or more incidents of physical violence or sexual violence, they were further asked to indicate if they had disclosed to a range of informal or formal sources and could tick all that apply or choose 'other' and provide additional detail. A total of 133 respondents who indicated they experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual violence at a festival in the previous 12 months answered this question; 105 identified as female, 24 as male, and four said they were differently gendered. Of these, 63 (47.4%) did not disclose to anyone while 70 (52.6%) had made at least one disclosure. A total of 119 disclosures were made by the 70 respondents who indicated they had made at least one disclosure. The most common sources of disclosure were friends (n=57), followed by security (n=14) and partner/spouse (n=13). Only five respondents disclosed to the police, although this difference may reflect that many UK festivals are predominantly regulated by private security once within the festival perimeter.

Figure 2 about here

DISCUSSION

This paper reports the findings from the UK's first study of festival-goer perceptions and experiences of safety and crime at UK music festivals. The wider literature, although limited, shows these spaces are gendered, and thus the experiences, perceptions and interactions in these spaces are shaped, modified and impacted by gender (as well as other identities) (e.g. Fileborn et al., 2019; 2020; 2021). Increasing media reports of sexual harassment and sexual violence at festivals in the UK and beyond indicates the growing concern of the gendering of risk in these spaces. Despite this, the majority of respondents in this study reported feeling safe at the festivals they had attended over the previous 12 months. However, this was dependent on different social, personal and environmental factors and experiences were gendered. Female respondents in our study were significantly more likely than male respondents to experience sexual harassment and sexual assault. We therefore argue that festivals must work with key stakeholders to take greater action to prevent sexual violence.

This study found that women, men and non-binary adults perceived and experienced these spaces differently in relation to safety and crime, consistent with research on other public and leisure spaces, particularly licensed leisure venues. Although respondents reported feeling generally safe at festivals, specific spaces within the festival environment felt less safe, particularly for women and non-binary/gender-fluid participants. Camping areas, the walkways between camping and festival sites, and woodlands were the areas of particular concern for these participants, with women statistically more likely than men to report that these spaces made them feel generally unsafe. These areas share similarities – they are separate from the main festival entertainment sites with consequent reduced lighting, security, police, festival staff and often other festival-goers. These environmental (reduced lighting, security and police) and social features (festival staff, volunteers and festival-goers) were important to respondents in our study, either increasing or decreasing their perceptions of safety. Poor lighting, groups of men and the presence of police significantly reduced feelings of safety for female respondents.

These findings are consistent with research examining gender and licensed venues which reports women find dark, long corridors to toilets intimidating (Fileborn, 2016a) and with broader fear of crime literature which typically reports that low levels of lighting create a heightened sense of fear, particularly for women. Blöbaum and Hunecke's (2005) research concluded that this is because of the implications of poor visibility associated with opportunities to escape. Thus, it is unlikely that the spaces, or environmental cues are themselves the causes of concern, but rather the risks that such environments represent. As Stanko (1995) argues, it is not poorly lit streets or overgrown bushes which are the central concern for women, but rather the possibility that a man will use these spaces to catch women when they are unaware and perpetrate sexual and/or physical violence against them. Such concerns are reinforced through sexual violence campaigns which continue to portray the 'real rape' stereotype of a male stranger attacking a woman at night in a public space (see Bows, 2019 and Bows and Fileborn, 2020 for discussion). Safety advice for women emphasizes this, associating risk with these features, despite decades of research revealing private spaces are the most common locations for sexual assaults. Standard festival and nightlife safety advice from management, police and welfare groups typically advises women and men to stay with friends and avoid secluded areas (e.g. Police Scotland, 2019)ⁱ.

Our study revealed that other festival-goers' alcohol/drug intoxication also significantly decrease perceptions of safety for women, echoing studies of women's experiences in the night-time economy. Others' alcohol intoxication was also the main factor reducing men's perception of safety (though this was not a statistically significant finding), with just over half of the male respondents citing this as a concern. However, women's own alcohol consumption is often a significant factor in reducing feelings of safety and increasing concern about their ability to remain 'in control' (e.g. Brooks, 2008), leading to the gendering of safety strategies and desirable and actual states of intoxication to achieve a "controlled loss of control" (author, 2002, p.343). In particular, women are concerned about threats to their safety from men, including drink spiking or unwanted sexual advances and attention (Brooks, 2008). However, alcohol consumption can also enhance individual feelings of safety by

facilitating a sense of belonging with a venue or between groups of friends or peers (Jayne, Valentine, and Holloway, 2010; Waitt, Jessop and Gorman-Murray, 2011). As Fileborn (2016b, p.1113) notes, 'the role of alcohol in the production of safety is seemingly a context-dependent one, with a sense of belonging and place mediating how alcohol is operationalised in this respect.' Further research is required to examine whether and how women engage in 'safety work' at festivals to reduce these perceived risks, for example moderating their alcohol consumption, which may explain why their own alcohol and/or drug consumption did not reduce feelings of safety for most women.

It is notable that groups of men were statistically significantly more likely to reduce feelings of safety for almost half of the women in this study, while groups of women were statistically significantly more likely to increase feelings of safety. This is consistent with data on alcohol-related violence in or near licensed premises, with groups of male strangers leaving women feeling threatened in relation to *physical* violence (e.g. Sheard, 2011), whereas individual male strangers are typically viewed as threatening in relation to sexual harassment and *sexual* violence (see Sheard, 2011; Brooks, 2008).

Overall, adequate lighting, the presence of security services and friends were all identified as statistically significantly more likely to increase feelings of safety for women. . Additionally, the majority of men, women and differently gendered participants reported that friends, welfare and medical services increased their feelings of safety. Again, these findings support previous studies on leisure and night-time economy spaces (Fileborn, 2016a). Backstage and VIP areas were also reported as environments where respondents felt safer. These spaces are generally characterised by additional security to prevent non-artists and non-VIPs from entering. However, research has shown that the presence of security can also be hostile and can increase feelings of anxiety for individuals from minority ethnic groups, particularly in the night-time economy where it was legal until the 1960s in the UK to refuse entry based on a patron's race. Research and media reports confirm that those from minority groups continue to be subject to racist formal and informal control in public spaces (Hirsch, 2018; Kempa and Singh, 2008; O'Dougherty, 2006), including nightlife venues (Measham and Hadfield,

2009) and thus further research which examines the experiences of festival-goers from minority groups is required to inform understandings of their subjective experiences.

Given that women report feeling uncomfortable, unsafe or intimidated if finding themselves alone in leisure venues (Sheard, 2011), it is unsurprising that the presence of friends is associated with increased feelings of safety at festivals. Moreover, friendship plays a central part in young women's enjoyment of the night-time economy and the presence of female friends serves to create perceived safe places within leisure venues and public space (Green, 1998). Waitt et al. (2011, p.266) describe this as a 'circle of legitimacy' that women create within urban night-time leisure spaces as a way of marking out and sustaining 'space of privacy' within a venue. Being with friends is clearly an important feature of risk management and safety strategies, as well as one of the pleasures of leisure.

Sexual harassment and sexual assault are repeatedly cited as the most common concerns among young women who access the night-time economy (e.g. Brooks, 2008; Griffin et al., 2012; Pain, 1991). These were also the two biggest concerns cited by female festival-goers in this study; just under 70% of women reported being very or quite concerned about sexual harassment and assault.

These concerns were not unfounded; a third of women (34%) reported being sexually harassed at a festival in the previous 12 months and 8% reported being sexually assaulted on one or more occasions. These figures mirror the only other UK study on sexual harassment at festivals which reported similar findings (YouGov, 2018). However, these figures on festival harassment are notably lower than those reported in other leisure spaces, particularly clubs, bars and other nightlife venues. For example, a survey by DrinkAware (2016) reported 54% of women aged 18-24 experience sexual harassment on a night out. This could suggest that festival spaces are experienced and engaged with differently, raising the need for further research in this area. Pubs and nightclubs are historically traditional masculine spaces which have, over the last three decades, allowed (some) women access. Indeed, young, white professional women have been the target of aggressive marketing by hospitality, festival and alcohol industries (author, 2005). Several scholars have argued that women's increased presence has led to some of these spaces becoming hyper-sexualised (Brooks, 2008; Griffin et al.,

2013). Moreover, violent attacks and sexual harassment remind women every day that they are not meant to be in certain spaces (Rose, 1993). However, spaces are not static sites – they are animated by history, location, physical characteristics, time of day or week, season, or the presence of other people (see Amin, 2015). The transient nature of festivals provides the opportunity for organisers to design the spaces differently, with recognition of the gendered experiences of festival-goers as demonstrated in our study.

Further research is needed to explore how women and differently gendered people negotiate festival spaces and how the everyday safety work (Vera-Gray, 2018) that women undertake affects their perceptions and experiences of festivals. In particular, further work which examines how women ‘do gender’, ‘do leisure’ and ‘do friendship’ (Green, 1998; Griffin et al., 2013; author, 2002; author, 2002) within the multiplicity of these spaces is needed to understand the gendered effects of the festival space on social interaction and intoxication within them. Feminist theorists within leisure studies and beyond have argued that women’s awareness of the risks associated with ‘imprudent’ behaviour has a profound effect on their use of public space, ultimately acting as a measure of social control over them (Brooks, 2008). It is unclear, however, whether the behaviours constructed as ‘imprudent’ in other spaces are viewed as such at festivals, given the backdrop of ‘atypical intoxication’ that is characteristic of festival consumption (Fileborn et al., 2019) and the normalisation of non-normative sexual practices by festival-goers (McCormack et al., 2021). It is also important to explore how men perceive women who access festivals and whether the same gender stereotypes that dominate some nightlife spaces are also observed within festivals.

This study found that most people who experienced sexual harassment or physical or sexual violence, disclosed these experiences to an informal source such as friends. Overall, 1 in 5 reported to security services and very few others reported to festival staff or other formal sources. This is consistent with wider research, including Fileborn et al.’s (2020) study on the reporting decisions of festival-goers in Australia, which found the majority of those who experienced sexual violence or harassment did not report to formal agencies, but instead disclosed to either friends or responded to

the perpetrator directly. The main reasons for not reporting centred around concerns about the perceived seriousness of the incident; the normalisation and trivialisation of sexual violence/harassment against women, particularly in festival and wider music industry environments; with the particular physical features of a festival (scale and arrangement of bodies and difficulty in locating appropriate authorities to report to) further impeding on reporting (Fileborn et al., 2020).

If over half of festival-goers take illicit drugs at festivals (author 2019), it raises additional obstacles to voluntarily reporting experiences as a victim of crime to onsite police or security, if they are simultaneously a perpetrator of crime (possession of a controlled drug), and if the resulting intoxication is seen as a possible contributing factor in the crime itself. Further research that examines motivations for disclosure and reasons for not reporting is needed to understand whether there are other particular challenges (or opportunities) for festival-goers to report to informal and formal sources and what influences their decision to disclose.

These findings have a number of implications for festival management, staff and volunteers, particularly in light of the growing numbers of female attendees. Although several festivals in the UK have committed to addressing sexual violence at festivals, along with campaigns and organisations such as The Loopⁱⁱ, Chill welfareⁱⁱⁱ and Festival Safe^{iv} being present online and/or onsite, relatively few festivals have implemented specific policies that consider the practicalities of achieving this. Despite the significant resources and attention given to safety and safeguarding at festivals, sexual violence and assault is only occasionally included in festival awareness material and campaigns (e.g. the six pillars of the Boomtown ethos^v and the AIF Safer Spaces campaign^{vi}).

This study found that most people did report incidents of sexual violence/harassment but most of these reports were made to informal sources (e.g. friends). This highlights the need to improve understanding of the reasons why victims do not report incidents to formal sources (e.g. police, security, paid and voluntary staff) and to ensure staff working at festivals in any capacity know how to respond to disclosures. This also further supports the need for bystander education and awareness raising to ensure friends and peers know how to respond to disclosures. Indeed, there is evidence of

bystander approaches operating well in other nightlife venues (e.g. see Powers and Leili, 2018, which evaluated a bystander training and intervention programme for bar staff) and a number of organisations are already working with festival management and staff to deliver training on sexual harassment and violence and foster bystander approaches in the UK (e.g. Safe Gigs For Women, Good Night Out Campaign and Boomtown's 6 Pillars^{vii}).

It is therefore critical that festivals and the agencies working within them develop policies, training and practices which: adopt a proactive approach to sexual violence; focus on perpetrator behaviour and accountability; actively counter gender-based myths and stereotypes which responsabilise and blame women; engage bystanders; and consider environmental factors when designing festival spaces. This must also extend beyond festival management and staff to those who attend festivals as artists, audience and agency staff to foster a collective community prevention approach. Several festivals in the UK and elsewhere have begun to raise awareness and respond to sexual violence and harassment at festivals but it is critical that the festival industry more broadly commits to developing this. Although there have been welcome developments over the last few years, particularly in relation to smaller, independent festivals^{viii}, larger festivals and the industry more generally has yet to fully acknowledge the issue and commit to working to prevent sexual violence.

However, there are a number of limitations with this study. The findings are based on a small (n=450) and self-selected sample with over representation of graduates, meaning that the findings are not generalisable to all festival-goers. The mode of recruitment (i.e. social media and online forums) gives further bias to the study. However, the purpose of the research was not to provide generalisable findings on rates of prevalence or risk factors but rather to explore the perceptions of safety and experiences of crime among a small group to provide insights which can inform future research and policy development. Furthermore, both women and men's experiences and perceptions of safety are also shaped by intersections of age, gender, (dis)ability and sexual orientation amongst others (Stanko, 1990). Thus, the discussion presented here can only inform our understandings of the ways in which some (primarily heterosexual, university educated and employed) women and men

perceive festival spaces and experience crime at festivals. Further research which examines perceptions and experiences among larger samples of festival-goers from minority groups is needed, with a focus on how inequalities and social identities intersect.

Funding details: This work was supported by the British Academy under Grant SRG18R1\180198.

Conflict of interest statement: The Authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

Acknowledgements: The Authors would like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments and suggestions on an earlier draft of this manuscript.

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ⁱ As illustrated by UK Drinkaware’s campaign that uses the hashtag #StayWithYourPack
<https://www.drinkaware.co.uk/advice/staying-safe-while-drinking/stay-with-your-pack>

ⁱⁱ www.wearetheloop.org

ⁱⁱⁱ www.chillwelfare.org.uk

^{iv} www.festivalsafe.com

^v www.boomtownfair.co.uk/news/2020-11-11-boomtown-ethos/

^{vi} The Association Of Independent Festivals (AIF) 2017 Safer Spaces campaign introduced a zero tolerance policy of sexual harassment at the 60 festivals that subscribed to the campaign:
<https://www.irishnews.com/magazine/entertainment/2017/05/05/news/britain-s-biggest-music-festivals-to-black-out-websites-to-raise-awareness-of-sexual-assaults-1017811/>

^{vii} The Boomtown 6 pillars try to responsabilise the whole festival and foster a sense of community and consensus of respect, onsite.

^{viii} For example, the AIF Campaign described in footnote vi